Fancy Free Walks *point your feet on a new path*

Sole Street and Eggringe Wood

Distance: 7 km=4½ miles — easy walking

Region: Kent — Date written: 18-aug-2019

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Refreshments: Sole Street

Map: Explorer 137 (Ashford). *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Grassy meadows, views, woodland

In Brief

Here is a quiet walk through central Kent countryside with sudden great views as you emerge from the woodland paths. Along the way you pass nothing more strenuous than a a long green pasture with a herd of sheep grazing.

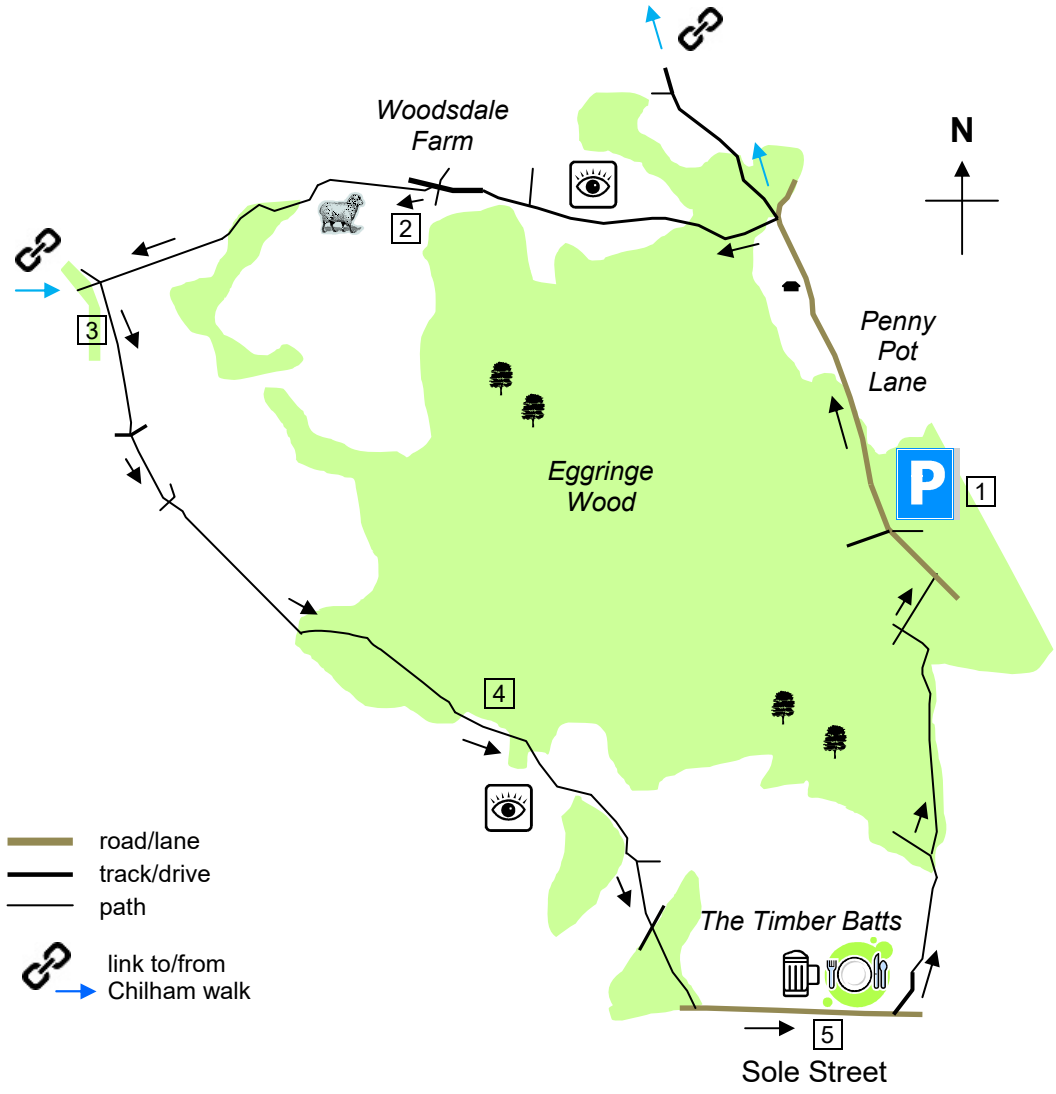
There is a quirky inn in Sole Street, open weekends from midday. (For enquiries, it's essential to ring *The Timber Batts* on 01227-531898 or check their website.)

This walk can be combined in a figure-of-eight with the *Chilham* 7-mile walk to make a very satisfying 10 mile=16 km walk. See the "chain link" points for where to join or leave this walk. You can also combine this walk with the *Wye Downs* walk to make a more challenging 13 mile=20½ km walk. (You could even "do the triple".)

There are very few nettles on this walk and the undergrowth is minimal, confined to the woods. The terrain was completely dry when it was first trod in August but there might be damp patches in the woods. Your dog will be happy for most of the way, except in the long sheep field and in the gastro-pub where he is welcome in the garden.

