

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is an outstanding medieval landscape, protected for its historic character of: rolling hills draped with small irregular fields; abundant woods and hedges; scattered farmsteads; and sunken lanes. It covers parts of 4 counties: East Sussex, West Sussex, Kent and Surrey and has an area of 1,457 square kilometres (570 square miles).

High Weald Heroes is a primary school programme that encourages children to do the following actions:

Explore

the local countryside around your school
- there's nowhere else quite like it.



Take care of

your local environment as you walk. Remember to follow the Countryside Code. For more information, visit www.naturalengland.org.uk



Enjoy!

yourself and have fun outdoors whatever the weather.



Find out about

the habitats you walk through - discover the story behind the landscape. To find out more go to the learning zone on www.highweald.org



Be proud of

your countryside. Tell other people about the special landscape around your school - even better, take them on your school's Welly Walk and show them!



Produced by the High Weald AONB Partnership with support from:



Walk Facts

Distance: 6km / 3.8 miles

Time: 2.5 hours (depending on conditions, numbers and excluding stops)

Description: Mainly unsurfaced paths, across farmland, flower-rich grassland and ancient woodland. A short section is on a quiet road passing a 13th century church. Gently hilly terrain with many stiles to cross. The paths can get very muddy and slippery.



Education Resource

RISK ASSESSMENT - Points to consider

- Please use with an Ordnance Survey Explorer Map.
- Wear sturdy footwear or wellingtons, being aware of uneven ground and fallen trees, especially near water and in wet weather.
- Adequate staff to student supervision ratios.
- Fields may contain farm animals.
- Long trousers are advised.
- Check the weather - waterproofs or hats and sun cream might be needed.
- Taking a drink with you is advisable.
- Plants such as nettles and brambles can sting and scratch; berries from plants can cause stomach upsets if eaten.
- There are no toilet facilities, so we recommend that toilet paper and antibacterial hand gel are taken as a precaution.
- Everyone must clean their hands before eating.
- Remember that a large group of people can be intimidating, especially to animals.
- Remember to follow the Countryside Code.

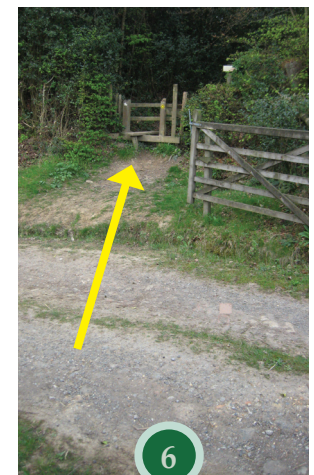
Footpaths are subject to change. The walk should always be checked for new risks before venturing out, especially when planning to take groups of children.

www.highweald.org

All Saints' & St Richard's C.E. Primary School High Weald Welly Walk




Be a High Weald Hero - you can make a difference



For guidance only; actual conditions may be different from those shown, depending on the weather and time of year.

Photo guide and route description

Leave All Saints' and St Richard's School and turn left to walk along the pavement. Keep to the left to pass through the lych gate and arrive at All Saints' church. Follow the path around the left of the church then turn left to walk downhill through the cemetery keeping the hedge close on your right **1**. At the bottom of the cemetery, pass through a kissing gate to continue downhill across the field **2**. Enter a copse and cross a bridge where the path then heads uphill and over a stile. Turn left and walk up the track. Look out for a stile and gates on your right **3**. Cross over the stile to walk across the field and enter a wood. Follow the path through the wood crossing over a bridge to reach a field. Cross the field (turn and see a view towards the South Downs) and climb a stile to reach a wide bridle path, turning right to walk down it. Continue along the bridle path until you reach a gate. Pass through the gate into the wood and bear immediately right following the footpath. **4**  Carry on keeping to the left path when the path forks following the footpath sign.

