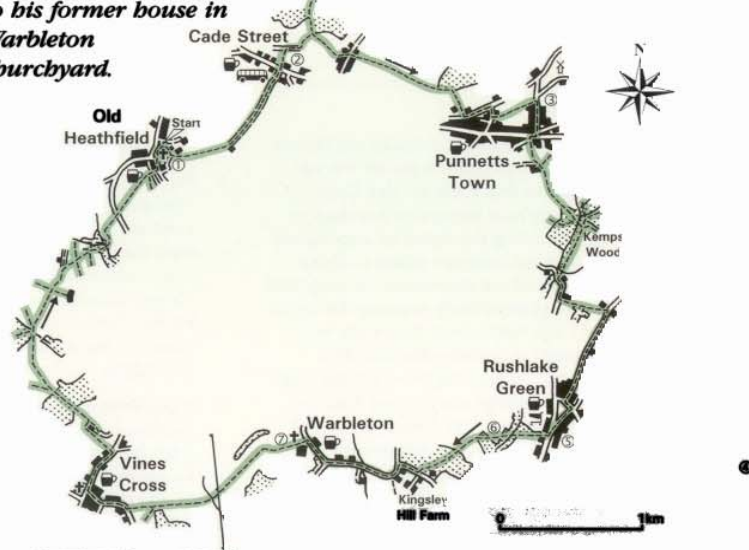




"The two MEMORIALS"

In 1450 a group of Sussex farmers, led by Jack Cade, marched on London to air their grievances with the government. After a couple of days their protest ended in disaster, whilst Cade ended up beheaded and quartered. His name lives on today in the hamlet of Cade Street. A century later the Warbleton ironmaster, Richard Woodham, was burnt at the stake in Lewes for his failure to believe in the state-imposed religion of the day. A memorial stone stands adjacent to his former house in Warbleton churchyard.



Length 7½ Miles = 12 Kilometres

Approximately 5 hours – Grade 3

START – Old Heathfield Church. (O.S. Explorer 16 – NGR 598204)

ACCESS – Car – On street parking adjacent to Old Heathfield Church
Bus – 201, 251 and 252
Train – Nil

PUBLIC TOILETS – Nil

REFRESHMENTS – Pubs at Old Heathfield, Cade Street, Punnetts Town, Rushlake Green, Warbleton and Vines Cross
Village shops at Rushlake Green and Vines Cross

7½
Miles



"The two MEMORIALS"

- 1 Heathfield originated as a swine pasture owned by the inhabitants of Bishopstone (near Seaford). By the 13th century, it had developed as a settlement in its own right and its church was constructed at this time. In the 19th century, a pottery industry had developed, including the manufacture of plaques for use as gravestones. Several of these rare Harmer Terracottas (named after their maker) can be seen about the church and graveyard. Another stone bears the odd poem "A happier couple there never was wed, But much more now they are dead".
- 2 In 1450 the burning of Rye by the French on top of high taxes to pay for the war, proved the final straw for Jack Cade. Gathering local farmers, he marched on London, taking the capital by surprise and carrying out summary justice to those members of the government he could find. The king's army finally scattered his forces and Cade fled back to Sussex. He was eventually captured at the site of his memorial, in the village now named Cade Street, beheaded and his head fixed on London Bridge. "This is the success of all rebels and this fortune changeth ever to traitors" states his epitaph.
- 3 As the iron industry collapsed, unemployment hit the Weald hard. Homeless people begun to squat on the wide roadside verges of the Heathfield to Battle road. In time these illegal cottages became permanent settlements such as Cade Street and Punnetts Town. These settlements are also distinguished by their lack of conventional churches, but instead possess a range of simple chapels, including the corrugated iron example in Punnetts Town.
- 4 Away to the south-east lies Warbleton Priory established in 1413. Just over a hundred years later it was shut down and its revenue confiscated for the crown by the agents of Henry VIII. This ushered in a period where the official state religion swung quickly between catholic and protestant and those of one view were likely to be in conflict with those of the other.
- 5 Leaving Rushlake Green, a much more modern memorial can be seen. This is a kissing gate, erected in memory of Ian Price who was killed near the spot whilst repairing power lines after the October 1987 hurricane.
- 6 Markdye ironworks operated during the 16th and 17th centuries. The banks of the pond and its overflow can easily be seen from the footpath on this walk. Among the first of its ironmasters was a man called Richard Woodham, who lived in the nearby Warbleton village. However his tenure of the works was set to be very short-lived.
- 7 Richard Woodham was a churchwarden at Warbleton church, where he had provided a fine, iron door to one of the tower rooms. He was a protestant, and unusually for the time, literate and hence able to read the bible for himself. The vicar, George Fairbank, in contrast, was a catholic. Conflict between the two was inevitable once Woodham had begun to publicly criticise Fairbank's sermons. However, Fairbank had the state on his side. Woodham was arrested and after a show trial was burnt alive at the stake at Lewes with nine other martyrs in an effort to scare others from following in his footsteps. Did he ever dream of a period of freedom to believe in what he chose, such as exists today? His memorial in the churchyard omits any controversy and states only "Close by in the meadow behind stood the Abode of Richard Woodham farmer and ironmaster burnt at Lewes 22 June 1537".

7½
Miles

