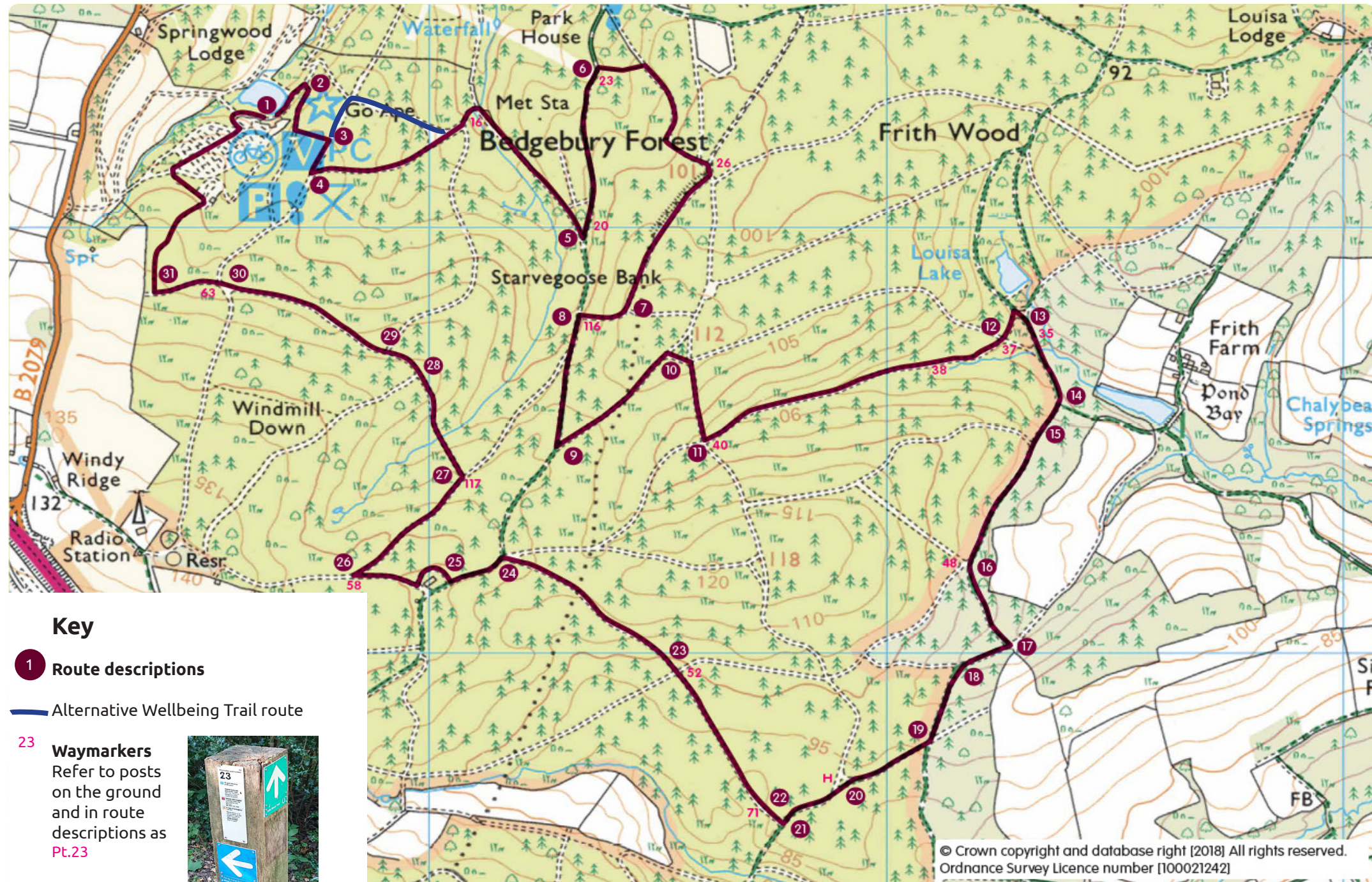
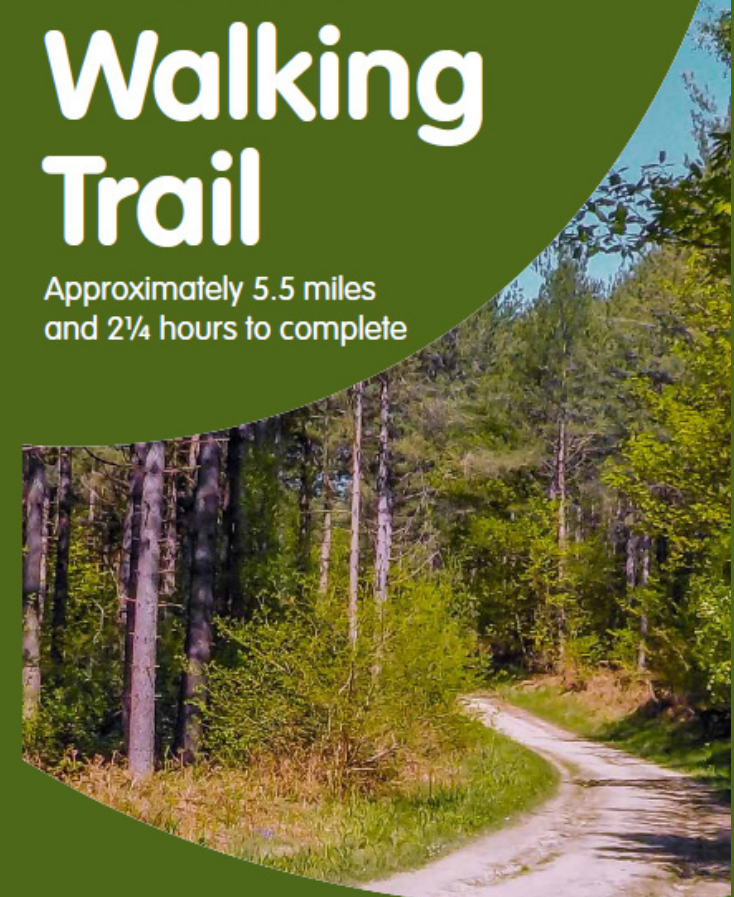


