

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: 2.5 miles/4.1km.



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

Description: A walk mostly on surfaced footpaths, with good views. Care will need to be taken when crossing busier roads.

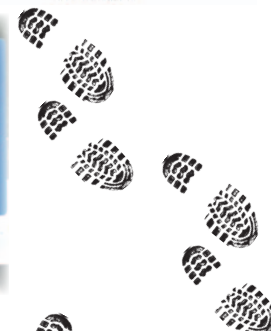


RISK ASSESSMENT - Points to consider

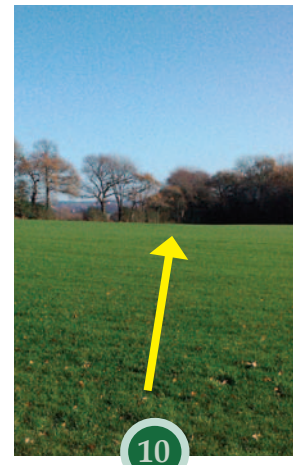
- Please use with an Ordnance Survey Explorer Map.
- Wear sturdy footwear or wellingtons, being aware of uneven ground and fallen trees, especially in wet weather.
- Long trousers are advised.
- Check the weather - waterproofs or hats and sun cream might be needed.
- Take care when crossing busy roads or walking along roads with no pavements; stay close to the edge/on grass verges.
- 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

Parkside Community 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 turn left to reach the end of Beechwood Lane. Turn right and walk up Elm Way. Go past The Oaks and Walnut Close. Turn left along the footpath at the edge of some ancient woodland on your left **1** ✨. Walk through the trees to reach Woodland Way. Cross over and continue straight on, along Green Lane to cross over at the mini roundabout. Bear left slightly (through the no entry signs) **2** and head downhill to reach the end of Prospect Road. Turn right along Hailsham Road and find a safe place to cross. Keep going until you reach Harley Lane (on your left, after Hampden and Oak Lodge). Turn left here and walk down the lane **3**. Where the path splits **4**, carry straight on downhill to reach the junction of footpaths.

Turn left and follow the paved path/cycle route. At the junction of Old Ghyll Road **5** cross over and carry straight on, following the path. Keep going until the path meets the main road. Cross over **6**, following signs to the Cuckoo Trail. Follow the path straight on for some distance until you reach the picnic area that is signposted on your right hand side. Carry on but look out for a footpath on your left shortly afterwards. Take this path up the steps and through the gate **7**. Walk straight across the small field, go through another gate and follow the narrow footpath up to the main road.

Cross over, turn right and follow the footpath on your left just before the 'Runt in Tun' pub (8). Walk along the footpath up to the gate ahead of you and head into the field. Turn right along the edge of the field (9). Go through the gap leading to the next field and walk diagonally left across it, heading towards the finger post in the far corner (10). Go past the finger post and then turn left, walking uphill towards a stile in the line of trees (11). Climb over the stile and walk along the path, fenced on either side, to reach another stile. Cross over and walk down the path to meet the road.

Turn right and walk along the grassy verge (12), past the gate to Theobald's Green Farm. Continue on the verge, and then pavement, until you reach Pine Tree Road. Turn right here and follow the road uphill until it meets Green Lane. You are now back at (2). Turn right and retrace your steps by walking down to Elm Way and back to school!

Look out for...











Rolling Hills



Former Railway Line



Key

-  Parkside Community Primary School
-  WALK ROUTE
-  numbered views
-  road
-  historic routeway
-  watercourse
-  busy road
-  suggested activity point

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Ancient Woodland

Trees and woodland cover over one-third of the High Weald and are a key landscape feature.

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.

Visit www.highweald.org to learn more about the High Weald's woodlands.

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 *Heatherden, Hampden*

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 Heathfield.

The Cuckoo Trail

The Cuckoo Trail, a former railway line, forms part of this Welly Walk. The line was opened in 1849 and used for transporting goods and passengers from Eastbourne through Heathfield. The line was closed in 1968.

The Cuckoo Trail is now a 14 mile cycling and walking route from Heathfield to Hampden Park and gets its name from the tradition of releasing the first cuckoo of Spring at the Heathfield Fair.



Scattered Farmsteads

The High Weald has many isolated farmsteads, hamlets and dwellings dotted across the countryside. This scattered settlement pattern means the High Weald is the most populated protected landscape in the UK.

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. By the 14th century, the High Weald was settled and looked much the same as it does today.

Towards the end of this Welly Walk, just after ¹¹, take a moment to admire Theobold's Green Farm - an example of an historic farmstead.

Look at the houses and farm buildings on this Welly Walk - what local building materials have been used to build them?

Funny-shaped 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. Early farmers began clearing the surrounding woods and scrub to make fields for crops and livestock. These clearances were done in an unplanned way by the individual farmers. This is why the High Weald's fields are often small and irregular in shape. The boundaries were simply formed by leaving strips or 'shaws' of the old woodland between the fields.

