

Self-Guided Walks

A circular walk from Mountfield to Netherfield

Welcome to the High Weald National Landscape, an unspoilt medieval landscape. Amid the remnants of ancient routeways we will be passing a site from the industrial age when ironworks were a feature of this landscape. We also pass a reversal of fortunes where a golf course has gone back to being grazing land.

Distance and duration	A pleasant 7¼ mile walk, taking about 3½ hours.
Level	Moderate with a few steep hills
Start point / Post code	The car park at the rear of the village hall in Mountfield, TN32 5LG
OS map reference What-3-Words	Explorer 124, TQ733203 https://what3words.com/munch.hints.distracts
Other information	The car park is located just beyond the Church, on the same side of the road. Click here to download a GPX file of the route

I-Spy - Something to look out for in the landscape



Two

We are grateful to Lionel Pringle for his permission to use this walk.

This walk begins from the village hall car park in Mountfield, which is located just beyond the Church on the same side of the road. Should you find this car park to be full, there is a layby just beside the Church which can be used.

In the car park, standing with your back to the hall, go through the gate on the left into the field beyond.

Keeping to the edge, with woodland to your right, proceed down the field.

About 100 yards from the bottom of the field you will find a stile to a footpath into the woods on the right. This actually goes across the top of Mountfield Tunnel, and you should be able to see the railway lines on the left.

The footpath turns left and emerges into a tarmac area, turn sharp right as you reach this point, and you will come onto a drive.

Turn left along this drive, immediately passing a two-storey brick and tile hung building, displaying the sign "Defence Vision Systems", on your right. The footpath will be found immediately after this property on the right just before a post-and-rail fence, where it goes between some thick rhododendron bushes. The path skirts the garden of the next property, passes through a small area of conifers, and emerges onto a railway line.

It is unlikely that you will find a train as it is a private line going to British Gypsum and is used infrequently.

Go over the railway line to the road beyond, which also belongs to British Gypsum, and is well used, particularly by heavy lorries, so beware.

Go through a kissing gate, cross the road, through another metal gate onto a footpath, turning left immediately, and parallel to the road. After 20 yards the footpath turns right and goes down a slope through woods.

At the bottom there is a wooden footbridge, go over the bridge and as you emerge keep bearing right, and carry on along this path.

Pass a gate and fence on your left and continue into the woodland.

Follow the well-defined path straight ahead through the woods, for about half a mile.

The path eventually emerges into a field by way of a field gate and stile. Carry on straight ahead, keeping the wood on your right, do not go into the wood.

The next field gate and stile will be found about halfway up on the right-hand side of the field.

Go over the stile and bear half-left, keeping the hedge, fence and farm buildings well over to your immediate left. Continue to the far side of this field.

Go through the field gate or stile that you will find at this point, turn sharp left and go through the gate or stile ahead of you.

Turn immediately sharp right and with the hedge on your right-hand side, carry on straight up the field. When you reach the corner of the field, go over the stile and proceed carefully down a steep bank and steps onto the road.

Three

Turn right and continue up the road. Beware of traffic along this road, as visibility is not always good.

You will soon pass a large brick house partially hidden behind rhododendrons on your right. There is no sign displayed but it is marked as The Old Rectory on the Ordnance Survey map. As you pass this, you will see a tall building ahead of you, which is known as The Shooting Box. Just before reaching this, turn left along the made-up lane.

When you reach the next road junction, go straight across the road, making for the big green box opposite. Go to the left of this box and over the stile into the wood.

Follow this path for a quarter of a mile, ignoring all paths off to the right.

At the end the path goes down a bank and onto a farm track in a cutting. Turn left and follow this track for about half a mile, passing through a wooded area with a pond on your left. Continue until you reach the farm at the end.

As you approach the farm, on the right there is an old Sussex barn, which appears to act as a gateway to the farmhouse beyond. As you pass between the farmhouse and farm buildings, there are numerous yellow way-markers here, just follow them. These will take you past a wood slat-covered barn with a board on it, proclaiming "Parking". Turn left at this point, going round the far end of the barns, still following yellow way-markers.

Go through a battered gate and follow the yellow way-marked track round to the right and cross a stile to the left of a second gate.

Carry on down through the field, keeping the line of trees to your right.

At the bottom of the field go through a gap in the hedge and continue in the same direction through the next field, still with the trees on the right.

When the trees come to an end, go over the stile, (dilapidated at the time of writing), in the fence in front of you to the left of a field gate, turn 45 degrees to your left, and head for the bottom-left-hand corner of the field. The exit from this field is over a stile about 20 yards to the left of this corner.

