



# Yalding to Borough Green walk

A gentle walk along The Greensand Way and through Mereworth Woods



## Mereworth & the Kentish Weald

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**Length** 16.8km (10.4 miles), 5 hours. For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow 9 hours.

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**Toughness** 3 out of 10.

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**OS Maps** Explorer 148 or Landranger 188. Yalding, map reference TQ 685 502, is in **Kent**, 10km north-east of Tonbridge.

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**Features** This is an easy walk through the woods and fields of the Kent countryside, without too much in the way of hills. You will, however, need good walking boots if not gumboots in muddy weather. The walk starts beside the River Medway, follows the Greensand Way to Roydon Hall (once the self-styled Maharishi's 'Capital of the Age of Enlightenment') and then heads gently uphill to East Peckham and St Michaels Church, which is maintained by the Churches Conservation Trust. Shortly afterwards you have a choice of routes, depending on which lunchtime pub you wish to visit. The original Book route now takes you to the village of Mereworth, dominated by its massive Palladian church, the steeple of which is visible for miles around. All routes (see below) meet up in the vast Mereworth Woods (very muddy or waterlogged in winter) on the Wealdway. Since 2015 extensive logging has taken place in these woods. At times your onward route as described in the Directions might be temporarily diverted to allow logging to continue

safely. Once through the woods the route continues to the outskirts of the village of Crouch through more light woodland which in season is carpeted in bluebells. You are next in a woodland valley as you head for the village Basted and on to Borough Green for tea.

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### Walk Options

There are three options, two of which visit a pub for lunch. The pub on the original Book route, the Queens Head, has closed and this route is now suitable for picnickers, and those wishing to visit the Palladian church in Merewerth. The second option diverts in the village of Merewerth, before the church, to a pub on the edge of the Woods, after a mile of road walking along quiet country lanes. After lunch this route takes a different route through Merewerth Woods and meets up with the Book route deep into the Woods. The third option takes you to the village of West Peckham and to its cosy pub. After lunch you walk along the Greensand Way before entering Merewerth Woods, where you join the other two routes, again deep into these Woods.

You can get a bus about once an hour to either Maidstone or Tunbridge Wells from a stop on the way into Mereworth near the church.

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### History

**Roydon Hall** is a Tudor manor house, built in 1535, which has changed ownership only three times: in 1834 from the Roydon/Twysden family to William Cook, a city merchant who accepted it in settlement of debts, in 1974 from the Cook family to the Maharishi for his Transcendental Meditation centre until it again changed hands much more recently. In the nineteenth century, a water diviner told the Cook family to dig into the lawn - where they found a collection of large silver dishes, probably buried in the Civil War.

The **Church of St Lawrence**, Mereworth, has been described as 'one of the most remarkable neo-classical churches in Europe' with a portico supported by six Tuscan columns, and a steeple 'so tall', wrote Horace Walpole, 'that the poor church curtsies under it'. Rear Admiral Charles Lucas, who won the first Victoria Cross in 1854 for throwing overboard a live shell that hit his ship, is buried in the churchyard.

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### Travel

Take the train nearest to **10am** from **Charing Cross** Station to **Yalding**, changing at Tonbridge or Paddock Wood. Journey time about 1 hour 5 minutes. Trains back from Borough Green to Victoria run twice an hour (hourly on Sundays). Journey time 45 minutes. Buy a day return to Yalding; although on a different line, this is acceptable for the return journey from Borough Green.

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**Lunch**

The Queens Head pub on the Book route has closed and is now a housing development. As noted above, the Book route is now an option for picnickers, with no pub on this route.

The pub on the Beeches route is **The Moody Mare** , Mereworth (tel [01622 813 038](tel:01622813038)), some 7.1 km into the walk, serving food midday to 9 pm Wednesday to Saturday (closed Monday and Tuesday) and until 7 pm on Sundays, from an extensive, seasonally changing menu. This establishment in its previous incarnations was called the Beeches Country Pub and Restaurant, and before that, the Old Beech Inn. Neither was walker friendly, but in its guise as the Moody Mare its management welcomes walkers.

