

8-mile route description

Heartwood Forest, Nomansland Common, Historic Wheathampstead,
part of the Hertfordshire Way, and Devil's Dyke

Adapted route description for use during the coronavirus pandemic

Route checked and route description revised 10 September 2021

Please check on <http://www.oxfamstalbens.org> for the latest version

- This route contains areas that may be challenging for social distancing, especially at busy times. Therefore, ***narrow sections are marked in red.***
- The walk starts at the Scout Hut in Heartwood Forest, Sandridgebury Lane, Sandridge, St Albans, **AL3 6JB**, but use the adjacent Heartwood Forest carpark, the nearest postcode is **AL4 9DQ**. The carpark opens at 8.00 and closes at 20.00. Follow the yellow signs to the Scout Hut. There is also nearby parking in Sandridge, off the main road. Please share a car or use public transport if you can, as weekends can be busy.
- **The Scout Hut will close at 17.00.** Allow plenty of time for parking (weekends are busy!), registration, the walk itself, some stops, and tea&cake on your return.
- The **± 8-mile** route takes about 3.5 hours at a steady pace and without a break, so we advise you to you **start your walk between 9.00 and 12.00.**
- We ask you to **follow current Government Covid Guidelines** on wearing masks, social distancing, and sanitising, in the Scout Hut as well as during your walk. **If you prefer not to come in, call one of the numbers below, and we will come outside to register you.**
- **In case of emergency, or if you will not return to the Scout Hut to check out,** it is important to call Sue Cockell on **07535 695744**, or Wilma Mendonca on **07305 807288**.
- **Bring your own** copy(s) of this route description, water, packed lunch, snacks, sunscreen, hat, anorak, a small first-aid kit, secateurs (if you wear shorts), and a fully charged mobile phone. Also bring some cash for tea&cake and for purchases at the St Albans Oxfam shop stall, and your bank details to make your Walk for Water donation on JustGiving. We have no card-reader.
- There are four **Check Points**, **C1**, **C2**, and **C5**.
- There will be **no yellow Herts Hike route signs** after **C1**, but the arrows in this route description **← ↖ ↑ ↗ →** indicate your direction.
- **Benches, café's and pubs** are highlighted in ***italic***, and **orientation points** in **bold**.
- For those of you finding it useful, OS Grid References are shown as: {2 Grid letters 3 figures (easting) 3 figures (northing)} e.g. {TL 189 149}.

Enjoy your walk!

Section 1: Scout Hut to Check Point C1

- 1 At the **Scout Hut entrance gate** turn left ← onto the **Scout Hut drive**, then left ← onto a bridleway, and almost immediately right ↗ through a kissing gate into **Heartwood Forest**.
- 2 Go ahead gently uphill on the diagonal gravel path ↑.
- 3 Where the gravel path divides left and right at a **signpost**, go straight ahead on the grassy path ↑ towards a second **signpost on the skyline**.
- 4 Here turn left ← onto a track, soon passing on your left a **bench dedicated to Matt Risby**.
- 5 Continue straight ahead ↑ entering the **Magical Wood**, passing the **Mouse carving** and then the **Woodland Arch** on your left as you go.
- 6 At the corner of **Puddler's Wood** in front of you, cross straight over another track ↑, continue ahead with the wood on your left and a young wood on your right, until a gate marked with a small plaque saying '**Brian's gate**' on your right.
- 7 Turn right through this gate →, and follow the broad grassy path, passing between a **memorial stone for Brian & Brenda** and a **bench**, to another gate, which is 'Brenda's gate'. Go through, turn left ← on the track for a few yards, to the edge of a wood.
- 8 Turn right →, continuing on the grass ↑, between a wood on the left and a young wood on the right.
- 9 Go downhill, where you see **Check Point C1** {TL 162 122} in a shady spot. **Please show your walker number to the Marshal.**

Section 2: Heartwood Forest C1 to Wheathampstead underpass C3

10 CAUTION – ROUTES DIVIDE HERE!

- 11 The 2.5 & 4-milers turn left, whilst the 5, 8,15 & 20-mile walkers turn right →.
Don't just follow the people in front! Continue along the boundary of Heartwood, passing a **bench** set back on your right, until you reach a **Woodland Trust kissing gate** {TL163 123}.
- 12 Go through the gate ↑, down the path for a few metres and then branch right ↗ walking towards the open space of **Nomansland Common**, from where you can see **Check Point C2** {TL175 124} in a shady spot. **Please show your walker number to the Marshall.**
- 13 Walk along the Common for ± 0.5 mile ↑, remaining parallel with the road on your left, passing a **bench** at the top of the hill, and the **public car park** on your left (do NOT cross the road here). Aim for the red bin and near the far-left corner of the Common, (The **Highstreet B651** lies ahead of you).
- 14 Once there, turn left ← to cross **Ferrers Lane WITH GREAT CARE** at the road sign '**Give Way–50 yds**'.
- 15 **CAUTION – ROUTES DIVIDE HERE!** At a small **enclosure** the 5-milers turn right, whilst the 8,15 & 20-mile walkers go straight on ↑, Aim for the **house** seen beyond the **cricket pitch**.
- 16 Follow the right side of the cricket pitch, passing 3 **benches**, and notice the small **historic puddingstone** in the **semi-circular bench** ↑.

