

Walk Route

KEY

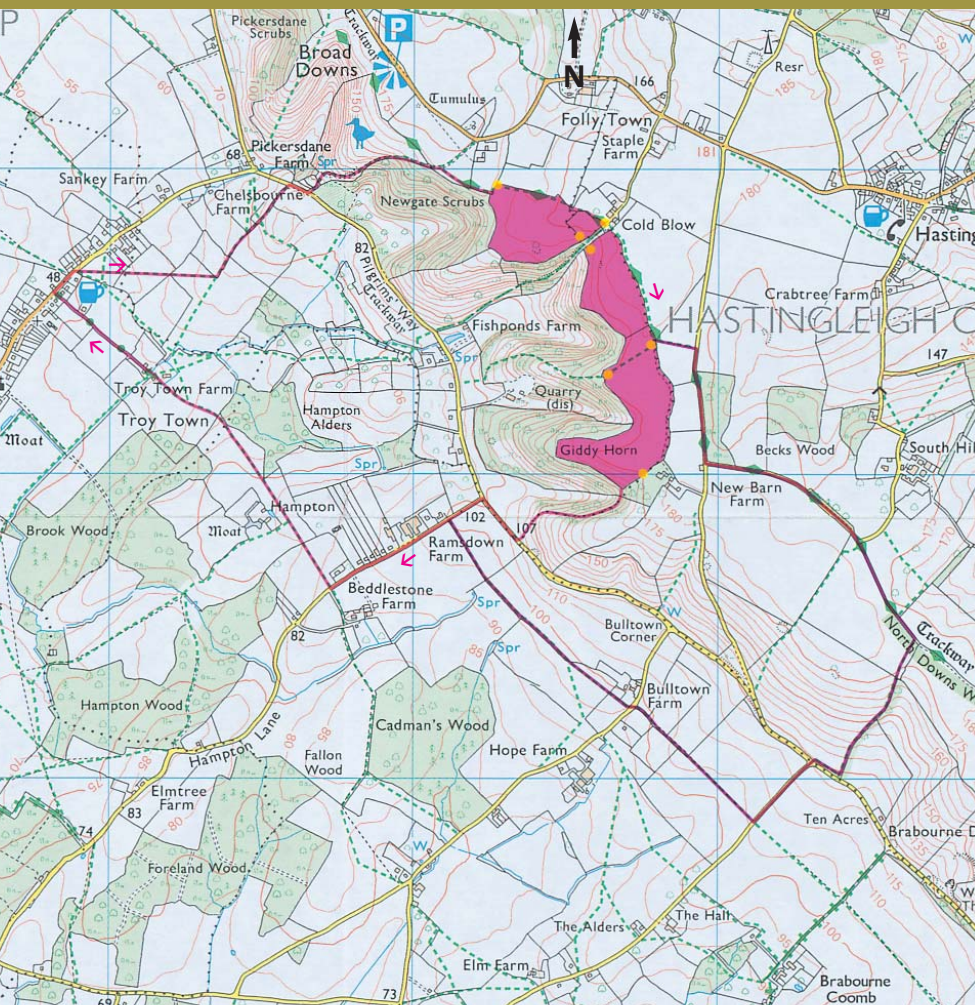
- CSS access land
- Entry and exit points
- Walk route
- Extended route
- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Byway open to all traffic
- Road used as public path



Scale 1:25 000  
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Arable field margin



Rough Poppy

As well as pasture many fields in the Downs are used for growing crops. This mix of pasture and arable land provides a valuable habitat for a range of wildlife, particularly farmland birds, that feed on insects and plant seeds of cultivated land. On the edge of many of the cultivated fields there are wide grassy margins. These undisturbed grassy habitats have been established as part of CSS for the benefit of wildlife such as small mammals and ground nesting birds. The tussocky grass also provides a habitat for insects which feed on crop damaging pests in the growing season.

In winter months look out for areas of stubble on the farm, farmers can receive payment through CSS to provide winter feeding habitat for a range of farmland birds such as linnets and yellowhammers. During the spring and summer, some areas of the fields are left fallow (uncropped) to provide good breeding conditions for birds such as skylarks which prefer nesting in open fields. Some strips of the crops are also kept free of herbicides to provide 'insect rich' field edges and encourage plants such as poppies to thrive. These areas are particularly useful for birds feeding young chicks on an insect rich diet.

