

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.countrysideaccess.gov.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!

www.highweald.org

Walk Facts



The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a nationally important 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 570 square miles (1,457 square kilometres).

Distance: 5.0 miles/8.0 km.

Time: 3 hours 45 minutes (depending on numbers).

Description: A circular walk over mixed terrain including some hills and a number of stiles, bridges and gates. There is one main road to cross and 2 short sections of country lane. The route goes through fields and woods and can be very muddy in places.

RISK ASSESSMENT - Points to consider

- Wear sturdy footwear or wellingtons.
- Check the weather - waterproofs or hats and sun cream might be needed.
- Taking a drink with you is advisable.
- Adequate staff to student supervision ratios as paths are narrow, the group will spread out and there are roads, bridges and stiles to cross.
- Plants such as nettles and brambles can sting and scratch and berries from plants can cause stomach upsets if eaten.
- There are no toilet facilities, so we recommend that toilet paper and hand wipes are taken as a precaution.
- Everyone must wash their hands before eating.
- A large group of people can be intimidating, especially to animals.

Remember to follow the Countryside Code

Produced by the High Weald AONB Unit, with support from:



Burwash Church of England Primary School High Weald Welly Walk



Be a High Weald Hero - You can make a difference!

The Story of the High Weald's Fields

One of the distinctive landscape features of the High Weald is its pattern of small, irregular fields. After the Anglo-Saxon period, settlers began moving into the High Weald in increasing numbers. These early farmers began clearing the surrounding woods and scrub to make fields for crops and livestock.

Valerie Alford, ESCC Landscape Group



These clearances were done in an unplanned way by the individual farmers. This is why the High Weald's fields are relatively small and irregular in shape. The boundaries were simply formed by leaving strips or 'shaws' of the old woodland between the fields.

Can you count the number of edges in the fields you walk through? How many fields have strips of woodland along their edges?

By the 14th century, the High Weald was settled and looked much the same as it does today. The landscape of the High Weald is essentially medieval: this can be said of few other places in the country.

With their heavy clay soils and steep slopes, many High Weald fields have never been ploughed up to grow crops and have traditionally been used for rearing cattle and sheep. Compared to many areas of Britain, the High Weald still has a relatively large number of ancient, undisturbed, wildflower-rich hay meadows and pastures. These 'unimproved' grasslands are some of our most important habitats for wildlife conservation.



How many different wildflowers and grasses can you see on your walk?

What's in a Name?

As far back as the Neolithic period (c.4300 - 1400BC), or even earlier, farmers from the Downs and coastal plains would drive their pigs into the woods each year to fatten them on acorns and beech mast.

As this happened during the late summer and early autumn, the farmers would have built temporary shelters in which to keep warm while watching their pigs.

Farmers from a particular village returned with their pigs to the same woodland place year after year. These woodland pig pastures were called *dens*.

Over time the dens became more permanent places of settlement, and if you look at a detailed, modern map of the High Weald, you will see what remains of the dens: many villages, farms, fields and woodlands with names ending in '-den' such as Mottynsden Farm.



Ancient Routeways

The frequent passage of pigs being driven to and from the dens formed tracks known as droves, connecting the dens to their parent villages - often 20 miles away. Burwash Church of England Primary School is situated on a known drove road.

To find out more about dens and droving visit www.highweald.org. Follow the links to 'Edmond - an early Saxon drover' and other film clips which tell this landscape story.

Look out for steep-sided sunken lanes on your walk. Follow their route on an Ordnance Survey map.

The High Weald Iron Industry

It is hard to picture the former iron industry in today's countryside of small fields, woodlands and steep, narrow, gill valleys, but in this landscape exist all the necessary raw materials that allowed iron to be smelted for over 2,000 years.

The Wealden geology of sands and clays yielded the iron ore, as well as the stone and brick to build the furnaces; the coppiced woodland provided charcoal for fuel; and the numerous small streams and valleys ensured water power for

the bellows and hammers of the forges and furnaces. For two periods - in the first two centuries of the Roman occupation, and during Tudor and early-Stuart times - the Weald was the main iron-producing region in Britain.

So, where are the remains of iron production? Building stone was too valuable in the Weald to be left unused, so the works were dismantled, and the woods grew back over the former sites. Only place names such as "Furnace Gill"; the telltale waste, called slag, from the smelting process; and some of the hammer and furnace ponds are left to remind us of this once-great Wealden industry.

Created from text by Jeremy Hodgkinson, Wealden Iron Research Group



Building Materials

The traditional building materials and styles of the High Weald are an essential part of the landscape's distinctive character. The building materials have come, in fact, from that very landscape, so it is hardly surprising that they blend in so well. Links with the area's wooded past are evident in the number of timber-framed and weather-boarded buildings, whilst the widespread use of sandstone, bricks and tiles is testimony to the High Weald's underlying geology of sandstone and clay.





