



Rock Wood and Purple Heather Ashdown Forest, Fairwarp

Distance: 14km=9 miles or 2 walks of 10km=6 miles and 8km=5 miles
easy walking

Region: East Sussex

Date written: 19-aug-2010

Author: Stivaletti

Last update: 20-jun-2013

Refreshments: Fairwarp

Map: Explorer 135 (Ashdown Forest)

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

Public rights are restricted to printing, copying or distributing this document exactly as seen here, complete and without any cutting or editing. See *Principles* on main webpage.

Heath, woodland, nature reserves, hills, views

In Brief

This circular walk has long soothing descents and hardly any noticeable uphill so it feels effortless for its whole length. Maybe the sheer lightness of the air of Ashdown Forest buoys you as you go.

The walk can be split into two contrasting walks, the **Northern Loop** which is mainly high moorland and the **Southern Loop** which is mainly forest.



There are some nettles on the Southern Loop where shorts are not advisable. The going underfoot is smooth so any good strong footwear is sufficient.

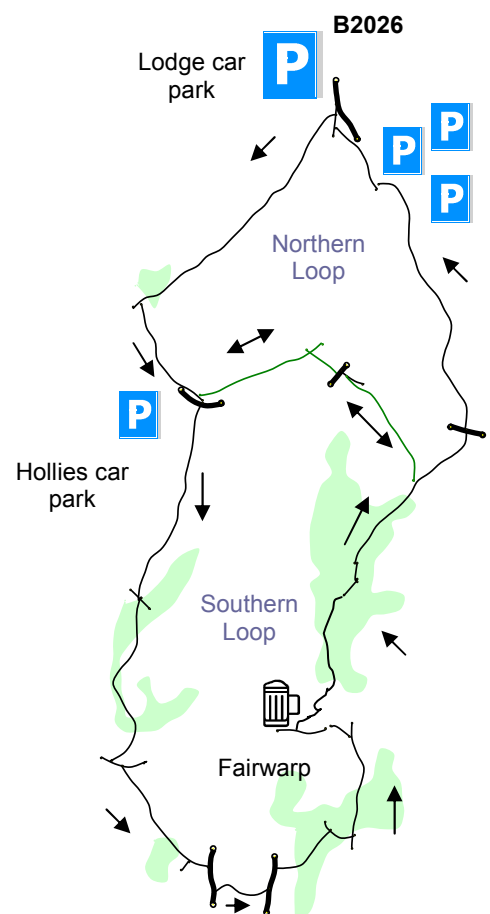


The Northern Loop is ideal for a dog.



The **full walk** and the **Northern Loop** begin at the **Lodge car park** (grid ref 470305, **postcode TN22 3JD**). This is just off the B2026. If you are coming from the north, this is on the **right**, 500m before the junction with the B2188 (signposted *Tunbridge Wells*). It is small but easy to recognise because it is just beside a private tarmac drive. If you reach the Bush Willows, Pines or Kings Standing car parks, you need to turn round. If the Lodge car park seems full, you can park on the grass verge in the car park; or park at one of the other nearby car parks, even the Nature Reserve just north of there.

Overview



The **Southern Loop** begins at the **Ellison's Pond car park, postcode TN22 3JA**, or the **Hollies car park** opposite. They are just off the Crowborough Road, not far from its junction with the B2026. You can also reach them from just north of Nutley on the A22, signposted *Crowborough, Tun.Wells*.

