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Britain's 50 best walks

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ANNA GORDON



Ashdown Forest - Pooh Corner East Sussex

Classification Easy walk
Distance 8.7 miles (14km)
Typical duration 3hr 30min
Height gain 200m
Starting point Hartfield church or Anchor pub
OS grid reference TQ478356 (Explorer map 135)

Walk in a nutshell

A circular walk around Ashdown Forest – a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – from Hartfield via many of the places mentioned in AA Milne's Winnie the Pooh books, including the Five Hundred Acre Wood, and culminating in a crossing of the famous Pooh Bridge.

Why it's so special

This walk isn't just for Pooh fans, there's plenty of archaeological interest too. Over the eight miles you'll pass an abandoned medieval tower, pillow mounds, a Bronze Age burial ground known as Peat Lump Hill, a motte and bailey castle,

and the hint of a Roman road.

Keep your eyes peeled for Sticks for Pooh Bridge. They're in curiously short supply around the immediate area, so pick up a few along the way. The game of Poohsticks was actually first mentioned in AA Milne's The House at Pooh Corner.

But bear in mind

There are no refreshments en route, so bring a picnic to keep you going until you make it back to Hartfield. **Impress your companions** Kanga and Roo may have existed after all: the forest was once home to some red-necked wallabies that had escaped from a captive colony. But numbers declined and the last confirmed sighting was in 1972.

Recover afterwards

Hartfield has two pubs, The Anchor and The Hay Wagon, both of which serve decent food.

And if it's tipping down

Royal Tunbridge Wells isn't far, and the museum and art gallery on Civic Way show everything from Victorian oil paintings to historic toys.

How to get there

By car Nearest motorway exit is Junction 10 of M23, 11 miles away. From there follow A264 and A22 to Forest Row, then turn left on to B2110 to reach Hartfield village. **By bus** The 291 bus links Hartfield with Crawley and Forest Row – but not on Sundays. **By train** The closest rail station is Ashurst, just under 3 miles away.

Step-by-step guide Walk ID 3532

1-2. Start either at Hartfield church or the Anchor pub. Walk up lane from main street, with buildings on left. Shortly after church, cross stile on right then turn left to parallel the lane.
3-4. Go through first field and over first stile. Follow path over more stiles until you pass Forstal Farm buildings and paddocks on left. After paddocks cross bridge, turn left. Pass through wood and over field.
5. At lane, turn right on to Wealdland Way (WW), which is waymarked, for nearly a mile. The Dome of Ashdown Forest can be seen in the distance ahead of you.
6-7. At end of lane, turn left and follow path into wood. In wood bear right. Follow WW signs in wood, tending towards right at first.
8. Shortly after tarmac runs out, turn left. Follow WW signs for a mile until wood starts to clear and small valley opens out to right.
9. Leave Wealdland Way here for next point

(Gills Lap car park) which can be seen 1/4 mile across valley on right. Either walk across valley or carry on around head of valley.
10-11. From car park turn north up ridge roughly parallel to road. Pass Roo's sand pit on right, and memorial to AA Milne on left. Carry on down ridge bearing left at seat away from nearby car park.
12-15. After 1/4 mile, at fork in ride bear left and downwards. Further downhill, bear left with houses on left. Turn left on to road, then right into March Green Lane.
16-17. This road turns left. Shortly after turn, take footpath on right, waymarked Pooh Bridge. Over bridge, follow path uphill. After 1/4 mile on footpath, turn left at minor road in Upper Hartfield.
18-19. This road soon bends left; instead walk on to path that continues straight ahead. Follow signs to Hartfield for 1/4 mile. At bigger road turn right back into Hartfield.