

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: 2.25 miles/3.6km.

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes from Hever CEP School to the Chiding Stone (approximately).

Description: A mixture of surfaced and unsurfaced paths through woods and farmland, over mainly flat terrain. There are numerous stiles and foot bridges, and one quiet country lane to cross.

RISK ASSESSMENT - Points to consider

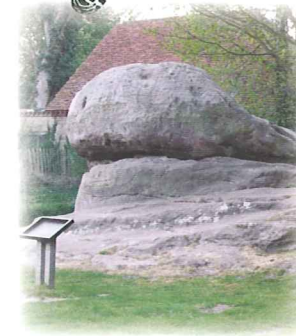
- Wear sturdy footwear or wellingtons.
- Check the weather - waterproofs or hats and sun cream might be needed.
- Taking a drink with you is advisable.
- Adequate staff to student supervision ratios as paths are narrow, the group will spread out and there are roads, bridges and stiles to cross.
- Plants 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:



Hever Church of England Primary School High Weald Welly Walk



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

Sandstone Outcrops

Sandstone Outcrops are a distinctive local feature found scattered over the High Weald. The rocks are important geological features and home for some nationally rare ferns, mosses, liverworts and lichens. These have survived so well in the High Weald because a number of factors, including the relatively high rainfall and extensive woodland canopy, have prevented the sandstone from drying out.

An Endangered Habitat

The sandstone is a very soft rock that can be worn away easily by people and the weather. Some people have left their mark by carving graffiti onto the rocks. This rubs off the hardened skin that protects the rocks and speeds up how fast they wear away. It also rubs off the minerals that the plants need to grow. Rock climbers have to be careful and follow a special code to protect the rocks.

Rhododendron is another major threat to these fragile habitats as it kills surrounding plants by exuding a natural herbicide from its roots.

Can you see signs of erosion on the rocks that you pass? Compare the number of plants growing on the Chiding Stone to the rocks found in the woods.

Man and the Rocks

Mesolithic hunters and gatherers who once roamed the High Weald were the first to appreciate the rocks, often choosing to make their camps underneath the sandstone cliffs. Archaeological evidence of their use includes thousands of flint tools and fragments of charcoal from their fires.



Sandrock was later valued as a building stone and the remains of many small local quarries can be still seen today. Many of the most well known grand houses and churches are built of Wealden Sandstone.

Can you think of some local buildings that are made of Wealden sandstone?

The Chiding Stone has lots of stories about it, the sandstone rock itself gives the village its name. One story is that nagging wives or wrong-doers were brought to the stone and 'told off' - or chided - by the rest of the villagers!

Coppiced Woodland

Coppicing is the name for when trees are cut down low to the ground in such a way that after the cut the stems grow back afterwards. The trees are cut once every 10-15 years and the harvested wood is used to make fencing stakes, charcoal, hurdles and trugs.



When the trees are coppiced the light can reach right down to the ground as the branches and leaves are no longer shading the floor. This means lots of wild plants can grow; including bluebells, wood anemones and wild garlic. These plants can attract insects to feed on the nectar and birds and small mammals to eat the fruits and seeds. In fact a whole range of wildlife can use the coppiced woodland to find their food and make their homes.

Woodlands have been managed in this way for hundreds of years and it is important for the plants and the wildlife that we continue to manage them in this way.

On your Welly Walk you will see coppiced hazel and sweet chestnut. At the edges of the path you can see some of the products that the coppiced timber is made into such as post and rail and pale fencing. Buying local wood products helps to ensure that these woodlands are managed in a way that supports a wide variety of wildlife.

Listen out for the laughing call of the Green Woodpecker. How many different bird songs can you hear?

Gill Streams

Steep-sided, wooded gills are a special feature of the High Weald. Gills are formed where a stream has carved a deep channel for itself through the clay and sandstone of a hillside.



Look at an Ordnance Survey Explorer Map to find out the names of the gills near your school.

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 existed 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 the telltale waste, called slag, from the smelting process, and some of the hammer and furnace ponds are left to remind us of a once-great Wealden industry.

In the churchyard of St Peter's you can still see the gravestone of Nicholas Francis, the village blacksmith, who died in 1779, (the last one on the left between the church and the path). The carving has nearly worn away but it reads...

*My Sledge and Hammer lie reclin'd;
My Bellows, too, have lost their Wind;
My Fire's extinct, my Forge decay'd
And the Dust in my Body's laid
Now I am gone to my long Home,
My Nails are drove, my Work is done.*

Created from text by Jeremy Hodgkinson, Wealden Iron Research Group



Look at a map to see how many place names you can find related to the local iron industry.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12

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

Photo guide and route description

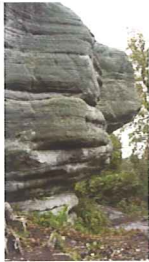
Follow Eden Valley walk through the churchyard ① and continue along the path around the edge of the Castle grounds. On either side of the path you can see the local chestnut pale fencing ②. Cross over the footbridge above the private road, walking into an area of birch and chestnut wood. Continue straight on beyond the woodland, the private road is now on your right hand side ③. ✨ The wide grassy verge provides a good space for an activity. Continue through the gateway and turn right onto a narrow path to the left of the white cottage. At the road go straight across following the path with the woodland and stream on your right. Cross over the stile and bridge and continue up the steps through chestnut coppice ④. Walk through these woods with caution due to the horse cross-country course. Follow the surfaced path and at the T-junction with a grass field directly in front of you turn left. Continue along path with steep sided banks and holly trees, past the sandstone rocks ⑤. At the top of the path you reach a clearing with a view looking across the coppiced woodland to Chiddingstone village and with the eroded sandstone this makes an interesting activity point ⑥. ✨ Continue along the path and you will reach some cottages, beware of moving vehicles. Go past Mole End Cottage and turn right at the fork in the road.

