

Walk 14 – The Sloe Road

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Description: A ramble around the hedgerows, shaws and tolls that stitch together the countryside between North Tonbridge, Hildenborough and Shipbourne.

Length: 4.3 miles / 7.4 km (approximately 2 hours)

Grade: Leisurely

Good for: Autumnal colour and foraging.

1. Begin your walk at the very end of Trench Road, near St Margaret Clitheroes school. Just after the school entrance you will see a bridlemarker and an oil drum at the entrance to the path. Follow the pathway through the blackberry bushes until you come to the end of the path.
2. At this point, turn right walking past Little Trench Farm and through the gate, continuing down the wide grass path, flanked either side by tall hedges. At the end of the track continue straight on and you will enter Trench Wood.
3. Turn left through the kissing gate and then take an immediate right, following another grassy farm track between another pair of large hedgerows. At the end of this track turn left again and you will join another wide bridlemarker, follow this until you reach Trench Farm.

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4. At the farm, turn right and walk up Coldharbour Lane, then after 200 metres turn left, climbing over the stile and walking through the sheep field. Please remember to keep dogs on a lead when walking through livestock.

5. Continue downhill into the corner of the field, then climb the stile and pass over the little wooden bridge as you cross the Hilden Brook. Walk in through the woods, following the path for around 120 metres until you come to a gate on your right. Walk through this and then continue you straight on through the field.

6. Continue straight on, passing through two more fields. At the end of the third field, walk through another kissing gate and the path will begin to narrow. At the end of this path you reach a large wooden gate, walk through this and you will emerge onto Riding Lane.

7. Turn right and follow the road with care past Hildenbrook Farm and Laundry Cottage. The take the first right after the Roundhouse and continue along the driveway.

8. Pass the gates of Fairhill and then continue along the road uphill. Continue straight on, walking round the metal gate and into Luke's Wood. The wood itself is private property, so please stick to the path and continue uphill.

9. Upon leaving the wood, follow the path beside a field of Maize and then climb a stile before crossing a brick bridge over a dry gully. Climb a second stile and then continue along the path between the barbed wire fence and a huge hedge row of hawthorn trees.

10. At the end of this path, climb another stile and continue on as the trail weaves its way under the pine trees. Continue into the open and then follow the path straight on. There will be a cluster of barns and houses on your right.

11. When you reach the lane, turn right and follow this past Violets Cottage Turn left at the 'Dead slow' sign and follow the gravel track until you reach a stile.

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12. Climb over and continue across the paddocks, keeping the hedge on your left, you will see an attractive white house on your right, this is Tinley Lodge farm.
13. Walk on until you reach another stile and then continue under the mobile phone mast. Keep going along the hedge and as the field dips down towards the woods, climb the stile and continue into Cold Harbour toll.
14. When you leave the woods, climb another stile and walk uphill through the sheep field. Please keep dogs on a lead at this point. Walk along the muddy track and into the next sheep field.
15. Continue across the field, aiming for the gap in the hedge, then climb the stile which will bring you out onto Horns Lodge Lane. Behind the opposite hedge is Cataract Cottage.
16. Turn right up Horns Lodge Lane, then turn left through the gap in the hedge, continuing across the overgrown meadow using the permissive path.
17. Pass through the metal kissing gate and then follow the path down through the woods of Trench Shaw.
18. At the end of the path you will reach a T- junction where another path crosses. Turn right and you will come to the top of a huge field, occupied by just two trees
19. Turn left and after a short walk you will come to a kissing gate that leads into Quincewood gardens, North Tonbridge.
20. This marks the end of your walk. If you wish to return to the starting point at Trench Road it will take approximately 8-10 minutes to walk back from here (take the first right and then follow Greenfrith drive to the end where it meets Trench Road).

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When enjoying this walk, please remember to follow the countryside code:

Respect other people

Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors

Park carefully so access to gateways and driveways are clear

Leave gates and property as you find them

Stay on footpaths but give way to others where it's narrow

Protect the natural environment

Leave no trace of your visit - take all your litter home

Don't have BBQs or fires

Keep dogs under effective control

Bag and bin your dog poo.

Enjoy the outdoors

Plan ahead, check what facilities are open, be prepared

Follow advice and local signs and obey social distancing measures