

Whitwell, a hamlet in the Parish of St Paul's Walden which has outgrown its 'mother' village.

This is a circular walk of approximately four miles.



There are attractive timber-framed and Georgian buildings in Whitwell High Street. The route passes through quiet farmland and ancient woodland, with views of The Bury, a childhood home of the late Queen Mother.

Park in the Recreation Ground car park on Bradway off Horn Lane, the B651 going towards Kimpton. Go down the steep ramp out of the car park, turn left then almost immediately right into Oldfield Rise. Keep going downhill taking the footpath to the High Street.

Go straight over into The Valley which crosses the River Mimram then becomes a track. Climb steadily until the track divides. Turn left then almost immediately right through a kissing gate.



Beyond the gate turn left and follow the edge of the field with the hedge on the left. Ignore the path to the left and go right to follow the edge of the same field. Go through two more gates keeping the hedge on your left, until you reach the gate leading into Walk Wood.



Follow the path through the wood: it bends to the right then to the left before emerging onto a path between hedges to reach a lane. Turn right to go along the lane then take the first turning left along another lane running between holly hedges.



[If you would like to make a small detour to visit St Paul's Walden church don't turn left here but keep straight on - the church will shortly come into view. Retrace your steps to rejoin the route.]

The lane bends to the right. Just before a large white house turn left onto the path which runs between wooden fences. You are now passing the edge of the tiny village of St Paul's Walden.

The path emerges from between the fences to follow a field edge with a fence to the right. There are recently-planted trees beyond the fence. Follow the path until it reaches the road through a gap in the hedge just to the right of a large oak tree.



Cross the road with care and go through the gate opposite, then go eastwards across the field to the left of a line of trees. Where the hedge turns sharp left go through the gate in the corner.

Head for the gap between the barn and house ahead, then cross the farmyard to the road. Turn left and after approximately 60 yards take the path through the low gap in the holly hedge to your right.

Cross the field keeping close to the hedge on the right then go through the gate at the far side onto the road. Turn right and follow the road to the T-junction by a roadside pond.



Turn left here and continue along the road with large silos to your left, then passing a pond on your left by East Hall Farm house. By the white cottages the tarmac road turns sharply left. Keep straight ahead here on the track, passing a large oak tree on the left.



After about 100 yards turn right onto the wide grassy track which leads to Reynolds Wood ahead.

Keep to the track as it enters the wood and aim for the large conifer tree just to the left of your route.



Further on the track, now going downhill, leaves the wood and continues with a hedge on the right to reach the B651 road.

Turn left onto the roadside then look for the metal kissing gate flanked by holly bushes a little way to the left of the lodge gates on the opposite side of the road. Go through the gate then follow the path towards the avenue of lime trees on the far side of the grass field.



Cross the avenue of trees and a little further ahead turn left onto the drive leading to the large house ahead. This is The Bury where the Queen Mother spent much of her childhood. In late winter there are masses of snowdrops along the drive edges.



About 60 yards along the drive another drive joins from the left. There are two footpaths ahead: take the right-hand path which crosses pasture between fences.

Cross the field to go through a gateway then bear left onto the track which eventually goes downhill to the top of The Valley. You have now completed the circuit! Retrace your earlier steps across the Mimram and the High Street, before going up Buttons Lane to reach the car park.

This route last walked by CPRE in February 2017.

Note: all walkers do so at their own risk. Suitable footwear and clothing are recommended.

CPRE Hertfordshire is a registered charity no. 1162419, address: 31a Church Street, Welwyn, AL6 9LW, tel 01438 717587. For more information on our work visit www.cpreherts.org.uk. We are the county branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England.