



The Hundred Parishes

Walks between railway stations – number 18

Ware to Stansted Mountfitchet – 17.5 miles (28 kilometres)

This walk starts a mile outside the Hundred Parishes and passes through eight parishes within the Hundred Parishes. It benefits from heading generally northwards for the first half and then eastwards so, with luck, the sun and prevailing wind will be on your back all day! The route undulates gently and is mostly on reasonable surfaces. There are no stiles, but there are steps in at least one location. The route is mostly rural and “away from it all” but there are places to eat near the start and finish and along the way at Standon after 7 miles (The Star – 01920 823725) and at Gravesend after about 11 miles (Catherine Wheel - 01279 260930), but do check first that they will be open. If you plan to visit a church or somewhere to eat, please be prepared to either remove muddy boots or wear boot covers or plastic bags. Several stretches of this route follow the long-distance Harcamlow Way path.

While the walk description starts and finishes at stations, the route could be started from anywhere along the way, using trains to transfer from Stansted Mountfitchet to Ware.

Start: Ware Station (Ordnance Survey Grid Reference: TL359139 – Car park postcode SG12 9HS).

Finish: Stansted Mountfitchet Station (GR: TL514248 - Postcode: CM24 8XJ – nearby car park)

Public may use toilets at Stansted’s Kings Arms and Yeoman’s tea room.

The route can be traced on Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps 194 and 195. The route is plotted in four overlapping diagrams at the end of this description.

Note: The two stations are on separate branches of the West Anglia line. The line splits just north of Broxbourne station.

Tip: If travelling by train to and from the two stations, it is usually cheaper to buy a return ticket for the most distant station rather than two single tickets.

Tip: If travelling by car, it is suggested that you park at the finish and catch the train to the start, thereby avoiding the possible pressure to finish the walk at a certain time.

Leave Ware Station by the single exit. Turn left and at the main road turn right, heading away from the level crossing. When safe, cross to the pavement on the left, passing a parade of shops.

Pass over the River Lea and bear left into Ware High Street. Almost immediately, use the pedestrian crossing to cross the High Street, go left for 10 yards and then turn right into New Road.

Keep straight ahead on this road for more than half a mile. It climbs steadily and then becomes Musley Hill before descending.

Cross to the pavement on the left of the road before it reaches the junction at the bottom of the hill. At the junction, we meet Fanhams Hall Road at a blind corner and we need to cross. It is probably safest to turn left for a few yards to open up the views in both directions and then cross when safe.

Take the road almost opposite and immediately bear sharp right onto a public bridleway (which was not waymarked in 2022). Very soon, pass Round House Lodge on the left and keep straight ahead.

Suddenly, we have left the town of Ware and entered the rural parish of Wareside in the Hundred Parishes. For about half a mile the route crosses the parish of Wareside before imperceptibly entering Thundridge.

Keep straight ahead on this path which climbs steadily, initially with a ditch on the left. This path can sometimes be muddy.

When the hedgerow on the right ends, continue straight ahead, still with a ditch on the left and now with a field on the right. This ditch is badly infested with giant hogweed, pictured here with early growth in springtime. It can grow up to 10 feet tall. It should not be touched at any time as its toxins can cause serious inflammation of the skin, especially when exposed to sunlight.



About a quarter of a mile after leaving the road, the ditch on our left turns right and passes beneath the path. At this point, we keep straight ahead, now on a clear path between fields, heading steadily uphill.

After a while, the path runs beside a strip of woodland on our left for about 400 yards. Shortly before the woodland ends, we turn left at a waymark (not always very obvious!) into the wood. After about 50 yards, the path emerges from the wood and we keep straight ahead, heading North between fields.

There are some isolated buildings over to the left. After passing beneath a telephone cable, a valley appears to our right. This is the valley of the River Rib.

When the path reaches a lane, go straight ahead on the bridleway, descending into the Rib valley. Ahead and to the left, the ruins of 15th century Thundridge old church are visible amongst the trees.

At the bottom of the descent, turn right onto another bridleway.

Cross a private drive, and about 100 yards afterwards turn left onto the footbridge over the River Rib, shown here. From this point, our route follows the Harcamlow Way for 4 miles, all the way to Standon



Continue uphill for some distance, after a while keeping a wood on the left. To our left, we pass beside the extensive Youngsbury estate



At the top of the hill, by the entrance to Home Farm with its splendid wooden barns, we turn right, heading towards a small wood.

