

## Islington U3A Longer Walks Group

<b>Walk Title</b>	Harpenden to St Albans	<b>Walk No.</b>	293
<b>Area</b>	Commuter belt of Hertfordshire	<b>Type</b>	Linear
<b>Date</b>	Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2020		
<b>Distance</b>	10 miles. Maybe slightly less; my phone only recorded 9.5 miles.		
<b>Timing</b>	4.5 hours walking time + travel + lunch stop. Allow 7 hours in total. Therefore, expect to be back in Islington by 4,30/5 pm		
<b>Meeting up &amp; travel</b>	<p>Meet at St Pancras station at 9.40 to catch the 9:51 Thameslink train from St Pancras to Harpenden – journey time 30 mins. We will meet at the ticket barrier to the Thameslink platforms A &amp; B – please wait for us to gather before going through the ticket barrier. Freedom Pass is valid to Elstree and Boreham Wood.</p> <p>We will be returning from St Albans. I suggest you buy an off-peak day return ticket Elstree and Boreham Wood/Harpenden. This train can also be caught at West Hampstead. On sign up please indicate if meeting us other than at H&amp;I. The trains from St Albans to London are very regular so it is unlikely we will have a wait longer than 15 mins whatever time we get to the station.</p>		
<b>Route</b>	<p>The walk links a wealthy Hertfordshire town with an historic Hertfordshire city, and is green and pleasant throughout. There is attractive common land, a forest with countryside views, a country estate, and finally a pleasant approach to St Albans which takes you through the old town past sites of historical interest. This part of the walk through St Albans is about 1 mile in length.</p> <p>The morning highlight is the brand-new forest called Heartwood. The afternoon takes you through the pretty Childwickbury country estate, with views also out to another estate, Gorehambury. A further highlight is then the city of St Albans, where you pass old pubs, quaint houses, the Roman museum and remains, the Abbey and its gate, and finally the clock tower and museum of St Albans.</p> <p>It should be noted that about 40% of the walk is on gravel or tarmac paths.</p>		
<b>Lunch</b>	<p>There will an early stop for lunch at Sandridge village – only 4.5 miles into the walk. Probably at the Rose &amp; Crown which has a covered outside seating area. Regrettably there are no other stopping points until we get to the outskirts of St Albans after about 8 miles. On sign up please indicate if you will be bringing a picnic lunch. There are many good tea/coffee shops in St Albans which we can take advantage off if the group decides.</p>		
<b>Dropping out</b>	A taxi can be taken from Sandridge to St Albans or Harpenden.		
<b>Suitability</b>	<p>We will endeavour to maintain social distancing.</p> <p>Suitable for any reasonably fit regular walker. There are no particular difficulties.</p> <p>Terrain: Undulating countryside</p> <p>Possible obstacles: None</p> <p>Comfortable waterproof walking shoes/ boots or if dry trainers. Waterproof jacket. Check weather forecast for temperature and likelihood of rain. Wear, or carry, an extra layer.</p>		

<b>Facilities</b>	There are toilets at Harpenden Station, the lunch time pub and St Albans Station.
<b>Walk source</b>	Saturday Walkers Club
<b>Map &amp; other references</b>	OS Explorer 182 Links: <a href="https://www.walkingclub.org.uk/walk/harpenden-to-st-albans">https://www.walkingclub.org.uk/walk/harpenden-to-st-albans</a>
<b>Leader &amp; contact details</b>	<u>Walk Leader:</u> Patrick Swaffer Phone: 07771 956190 (leave message if necessary) e-mail: <a href="mailto:patrick@pljswaffer.co.uk">patrick@pljswaffer.co.uk</a>
<b>Interesting facts</b>	<p><b>Heartwood Forest</b> is a new forest created by the Woodland Trust. Until 2009 the land it now covers – some 858 acres – was arable farmland. The Trust planted hundreds of thousands of trees to create “the largest new, continuous native woodland in England”.</p> <p><b>St Leonard's Church, Sandridge</b> is a 900 year old Norman Church, with only a few of its original features remaining. The Church was substantially rebuilt in 1886 to give its present appearance.</p> <p><b>St Albans</b> is a city steeped in history. It was the first major town on the old Roman Road of Watling Street for travellers heading north. The city was named after <b>Alban</b>, the first British Saint, who was martyred by the Romans in the third century for refusing to renounce his Christian faith.</p> <p><b>St Albans Abbey</b> and its monastic buildings was completed in 1088 with bricks from the Roman town (dismantled because it had become a hiding place for robber gangs). In 1381 its <b>Great Gateway</b> was besieged during the Peasants’ Revolt; it was later used to imprison the rioters. In 1455, during the War of the Roses, <b>Henry V1</b> was wounded in the neck by an arrow and took refuge in the Abbey, while drunken Yorkists ransacked the town. The Abbey, now a Cathedral, is open daily until 5.45 pm.</p>