

Flamstead to Hemel Hempstead

CCA 12

Start	The Three Blackbirds, Flamstead — AL3 8BS
Finish	Hemel Hempstead railway station — HP3 9BQ
Distance	13.17km
Duration	2 hours 54 minutes
Ascent	165m
Access	Bus at start of section; train and bus at end of section
Facilities	Pubs and shop at start and end of section

12.1	Flamstead, The Three Blackbirds	0m
12.2	S on Trowley Hill Rd for 110m; W on enclosed path; ahead on path to Pietley Hill; L for 70m; R on path to Wood End Rd; R as far as wood on L.	1640m
12.3	Before rd bend, R on path; alongside wood for 120m; L on path through wood; ahead across field; L on path to rd; L for 110m.	1470m
12.4	R on path alongside wood, then bear L to far L corner; L on lane to cross rd.	1870m
12.5	Ahead on driveway, L; half-R to track; R to pass to R of fm.	1760m
12.6	Leave wood beyond ride crossing; descend on path trending L; through gate ahead; ascend; R on path; diag L to fence; downhill; through gate and diag down next field; through gate and descend to rd at Water End.	1220m
12.7	R; L between houses; cross fb; pass pond on L; L; L to Nettleden Rd; R; L to bench; ascend R through wood; ahead at crosspath to top; across field to LH tree; bear L to keep hedge on R; on to Potten End Hill.	1800m
12.8	R on rd for 120m; L on path to bldgs; pole avenue to reach driveway; R to rd; R for 20m then L on path; dog-leg L and R to reach rd; R for 150m.	1640m
12.9	L on lane; cross rd (Long Chaulden); ahead to crosspath; ahead, then next path on R to Northridge Way..	1740m
12.10	R; third R on Chaulden Lane; L onto Old Fishery Lane; over canal,, under rly and by-pass; L to London Rd; L on L pvt to rbt cross to stn.	1030m



*The Three Blackbirds,
Flamstead (above)
Path to Wood End Lane
(below)*



12.1 This section begins at the main junction in the centre of Flamstead, at the Three Blackbirds pub.

In this section, the ground underfoot is a mix of paths, lanes and hard tracks: the paths may well be muddy after rain, especially across (and sometimes moderately steeply up) ploughed fields. The stony ground adds to the evidence which points to walking boots as the preferred footwear in all weathers.

There are bus stops here with services from St Albans and Dunstable (34) and from Luton and Hemel Hempstead (46). Each

of the two routes has an hourly service on Mondays to Saturdays, but no Sunday service. Note that the Saturday times differ on the clock-face from those on Mondays to Fridays.

12.2 From the Three Blackbirds, take Trowley Hill Road southwards for 110m, where a path emerges from the churchyard on the left. This path is the Chiltern Way, and continues with our route along the enclosed path on the right.

If you have completed the previous section and are not finishing the day's walk at Flamstead, turn left onto the enclosed lane: it will be just beyond Vicarage Gardens.

Take the enclosed path on the right, and follow it out onto open countryside. The path keeps straight ahead to Pietley Hill. Turn left onto the road for 70m, then turn right onto a clear path which dips into Trowley Bottom, then climbs to reach Wood End Lane.

Turn right along Wood End Lane, and follow it for about 450m, by which point there will be some woodland on the left.

12.3 Take a path to the right, aiming for some woodland. When you reach the wood, keep it to your left for about 120m, then take a path on the left through the wood. Right at the end of the wood, the path bends right to exit onto a field. Cross the field, and turn left onto an enclosed path. This path passes Little Woodend Cottages, presenting the walker with a profusion of barely necessary signage, and continues along the farm track to a road, and follow it for 110m to the far end of the woodland on your right.



The Golden Parsonage

12.4 At the end of the woodland, turn right onto a path which begins by bordering the wood on the right, then bears left to reach a gate at the far left-hand corner of the field. Take the lane to the left: it soon curls to the right (do not take the footpath straight ahead on the bend).

Turn right and follow the lane out to the road at Gaddesden Row school.

12.5 Cross the road, and follow the driveway of The Lane House almost as far as a gate, then take the footpath on the left, with a hedge on your right, to the corner of the field. Turn right to reach a field, and bear slightly left to cross it diagonally to reach a dusty (or muddy) track.

The red-brick house on the left is the Golden Parsonage, owned for centuries by the Halsey family, and their home today.