At the end of the wood, we bear left, continuing along the byway towards another wood.

There, keep right along the byway, with the wood immediately on the right.

Exactly at the end of this wood, the route crosses the Greenwich Meridian but there is no marker. Keep ahead on the path between fields, heading downhill. Soon after the end of a stretch of wood on the left, turn left towards a group of buildings.

The buildings are part of Great Barwick Farm (pronounced “barrick”); the long barn we pass on the right is the oldest of many ancient buildings here, dating from the 14th century. The farmhouse, tucked behind, dates from the 16th century. The track turns right and soon reaches Barwick Ford.

Once again, we cross the River Rib via a footbridge. Here, the river marks the boundary between the parishes of Thundridge and Standon.

Continue ahead on the road for 100 yards, passing 17th-century Little Barwick Farm before turning left onto Bridleway 58, signposted to Latchford (a hamlet within Standon).

This bridleway can be muddy at times as it is used by farm vehicles. It starts by climbing steeply for about 100 yards before levelling off with views back towards Barwick’s farm buildings. When the farm track turns right, keep straight ahead on a footpath. Keep generally straight ahead, sometimes through woodland.

The bridleway continues for about a mile after Barwick Ford until it reaches a lane. We go slightly right to follow the lane, with the River Rib close by on the left.

After following the lane for about a quarter of a mile, we come to a crossroads with a gated entrance on the right to Arches Hall. Here we go straight ahead, signposted towards Latchford.

Follow the lane sharp right, past Latchford Lodge, and then left, soon keeping straight ahead, signposted towards a ford.

We pass a footbridge and the ford on the left. The grass path now climbs, steeply at first, affording a view of the river meandering away to the left. It is not always as visible as in this winter photo.



At the brow of the hill, Standon Lordship comes into view, ahead and to the left.

Keep straight ahead, descending and crossing another, well-defined path before passing through a gate. Continue straight ahead on the wide grass path.

We pass Standon Lordship, pictured here, over to the left. It is not so visible in summer.



Later, keep a hedgerow on the right. The spire of Standon church appears above the horizon on the right.

Continue with hedgerow on the right until we pass through a gate. Here, we turn right onto a gravel track which soon becomes a lane.

Soon, on the left, we pass 17th-century Paper Mill House. Behind it was a corn mill that was later converted to a paper mill. It probably ceased production in the 19th century. Just afterwards, the road rises a little to pass over the embankment that once carried the Buntingford branch railway line.

We go straight ahead and soon the Hertfordshire spike on Standon's church tower again comes into view.

As we enter the village of Standon we pass Church End Cottages on the right – former almshouses that date from the 17th century.



Opposite Church End Cottages, we turn left beside a small village green. Here, there is a mounted puddingstone beside an oak tree planted in 1911. To our right, the long building with exposed timber-framing is Knights Court, dating from the 16th century or earlier. It was once a courthouse, then a school before conversion into apartments in 1974. The herringbone brickwork was added in the 19th century.

Turn left into the High Street (leaving the Harcamlow Way for a while), passing Grade I-listed St Mary's Church on the right. It dates from the 13th century, is usually open, and has some impressive 16th and 17th-century memorials to former owners of Standon Lordship, Sir Ralph and Sir Thomas Sadleir. If you do take a look inside, please first remove or cover boots if muddy.

On the left, opposite the church, the Star Inn dates from the 17th century or earlier. You may wish to dine here, but pre-booking is advised. (01920 823725). The distance travelled to this point has been 7 miles and there are no food or drink outlets for the 10 miles after Standon, except possibly the Catherine Wheel at Gravesend, 6 miles before the finish. Do not rely on the Catherine Wheel without first checking that it will be open when you expect to reach it (01279 260930).

Continue along the High Street, with The Star on the left and the church on the right. This wide part of the High Street is where a market was held from the 13th century until relatively recent times. On the right, all the houses along the slip road date from the 17th century or earlier.

Further along, we pass seats which may be handy if you want a takeaway from Day's bakery opposite.

Just a little further along on the right, the white-painted Old Post Office with jettied upper storey may be as old as the 14th century. Almost opposite is The Bell, 16th century and a possible option for refreshment.

