

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is one of England's Finest Landscapes, 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 Unit with support from:



Walk Facts

Distance: 2.7 miles/4.4 km.

Time: 1.5 hours (depending on conditions and numbers and excluding stops).

Description: A walk through woods, fields and the historic village of Cuckfield. Be aware that parts of this walk can get very muddy and there are some busier roads to cross.



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.
- Long trousers are advised.
- Check the weather - waterproofs or hats and sun cream might be needed.
- Taking a drink with you is advisable.
- Consider adequate adult to child supervision ratios as paths are narrow, the group will spread out and there are roads and stiles to cross.
- 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 hand wipes are taken as a precaution.
- Everyone must clean their hands before eating.
- Remember that a large group of people can be intimidating, especially to animals.
- Footpaths and rights of way are subject to change. The walk should always be checked for new risks before venturing out, especially when planning to take groups of children.
- Remember to follow the Countryside Code.

www.highweald.org



Holy Trinity C.E (A) 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

From the School gate, turn right and walk along Glebe Road. Follow the road until you reach the public footpath on your right **1**. Turn down here, bearing left past the stile. Head along the paved path, until the junction of footpaths. Turn right, past a metal gate and head towards the trees **2**. Carry straight along this path until you reach the road. Turn right and find a safe place to cross over. Keep going until you reach a public footpath on your left **3** (opposite Longacre Crescent) and turn down here. Now stay on this footpath for some distance. Eventually you will emerge opposite The Ship pub.

Safely cross the road and turn right towards the roundabout. Turn left at the roundabout, passing the petrol station **4** and heading down Staplefield Road. From the petrol station continue straight on for approximately 150 metres until you reach the public footpath **5** on your left. Turn down here and, where the path splits, take the right hand fork to walk past The Cottage **6**. Continue forward along the track. At the gap in the hedge (which leads to the Recreation Ground), turn left past a stile **7** and follow the path as it winds all the way downhill. Take care as it can get very muddy here!

Keep going downhill (past the stile on your right) until you reach a wooden bridge. Do not cross over, but pass by (bridge on your left) and head through the gap in the fence **8**, following the main woodland track through New England Wood . Keep going for some distance, keeping the stream on your left and staying on the main path (crossing two small footbridges during this section). When the track reaches a metal fence, turn left. Continue to follow the path downhill, until you reach a gateway in the metal fence **9**. Turn left here and walk over the footbridge **10**. Head uphill towards a stile. Once past this carry straight on through Cuckfield Park, keeping close to the line of fencing on your right and passing through two metal kissing gates. Eventually you will reach a gate at the edge of the park **11**. Go through this and carry straight on up the pavement along South Street that leads to the High Street.

Look out for Church Street on your right, carefully cross over and walk down here. Pass The Old School on your right and head into the churchyard. Once here, turn left along the path and head towards the gate **12**. Follow the tarmac path through the gate, enjoying views towards the South Downs on your right. Carry straight on to reach the end of Courtmead Road. Turn right and safely cross over to reach London Road. Walk along London Road until you reach Glebe Road. Turn right and follow the road round until you get back to School!

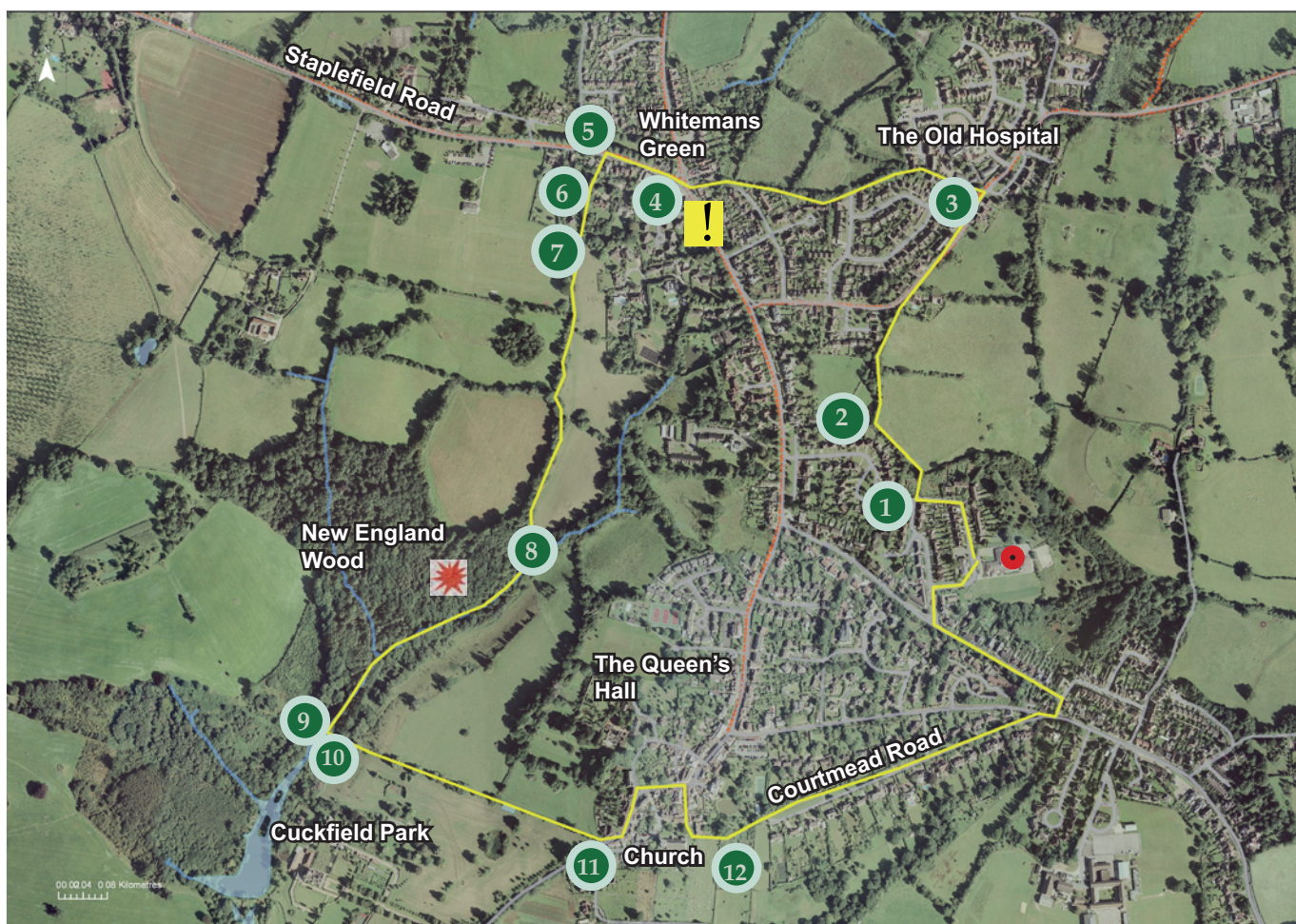
Look out for...



