

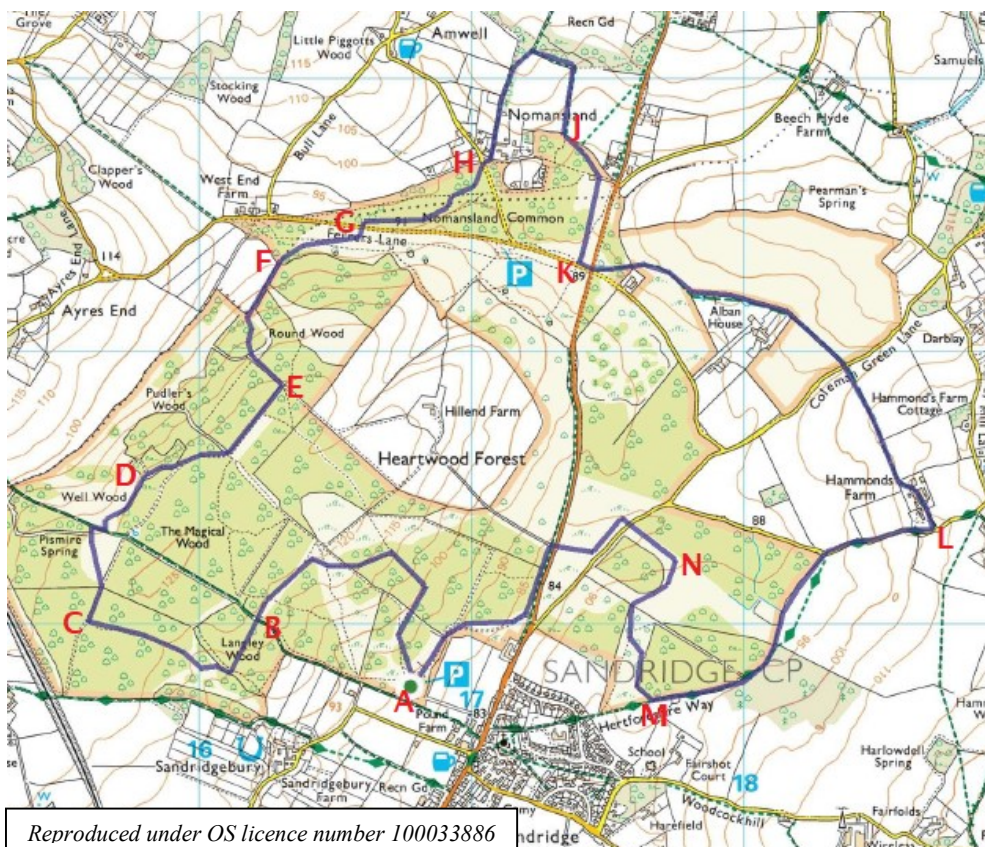
Heartwood Forest Walk

Mary Field, N London & S Herts Ramblers

If you are looking for a beautiful open area to explore you can find it right here in Hertfordshire in the extensive area between St Albans and Wheathampstead where the largest new native forest in England is being created by the Woodland Trust. Volunteers have planted nearly 600,000 saplings and new paths have been created through the burgeoning woodland, which includes an arboretum and community orchard. All are welcome to walk in Woodland Trust woods, large and small, which are scattered throughout the UK. (See heartwood.woodlandtrust.org.uk for further information) Because Heartwood Forest is a work in progress paths are in development and may not appear on the OS map. However, the main paths are clearly signposted and easily accessible for everyone.

Open access extends to neighbouring Nomansland Common which gets its name as a strip of unclaimed land between parishes, claimed by the monasteries of both St Albans and Westminster in the Middle Ages. The notorious Wicked Lady highwaywoman preyed on travellers on the Common in the 17th century and is remembered in the local pub of the same name. This walk is offered as a suggestion for discovering new paths but there are plenty of other paths to follow.

