

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 trail most suitable for wheelchair and pram users. However, in dry weather, many other areas and routes may be accessible. Please contact us for more advice on alternative routes. Benches are situated at several points around the route.

Safety

When carrying out the activities suggested in this leaflet, please take great care. In particular, do not enter our pond dipping 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.
- Do not approach livestock.

For more information on
Hertfordshire's Year of Physical Activity visit:
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/health-in-herts/hertfordshire-lifestyle-and-legacy-partnership/hertfordshire-year-of-physical-activity-2018.aspx>

Sporty Stroll

**Exercise your body and learn more
about the animals on
the Box Moor Trust estate with a
sport-themed stroll around our
woods and meadows**



**If you have enjoyed this walk,
why not visit the 'Informal Learning' section
of our website for more ideas on how to explore
the Box Moor Trust land?
You can also find details of our varied programme
of family events for the 2018 summer holidays.
www.boxmoortrust.org.uk**



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Swimming Stars

Shortly after leaving the Old Barn, look for a feeding trough in the field to your right as you walk along the boardwalk. Can you see any water boatmen? One pair of this insect's six legs is very long, allowing them to move fast through the water using long strokes. It is how they get their name because they look like they are rowing. As they can't breathe underwater, they have a clever trick for taking plenty of air down. Air is trapped between the hairs on the outside of their bodies. If you look carefully, you might be able to spot the silvery bubbles.

Breathing correctly is very important in sport and it can also make us more alert or calm us down. Stand quietly and practice the '4-7-8' technique. Breathe in through your mouth for 4 counts, hold your breath for 7 and then breathe out through your mouth for 8 counts. Repeat this three more times. You will find this is a good way of making yourself calm and focused.

Clever Climbers

Have you tried a climbing wall or a tree-top assault course? Some birds are very good at climbing tree trunks. Woodpeckers have specially shaped feet so they can hold on whilst they search for insects in the tree bark or make their nest holes in the trunk. Another bird with a name that describes how it lives is the treecreeper: these small brown birds climb up the trunks of trees looking for insects. They can only walk up the trunks though; another bird, the nuthatch, can hop down head-first, the only British bird able to do this. The nuthatch's beak gives this bird its name: it wedges nuts into crevices in the bark and hammers them open with its sharp, hatchet-like bill. Stand quietly and look through the gaps in this fence at the bird feeders. What birds can you see? Remember to look on the tree trunks too.

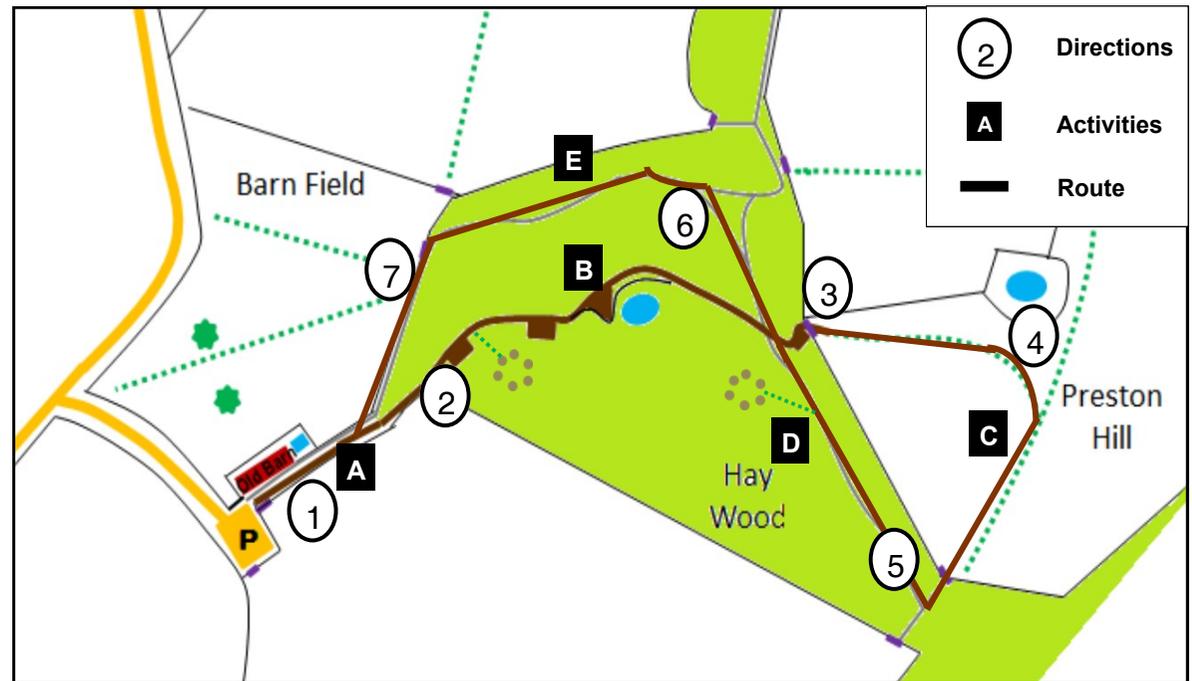
You need strong legs to be a good climber. Try this squatting exercise: stand with your arms out in front, level with your shoulders, and with your feet apart as wide as your shoulders. Do deep knee bends as if you're sitting down on an invisible chair. Make sure your knees don't extend past your toes. The more slowly you do this, the harder it is!

