

# Dover to Dorking Robust Ramble

## Section 11 (Return)

### Headcorn to Smarden

#### WALK DETAILS

Map OS Explorer 137 (Ashford)

Distance/Time 4.5 Miles/3 Hours

Start Headcorn centre, car parks and on road parking can be found.

Comment A long stretch on a side road to get out of town, then a testing stretch, not only not easy to find but maybe needing diversions due to flooded ponds. There are blocked paths, broken stiles and railways to cross, but a lot of interesting countryside too.

#### WALK INSTRUCTIONS

With the George and Dragon pub on the left go back down the main road passing the station entrance on the right. Follow the road for some way eventually bearing right to a Y-fork just before a railway bridge. Turn left here on the Smarden Road (signposted Smarden/Egerton) and walk along for ½ mile with great care (the road is straight and encourages speeding).

Turn first left up a narrow side road called Love Lane. Keep on this for ¾ mile passing farmhouses. Ignore the first footpath on the left going up to Heiland Farm and keep on to reach a Y-fork. Here go left on a farm track signed to 'The Granary' and keep on the track up to this new house. In front of the house, go right through a gap in the hedge over a footbridge. Bear left to a stile into the bottom of a field.

Go diagonally right up and across the centre of this large field to a stile into woods at the top righthand corner.

Cross into the wood and pass between two ponds (it may be waterlogged here). At the far side emerge from the wood and turn right. Follow the wood and ponds on the right to a gap through a hedge into a further field.

Keep on in the same direction heading slightly away from the hedge towards a lone tree ahead. To the right of this tree is a new footbridge and stile. Cross into the next field. Go on in the same direction. At the far end go through a metal fieldgate and keep on around a pond to a broken stile, again may be boggy (access to this might be cut off by overflowing ponds so walk up the hedge on your left and eventually find a way through into the next field. Walk back to rejoin the line of the path).

From the stile keep straight across to a new stile leading to a road. Turn right on this road to a T-junction. Here turn left. Some 200 metres along, look out for the entrance to Malthouse Farm. Turn up here to a gate.

The path is diverted. Turn immediately right and cross over to enter a field. Turn left up by the hedge on your left parallel to the farm drive over on the left. Continue past a pond. At the top of the field turn left a few paces towards a pond, then right into a small field. Go up by a wire fence on your right to a broken stile in the top hedge.

Cross and go immediately right for five metres. Look for a gap in the bushes on the right concealing a footbridge and stile. Cross into the adjacent field. The footbridge and stile are just about useless, so if crossing is impossible continue up the side of the field to a tractor bridge a little further on.

Having arrived in the adjacent field, walk along with the hedge on your left for some way weaving around to the far end of the field where there is a stile in the hedge. Over this, cross a small pasture to a stile leading to a railway crossing. Cross this high speed line with great care to find a new stile in a corner of woodland leading into a large pasture.

Walk down towards a small red tiled building, passing a pond on your right, and then another on your left to a small wooden gate. Through the gate, turn right to follow a fence down to a fieldgate in the bottom corner.

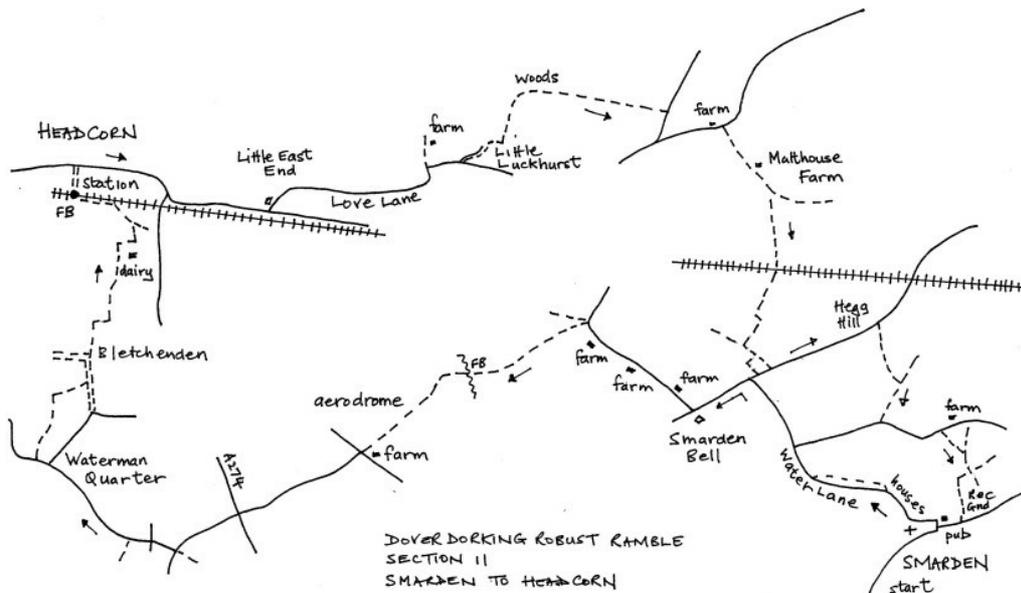
Turn left here and continue, following the field edge around and along the bottom of the field, to eventually reach double wooden fieldgates just on from the next corner. Go through these to a road (this is not the proper right of way but the proper path is blocked in the garden at the other side of the field).

Turn left for ¼ mile along the road. Face the traffic and step onto the verge when vehicles speed towards you. At the top of a rise, opposite Hegg Hill Farm, find a footpath and go right, through double gates, into a field.

Bear sharp right down to a stile by a pond. Now bear left across the next field to a stile to the right of trees in the far corner. Again bear diagonally left to a broken stile and footbridge between two trees. Keep on diagonally left to a gap in the hedge ahead.

Here turn right on a broad track, going across the field towards a white house. Emerge onto a road and turn left for some way looking for a footpath on the right through a gap in the hedge just before farm buildings.

Cross a plantation of trees on an enclosed path, ignoring side paths. Go through two posts into a playing field and turn right to follow the hedge and ditch on the right then a fence all the way along the edge of playing fields to a children's play area by tennis courts. Cross through the play area to a gate out to a road. Turn right to soon reach the Chequers Inn in the centre of Smarden and the start of the section.



This is a walk from Robust Rambles, a collection of walks across the South East of England

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