Fancy Free Walks *point your feet on a new path*

Bencroft Wood

Distance: 2½ km=1½ miles — easy walking

Region: Hertfordshire — Date written: 26-jun-2017

Author: Phegophilos — Last update: 18-may-2020

Refreshments: Brickendon after the walk

Map: Explorer 174 (Epping Forest) *but the map in this guide should suffice*

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

Public rights are restricted to printing, copying or distributing this document exactly as seen here, complete and without any cutting or editing. See *Principles* on main webpage.

Woodland trails, secret paths

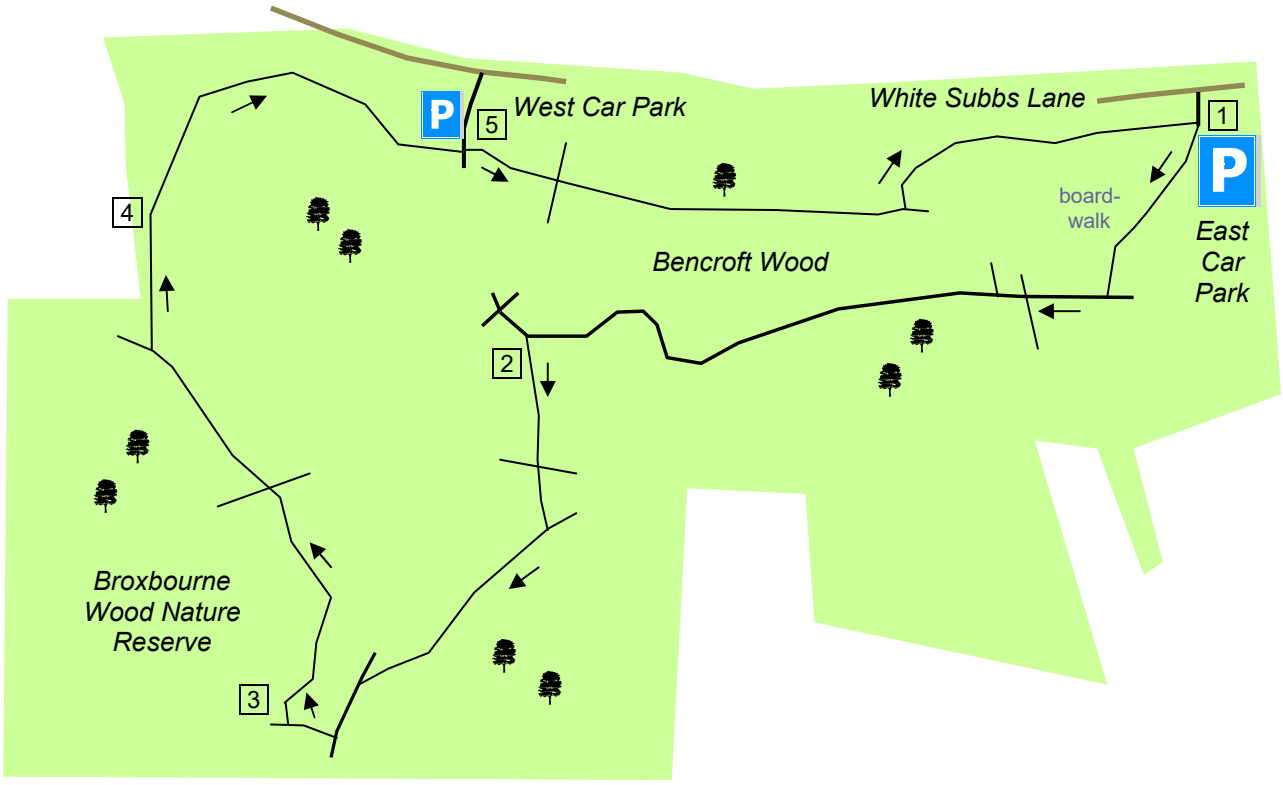
In Brief

Bencroft Wood is a big family attraction because of its well-made paths and boardwalks through wonderful woods which form part of the wider Broxbourne Woods Nature Reserve. The route given here is only a suggestion, designed to tempt you further into the wider woods beyond where there are more nature trails.

All the paths on this walk are clear, although one or two are little used, so there are no nettles and very little undergrowth to worry you. Any sensible walking shoes should be fine. This walk is perfect for your dog too.