The pub on the route to West Peckham is the walker friendly **Swan on the Green** (tel [01622 812 271](tel:01622812271)), some 6.8 km into the walk, an attractive and comfy country pub in the heart of the small village of West Peckham, which serves food in informal and formal (restaurant) areas between midday to 2 pm Wednesday to Saturday (closed Monday and Tuesday) and midday to 3 pm on Sundays. This pub has its own micro brewery in its grounds, a bonus for real ale drinkers.

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**Tea**

The recommended tea shop for this walk is now **Melias Place Cafe** (tel 07738 718199) a family run coffee shop and cafe, serving delicious cakes, at 2 Sevenoaks Road, Borough Green, (between the A25 and A227 roads) open until 5 pm, Monday to Saturday, and until 4 pm on Sundays.

The Henry Simmonds pub, noted in the 2011 edition of the TO Book, closed down many moons ago and is now a housing development. On the High Street you have **The Plaxtol Village Bakery** and, next door, the **Plaxtol Cafe and Sandwich Bar** . Closer to the railway station you find the **Robin Hood Bar** , a pub which looks awful from the outside, and inside is very basic - an old fashioned working mans pub, with four letter words in abundance, so not exactly suitable for the ladies - but a port in a storm for the walker in dire need of an alcoholic drink at walk-end.

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**Updates**

The online Directions were materially rewritten in December 2017 to reflect the three route options. The 2011 TO Book is now out-of-date and **should not be used** . New recommended tea stop at walk-end added September 2019. This edition following a book check - March 2023.

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**Help Us!**

After the walk, please leave a [comment](#), it really helps. Thanks!

You can also upload photos to the  [SWC Group on Flickr](#) (upload your photos) and [videos to !\[\]\(eebbd3dc1abeccf4c1e5751ec03fc559\_img.jpg\) Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:

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**By Car** It is not easy to return to the start by train, as the stations are on different rail lines.

**Start** ME18 6HN      **Finish** TN15 8BG

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**Help** National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Traveline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

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**Version** Mar-23 Marcus

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## Walk Directions

The [numbers] refer to a sketch map in the book.

1. **[1]** Coming off the London train go over the bridge and exit **Yalding Railway Station** by a gate in the fence just before the station building. Go out through the small station car park to the main road, and *turn left* (where to turn right goes over the railway crossing) your direction 75°. You have a new housing development on your left-hand side. In 120 metres, just before the bridge over the **River Medway**, *turn left* on a signed Medway Valley footpath on the left-hand bank of the river, your direction 15°. (Your route will follow the Greensand Way and its arrows as far as the church beyond Roydon Hall).
2. In 110 metres *fork left* away from the river, your direction 340 ° and between concrete fences, to pass the end of the new housing development under construction on your left. In 100 metres go over a stile and cross the railway line and go up the concrete steps on the other side, over a stile and then turn *half right*, your direction 325°, across a large, open field, with a post and wire fence on your immediate right-hand side.
3. In 280 metres, and beyond the end of the wire fence on your right, you come to the corner of the field. Go pass a barrier and then cross a stile into a field where you *turn left* **[2]**, your direction 280°. Follow the barbed-wire and mesh fence on your left-hand side and in 230 metres you exit the field over a stile and go straight across the B2015 to continue *straight on* to the left of no.1 White Cottage, your direction 290°. In 55 metres go over a stile and straight on, gently uphill along the left-hand