- 17 Aiming at the **Wicked Lady pub**, leave the pitch, and see the **Historic Wheathampstead board**. Turn left ← on to the tarmac drive of the **cricket pavilion**.
- 18 Just before the **cricket pavilion**, where the edge of the wood is set back slightly, turn right → onto a **very narrow woodland path**, which is easily missed, and almost immediately take a left-hand fork ↖.
- 19 Ignore a left turn, and at a **waymark** where paths cross (you may still see a large tree blocking the path ahead), turn right →, and after ± 10 yards turn left ←, keeping the wood on your left and a corn field on your right. At the corner of the field, the north side of Nomansland woodland [TL173 128}, turn right →.
- 20 Go straight on ↑, with the hedge on your left and the field on your right, and follow a short section of **telegraph wires**.
- 21 At the next corner of the field go straight on, onto a gravel path, and almost immediately turn right →.
- 22 At the T-junction turn left ←.
- 23 Emerge onto an open space and continue diagonally uphill ↗, towards the right-hand corner of an **enclosure**.
- 24 Carry straight on ↑ with the fence on your left and a narrow wood on your right. Just after the next corner of the enclosure turn right →.
- 25 Go past an iron gate, and turn left ← onto an asphalt path.
- 26 Continue **WITH CARE** alongside the **High Street** for ± 50 yards, to **Butterfield Road**.
- 27 Turn left ← into Butterfield Road. After ± 200 yards cross Butterfield Road **WITH CARE** and turn right → into **Wick Avenue**.
- 28 After **house number 39A**, turn right → onto a **narrow asphalt path**.
- 29 At the end of the path turn left ← to continue gently downhill on a **narrow sloping path** above the **High Street**.
- 30 After a little way descend by steps to street level, turn left ←, and continue on the pavement down into the village and past **The Swan pub** to the corner with **Church Street**. Walk a few yards up Church Street, away from the busy junction, before crossing **WITH CARE**.
- 31 Returning to the High Street, pass the **lychgate to St Helens Church**. (Time permitting, you may like to stop and see the windows and monuments inside this lovely building).
- 32 Proceed to the foot of the hill and just before you get to **Loafing Bakery & Coffee Shop**, (or **Charlie's Coffee Shop** would be a bit further on, past the Pharmacy and the mill stream), cross the High Street at the **zebra crossing**.
- 33 Turn right → between **The Bull pub** and the **Jessamine garage** into **East Lane**. Walk past the **public car park** on your left (note there are **public toilets** available here) ↑ and as the road bends to the left, pass the **Women's Institute Mead Hall** on your left and a **bench** on your right.
- 34 At the **East Lane** road sign keep left ↖ as **Meads Lane** carries on gently downhill past the **Rainbow House Nursery** and emerges in the **river meadows** ↑.

- 35 Immediately after passing between two **benches**, (and ahead you can see **picnic tables**) turn left ← to cross the **River Lee** over the **footbridge**.
- 36 Immediately turn right → and follow the path along the **riverbank**, past a **bench** on your left, until it climbs to join a bridleway (**Lea Valley walk**).
- 37 Turn right → and follow this, passing a **bench** immediately on your right. After passing through two gates the path turns right →.
- 38 Go through another gate on your left, taking the steps down to **Check Point C3**, from where you can see the **underpass** on your left. **Please show your walker number to the Marshall.**