Before reaching the end of the High Street, we should cross to the pavement on the right. At the junction, turn right onto the main A120, Stortford Road. Stay on this side of the road and keep to the pavement which rises above the road, passing beside a terrace of houses and two old water pumps.

When the pavement rejoins the road, cross with great care and continue in the same direction on the left side for about 200 yards. Fork left onto a tree-lined bridleway that rises steadily with occasional views of Puckeridge (part of Standon parish) below and to the left. Once again, we are following a stretch of the Harcamlow Way.

At the end of the trees, keep to the path, bearing right on a field-edge path with a hedge and ditch on the right. This becomes a wider track, now with a wood on the right. At the top of the climb, there is a final view back towards Puckeridge, down in the valley. Around here, the route passes without any indication from Standon into the parish of Braughing.

Before reaching some farm buildings, bear to the right, keeping the wooden rail fence on the right. Pass between the farm buildings with the farmhouse on the left.

On reaching a lane, cross with care, bear slightly left across a driveway and pass through a gate beside the postbox onto the public bridleway. The bridleway soon comes onto a large meadow. The next paragraph relates to crossing this meadow.

For a while, keep close to the fence on the right, passing beside the grounds of Upp Hall on the right. Follow the field edge round to the left and gradually descend, heading for the far right, bottom corner of the field. Once upon a time, the path followed the fence and passed through a gully, but this sunken path has become overgrown and the trodden route (in 2022) runs to the left of the sunken, overgrown area. We pass beneath a large oak tree and soon bear right with shrubs on the right to reach the far end of the meadow and the gateway in the bottom right corner of the field.

Pass through the gate and continue ahead, now uphill, through woodland. The path becomes more defined and passes Tan House on the left just before reaching a lane. Here, we turn left.

Follow the lane for about 300 yards.

Turn right beside the street lamp onto Braughing Bridleway 005, signposted to Cock Hamstead.

Follow this tarmac lane as it winds uphill and then passes a communications mast on the left. This is the highest point on the walk at 131 metres (430 feet) above sea level.

About 400 yards after the mast, the road bears left towards the house called Cockhampstead in the distance. Here, we leave the road beside a telegraph pole on the right, keeping straight ahead on the bridleway, crossing a field for about 300 yards (this short stretch can be muddy). Over to the right, the water tower is at Braughing Friars.

At the far side of the field, bear slightly left on a field-edge path with a hedge on the left.

At the end of this field the route quietly leaves Braughing parish and enters the parish of Albury, continuing straight ahead along a field-edge path, now with woodland on the right.

When this path reaches a lane, turn right and in 80 yards turn left onto a footpath, leaving the Harcamlow Way and passing through woodland.

When the path emerges onto a small green, go straight ahead across the green and bear right onto a lane. Follow the lane alongside the brick wall that once marked the perimeter of Albury Hall which was demolished in the 1950s.

The lane climbs beside woodland on the right. At the top of the rise, the distant tower of Furneux Pelham church comes into view just a little to the left of straight ahead. It is about 1.5 miles away.

The tarmac lane turns sharp left, opposite the entrance to Charleston House on the right, but we keep straight ahead on a gravel track. In about 50 yards, we turn right to follow this main track, now heading East past Charleston House and passing ponds on the right.

We keep straight ahead for more than half a mile, crossing the River Ash and then climbing to meet a road. Turn right and descend into the hamlet of Gravesend, part of the parish of Albury.

In 200 yards, the route turns left at a road junction, immediately before the Catherine Wheel pub/restaurant (01279 260930). Should you choose to pause at the Catherine Wheel, please remove or cover boots if muddy. On leaving the pub, turn right and right again into the lane, signposted to Patmore Heath.

Soon, at the edge of Patmore Heath, turn right onto another lane, with the heath on the left. After 200 yards, follow the lane round to the left, keeping Patmore Heath on the left.



In another 200 yards, immediately before the high, red-brick wall around the house called Hunting Box, turn right onto a footpath (number 15 signposted to Mill Lane), initially heading downhill and depicted here.

After nearly half a mile, the track reaches a tarmac road. Turn right onto the road and almost immediately turn left, uphill, onto a public footpath.

After 100 yards, turn left onto another track, heading East.