Continue up this road into the farmyard follow the road round to the left with the cottage on your left and farm buildings on your right (7). At the end of the farm buildings follow straight on along the grassy path with a fence on you left (8). Go over the stile and continue straight on, beware it can be very wet and muddy in places. Cross over a mud farm track and continue straight on towards a small woodland (9). Continue through the woodland, you can see ponds on both sides of the path. Cross over the stile into a large field (10) and turn left up the hill with woodland and ponds on your left. At the edge of the woodland the path veers slightly right diagonally across the field to the left of the large solitary tree. At the edge of the field continue through the gap and along the surfaced path (11). When you reach the road turn left towards the village centre, walk past the millennium bench and turn left up the path sign posted to the Chiding Stone (12) .

Look out for...



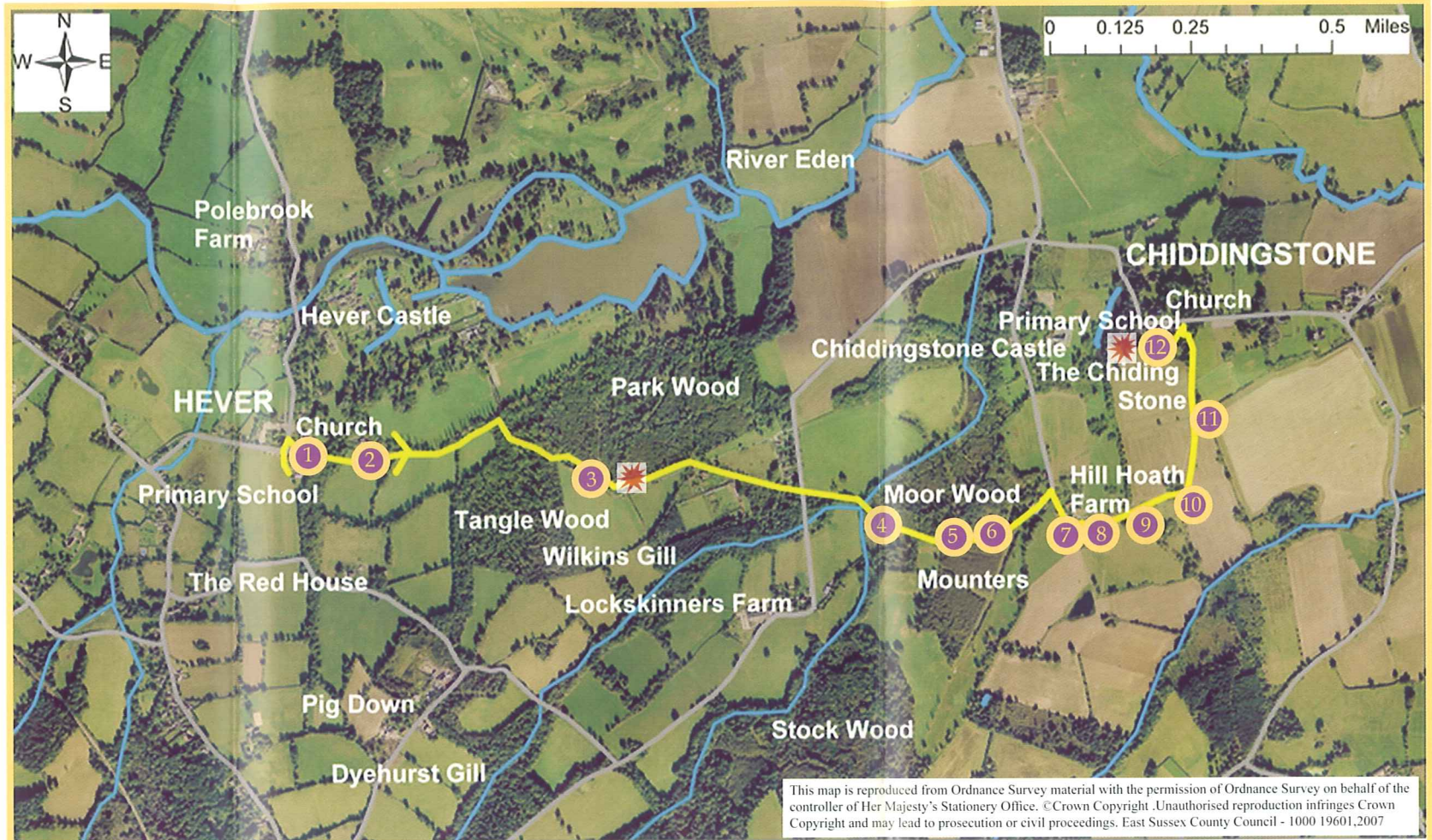
gill streams



sandstone outcrops



coppiced woodland



Key

 walk route  road  watercourse  numbered views  suggested activity point