- edge of a field of ponies, donkeys and ducks, exiting the field in 160 metres, by a stile in its top left-hand corner, *turning right* to continue in your previous direction (280°) over a large open field towards the woods.
4. In 160 metres you have the edge of the wood on your right-hand side, with a fading LEAF notice (Linking Environment and Farming). Continue ahead and in a further 150 metres you come (via a break in the wood of 50 metres) to a large wood-enclosed field and continue straight across it (down its middle), your direction 315 °. Exit the field in 450 metres to the left of a redundant stile, straight on into **Moat Wood** (marked on the OS map).
  5. In 15 metres you have the start of a two metre high deer protection fence on your left-hand side. Keeping the fence on your left you now follow it through the wood, through twists and turns. In 275 metres you *bend sharp left* with your main path (following the Greensand Way arrow). In a further 175 metres the wood becomes a dark pine forest, your direction now due west. In a further 75 metres you step across a possibly dried up (in summer) tiny stream; in a further 100 metres, you exit the wood to the left of a redundant stile, to head along the right-hand edge of a grassy paddock, gently uphill.
  6. In 35 metres go through a deer protection gate and cross an access drive. On its far side pass through another deer protection gate and keep ahead, with blackberry bushes on either side, now with the deer protection fence on your left and a low wire fence on your right, on a car-wide earth and gravel track, your direction 295° initially.
  7. In 150 metres you get a first sight of Roydon Hall ahead to your right. Where the track begins to bend to the left towards the main gate, *bear right* across a grass verge, beside a low wire fence. Cross over a grassy path (which to the right after 100 metres gives you a close-up view of Roydon Hall and its garden). Go through a gap in the bushes and follow the fence on your right-hand side for 80 metres, through light woodland, to drop down onto a tarmac road where you *turn right*, your direction 40°. In 110 metres you pass a side entrance to Roydon Hall and in a further 120 metres you come to the front entrance. (Note: The sign once there announcing it as the 'Capital of Enlightenment' has gone; the Hall is no longer open to visitors, as it is under new ownership).
  8. **[!]** Your onward path is opposite the front entrance of the Hall, through a metal kissing gate on your left-hand side, on the Greensand Way footpath, across grass, your direction 305°. In 90 metres the path becomes enclosed between fences. The path swings to the left and right as you head gently uphill and after 120 metres go through a metal kissing gate and then cross over a stile, with a pond over to your right, following a fence to your right, uphill along the right-hand edge of a field. St Michaels Church is now clearly visible ahead and to your left. In 100 metres by a Greensand Way marker on a post on your right *veer left*, your direction 295°, uphill towards the church. In 160 metres you exit this field by a stile to an enclosed path, in 30 metres to cross over a stile into the graveyard of **St Michaels Church** , East

Peckham, which, though not open for regular worship, is a consecrated building and cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust, and worth a visit (opening hours 10am to 4pm). After exiting the church (or passing to its left-hand side) exit the churchyard by a stile in its far top corner, to go down stone steps and straight on downhill on a car road (the one with a dead end sign), your direction 320 °.

9. In 180 metres down the road **[3]**, by the end of the wood on your right (and just before approaches to field gates to your left and right) **[!]** you have your first choice of route option. Either continue on the original Book and Beeches routes (which later diverge), or detour to the **The Swan on the Green route** , for lunch in West Peckham.
10. To follow the Swan on the Green route, *keep ahead* at this point and refer to the directions at the end of the main walk
11. To continue on the original **Book** and **Beeches routes**, *turn right* on the signposted public footpath, your direction 25°, with the edge of the wood on your right and a low mesh fence on your left. This path can be overgrown in summer.
12. In 300 metres go through a metal swing gate (reported missing August 2021) and keep straight ahead, on a path across a vast field, your direction 25°. (This path can be very muddy when ploughed). The church in Mereworth is ahead to your north.
13. In 500 metres, go through a field boundary, passing to the right of a line of poplar trees and *bend left* down the right-hand edge of the field, with hedges on your right-hand side, heading downhill towards the church. In 450 metres this leads down over a small bank and through scrub to come out on to the busy A228 where you *turn right* to walk, with care, along the narrow, raised verge on the road's right-hand side. In 100 metres cross a bridge over a river and keep ahead now on a safer pavement. In a further 150 metres you come to a roundabout, where you take the left fork (northwards) sign-posted Mereworth and West Malling. In 80 metres *turn left* onto The Street into the Village of **Mereworth** .
14. If you wish to have a pub lunch, you now need to take the **Beeches route** , and follow the Directions at the end of the main (Book route ) directions.
15. **The original Book route continues as follows** : Keep ahead on The Street and you soon come to the **Church of St Lawrence** on your left-hand side - well worth a visit. Do also visit its churchyard to find the grave of Rear Admiral Charles Lucas, from County Armagh, who was the first ever recipient of the Commonwealth's highest military reward for bravery, the Victoria Cross, in 1854 for heroics during the Crimean War. He died ten days after the start of the First World War.
16. Continuing along The Street in 100 metres you come to the site of the old Torrington Arms pub (now called Torrington House). *Turn right* on a signposted footpath, a tarmac lane, your direction 325 °. You go into a narrow path between fences by house no. 103. In 180 metres you ignore a fork up to the right (going north). Continue on the main path (now 265°). In 130 metres go round to the right of an old

