

Standon Nr. Ware Walk 8:

Dowsett's Lane via Latchford and Plashes Wood.

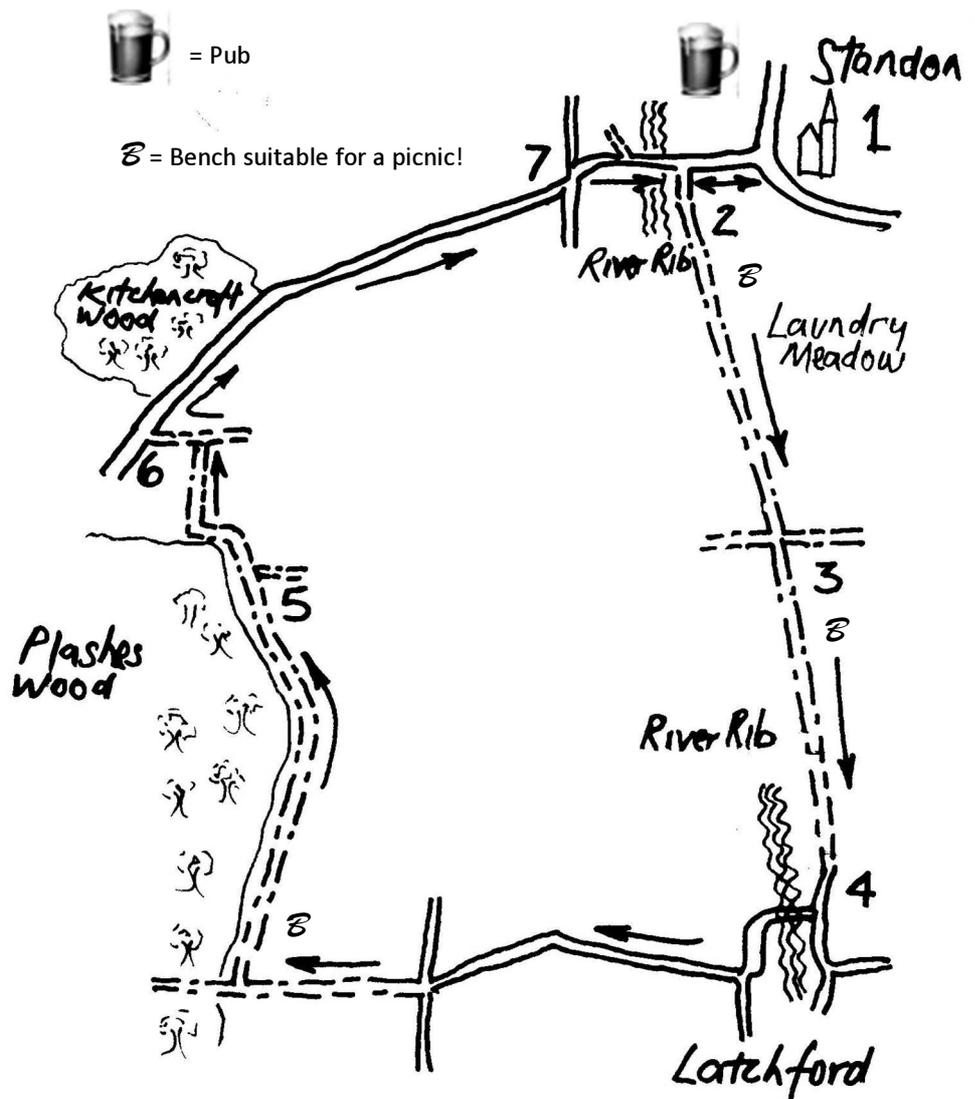
Plashes Wood is one of the last pieces of ancient woodland left in Hertfordshire with many different kinds of broad leaved trees and many species of flowers and grasses. Walking along the edge you will often see deer tracks (and if you are out early you might well see deer from the road – if you are out late you may see one of the four species of bat that feed in the woods).

