

STEVENAGE OUTER ORBITAL PATH

STOOP Walk 6. 9.8 miles. Featuring STOOP Six

This long ramble takes you through fields and woodland, countryside probably destined for development to the west of the new town, so you may see the new shape of Stevenage emerging as you walk. The Strathmore Arms welcomes walkers, if you need a break midway. It is only a few steps off your track. There are three stiles to climb on this walk. You can follow your route on OS Explorer Map 193.

Stevenage to Link Path 5:

Note: About twenty minutes easy walking

From Stevenage Bus Station: Follow the signs 'To Trains' and go over the footbridge, on through the station, down the steps and on to the footpath straight ahead. Turn left and make your way, (with Hollywood Bowl, cinema and a gym on your right) to the exit at the far left hand corner of the Leisure Park and emerge on to Six Hills Way. Turn right here along the footpath/cycleway. Turn left under the first underpass, turn right at the next then right again then left back into Six Hills Way. Follow this to its end to head under the motorway.

You now join Link Path 5

Link Path 5: Stevenage (Norton Green) to Knebworth Park. 3.1 miles. Start Point: TL230234.

Turn left as you emerge from the motorway underpass and on up the footpath to meet the Woodmans Arms opposite. Cross the road and go back along it to a finger post indicating Public Footpath 64. Turn left here. Go on, through the kissing gate then on along the field edge to go through the next gate. With the fence on your left follow the path as it curves right round the edge of a field. At the corner follow the path, now on the left side of a wooded dell, to a waymarked post at the end of the hedge.

Follow the path indicated and on through the trees, following the waymarked route to go through the gate. At the corner of the field straight ahead, go through the gate at Pigeonswick Cottage (225228) and turn right. Go straight ahead along the broad, clearly waymarked track through the trees. After some ten minutes or so go through a kissing gate. Turn left. Follow the hedge around the corner of the field and continue around the field edge to a waymarked stile, left. Cross over this stile and walk towards the end of a brick outbuilding. Cross the stile here and walk on ahead through the Burleigh Farm (22217) and out through the farm gate.

Follow the track ahead across the field and over another stile. Continue on the clear path across the field and on through the wood, following the waymarks along the winding path ahead, to the tall metal gate into the Deer Park. Go through the gate, cross the dam and follow the fence up to a post on the brow of the hill. Turn right here. You now follow a series of marker posts, ahead of you to start with, then gradually diagonally right downhill. Soon, with the gate leading out of the park in sight, you meet a free standing waymark post (221209). This marks the end of Link Path 5.

You now join STOOP.

STOOP Six: Knebworth Park to Langley Lane. 3.6 miles.

Go through the tall gate to the road – B656 Hitchin to Codicote (219209) Cross carefully and continue into the wood, following the track. Just before the track bends to the right, take the fork right towards a waymark post and follow the waymarks through the wood to the road (212210). Turn right here and walk along the road for just over half a mile. Go past the Easthall Farmhouse and bear left. Immediately past the green barn, look for a finger post in the hedge, left (202219). Following its direction, go up through the hedge, across the yard and out through the gate, noting the waymark indicating the right of way across the field.

Note: The path here may not have been restored after ploughing, but the waymark does indicate your route. The right of way crosses the field in the direction shown, heading for the gap in the line of trees. At this point it meets up with your objective – a clear, tall waymark post.

Turn right here on to the track on the other side of the trees and follow it into Reynold's Wood ahead. Follow the track through the wood and down to the road - B651 (192217) Turn left on to the road and immediately look for the footpath sign on the right. Take this footpath through the gate and up the hill to join a metalled track. Turn right, downhill again, and follow the track around, with the tall hedge on your left. Continue up this track which leads you to All Saints church at St. Paul's Walden (192223).

Note: There is a diversion possible here and a chance to shorten the walk. Turn right to reach the Strathmore Arms. At the time of writing the 304 bus runs from here to Hitchin about every two hours.

Walk on through the churchyard. Turn left on to the road and shortly after, turn right, on to a footpath. This leads back to the B651 (197227). Turn left *and with very great care* follow the road round a dangerous bend, past the gated entrance of Stagenhoe on your left. Turn right on to a footpath into the wood and continue through the wood in the same direction, walking parallel to the edge of Hitch Wood across a large field to the road, Langley Lane (199234). At this point you leave STOOP to head back to Stevenage on the next Link Path.

Link Path 6: Langley Lane to Stevenage (Bessemer Drive). 3.1 miles.

Turn right. Continue along the road for half a mile or so to a T-Junction. Turn left. After 100 yards, the road turns right (205229), but you go straight on to a wide track. Continue for half a mile downhill to the main road (B656). Turn right and walk alongside this busy road for about 100 yards. Turn left to go through the farmyard (now a junk yard). Bearing slightly to the right to skirt round old sheds, take the clear path (a bridleway) with the wire fence on your left. Continue downhill, crossing over a footbridge. The path goes uphill and joins a track. Continue straight on for about ten minutes now towards the motorway, where the track turns right and goes more steeply downhill. Turn left under the motorway (226238). This marks the end of Link Path 6.

To Stevenage Bus Station: (About twenty minutes easy walking).

Follow Bessemer Drive ahead through the industrial area to meet Gunnels Wood Road. Turn right to the underpass to go under the road, up the steps and follow Argyle Way straight on to its end. Turn right to reach the ramp up to the Railway Station, walk up and through the booking area, across the footbridge and back to the bus station for the journey home.