In another 150 yards, our route passes Bogs Wood on the left, renowned for its short 'wild' daffodils that bloom somewhat earlier than cultivated daffodils.

Keep ahead on this track with ditch and/or hedgerow on the left.

When this path reaches another wood (Shaw Wood), turn right, keeping the wood on the left. In 100 yards, turn left, still keeping the wood on the left.

At the end of the wood, the path imperceptibly passes from the Hertfordshire parish of Albury into the Essex parish of Farnham. Keep straight ahead, passing beneath two parallel electricity transmission lines.

The path becomes a stony track and then a tarmac lane, passing the entrance to 17th-century Farnham Hall on the right, then a former telephone kiosk which has been repurposed into a book swap. Just afterwards, ignore the lane on the left – it is not signposted but leads to the hamlet of Farnham Green.

Keep straight ahead through the hamlet of Chatter End, passing this attractive 18th-century cottage and going gently downhill.



When the lane turns right at a green triangle, fork left and in a few yards bear left. Ignore both the entrance to Savenend Farm on the left and a driveway to the right. We take the signposted public bridleway between them.

Soon, pass through a gate and cross a field, keeping to the right of a dead tree and then heading to a gate in the left corner of the field.

There, cross Bourne Brook and follow the bridleway uphill through woodland.

When the path leaves the woodland, keep to the right of the field, with the wood on the right. This stretch is used by horses so can be muddy.

Keep the wood on the right for 300 yards and then turn right into the wood onto a wide public bridleway. This path runs between Home Wood on the right and Oozes Wood on the left.

On leaving the woods, we leave Farnham and are in the parish of Manuden for a few hundred yards. Manuden village is over to the left. After leaving the woods, keep straight ahead, downhill with hedgerow on the left, for about 600 yards to reach a road.

With care, turn right onto the road and in about 20 yards cross the road and turn left to continue on the bridleway. This now heads clearly downhill for a while before crossing the River Stort (where we pass from Manuden parish into Stansted Mountfitchet parish), and then climbs in a straight line for nearly half a mile.

Just over the brow of the hill, turn left onto a gravel track and in about 80 yards turn right onto a footpath with fence on the right and hedgerow on the left. To our right are the buildings of Hole Farm.

In 200 yards, the footpath reaches a lane, where we turn right and immediately bear left, ignoring the entrance to Hole Farm on the right, pictured here with its row of agricultural buildings that date back to the 16th century.



Our lane climbs for a short distance and then descends gently for about half a mile.

At a fork, keep left, ignoring Watermill Lane on the right.

After about 250 yards there is a small gap in the hedge on the right with a half-hidden footpath sign. From here, we can enjoy this view down to Watermill Farm. The farm sits beside the River Stort and was the site of extensive watercress beds until the mid-20th century.



Almost immediately opposite the gap on the right, there is a gap on the left. We turn left here and ascend a few steps up to a field.

Continue ahead along the field-edge path, with a strip of woodland on the right.

At the end of the field, keep straight ahead down a narrow path with high wooden fences and houses on either side. This path descends to meet the busy main road, Silver Street, the B1383, and we are now in Stansted Mountfitchet village.



Turn left, cross the entrance to Blythwood Gardens, and almost immediately cross the main road, using the pedestrian refuge. Continue in the same direction, but almost immediately turn right up Mill Hill.

At the top of the steep climb, keep to the left, now on Mill Side, and pass Stansted Mountfitchet's 1787 windmill on the left. It is usually open to visitors on bank holidays and the first Sunday of the month from May to October from 1:30pm to 5:30pm.

Continue straight ahead on this road, ignoring Mill Fields on the right.

At a small crossroads, turn right into Woodfield Close. Follow this round to the left, where it becomes Sunnyside.

At the end of this road, turn right onto Chapel Hill, and in about 20 yards turn right again into Station Road for Stansted Mountfitchet Station.

If you need refreshment, there is a selection of pubs, restaurants and takeaways close to the junction of Chapel Hill and Station Road.

Station Road leads to the north-bound platform, for Cambridge, etc, and there is also a ticket machine on this platform. Pass right along the platform and cross the footbridge for the south-bound platform and trains towards Broxbourne and London.

Trains do not stop at all stations so, before boarding one, please check that it is scheduled to stop at your intended destination.

