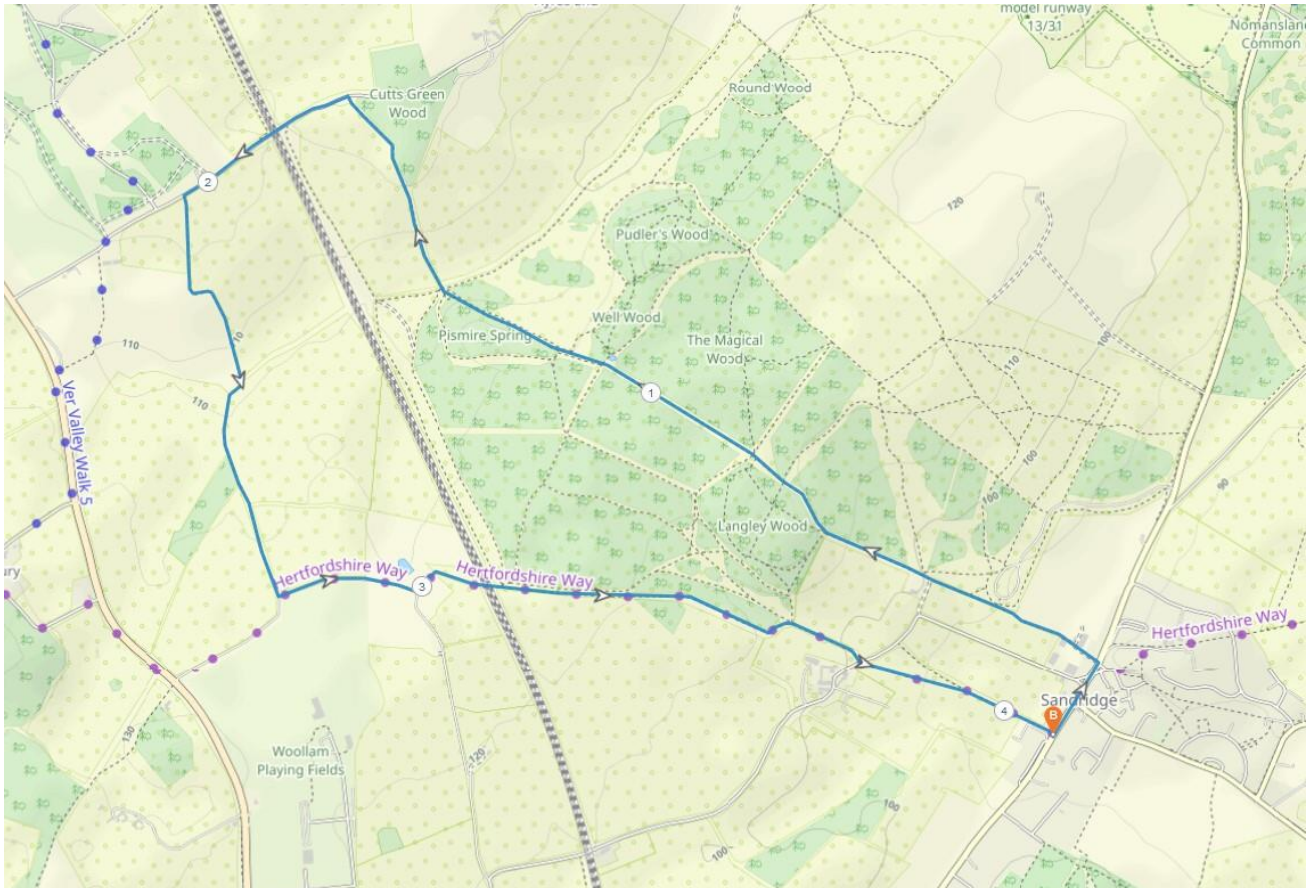




The countryside charity
Hertfordshire

Sandridge and Heartwood

Old English: Saundruage - a place of sandy soil



An easy circular walk through a part of Heartwood Forest, also taking in fields and country lanes. Pleasant in all seasons, the spring bluebells are especially notable.

