

Short walk option: take the right fork, with the Pale bank on your left, to return to the start.

Longer walk continuation: avoid both forks but turn sharp left, keeping the Pale bank on your right. Cross the small stream over a plank bridge. Follow the path through the wood for 100m, then turn right onto a broad path downhill.

This path follows the **ditch and bank boundary** round Brabies Gate Farm ⑦, which used to be called the Pheasantry and is another old animal enclosure.

The path is crossed by a large fallen beech with notches cut into it to help you climb over it, then crosses a stream by a small wooden footbridge.

Over to the left is an elaborate **stone bridge** ⑧ which formed part of the 19th-century landscaped garden within the ancient enclosure of Chelwood Vachery. The stream crossing point here, **Brabies Gate**, was an important access point into the deer park. The once heavily used paths on either side have cut deep into the slopes to make **hollow ways** ⑨.

Walk uphill until the ground levels out. Keep the fence on your right, passing the entrance to Brabies Gate Farm, and continue along the surfaced track. Turn right at a small crossroads and continue on the main path.

Braberry Ponds ⑩, created as ornamental landscape features, are down to your right, and in the woodland on the left are **spoil heaps and hollows from quarrying activities** ⑪.

Bear right, over the stream and uphill to return to the Pale at Chelwood Gate. Turn left to return to the start.

A well used hollow way

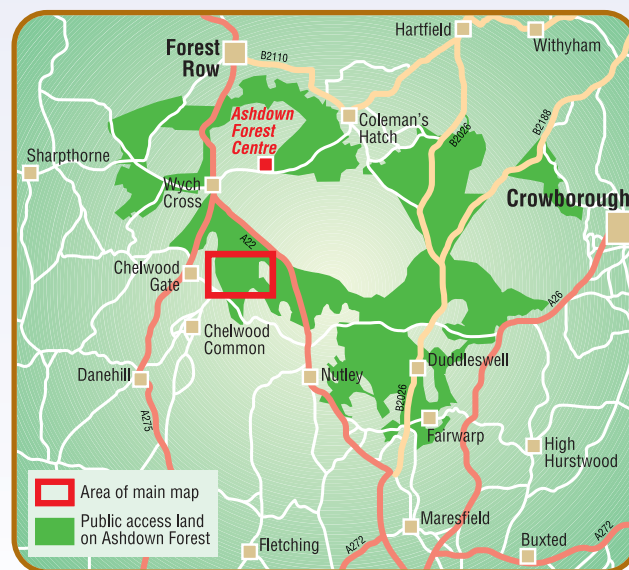
The stone bridge at Chelwood Vachery



HISTORY &
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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).

At 2,500 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.



Use your smartphone to scan the code for more information.



You can also find out more about the archaeology and history of Ashdown Forest by visiting www.ashdownforest.org and the Ashdown Forest Centre at Wych Cross.



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CHELWOOD GATE



EXPLORING ASHDOWN FOREST ON FOOT - WALK 11

An easy circular walk over heather-clad heathland and through woodland, with splendid views across to the South Downs.



HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY SERIES

CHELWOOD GATE

WALK 11 3 miles/4.8km; short version 1.5 miles/2.4km

Park on Beaconsfield Road (RH17 7LG) in Chelwood Gate village, off the A275, near the village hall and small church. Take the track to the left of the church. Cross a small stream. 20m after this, turn left along a small path through bracken which soon runs alongside the stream. Where the path swings to the right, cross the small bank ahead.

You are now standing just outside the **Pale ①**, with the boundary bank in front of you. The Pale is the great bank and ditch of the Ashdown Forest deer park boundary, dating from the 13th century, which kept the deer within the park.

Walk over the bank and ditch and into the old deer park (there may be an electric fence ahead). Turn left and walk along the edge of the open ground until you reach a permanent fence.

The open ground was part of an enclosed rabbit warren. The long, low, bracken-covered mound in front of you is the first **pillow mound ②**, where rabbits were bred commercially. There is a second, curved one further to the left.

Retrace your steps and continue walking round the edge of the open ground, passing the point where you joined it.

The Pale is now on your right, partially hidden in the bracken. Where the edge of the open ground curves round to the left, you will see a small bracken-covered mound ③ with a lone pine growing by, which may be a **circular pillow mound**.

Continue walking in the same direction.

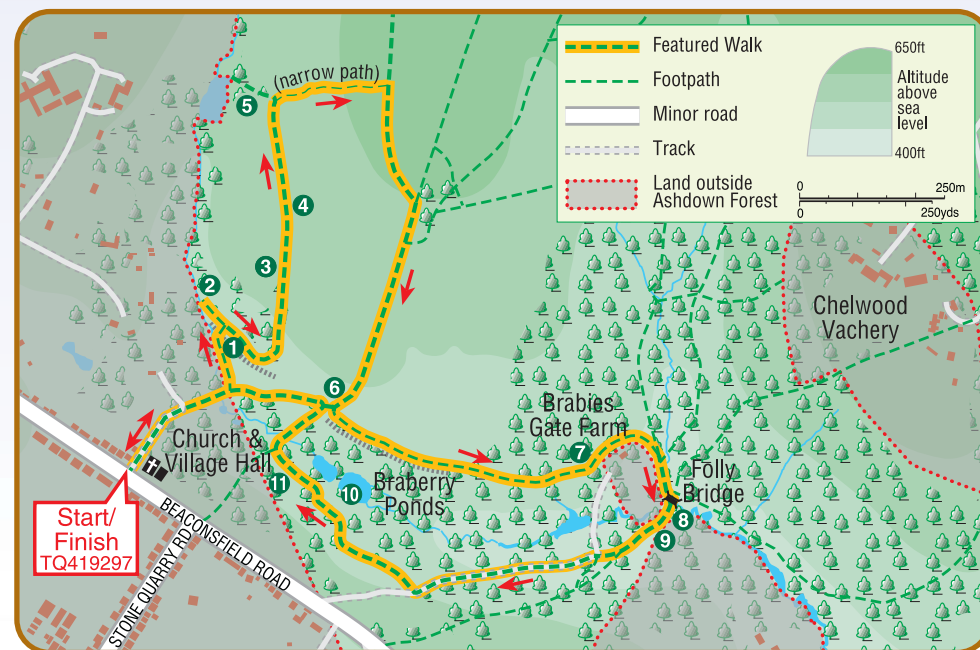
On your right is the **boundary bank and ditch ④** to the warren enclosure. The ditch is on the outside of this bank, unlike the Pale where the ditch is on the inside.

Follow the bank until it reaches a corner and turns left downhill.

To the left you can see the last of the **pillow mounds ⑤**.

Turn right at the end of this enclosure through a small gap cut into the bank and go forward over the heather towards a line of gorse. Turn right on the broad track beyond the gorse and head downhill. After 430m, where the path forks, are some tall pine trees with a large bank behind them.

You are now at Chelwood Gate itself, one of the **gates ⑥** or entrances to the Forest which cut through the Pale. The continuation of the Pale is off to the left.



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Part of the medieval Pale



The pillow mound at point 3



The boundary bank and ditch at point 4



A grazed pillow mound



A LiDAR image showing 2 pillow mounds

