

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: 3 km / 1.9 miles

Time: 1 hour (depending on conditions, numbers and excluding stops)

Description: A gentle walk through ancient woodland and across meadows with a small amount of road walking. The woodland paths can get very muddy and slippery.



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.
- Remember that a large group of people can be intimidating, especially to 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 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

Bidborough C of 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

Come out of the school gates and turn left up the hill (watch out there are no pavements). Turn right through a lych gate and into the churchyard of St Lawrence church. Follow the path to the left of the church and straight across the churchyard. Look left for views across the High Weald. Leave the churchyard following the path alongside the recreation ground **1**. Keep straight ahead to walk up onto the road, opposite the old rectory. Cross over the road, turn right and look for an alleyway on your left in the cul de sac. Walk along this footpath and when it reaches the road cross over to continue down it. Half way along the alleyway, turn right down a narrow path **2**. Cross over St Lawrence Avenue to continue on the footpath and enter Birch Wood **3**. Take the right hand path and continue on around the bottom of the pond and up the other side. The path leaves the woodland with a meadow on your right. Bear right as the path joins Birchwood Avenue **4**. Walk along the pavement, then at the next junction turn right to follow the bridle path **5**. As you enter Southborough Common take the main wider path **6** and soon after take a path on the right to enter a denser woodland of beech trees **7**. Go down wide woodland steps where the path then follows a narrow gill. At a T-junction turn right **8** to follow the path downhill and over a bridge. The path continues uphill. Go through a gate to enter a meadow with a cemetery on your left. **9** Go through another gate **10** and bear right across the field to a kissing gate **11**.

Enter the wood heading downhill. Look out for a gate on your left to leave the wood and enter Brookhurst field. Keep to the left and head downhill . Cross the footbridge and pass through a gate. Continue uphill to meet Spring Lane and back up to the school.

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Look out for...




Gill Stream


Key

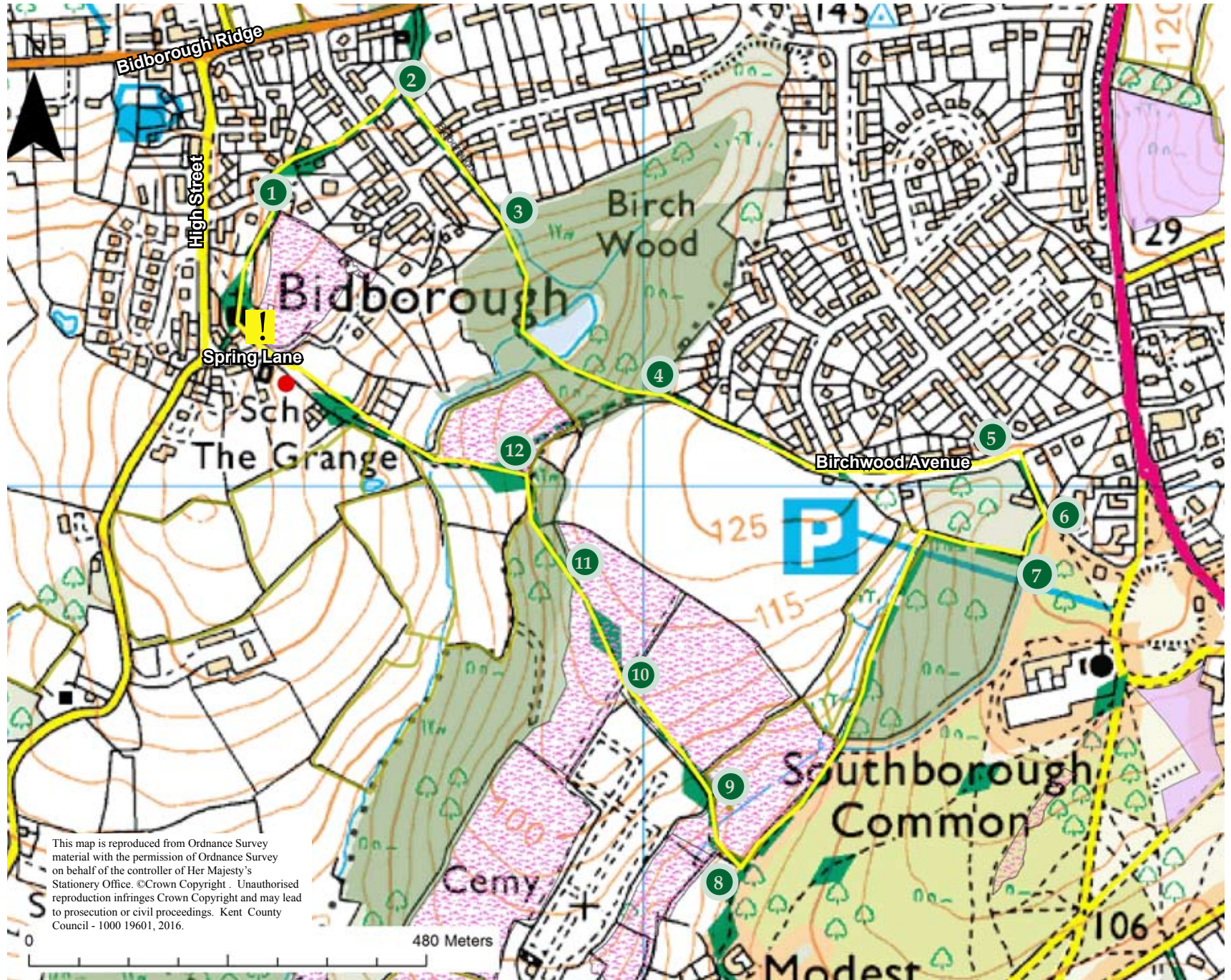
 WALK ROUTE

 Bidborough Primary School

 numbered views

 no pavements

 meadows



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 firewood, fencing, charcoal and trugs. Hazel and sweet chestnut are trees that were commonly coppiced on the High Weald. Which can you see on this walk?



Hazel



Sweet chestnut

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 different plant and animal species. Shrews and voles are plentiful here providing a fantastic feeding ground for barn owls. You will pass through several meadows on this Welly Walk. Count how many grasses and plants there are in a small area. The end of June and early July is the best time to spot wildflowers.



Lesser spotted orchid



Bird's-foot-trefoil



Ox-eye daisy

Count how many grasses and plants there are in a small area. Compare it to another field on the Walk.

Local Building Materials

Traditionally buildings were made from materials in the local landscape. In the High Weald, that means sandstone for bricks, clay for bricks and tiles and wood for timber-frames and weather-boarded buildings. St Lawrence church is made from local sandstone. The oldest part of the church is from the 10th century and was made from stone quarried from the hill on which it stands.



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

Sandstone

Dramatic sandstone outcrops can be found scattered all over the High Weald. The sandstone is porous and when shaded by woodland a unique habitat is created. It is home to rare mosses, lichens and liverworts. A small outcrop can be seen in the final wood on this Welly Walk.



High Weald Ponds



Ponds are an important habitat for wildlife and the High Weald has lots of them. Many ponds have developed because of human activity. The large pond in Birch Wood provides a home for lots of plants and animals such as dragonflies, caddis flies and frogs. Look out over the pond and see how many species you can spot.

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 on the unique environment of the gill slopes such as ferns, liverworts and mosses, form an important, fragile eco-system.