stile to continue *straight ahead* (275°) on a car-wide earth track through a network of fields.

17. Take the *left fork* in 250 metres for 10 metres by a corrugated water mini-reservoir and *immediately fork right*, your direction now 230° until in a further 80 metres a stile (to the left of a metal fieldgate) leads you out onto the main B2016.
18. If you change your mind about having a pub lunch, you can turn right here and head for the **Moody Mare pub**, 1 km away – but this route is not recommended: traffic along this busy B road travels at speed and walking along the road edge is quite dangerous.
19. The route ahead is to cross the B2016 to continue *straight on* along a tarmac lane to the left of Libbits Cottage. **[!]** In 40 metres *go left* by a post marked 'FP' to take the faint footpath to the left of a fieldgate (since gone), with a fence on your right-hand side, parallel and to the left of the main track, your direction 175°. This is a potentially very muddy area - there is now a boardwalk for some of it possibly because one reader wrote 'on the day we did it, it was impassable, we had to continue along the track to the right and clamber down an earth mound building site to regain the woods and the path'.
20. In 180 metres go over a metal fieldgate to continue straight on, your direction 210° initially, towards buildings, with the chimneys of **Yotes Court** mansion house (marked on the OS map) visible in the distance. Exit the field in 175 metres, by its far left corner, through a metal fieldgate. *Turn right uphill* on an earth farm road, your direction 320°, away from the houses.
21. In 30 metres take a footpath to the right of metal fieldgates, your direction 350°. In 20 metres you are between hedges on both sides. In a further 270 metres your path crosses over a stream and then the path follows the stream (with the stream to its left). In 160 metres you come to what looks almost like a low wooden horse jump and you go round this, to the left, leaving the stream banks to continue straight on, with a fence on your left-hand side, your direction 285°. In 130 metres there are duck ponds on your left-hand side.
22. Go past what used to be a mini-stile, part of another 'horse jump' and in 10 metres you are on a tarmac road where you *turn left*, your direction 210°. Opposite Yew Tree Cottage, in a few metres *turn right* on an earth car road (there is a pond on your right-hand side), your direction 295°.
23. Keep straight on. In 100 metres you pass a cottage on your left-hand side - apparently you are on a private drive. In a further 100 metres, go out through its metal fieldgate and continue *straight on*, your direction 250° until you reach the woods where you *swing to the right*, bearing 295°, on a wide avenue to the right of the woods. In a further 250 metres go up left through a metal fieldgate on an earth car road, your direction 300°.