Length 7 miles (or 5 miles via shortcut). Easy. Nearest postcode AL4 9DQ. Park in the Woodland Trust official car park off the B651 north of Sandridge, signposted "Heartwood Forest" grid ref TL 168 108 [A].



From the car park walk towards **the tall wooden poles** on the right arm of the "Magical Meander" path, keep right at the junction and past the interpretation boards on the left to reach a wide track [B].

Cross the track into Langley Wood and keep straight on to the far edge of the wood. Cross diagonally to the right to go through the gate into the meadow and turn right along the edge of the wood for 50 yds. Bear left up a grassy slope to a bench (dedicated to Mary Sharp) and, keeping the bench on your left, continue forward past a post with a white arrow. At the next junction follow the white arrow to the right [C].



After 150yds, at a junction, fork left past a bench and go down towards an old wood, past a board and through a kissing gate. Turn right onto the track, then left through another kissing gate to follow the path through the meadow along the edge of Well Wood to [D].

Take the wide track straight on into the wood, as it bends to the right to a T junction. Turn left through Pudlers Wood (mature trees on your left, saplings on your right), and keep straight on over a cross path, now with a hedge on your left. At the end of the hedge [E] turn left and down, then bear right through a narrow entrance into Round Wood, keeping right to exit the wood. Do not turn left but keep straight on beside the hedge on your left, young plantation on your right, to the Heartwood Welcome board [F].

Go down the steps and take the path immediately right onto Nomansland Common. Head towards a large round gorse bush, keeping straight on the path between the first gorse bushes. Through a gap to the left, look out for 2 sets of posts to cross the road into the wooded part of the common [G].

Turn right along the edge of the wood onto an open area and past a bench. Look out for a distinctive tree with low wiggly branches and bear left of it to join the main path to the right past a post and information board. After a short distance (50 yds) take an indistinct path on the left and make your way through the trees until you reach the exit of the wood (marked Nomansland Common) with a small green and houses ahead [H].

Cross the road and bear right towards a tall coniferous hedge and take the footpath left, signposted Butterfield Road. Continue N up the path and follow a yellow arrow to the right, along a winding path round a field, into the wood, turn right (E) along the edge of the wood and out into the next field. Follow the telegraph poles S down the field and back into Nomansland Common [J].

Turn left and take the path through the trees to the cricket pavilion. (If you feel like a break, turn left to the road here, where you will see the Wicked Lady pub). Cross the cricket pitch, keeping the cricket square on your right following the main path over the grass S straight to a minor road [K].



Alternative Short Cut from K:
Cross the road at the wooden posts with a red bin ahead and bear left up the slope past the Heartwood Forest Welcome Board onto a well prepared track. Keep straight on until you reach the access road to the car park.

Turn left along the road to the crossroads. Cross the main road (B651) between the posts to the footpath opposite and continue past the Heartwood Forest Welcome Board for $\frac{2}{3}$ mile through fields passing round the back of Nomansland Farm to a minor road (Colman Green Lane). Cross the road and follow the footpath to Hammonds Farm then through the farmyard (look out for the footpath sign) to a lane [L].

Turn right along the lane for about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile and take a footpath on the left (Hertfordshire Way) along the edge of a field and into a mature wood. When you exit the wood, continue along the footpath with a new plantation on the right behind a wire mesh fence and into an open field.

Turn right beside the wire mesh fence [M] and follow it right round another corner. Halfway along the fence turn left into the communal orchard (trees in rows) towards a bench and bear right past it (northwards) to the corner of the field to a large gap in the hedge. Bear right along a wide grassy path to skirt round a new plantation.

At the junction of paths [N] turn left towards a wide barred gate. Go through a kissing gate to cross the road and through another kissing gate. Turn immediately left along a grassy track with a hedge on the left. At a wide gate on the left turn right (with the gate now behind you) along a winding path to the main road (B651). Cross over and turn left through a kissing gate and follow a wide track until you reach the access road to return to the car park.