

# Notes



1 The site of the Old Barn is now the Box Moor Trust's classroom and presently the centre of the education programme. The building was built as a cart shed for the Westbrook Hay estate some time in the 18th century. It has had a variety of uses since then, including as a corn store, pig housing and as a poultry shed. The central roof space is now a barn owl loft but was originally a dovecote.

2 From here there is a good view of the Bulbourne valley. The large tree in the field on the left is a Wellingtonia and evidence suggests it was planted in the 1890s as a feature of the parkland around the estate.

3 This is Hay Wood and is in part ancient, being the remnants of the old wooded field system where woods were grown around the field to protect the crops from harsh weather. Two of the sides still remain. The pine trees you see were planted over fifty years ago as a crop replacing yew, ash, beech and box trees that once populated the wood. The pines have been thinned to allow the native trees to develop.

4 To the right you will pass a small woodland pond that is dug into the boulder clay that covers the base chalk on top of the hill. This was deposited here at the end of the last ice age about 6000 years ago. The pond has recently been extended and is now a central part of the Trust's education programme, being used as a site for pond dipping. The wood is a haven for birds and treecreepers are common on the periphery. The bird feeding station attracts many species and you can stand and observe them without disturbing them.

5 This is Preston Hill and the hedge on the left is a new one planted on the line of the old field boundary that divided up what were known as Upper and Lower Wanslets. Ahead, you will have a panoramic view of Sheethanger Common to the fields beyond.

6 Looking left there is large pond, which was dug and filled in 1997 to create a wet area on the otherwise dry

landscape at Westbrook Hay. At one time, ponds on top of chalkland hills were common and important features in this area, but they have nearly all disappeared.

7 This larger field is named Bovingdon Reach and was once parkland for the Ryder estate. The flinty soil made it a poor producer of crops, but since 1990 the area has been left to grow naturally and produces a wide variety of flowers, including common spotted orchids. Skylarks can be seen in the sky above this field, soaring high in the summers months and nesting on the ground in the spring.

8 Beyond the bridleway are the grounds of an independent school, Westbrook Hay School. This used to be the home of the Ryder family from the 17th century until the Second World War. After the war, the property became the headquarters of the New Town Development Corporation.



**Warning: Sheep and cattle can be curious about people, which can feel intimidating. Please refrain from feeding or stroking the livestock as this can encourage their interest.**



The Box Moor Trust Centre, London Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 2RE  
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Meeting space available for hire – see website for further details

[www.boxmoortrust.org.uk](http://www.boxmoortrust.org.uk)

Your land, your heritage,  
your future

The  
Box Moor  
Trust



A short easy walk for people with impaired or limited mobility

Orange Walk

(follow the ORANGE markers)

Length: approx 1¼ km (¾ mile)

Time: approx 30 minutes

# Orange Walk

Please note: distances are approximate

From the A4251 (London Road), turn into Westbrook Hay drive and follow it all the way to the top of the hill, then take the first track on the left, which will lead you into the car park next to the Old Barn.

From the Old Barn ①, proceed along the boardwalk and follow it down the track ②. Enter the wood and continue along the boardwalk as it wends its way through the trees.

On your left ③ can be seen a ditch and remnants of a laid hornbeam hedge, denoting the boundary of an old protected field. The original ancient woodland is to the left of the boundary.

To the right you will pass a bird feeding station and, a little further along, a small woodland pond ④.

Continue along the boardwalk to the end, where you will emerge from the wood ⑤. **From this point on, the terrain may be subject to changing weather conditions and a flat, stable surface cannot be guaranteed at all times of the year.**

Follow the mown pathway to the corner of the pond ⑥. Turn right and continue to a gate on the far side of the field. Go through the gate and follow the track through another gate into the next field ⑦. Proceed along the mown walkway, which goes slightly uphill ahead of you diagonally across the field. Head towards the middle of the field, using the small copse of trees ahead as a reference. Eventually you will reach a point where two paths cross. Turn right towards the field boundary and when you reach the fence, turn and pause for a moment to take in the view behind you. Box Lane runs through the valley towards Bovingdon, and the wood on the hillside beyond is Bury Wood.

At the fence ⑧, either turn right and follow the boundary of the field, or go through the gate and turn right along the bridleway. Either way will bring you back to your starting point at the Old Barn.

## Access

The boardwalk is fully accessible and suitable for wheelchairs, pushchairs and mobility scooters. It is 367 metres long and ends where Hay Wood meets Preston Hill,



# Box Moor Trust Estate

This map should be used as a guide only. Please follow written instructions.

## Key

- Meadow
- Woodland
- ① See written information
- Mown Walk
- Permissive Bridleway
- Boardwalk
- Other Routes
- Pond
- P Car Park



at which point there is a broader area of boardwalk to facilitate ease of turning. 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 slightly uneven and susceptible to puddles and mud after rain. Although there are kissing gates at all field boundaries, occasionally some of the five bar gates may be locked to prevent straying of livestock, which may present access issues for mobility scooters and wheelchairs. If in doubt, please contact the office on 01442 253300 for clarification.

## Car Park Access

The car park will normally be closed during the hours of darkness. The Box Moor Trust reserves the right not to open the gates for reasons of maintenance or in an emergency.

Livestock occupy these fields throughout the year. Please take close notice of the signage at field gateways. Please keep your dogs under control, clear up after them and dispose of your litter responsibly. Try to keep your distance from livestock, particularly if you have impaired mobility.