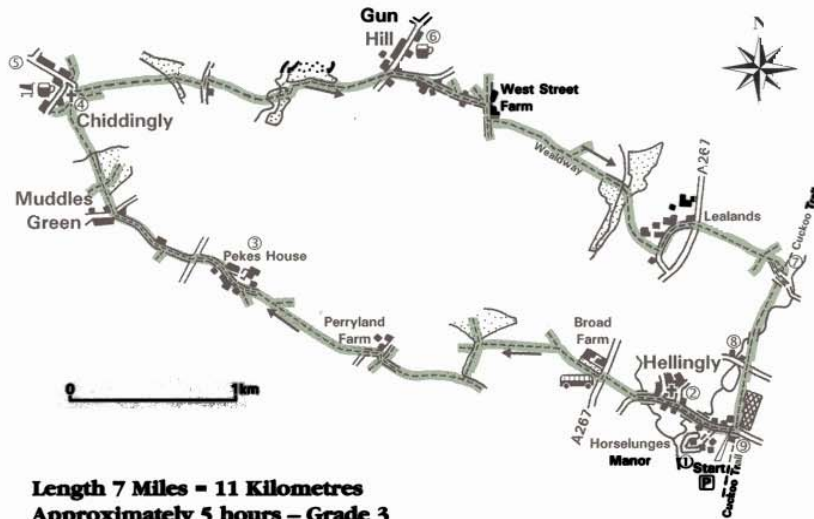




"A fishy tale ABOUT CHEESE"

Inside Chiddingly church stands a monument to the Jefferay family - said to be so proud that every Sunday their servants laid a row of round cheeses between their mansion house and the church for the family to walk on like stepping stones, thus keeping their feet out of the dust.



Length 7 Miles = 11 Kilometres
Approximately 5 hours – Grade 3

START – Cuckoo Trail car park, Station Road, Hellingly
(O.S. Explorer 16 - NGR 585121)

ACCESS – Car – Cuckoo Trail car park, Station Road, Hellingly
Buses – 218, 728 and 752
Trains – Nil

PUBLIC TOILETS – Nil

REFRESHMENTS – Pubs at Hellingly, Chiddingly and Gun Hill
Village shop at Chiddingly

CAUTION – This walk includes two crossings of the A267 road

7
Miles



"A fishy tale ABOUT CHEESE"

- On the left through the trees can be glimpsed the moated manor house of Horselunges. Originally built in the 15th century it was restored in 1925.
- Surrounding Hellingly church is the finest Saxon raised churchyard in Sussex. Today it stands up to 7 feet above the encircling houses, held in place by tall brick walls and criss-crossed by brick paths, laid by unemployed labourers in 1824. On the mound stands a church dating back to Norman times but with a tower as recent as 1869.
- At Pokes Manor look and listen out for the clanking of the armour-clad ghost of Sir Richard Milward, said to haunt this medieval house.
- Beneath the 130 feet high spire of Chiddingly church is the Jefferay monument. This alabaster carving shows Sir John Jefferay (d 1578) casually propped on one elbow above his second wife, Alice. Frowning down on them from the sides are his daughter, Elizabeth, and her husband, Edward Montague. Around the base of the monument are a series of stone drums representing giant round cheeses. (Around the car park are a series of giant oak sculptures erected to mark the millennium.)
- The original, brick, 'E' shaped Elizabethan manor house in which the Jefferay family lived, has now fallen on hard times. The west wing has gone, the centre now forms a farmhouse and the east wing is a shell with the floors gone and ornate marble fireplaces marooned in the upper walls. It was from here that the family set out to walk on their row of cheeses to the church, too proud to share the dust and mud of the common highway with the lower classes. What would they make of the state of their home today?
- Despite its name, Gun Hill is quite safe today and the walker can enjoy a drink and meal in the 15th century Gun Inn. The name commemorates the Wealden iron industry and particularly the nearby furnace at Stream Farm.
- The "Cuckoo" line was opened in 1880 between Polegate and Redgate Mill junction; trains ran from Tunbridge Wells to Eastbourne. The line was named after the tradition that the first cuckoo of spring was heard at the Heathfield Fair. The nearby bridge is a good example of recycling – clay dug out of the cuttings was fired into bricks to make the structure. The line closed between 1965 and 1968 and has now been converted into a walkway – the Cuckoo Trail.
- There has been a watermill on this site since at least 1255 when it was owned by Battle Abbey. An agreement of that year limits the sluice height to "2 feet and a half and 3 inches" to give sufficient flow to other downstream mills. The present building dates from the mid 18th century. The mill fell out of use in 1924 but a new wheel was installed in 1984/5 and the present owner is hoping to restore the remainder of the machinery to working order.
- The end of your walk is marked by the remains of Hellingly Station, now a private dwelling. From here a short branch line once ran from its own platform to the nearby mental institution. The attractive station house was originally half timbered to resemble a country cottage, but has been tile hung to reduce water penetration. Much detail still survives – look for the ornate plasterwork, canopy fretwork and stained glass windows.

7
Miles