1



2



3



4



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8



9



10




11





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

Photo guide and route description

Leaving the school go through the churchyard and turn left at the war memorial, walk along the High Street and turn left into the free car park. Follow the footpath from the left corner of the car park next to the scout hut **1**. Heading down the hill turn right at the way marker crossing a bridge and a stile **2**. Follow the path and cross another bridge and 2 stiles. Cross another stile in the hedge to your right and walk through the middle of the field and around to the right and through a gateway. Continue along the edge of wood shaw towards the stile ahead. At the road turn right. Turn left and follow driveway in front of Batemans **3**. Turn right after Corner Cottage and turn left at the mill pond. Cross over a bridge and walk by the stream and through a gate into the woods. Go straight on at the T-junction keeping to the left of the river, go through a kissing gate and head straight through field. Turn left through gate and over bridge and turn immediately right along the stream and wood shaw. Go straight on through the gateway and across the field **4**. Turn right through the gateway and over the bridge **5**. Turn left along the bottom edge of the field and go into the woods through a kissing gate. To your right is the old path now sunken **6** . Turn right out of woods through a kissing gate and head towards the farmhouse. Turn left at the top of the field, go through a kissing gate, turn right and head up hill through a kissing gate and towards the oast.

Join the driveway and follow it heading straight on to the road when you reach the bollards **7**. Cross the road and turn right and then left following the path on the right **8**. Follow path down a woody sunken lane. Turn right at the T-junction and continue along sunken lane, do not turn off. Beware this path can be very muddy in places  When you reach the road, cross over and turn left and then turn right up the private drive **9**. Turn right off the drive and go over a stile into the orchard **10**. Walk around the right edge, go through the gate **11** . Walk down the edge with the trees on your right and turn left over stile. Follow the drive, before the oast turn left through a field gate **12**. Go straight on along field edge. Go through gates, over bridge and head straight on through the next gate and along the edge of the field until you reach a bridge to your right, cross over and go straight on. Walk to the left of the oast house, across a stile and walk up the drive to the High Street, cross the road and turn left.

Look out for...



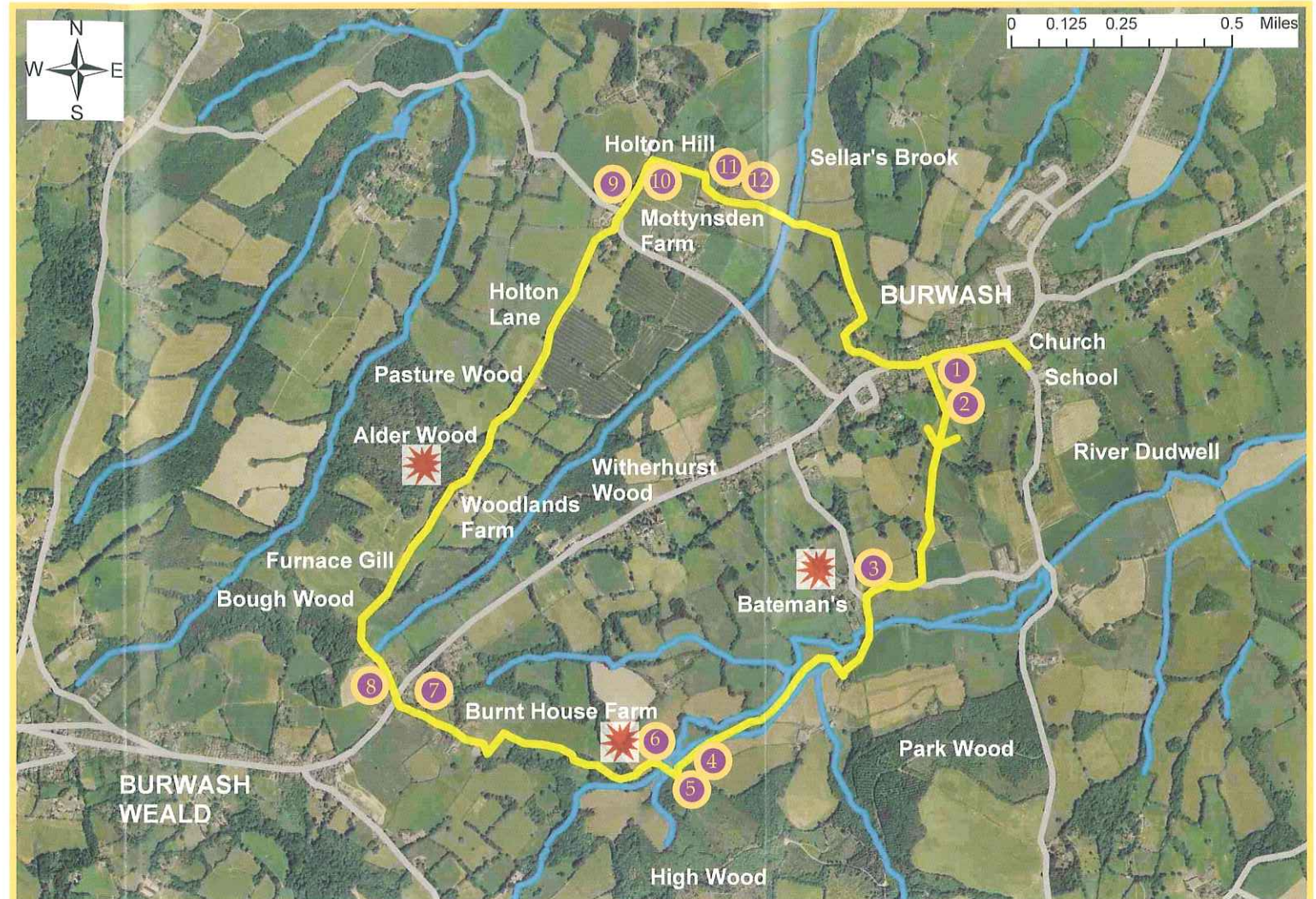
small irregular fields






sunken lanes



local building materials



Key

 walk route  road  watercourse

 numbered views  suggested activity point

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