

# Walk 9: Hever circular

A few miles south of Ide Hill is this gem on the Weald with quiet meadows, woods and a sandstone outcrop. The castle and church set a Tudor theme. Great for woodland birds

How long? 4.5 miles (7km), 3 hours

Public transport: Trains serve Hever hourly (sometimes more frequently) on London Bridge to Uckfield line via East Croydon. Parking: easy, at Hever Castle car park opposite church (free) Start of walk: St Peter's Church next to entrance to Hever Castle Steep slopes? None Easy to navigate? Yes, because until Point 3 you are following the waymarked Eden Valley Path. At Point 3 the right turn is obvious and from there it's straight on to Point 5.

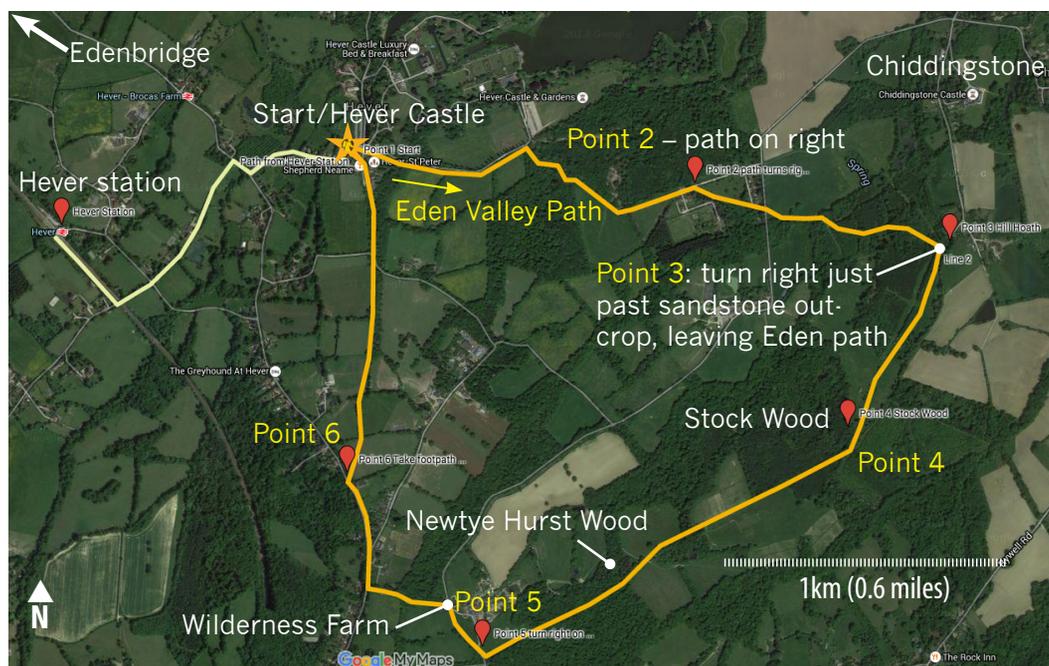
## Walk highlights

Sandstone outcrop and holloway on Eden Valley Path at Hill Hoath, St Peter's church in Hever, Stock Wood, wildflower meadows, beautiful woodland

## Description (and pub)

A lovely walk without any steep inclines through quiet woods and meadows with a great variety of trees and birdlife. The route starts at the medieval church of St Peter right by the entrance to Hever Castle. Just before Hill Hoath there is a really fun section of path between tall green sandstone boulders, a hidden Wealden rocky outcrop. Later on there's a bit of the walk for a few hundred metres on Uckfield Lane so take care (especially with kids), but the final stretches are back on footpaths and pleasant, cutting through fields and woods. At the end of the walk a large historic pub, the Henry VIII, beckons you in for Shepherd Neame beer and some decent food. The walk is one for spring, summer, early autumn – appallingly muddy bits from December to April.

Covered on Ordnance Survey Explorer 147 map.



## THE WALK

### Points 1-2: 1.3km

Start at Hever Castle car park by St Peter's Church and Henry VIII pub or walk to the start point from Hever station on the Eden Valley Path. Walk through St Peter's churchyard on the Eden Valley Path (EVP) and exit by a gate then across a little bridge. Follow the path through woods, parallel with a lane to your left before turning away, going through more woodland and over another bridge then back out of woods with two houses ahead.

### Point 2-3: 1km (Pay attention at this point – danger of missing turn off)

When you reach the second of two houses (Bothy Cottage Two) continue on the Eden Valley Path, which angles off the track to the right (look out for the yellow EVP marker). Pass a lovely, small meadow with very tall pine trees (look out for alpacas), cross a lane, over a stile then walk by a larger, attractive field with woods to your right. Watch out for birds here like blackcap, treecreeper, goldcrests, coal tits and nuthatches. Soon the rather rutted path turns sharp right then left, crosses a stream and becomes enclosed by woods and goes slightly uphill on steps. Cross a firebreak then continue east (left) at a path junction. Pass a large ancient yew tree and then green sandstone rocks – an ancient holloway. After you emerge from the holloway you are about to leave the Eden Valley Path – look out for

a path heading south west to the right, next to a strip of meadow with horse-jumping obstacles visible in it usually. If you reach a lane or Hill Hoath Farm you've gone too far. Take the footpath through a kissing gate to the side (on the left of the meadow). The path is marked with a blue sign. (Pay attention at this point – danger of missing turn off.)

### Point 3-4: 750m

You've hopefully found the aforementioned path through the kissing gate heading south west so turn right on it and follow it to Stock Wood passing a gate by an opening between trees on the right. In the southwest corner of the meadow is a stile. The path then goes by young spruce and between hedges – good blackberries here in summer – and enter Stock Wood (you'll see the sign).

### Point 4-5: 1.5km

Walk through Stock Wood, ignoring paths off to the right and left (so plough straight on, don't deviate) emerge, cross a meadow (used by radio-controlled plane enthusiasts – look out for their runway on the left) and another copse, pass a caravan (usually) on the right behind a hedge and enter Newtye Hurst Wood. Continue all the way to a junction of country lanes. A long stretch, but a lovely one.

### Point 5-6: 0.8km

Turn right down the quiet lane a few hundred

yards to Wilderness Farm. Then, turn left on the lane opposite the farm house. Next, after a few hundred metres, turn right again on the busier Uckfield Lane. Carefully continue down this lane and ignore the road forking right you soon come across. Follow Uckfield Lane for a few hundred metres looking out for a slightly hidden but marked footpath through a kissing gate in the hedgerow on the right. If you miss this path you have another chance to join it a few hundred metres further on, next to the Greyhound pub.

### Point 6-7: 1km

Follow this footpath north as it turns left through several fields (often with livestock) eventually across a lane, past a primary school, back to the church and Henry VIII pub.

## Choice fact

Anne Boleyn's dad (Elizabeth I's grandfather) is buried at St Peter's church with other members of the Boleyn family. It's great inside with a wonderfully decorated 1419 tomb of someone called Margaret Cheyne, plus Boleyn's tomb. More at [onthetudortrail.com](http://onthetudortrail.com).

## Pop in on way back...

Bough Beech reservoir ([kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://kentwildlifetrust.org.uk)) has a great nature reserve. Hever Castle, Ide Hill and Emmetts Garden (see my walks).

Please email me with your experiences

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