

Dover to Dorking Robust Ramble

Section 12 (Return)

Staplehurst to Headcorn

WALK DETAILS

Map OS Explorer 136 (TheWeald) & 137 (Ashford)

Distance/Time 5 Miles/ 3Hours

Start The King's Head and the parish church in Staplehurst.

Comment This is interesting countryside but very heavily cultivated. Paths are either difficult to find or heavily used farm tracks. There is a small amount of road walking. There is an attempt to obliterate the right-of-way on the final stretch. An alternative is given. However the route can be walked, with careful map reading and some determination, so,
for those who are able, have a go and assert our walking rights !

WALK INSTRUCTIONS

From the King's Head, return to the churchyard and walk back past the church. At the end of the building, turn left along the end of the church to a wall. Continue down the back of houses on a stone slabbed path to a road and turn right.

At the end of the road swing left then right, along the side of Little Orchard Cottage, to a junction of footpaths at a field corner. Ignore the footpath off right and turn left, down the field edge with a hedge on your left. The path eventually emerges onto an entrance track at the gates of Spilshill Farm. Cross the track and follow the hedge on the right for about 10 metres to a junction of paths.

Turn left and walk down a path enclosed between wire fences with horse paddocks either side towards distant factory buildings and a road below. Head towards the righthand side of the buildings and reach the road by a fingerposted sign. Cross the road with care and turn left.

Pass the factory buildings and turn right on a side road in about 100 metres. Keep along for some way to reach a T-junction. Look for a footpath with a footbridge and stile going off left. Cross into a horse paddock and bear diagonally left across to the far corner. Here there is a metal kissing gate into the next paddock. Bear right to follow the hedge on your right, around and down to a corner.

Go through a metal fieldgate and straight on to a metal kissing gate into bushes. Follow an enclosed and muddy path between ponds to a small pasture. Bear right to follow a conifer hedge to a gap with a stile. Over the stile, walk forward to a corner by an oast house (for the station go forward past the oast to a road; at the end of the road cross to the station approach).

Otherwise from the oast, turn right, across the grass, towards tall conifer trees and a railway crossing. Over the railway turn right, over a stile onto an enclosed path by the railway, and follow it to a road.

Turn right along the road towards a road bridge over the railway. Just before the bridge take a path on the left signed Turley Farm. Just before the first house on the left, go left on an enclosed gravel path and follow it around to a field corner.

Go diagonally left across the field to a stile and footbridge, aiming to the right of a line of trees ahead. Cross the next field in the same diagonally left direction, to a further stile and footbridge. Turn left along a narrow field to another stile in a wire fence. Cross a large field ahead bearing left towards the righthand side of a brick river bridge. Emerge onto a road and turn left for ¼ mile.

This is a very busy road with few verges. Take great care and stop and stand well in when traffic approaches. Having passed buildings at Hawkenbury, look for a stony vehicle track going right opposite California Cottage.

Follow this for some way a sit weaves past orchards on the left. At a junction of tracks on a bend, keep on in the same direction, towards metal farm outbuildings. Pass these on your right and keep ahead with a hedge on your left for some way towards the distant chimneys of Kelsham Farm.

At the end of the field go left between ponds into the adjoining field and immediately right along the field edge to a fieldgate onto a drive. Turn right and stay on the drive as it passes farms and oasts. Where it bends left, slightly uphill towards a works, go through a broken fieldgate into the field on the right. Go across the field to a stile hidden in bushes at the far side.

Enter an enclosed path with waterworks and a wire fence on the left. Follow this path to a stile and a gap on the right. Through the gap, turn left, and go on in the same direction along the edge of a plantation of young trees. Eventually emerge onto a road at a bend.

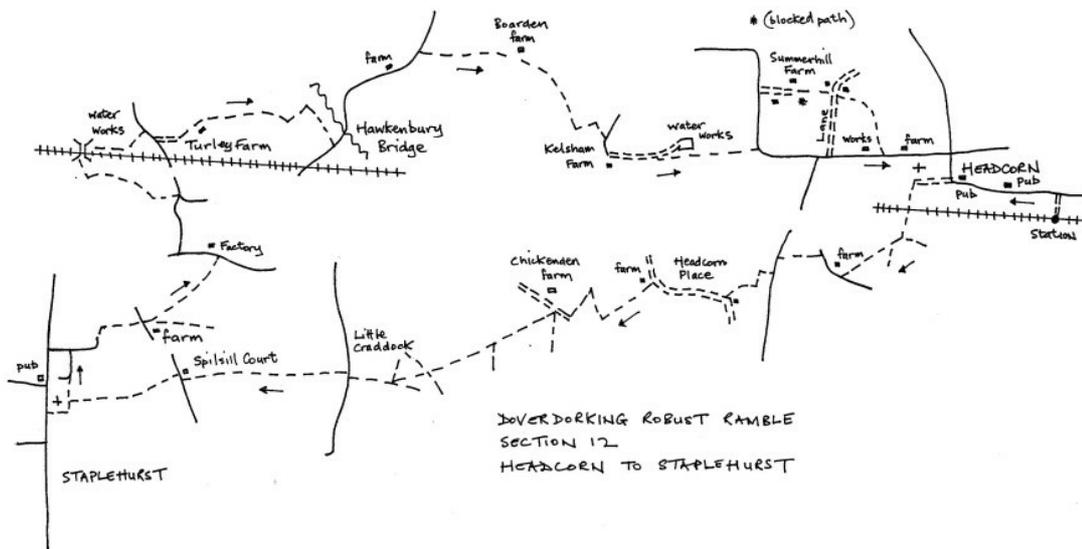
Unfortunately the footpaths through Summerhill Farm and Millsbank are blocked and unsigned so for those who do not want to be brave, turn right along the road all the way back to a crossroads in Headcom village.

For the intrepid, turn left uphill. At the top, opposite a wooden fingerpost with a broken finger, turn right down a drive. Pass Summerhill Farm down on the right and keep straight on over a black metal fieldgate, then on to climb another fieldgate by a barn, then on to climb a wooden gate into a large horse paddock. At the far side exit by a fieldgate with a house on the left.

Go over to a small gate into the garden of the house and cross the bottom of the garden to a wooden fieldgate. Exit onto a drive. Cross the drive to another wooden fieldgate and enter a field. Go across the field bearing slightly right then continue along the bottom of a garden on your left.

Reach a wrought iron gate in the hedge ahead. Go through into a very large field. Bear diagonally right downhill to a gateway in the bottom hedge between two rows of power lines. Go through to the field below. Bear right down this field, aiming just left of an electricity substation. Find a stile in the bottom hedge and cross to a road. Turn left along this road to a junction.

Turn right here and follow the main road back past the church, shops and the George and Dragon pub on to the road entrance to Headcom Railway Station 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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