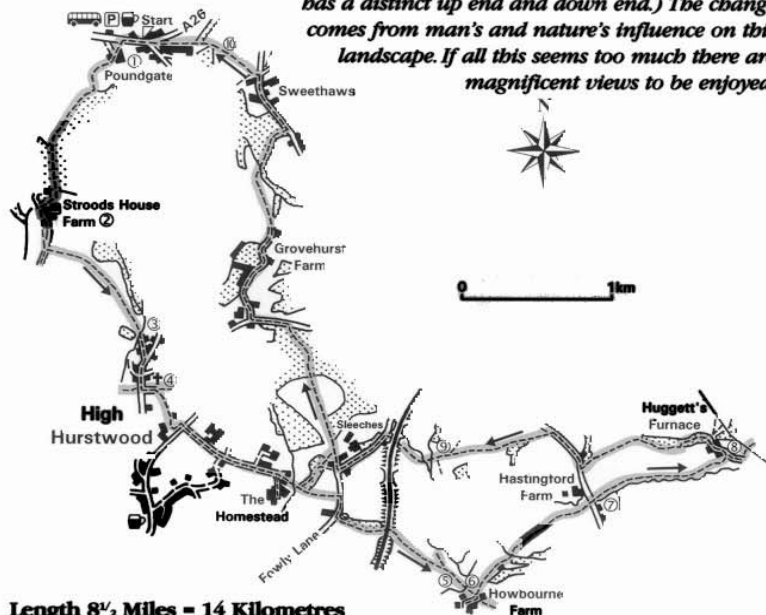




# "Up hill and DOWN GHYLL"

*"Continuity and Change" is a watchword for some historians in viewing a landscape and this apparent paradox is explained in the course of this walk. The continuity comes from the bands of clay and sandstone laid down millions of years ago, forming the basis of the "up and down" country of today's High Weald. (As the name of this walk suggests, it has a distinct up end and down end.) The change comes from man's and nature's influence on this landscape. If all this seems too much there are magnificent views to be enjoyed.*



Length 8½ Miles = 14 Kilometres

Approximately 5 hours – Grade 3

(This walk can be divided into two separate walks of 5 Miles = 8 Kilometres and 3 Miles = 5 Kilometres using Fowly Lane as a link)

**START** – Lay-by opposite the Crow and Gate public house on the A26, south of Crowborough. (O.S. Explorer 18 – NGR 494288)

**ACCESS** – Car – Lay-by on A26 opposite Crow and Gate pub south of Crowborough  
Bus – 729  
Train – Nil

**PUBLIC TOILETS** – Nil

**REFRESHMENTS** – Pubs at High Hurstwood and A26 south of Crowborough

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8½  
Miles



# "Up hill and DOWN GHYLL"

- 1 Although the land has been continually exploited for hundreds of years, Crowborough parish has changed, being carved out of Rotherfield parish as Crowborough grew in Victorian times.
- 2 The site of Strood farmhouse has remained static in the landscape for many years, but the actual house has changed its appearance due to both economic circumstances and fashion. The present house is a typical Georgian building with a simple, rendered elevation.
- 3 The route crosses the river in a typical Sussex ghyll – a fast flowing stream in a small, steep-sided valley. A section of the block-like sandstone forming the basis of this landscape is exposed. Its origin as beach material compressed in layers over many millions of years can be seen. Also look out for the rust coloured water showing the presence of iron and the mini cliff carved as water erosion slowly changes the landscape.
- 4 High Hurstwood church is a Victorian building, constructed as the village developed to prevent the need to trek to the original parish centre at Buxted. It is notable for its half-timbered tower.
- 5 Approaching the valley of the River Uck, water cutting through the sandstone until it found a clay layer has changed the landscape to produce a much flatter and lower appearance. On the right is a brick pillbox or gun emplacement. These were constructed throughout Sussex in chains along river valleys during World War II to repel any possible German landing.
- 6 A double brick oast house with its distinctive cowl can be

seen at Howbourne Farm. These were used to dry hops and were once a common

sight in East Sussex and Kent. The cowls changed direction with the wind to maintain a draught through the structure.

- 7 The parish of Hadlow Down is another Victorian parish created in response to a growing settlement. Yet the older hamlet of Hastingford is represented by Hastingford House, a fine example of a four bay medieval house with all its timbering exposed, on a sandstone foundation. Both the original smoke vents and the chimney that replaced them are visible. There is an original window to the undercroft/cellar.
- 8 At Huggets Furnace the continuity comes from its use for 600 years as a local industrial centre. Initially, the geology was put to practical use with iron ore, wood and a dammed ghyll being used in the iron works. This works had a short working life producing cannon in the late 16th century, but the site later changed to become a corn mill, which is still apparent today. The bank of the hammer pond remains, as do some fine contemporary houses.
- 9 Although there is little to see here today, this is the site of another ironworks – Little Forge. It had a longer lifespan than Huggets, operating from 1560 to 1667. After many years disuse, the pond upstream to the north has recently been restored by the present owner.
- 10 The very acid sandstone makes the soil over it poor for crop production. Large areas were therefore left undeveloped in agricultural terms as commons. Originally of benefit to residents in providing free grazing, timber and fish they are now an important recreational facility – Crowborough Common having become a golf course.

8½  
Miles

