



Marsh Green and Dryhill

Distance: 7½ km=4¾ miles

easy walking

Region: Kent, Surrey

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Author: Malinovka

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Refreshments: picnic or nearby facilities after the walk

Map: Explorer 147 (Sevenoaks) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Village, hills, views, woodland, nature reserve

In Brief

This walk takes you from an unassuming village in the Garden of England up into a nature reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest with great views and raw nature at its best.

Dryhill (or Dry Hill) became the first “geological” Local Nature Reserve in Kent because of the exceptional structure of its Lower Cretaceous rocks and the fossils that were discovered there. The rare rock formations exposed here, called Hythe Beds, were deposited approximately 115 million years ago. Dryhill was originally a stone quarry, closed in the 1950s and thereafter reclaimed by nature.



This walk could be zipped up with the walk *Cowden and Dryhill: Three Manors and a View* to make a wonderful 10-mile figure-of-eight hike with refreshments in Cowden.

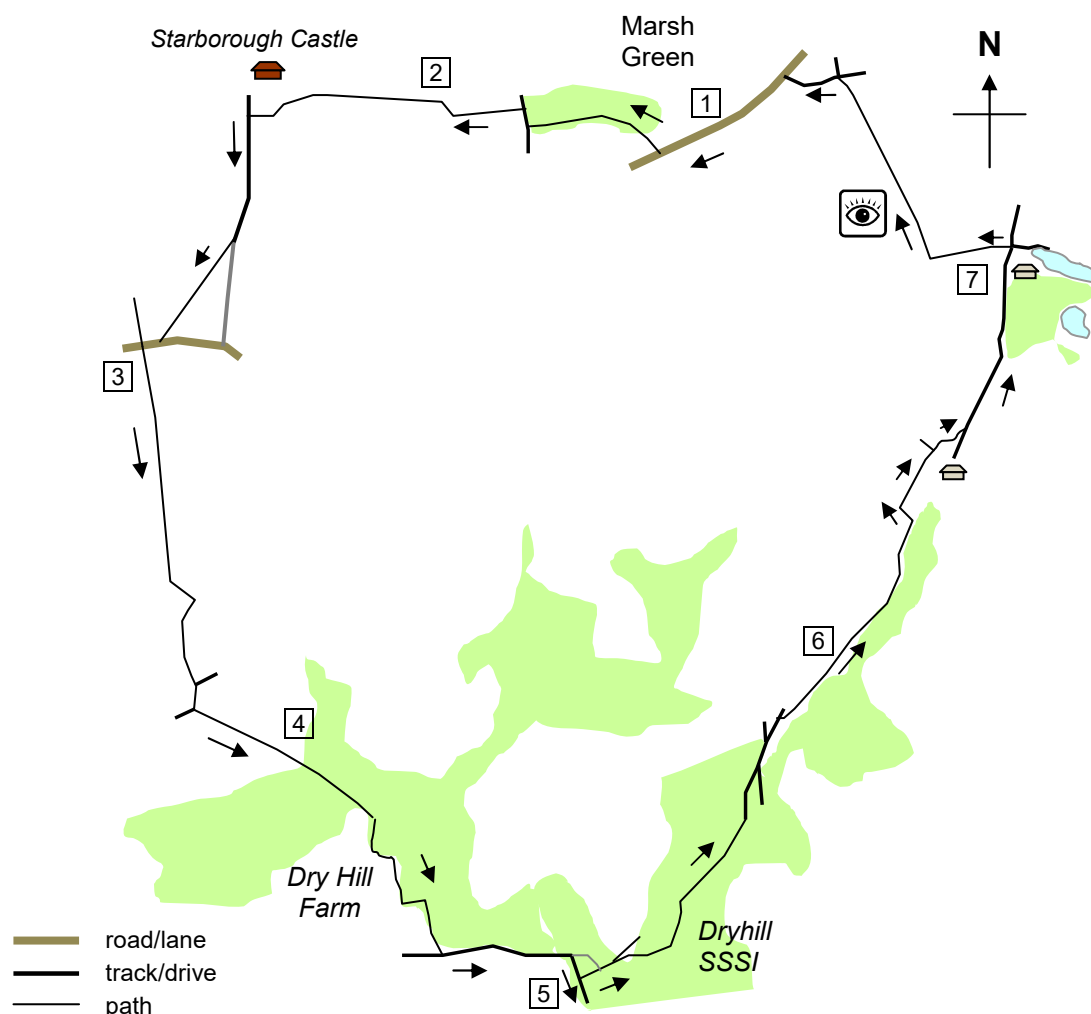


There is just one short section with summer nettles making bare legs a little uncomfortable. Boots are recommended because of the terrain, especially in the wetter half of the year when there are some muddy sections on the tracks. This walk would be fine with your dog too.



The walk begins in the small village of **Marsh Green**, near Edenbridge, Kent, postcode **TN8 5QN**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



1 Go northwest along the main road in Marsh Green. In case you don't have a direction indicator, you should be heading for the *opposite* side of the village from the green and the church. You pass on your **right** the red, black and white clapperboard houses and a large house (the old *Wheat-sheaf* pub). As you leave the village, 50m after a *40 mph* sign, ignore a bridleway forking left and, after another 200m, just after *Brookside*, turn **right** on a narrow footpath between fences. Go over a bridge across a stream and a stile, and follow a winding path through a bluebell wood, never straying far from the field on your left. The path leads to a tarmac driveway. Go **right** for 20m, towards a converted oast, barn and a timbered house with a pond and resident ducks. Turn **left** at the corner of a fence and over a stile onto a path between fields.

