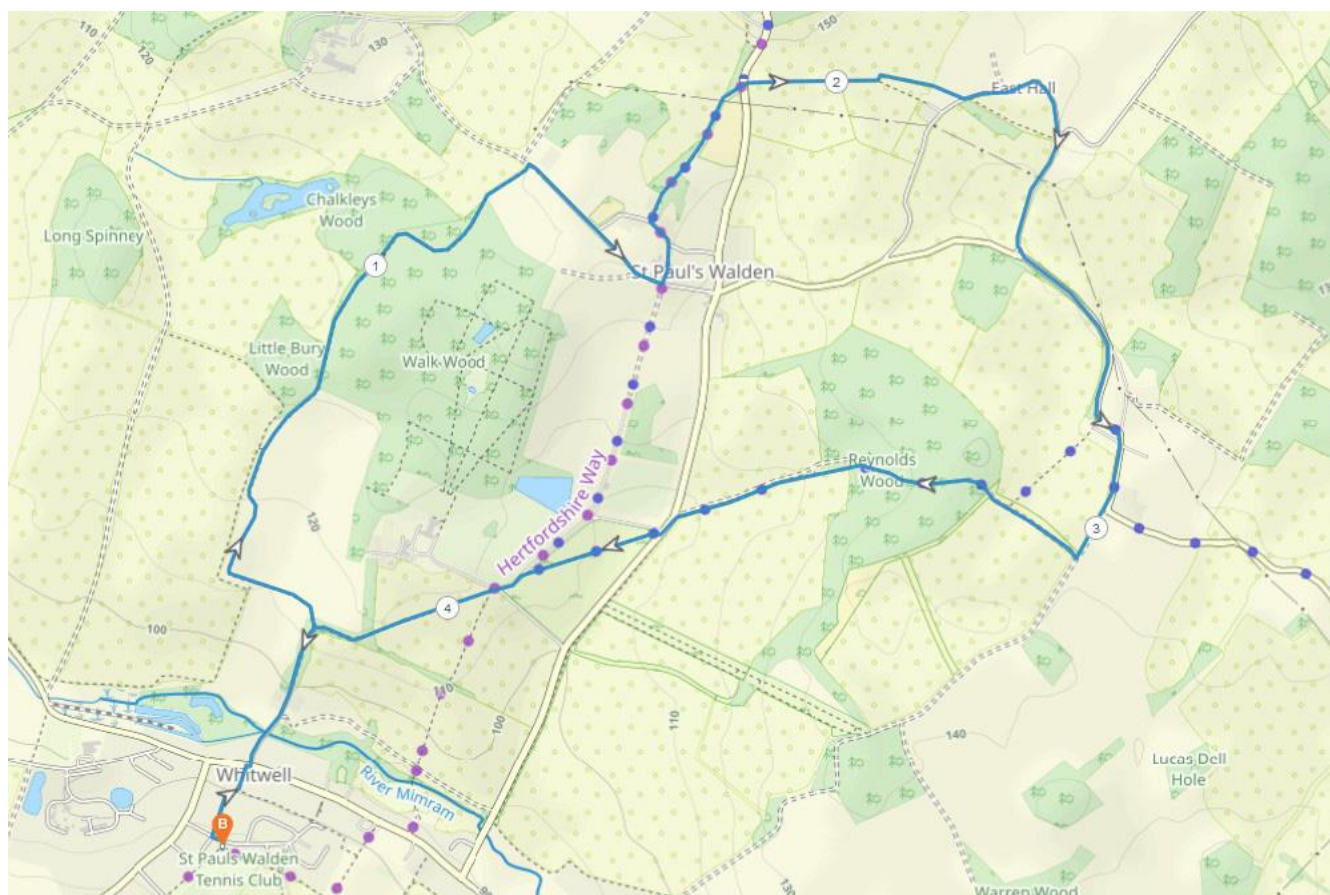




The countryside charity
Hertfordshire

Whitwell and St Pauls Walden



The village of Whitwell in the Parish of St Paul's Walden has attractive timber-framed and Georgian buildings along its High Street. Our walking route explores quiet farmland and ancient woodland, with views of The Bury, a childhood home of the late Queen Mother.