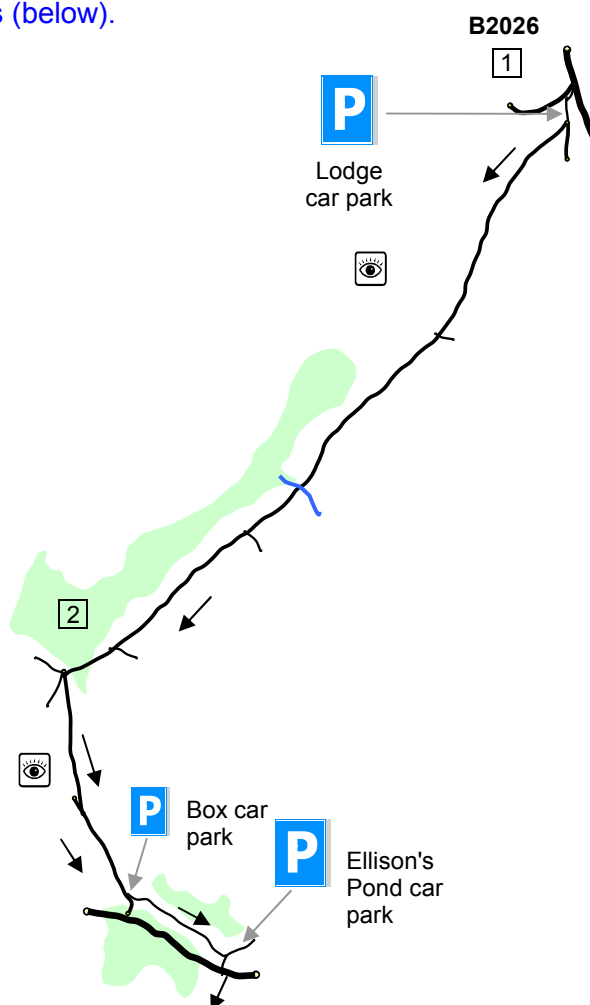
For more details of the location of the car parks, see the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

Leg 1: Lodge to Ellison's Pond 3 km=2 miles

Begin here if you are doing the **full walk**. If you are doing the short **Northern Loop**, you can begin here **or** at the Ellison's Pond car park. The **Southern Loop** begins at Ellison's Pond or Hollies (below).

- 1 From the back of the car park, take a grassy path between bracken (**not** the tarmac drive). This leads through a small wooden gate into an open meadow with an immediate choice of two wide paths. Take the **right-hand** fork downhill. *You now have a wonderful spread of pines, heather and grassy slopes on all sides. Ahead on the hilltop is Friends Clump which will be familiar if you have done the "Turnstile and Windmill" walk in this series.* Follow this very wide, sandy track for 1 km down to cross a wide bridge at the bottom. Continue up the other side, still on a wide track. The track comes down in 750m to enter trees by a spring on the left.