Forest Walking Trail

Approximately 5.5 miles
and 2¼ hours to complete



Route Descriptions - Forest Walking Trail

- 1 From the Information office, when facing the lake, turn right and shortly bear right uphill.
- 2 After 40m at the path junction turn sharp right and head up the Cherry Tree Avenue. Once you are behind the Visitor Centre, turn up the little side track on the left, onto the grassy area. Take a moment to read the plaque on the back of the stone obelisk and enjoy the view over the lake and dwarf conifer planting around the Visitor Centre.
- 3 Continue through the rear of the grassland to reach a surfaced path. Turn right and go through the gate. (*For Wellbeing Trail turn left and next right grass track to start*)
- 4 Take the left fork, downhill to join the blue waymarked Family route. At the bottom of the hill ignore the track on the right at (Pt.16) pass an entrance gate to the pinetum to your left, and cross over a small stream at the corner. You are now heading uphill along the boundary between the pinetum on the left and the area of forest known as Starvegoose bank falling away to the right.

Starvegoose is a corruption of the old English Stanehtandenne / Starvden meaning stony pasture, indicating the stony road through the forest.

You may be able to see a small pond or boggy area in the stream. This is thought to be the remains of an old pond bay. Note also the tall conifers edging this section of track. They are Lawson cypresses, the remnants of the avenue known as Lady Mildred's Carriage Drive.

The Scots pines on the stream bank have been crossed felled, meaning every other row has been taken out to give the remaining trees room to grow. This also lets light on to the forest floor so is beneficial to wild flower and insects and opens up the view for us.
- 5 Passing the 2km runners marker post on your right, carry on to the junction and turn sharp left (Pt.20). There is a bench on your right. (To take a short-cut, go straight ahead at the junction to meet the trail at instruction No.8, after Pt.116). You now have sweet chestnut on your right and the lovely, heather heath area of the pinetum on your left.
- 6 At the next junction (Pt.23) turn right, up the hill. At the top, you emerge into a small clearing with trails leading in five directions (Pt.26). Take the first right path, the smallest grassy one. *This can be a bit muddy at the start but gets better further up the hill.*

- 7 At the top, turn right downhill and in a short distance turn left at the junction marked with the red cycle route Pt.116 – *take care, fast moving cyclists nearby.*
- 8 After about 50m, take the left fork, following the public bridleway – *beware, cyclists crossing* – head up hill passing a 10km run post on the right.
- 9 At the junction turn left. (To take a short-cut, turn right to meet the trail at description No.24 and turn right).
- 10 Take the first right turn then almost immediately go right again downhill. This track can get a bit churned up by horses in wet conditions.
- 11 At the cross roads, turn left at Pt.40. and head downhill. In spring this path is edged by bluebells and ferns. After rain listen for the sound of the stream on the right, near Pt.38, as it makes its way towards Louisa Lake.
- 12 At Pt.37 go straight on then bear left for a bench with a view over the lake.