Distance and time needed: 3½ miles, approximately 1¾ hours

Refreshments: The Bell (Pizzas & Pub food) 01920 739838

The Heron/China Garden (Chinese Food) 01920 821236

The Star (Pub food) 01920 823725



- 1** Starting at St. Mary's Church in Standon High Street, walk towards Knights Court. Turn right down Paper Mill Lane, go past the Pumping Station on your left, cross over the old railway line.
- 2** Enter the Laundry Meadows by the gate on your left (just before the River Rib ford). There is a bench on your left (ideal for a pic-nic), the path across the fields is a bridleway, and if you keep to the left-hand field boundary (close to the route of the old railway line), you will see a gate ahead of you. Pass through this gate and into the second field, where the bridleway roughly follows the route of the power line. Down to your right, on the other side of the river you will see Standon Lordship.
- 3** Exit the field through a gate, and, crossing straight over the bridleway which goes from Kitchencroft Wood to Much Hadham, continue uphill, in a southerly direction along the bridleway to Latchford, just before the top of the hill you will see a bench with wonderful views of Park Hills, probably named because it was part of the medieval deer park of Standon Lordship, and a good view of Plashes Wood and the river directly below you. You can often see a number of herons in the late winter/early spring near this section of the Rib. As you begin your descent towards Latchford you will pass through a metal gate and meet a further gate as you come down into the settlement.
- 4** Turn right and use the footway to pass over the ford and on to the lane, after 50 metres bear right, on the road, up the hill towards Plashes Wood, eventually reaching the junction with Barwick Lane. Cross over the road and carry on along the bridleway towards Plashes Wood. The bridleway carries on into the wood, but as you reach the entrance to the wood you should take the footpath on your right where there is a bench with a great view over the valley, and skirt around the eastern edge of the wood.

Halfway along on your right in the field are the remains of a ploughed out Neolithic or early Bronze Age round barrow, only visible as crop marks from the air.

Keep the trees close on your left-hand side until you reach the north-eastern corner of Plashes Wood. The path is reasonably well used and it is often possible to pick out the prints of deer, as well as those of man and dog.

5 Shortly after you bear to the left to follow the path along the northern boundary of Plashes Wood, you should see the footpath. Continue to your right (in a northerly direction) going straight across the field to join the bridleway running from Kitchencroft Wood to Much Hadham. The path is usually well marked when there is a crop on the ground, but it can be difficult to see during the winter months. Turn left, up the field towards Dowsett's Lane and Kitchencroft Wood. The soil can become very heavy and sticky following rain, so do wear walking boots or wellies if you have them. Once you reach the top of the hill, you should be able to see the footpath sign pointing down the field from Dowsett's Lane and the bridge over the ditch, and so you can correct your route if you have gone slightly off course.

6 You will emerge on Dowsett's Lane at the southern end of Kitchencroft Wood. There is a very good view of St. Edmund's College, across the A10, from here; and also back across the field you have just toiled up towards Latchford. Turn right, onto the lane, and walk back towards Standon.

There is usually a good display of bluebells in Kitchencroft Wood in the spring, but since there are no public rights of way through this wood, one must admire them from the road.

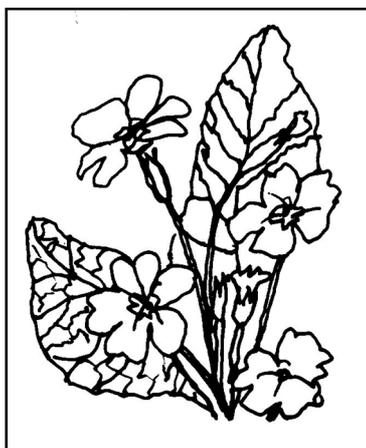
Dowsett's Lane will eventually meet Barwick Lane on a staggered cross-roads, the field opposite used to be allotments but is now returned to agriculture.

7 Turn left onto Barwick Lane and then immediately right to join Paper Mill Lane and go down the hill, crossing the river by the footbridge, until you emerge on the High Street by the Pudding Stone.

Paths in Standon Parish are clearly waymarked. If you come across any problem with missing waymarks, please contact the Parish Paths Partnership: john@walkinginengland.co.uk.

This leaflet has been produced by Standon Parish Council working as part of the Parish Paths Partnership, a programme funded by Hertfordshire County Council's Countryside Management Service (CMS). CMS helps communities across Hertfordshire to care for and enjoy the environment. www.hertslink.org/cms

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Primrose

Seen on most of the walks in this book in March/April

Next time you come across a clump of flowering Primroses, stop and have a closer look. Primroses (and indeed, also many other *Primula* species) are remarkable in that they have two different types of flowers which look superficially almost identical.

One type is called 'pin-eyed' and the other, 'thrum-eyed'. The two different types of flowers are produced on separate plants.