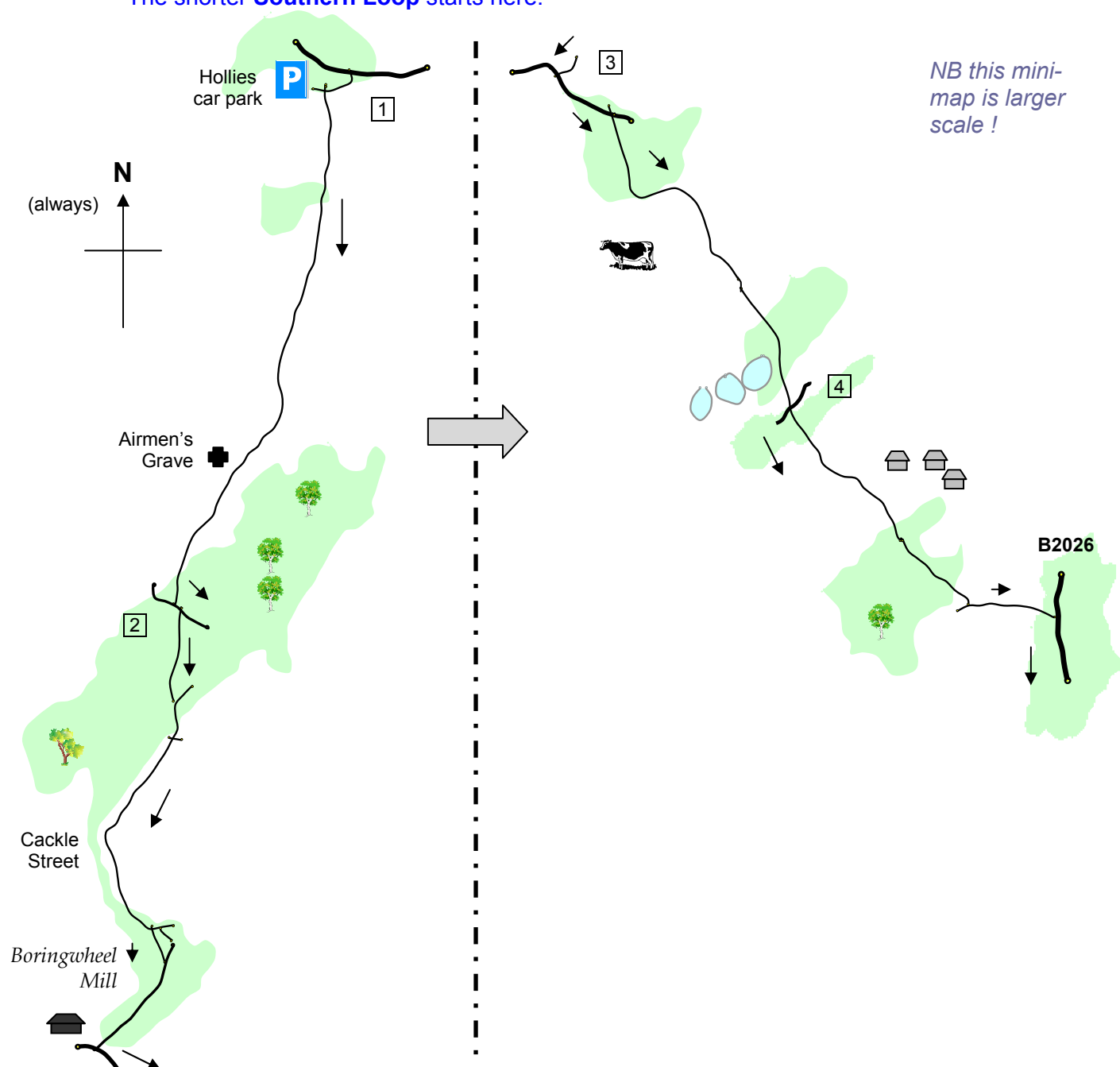


- 2 Go up a bank on the other side and turn diagonally **left** on a wide path uphill, avoiding the steeper track ahead. You can see the track ahead snaking up the hill to guide your direction. *As you go you have a good view, behind you, of the Old Lodge on the broad hill.* At the top, a track joins from the right. The track reaches the Box car park, just off the Crowborough Road. Don't cross the road but traverse the car park and follow a wide grassy strip with woodland either side. This quickly leads to the Ellison's Pond car park.

If you are doing the short Northern Loop, you now need to skip to the end and do **Over Camp Hill (eastward)**. Otherwise, continue with the next leg.

Leg 2: Ellison's Pond to Lampool 4km=2½ miles

The shorter **Southern Loop** starts here.



- [1] Cross the Crowborough road to the Hollies car park. Don't take any signposted footpath. Instead, walk half way across the car park, admiring the magnificent view to the south, to a small slanting information tablet. Take a grassy path gently downhill by the tablet. The path is soon joined by a horse track from the left. Follow the wide bridleway which becomes a broad grassy slope. 1 km from Hollies, you reach a small war memorial which looks rather like an alpine sheep pen from the back. Continue down through trees to a stream and a sandy crossing path. Turn **left** for 10m by means of a little two-plank bridge and turn **right** on a wide woodland path, thus regaining your original direction.

- 2 The path winds through trees and soon there is an open area on the left from which a path joins. Stay on the level sandy path, ignoring all turnings off. Soon there is a metal gate, not on your route, and meadows on the right, part of the hamlet of Cackle Street, a common name for a place of many chicken farms. You come to a fork in the path. Take the **right** fork down into woodland. At the bottom, veer **right** on a major path coming down from the left and continue to a gate and stile. Go through the gate, passing the tumbledown barn of Boringwheel Mill to a lane. Turn **left** on the lane. However, just on your right is a gate giving you a better view of Boringwheel Mill farm.

Boringwheel Watermill was a small corn mill of quite sophisticated design. The Boringwheel Pond is on the other side, not visible from the lane. There is a local tradition that cannon were bored here, encouraged by parliamentary surveys of 1658 (shortly after the Civil War) referring to the pond by that name.