2 Your path goes **right** over a stile, **left** over a bridge and straight across the centre of a field with great views on your right of the North Downs. (Occasionally you may find crops growing here obscuring the path: you need to pick your way across the centre; when you reach the highest point, look for the flag at Starborough Castle in the distance; your route is slightly to the **right** of it.) At the other side, go over a (broken) stile and along the right-hand side of a meadow. On your right is the moated garden and crenellated house known

as *Starborough Castle*. In the next corner, avoid the large wooden gate but turn **left** along the edge of the sheep field. For this next half of the walk, you will be in Surrey. Go through a little enclosure of metal gates (the opening is on the left) and over a stile. Turn **left** on the drive, away from the house. A bridge takes you over a stream. Half-way along the beech avenue, go **right** over a stile and take a diagonal path across the field. (Just occasionally, the field may be ploughed over. In this case, stay on the drive all the way to the main road and some lion-topped pillars, and turn **right** on the road, using the grass verge on the other side.) At the far side, go over a stile to the main road. Turn **right** on the road for 40m.

3 Opposite a side road, turn **left** onto a bridleway. The path goes between fields, then up the left-hand side of field. At the far end, keep ahead on the bridleway, avoiding a footpath on your right. *Note that you are on part of the Vanguard Way (VGW), a long-distance trail running from Croydon to the South Coast near Brighton.* Ignore a footpath on the left 40m later. After a very brief muddy section (bypassable using a narrow rat-run on your right), your path narrows and continues uphill. Finally you come through a metal gate. Bear **right** here on a track, still on the VGW. In 50m, you reach another junction with a house visible on the right. Turn **left** here on a pleasant route between hedges and meadows. In 250m or so, you enter Reynolds Wood.

4 This stony but dry path runs gradually uphill. When you reach a large meadow, your path veers left round the perimeter and zigzags round the side of a barn. You pass the houses of Dry Hill Farm on your right. At a T-junction with a fingerpost, turn **left** on a bridleway, away from the houses. In 250m or so, after the remains of a gate and at the start of some pines, turn **right** at a blue arrow on a little fingerpost on another wide path. You are now back in Kent. (If the blue-arrowed route is very muddy, you can instead keep straight ahead, curving right and turning **left** at the next junction to re-join your path.)



