

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:** 3.4 miles/5.6km.

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

**Description:** A largely woodland walk along sunken routeways and with stunning views. Care will need to be taken when crossing busier roads.



## RISK ASSESSMENT - Points to consider

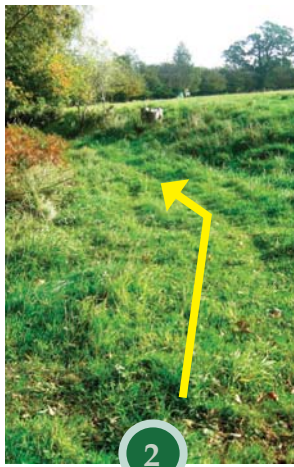
- Please use with an Ordnance Survey Explorer Map.
- Wear sturdy footwear or wellingtons, being aware of uneven ground and fallen trees, especially near water and in wet weather.
- Long trousers are advised.
- Check the weather - waterproofs or hats and sun cream might be needed.
- Take care when walking along roads with no pavements; stay close to the edge/on grass verges where possible.
- Taking a drink with you is advisable.
- Consider adequate 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](http://www.highweald.org)

# Turners Hill CE 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 left and walk along the pavement. Carry straight on, along the grassy verge, down Paddockhurst Road. Before the grass verge narrows, safely cross over and keep going straight on. You will pass a public footpath on your right (opposite Grove Farm) but continue forward until you reach the next public footpath, just past Pumpstreet Cottages. Turn right here **1** and follow the farm track past the barns on either side of you. Stick to the track as it bears right, passing houses on your left, and carrying straight on towards the open fields. Keep going and, where there is a fork in the track, carry straight on towards the road **2**, do not turn left into the woodland. Follow the grassy path up to the road and safely cross over **3**.

Walk along the wide grassy verge to reach an entrance to Tulleys Farm. Turn right here and follow the tarmac drive for some distance. Where the drive becomes gravel, follow it uphill between the trees. Keep going until the gravel path ends. Pause to admire the open view to your left and then carry straight on along the narrow, sunken footpath between the trees **4**.

Stay on this track all the way through the woods. Head downhill, through a gap in the wooden fence. Continue forward and, where the path splits by the fingerpost ⑤, carry straight on along the grassy path. The path widens – continue to stay on the main woodland track. Eventually you will pass a pond on your right. Keep going but turn right at the end of the path ⑥ (keep following the public footpath arrows) to walk up to the road. Turn left and walk down the road, away from Rowfant Business Centre ⑦. At the speed bump, turn right, cross the grass and head into the woods. Take the right hand fork, to cross the stile ⑧ and follow the path uphill.

Stay on this path all the way through the woods. The path splits at various points but always continue straight on. At the edge of the woods, the path splits into 3, bear left uphill ⑨ to reach a stile. Cross over and walk through the field, keeping to the right hand edge. At the end of the hedge (on your right) carry on, down the concrete path towards a gate ⑩. Go through this and follow the concreted track downhill.

Go through a second gate and walk up to the road. Turn right and find a safe place to cross over. Walk on the grass verge until the pavement begins. Now follow the pavement all the way up the hill, crossing over Medway and Hill House Close. When you reach Lion Lane (on your right hand side) cross the main road and walk up Lion Lane, heading towards the Red Lion pub. Take care as there are no pavements. Just after the pub, turn right along the public footpath ⑪ and follow the gravel track. The path splits - take the left hand fork along the private drive. Bear left and walk uphill, ⑫ across the grass behind the houses, heading towards the fire station. Keep going and you will soon emerge at the roadside opposite Turners Hill School!