Louisa and Marshal lakes are both named for the Beresford family, the founders of the Pinetum. This lake would have been originally constructed as a hammer pond, a source of water power for the iron forge and furnace that were at Frith Farm in 1574.
- 13 After admiring the view, retrace your steps to Pt.35 and follow the main, wide track ahead and downhill. Soon you will see a green way marker for Frith wood horse trail J on your left before crossing over the stream.
- 14 Ignore the turning to the left part way up the hill and keep to the main path up hill.
- 15 At the top, take the left fork – bridleway Frith wood. After about 200m a view from the forest edge over farm land opens up to the left. There is a bench here where you can watch and listen for buzzards and hear the “clocking” of pheasants.
- 16 At the cross paths (Pt.48) go left on the Frith wood trail.
- 17 At the bottom of the slope go right at the T junction, still on the Frith wood trail. It can be muddy but the broad-leaf copse is full of bluebells in spring.
- 18 At the fingerpost bear left as the path curves. These tracks have the edges regularly cleared of scrub and saplings. If the trees are allowed to meet overhead, rain dripping from the branches erodes the paths. The bracken you see on both sides is very invasive but provides cover for

wild life and is a glorious sight in late autumn when the tawny foliage is turned to gold by sunbeams.

- 19 At the cross paths go right. You can hear the hum of traffic from the busy A21 in the background here. *Beware cycles crossing from left to right at “Deer Stalker”.*
- 20 At the T junction keep left. (Pt.H)
- 21 At the “Holby” T junction turn right. Beware cyclists coming out of the forest uphill towards you.
- 22 After a short distance take the right fork. (Pt.71) You often see cyclists weaving through the trees on your left. At the top of this path, look out for an enormous storm damaged beech tree.
- 23 Cross over the family trail (Pt.52) and continue to the top of the hill.

Look for the stone structure on the left. This is the remains of the loading ramp for timber from the sawmill, a little further down on the right. Two sawmills were set up to supply the war office in the 1st and 2nd world wars and later produced many hop poles for the Kentish farms. This mill is now fenced off as it is a protected bat roost. (Pipistrelle and Long-eared at the last survey)
- 25 By the bench, on the right there is a little path going round the back of the sawmill which allows a view of the structure. At the end of this path turn right back onto the family trail.
- 26 Take the next right turn, Frith wood green trail (Pt.58).
- 27 At the next junction turn left, yellow Play Trail. *Beware cycles crossing right to left at the bottom of the dip. (Pt.117)*
- 28 At the top of the slope carry straight on passing a large tree stump on the right.
- 29 At the T junction by the dragon fly slide, go straight ahead. You are now on the Play Trail.
- 30 At the end of this section ignore all tracks to right and left but keep straight on to and past Pt.63.
- 31 Bear right at the first bend and left at the bottom of the hill to come out at the zebra crossing. Dogs back on leads, please. Go over the crossing and walk on the pedestrian path through the pampas grass and monkey puzzle trees to arrive back at the gate to the Visitor Centre.

Bedgebury forest once rang to the sounds of iron manufacture. Today, though it is still a working forest for timber, you are more likely to hear the cries of joy or despair as cyclists tackle the slopes, the patter of dog paws & runners' feet and the clop of horses' hooves, all to the background of bird song.

We hope you enjoy this walking trail as it circles through the forest. It is about 5.5 miles, has 2 short-cuts and takes approximately 2¼ hours to complete the full route.

Please be respectful to other forest users and wildlife; take any litter away with you.

Visitor Information

For enquiries and Emergencies contact the Visitor Centre on 01580 879820 between 9.30am and 4pm. After hours emergency call 999.

Dogs Dogs with responsible owners are welcome at Bedgebury but must be under full control at all times. On leads in the car park, around the Visitor Centre, in the Pinetum and the play areas.

Bedgebury is open from 8am. For closing times visit our website

Diversion/hazard information

Please inform Visitor Services of any hazards/obstructions on this trail. 01580 879820. We value your feedback.

Find us on Facebook @bedgeburypinetum

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