

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covers the surrounding of the village of Lamberhurst. Covering a total area of 560 sq miles (1,450 square kilometres), it extends across the counties of Surrey, West Sussex, East Sussex and Kent. It is the fourth largest Area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB) in England and Wales. It is characterised by an attractive, small-scale landscape containing a mosaic of small farms and woodlands, historic parks, sunken lanes and ridge-top villages.

The High Weald AONB was designated in October 1983. Designation as an AONB gave official recognition to the unique landscape of the High Weald, strengthened the ability of government agencies and local authorities to conserve and enhance the landscape, and provided priority for financial support for these objectives from the principal government agency responsible for AONBs, the Countryside Agency (now Natural England). AONBs do not possess separate administrative structures like Britain's National Parks, but rely on existing structures. In the case of the High Weald, this requires co-ordination of the policies and management activities of fifteen local authorities, comprising four counties and eleven district authorities.

The entire Weald was once heavily wooded and, even though the vast woodland has been much reduced and fragmented as the result of human activity over the last 1,500 years, woodland remains at a much higher density in the High Weald than elsewhere. This gives the High Weald a wooded appearance when viewed from a distance from a hilltop, but on closer inspection a close patchwork of small fields, hedges and woods connected by sunken lanes created by centuries of transhumance which patterns the rolling wooded ridges and valleys becomes apparent.

The unique Wealden landscape of small fields and scattered farmsteads was created by pioneer farmers of the late medieval period. The early settlements in this period were formed on the better warm soils, the drier ridge tops and the river valleys. The wooded relief and comparative inaccessibility historically provided the High Weald with a sense of enclosure and remoteness that can still be appreciated today, and which contrasts strongly with the more open nature of the surrounding Low Weald and the generally populous and urbanised nature of south-east England as a whole.

Farming was always a marginal activity in the High Weald. This, combined with the area's relative inaccessibility, made it historically one of the least prosperous areas of south-east England. However, the rapid growth of the iron industry from about 1490, together with the development of crafts such as weaving and tanning, made it, for a time, one of the wealthiest districts of England. By the 18th and 19th centuries these activities had moved to more favourable areas, leaving farming as the mainstay of the rural economy.

Source: www.wikipedia.org

The Lamberhurst 'No Barriers' Circle

Walk overview:

Distance:	2 miles (3.5 km)
Time:	1 – 1.5 hours
Description:	A longer 'no barriers' walk. Enjoy an easily accessible route through the fields surrounding the village of Lamberhurst.



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Leave The Vineyard, turn right and immediately turn right again onto the road (around the corner of the pub). Keep walking along it for about 0.3 miles (500m) until a 'Public Footpath' signpost on the right (there are a few road signs around). Turn right, go through a gate and continue straight along the road through farm property. At the end go through a wooden gate and keep walking along the road down the hill for about 0.3 miles (500m) until a small concrete bridge.

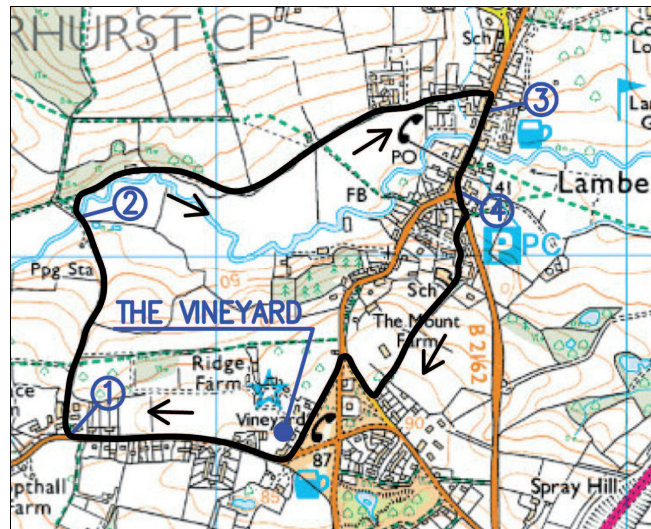
Go over the River Teise (for more information see The Walk of The Vineyard no. 2 - The River Teise Walk) and turn right onto the track behind the bridge. Keep walking along this track for about 0.5 miles (800m) until a wooden gate. Go through it and continue along the road until a T-junction. Turn right onto the road and keep walking along Lamberhurst High Street (for more information see The Walk of The Vineyard no. 9 - The Little Vineyard Stroll) until the centre of the village (there is a crossroad with a white signpost). Turn left onto the road (follow the 'Hastings' signpost) and keep walking for about 50 yards (50m) until a 'Public Footpath' signpost on the right. Turn right (follow the signpost) and continue straight (join a road) until a T-junction. Turn left onto the bigger road (it turns sharply to the right) and keep walking along it until the end.

Continue straight along the pavement (follow a 'Public Footpath' signpost) and walk up the hill along the school ground until a wooden gate. Go through it and carry on until a T-junction with a road. Turn right onto the road and keep walking until a crossroad with a larger road. Turn left onto this road and after 30 yards (30m) it turn slightly right onto a smaller road. Continue along it and go back to The Vineyard.



Pic 1: The turning onto the public footpath

Pic 2: The track with a bridge over the River Teise



Pic 3: Lamberhurst High Street from the west

Pic 4: The centre of Lamberhurst village