

STOCKLAND GREEN RETURNING VIA BRADLEY'S MILL

Walk: 2 miles

Time: approx 1 hour

This walk had been selected to be in more open areas and to avoid woods as much as possible although some wooded sections are inevitable in this part of Kent. It is quite hilly, but nevertheless enjoyable.

- 1.** With your back to the lych-gate outside the church turn left and proceed down Speldhurst Hill passing the "The George and Dragon", "The Cottage" an old beamed cottage and the "Manor House" on your right until, after 150 yards there is a junction with Barden Road on the left. Veer right continuing down the hill for 200 yards when on the left is a "Footpath" finger post (WT 67).
- 2.** Follow the path with a bank on the left and riven oak fencing on the right for 125 yards where at the end is a stile. After this the path continues for a further 150 yards with another stile at its end leading on to a concrete track.
- 3.** Turn right and, following the "Footpath" finger post, proceed straight down this track for 250 yards where at its end are metal gates carrying a sign "Southern Water - Waste Treatment Works". Turn right here over a stile and follow the path with a high beech hedge on the left, later curving right downhill to a hand rail bridge over a stream. Cross the bridge and proceed along the path which for the next 40 yards is a board walk with a stile in the middle. Continue uphill after this with fencing on the right and varying hedgerows on the left for 400 yards, crossing another board walk on the way, until you reach a private lane at the top with "Nutshell Cottage" on the opposite side.
- 4.** Turn left into the lane and after 30 yards on the right there is a "Footpath" notice by the handrail of a flight of stone steps. Up these steps, continuing with garden fencing on the right for a 100 yards where there is a stile. Over this and into a field and, following the path round to the left, go up this side of a field for 150 yards where at its top is another stile. After this the path runs between private gardens and high wooden fencing of neighbouring properties and after 100 yards arrives at a road (Franks Hollow Road).
- 5.** Turn right and proceed up the road for 250 yards (after a while Bidborough village can be seen across the valley on your left) until you arrive at a T junction with Stockland Green Road.
- 6.** Turn left and along the road for 100 yards where on the right is a "Footpath" finger post in the hedge (WT 71). You are now approximately half way through the walk.
- 7.** Pass through the metal kissing gate and after a few yards there is a stile, behind which is a field. Follow the path with the hedge on your left for 75 yards to the top. At the top cross the stile on the right of the path, then immediately turn left and along the side of this next field for 100 yards until on its other side it meets a footpath with a fence and hedge behind. This is WT 70. You are now joining the High Weald Walk and the Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk which lead all the way back to Speldhurst.
- 8.** Turn right and follow the path across the top of this field where at the corner is a stile. Over this and the path then continues for a little over third of a mile where in the main there are hedgerows on the left and fields on the right. After walking about the first 250 yards you pass over a stile and after a further 200 yards or so Speldhurst church and village can be seen directly ahead over the valley. At the end of this third of the mile section is a stile behind which are some stone steps leading down to a road behind (Stockland Green Road again). **WARNING** to parents of young children and dog owners - extreme caution should be exercised here as these steps finish on the edge of this busy narrow road, and as there is no pavement it might be a good idea to put your charges on their leads beforehand!
- 9.** Turn right up the hill and after 75 yards on the left is "Forge House" with large wrought iron entrance gates. Turn left through an access provided in their first part (there is no footpath finger post here, but set in the bank on the opposite side of the road is an old tree trunk with footpath arrows). Cross the driveway where immediately opposite is a stone "Public Footpath" sign set in the ground. Follow the path (WT 68) on its left downhill and after 100 yards there is a wooden spar fence crossing it with a stile to its right. Step over the stile into the field and continue down the steps cut into the hillside, being careful as you walk as the path can be very slippery after rain, and where after 100 yards at the bottom are a stile and gate and behind which is a "farm" complex comprising of what was once Bradley's Mill.
- 10.** Over the stile, noting the old mill stream passing under the initial section of the concrete apron. On the left are a store and the old mill which was recently made a "listed building" although sadly is no longer in working order. The remains of the water wheel can still be seen on the far side and behind this is the fenced off old mill pond. On the right are further storage buildings and the Saracen's Pet and Animal feed Superstore. Continue straight ahead through the yard area and along the roadway on the other side until after 150 yards it meets a road (the bottom of Speldhurst Hill).
- 11.** Turn right and proceed up the hill when after 350 yards it arrives at the junction with Barden Road (see 1 above), veer left passing the "Manor House", "The Cottage" and "The George and Dragon" once more until finally arriving at the Church lych-gate.