

# Old John Tower to Swithland Village

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**Fourteen Family Walks around Charnwood**  
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 Loughborough & District CHA Rambling Club.  
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This walk goes from one of the main landmarks in Bradgate Park and has a pleasant pub at its mid way point. It has down and uphill sections, with nice views and some attractive locations on the route. There are also plenty of places to stop for children to explore. The walk starts at The Old John car park for Bradgate Park. The extension for 5 miles is from point A to point B, and is described after the 4-mile version.

As you leave the path through trees from the car park Old John Tower (1) is very evident on the hill just up to your right. Make your way up to the tower from where there are good views. Children are likely to want to explore this area for a while. From the tower you can also see the next part of the walk. To do this stand in front of the tower by the plaque in memory of Charles Bennion. Immediately in front is a wide grassy track, which goes down the hill and leads to the nearest smaller hill that has woodland coming up the hill from the left. The path continues down this broad track and then up the hill to the right hand edge of the piece of woodland.

At the top of the hill take the track, which passes a little, to the right of the stone wall, which encircles the woodland. You will then shortly see a white cottage well ahead on lower ground immediately in front of you. Continue by aiming for this house using anyone of a number of paths. At some stage you will cross a small stream where children might like to play for a while. When approaching the white house you will see a gap in the wall to the right of the house. Go

through this gap and follow the path to Hallgates car park.

Leave Hallgates car park by the main entrance and look for a footpath sign on the other side of the road and just to the right. Cross the stile to follow this path keeping roughly in the direction of the footpath sign and looking for yellow marker posts. The path goes across two fields, by a hedge, along a track and then through a small piece of woodland. It then goes by a small stream between two fields. At the end of this section there is a T junction of paths where you turn right and shortly pass a fenced-in house called Cropsion Leys. You then reach a road, which you cross and turn right. Almost immediately there is a bridleway on the left, which you take to soon reach Swithland Village (2). Here you turn left and the Griffin Inn is a short distance away on the left. (point A)

To continue the shorter walk you now retrace your steps back along the road to the gate on the right, then walking along the path and track and across the road to the bridleway past Cropsion Leys house (at several places you have a good view of Old John Tower). Before long you reach the T junction where on the left is the path you used on the way out. Ignore this path now and carry straight on towards Swithland Wood in front of you. Enter the wood and carry on until you reach a main track at a T junction (point B). Here turn left along the track. This track goes through the wood for a short distance and then goes along the edge of the wood with a field on the left.

You then almost reach the road but turn right just before it to walk through a small car park and then along a pretty path that runs parallel to the wall and the road. When you reach the end of the wood there is a narrow gap in the wall on your left leading out to the roadside. Almost opposite and just to your right there is a footpath signposted to Old John. Follow this path, cross the stile at the end and enter the park by the gate in the wall. Here you turn right and follow the wall back to the gate for the Old John car park.

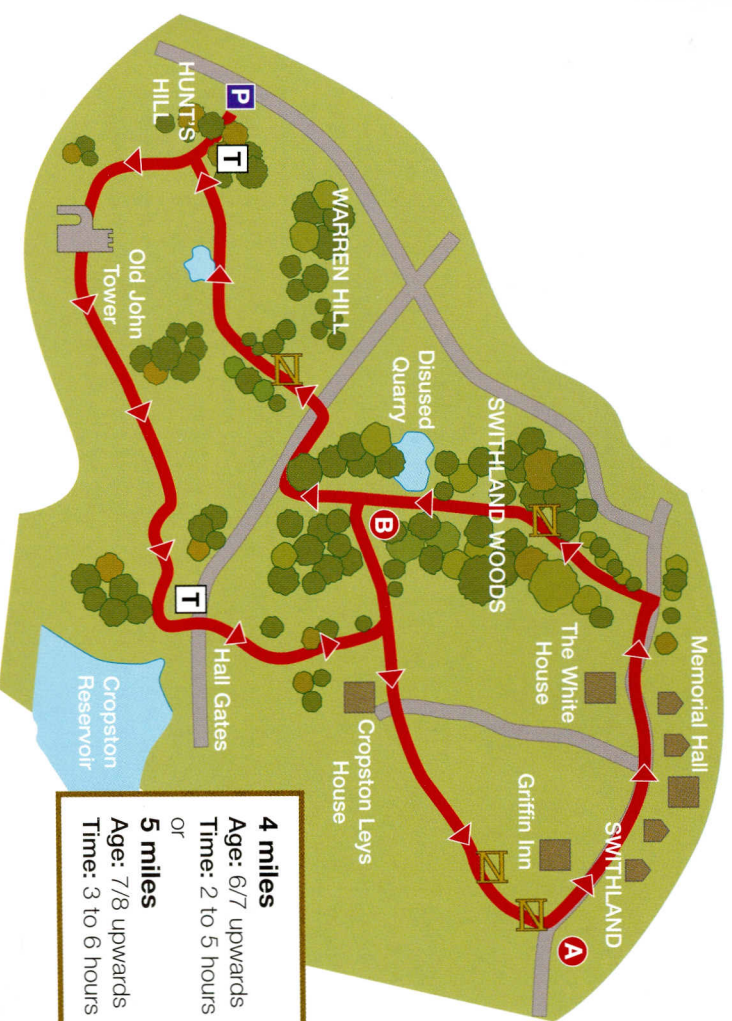
For the longer version (see point A) continue on through the village away from the Griffin. You pass the war memorial and Memorial Hall on the right and later the White House on the left. Swithland is a long thin village so this part will take around 20 minutes. Just before the 30mph sign take a signed footpath on the left. You can see by the wall on each side of this path that at one time this path was the 'working' track that led to

the quarry in Swithland Wood. After crossing the second stile you are in Swithland Wood. Keep to a pathway and track, which starts straight ahead and stays roughly the same direction for a good distance. You pass picnic tables on the right, and later a plaque saying how the wood was acquired by Rotary in 1931. You are then at point B on the shorter version and continue by walking straight ahead.

## Notes

(1) Old John Tower was built in 1786 on the site of an old windmill, and it is the highest point in the park. The story is that Old John was a retainer of the Grey family who was killed by a falling maypole during a coming-of-age party for a relative of the Earl of Stamford. At a distance the shape resembles a beer mug. The memorial is said to reflect Old John's partiality for ale.

(2) Swithland village was once famous for the slate produced from quarries in Swithland Wood. Many of the houses in the village are built with local materials, including the slate on the roofs. St Leonards churchyard also contains some slate memorials.



**4 miles**  
 Age: 6/7 upwards  
 Time: 2 to 5 hours  
 Or  
**5 miles**  
 Age: 7/8 upwards  
 Time: 3 to 6 hours