Take the track to your right, and follow it for about 750m. Where the track bends slightly left, carry on straight ahead on a path which by-passes the farmyard of the Gaddesden Estate's Home Farm. About 70m into this woodland path, there is an item of luxury (in dry weather particularly) for the weary walker.

On the right of the path, there is a vary convenient tree-trunk at exactly the right height to use as a bench — and what is more, it is cushioned with a soft layer of moss.

12.6 Continue along the path, crossing a ride just before coming out of the woodland onto a field. Descend on a path which trends left to reach a gate at the bottom, close to the left-hand corner.

Ascend the right-hand side of the next field, and take a gate on the right. The path begins straight ahead, but soon trend left, passing a lone tree on the right before making for a gate in the fence over on your left.



Gaddesden Place

The imposing building up to your left is Gaddesden Place, which was built for the Halsey family to replace the Golden Parsonage as their residence. Fortunately, the family retained ownership of the Golden Parsonage, and after the Second World War, Gaddesden Place was sold and the family returned to their former dwelling. Gaddesden Place is now a corporate headquarters.

Go through the gate, and continue diagonally down the next field to a gate at the bottom. Go through

this gate, and continue straight downhill to reach the road at a pair of cottages which are much more modern than the rest of the buildings which line the road nearby.

Be very careful on entering the roadway: there is no refuge outside the gate, and there is a blind bend in both directions. To check for traffic, use your ears before using the gate, and in a party, go through the gate one at a time, closing it after each member of the party goes through. First one through should be responsible and nimble, and can then help orchestrate the road crossing of the rest of the party from the far pavement.

12.7 Turn right to follow the pavement for a few metres and take a path between houses on the left. Make for a wooden footbridge; cross over and continue ahead. Half-way up the field, turn left on a path which keeps below the edge of the wood on the right, trending to the right, then following a path to the left to reach Nettleden Road at a vehicle access point. Turn right along the road for 100m.

Gaddesden Place seen from the park bench below Heizden's Wood



Turn left to ascend a field to reach a welcome park bench at the top, with a grand view across the valley to Gaddesden Place.

Pass into Heizden's Wood, bearing right on a clear track. Continue ahead (that is, still climbing) where a footpath crosses the track.

At the top of the track, continue ahead across the field to the left-hand of two trees, then bear left to the end of a hedge. Turn left to keep the hedge on your right, and follow the path out onto Potten End Hill.



Looking back along the avenue of stakes on the path at Boxted Farm

12.8 Turn right along the road for 120m, then turn left onto a path which descends. At the bottom, make a miniature left-right adjustment to pass through a gate and ascend towards major power lines. Beyond the lines, take a gate into a field to the right of the entrance to Boxted Farm and its commercial units, the way indicated by pairs of stakes, between which you will pass.

If you take a look back along the avenue of stakes, you will have a final glimpse of Gaddesden Place to the right of the line of the path.

Exit from the field onto the driveway, and turn right. Take the driveway all the way out to Berkhamsted Road.

Turn right along the road for a few metres, then turn left on a path. This path takes a line which ensures that walkers are kept at a safe distance from the residents of Boxted House. Turn right along the road for 130m to reach a driveway on the left.

12.9 Turn left along the driveway, which soon becomes an enclosed lane, descending towards Hemel Hempstead.

The conservation of the lane separate from the houses which have been built up alongside is an excellent outcome for all concerned: it maintains the *rus in urbe* conceit for walkers almost all the way to the centre, and forms a linear quiet route for locals.

Descend, then, crossing a road (Long Chaulden) at a pedestrian refuge, and on ahead.

At a point where there is a gap to the right of forward, with a view towards an urban field and some houses ahead and to the right, and where a path goes off to the left, ignore these two and



Beginning the descent to Hemel Hempstead

continue ahead, still within the woodland, then take the next path on the right, leading out to parkland.

12.10 At the far end, take Northridge Way downhill to the right; just after the end of the housing on the right, turn right on Chaulden Lane, then immediately left on Old Fishery Lane. Cross canal, railway and by-pass, then take a path on the left to reach London Road near its entrance to the road and rail bridges.

If you are continuing past Hemel Hempstead, cross London Road and take the path adjacent to the by-pass. Note that there is **no access to the station** from this path.

Turn left to pass beneath the road and railway on the left-hand pavement. Cross at the roundabout for the station and buses.

There is a pub on the far side of the station entrance, and another (quieter?) one visible across the meadow, with a café nearby. The town centre lies over to the east, across the meadows.