

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](http://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](http://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:** 3.9 miles/6.2 km

**Time:** 2 hours (depending on conditions and numbers and excluding stops).

**Description:** A mixture of surfaced and unsurfaced paths through woods, fields, orchards and Ticehurst village. The terrain is mostly gentle although there are some steeper sections.



### RISK ASSESSMENT - Points to consider

- Please use with an Ordnance Survey Explorer Map.
- Wear sturdy footwear or wellingtons, being aware of uneven ground. Long trousers are also advised.
- Check the weather - waterproofs or hats and sun cream might be needed.
- Take care when walking along roads with no pavements; stay close to the edge/on grass verges where possible.
- Taking a drink with you is advisable.
- Consider adequate staff to pupil 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.
- Whilst there are toilet facilities in Ticehurst village, we recommend that toilet paper and hand wipes are taken as a precaution.
- Everyone must clean their hands before eating.
- Remember 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](http://www.highweald.org)

# Ticehurst & Flimwell Church of England Primary School High Weald Welly Walk



Be a High Weald Hero - you can make a difference



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12

*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 car park turn left and, almost immediately, turn left again through some wooden gates **1**. Continue forward towards the open fields, keeping close to the line of trees on your left. Carry straight on down the hill, following the worn path. At the bottom of the hill, follow the path into the trees (depending on time of year you may need to follow the edge of the field all the way round until you come to the second path into the wood). Once in the woods, stick to the path **2** (beware it can get very muddy here!) and walk up towards the houses. At the pavement turn right and, after approximately 50m, turn right again to cross the grass and follow the footpath between the fences and allotments **3**. At the end of the footpath turn left. Walk to the end of this road (Pickforde Lane) and turn right along the High Street. After approximately 100m turn right into an alleyway beside a shop, opposite the private drive to Old Hazelwood **4**. Follow this footpath as it emerges into fields. Keep close to the hedge on your left, with open fields to your right. Keep going straight on, all the way down to the woods. Follow the main grassy track through the trees. Bear right as you pass the pond and then left **5** to walk up towards the houses. Cross the road at Walter's Farm and continue forward. As the driveway of the house bears left, carry straight on down a narrow footpath that is wooded on either side **6**. Keep going to reach the end of the footpath and a row of houses on your right. You are now in a sunken lane, can you spot where the path used to be? Walk up this historic routeway to meet the main road. Turn right, past Overy's Farmhouse, and walk along the road. Follow it for as far as you can, until the track becomes inaccessible

for cars. Follow the path, past the barrier, as it turns left **7** and leads to the banks of Bewl Water . Follow the well worn path through the trees. At the junction of footpaths turn left to go through the gate **8** and walk up the steps. Shortly afterwards turn left and cross the cattle grid. Follow the road all the way to its end and then turn right. Walk up the road, past the end of Tinkers Lane, until you reach The Bull pub. Keep following the main road round to the left, passing the end of Boarders Lane. Continue for approximately 130m until you reach a footpath on your right **9**. Turn down here and walk on the wide grassy path uphill through the orchard. Where the path forks, bear left and then immediately right **10**. You are now walking with a tall hedge and trees on your right and rows of small fruit bushes to your left. Follow the path and hedge all the way down the hill until it runs out, heading towards the woods. Turn left at the bottom, walking with the woods on your right. Shortly afterwards turn right into ancient woodland **11**. Stick to the main track as it bears right and goes steeply downhill (take care if wet) to cross a small wooden bridge **12**. Bear left once over the bridge and continue to follow the narrow path as it becomes fenced on either side. Turn left at the top of the steps and cross the stile into a grassy field. Walk uphill towards the house and cross another stile at the roadside. Turn left and follow this road (Vineyard Lane) all the way to its end. When you reach the main road turn left and follow the road back towards Ticehurst. At Pickforde Lane, turn left to retrace your steps back to school. (At the end of Pickforde Lane turn right along the narrow footpath towards the allotments. Turn left at the pavement and cut back through the woods to bring you to the bottom of a hill. Follow the path uphill back to the school).

### Look out for...



Oast Houses



Sunken Lane



### Key

-  Ticehurst & Flimwell CEP School
-  WALK ROUTE
-  road
-  historic routeway
-  watercourse
-  numbered views
-  busy road
-  suggested activity point

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. ©Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. East Sussex County Council, 1000 19601, 2010.

## 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. 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.

Visit [www.highweald.org](http://www.highweald.org) to discover more about coppicing

Woodlands have been coppiced for hundreds of years and it is a valuable process for plants and wildlife. Buying local wood products helps to ensure the continuation of traditional management.



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

## A Medieval Landscape

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.



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. 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.

## Historic 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 many High Weald farmsteads 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. The building materials have led to a particularly rich architectural heritage of distinctive farm buildings.

What local building materials can you see on the houses in Ticehurst village?

## Ancient Routeways

As far back as the Neolithic period (c.4300 - 1400BC) 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 this Welly Walk takes you through Broomden Wood.

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,



Look closely at the map in this Welly Walk leaflet to see where some of these historic routeways exist in and around Ticehurst.

many of the routes have deeply sunken sections. In spring and summer, the High Weald's narrow, sunken lanes with their ancient, wooded banks are transformed into shady 'tree tunnels'. Many are lined in places with wildflower-rich verges - some are even designated as 'Roadside Nature Reserves'.

## Oast Houses

Keep your eyes peeled for some historic oast houses on this Welly Walk. Traditionally, oast houses would have been used to dry and cool hops before they were transported to local breweries and made into beer. Hops have been cultivated in the High Weald since the 16th century.



Hopped ale or beer was popular for both its taste and superior keeping qualities and, as trade flourished, so too did hop gardens, oast houses and breweries. Today, only a handful of hop gardens and breweries remain and most oast houses have been converted for residential use.