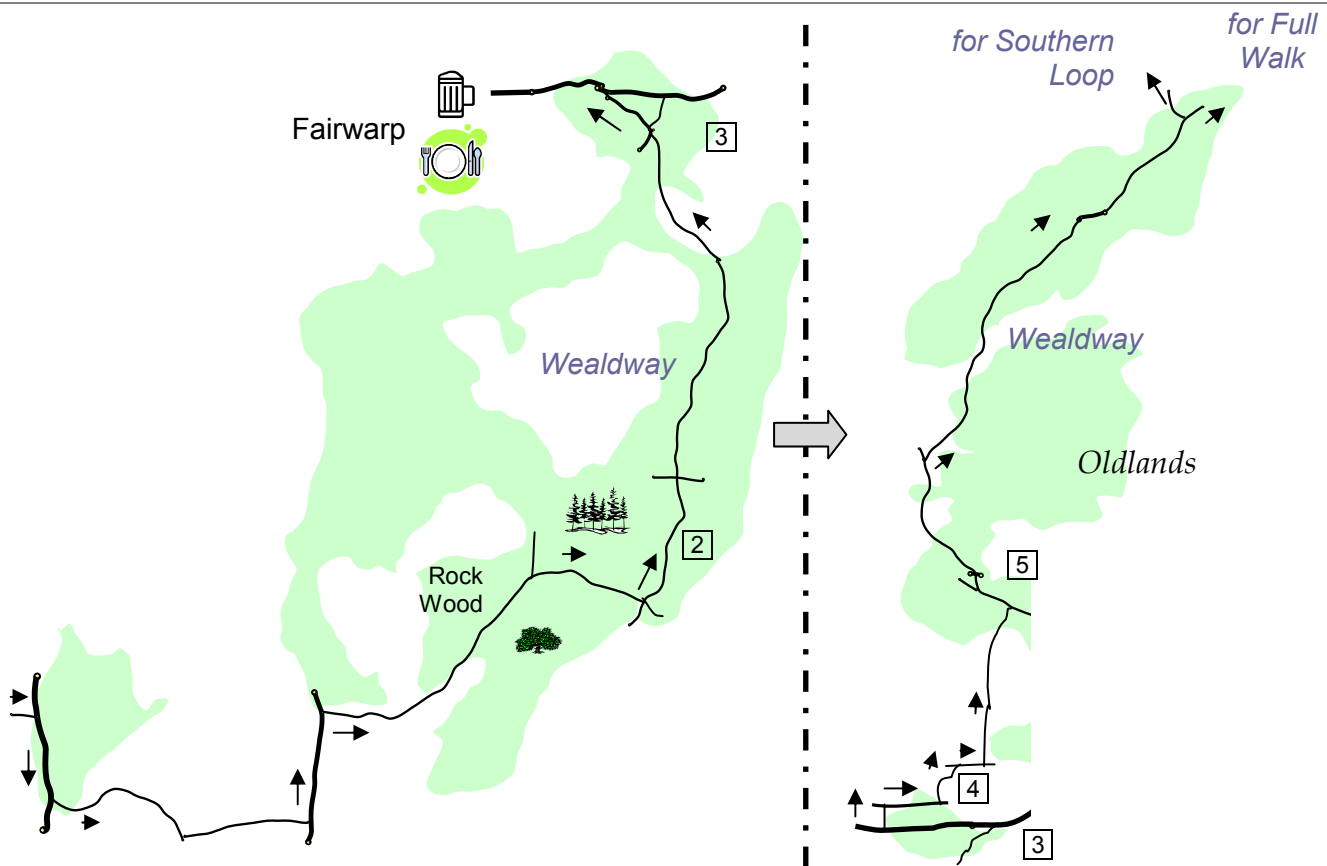
- 3 Just past the second house *Beak House*, turn **right** over a stile on a narrow path, easily missed. The path leads through a hawthorn wood, over a rickety stile into a sheep pasture. Turn **left**, past a pond on your left and turn **right** round the edge of the pasture. In the far corner, keep ahead through a gap, along the short side of the next meadow and down to a metal gate. Go over a stile beside the gate to a lily pond and immediately fork **left** through a small unneeded metal gate and more woodland to a lane.
- 4 Cross the lane, slightly right, to a footpath opposite and small wooden gate beside *Kates Cottage* and its poultry sheds. Go over a rickety stile to a grassy area serving some houses on the left. Keep ahead to the right where there is an enclosed path. The path leads up through a holly wood, then on the right-hand side of a wire fence and past a depression on the right, reaching a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **left** on an enclosed path, over a bridge to a main road, the B2026. Turn **right** on the road.

Leg 3: Lampool to Oldlands 4km=2½ miles

- 1 **See map overleaf.** In 100m, opposite a drive to Lampool Farm, turn **left** on a drive to Lampool Edge. Cross a useless cattle grid and continue on a footpath running on the right of a drive, then an enclosed path. Go **left** over a stile, along the right-hand side of a meadow and then through two metal gates to a lane. Turn **left** on the lane. In 170m, just after some cottages and a high wooden gate, turn **right** on a marked footpath over a rudimentary stile, past a barn and redbrick shed. Go over a stile and along the right-hand side of a grassy meadow that bends left and continue along the left-hand side of a deep valley on your right. At the end, go over a stile (or simply unhook the ribbon) into the wonderful dense ancient species-rich Rock Wood. *This is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is of biological significance, with rare mosses and ferns growing alongside the stream which flows through it and, in spring, bluebells in profusion.* Go over a bridge, ignore a left turn at a 3-way post and cross a flowing stream by a large wooden bridge. You now ascend through birch, hawthorn and hazel.