The walk begins in the car park near the south end of Penny Pot Lane, near Crundale, Kent, w3w:bluff.beak.shrub, nearest postcode **CT4 7ES**, gridref TQ098504. The car park is ¾ mile north of the junction of Penny Pot Lane with Sole Street. It is marked on the map as the *Denge Wood Car Park*. Warning! isolated car park: leave car visibly empty - see Guidelines. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



1 From the Penny Pot Lane car park, go out and turn **right** along the lane. In 600m, you pass *Thruxted Mill* with its three tall chimneys. *Thruxted Mill was an "animal rendering plant", a kind of hell for animals, standing idle for ten years and now (2019) to be demolished as a site for twenty new homes – it may have changed by the time you do this walk.* Just after the Mill, as the lane enters trees, there are two wide paths on your left.

If you are doing this walk in combination with the **Chilham** walk, do as follows. Take the **second** path on your **left**, the bridleway. Follow the path through bluebell beechwoods. As a green pasture comes in view, shift to the right onto a narrow path and exit the wood through a metal gate into a pasture with ponies. Follow a line of eletricity poles but veer away **right** to go through another metal gate into crop fields. Go straight ahead on a wide bridleway between fields. Now join the Chilham walk at section 7. Otherwise …

Take the **first** path on your left, a wide track marked as a byway, going down into dense woods. You come down to a large wooden gate leading into a long wide green meadow. Head down to the left where you can see the start of a cinder track. Follow the track, passing free-range runs of ducks, geese and peafowl. You come over a grid (using the wooden gate on the left if needed) onto a track under trees. Ignore a footpath on your right and keep ahead to pass a flowery redbrick house in the hamlet of

Woodsdale Farm. *You have joined part of the Stour Valley Walk, a 54-mile=87 km walk from Lenham to Pegwell Bay, near Ramsgate.*

2 Immediately, at the corner of a sheep meadow, go **left** over a stile. Your destination is the top left-hand corner, so follow a path near the right-hand side at first and then veer **left** across the centre. At the top, go over a stile and follow a grass path. Soon you come through a beech glade to meet a tall footpath sign which directs you **right**. A similar sign points you **left** along the top of a field with great views, including Chilham church and castle. In 150m, your path curves right and goes down the centre of the field. At the bottom, where you meet a line of trees, ignore a descending path through a gap ahead and instead stay in the field by turning **left** on a crossing path.

3 Follow a rather vaguely-defined but quite usable path along the rough edge of two fields. After 350m, you reach a stony track. Cross straight over to a gap in the fence, going through a small metal gate and over a stile. Keep straight ahead, staying on the level, passing a bush and a tall maple on your right. A small metal gate leads you into a large sloping meadow. Skirt left-right round a patch of crops. You can now see your path ahead rising up the hillside. At the top, veer **left** into part of Eggringe Wood, where you need to keep alert to stay on the narrow high path. It runs through shrubs, then gently uphill under beeches, and winding through yews. After a relatively straight section, your path comes through a wooden swing-gate onto the open hillside with terrific views.

4 Keep to a level path, not too far from the trees on your left. You come through a thorny thicket and out into the open again with more views. More thorn bushes lead up to a wooden beam, useful as a seat, and a large wooden gate. Go through a wooden swing-gate beside them and turn **right**. Keep to the right-hand side of the hillside, on an upward gradient, leading you into a forest of tall hornbeams. Keep to the left side of the forest to go through a wooden swing-gate and veer **right** onto a woodland path between fences. You reach a diagonal crossing path by a marker post showing red and yellow arrows. Go straight ahead, forking **left** on a footpath, identified by one of the yellow arrows. Follow this wide shingly woodland path, finally coming down, bypassing a large metal gate, to a quiet road. Turn **left** on the road, soon avoiding a road on your right (next to a seat to take in the view). Ignore a footpath right and press on into the village of Sole Street, passing cottages and shortly the old *Compasses* pub, now a punky alternative to a traditional pub known as *Timber Batts*. This pub is open evenings, but announces itself as open from **12 noon Sat and Sun**.

5 After a possible sojourn, your route will take a path back into Eggringe Wood. (The official footpath is ploughed over and fenced off. Local paths used by dog owners seem to have implicitly changed: this walk takes one of them into the wood.) Start walking along the road in the same direction but, immediately after the entrance to the pub car park, turn **left** passing to the side of a large metal gate and onto a farm track, leading out through the smaller metal gate into a crop field. Walk along the left-hand edge of the field (where there is a comfortable width of grass), to the corner of the woodland ahead. Take a path, through a small metal gate, into the wood and immediately fork **right**, thus leaving the official footpath. This narrow path keeps to the right-hand side of the wood, so that the field on your right can be glimpsed for most of the way, After more than 500m, your path veers left, going over a bank, and arrives at a 4-way junction with a wide path. Turn **right** at the junction on a wide, fairly straight, path which leads

out to the road, Penny Pot Lane. Turn **left** on the lane, quickly arriving at the car park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Sole Street is signposted off the A28 trunk road, in the village of **Godmersham**. Go through Godmersham village, under the railway to a 3-way junction where there is a small sign directing you to the **right**. In ½ mile, turn **left** where you shoud see another sign for the pub. In ¾ mile, turn **left** at a side junction, signposted *Sole Street*. Continue nearly 2 miles to a crossroads, turn **left** and park in ¾ mile on the right in a large car park.

The A28 trunk road can be reached from the M20 motorway in Ashford (Junction **9**). Follow signs for **A28** *Canterbury*.

Another possible route is from the A20 at **Chilham** where you can join the A28 going south 2 miles to Godmersham.

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