24. In 100 metres this road has an avenue of small redwood trees on both sides of the road. You are now in **Mereworth Woods** (as marked on the OS map). In 650 metres you cross a bridleway and continue *straight on* (due west). In a further 375 metres, you come to a T-junction of paths. *Turn left*, your direction 245 °.
25. **[3B] The Beeches route rejoins here.** In 10 metres you pass a metal fieldgate some 5 metres over to your right and keep straight on, through a tree felled area. In 60 metres go past a low metal vehicle blocking post.
26. In 85 metres you come to a post on your left with blue arrows and faded white discs **[4]** and here you *turn sharp right*, your direction 320°, on a path marked with a public bridleway concrete marker. In 20 metres go past another low metal vehicle blocking post.
27. It is normally possible to skirt the muddy and waterlogged areas ahead by short detours into the woods to your left and right. In a further 125 metres keep to the main path, your direction 300°, ignoring all turn offs until after 300 metres you reach a broad earth road with a wooden post covered with blue and yellow arrows. *Go right* on this earth road (MR 315), your direction 340°.
28. **[5] The Swan on the Green route rejoins here, from the left** . In 60 metres, you come to a road junction where the main earth road bends to the right. *Take the middle fork* with yellow WW arrow indicating the **Wealdway** (so marked on the OS map), your direction 320°.
29. Your route for the next 2km or so is more or less straight on, through the woods, following the Wealdway, till you come to a tarmac car road. In more detail: In 275 metres you cross paths to continue on, following the WW arrow on a post, with the trees in the area to your right now felled. New tree growth is now taking place, in this and other areas cleared since 2015. In a further 360 metres, you come to a three-way fork and *take the leftmost fork* (the main track and the one that is the most straight on for you), your direction 330°. The trees in the area to your left have also been felled, with new tree growth now occurring. In season you now have banks of bluebells on either side of your route.
30. In a further 200 metres, go over a path crossing and continue *straight on*, your direction 325°. In 300 metres at another cross paths keep ahead, gently downhill, following the WW arrow on a post, your direction 340°, with an orchard over to your left behind a post and wire fence. The tree area to your right has now been felled.
31. In 300 metres you go through a wooden swing gate and cross a track path that goes off left into fields (and right into a field for horses).
32. In a further 800 metres **[6]** you come out onto a car road (by a WW arrow on a post) and *turn left* on this for 1 metre, then **[!]** immediately *turn left again* onto a public bridleway (with a concrete marker), your direction 285°.
33. A green way, soon running parallel to your path in a field to the left and with regular openings from your path, offers an unofficial refuge from the potentially muddy

bridleway. You come out by a wooden fieldgate in 370 metres onto a car road where you *turn left* gently uphill, your direction 230 °. In 200 metres *turn right, downhill*, on Crouch Lane (signposted to Borough Green and Ightham), your direction 325°. (If it is getting dark you can follow this road all the long way to the A25, then turn left into town.)

34. In 250 metres you pass Sotts Hole Cottage on your left-hand side. 15 metres past this cottage **[7]** DO NOT turn left on a private tarmac driveway (to go 30 metres down towards a wooden fieldgate with a grass road beyond it **[!]**) but instead keep ahead down the road for just a few metres, past the driveway to a hedge with a gap where you *turn left* to go down a few steps, to pick up a clear, narrow bridleway ahead, your direction 235°, to continue parallel to the driveway on your left-hand side.
35. Follow this woodland path for 1km. In more detail: In 80 metres you follow the way through two zigzags to the right, some 65 metres apart. 200 metres beyond the last zigzag, *turn sharp left* to descend through the woods until in 110 metres you come out to an open glade, ignoring the stile and fork straight on, to *fork right* on the main bridleway, ignoring any ways off, now on the level with a fence and open fields off to your left, and a wooded bank to your right. After some 600 metres you pass through a housing development to you reach a car road. *Turn right* here. There is a small waterfall to your right-hand side. You are now in the picturesque village of **Basted** .
36. **[8]** Continue on along the road's pavement and after 150 metres the pavement ends and a lake starts on your right-hand side.
37. **[!]** In 300 metres, just beyond the end of the green open space on your right-hand side, with its picnic area, you *fork right* on a signposted path, your direction 5 °, downhill, with a wooden close boarded fence to your left.
38. In 80 metres you go over a stream on a wooden bridge with wooden handrails. The route is then steeply uphill on the other side. In 435 metres you cross over the private drive to Reynolds Retreat to continue on a path between fences, your direction 15°, initially gently downhill but soon gently uphill.
39. In 280 metres, having passed a telephone exchange on your left-hand side, you cross a housing estate road to carry *straight on*, uphill, your path now tarmac. In a further 175 metres you come up to a car road with the **Church of the Good Shepherd** opposite, where you *turn right*, your direction 55°.
40. In 40 metres you pass a fish and chip shop on your left-hand side and cross the A25 to go straight on, now in **Borough Green** High Street. Some lesser tea stop options - and the very basic pub - are on your left-hand side as you head along the High Street. **Melias Place Cafe** , the recommended tea stop, at 2 Sevenoaks Road, is located between the A25 and A227 roads. In 220 metres you come to the railway bridge. 5 metres before the bridge, a tarmac lane to the left leads down between

