



Bengo Trails 14: Bengo's Twitchels

This trail highlights eight twitchels connecting sixteen Bengo streets between Watermill Lane and Port Vale. Twitchel is said to have been inherited from the Middle English *twychel*, an alteration of *twychen* from the Old English *twicen* (fork in the road).

It may have largely fallen out of everyday use, but, in urban settings, it was commonly used to refer to passageways or alleys between houses, fences, or hedges. Across England, alternative terms include *gennel*, *ginnel*, *jitty*, and *snicket*.

This trail was produced by the [Love Bengo Community Group](#).

Starts: Watermill Lane North, at the junction with Wadesmill Road, SG14 3HT

Finishes: Port Vale, at the junction with Port Hill, SG14 1PJ

Distance: 2.7m/4.4km

Conditions: Pavements and tarmac, uphill and downhill in parts

From Wadesmill Road, walk down Watermill Lane North and join Public Bridleway 14, on the left, signposted Rib Vale. The bridleway emerges into Watermill Lane.

Immediately after the 2nd Bengo Scout Hall on the right is the first twitchel on this trail. Turn right into this hedge and fence-lined twitchel which connects Watermill Lane with Glebe Road.



Turn left from twitchel 1 and walk along Glebe Road. Just before it merges into Revels Road (and just before the brick wall on the left) turn left into twitchel 2, which exits at the other end on the boundary of New Road and Ware Park Road.

This twitchel is one of the longer ones on the trail. It's a shortcut to [St. Leonard's Church](#), Hertford's oldest building, and on to [Hartham Common](#). Turn right from the twitchel onto New Road.

Cross to the other side and, with the cricket ground on your left, turn left into Boundary Drive.

The road bears round to the right and merges into twitchel 3, connecting Boundary Drive with Warren Terrace.

Walk along this short, fence-lined twitchel, with planting on the right, and turn right into Warren Terrace.



Turn left into New Road, cross over, and turn right into Parker Avenue, then left into Revels Road. Cross over Palmer Road into Grove Walk, ahead, which is slightly diagonally to the right. The Public Footpath 16 sign points towards the fourth twitchel on this trail.

This fence and hedge-lined twitchel, connecting Grove Walk with Bengeo Street, has three pairs of 19th century cottages on the right of the path. Their yellow and red brick construction is referenced in the [Hertford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan](#).

Turn left from the twitchel into Bengeo Street.

Continue along Bengeo Street, past Holy Trinity Church and Mansfield Gardens and turn left into Trinity Grove. Between the first and second house on the left is twitchel 5 - a short path leading to Mansfield Gardens. Holy Trinity Church is visible, on the right, as you walk along the twitchel.

There was once a school on the Mansfield Gardens site and this twitchel was used as a route to the school.

Exit the twitchel into the Mansfield Gardens car park. Straight ahead is a brick wall and a rear entrance to the grounds of Holy Trinity Church. Turn right through the entrance into the church garden, turn left after the bench, and, bearing left, follow the main, tree-lined path to the church gate onto Bengeo Street.





Turn left onto Bengeo Street, cross at the pedestrian lights, and turn right, heading north along Bengeo Street.

At the Public Footpath 90 sign (signposted to The Drive) – just before the tall curved brick wall, turn left into twitchel 6.

Eight trees line the right side of this twitchel. Duncombe Close is on the right and The Drive is straight ahead. It's understood that Public Footpath 73, at the far end of The Drive, once stretched as far as Bengeo Street. Turn left from the twitchel onto Duncombe Road.

Cross over Tower Street and turn left into Cross Road, then right onto Port Hill. Just before the Port Hill slopes, turn right into twitchel 7, signposted Public Footpath 85 to Farquhar Street.

The brick walls of the twitchel (and other brick walls opposite Byde Street) are referenced in the [Hertford Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan](#) as adding interest '*particularly to the footpath access*'. At the end of the twitchel, cross straight ahead into Byde Street.



Walk downhill along the right-hand side of Byde Street, crossing over Fanshawe Street and Wellington Street. At the very bottom of Byde Street, turn right onto the 8th and final twitchel on this trail.

This fence and ivy-lined twitchel (Public Footpath 89) has the former railway land on the left (which is designated as [Local Green Space](#) through the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#)), and a row of Victorian cottages on the right. Goods traffic continued along the former railway line until 1966. This twitchel, connecting Byde Street and Port Vale, is the longest of the eight twitchels on this trail.



Turn left from twitchel 8 into Port Vale.

The bridge abutment on the left is known as the Scooby-Doo Bridge. Various versions of Scooby-Doo have been chalked or painted on the brickwork. Sometimes they disappear, only to reappear again!

The version on the left was photographed in 2007. Scooby-Doo is commemorated in the [Bengeo Mosaic](#) as a memorable part of local history.

Continue to the end of Port Vale to the junction with Port Hill where this trail ends. Nearby refreshment options include [The Millstream](#) pub on Port Vale, and Nourish in Vale House, Cowbridge. Teas and coffees may also be available at [Courtyard Arts](#) on the corner of Port Vale and Beane River View.

Bengeo Trails 14: Bengeo's Twitchels

Map sourced through [Openstreetmap.org](#)

