



Bengo Trails 16: Waterford Heath Local Nature Reserve

This trail covers the Waterford Heath Nature Reserve. Reclaimed from former gravel workings, Waterford Heath is referenced in the [Bengo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#) as a designated Local Nature Reserve. It is one of the largest green spaces in Bengo and is divided by Vicarage Road into the South Heath and the North Heath.

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

Starts and ends: The Orchard, Bengo SG14 3HQ. If arriving by car, do not park in The Orchard; there is a layby with parking spaces further along Sacombe Road. Alternatively, there is a car park on Vicarage Lane, and the walk can start there instead.

Distance: 2.5m/4km

Conditions: Footpaths, tracks, and quiet roads. Some uneven surfaces which can be wet and muddy. Contains uphill and downhill sections as well as some steep steps.

Starting at The Orchard, go through the kissing gate into Great Mole Wood. Follow the path through the wood, bearing slightly to the right.



Just before reaching the gate posts, turn sharp left and follow the track downhill. (Do not follow Restricted Byway 09 or go through the gate to Waterford Heath opposite.)

At the bottom of the slope there is a waymarker post. Ignore the arrow pointing left and continue straight on along the path.

Shortly after, take the first left-hand path into a wooded glade. Continue to follow the path as it curves around to the right and down some steps.



Waterford Heath Local Nature Reserve is managed by [Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust](#). The site was originally a large sand and gravel quarry which was reclaimed to create a 35-hectare nature reserve. It now supports a wide variety of trees, including oak, ash, birch, willow, pine, and cherry. The reserve is home to many species of insects including the increasingly rare Grizzled Skipper butterfly, as well as birds such as Woodpeckers, Kestrels, and the ubiquitous Red-Tailed Kites. There are information boards dotted about the reserve giving details about the wildlife, flora, and history of the site.



Follow the path through the woods, climbing up several separate flights of steps until you emerge at a metal gate.

Go through the gate and turn left onto the path (ignoring the second metal gate opposite). This is Public Restricted Byway 09 which passes through the middle of the South Heath.

Follow the byway as it rises gently uphill. At the end of the path turn right through the kissing gate and follow the path through the woods noting the gnarled and ancient oak trees to your right.



Continue down a steep flight of steps until you emerge onto the floor of the South Heath. Turn left from the steps and follow the path around to the left passing a bench on the way.

Keep following the path, with the bank on your left, noting the interesting outcrops of gravel conglomerate (more commonly known as Hertfordshire Puddingstone) on the left. Continue following the path to the wooden five-bar gate ahead.



Pass through the smaller gate to the right-hand side and head directly across Vicarage Lane. Take care when crossing the road. (The car park is an alternative starting point for the walk.)

Keeping the car park to your right, bear left at the horse-hop (a barrier designed to prevent vehicle access) and follow the path downhill through the woods. Follow the path until it emerges by a bench looking out on the North Heath.



Follow the main paved track straight ahead across the heath. To your left, on a small mound, is an interesting sculpture called 'Breaking the Mould.'

Breaking the Mould is technically just outside the [Bengeo Neighbourhood Area Plan](#) boundary but is significant enough to warrant some comment. This is one of twenty-one identical pieces created by sculptor Andrew McKeown which are scattered throughout the country. They were installed as part of the Changing Places Project to transform derelict industrial land into parks and open spaces. The artwork signifies the rebirth of nature from industrial decline.

Continue following the paved track slightly uphill. About 50m before reaching the large gate, which opens on to Bulls Mill Lane, turn right and follow the path heading towards the pine trees on the side of the Heath.

Climb up the steep steps into the pine woods. At the top of the steps, follow the main path as it curves around to the right. Continue to follow the path through the pine woods. (Note that at the time of writing there is a fallen tree across the path, but it is easy to step over.)

Continue to follow the path passing a gate to your left which opens onto Sacombe Road. Go straight on with views over the North Heath to your right. Go past the bench and follow the path around to the right passing a small housing estate on your left.



Go through the horse-hop and turn left. Head for the wooden kissing gate on the opposite side of the road (taking care when crossing the road). Turn left through the kissing gate. Follow the path through the pines with Vicarage Lane on your left and looking over the South Heath on your right.



Keep following the path until you see a metal gate on your left opening onto Sacombe Road. Don't go through this gate. Instead turn right and go down a flight of steps. At the bottom of the steps turn left onto the path and follow it along the eastern edge of the South Heath.



At the top of the path there are a couple of benches where you can enjoy the view across the heath.

Continue up the slope until you come to the entrance of the heath. Go through the gate posts and head for the gate posts opposite.

Retrace your steps through Great Mole Wood until you reach The Orchard.

Route Map: Bengoe Trails 16 - Waterford Heath Local Nature Reserve
Map produced using openstreetmap.org

