

The name of Boringwheel Mill Farm on private land about 1km to the southwest describes the boring wheel that was used to drill out the solid cast cannon barrel to the right calibre or bore.

Turn right and cross the bridge over the stream and ascend from the gully on the track. At the brow of the hill, after about 250m and at a junction ③, bear right and remain on the wide ascending track for about 1km with a gully and stream on the right.

After passing through light woodland and with Stonehill car park about 100m ahead, turn right onto another wide track ④.



The broad path back to Hollies in winter

Follow it for about 700m back to Hollies car park, parallel with the roadway and with Camp Hill Clump in front of you on the horizon.

Camp Hill Clump was first planted in 1825. Its name probably derives from a military camp nearby in July 1793. More Forest clumps can be encountered on other walks in this series.

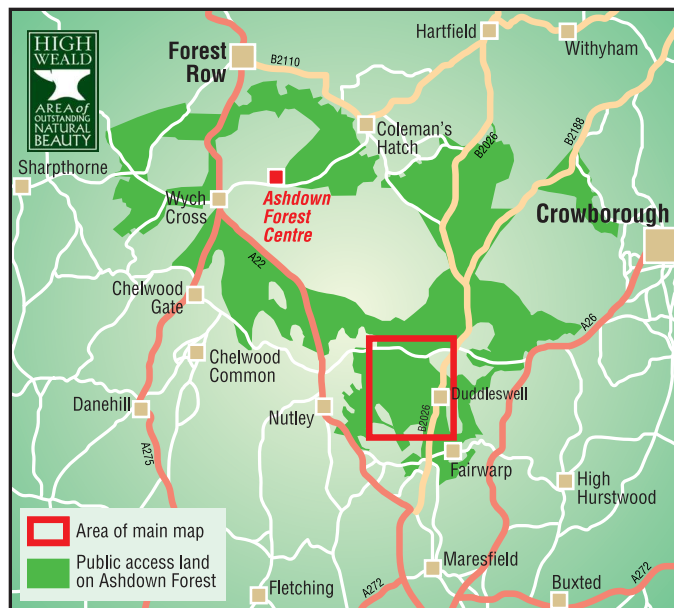


Heath spotted orchids

## Information

A Board of Conservators manages Ashdown Forest as a quiet, natural place for you to enjoy and as a refuge for wildlife. At 2500 hectares (10 square miles), Ashdown Forest is the largest open access space in the South East. Nearly two thirds of it is heathland, one of the rarest habitats in Britain. On account of this, the Forest is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and an EU Special Area for Conservation and Special Protection Area.

Ashdown Forest is a former medieval hunting forest, the largest of four spread between Horsham and Tunbridge Wells in an area known as the Weald Forest Ridge. This is the highest ridge of the High Weald, itself recognised as one of England's Finest Landscapes and designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



If you would like further information about the work of the Conservators and the Friends of Ashdown Forest, visit the Forest Centre at Wych Cross. Telephone 01342 823583 or visit [www.ashdownforest.org](http://www.ashdownforest.org)