Long Jumpers

How far can you jump? If you listen in this meadow on a summer's day, you will probably hear the noise of grasshoppers. They make their sound by rubbing their legs and wings together as a way of communicating with each other but they also use their legs to jump astonishing distances - up to twenty times their adult body length. If a grasshopper was the same size as you, it would be able to jump 90 feet - that's the length of a basketball court! Grasshoppers are able to travel so far because their legs have special muscles that give them an explosive jump. Young grasshoppers that are not able to fly need to be able to jump away from predators and to find their food, whilst the adults use a powerful single jump to launch them up into the air for flight. *Find a flat area of grass and see how far you can jump. Bend your legs and use your arms to help project you forward. Now try it without your arms - you might find it more difficult! Remember to bend your knees when you land to cushion the impact on your legs.*

Great Gymnasts

The grey squirrels in Hay Wood are fantastic at gymnastics. They can leap high in the trees and always seem to land on their feet. They are also very clever at finding their way into our bird feeders! If you walk into the woodland clearing on your left, you can see our latest attempt to stop them eating all the birds' food. The plastic bottles



Directions

From the Old Barn (1), proceed along the boardwalk and follow it into the wood (2). The boardwalk wends its way through the trees. To the right, you will pass a bird feeding station and, a little further along, a woodland pond. Continue along the boardwalk to the end, where you will emerge from the wood into Preston Hill meadow (3). *From this point on, the terrain may be subject to changing weather conditions and a flat, stable surface cannot be guaranteed.* Follow the mown pathway to the corner of the pond (4). Turn right and continue to a gate on the far side of the field. Go through the kissing gate to the path beyond. Almost immediately, turn right onto a bridleway through the wood (5). Follow this through the wood, crossing over the wooden boardwalk, until you reach a triangle of paths (6). Take the path to the left which will bear left again to run parallel to the boardwalk. Continue along this path as it skirts the edge of the wood (7), eventually meeting up with the boardwalk once again. Keep on the path until you return to the Old Barn.

on the rope turn when the squirrel runs along so even these great gymnasts can't hold on. You might have seen our special 'squirrel-proof' bird feeders earlier in this walk.

Close to the bird feeding line is our woodland balancing beam. Can you walk all the way along to the end? If you wobble, try holding your arms out sideways to keep your balance.

Super Sprinters

How fast can you run? Usain Bolt is the fastest human on Earth but even he is a slowcoach compared to the UK's fastest land mammal. Bolt has reached a top speed of over 27 mph but the Brown Hare is able to run at 45 mph! Hares do not use burrows to hide away like rabbits; instead, they spend most of their time in small depressions in long grass called 'forms', coming out to feed in the evening. They rely on their powerful back legs and speed to escape predators.

Find a flat area of the path and try jogging on the spot. Start off slowly and get faster. Try to get your knees up as high as you can to give your legs muscles a really good workout.