The walk begins at the **Bencroft Wood East** car park off White Stubbs Lane, near **Brickendon**, Herts. The nearest postcode is **EN10 7QP**, w3w:hulk.decreased.jaws. If you are coming from the **east** (e.g. from Hoddesdon), the car park is on the **left**, about 300 yds after a junction on the left (West End Road). If coming from the **west** (e.g. from Epping Green), the car park is on the **right**, about 300 yds after a junction on the left (Pembridge Lane). Don't confuse this car park with the Bencroft Wood **West** car park. (You can also start there, as it's on the route, but the quieter east car park is much better for this walk because of the exhilarating start.) For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



1 Starting at the Bencroft Wood East car park, go to the notice board at the back and turn **right** past one of the "fat waymarkers" which you will see in several places along this walk. Your path goes down through bracken into woodland. Very shortly, you meet a really superb feature of this nature reserve: a descending boardwalk. At the end of the boardwalk, turn **right** at a T-junction on a wide shingly path beside another "fat waymarker". Follow this excellent wide path for 250m, ignoring all paths leading off, till you pass a bench seat. Your path now curves right and left as it descends and ascends. As the path bends right again, look to your left for a *permissive path*, provided by the Woodland Trust. (As a guide, this is 10m **before** a major crossing of paths and another "fat waymarker".) Turn **left** on this narrow path, down into attractive woodland.

2 In 100m, you arrive at a crossing path by a marker post with a black arrow [May 2020: lying broken on the ground]. Go straight over, still on a narrow path. In only 50m more, you meet another narrow crossing path. Turn **right** here. In 150m, you arrive at a junction with a very wide raised path which has a ditch on each side. This ancient trackway forms part of the Hertfordshire Way, a 312 km=194 mile circular walk. Go up a few steps to meet the trackway and turn **left** on it. You quickly descend to cross a stream bed (possibly dry in summer) by a long bridge.

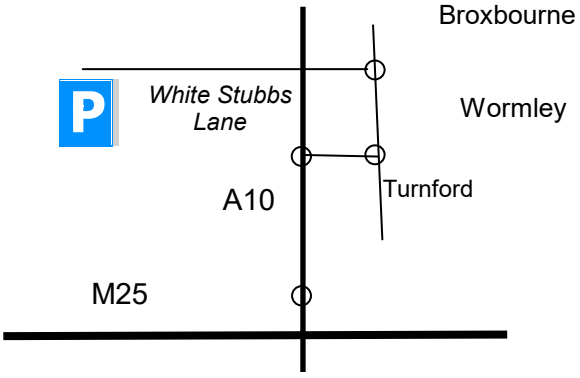
3 Turn immediately **right** and **right** again to cross another long bridge, almost reversing your direction. Now keep on dead straight on a narrow woodland path. (You may need to look out for bikers who speed along all the paths in this area.) Down on your right is the gully of the stream you just crossed. In 100m or so, your path goes straight over a wide forestry track. The path goes up through bracken and you can see a green meadow ahead. Just before you reach the meadow, fork **right**. This new path takes you over a ditch to run beside the meadow on your left.

4 After only 50m, your path suddenly veers right away from the meadow. It comes down to the stream gully. Cross the gully using a mud bridge and immediately veer **right** over another mud bridge. Your path now winds its way through woodland and curves right. You are walking parallel to the road, which is only 50m on your left, and you may hear traffic, giving you an audible cue as you head for the West Car Park. A rather bumpy up-and-down trail of about 150m finally takes you to the western car park.

5 Go straight across the car park to find a narrow hidden path on the other side. (This path is difficult to see at first and it may be hidden behind a parked car. As a guide, it is exactly **10m** to the *left* of a "fat marker post".) The path runs through tall rush grass and you may have doubts about this path until, after just 20m, you pass a marker post with a yellow arrow. You now meet a boardwalk which takes you to a crosspaths by a post with red/mauve bands. Go straight over. The path goes over a plank bridge and rises, passing another banded post. After a bank, the path winds through bracken and arrives at a "fat marker post" and a white-topped post with a deep hollow ahead. Turn **left** and almost immediately fork **right** to a bench seat. Veer **right** past another red/mauve post. Continue on this path, soon crossing a 4-plank bridge, with the road still audible on your left. Another 4-plank bridge finally leads to the Eastern Car Park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: White Stubbs Lane is easily accessible from the A10 trunk road and hence from the M25. One way is to leave the A10 **eastwards** at the exit for *Broxbourne* into Turnford. In just over 1 mile, at a roundabout, turn **left** on Bell Lane, marked *Broxbourne Woods* and (in brown) *Paradise Wildlife Park.* The road goes over the A10 and into woods. Follow the road for another 1¾ miles to the car park, as described on the header page.



*fancy **more** free walks?* www.fancyfreewalks.org