Ancient Woodland



Gill Stream



Key



Holy Trinity Primary School



WALK ROUTE



numbered views



suggested activity point



historic routeway



road



watercourse



take care, busy road

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Ancient Woodland

Trees and woodland cover over one-third of the High Weald and are a key landscape feature that you can enjoy on this Welly Walk.

The woods of the High Weald were relatively slow to be cleared because they were a valuable resource: providing timber for building, fuel for heating and charcoal for iron smelting, as well as animal feed - acorns and beech mast for pigs. Even when agricultural clearance did begin in the High Weald, much woodland was retained and continued to provide valuable resources, particularly for the iron industry.

Today, 70% of the High Weald's woodlands are classed as ancient - having existed continuously since at least 1600AD. They have been maintained for centuries by skilled workers using a rotational coppicing system.



Coppicing is when trees are cut down low to the ground in such a way that the stems grow back afterwards. The trees are cut once every 10-15 years. The harvested wood is used to make products such as fencing stakes, charcoal, hurdles and trugs. Buying local wood products helps to ensure the continuation of traditional management.

New England Wood is an example of an ancient woodland on this Welly Walk.

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 attract insects to feed on the nectar, and birds and small mammals eat the fruits and seeds.

Often, rarer species are now only found in working coppice.



Ancient Routeways

As far back as the Neolithic period (c.4500 - 2300BC) farmers from the Downs and coastal plains would drive their pigs into the woods each year to fatten them on acorns and beech mast.

This happened during the late summer and early autumn, and the farmers would have built temporary shelters to keep warm while watching their pigs. These woodland pig pastures were called dens. Many places in the High Weald have names ending in den - for example *Standen*, *Cowden*.



The frequent passage of pigs being driven to and from the dens formed tracks known as droves. Over time the dens became settlements in their own right, and the roughly north-south droving routes remained. They can be seen today in the pattern of lanes, bridleways and footpaths radiating away from the High Weald.

Centuries of use by many trotters, feet, hooves - and, later, cartwheels - have worn the soft ground away so that, today, many of the routes have deeply sunken sections.

Look closely at the map in this Welly Walk leaflet to see where historic routeways exist in and around Cuckfield.

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. Gill streams flow into rivers that have formed wide valleys in the eastern part of the High Weald.

Admire the twisting path carved by a gill stream as you walk from point **8** all the way through the woods.



Dinosaurs...

The village of Cuckfield is noted for a number of significant finds and periods in history.

In 1822 Dr. Gideon Mantell traced a fossil, that his wife had found in the village, to a quarry in Whitemans Green. Here he found teeth and other remains of an unidentified creature that had died 130 million years ago. Mantell concluded that he had found the remains of a giant reptile, not unlike an iguana, and so named the creature *Iguanodon*. *Iguanodon* thus became the first dinosaur in the world to be recognised and named - and it all started in Cuckfield!

...and Doodlebugs

Cuckfield has also been shaped by events in more recent times, including WWII. Evacuees were brought to The Queen's Hall, Cuckfield hospital was a refuge for the wounded and two bombs were dropped in the village. One of these landed in Brook Street in 1940, whilst the other - the second ever Doodlebug to fall in England - fell at Mizbrook's Farm to the north of the village.



Take a detour and carry on up the High Street - can you spot the old air raid siren on the roof of The Queen's Hall?

Local 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.



What local building materials can you spot on the houses that you pass?