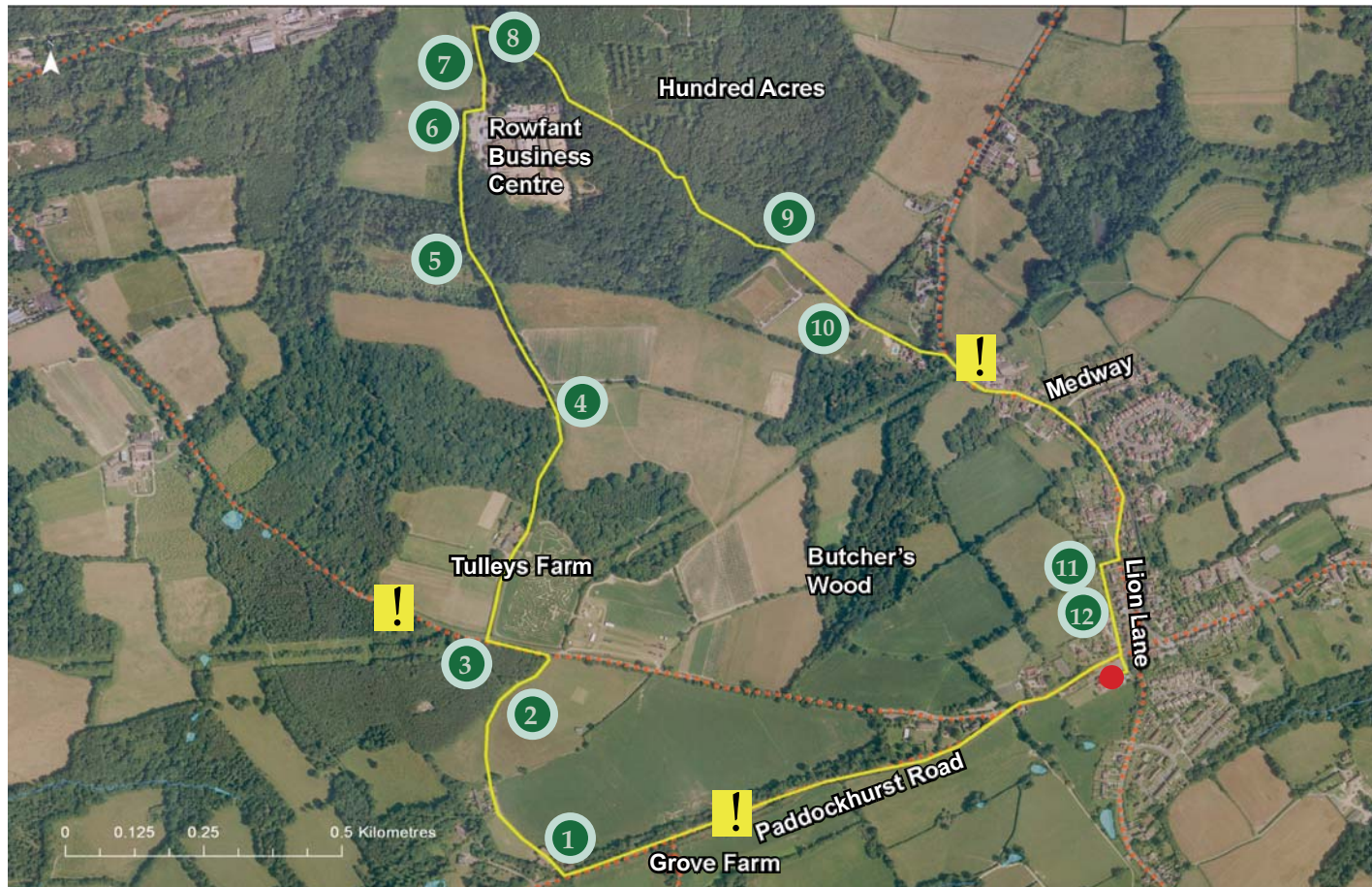
### Look out for...





Rolling Hills



Historic Routeways



### Key

-  Turners Hill CE Primary School
-  WALK ROUTE
-  numbered views
-  road
-  historic routeway
-  watercourse
-  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.

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.

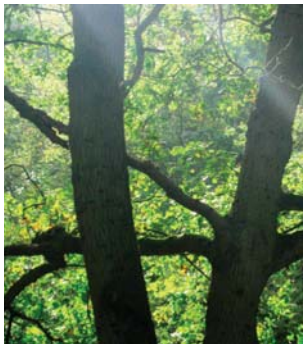


Coppicing is when trees are cut down low to the ground in such a way that the stems grow back afterwards. The trees are cut once every 10-15 years. The harvested wood is used to make products such as fencing stakes, charcoal, hurdles and trugs. Buying local wood products helps to ensure the continuation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

*Visit [www.highweald.org](http://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 Tenterden, Standen.

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 out for this as you walk from point **4** and head into the woods.

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

## 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.



## 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.



## 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.



*Think about the old houses and farm buildings you can see in Turners Hill - what local materials have been used to build them?*