To extend your walk, you could ignore the forthcoming left turn, keep straight ahead on the path, after 250m take the **left** fork, after 200m enjoy views on your left, after 200m, turn **right** at a marker into woods, thus joining the other walk *Cowden: Three Manors and a View* near the start of section 6. This makes a very satisfying 10-mile zipped-up hike with refreshments in Cowden.

5 In just 50m, at another blue arrow [oct 2016: fallen down, in the bushes - don't miss!], turn **left** on a rather muddy (but thankfully short) path. In 50m, a path joins from the left: keep straight on, slightly downhill. In 20m, **ignore** a narrow path that forks off left. You are on a long wide path beside a fence on your right. After 600m on this woodland path, you join a path coming up from the right. In 70m, as you approach a large wooden gate into Greybury Farm, **ignore** a bridleway forking off left and go straight through the gate on a footpath. Just before the next gate, turn **right** on a footpath along the fence of the property. Go through a small wooden gate or over a stile (both avoidable through a gap) and over another stile into a large sloping pasture. Keep straight ahead along the higher part of this horse pasture, keeping the woods about 30m on your right, with great views of the North Downs ahead. [2016: a walker reported being followed by over-inquisitive horses; if this happens, you could keep right by the woodland.]

6 Your path goes down into a dip and over a stile up into the next field with crops on your left. At the far end of the field, turn **left** round the corner and go **right** over a (wobbly) stile in the fence. Go across the centre and then along the right-hand side of the meadow, with a house *Clatfields* visible on

your right. Go over a stile in the corner under an electricity pole, down steps, ignoring a footpath on the left and up again over another stile. The path bears right to a post with a yellow arrow in the hedgerow. It takes you down steps, over a bridge with railings and bears left on a concrete drive coming from the house.

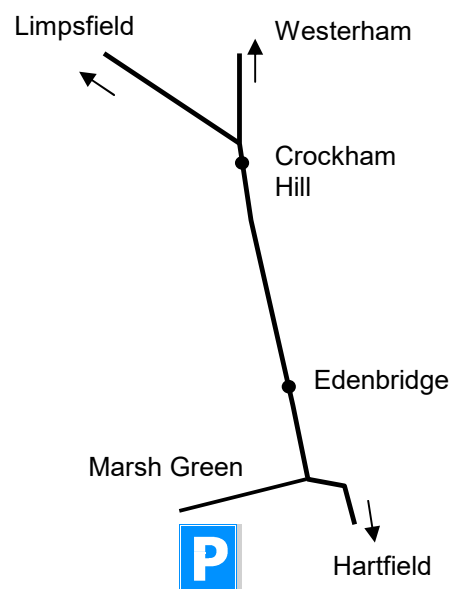
- 7 Go through a large wooden gate and continue on the concrete drive. You pass gardens and tennis court of *Christmas Place* and soon arrive at a bend in a tarmac drive. On your right is the pond of *Christmas Place* (worth a sneaky peek) but your route is **left** through a large metal gate (avoiding a broken stile beside the gate) and along the right-hand side of a field. Look to your right at the adjoining field and, just before it ends, go **right** through a gap into this field. Go **left** and **right** in the corner, ignoring a broken and disused stile. In the next corner, go past an unneeded stile and go straight across the centre of the next field, with great views of the Greensand Hills and the North Downs. At the other side, you reach a junction of tracks. Turn **left**, going past Manor Farm and keep straight on for the village centre where the walk began.



For end-of-walk refreshments, there are several places to eat (but no pubs) in Edenbridge. The “Royal Oak” in Crockham Hill, the “Carpenters Arms” in Limpsfield Common and many places in Westerham are on your route if you are going back north.

Getting there

By car: Marsh Green is just off the B2026 Hartfield Road, just south of Edenbridge, Kent. If coming from the London area or the M25, the easiest route is via Westerham or Oxted and the Kent Hatch Road, through Crockham Hill and Edenbridge. The turning, marked *Lindfield B2028*, is one mile south of Edenbridge, on a bend. Park on the roadside in the village.



By bus/train: bus 236, 636 or 646 from Lingfield Station. Check the timetables.

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