metal railings to Platform 1 of **Borough Green Railway Station**, for trains to London.

## Option 1) Detour for lunch at the Moody Mare pub, on the Beeches route

1. Having turned left on The Street (as per the main Book route) take the *first road on your right*, Butcher's Lane, and keep ahead on this road as it heads steadily uphill.
2. In 400 metres - and some 70 metres before you come to what was the Queens Head pub (now a residential development) - *turn left* into Willow Wents (lane). Keep ahead on this country lane, soon between hedges, for 375 metres to a T-junction, where you *turn right*, your initial direction due north, along a tarmac lane. In 70 metres the road swings to the left: ignore the turning right, Horns Lane and keep ahead (left), your direction now 240°.
3. In 475 metres *turn right* on New Pound Lane, steadily uphill. In 575 metres you come to a T-junction with Beeches Road, where you *turn left*, due west. In 150 metres you come out onto the busy B 2016 road: cross over with care - **The Moody Mare pub** is opposite.
4. After lunch, take the public bridleway immediately to the right of the pub (coming out of the pub, it's on your left) your direction 250°, in 15 metres passing a metal barrier. You will now take a route through Mereworth Woods in a westerly direction for some 1.6 km to join up with the Main Book route deep in these woods. Forestry work and logging is taking place and some new forestry tracks and clearings will appear from time to time. But the general route ahead is as follows:
5. Keep ahead along a broad path, with hedges to your left and right. In 350 metres you have a number of large grey coloured metal silos and overhead conveyors over to your right. Here take the *right hand fork*, your initial direction 225°, along a broad gravel path. You have light woodland on your right and a tree felled area, now scrub, on your left.
6. In 250 metres keep ahead where the forestry vehicle track veers off to the right to a grey coloured metal gate. In a further 300 metres tree felling is on-going (December 2017) in the woods to your right. In 250 metres cross tracks with a green metal 3-bar gate some 15 metres to your right, and keep ahead, your initial direction 240°, soon gradually bearing left.
7. In 350 metres, a path joins you on your left-hand side. **You are now back on the main Book route at point 3B above** .

## Option 2) Detour for lunch at The Swan on the Green in West Peckham

1. At point **[3]**above, *keep ahead*, downhill, and in 130 metres cross the busy A228 road, taking great care. On the other side pass a redundant stile and continue down

