

Notes

- 1 The site of the Old Barn is now the Box Moor Trust's classroom and presently the centre of the education programme. The building was built as a cart shed for the Westbrook Hay estate some time in the 18th century. It has had a variety of uses since then, including as a corn store, pig housing and as a poultry shed. The central roof space is now a barn owl loft but was originally a dovecote.
- 2 From here there is a good view of the Bulbourne valley. The large tree in the field on the left is a Wellingtonia and evidence suggests it was planted in the 1890s as a feature of the parkland around the estate.
- 3 This is Hay Wood and is in part ancient, being the remnants of the old wooded field system where woods were grown around the field to protect the crops from harsh weather. Two of the sides still remain. The pine trees you see were planted over fifty years ago as a crop replacing yew, ash, beech and box trees that once populated the wood. The pines are being thinned to allow the native trees to develop.
- 4 To the right you will pass a small woodland pond that is dug into the boulder clay that covers the base chalk on top of the hill. This was deposited here at the end of the last ice age about 6000 years ago. The pond has recently been extended and is now a central part of the Trust's education programme, being used as a site for pond dipping. The wood is a haven for birds and treecreepers are common on the periphery. The bird feeding station attracts many species and you can stand and observe them without disturbing them.
- 5 This is Preston Hill and the hedge on the left is a new one planted on the line of the old field boundary that divided up what were known as Upper and Lower Wanslets. Ahead, you will have a panoramic view of Sheethanger Common to the fields beyond.

- 6 Looking left there is a large pond, which was dug and filled in 1997 to create a wet area on the otherwise dry landscape at Westbrook Hay. At one time, ponds on top of chalkland hills were common and important features in this area, but they have nearly all disappeared.
- 7 This larger field is named Bovingdon Reach and was once parkland for the Ryder estate. The flinty soil made it a poor producer of crops, but since 1990 the area has been left to grow naturally and produces a wide variety of flowers, including common spotted orchids. Skylarks can be seen in the sky above this field, soaring high in the summer months and nesting on the ground in the spring.
- 8 Beyond the bridleway are the grounds of an independent school, Westbrook Hay School. This used to be the home of the Ryder family from the 17th century until the Second World War. After the war, the property became the headquarters of the New Town Development Corporation.



The Box Moor Trust Centre
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Registered Charity No 206142

Woods & Meadows of Westbrook Hay

The Box Moor Trust

A short easy walk for people with impaired mobility



Length : approx 1 1/4 km

Time : approx 30 minutes - 1 hour

(follow the **ORANGE** markers)

ORANGE WALK

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Orange Walk

From the A4251 (London Road), turn into Westbrook Hay drive and follow it all the way to the top of the hill, then take the second track on the left, which will lead you into the car park next to the Old Barn.

From the Old Barn ①, proceed along the boardwalk and follow it down the track ②. Enter the wood and continue along the boardwalk as it wends its way through the trees.

On your left ③ can be seen a ditch and remnants of a laid hornbeam hedge, denoting the boundary of an old protected field. The original ancient woodland is to the left of the boundary.

To the right you will pass a bird feeding station and, a little further along, a small woodland pond ④.

Continue along the boardwalk to the end, where you will emerge from the wood ⑤. **From this point on, the terrain may be subject to changing weather conditions and a flat, stable surface cannot be guaranteed at all times of the year.**

Follow the mown pathway across the field ⑥ until you come to a 'T' junction. Turn right and continue to a gate. Go through the gate and follow the track through another gate into the next field. Proceed along the mown walkway, which goes slightly uphill ahead of you across the field ⑦. Keep following the directional arrows, turning right towards the field boundary at a point where two walkways cross. When you reach the fence, pause for a moment to look at the view behind you. Box Lane runs through the valley towards Bovington, and the wood on the hillside beyond is Bury Wood.

At the fence ⑧, either turn right and follow the boundary of the field, or go through the gate and turn right along the bridleway. Either way will bring you back to your starting point at the Old Barn.

Mobility Scooter

A mobility scooter is available on loan from the Trust Centre for use on this walk. Please ring in advance to arrange. Tel: 01442 253300.

Box Moor Trust Estate



Users of Wheelchairs, Pushchairs or Mobility Scooters

The boardwalk is the main section of this walk suitable for wheelchair users. It is 367 metres long and ends where Hay Wood meets Preston Hill, at which point there is a broader area of boardwalk to facilitate ease of turning for wheelchairs and mobility scooters. The visitor will have to assess the suitability of the rest of the walk but this will depend on weather conditions, as some of the ground is uneven with puddles and mud after rain. There are also a few small sections of loose gravel that could cause difficulties for pushchair users. Benches are situated at several points around the route for your convenience.



Car Park Access

The car park will normally be open at weekends between the hours of 8 am to 9 pm (1st April to 31st October) and 8 am to 7 pm (1st November to 31st March). The Box Moor Trust reserves the right not to open the gates for reasons of maintenance or in an emergency. During the week, electronic keys for the gate can be borrowed from the Trust Centre on request during office hours.