Distance: 4.1 miles / 6.6 km

Ascent: 280 feet / 85 metres

Duration: 1.5 - 2 hours

Difficulty: Easy

Start / finish: Sandridge Village Hall - free car park

Refreshments in Sandridge: Heartwood Cafe & Tea Rooms, three pubs - The Green Man, Rose & Crown, and Queen's Head, and JTB Butchers Farm Shop

Sandridge is one of the oldest villages in Hertfordshire, dating back to 796 a.d. The fields around the village were the scene of the Second Battle of St Albans in 1461.

This is a circular walk of just over 4 miles.

The walk starts and finishes at Sandridge Village Hall. A free car park and public toilets are adjacent to the hall.



Leaving the car park, turn left in front of the hall and walk north up the High Street to the triangular junction at Sandridgebury Lane. Cross over and carry on up the B651 to the farm access to Pound Farm on the left, where the Bridleway is signposted.



Turn up the drive, through the farm buildings and up the well-defined path beyond. The path goes gradually uphill past the land on your right which is being developed as Heartwood Forest, one of the largest new native forests in England. It is a vast new forest of more than half a million trees, pockets of ancient woodland, wildflower meadows and fantastic wildlife spotting. There are many points of access into the forest from this path. It is well worth a visit.



You will arrive at Langley Wood, with its Woodland Trust information board on your left telling you all about this ancient woodland. Skirt around Langley Wood, keeping the wood on your left. (In the springtime, the bluebells in Langley Wood are especially notable).



The path opens out into a broad avenue with young beech trees planted along either side. Follow the path between the two woods in front of you. These are Pismire Spring and Well Wood both, like Langley Wood, are remaining fragments of ancient woodland.



Once through the gap between the two woods, the landscape is typical of rural Hertfordshire.



Go down the hill and at the bottom go through the gap in the hedge immediately ahead, which has a concrete fence base in the centre and a Woodland Trust board to one side.



The path then goes up hill past a wood on the right-hand side until it reaches Ayres End Lane. Turn left and walk along Ayres End Lane. Take great care as the lane is narrow with no footways or verges and has a couple of blind bends.

You will cross the railway and then pass two large houses on your right-hand side.

Opposite the second house, on the left-hand side of the road, is a marked footpath immediately before the 'Slow Down, Horses' sign. Turn on to the path which goes up the field margin with the hedge on your right.



Follow the hedge round the dog leg to the left and then down to the end of the field. Go through the gap in the hedgerow.



Continue on the path, turning sharp right and then left. Carry on, now with the hedge on your left until you come to a plantation.

Take the left-hand path, with the plantation on your right. The path will then carry on with a substantial hedgerow to the right until it meets a farm drive.



Turn left and walk along the drive to Cheapside Farm.

You are now following a section of The Hertfordshire Way long distance path.

Bear left to go between the farm buildings to a gate and then diagonally right across the field (aiming for the telecoms mast) to a second gate and the bridge across the railway. Once over the bridge follow the path straight ahead until it exits on to Sandridgebury Lane.



A detour up the lane to the right can be made for refreshments at JTB Butchers Farm Shop, where sustainably grown meat can also be purchased.

Immediately opposite there is a gate on top of the embankment. Go through this swing gate onto the field beyond. Cross the field diagonally to the left to go through another swing gate, and the one beyond that, to finally go through the swing gate in the corner of the field into the sports field beyond.

Go round the left-hand edge of the sports field to arrive back at Sandridge Village Hall and the end of the walk.

If you have time, pay St. Leonard's church a visit. It dates back to 1100, though the bricks from which it is built are much older, they were pillaged from Roman Verulamium. The 14th century rood screen is particularly fine.

This route last walked by CPRE in January 2024.

All walkers do so at their own risk. Suitable footwear and clothing are recommended.

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.