

rather than the usual sand bunkers. There is open access over the courses but the public needs to heed the golfers.

Follow the ride to the top of the hill where it bears left to reach a bench, then bears right through the trees at way marker ⑤. Townsend's car park and the Ridge Road now lie ahead. At way marker ⑥ turn right and follow the gradually ascending ride as it runs parallel to the road. After about 400m Linton's car park is up the slope on the left.

Linton's car park, named after a former Forest Ranger, is the start for a walk into Tabell Ghyll (leaflet number 4 in this series) on the other side of the road.

Continue on the gradually ascending ride for 800m and head towards the Forest Centre.

Established for deer hunting 900 years ago, the Forest today holds large numbers of fallow deer. However, generally shy of people, and always fearful of dogs, they may be difficult to find in daylight. A good place for them (although at a distance) is in privately owned fields like those down to the right. At dawn and dusk the fallow wander more widely and, unfortunately, many are killed or injured on the roads. This has become a serious issue across ever wider areas of Sussex, and nationwide too.



Fallow deer

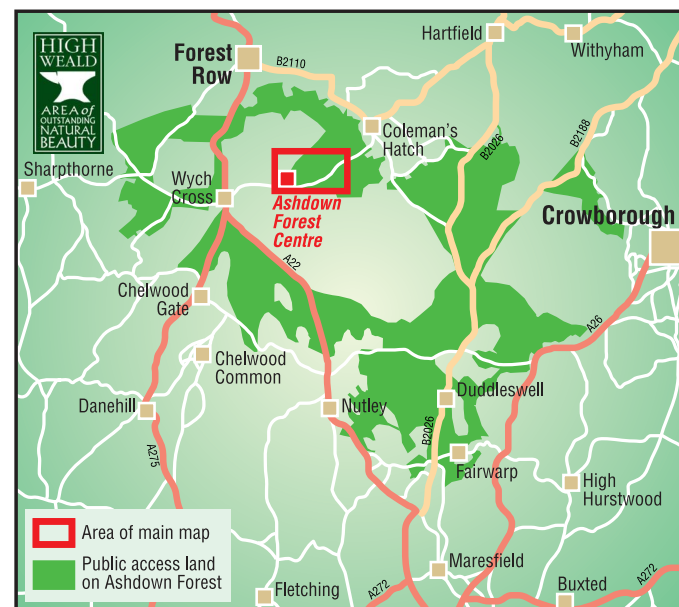
On the left of the ride is the Millennium Clump, made up of Scots pines transplanted in 2000 from elsewhere on the Forest by the Conservators – a modern equivalent of the clumps that grace several hill-tops on the Forest.

The Forest Centre has been the base of the Conservators since the early 1980s. It also houses an Education Barn, an Information Barn (whose opening times are displayed in the adjacent car park) and public toilets. If you enjoyed this walk, why not pick up other leaflets in this series for exploring the Forest?

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).



Text by Per-Rambulations
www.per-rambulations.co.uk
and the Conservators

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

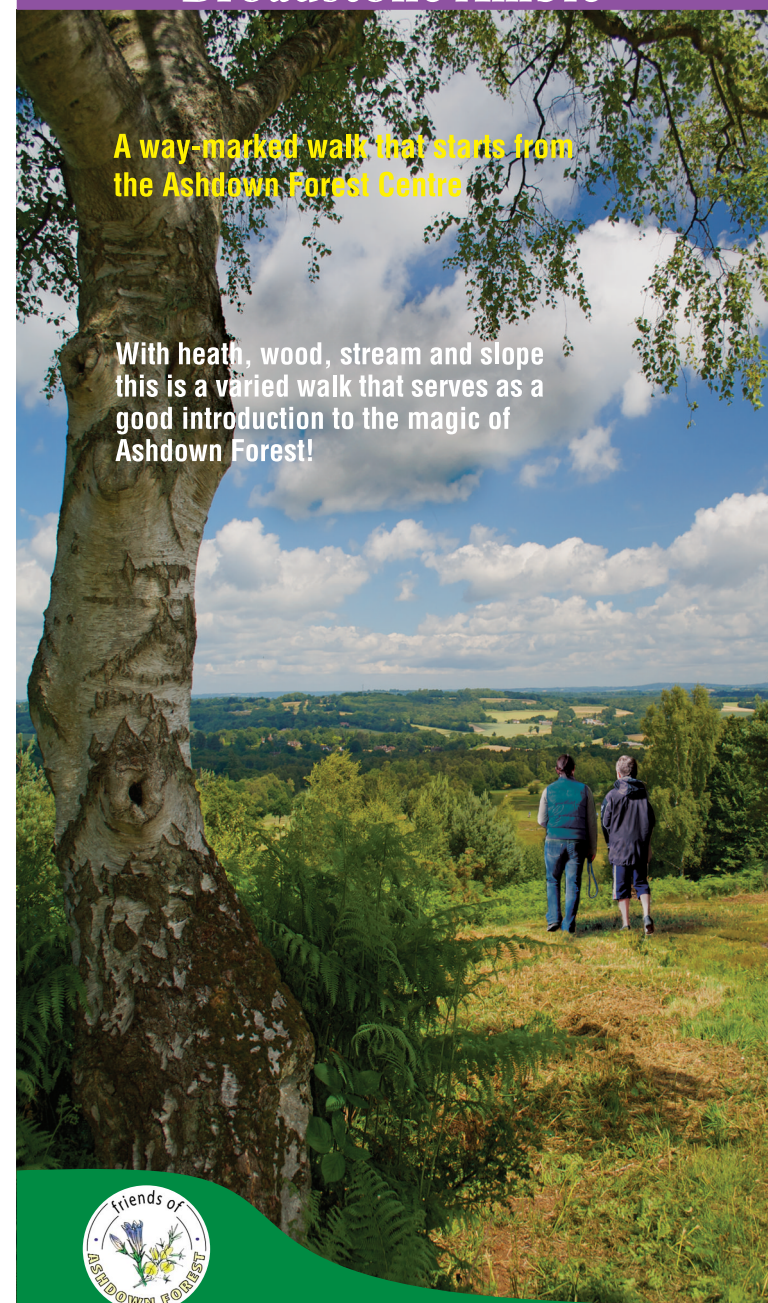


Cartography, photography and graphics by Mapping Ideas Ltd. www.mappingideas.co.uk