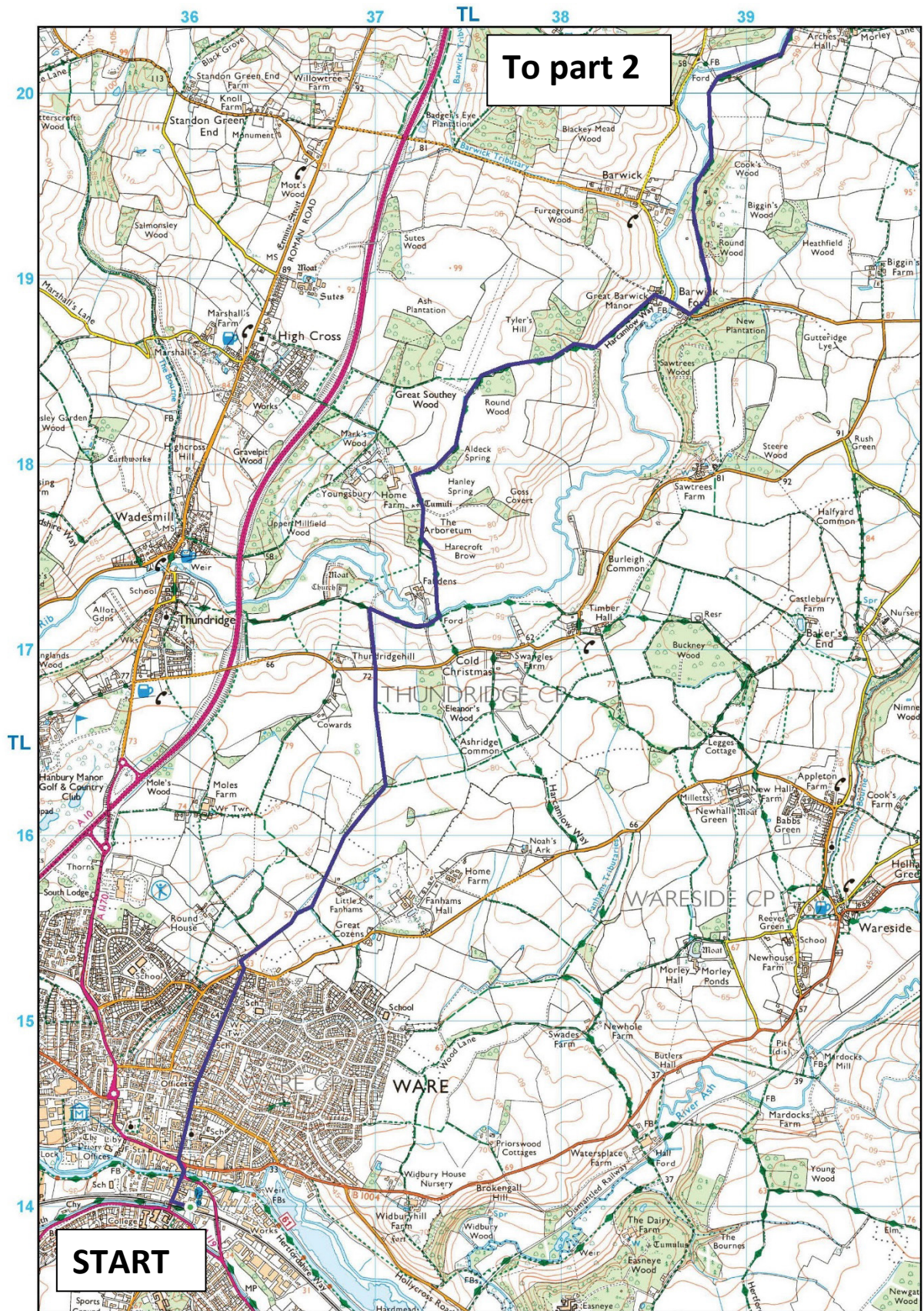
This route description, last updated 22 June 2022, was downloaded from www.hundredparishes.org.uk where you can find many more walks and further information about each of the eight parishes through which this walk passes.