Straw bales



The Kent Downs is a nationally important landscape on a par in terms of landscape quality and the protection afforded to it as the well-known National Parks. The Kent Downs AONB covers nearly a quarter of the county of Kent and within it is some of the most outstanding landscape that England has to offer. The Kent Downs extends from the White Cliffs at Dover to the London and Surrey borders. There are 41 AONBs across England and Wales, all protected by Government legislation to ensure their conservation and enhancement.

Cover: View from Wye Downs

Defra – Department of Food, Farming and Rural Affairs.

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) is run by Defra. The aim of the Scheme is to improve the natural beauty and diversity of the countryside. By paying farmers and landowners over a 10 year agreement to manage their land in environmentally sympathetic ways the scheme is able to target threatened habitats such as chalk grassland.

Please note that public access provided under Defra's Countryside Stewardship schemes is permissive only and no new rights of way are being created. Existing public rights of way are not affected. The landowner reserves the right to close or withdraw permissive access areas/routes at any time. In the event of temporary closure notices will be posted on site. Please follow the Country Code and observe any other requirements notified on site. Do not disturb wildlife, livestock and please keep dogs on leads when livestock are present. This is working farmland so please take care, people using the access sites do so at their own risk.

Further Information

- Kent Downs AONB  
01622 221522  
[www.kentdowns.org.uk](http://www.kentdowns.org.uk)
- Defra  
01233 813667  
[www.defra.gov.uk](http://www.defra.gov.uk)
- Public Rights of Way report line  
0845 3450210  
[www.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccess](http://www.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccess)
- English Nature, Wye office  
01233 812525  
[www.english-nature.org.uk](http://www.english-nature.org.uk)
- Public Transport Information  
0870 608 2608  
[www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)
- National Rail Enquiries  
08457 484950
- Kentish Stour Countryside Project  
01233 813307  
[www.kentishstour.org.uk](http://www.kentishstour.org.uk)
- North Downs Way  
01622 221525  
[www.nationaltrail.co.uk](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk)



Design: LOUP Photos: © Dan Tuson, Kent Downs AONB

# Explore the Farmed Landscape of The Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

*A walk to discover farmland, views, wildlife and history in the Wye Downs*



Distance: 3.5 miles or 5 miles  
Time: Allow 2.5hrs or 3.5hrs  
Terrain: Steep climbs, stiles, can be muddy





Farm walk in the Wye Downs



Wasp orchid

*Wye National Nature Reserve (NNR) comprises chalk grassland and woodland on steep coombes. There are spectacular views over the Romney Marsh and Weald. 19 species of orchid are recorded, including the Wasp orchid which had its best ever year in 2003! The reserve is home to some rare butterflies and moths. Cattle and sheep are used to manage the site through grazing, with some areas being kept open by deer.*

**'The steep hillsides shake off all enclosures as they mount upwards through scattered fringes of wood to long ridges of open turf some 500 feet above sea'**  
*AG Bradley 1921*



Hampton Moat



Devils Kneading Trough



Chalk grassland

*Until recently the field on the scarp slope was under regular cultivation growing crops such as oilseed rape and wheat. Under CSS this has now been reverted to grassland, so restoring a continuous tract of grassland along the Downs. Grazing will be sensitively managed to encourage chalk-loving plants to grow on this site.*



Brook village

The walk starts in the village of Brook at the foot of the Downs near Ashford. Start on the public footpath beside the Honest Miller pub. Cross a small railway sleeper footbridge, over a stile and cross the field diagonally to the next stile. Cross the next 2 fields on a left diagonal to reach the end of a hedge. Turn left here, through the hedge and over a stile into a pasture field, follow the field boundary keeping the tree line to your right. Looking up, the Devil's Kneading Trough will be ahead of you, a natural dry valley in the scarp slope. Pick up a track and follow straight ahead to come out on a road. Turn right and follow the road for 45 metres.

Take the public footpath on the left. This sunken lane winds its way up into the Downs with hazel coppice on your right. The gate at the top takes you into the English Nature Wye National Nature Reserve (the area is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest). The Nature Reserve extends along the Downs from Broad Downs (Devil's Kneading Trough) to Bulltown Corner, there is public access on the National Nature Reserve. Bear right through the gate and follow the fence line. You might be able to see the sea from here on a clear day!



