

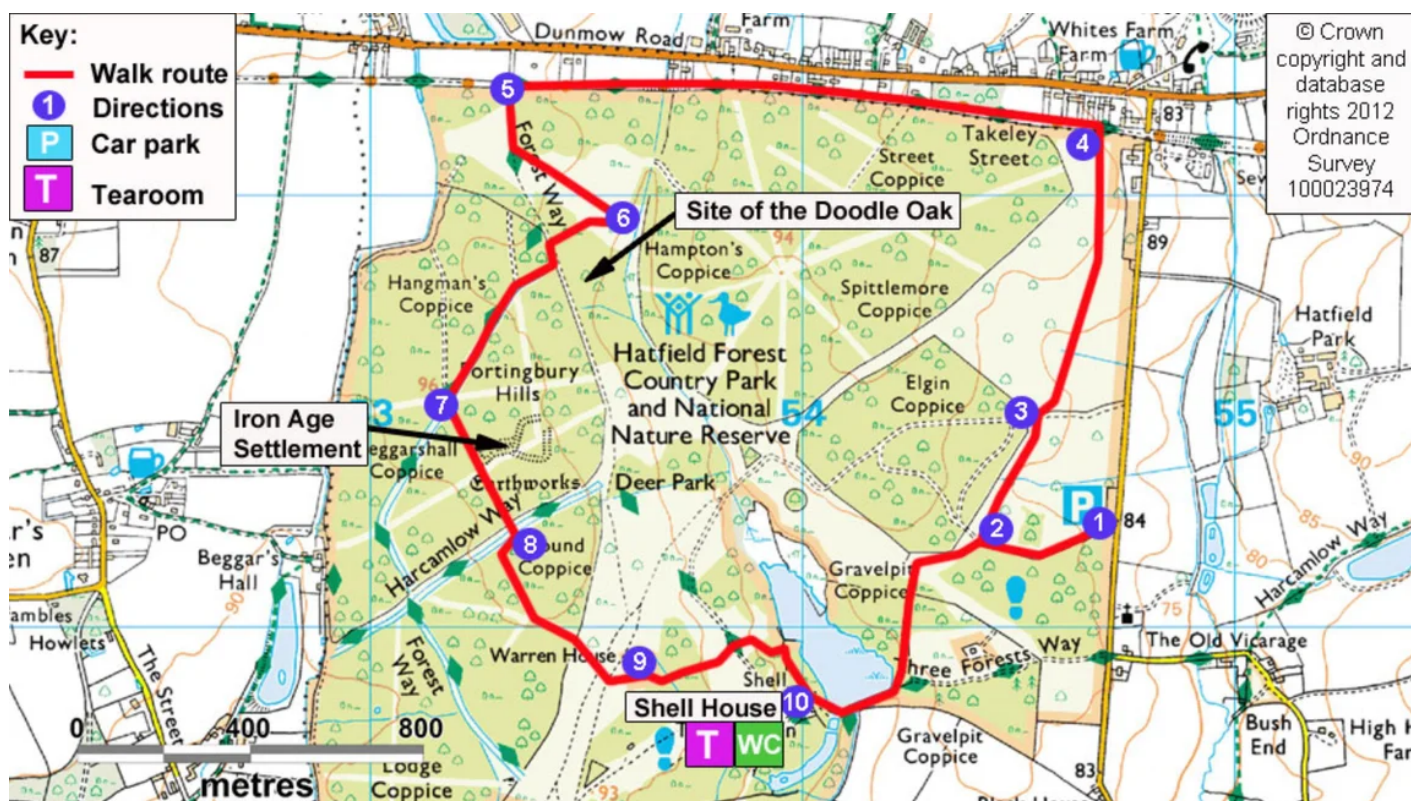
ESSEX, BEDFORDSHIRE & HERTFORDSHIRE

Hatfield Forest and Flitch Way walk

This circular family walk takes you deep into Hatfield Forest, a medieval hunting forest full of ancient trees, and around several points of interest in this national nature reserve.

! Trails status

The trails in the forest can become very muddy during winter, so this walk is best enjoyed from April to October. Some parts of the route may have to be closed, even in summer, to allow the ground to recover. If that's the case, we'll provide an alternative walk.



Information

Address: Hatfield Forest car park, Takeley, Bishop's Stortford, Essex, CM22 6NE

OS map: Landranger 167

Activity: Walking

Easy: Terrain is flat throughout. Paths can get muddy. For further details, please see section marked Terrain.

Dog friendly: Dogs are welcome on the walk but must be kept on leads near livestock, around the lake and wherever temporarily signed.

Full trail: Miles: 3.5 (km: 5.6)

Access: Challenging

Duration: 2 hours

Terrain

Paths can be muddy after wet weather so boots may be necessary.

Total steps: 10

Start point: Hatfield Forest car park, grid ref: TL547203

1. From the car park, head along the entrance road until reaching a boardwalk path to your left. Turn right opposite the boardwalk and head across the plain.
2. Continue straight ahead, keeping the line of trees close to you on your left. Eventually you'll reach the exit road from the forest. Cross this road (checking for any traffic) and continue on, heading slightly to the right.
3. Head across the plain towards a red-roofed building in the distance, going up the slope to the top of Takeley Hill and continuing straight on, keeping the building (Hatfield Forest Estate Office) on your right. Continue ahead, then exit Hatfield Forest through the metal gate and turn left onto the Flitch Way.
4. Head straight along the Flitch Way for around 1 mile (1.6km), with the boundary of Hatfield Forest on the left. Pass through three gates across the Flitch Way until reaching Elman's Green. Then stop at the third gate.
5. Turn left into Hatfield Forest at Elman's Green, and on to the Forest Way path. There's an information map on the left as you enter. Keep left of the open pasture, alongside the trees, then when you reach the first left opening, fork left off the Forest Way path. Go diagonally left across the pasture to the far side.
6. To your right, you can walk into the site of the Doodle Oak. Go back out the same way from the trees and turn left along the edge of the pasture and you'll meet the Forest Way path again. Turn left and immediately right (in effect crossing over the Forest Way

path) and follow along until the third opening/path on your left at a site known as Six Wantz Ways – where six paths meet.

7. Take this path and at the first crossroads you can stop and explore the Portingbury Hills Iron Age settlement on your left, at Beggar's Hall coppice. Rejoin the path and go straight over the crossroads to a T-junction at a wide ride (there's a yellow walk sign with number 13 on a post at this junction).
8. Turn right, then almost immediately left (crossing over the ride) on to a smaller path to Round Coppice, bearing left at a crossroads. When you arrive at the open plain, walk straight across to the gravel track at the far side. Cattle and deer often graze in this area.
9. At the gravel track, turn left and follow it round to the right past Warren Cottage, then round to the left and up to a road junction. Cross over the road and straight over the grass to a post with a yellow marker on it. Turn right and cross over a small bridge. Pass through a hawthorn coppice and bear left to a boundary gate of the lake area. Go through the gate, walking alongside the lake on your left, then after a large old oak tree on your right you can take a break ahead of you at the Shell House and Discovery Room. There are toilets, a shop and café at this point. Please keep dogs on leads in this area.
10. Coming out from Shell House, turn right onto the path and then follow it left over the dam, with views of the lake on your left. Join a boardwalk path and stay on this through the woods, going through one gate then across a plain until the end, when it comes to a road. At the end of the boardwalk path, turn right and follow the road back to the car park. Many of the pollarded hornbeam trees in this area are more than 400 years old.

End point: Hatfield Forest car park, grid ref: TL547203