Hazel was once the dominant tree in Britain, sweeping away the birch that followed the last great ice age about 13,000 years ago.

At the next 3-way fingerpost, just before a large crop of sandstone, turn **left** joining the Wealdway (WW). *The Wealdway is a long-distance national trail running from Gravesend on the Thames Estuary to the coast near Eastbourne.*



2 The WW runs through pinewood, down steps and across a track in a clearing. You are now walking on a lovely level path carpeted with pine needles. Cross a long bridge and immediately turn **right** through a wooden gate into Brickfield Meadow. Cross the meadow and exit it through a large wooden gate. The path re-enters woodland via a small wooden gate beside a large one. 10m later, at a T-junction, turn **right**. In 20m, stay on the track as it bends left, avoiding a narrower path on the right, thus temporarily leaving the WW. The track ends at a lane. Turn **left** reaching, in 200m, the village of Fairwarp. The florid *Foresters Arms* (Hall and Woodhouse) serves good basic food. It offers a pool table and a garden. It is not open after 2.30pm (3pm Sundays). *Note the "telephone box" library.*

3 After refreshment, go back a few metres and turn **left** (or right if you did not visit the pub) immediately next to the pub car park on the brick drive to *Forest Lodge*. Take a narrow footpath to the right of the drive, passing a little garden and bench. At a tarmac drive, turn **right**, going past cottages. Where the drive ends at *Casey's Way*, keep dead straight across the grass and enter woods at a gap in the bracken. Stay on the path, always keeping the gardens of various houses on your immediate right. You reach the last house called *The Cottage*, a white weatherboard affair, and its curving entrance drive. 10m before the entrance, turn **left** on a very narrow path into dense woodland. (A faded **WW** symbol on a post marks the entry point.)

4 Always keep to the main twisty path. After 50m, you have a more open area ahead. Here, avoid a lesser path on the left and keep to the main path which curves **right**. Immediately after this, avoid a minor path on the left and keep straight ahead, down into the wood again. This rooty path descends to meet a very wide path in the valley. Veer **right** on this forestry path, going over a heavy-duty bridge. 20m after the bridge, at a 4-way fingerpost, go **left** on a narrower path. The path uses several planks to avoid a boggy section and rises through an exquisite birch wood fringed

with bracken. The path soon runs beside a more open area on your right. Look out now for a **WW** marker post on your left and here fork **right** up into the open ground of purple heather, avoiding a path left into woods. You meet a wide grassy path at the top. Veer **left** on this path, a bridleway running across an open area, still on the WW.