Section 3: Wheathampstead underpass C3 to Hammonds Farm

- 39 **CAUTION – ROUTES DIVIDE HERE!** The 15 & 22-milers turn left, whilst the 8-mile walkers turn right →. Follow the gravel track, **Sheepcote Lane**, as it crosses the **River Lea** by a small bridge and then becomes a tarmac road.
- 40 Continue up the lane ↑ and cross over **Marford Road WITH GREAT CARE**.
- 41 Carry straight on ↑ into **Dyke Lane** and continue **WITH CARE** uphill to the **Wheathampstead Heritage Trail information board** with the entrance to the **Devil's Dyke** on your left.
- 42 Pass through the **metal gate** ↑ to enter the **Pre-Roman earthworks**. Carry straight on into the **deepening ditch**, over a **wooden boardwalk** at one place.
- 43 Follow the Dyke until a flight of **wooden steps** on the right →. Go up, onto **Footpath 24**.
- 44 Soon the path forks. Take the left turn ← up to **Dyke Lane**.
- 45 **TAKE CARE** both looking and listening for traffic as you emerge onto **Dyke Lane**, where you turn left ←. Follow the lane **WITH CARE**.
- 46 Pass **Beech Hyde Farm** on the left, and after ± 10 yards turn left onto **Footpath 15** into a large field. Follow the field boundary with a hedge on your left and then, at a **yellow waymark sign**, continue on with hedges on both sides.
- 47 Emerge onto **Beech Hyde Lane** opposite **Old Beech Hyde house**. Turn right → onto the lane. As you come to the end of a **fenced wooded garden** on your left and a **telegraph pole**, take the footpath on the left ← **Public Footpath 14 'Lemsford 2 miles'**, which leads across a field towards a wood.
- 48 Enter the wood ↑ by a waymark sign, ignoring the path on the left, through an area of destroyed woodland, and where paths cross, follow the **narrow path** straight ahead ↑ to **Check Point C5** {TL 189 125}. **Please show your walker number to the Marshall.**
- 49 (± 100 yards to the left you will find the **John Bunyan pub**, so named because the famous preacher and writer stayed at a cottage close by. Just the chimney stack of the cottage still remains).
- 50 Where the path forks, turn right ↗ towards **Coleman Green Lane**.

- 51 Cross the lane **↑ WITH CARE**, to a field gate opposite. At the gate two footpaths diverge. Take the right fork **↗** to follow the path with the field on your left and a hedge on your right.
- 52 Continue straight on **↑** up-hill. At a gap in the hedge ahead, with **waymarks**, go right **↗** along the edge of the field with the hedge on your right.
- 53 Continue straight on to follow the footpath across the field to the edge of **Titnol's Wood**. Do not enter it but turn right **→**, with the wood on your left and a field with a barbed wire fence on your right.
- 54 At a hedge ahead and a waymark, ignore a left and a right turn, but cross a stile and continue straight on **↑** on a **narrow path**, still on the Hertfordshire Way, with the wood to your left and a field on your right.
- 55 Then follow the **fence of a house** on the left and **stables** on the right, to a kissing gate where you turn right **→** onto **Hammonds Lane**.
- 56 **TAKE GREAT CARE** on the lane, which is generally quiet but does have some traffic. Follow Hammonds Lane past a junction with **Tower Hill Lane** on the right. At **Meadow Lodge** on the left, cross a stile. You are now on the **Hertfordshire Way** footpath.
- 57 Continue straight on **↑**, parallel to Hammonds Lane, with a field on the left and a hedge on the right.

Section 4: Hammonds Farm to Scout Hut

- 58 Pass **Hammonds Farm** and **Hammonds House** on the right, two metal gates, and another one with a **large log** behind it. Here, the 5-milers re-join the 8, 15 & 20-mile walkers.
- 59 Continue with the hedge on your right, towards a wood.
- 60 As the path enters the wood, continue straight on **↑**. Soon the Hertfordshire Way emerges from the wood, bending sharply to the left **↖**, and then continues straight on **↑**, with the wood on the left, and a young wood with a fence on the right.
- 61 Passing a **small pond** on the left, you reach the corner of the wood, and the **houses of Sandridge** come into view. Carry straight on **↑** through a field to **Langley Grove**. Cross the road **WITH CARE** **↑** onto a **narrowing footpath**.
- 62 After a few minutes, at the end of a garden fence and a **waymark post** on the right, take a short and **narrow path**, which forks off to the left **↖**, to cross a tarmac drive at a small zebra crossing (take care).
- 63 You emerge into the grassy churchyard of **St Leonard's Church**. Where the path forks, keep to the right **↗** aiming for the **lychgate arch** at the front of the church.
- 64 From the lychgate go straight on **↑**, past the **Queen's Head pub**, toward the **bus shelter at St Albans Road B651**.
- 65 Cross the main road **WITH GREAT CARE** and walk a few yards to the right **→**, to the drive of **Pound Farm**.
- 66 Take the drive through Pound Farm **←**, leaving the **large barn** to the left.

67 Continue gently uphill on the bridleway, past the **Heartwood Forest welcome sign** ↑ until the **Scout Hut** comes into sight again.

68 Turn left ← onto the Scout Hut drive, and immediately right → through the gate.

CONGRATULATIONS ON FINISHING YOUR WALK

Please go inside to register your arrival, hand in your sponsorship money/donation(s) or make a transfer to

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Oxfam-St-Albans1>

give us feedback, and treat yourself to drinks and cakes whilst sending us your experiences & photos for our website on oxfamstalbans1@gmail.com

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

**We hope you enjoyed your walk
and we look forward to seeing you on**

SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2022

Do save the date!