Chalk grassland

Cross the stile and follow the route of the North Downs Way. At the next gate you enter an area of CSS access land where you can wander freely. Under CSS landowners can receive payments from the Department of Food, Farming and Rural Affairs (Defra) for managing chalk grassland and also for allowing open access on foot over selected sites. There may be stock in the field as a grazing regime is essential to the management of this chalk grassland. Grazing helps to maintain the sward (the expanse of short grass) which supports a wide diversity of plant and wildlife species. Please keep dogs under close control.

At this point you have the choice of following the North Downs Way along the edge of the field or heading across the field to one of the entry/exit points on the far side. You can cross through the wooded coombe using the stiles and steps or walk past Coldblow Farm and across the track to enter the next area of access land. Look out for the Defra Conservation Walks map boards and way markers rather than following the North Downs Way.

This section of CSS access land provides a huge area of grassland to enjoy, dips and slopes to explore, and fabulous 180 degree panoramic views from the spur of Giddy Horn. (For a longer walk from this point see 'extended route' text)

Walk through this area to New Barn Farm on the far side. To the right of the buildings at New Barn Farm is a wooden gate, head through this gate and follow the permissive footpath (this route is alleged to date from



Steep scarp slope



Track from New Barn Farm

Roman times) down through the woodland. Follow the track to the bottom of the field and climb over the stile in the bottom corner. Follow the path along the fence to the next stile, climb over and turn right on the road. Follow the road and take the next left into Hampton Lane.\* Follow the road, at the end of the houses take the public footpath on the right into a field. Follow straight across the field and over the stile. As you cross this next field you will see the remains of Hampton Manor on your left. Earth banks from Hampton Manor are believed to date back to the 13th Century.

Bear right, heading for the corner of the wood, over the stile and straight across the next field. Over the next stile and across the next field bearing slightly left. Over a wooden bridge with metal rails. Walk past the houses and onto Troy Town Lane. Follow back to the village, turn right to get back to the pub.

#### Extended route

A suggested extension to this route provides an opportunity to explore conservation work carried out through CSS on a neighbouring farm and offers wide ranging views along the Downs.

From the larger area of access land go over the stile in the fence line half way between Cold Blow Farm and New Barn Farm and pick up the North Downs Way. Follow across the field to the road. Follow the waymarks for the North Downs Way along the lane and towards South Hill Farm.

The grassy coombes of the scarp slope give way to a flatter, gently undulating landscape. This part of the landscape of the Kent Downs AONB is commonly termed the dip slope, characterised by secluded dry valleys, a patchwork of woodland, shaws, hedgerows, isolated farmsteads, copses and narrow lanes.

Pass the road to South Hill Farm, head along the track and take the next footpath on the right. Birds such as Yellowhammers will benefit from the many new hedges that are being planted on the farm. Follow a tree lined shaw towards the top of the Downs. The field to the east has been known as 'Captain Dowser field' since the early 19th century and is named after a huntsman who had a fatal accident here while out hunting. Follow the footpath down the slope and enjoy the far-reaching views over the farmed landscape, much of which is also managed under CSS to benefit farmland wildlife.

Where the path emerges onto the road, cross over and head straight down the road opposite. Take the first footpath on the right, over the stile. Head towards Bulltown Farm crossing two further stiles and continue onto the road.

From here the footpath follows the southern boundary of Bulltown Farm crossing open fields before reaching Hampton Lane. Turn left onto the road to pick up the route back to Brook.\*



Yew



**Coppicing** is a management technique for woodland. It involves cutting the trees down to the base every 10-15 years and allowing many new trunks to shoot up. The cut wood is traditionally used for fencing, charcoal, basket making etc.



*This is an area of former arable land which is now being managed sensitively for the benefit of the diverse chalk grassland flora. The farmer grazes sheep on this area now instead of growing crops. Under CSS the farmer receives payments over a 10*

*year agreement to maintain this area as grassland. He manages his stocking density to benefit the wildflowers and grasses, this means keeping stock off the field during the summer months to allow plants to flower and seed.*