

Bluebell Walk

Pleasant at any time of year, the wildflowers make spring a particularly good time to walk these paths. Good views all year round. There is room for a few cars to park opposite the church.

The Parish Church of St John the Baptist and its churchyard are worth a visit at the start or end of the walk. The oldest part of the Church is said to date from the 13th century and was built of local ironstone. The Spanish Chestnut trees in the front are more than 300 years old and still produce a good crop of chestnuts. The war memorial to those who died in the First and Second World Wars is inside the Church.

- From the Parish Church walk up the road and round the sharp right-hand bend. Immediately cross the road [take care, busy road] and go through the field gate. Walk down the track to cross a stile into the field and continue straight on to the end of the wood to your right. Bear very slightly to the right across the field to the right-hand corner of a small wood opposite.
- Keeping this wood to your left continue down the field to cross two stiles and a bridge. From here, bear very slightly left up and across the field to cross a stile into Beech Wood. Walk along the path through the wood and cross a stream before reaching a field.

Beech Wood is a lovely sight when carpeted with bluebells. Look also for the plants of ransoms or wild garlic with their strong oniony smell, golden marsh marigolds in the damp areas, known also as kingcups and the delicate white wood anemones. The rusty water in the stream indicates the presence of iron.

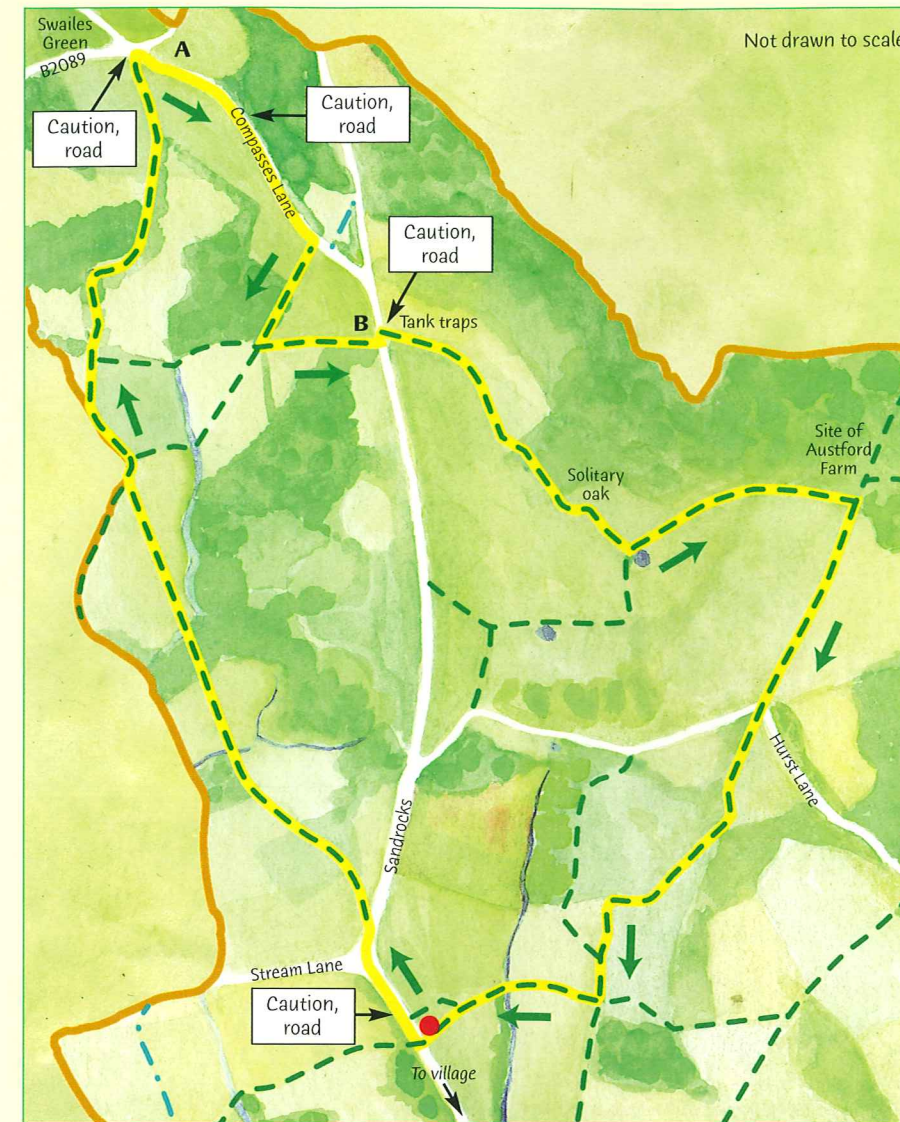
- Walk diagonally across this field aiming towards a point approximately 50 metres in from the right-hand end of the conifer wood ahead. Go through one gateway and very shortly a second, onto a track. Walk ahead along the track for some distance before reaching the road at Swailes Green. Turn right. Here you have the opportunity to visit the workshops and showroom of Country Ways Oak.

Country Ways Oak – you can visit the workshop and showroom of this maker of fine oak furniture at the end of the track at Swailes Green. Alternatively, take one of the shorter footpaths to the right leading off the track towards the vineyard.

- Walk down Compasses Lane and take the footpath on your right. Cross the field diagonally to the left and on through the woodland. Turn left at the end of the wood through a garden to reach Sedlescombe Vineyard.

Sedlescombe Vineyard is England's oldest organic vineyard, established in 1979. Its shop is open to the public and sells wines and fruit juices (please note that in winter the shop only opens at weekends). There is a bluebell walk in spring.

- Leaving the vineyard, cross the road into the field on the other side walking along the track until it turns sharply left. Here bear right to reach a narrow strip of trees.
- Keeping to the left of these trees walk towards a solitary oak in the middle of the field ahead. Bear slightly right and uphill towards the footpath marker near trees and a pond.
- Turn left, cross a field and then, keeping woodland on your left, walk on to reach a crossroads of paths. Turn right and walk uphill to reach Hurst Lane. Take the footpath opposite between fences, then after crossing a stile turn right onto an unmade lane with bungalows on your left. After a short while the lane bears sharply to the left. Here find and pass through a gateway in the corner of the field. Keeping the hedge on your left, walk through the first field, and on the far side of the second field, turn right and walk first down and then uphill to reach the Church and your starting point.



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Reminders of the Second World War can be seen near Sedlescombe Organic Vineyard. Look for the brick gun emplacement near the vineyard and concrete tank traps opposite. The Powdermill Reservoir was built in the 1930s and it was at that time that nearby Austford Farm and its buildings were demolished. The footpath from here leads to the village and has been used by countless people, carts and animals over the centuries.

Approximate distance
4½ miles

Time – allow 2¼ hours

Limited parking opposite church

KEY

- Start point
- Direction of route
- Route follows road
- - - Route follows path
- - - Other footpath
- · - · Bridleway
- Parish boundary

- A Country Ways Oak
01580 830077
www.countrywaysoak.co.uk
- B Sedlescombe Vineyard
01580 830715
www.englishorganicwine.co.uk