Please email any suggestions for improving the route or the route description to hundredparishes@btinternet.com

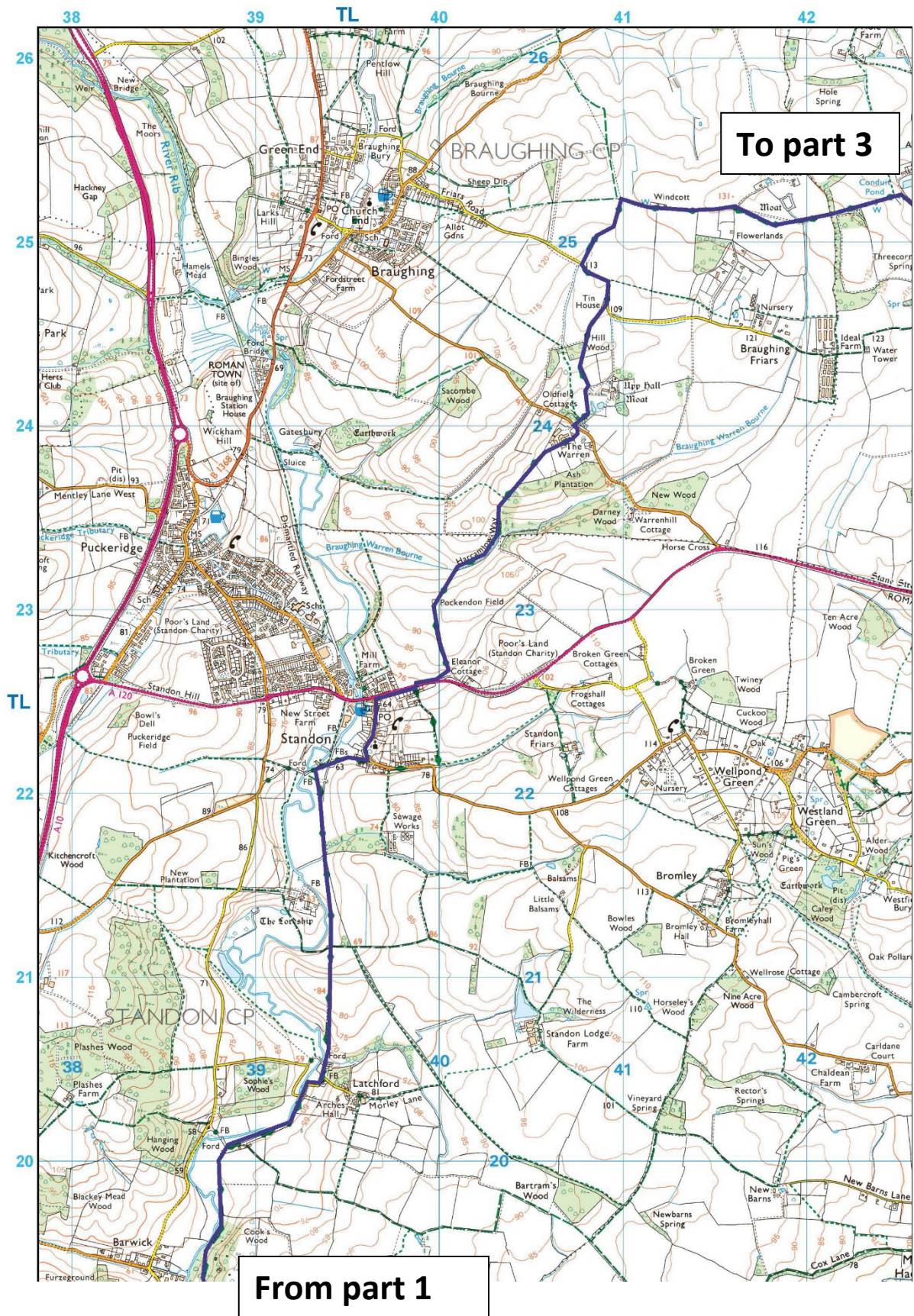
The route is plotted in the four overlapping maps that follow. They are based on the Ordnance Survey map and published under © Crown copyright 2020 OS 100062498.

The first two maps plot the first half of the route as it flows roughly south to north, whilst maps 3 and 4 show the second half of the route as it travels from west to east. In maps 1 and 2, North is at the top. In maps 3 and 4, North is to the left.

Route – part 1 of 4



Route – part 2 of 4



Route – part 3 of 4



