

Getting Here

Westbrook Hay is situated on the hills to the south of the Box Moor Trust Centre on London Road, Hemel Hempstead (A4251). Westbrook Hay can be reached from the A4251 (London Road), running between Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted. Close to the Box Moor Trust Centre on London Road, turn into Westbrook Hay drive (signposted for the Box Moor Trust Old Barn). Follow the drive all the way to the top of the hill, then take the first track on the left (just before Westbrook Hay School entrance). This will lead you into the car park next to the Old Barn Education Centre.

Car Parking

The car park by the Old Barn is usually open during daylight hours. An alternative car park can be found at the base of the hill, at the start of Westbrook Hay drive. Park here and walk up through the meadows to the Old Barn and the starting point for this walk.

Users of Wheelchairs, Pushchairs or Mobility Scooters

The boardwalk is the main section of this walk suitable for wheelchair and pram users. The visitor will have to assess the suitability of the rest of the walk but this will depend on weather conditions as some of the ground is uneven with puddles and mud after rain. If the section between points (3) and (4) on the map seems unsuitable, please try continuing along to the end of the boardwalk, through the gate and into the large field. At the pond, bear right to a large gate leading back into the wood to re-join the walk at point (4). Please contact us for more advice on alternative routes. Benches are situated at several points around the route. A mobility scooter is available on loan from The Box Moor Trust Centre for use on this walk. Please ring in advance to arrange. Tel: 01442 253300.

Safety

When carrying out the activities suggested in this leaflet, please take great care. In particular, do not enter our pond dipping areas. It should be possible to observe the ponds from outside these areas. The Box Moor Trust cannot accept responsibility for the children under your care.

Care of the Box Moor Trust Estate

Where livestock are grazing, please keep dogs on a short lead or at heel. If your dog fouls, please bag and bin it or take it away with you. More information can be found in our leaflet 'Dogs and the Box Moor Trust'. Please also:

- Close all gates.
- Do not leave litter or light fires.
- Do not pick plants, flowers or fungi.

All the Fun of the Fair

A short, easy walk for families around the woods and meadows of Westbrook Hay, including six 'fairground' themed activities.

These activities are designed to appeal to as wide an audience as possible. Take on as many or as few as you wish or just enjoy the walk!

Throughout our history, the lands of the Box Moor Trust have been used for fairs and special days out. In particular, 'Howe's Pleasure Ground' was established in 1896 at what is now Howe's Retreat off Felden Lane. In those days, many people did not travel far for their holidays so day trippers came from London by train and bus to ride the merry-go-round, have picnics and take afternoon tea in the beautiful tea gardens.

Today, Howe's Retreat has a very different set of visitors: it is a winter home for our Belted Galloway cattle!

If you have enjoyed this walk, why not explore further on our Orange, Blue, Green or Red walk routes? We produce seasonal 'I-Spy' inserts for children to accompany the Orange walk.

**Please visit our website:
www.boxmoortrust.org.uk**



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'Roller Coaster Ride' - The Bulbourne Valley Landscape

A

Stop by the seat to enjoy the view. Ahead is a very steep slope down to the bottom of the valley and, on the opposite side, another steep climb up again - just like a roller coaster! This valley has been formed over thousands of years by the River Bulbourne wearing the clay and chalk rock away as it flows over. Years ago, this river was much bigger and important. It provided water power for local mills, useful materials and food, especially watercress, fish and willow. People also used boats along the river. Four other transport routes run beside it along the flat bottom of the valley - can you spot them or guess what they are? (The 'new' A41, the old 'turnpike' road, the canal and the railway.) Now, try running a stick along the planks of the boardwalk - can you make the 'ratcheting' sound a roller coaster makes as it pulls its carriages up to the top?

'Ghost Train' - Old Roads and Highwaymen

B

As you enter Hay Wood, look carefully to the right to see the old 'way through the woods', just like in the famous poem of the same name by Rudyard Kipling. Why not read it standing here? Just like in Kipling's wood, badgers and doves live here and the old road is very overgrown. How does the second verse of the poem make you feel? It's a bit spooky! Do you think James Snook, the Box Moor Highwayman, ever rode up this track? Snook is famous because he was the last highwayman in England to be hanged at the scene of his crime - down on Snook's Moor where he robbed the Tring Mail. A white stone on the Moor marks the spot where it is thought he is buried. Legend has it that, if you run around his grave at midnight and call his name three times, his ghost will pop out!