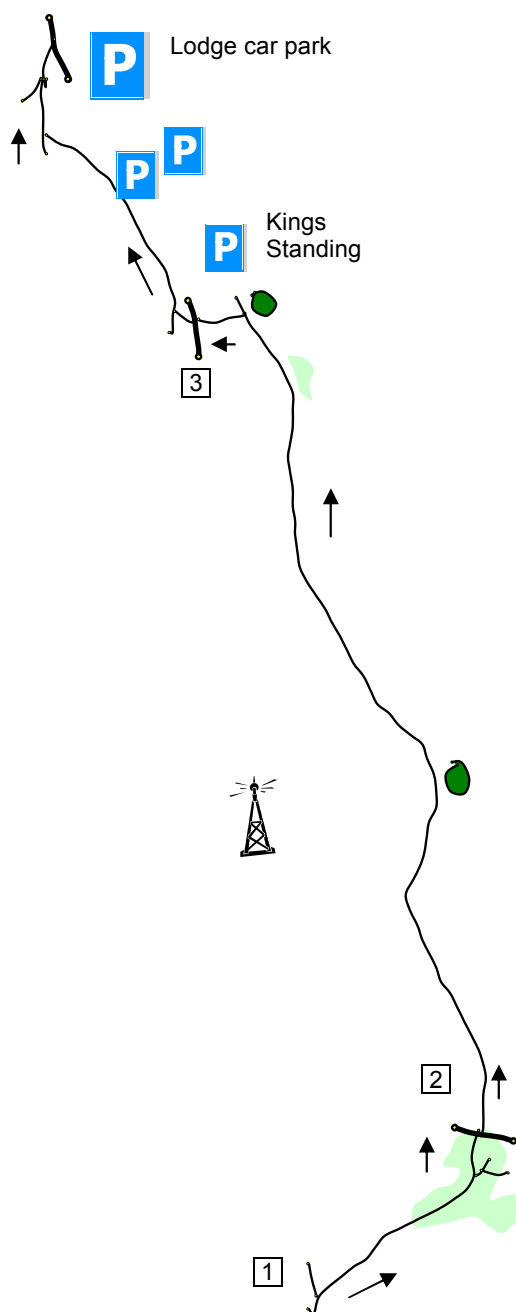
- 5 In 50m the path enters woods. 50m later, at a post with the **WW** symbol, fork **right** on a narrower path. *Don't miss this turning!* The path crosses a tarmac drive and goes down to another drive. Bear **left** on this drive, going past a line of cottages and continuing straight ahead by a hedge. The path descends to cross a bridge with a rail and gradually ascends for some distance through woodland, then more steeply to cross a drive by a large Wealdway sign. The path bends **left** by the garden of the house, then turns abruptly **right** uphill by the stainless steel chimney of the house. It then goes through a light area of young birches, across a grass-centred drive by another large Wealdway sign, and joins a track coming from the right. 50m after joining the track, you will see a partly-hidden **WW** marker post pointing left and a stile visible a few metres over on your left.

If you are doing the shorter Southern Loop, skip ahead in this text and do **Over Camp Hill (westward)** which takes you back to the Ellison's Pond car park.

To continue the **full walk**, ignore the **WW** symbol and the stile on the left.

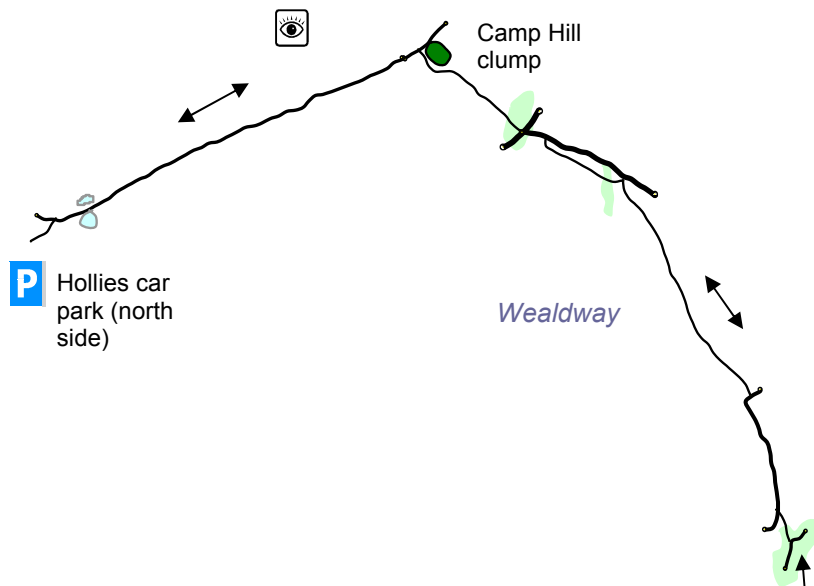
Leg 4: Oldlands to Lodge 3 km=2 miles

- 1 Continue on the wide stony path, thus leaving the WW. The track joins a drive coming from a house on the right. Where the drive bends left towards the road, stay on it, ignoring some paths to the right by a fingerpost. Continue to a road, New Road. Cross the road to a rough unmarked path directly opposite.
- 2 Keep ahead as the path crosses a wide grassy strip. The path winds round a copse and then widens as it ascends gently towards a large transmitter tower. Soon the transmitter is on your left while the path runs alongside the fence of the enclosure. The path goes past a clump on the right, wheels left following the fence and leaves it, rising gently on a grassy course. It then curves left beside a little wood of gorse and birch on the right and the Kings Standing clump and car park come into view. Just before reaching the corner of the clump, 50m before the car park, fork **left** on an uneven path leading to the road.
- 3 Cross the road and go through a large wooden gate opposite into a pasture. In 20m, at a T-junction, turn **right**, parallel to the road. The path passes Bush Willows car park on the right and curves **left** to a T-junction. Turn **right** here. At the end of the path, go through the smaller of the two gates, soon arriving back at the Lodge car park where the walk began.