- a sunken bridleway, your direction 290°, with tree line and hedges on either side.
2. In 250 metres you come down to the A26 road, with Forge Farm on your right-hand side. *Turn right* along the road for 40 metres, then cross this (equally busy) road, again taking great care, and take the byway ahead, between an oasthouse on your left and a detached house on your right. 70 metres down this access road you pass Beadles Forge on your right and in a further 20 metres go through the metal swing gate ahead of you (slightly right) with a metal fieldgate to its right, to go down the middle of a field on a clear, broad grassy way, your direction west.
  3. In 150 metres go through a metal swing gate into a lightly wooded area, and in 20 metres cross over a new wooden bridge with wooden railings, to continue up a path with a field to your left and a lightly wooded area to your right. In 90 metres *turn left* through a wooden swing gate and immediately *turn right* along the right hand edge of a field, your direction as before.
  4. Some 200 metres along the field edge, by a post with a yellow arrow on your right, and just before a car-wide turning into the field on your right, *turn half left* to go diagonally over the field, on a bearing of 245°. In 200 metres pass through a field boundary in the corner of the field and a bridleway joins you from the left. Here *turn right* and your way soon becomes a concrete farm track which in a further 80 metres comes out onto Mereworth Road, where you *turn left* towards the village of West Peckham. In 250 metres, as the road swings right (to become Forge Lane) *keep ahead* through white gate posts into the village of **West Peckham** . In 190 metres you pass **St Dunstan's Church** on your right and as you head down to the village green, you come to the **Swan on the Green** pub on your left, your lunch stop on this route.
  5. Coming out of the pub after lunch, turn half-right to cross the village green in a diagonal, on its far side going through a metal kissing gate to keep ahead on a farm track, with a tall hedge on your right. In some 210 metres at the end of this track you come to Pear Tree Cottage. Cross its access road and go through the metal kissing gate ahead of you (slightly right) to *turn right* up a field edge, your direction 290°. In 200 metres, at the top right hand corner of this field, **[!]** you have a choice of way ahead. The more pleasant, but longer, route on the Greensand Way, is described below. **The Direct Route** , which entails a stretch of road walking uphill, is as follows. In this field corner *keep ahead* to pass a redundant stile to go through a lightly wooded area.
  6. In some 35 metres you come out onto a road (Forge Lane) where you *turn left*. In 40 metres, at a road junction, you take the right-hand fork, signposted Crouch and Borough Green, to walk uphill, soon to ascend Gower Hill. There is no pavement so take care when walking up this road. In 700 metres, at the top of the hill, you come to a 4-way road junction. **The Greensand Way route joins here.**
  7. **The Greensand Way route** : At the field corner *turn left* to follow the edge of the field with hedges and trees to your right, on a grassy way, downhill, your

direction due west. In 90 metres, by a post with a yellow arrow, *turn right* to go through a metal kissing gate, to head down a path in a woodland strip. In 70 metres you come out onto a road, at a bend in the road to the left. *Turn left* down the road and in 30 metres *turn right* through a metal barrier onto a footpath, a broad earth track. Head along this track, lined on both sides by walnut trees, steadily uphill, soon with open fields on either side. In 500 metres, at a staggered cross paths, follow the footpath sign ahead, slightly right, into an orchard. Follow the left-hand edge of the orchard, on a grassy way, with a woodland strip to your left, your direction still due west. In 300 metres the woodland strip on your left ends and your path swings to the left to come out to a major path and track junction. Here *turn right* onto a gravel, car-wide track, and head steadily uphill, your direction now north, with seedbank and propagation structures over to your left. In 480 metres the track comes out onto Gover Hill road at the 4-way road junction, where you rejoin the Direct route.

**Both routes continue** : cross over the road junction and take the public footpath (a wide track) ahead of you (slightly to your left) uphill, your initial direction 340°, along a wooded slope, with a road directly below you. Soon there are viewing points just to your left, but otherwise keep ahead along this path, ignoring ways off, as you head up Gower Hill to its summit.

8. In 300 metres cross a forestry access road and keep ahead, with a sign “Fairlawn Estate – Private Land” on your right-hand side, your direction now 15°, along a gravel road. You are now in **Mereworth Woods** .
9. You now keep ahead in a northerly direction along this unmade forestry road for some 800 metres until a path joins from the right, with a post with multiple arrows on your left-hand side. This path is the Main Book route at point **[5]**. You now continue on this Main Book route, in 60 metres taking the middle fork at the track junction.

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