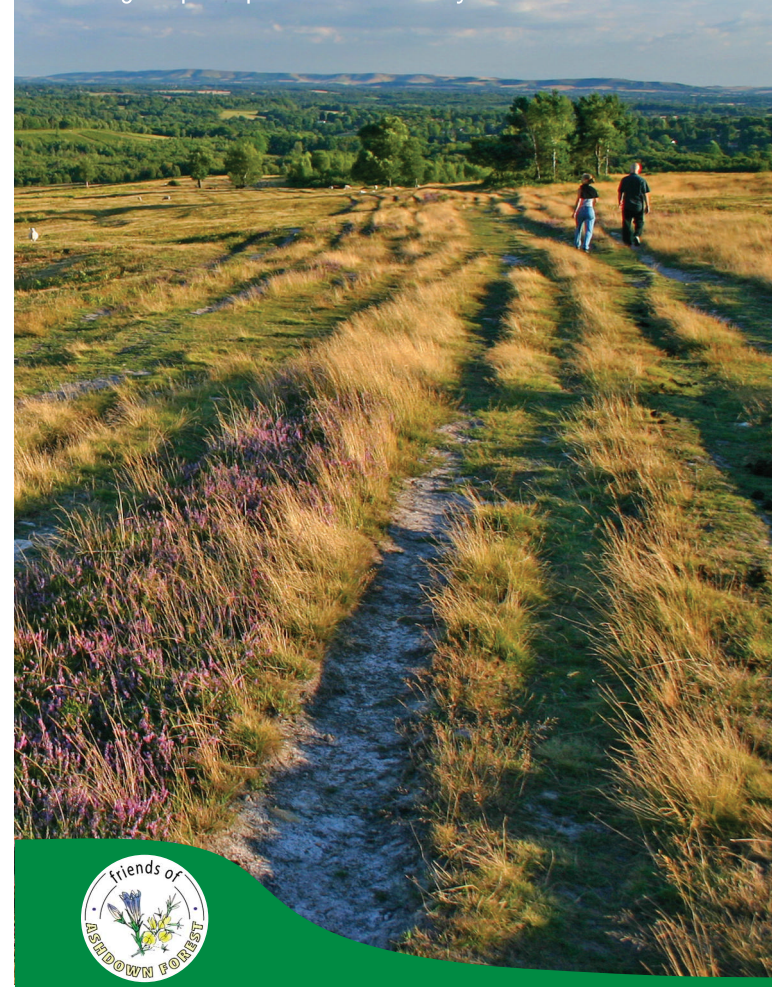


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## The Southern Slopes and the Airman's Grave

A walk with great views to the South Downs via a lonesome memorial to the crew of a World War Two plane

This leaflet describes the walk as starting from Hollies car park but you may start from any one of the five ridge-top car parks in the vicinity.



Exploring Ashdown Forest on foot

## The Southern Slopes and the Airman's Grave

2.0 miles / 3.25km

From Hollies walk past the information board and head downhill and due south (away from the road) on a clear wide grassy track. Head to the left side of the patch of woodland (mainly oak and birch). Passing the woodland, the track continues to descend gently and views south open up ahead.

The views stretch over the Low Weald to, on a fine day, the panorama of the South Downs around Firle Beacon some 25km (16 miles) away. From spring to autumn, sheep and cattle graze the area around you. They belong to local commoners who have traditional rights to put livestock onto the Forest. If you have a dog, please keep it under control.



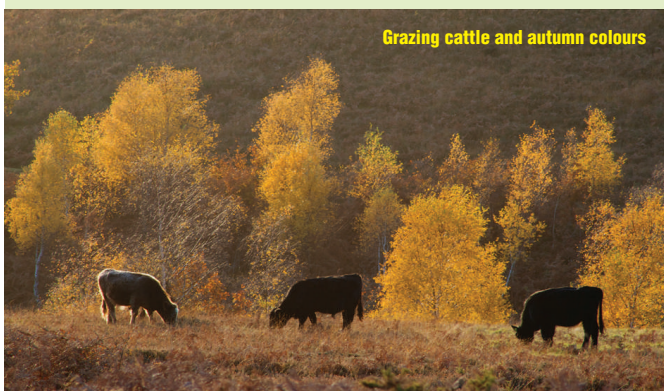
You are walking through heathland, the most characteristic habitat of the Forest. The 1500 hectares of it here are the largest extent in South East England and some 2.5% of all that is left in Britain. The most typical plants on the poor acidic soils are three species of heathers, two species of gorse, and purple moor-grass. Wetter areas contain scarcer plants like the cotton grass (actually a sedge), whose



Heathers and dwarf gorse (late summer)

white, cotton-like flowerheads can be seen in late summer. More careful searches will find the round-leaved sundew. It obtains nutrients from insects caught by long sticky glands on the leaves. In folklore, the sundew had a reputation for preserving long life and acting as an aphrodisiac!

Grazing livestock have been an intrinsic part of the Forest scene for hundreds of years. They play an important role in maintaining



Grazing cattle and autumn colours

heathland through controlling the growth of trees, bracken and the moor-grass. Other plants, like heath spotted orchids and marsh gentians, then have a better chance of survival. In summer you may see tractors mowing large areas of bracken and, in winter, the cutting of small trees and scrub as part of heathland management and restoration.

The route continues downhill, steeply in places, for about 1km until it reaches the enclosure known as the Airman's Grave ①.

Despite its name, no one is buried here. It is a memorial to six young men, the crew of a Wellington bomber who were all killed when it crashed here on 31 July 1941. They were part of a 100 plane bombing



The Airman's Grave

mission to Cologne but were forced to turn back in atrocious weather with engine trouble. Annual remembrance services are still held here.

From the Airman's Grave continue in the same direction downhill for about 200m to reach a stream ②.



Inside the Airman's Grave

The stream sometimes runs a dark rusty colour. This denotes the presence of the iron that was the basis of a major Forest – and High Weald - industry for nearly 2000 years. Woodland on this part of the Forest was heavily exploited to fuel the furnaces at nearby Buxted that, in 1543, produced Britain's first cast iron cannon. The industry survived in the Weald until 1824 when the last furnace closed.



Iron-stained water entering a stream