

# 2025 January Walk – The George and Dragon, Watton at Stone

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Walk Date	16/01/2025
Walk leader	Tim Alexander
Number of people on walk	16
Walk Location	Watton at Stone to south of Stapleford, across the River Beane, along the river to the Woodhall Estate then back to Watton at Stone.
Walk Weather	Wet underfoot but not too much mud apart from crossing one field
Distance Covered	6.8 miles / 4.8 miles
Average Speed	2.2 mph
Elevation Gain/Loss	709 feet

## The Walk

This was our third visit to Watton at Stone and our first visit to the George and Dragon.

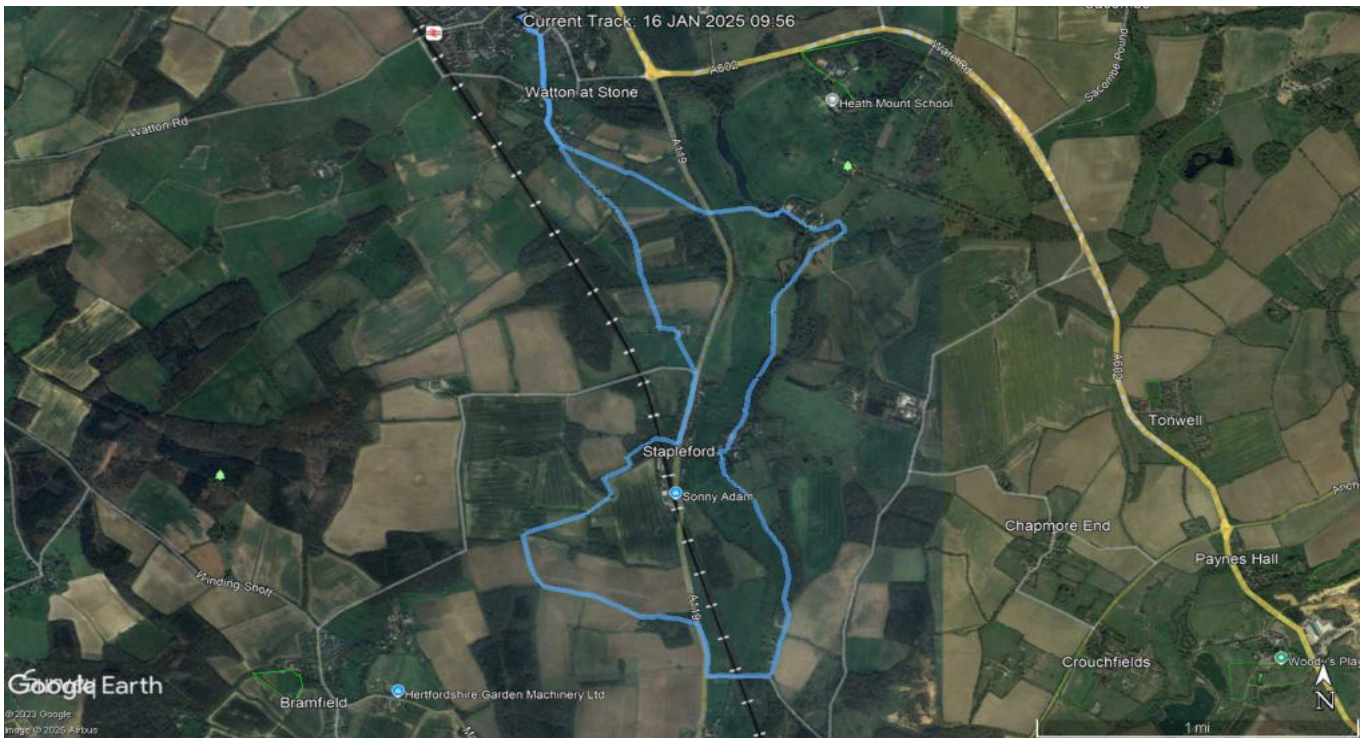


From the back of the pub car park, we turned south on a metalled footpath, through the churchyard until we got to the edge of the village. We turned right into Perrywood Lane and then headed south along field paths, through Patchendon Farm and on more field paths until we joined the A119 at Stapleford. After walking along the A119, we paused for a short break near Stapleford village hall. At this point the people on the short walk left us to head up Church Lane and across the River Beane to head back along the river.

The rest of the group turned right into Warren Wood and under the Stevenage to Hertford railway line. From there, we walked along more field footpaths until we got to Little Gobions and the A119. We walked south, along that road, until we got to Bullsmill Lane and headed east across the River Beane and under the railway line. Once across the river we turned left past Bullsmill cottages and onto a footpath along the river. After passing Stapleford Church, we walked along Clusterbolts onto a footpath into the Woodhall Estate and stopped to look at the work going on to restore the chalk stream.

We walked out of the Woodhall Estate, avoiding the vehicles carrying people from a shoot back to the farm. From there it was walking along field footpaths until we got to Perrywood Lane and the metalled footpaths that we had used at the beginning of our walk. Then it was a short walk for that welcome drink and some food.

The map of the walk is shown below:



## Watton at Stone

The first references to Watton appear in a collection of wills as Wattun. The addition of 'at stone' was added in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century and has two potential sources: 1) it may be derived from two large examples of Hertfordshire puddingstone now at the former Waggon and Horses public house or 2) the Roman road from Verulamium (St Albans) described as Stone Street that fords the River Beane at Watton at Stone.

## Woodhall Park

Woodhall Park is the home of Woodhall Estate and contains a Grade I listed country house. This house is an 18<sup>th</sup> century neoclassical building. This house is the home of Heath Mount School since the 1930s.

The estate was acquired by Thomas Rumbold using the fortune he made in India.

## Woodhall Park - Broadwater

During 2016, the lake on the Woodhall Estate suffered a dramatic breach and discharge during Storm Katie. In 2017 work was begun to create a more natural meandering chalk stream. The work that we saw was Phase II of the project.