Distance: 4.6 miles / 7.3 km

Ascent: 351 feet / 107 metres

Duration: 2 hours

Difficulty: Easy

Start / Finish: Whitwell Recreation Ground, Bradway, Whitwell - free car park

Refreshments: Emily's Tea Shop, The Bull Inn pub, and a village shop - all in Whitwell village

The walk starts and finishes at the free public car park at Whitwell Recreation Ground on Bradway, just east of the B651. There is a well-equipped children's playground next to the car park. This walk can be combined with our 'Whitwell and Bendish' walk, for a single longer walk of about 8 miles in total.

Whitwell is a historic village in St Paul's Walden parish in rural North Hertfordshire. It sits on a tableland above the River Mimram, offering stunning views of the Hertfordshire countryside. The village is surrounded by rolling hills and farmland, and there are many public footpaths in the area including portions of The Hertfordshire Way and of The Chiltern Way. The village was once known for its "notorious seven" public houses, but today only one remains, The Bull Inn.

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To start the walk, 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 - one of our rare chalk streams where on the western edge of Whitwell there are watercress beds which have existed since Roman times. The road becomes a track beyond the last houses.

Climb steadily until the track divides. Turn left, then almost immediately right up a stepped embankment onto Public Footpath 8.



At the top turn left and follow the edge of the field with the hedge on the left. In the corner of the field go right to follow the edge of the same field.

Go through two more field boundaries keeping the hedge on your left, until you reach the gap into Walk Wood.



Follow the meandering path through this pleasant mixed woodland: 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 (ignoring the first turning left) and continue...



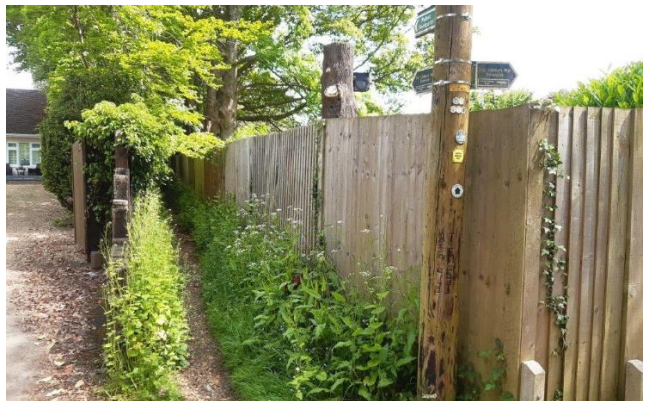
... until you reach All Saints church, St.Pauls Walden, on your left.

An historic and architecturally interesting building, and if open, worthy of a visit inside.

Turn left on to Footpath 003, enter the churchyard via the gate and continue straight keeping the church to your left.



Exit the churchyard via another gate to emerge on to a lane, turn left along the lane and in approximately 100 metres turn right on to the path which runs between wooden fences.



The path emerges from between the fences to follow a field edge with a fence to the right.

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 directly eastwards across the field to the left of a distant line of trees. Continue through the pedestrian gate...



... and where the hedge turns sharp left ignore the gate in the corner, and continue following the hedge line, keeping it on your right. Go through two kissing gates to emerge on to a road. Turn left and continue on the lane.

At the first road junction bear right (signposted Easthall; St.Pauls Walden) and continue until the next T-junction by a roadside pond. Turn left here (signposted Easthall).



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 (Public Byway 37), 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.

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 Public Footpath 5 finger post on the right and a metal kissing gate beyond.

Go through the gate then follow the path diagonally towards the avenue of lime trees on the far side of the grass field.



Cross the avenue of trees and a little further ahead go through a kissing gate and turn left onto the drive leading to the large house ahead. This is The Bury where the Queen Mother (Elizabeth Angela Marguerite Bowes-Lyon) 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 diverging 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!

Emily's Tea Room is on your left, with free entrance to their "hidden" garden. Retrace your earlier steps across the River Mimram and the High Street, before going up Buttons Lane to reach the car park.

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This route last walked by CPRE in May 2024.

If you have enjoyed this walk, please consider supporting CPRE Hertfordshire in our efforts to protect and promote the Hertfordshire countryside for everyone. For more information on our work, or to sign up for our newsletter, make a donation, or volunteer with us, please visit www.cpreherts.org.uk

CPRE Hertfordshire is a registered charity no. 1162419, address: 31a Church Street, Welwyn, AL6 9LW, tel 01438 717587.

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