Go through the gate, passing into a wooded area and then over the stile to the right of the next gate. Go to the top of the slight incline in front of you, turn right and head down across the field, you should pass a boggy depression in the ground to your left.

The next stile will be found in the bottom of the field on the left. Go over the stile and go straight on, you will emerge on a wide woodland ride. Turn to the left and continue up the hill.

Whilst walking up this ride look out for a stone marker on the bank on your right. This marker bears the legend "55 miles from London, 2 miles from Ashburnham Place". At one time this ride was part of a coach road to Ashburnham Place from a gate house situated on the A2100. The gate house is still there but is now a private residence.

Carry on along the ride until you come to a well-defined path on the right.

Take this path, bearing right downhill, and follow it until it merges into another path.

Turn right here and continue down the slope. You will reach a point where the path turns sharply to the right. At this point leave the path and turn sharp left onto a less defined path through pine trees. You will shortly come to a kissing gate.

Go through the kissing gate and carry on straight ahead with glimpses of a lake through trees on your right, and an open field behind the vegetation on your left, until you reach a converted oast house on your right. Go left here to a timber gate and up a wider path leading to a three-

At the junction bear left uphill. This path is Wadhurst Lane. The writer is not at all sure why a path so far from Wadhurst should have such a name, but possibly it has something to do with a notorious band of 18th century smugglers known as “The Wadhurst Gang”.

Wadhurst Lane runs up through a cutting (known as a hollow way). It used to have a reputation for being very muddy in winter, and overgrown with brambles and nettles in summer, but in recent years it has been resurfaced with stone chippings, and the vegetation cleared back.

Eventually after a long steady climb, the path starts to descend slightly, and then levels out and comes to a t-junction with a road.

Turn right along the road. Take care as the road is quite narrow and bendy in places, with limited visibility, and has become a bit of a rat run.

After approximately 150 yards, at the 30mph sign, pass the entrance to Peacehaven Farm on the left. Approximately 20 yards further on, turn left onto a track leading to Pegasus and Fairhaven. Immediately on your left is a finger post by a metal gate.

Go through and follow the enclosed path ahead, which after a short distance crosses a drive.

Go straight across and continue following the path ahead for approximately 20 yards to a finger post. Turn left here to a gate which opens into a field.

This field is part of a former golf course. This accounts for several apparently unexplained bumps and mounds. From the gate go slightly right ahead and down, keeping a grassy mound on the left.

Maintain direction downhill on grass giving way to bracken and follow the path through the bracken into a dip, and then up the grass field on the far side, following a barbed wire fence on your right, which leads to a gate leading into woods ahead.

Go through the gate and follow the path down through the wood. The path goes over two wooden bridges and then starts to climb slightly until it makes a junction with another path at a 3-way fingerpost.

Turn right and go up the hill at the top of which you will come to a clearing.

Continue in the same direction along the path in front of you. You will eventually come to a road. Cross over, and on the other side pass through an opening to the right of a metal gate, and onto a path leading into more woods.

Shortly, you will see a path going off to the left, do not take this path, your path bears slightly to the right and continues down the hill.

Towards the end this path passes through a conifer plantation, and then emerges into a field.

Go straight ahead across the field to a fence with a gate and stile. Do not go over this but turn left following the fence line, until you come to a kissing gate, and carry straight on.

The path goes through a metal gate, and emerges onto a road, which belongs to British Gypsum.

Cross the road, go down the bank through a metal kissing gate, and you will find yourself on another footpath. Turn right along this path. You will see the railway line running parallel to your left.

Five

Emerge at the end into an open space/goods yard, with a green industrial building to the left. Continue straight on across the entrance to this complex and follow the enclosed path ahead with the road on your right.

The path soon starts to bear left away from the road, and meanders for a short way through woodland, reaching another road. Turn left and follow this road to the level crossing.

Go over the level crossing and continue to follow the road to the junction with Solomons Lane on the left. Keep straight on and shortly afterwards, directly opposite the 30mph sign, you will find a stile into the field on the left.

Climb over the stile and head for the opposite side. You may just be able to pick out the next stile in the hedge, but if you cannot see it, it will be found about 10 yards to the left of the small building in the field you are crossing.

On the other side of the stile there is a double plank bridge, the planks virtually point in the direction you need to take across the next field. Make for a point 10 yards left of the power line pole directly opposite you on the edge of a wood.

Go through a gap in the hedge into the wood and follow the footpath through it. It is a little confusing as there are a number of footpaths through the wood, but if you follow the path that maintains the general direction, you should emerge close to the correct place.

As you emerge into the next field continue straight up the field, along the left side of the hedge.

You might just be able to see the spire of Mountfield Church ahead.

At the top of the field turn right, and then immediately left.