Broadstone Amble

A way-marked walk that starts from the Ashdown Forest Centre

With heath, wood, stream and slope this is a varied walk that serves as a good introduction to the magic of Ashdown Forest!



Exploring Ashdown Forest on foot

6



Broadstone Amble

1.8 miles/3km

On leaving the Forest Centre site, turn left immediately at way marker ① and walk downhill parallel to an earth bank and ditch on the left.

The bank and ditch date from, or soon after, 1693 when half of the common land of the Forest, originally 5,000 hectares, was sold by the Crown. Now woodland, the land on the other side was turned over to the raising of rabbits, hence its name of Broadstone Warren. Warrens were mounds of soil about 200 metres long and 7 metres wide.

The large beech trees testify to their former use as boundary markers on the edge of the Forest. Such trees, as they age, are very prone to dropping large branches without warning!

After about 150m, at way marker ②, turn right and follow the path as it emerges from the trees onto the open heath. Continue for 400m, noting on the left a line of Scots pines that mark the site of a quarry.

This quarry is one of many on the Forest made for road building. In World War Two a V1 rocket – commonly called a ‘doodlebug’ – crashed here one night in June 1944. Military activity has long been a feature of the Forest. Most takes place now in the Ministry of Defence training area at nearby Pippingford but sometimes Broadstone Heath is used for navigation exercises.



A 1930s postcard view of Broadstone Heath
Ashdown Forest, Hailfield.

In the past people with common rights on the Forest, commoners, used to set the heaths alight in order to encourage early spring growth of vegetation for their livestock. A big fire went through this area in 2000. Uncontrolled fires can be very destructive to wildlife but so-called ‘controlled burns’, using rides to curb their spread, can be an important part of management. Other management activities include bracken mowing and the control of woodland expanding onto the heath.



Adder
(© Tracy Buxton)

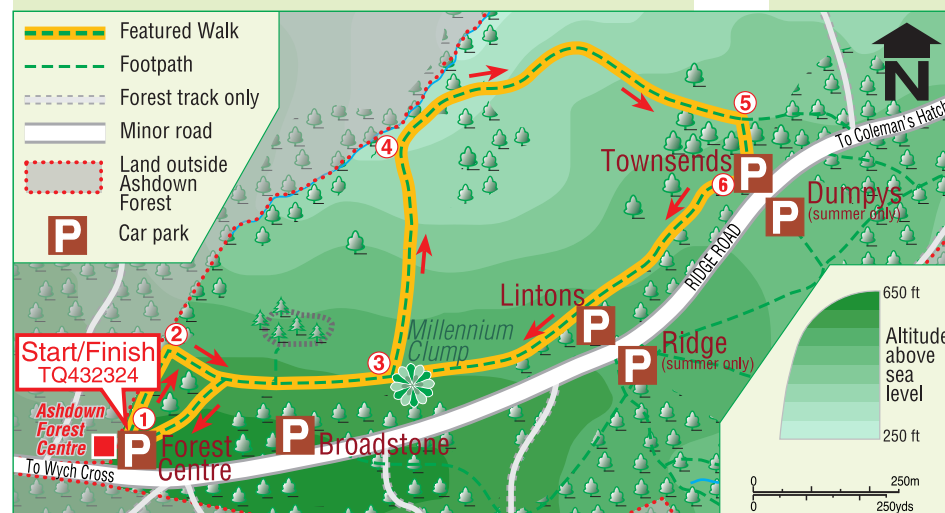
Forest’s 1400 hectares of heath hold the largest populations in Sussex of all these species. Surveys funded by Defra’s Higher Level Stewardship environmental scheme (that supports the Conservators’ management of the Forest’s heathlands) have shown that there are plenty of reptiles: the common (or viviparous) lizard, slow worm, grass snake and adder. One survey technique is to lay metal sheets on the ground and to count reptiles underneath that are attracted by the warmth, especially in cool but sunny conditions.

Small mammals are relatively scarce on the open heath so the main prey of adders is probably lizards. When surprised by dogs running through the heather, adders will bite in self-defence, sometimes with serious consequences. Keeping dogs under control (which is required by Forest bye-law anyway) will leave the snakes in peace!

Heathland plants like round-leaved sundew, bog asphodel and bog cotton are common in the wetter areas. Recent years have seen considerable efforts by Forest staff to rid Broadstone Heath of invasive rhododendron. Hopefully little or none escapes their attention!

At the bottom, just before a stream, the path turns right at way marker ④ and enters a patch of woodland. Cross two bridges and follow the ride as it climbs uphill through more heath.

Over to the left are the fairways of the Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club. Its two courses are renowned for having banks of heather



At the next way marker ③, turn left down a broad ride and follow it to the bottom of the slope.

In summer Broadstone Heath is home to characteristic breeding birds such as Dartford warbler, nightjar, stonechat and tree pipit. The



Bog cotton