



Self-Guided Walks

Whatlington to Staplecross circular walk

Welcome to the High Weald National Landscape, an unspoilt medieval landscape. Passing a site from the industrial age when ironworks were a feature of this landscape and the remnants of ancient routeways.

Distance and duration	A 9 mile walk, taking about 5 hours to complete
Level of ability expected	Moderate but hilly
Start point & post code	Footland Wood car park. TN33 0NT
OS grid refrence What3Words location	TQ762203 https://what3words.com/float.inclines.senders
Additional information	Click here to download a GPX file of the route

I-Spy Something to look out for on your walk



Two

This walk starts from the car park at Footland Wood, which will be found off the B2089, the road from Vinehall on the A21, to Cripps Corner.

From the car park, cross the main road and go into the entrance to Barnes Wood opposite.

These woods are open access and so it is not necessary to stick to the rights of way.

After entering from the road follow the open track ahead, gradually bearing right, and then turn left into the next available ride. Continue downhill.

Keep on this ride for just over three quarters of a mile, ignoring all turns and paths to right and left.

At the bottom the ride bends sharply to the right. Look for a footpath and finger post on the left going into woodland.

Follow this path over a footbridge and then climb uphill through the wood.

At the top go through the gap and out onto the road.

Turn left and walk down the hill.

At the bottom of the hill pass New Pond Farm on the right, and Poppinghole Farm on the left.

Continue up the next hill, passing Oakwood Farm and Quercus Cottage on the left.

The road then goes downhill, levels out, and goes past Knights Shaw Cottage on the left.

Continue uphill again and look for the footpath on the right at the top of the hill. Go over a stile directly opposite Holly Cottage.

Continue straight across the field, heading for the stile in the fence ahead.

Go over the stile and then straight ahead and downhill to a stile at the bottom of the field.

There are two stiles in quick succession.

In the next field bear left and look for another stile in the hedgerow.

Move into an enclosed path and continue uphill, passing a house on the left.

Pass by an old Morris Minor living a new life as a greenhouse and continue straight on along the track.

Just after passing a stone house on the left, at the junction turn right and continue along the track past another cottage on the right.

At the next junction take the track to the right and carry on. There is a lake to the left beyond the hedge.

To the right is a narrow single storey dwelling, a holiday cottage known as Pipe Cottage.

Go straight ahead through the gate by the cottage, and at the top by the next gate turn sharp right, and with the woods to the immediate left carry on up the field edge.

Three

Upon reaching the top left-hand corner of this field, turn right and continue along the edge of the field.

At this point take time out for a breather, and to admire the view right across the valley.

On reaching the top of the hill, the slope starts to level out, and in the top left-hand corner there are two gates. Do not go into the next field, instead take the gate which appears to go into the wood. In fact, the path actually turns right and continues along the outside of the wood with a tall fence to the right.

This is a path where a pair of secateurs and a stout stick may be useful, there are also a few large potholes to be aware of, so take care.

The path continues along the enclosed section for half a mile, passing orchards on the right.

Eventually the path moves into the wood. The path through the wood is fairly well defined as it follows a shallow gully, this can be very wet and muddy at times, so it may be necessary to divert to one side. Initially, if the fields to the right continue to be visible, the line is correct.

Eventually the path becomes a wider track, once surfaced with cinders, or something similar, and there is an intermittent fence on the right.

Stay on this track until the point where it turns sharp left and follows the line of the main road in the cutting below. Follow the track down to the left and at the road, cross to the other side.

Take care, this is a fast and busy road.

Turn right and go up the road a short way to reach a short flight of steps and follow the path back up the hill above the road cutting.

At the top turn left and continue along the path. This path continues for about half a mile; at the end it comes out into a built-up area. Continue straight on in the same direction to the main road.

The Cross Inn opposite provides an ideal spot for some welcome refreshment.

There is a choice here of routes. Choice 1 is much more rural and involves a bit of investigation. Choice 2 is more straightforward but has more road walking.

Choice 1 – Cross the road opposite the pub and walk straight ahead along the pavement.