'Fairground Organ' - Bird Watching and Bird Song

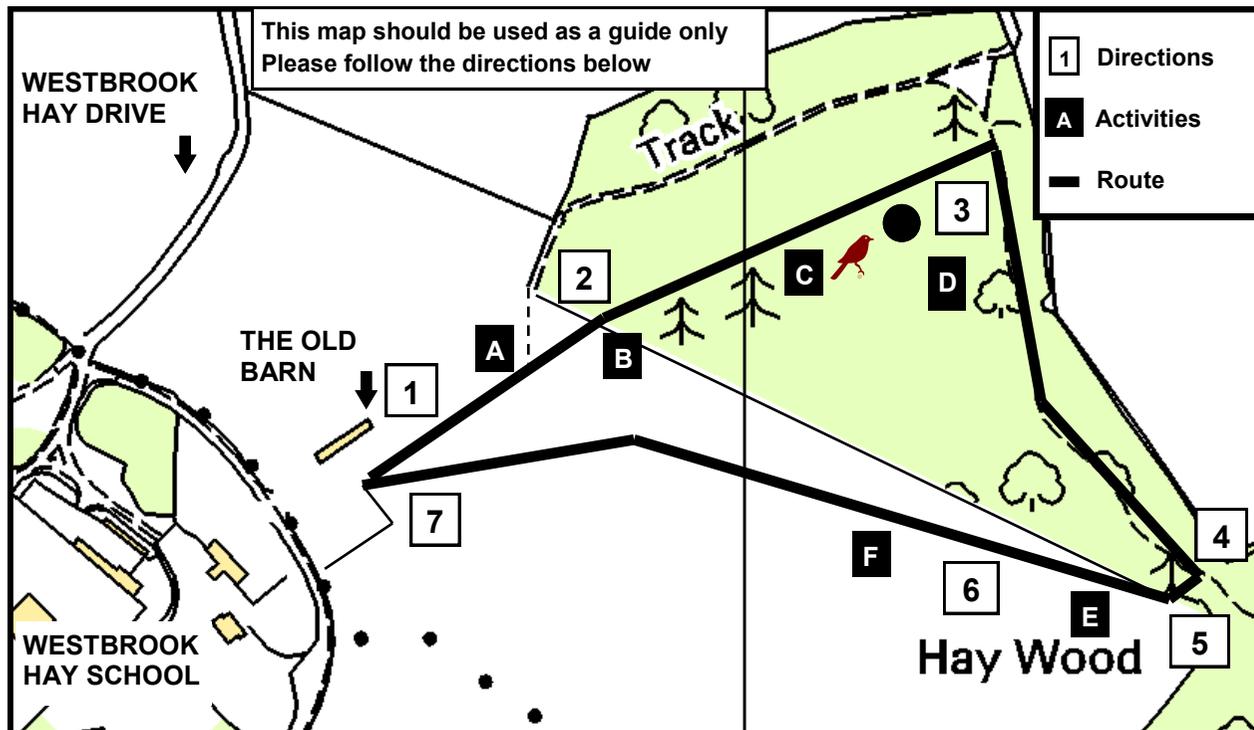
C

Watch though the wooden fence. The feeders are used by many different species of bird. Just as humans do, birds use their voices to communicate: their calls can warn of danger or scare off predators - very important for small birds living in dense woodland like this. Different calls even warn of whether the predator is on the ground or in the air. What bird calls can you make? Many birds also sing beautiful songs as a way of attracting a mate - the longer, louder and more complicated the song, the better the parent! Each bird species has its own special song pattern and some birds are able to mimic other songs or even sounds (including animal calls and telephones!) Some birds only sing during the breeding season in spring and summer whilst others, like the robin, use song all year round as a way of warning other birds off their territory.

'Log Flume' - Mini-beast Hunting and Tree Rings

D

Follow a narrow path off to the right to a woodland clearing with logs. A ride on the fairground log flume can leave you very wet but many of the mini-beasts living on these old logs prefer it damp. Hunt for these tiny animals in the cracks in the bark, in the leaf litter on the floor or underneath some of the smaller logs. (Adults only: turn logs over and roll back carefully, avoid any fungus please). How old were the trees when they were cut down? Count the tree rings, one for each year of growth - rather like the name in a stick of fairground rock.



Directions

From the Old Barn (1), proceed along the boardwalk and follow it into the wood (2). Enter the wood and continue along the boardwalk as it wends its way through the trees. To the right, you will pass a bird feeding station and, a little further along, a small woodland pond. Shortly afterwards, turn right onto the bridleway that crosses the boardwalk (3). *From this point on, the terrain may be subject to changing weather conditions and a flat, stable surface cannot be guaranteed. Please see the back page of this leaflet for an alternative route avoiding this bridleway.* Follow the bridleway through the woods until it crosses a second path at right angles (4). Turn right and pass through the kissing gate into the meadow beyond (5). Bearing right, walk uphill, keeping to the edge of the wood (6). After a time, you will see the Old Barn. Go through the black metal gate into the car park (7).

'Tunnel of Love' - Kissing Gate

E

A kissing gate is a clever way of letting people though a fence but keeping our cattle and sheep safely inside. Traditionally, the gate gets its name because the first person who goes through has to shut the gate on the second person, allowing them to demand a kiss as 'payment' for re-opening it! Another reason may be that the gate only lightly touches or 'kisses' both sides when it is worked; there is no need for a lock or latch to keep it closed.

'Candy Floss' - Seed Dispersal and Edible Plants

F

Walking through the field, keep your eyes open for 'clocks' - like little sticks of candy floss. These seed heads are made up of hundreds of tiny seeds, each with a 'parachute' that allows the wind to carry the seed far away. Some of these are dandelions, a useful food plant. The leaves and flowers can make salads, the flowers make dandelion wine and the roots were ground up for use as coffee substitute in the Second World War.