Follow the top edge of this field with the hedge on your right and pass through into the next field.

Following the same line you will pass the Church on your right, and then arrive back at your starting point.

At all times please follow the Countryside Code



Respect everyone

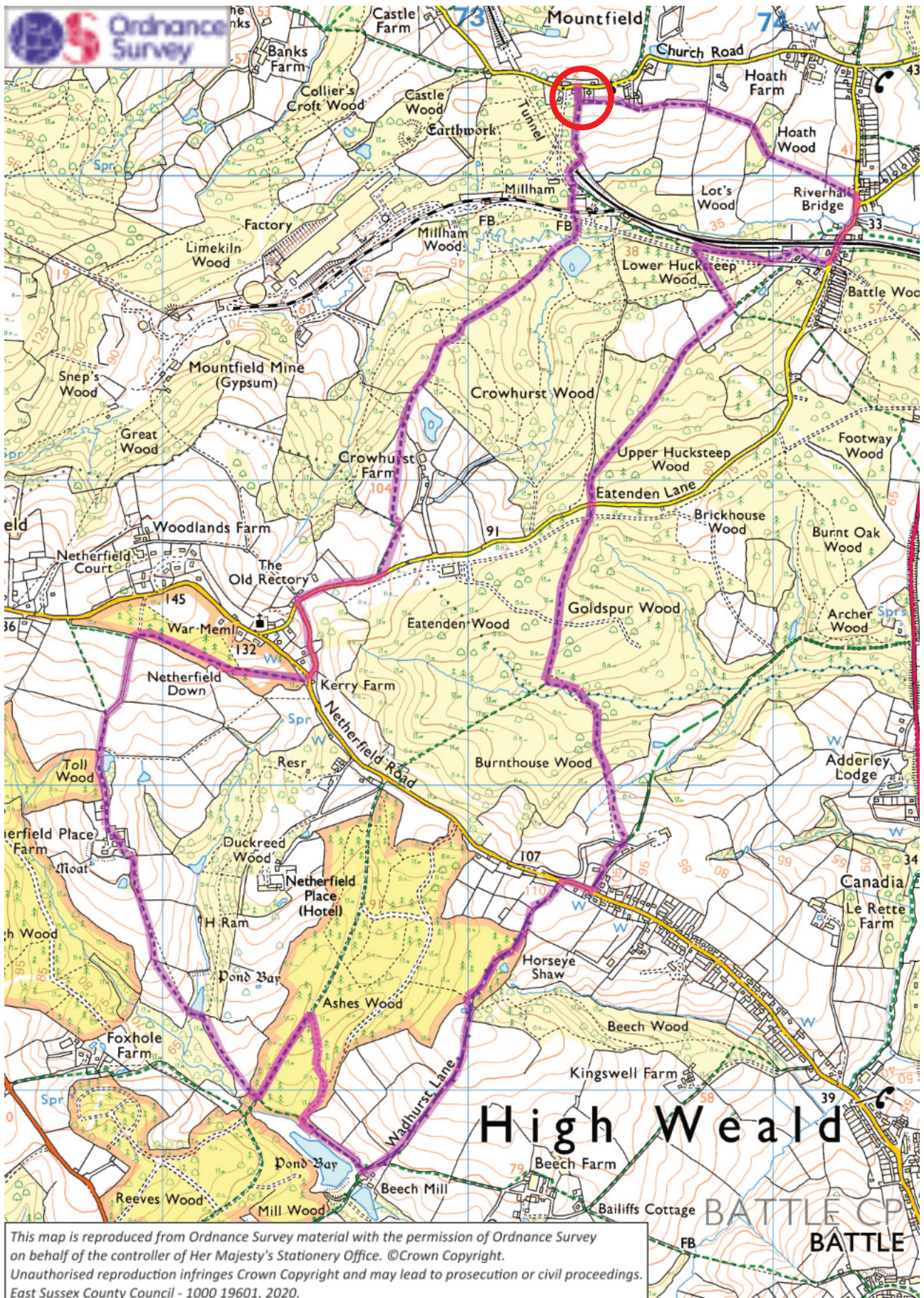
- be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside
- leave gates and property as you find them
- do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking
- be nice, say hello, share the space
- follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available

Protect the environment

- take your litter home – leave no trace of your visit
- do not light fires and only have barbeques where signs say you can
- always keep dogs under control and in sight
- dog poo – bag it and bin it – any public waste bin will do
- care for nature – do not cause damage or disturbance

Enjoy the outdoors

- check your route and local conditions
- plan your adventure – know what to expect and what you can do
- enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory



The High Weald - An outstandingly beautiful medieval landscape