Leave the wood through a gate and continue with a field on your right. Go through a gate into a meadow and pass a farm on your right. A metal gate leads you to a path with a track on your right **5**. Be careful as the path is gullied in parts. Go through a gate and cross over the track to enter a wood via a stile **6**. Leave the wood via another stile and cross the grass meadow straight ahead. Cross a stile to enter the next meadow following the path and the signs **7**.

At the end of the field bear right and head downhill towards a gill. The church can be seen on the hill ahead (8) Follow the path to cross the gill and head uphill bearing left. Look out for a gap in the hedge and carry on uphill with the hedge on your left (9) . At the top of the field cross a stile to carry on straight ahead with a wire fence on your right (10) ⚡. When you reach a kissing gate pass through and continue on with the hedge on the right. Go over another stile to bear right towards a metal fence.

Pass through the kissing gate and cross over the small road (11) to follow the path between the trees. Climb the stile and turn left to walk up the road for about 20 metres passing the pub car park on your right. Turn right off the road towards the church (12) bearing right to keep the church on your left. Leave the churchyard through the lych gate and head back up the road to the school.

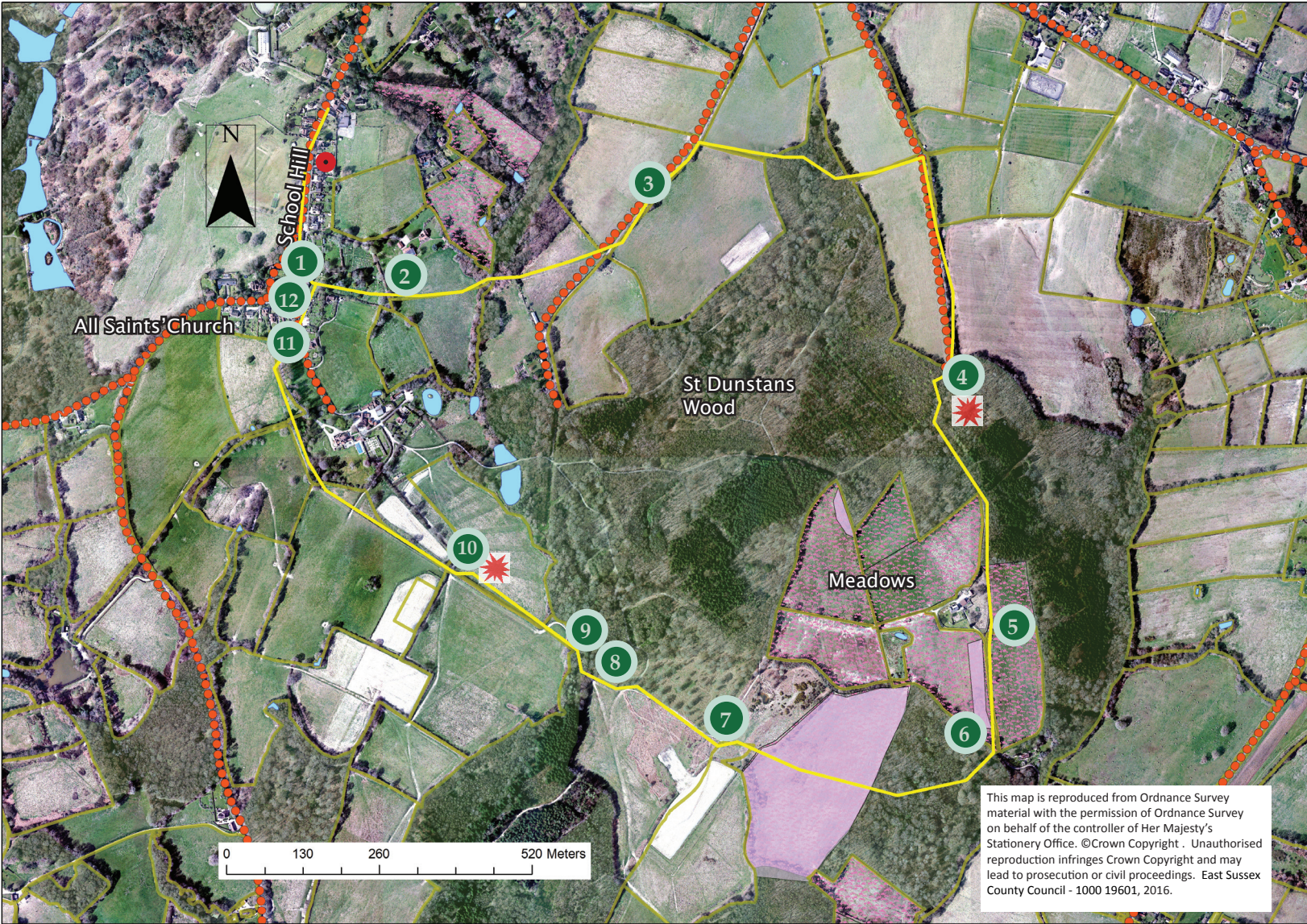
Look out for...