Go past the village hall and the recreation ground, looking for a finger post on the right-hand side of the road. The footpath you need should be here, and is shown as such on the OS maps, but in fact it has been moved about 180 yards further along the road, alongside the third telegraph pole.

Continue to this point and go over the stile and along the enclosed green space beyond.

Go over the stile to the right of the gate at the end.

Continue straight on and through the next field gate.

Go straight across the next field and make for the bottom right-hand corner.

Go through another field gate and follow the path through the wood.

Four

As the path nears the wood's edge, it turns sharp left and continues uphill on the edge of the wood.

At the top look for a stile on the right, go over it into the field beyond and turn left.

In the field continue to follow the edge of the wood to another stile on the left.

Go over the stile and continue to walk in the same direction.

Maintain direction and go over a further two stiles.

One more stile accesses a large open field. Go across bearing slightly right.

Exit the field on the farm track to the left of a pond.

Follow the track round to the right and look out for a stile on the left.

Choice 2 – Turn right and carry on along the road, make sure you admire the beautiful thatched building on your right. Carry on for about a quarter of a mile, looking for the first turning on the left, Beacon Lane.

Go down Beacon Lane for about another quarter mile, where the lane goes up a slight incline. At the top of the incline, the footpath will be found on the left, down a drive leading to Miles Farm.

Go along the drive and through a controlled gate halfway along towards Miles Farm. In recent years this gate has been left open. Should the gate be closed, it can be opened by a push button on the side of the right-hand gate post. It will close automatically.

Upon reaching the farm turn right through a gap in the farm buildings and then turn left and go straight ahead between the farmhouse and farm buildings. This stretch is often part clogged by parked tractors and farm machinery and can be very muddy. After a short distance a stile will be found in a fence on the right-hand side. This stile is sometimes blocked by a sheep hurdle, but there is a field gate on the same side about ten yards further on.

Choices 1 and 2 have now merged

Go over the stile and continue straight down the field towards the trees on the opposite side.

Go over a stile at the bottom and carry straight ahead through the next field, keeping the hedge to your right. At the bottom of the field go through the gap and out onto the road. Turn right up the road.

At the junction with the main road turn left and then shortly cross the road to a gate. This is a busy, fast road with limited visibility due to bends. Take care.

Go through the gate and onto the forestry track ahead. (This is not actually the footpath, that is a little further up the main road, but this area of woodland is open access, and so this path is available).

Carry on along the track. After a while a track merges in from the left. Ignore this and continue in the same direction downhill as previously. At the bottom of the hill ignore the path merging in from the left, and carry on, bearing slightly right to a metal field gate, ignoring the turning right.

Go through the field gate, and shortly afterwards go through a tall kissing gate into the field beyond.

Five

Turn right and follow the bottom edge of the field, with the wood on the right.

Upon reaching the corner of the field, go through the gap into the field beyond.

The footpath bears slightly to the left, indicated by a finger post. Go up through the field, making for the junction between the tall, thick bank of trees, and the thinner, shorter bank of trees on the horizon.

At the top of the hill there is a small copse of trees. At the finger post turn right and shortly afterwards at a second finger post, go right making directly for the oak tree in the field below.

From under the oak tree head for the far end of a line of trees which is over to the left.

At this point continue across the field in the same direction to the tree line opposite.

Turn to the left and continue along the edge of the field. Note the large concrete blocks in the hedgerow at this point, these are known as “Dragons Teeth” and are anti-tank defences which were set up during World War 2.

Upon reaching the main road, which is fast and busy, go straight across and, keeping to the right of the red brick bungalow, on down the drive leading to Sedlescombe Vineyards.

Follow the track through the vineyard, passing the Winery and a wooden “chalet” style building on the left. In the top right corner, there is a stile.

Go over the stile, turn left and go diagonally down across this field to the far corner.

Go over a footbridge and into the field beyond.

Turn right and, keeping the hedgerow on the right, go straight up the field.

At the top right-hand corner turn left and continue along the top of the field.

Look for a gap in the tree line which gives access to Footland Wood.

Go straight on along the track and follow it through to the car park, and journey's end.

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