Over Camp Hill (westward) 2km=1 mile

Take this short cut if you are doing the shorter **Southern Loop** and want to return straight to the Ellison's Pond car park.



Follow the *WW* sign by forking **left** over to the unneeded stile. Go up an enclosed path, over another stile and **right** on a track. *There are now great views left to the South Downs.* The track passes a house on the right and bends **right** at the corner. Turn **left** here on a delightful level grassy path between gorse, then birch. The path arrives almost at the road. Turn **left** here at the *WW* sign over a bridge and stile. Go along the right-hand side of the meadow, ignoring first a metal gate and then a stile on the right. Go over the second stile at a *WW* fingerpost and turn **left** on New Road. In 10m, you come to a road junction with the major B2026 road. Cross straight over the road and go through a small wooden gate on the opposite side and follow the gently rising path to Camp Hill clump, one of the many distinctive clumps on Ashdown Forest. Veer **left** around the clump to a wide sandy crossing track on the other side. Turn **left** here, thus leaving the Wealdway. (As a double-check on your direction, the tall transmitter tower, a landmark of the Forest, is now directly behind you.) Continue all the way down this very wide track, enjoying the views in all directions. At the bottom, the path runs between two ponds. The Ellison's Pond car park is straight on, up the grass bank on the left.



Over Camp Hill (eastward) 2km=1 mile

Take this route immediately from the Ellison's Pond car park if you are doing the short **Northern Loop**. If you are parked in the Hollies car park on the south side of the road, you need to cross the road first to the car park on the other (north) side.

Same map as for westward direction, above. With your back to the road, facing north, head for the long very wide sandy track that you can see to the right, leading uphill. At first, the path runs between two ponds and then runs all the way up, with magnificent views in all directions, finishing

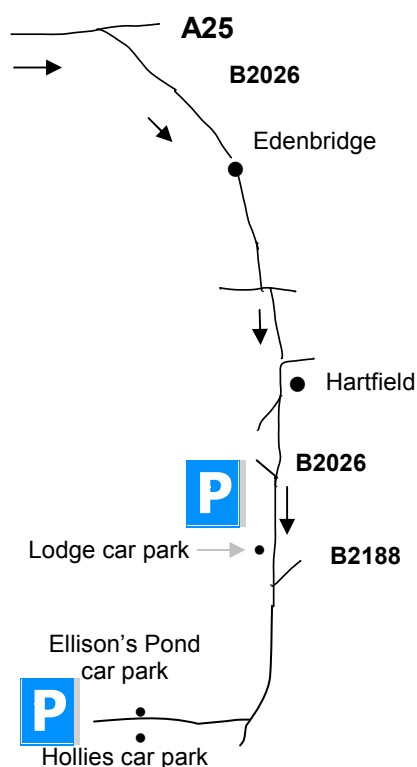


finally at Camp Hill clump, one of the many distinctive clumps on Ashdown Forest. You will now be following the small but distinctive *WW* symbols, indicating the Wealdway, a long-distance path running from the Thames estuary to the south coast. Veer **right** around the clump until you pass a concrete triangulation pillar on the other side. Take the path that has the pillar on the **right**. The path leads gently down to a small wooden gate and out to the B2026 road. Cross the road straight over to a minor road, New Road. In just 10m, turn **right** over a stile into a grassy meadow and keep **left** along the edge, ignoring another stile and a metal gate, and finally leave the meadow over a stile in the far corner. A bridge takes you almost back to the road. Veer **right** here, in the direction of the *WW* sign, on a pleasant level path through birches and then gorse. The path arrives at a drive by a small house. Turn **right** on the drive and immediately follow it as it bends **left**. *There are now great views right to the South Downs*. Before the track turns right to another house, go **left**, as indicated, over a stile, along a short enclosed path to an unneeded stile. Continue a few more metres to a T-junction with a wide stony track. Turn **left** on the track.

You now continue the main walk from [Leg 4](#).

Getting there

By car: If coming from London, the “scenic” route is the B2026 all the way through Limpsfield Chart, Edenbridge and Hartfield. From the South, join the B2026 at Uckfield. From Tunbridge Wells, take the B2188 to the junction with the B2026.



fancy *more* free walks? www.fancyfreewalks.org