



Nap Wood, Sussex

TRAIL
Walking

GRADE
Easy

DISTANCE
1 mile (1.6km)

TIME
20 minutes

OS MAP
Explorer 136;
Landranger 188

Contact

01892 893820

scotneycastle@nationaltrust.org.uk

Facilities

National
Trust

nationaltrust.org.uk/walks

Nap Wood walk, in the footsteps of drovers

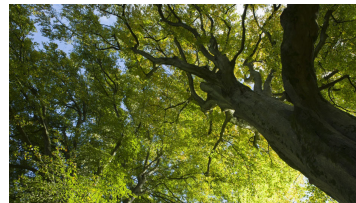
Discover a tranquil woodland oasis along an ancient track way of the Weald. Nap Wood is home to a fantastic array of wildlife, from the mature trees that tower above you to the vivid displays of bluebells that decorate the woodland floor in late spring. See what you can spot on this gentle one mile (1.5km) walk.



Terrain

Circular walk along a well compacted path, with some protruding tree roots. Mostly flat, but with several gentle slopes and one relatively steep one. Take care after wet weather as the path can be muddy, uneven and slippery.

Things to see



Ancient drovers' routes

These sunken tracks were created over hundreds of years and possibly existed as far back as the first few centuries AD in Romano-British times. The people who used these routes were called drovers and they'd take their livestock along them to trade and for grazing. They'd let the livestock graze in the High Weald during the summer and autumn in order to fatten them up for winter, when they would return to the Downs.

Ancient woodland

Nap Wood is located in the High Weald, one of the largest areas of ancient woodland in England. Nap Wood itself is home to hundreds of grand old trees, like beech (pictured here), oak, chestnut and yew. We tend to leave trees and branches to rot rather than remove them after they die as they provide an important habitat for bats, insects and fungi. Keep an eye out for bracket fungi on the side of dead trees and any holes you spot may be homes to great spotted woodpeckers. In spring, you might hear them drumming on dead tree trunks and branches to proclaim their territory.

Bluebells

Nap Wood is famous locally for its dense carpet of bluebells in the spring. At other times of the year the woodland floor is covered with honeysuckle, brambles and moss.



Nap Wood, Sussex

Start/end

Start: A267 lay-by, grid
ref:TQ581329

End: A267 lay-by, grid
ref:TQ581329

How to get there

By foot: 1 mile (1.6km) from
Mark Cross; 2 miles (3.2km)
from Frant along a busy road.
The Sussex Border Path runs
just north of entrance to Nap
Wood

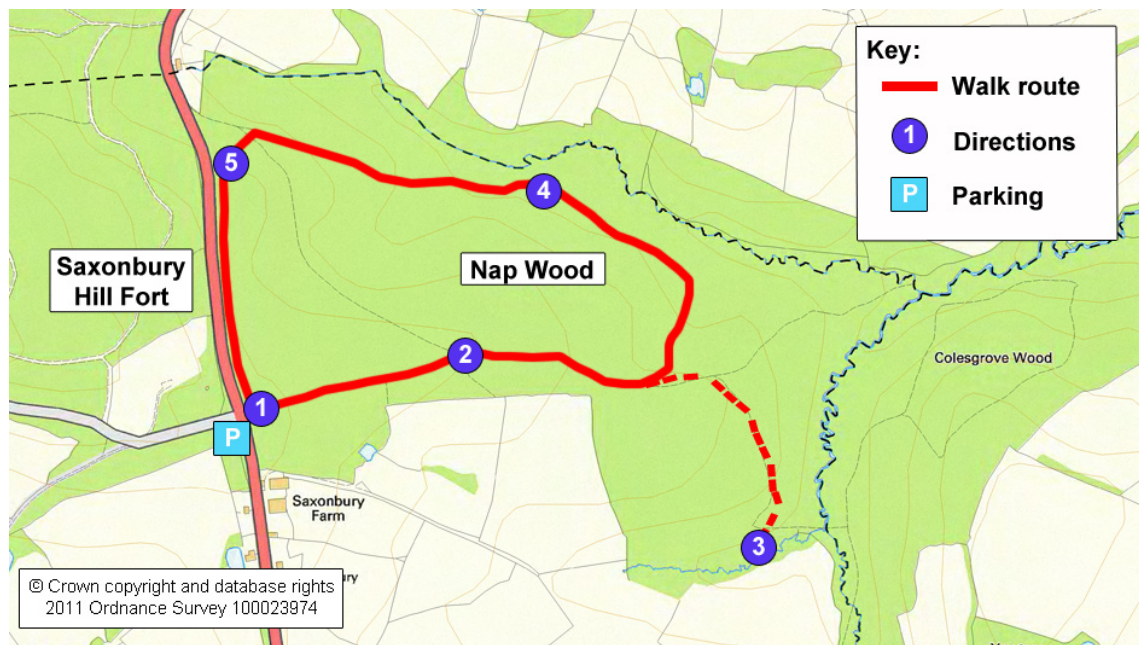
By train: Wadhurst, 3 miles
(4.8km) along the Sussex
Border Path

By bus: Service 52, Tunbridge
Wells to Eastbourne, passes
the start point of the walk

By car: Just off A267 Tunbridge
Wells to Eastbourne road.
Roadside parking

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1. From the lay-by, follow the well-trodden track, an ancient drovers road, into the woods. Just before you enter the woods, take a look behind you towards Saxonbury Hill Fort (not on accessible land). A Stone Age flint axe-head and a Roman coin are just some of the artefacts found here, suggesting evidence of a settlement.

2. Continue along the drovers road, ignoring a path that crosses your route. After a short while, you come to a yew tree on the corner to your right. Another old sunken drovers road leads off from here, that you can head up for a short detour. Local folklore say that the tracks here once led to a hunting lodge for King John called Lightlands (still visible on maps of the area), so you could be walking in the footsteps of royalty.

3. This detour leads you to more impressive, old yew trees. After reaching them, turn back and rejoin the main trail.

4. The track goes downhill for a short while before levelling off again. We coppice trees in Nap Wood, which is where we cut trees right back to their trunks to encourage them to grow more densely. It's a traditional, renewable way to take advantage of wood for products like charcoal. It also helps provides homes for small mammals such as dormice and shrews.

5. Carry on through the woods, listening out for the rustle of dormice or woodpeckers drumming the dead trees. The track winds its way up a fairly steep hill until you are back at the lay-by.