Iron in water

Key

- All Saints’ and St Richard’s School
- WALK ROUTE
- 1 numbered views
- ⚡ suggested activity point
- meadows
- historic routeway
- ancient field boundaries



Look out for these key High Weald landscape features on the Welly Walk

Ancient Woodland

Almost one third of the High Weald is covered in woodland. Most of these woodlands are classed as ancient. This means they have existed since at least 1600AD. Coppicing has been used for centuries in many of these woodlands, helping to maintain them. The woodland on this Welly Walk is ancient. Look out for bluebells, wood anemones and ransoms (wild garlic) in the spring. These flowers are good indicators of ancient woodland.



Bluebells



Wood anemones

Coppiced Woodland

Coppicing is when trees are cut down low to the ground allowing multiple stems to grow back. The stems are harvested to make products such as fire wood, fencing, charcoal and trugs. Hazel and sweet chestnut are trees that were commonly coppiced in the High Weald. Which can you see on this walk?



Hazel



Sweet chestnut

High Weald Hedges

Hedges are an essential part of the High Weald's distinctive character. Hedges indicate land boundaries and help to manage livestock. They are also an important habitat for wildlife. Can you spot this grown out, relic hedgerow as you leave the woodland at St Dunstan's Farm? It probably indicates an ancient boundary.



Wildflower Grassland



The High Weald has a relatively large number of ancient, wildflower-rich hay meadows and pastures. These 'unimproved' grasslands are some of our most important habitats for conservation. They are special because they support so many plant and animal species. Shrews and voles are plentiful here providing a fantastic feeding ground for barn owls.



Lesser spotted orchid



Bird's-foot-trefoil



Barn owls

On the Welly Walk you will pass through several unimproved grasslands, including one that is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, after passing St Dunstan's farmhouse.

If you are interested in finding out more then please visit www.highweald.org/learning-zone

Count how many different grasses and plants there are in a small area of unimproved grassland and compare it with the last field of the Walk.

Medieval Landscape

The High Weald looks much the same today as it did in the 14th century. This Welly Walk shows: gently rolling hills, irregular-shaped fields, scattered settlements and wooded areas. These features give the Weald its distinctive look. Look up towards All Saints Church at Old Heathfield as you cross the gill for a view of the High Weald that has barely changed in centuries



Gill Streams



Steep-sided, wooded gills are formed where a stream has carved a deep channel through the clay and sandstone of a High Weald hillside. Look out for gill streams on this Welly Walk. Plants growing in the unique environment of the gill slopes such as ferns, liverworts and mosses, form an important, fragile eco-system.

Local Building Materials

Traditionally buildings were made from materials in the local landscape. In the High Weald, that means wood for timber-framed and weather-boarded buildings, clay to make bricks and tiles, and sandstone. The 13th century church at Old Heathfield is made from local sandstone.

