

Islington U3A Longer Walks Group

Walk Title	Harpenden to St Albans	Walk No.	339
Area	Hertfordshire	Type	Linear
Date	Thursday 2 December 2021		
Distance	10.9 m/17.6km.		
Timing	4.5 hours walking time + travel + lunch stop. Allow 7 hours in total.		
Meeting up & travel	<p>Meet at St Pancrass station at 9.30 to catch the Thameslink at 9:43 (9.48 Kentish Town, 9.52 West Hampstead rail station) train to Harpenden (dir. Bedford) – journey time 44 mins. We will meet at the Thameslink ticket barrier. Frequent trains back from St Albans City station to Euston (20 min).</p> <p>Ticket to buy: With railcard: off-peak day return to Harpenden £10.45 With Freedom Pass: off-peak day return Elstree and Boreham Wood to Harpenden £7.70</p>		
Route	<p>We will walk along Harpenden Common, in Heartwood forest, where we hope to catch the last of the colours, in a country estate, Childwickbury, before finally arriving at St Albans where there will be two highlights: lashings of tea and cake in the cathedral's café before 4pm and/or Evening Song at 5pm. It depends on your taste which was one is the highlight for you. The walk back to St Albans City Station through the city is c. 10/15 max minutes.</p>		
Lunch	<p>In The Rose & Crown pub in Sandridge after about 90 minutes (hence the slow train so as not to arrive too early).</p>		
Shortcuts and dropping out	<p>Shortcut: take a direct route from Harpenden golf course to the Hertfordshire Way, a mile west of Sandridge Village, see last map below; however you would miss lunch and Heartwood Forest plus our discussion whether this is a successful new plantation or not (see below). If that is your plan, print out map below, bring your own, or download the walking instructions from SWC website walk 351.</p> <p>Another option is to take a taxi from lunch pub to St Albans or Harpenden.</p>		
Suitability	<p>Suitable for any reasonably fit regular walker. There are no particular difficulties. Terrain: Undulating countryside Possible obstacles: None 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>		
Facilities	<p>There are toilets at Harpenden Station, the lunch time pub and St Albans Station.</p>		
Walk source	<p>Saturday Walkers Club website walk no 351</p>		
Map	<p>OS Explorer 182</p>		
Leader & contact details	<p>Walk Leader: Pia Rainey Phone: 07775 782860 (WhatsApp or text) e-mail: piarainey@icloud.com</p>		
Interesting facts	<p>Heartwood Forest 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>		

Sometimes the planting by the Woodland Trust is considered too dense, not giving enough space to the trees to fully develop, and trees die as a result. We will have a close look ourselves in order to make a well-informed judgment there and then.

St Leonard's Church, Sandridge is a 900-year old Norman Church, substantially rebuilt in Victorian times (1886).

St Albans is steeped in history. It was the first major town on the old Roman Road going North and was originally known as **Verulamium**.

St Albans Abbey and its monastic buildings were completed in 1088 with bricks from the Roman town. In 1381 its **Great Gateway** was besieged during the Peasants' Revolt; it was later used to imprison the rioters. In 1455, during the War of the Roses, **Henry V1** 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.



