

**A** The old Blean Union Workhouse, which later became Herne Hospital, opened on 14th January 1836. The Workhouse served 16 parishes, neighbouring the Blean and housed 420 inmates. Built by William Edmunds it comprised a large formal quadrangle enclosed by two-storey buildings. In 1879 the Workhouse was extended with the construction of a hospital for 'infectious' cases. It was later used for 'difficult' women and finally a hospital for elderly patients. It has since been converted into residential use. There are interesting Grade II listed cottages opposite.

**B** The name Bleangate, apart from being the gate into West Blean Wood, also referred to the whole area of Herne, Chislet, Reculver, East Stourmouth and Sturry, forming the Hundred of Blengate (Bleangate) in the middle ages. It is situated on the highest ground locally and is thought to have been the meeting place of the Hundred Court Leet, which dealt with disputes and levied taxes on behalf of the king.

**C** The 'Radfall' is one of the former droveways thought to date back to at least the 5th century, it consists of two earth banks (called woodbanks) with ditches beside them 15 to 20 metres apart. These cross the Blean, varying in width and the height of the banks.

**D** Mayton Farm, a former oast house, is where hops grown in nearby fields were dried for the brewing industry. Chestnut poles were used to support the vigorous climbing hop plants, which led to a high density of chestnut coppice in the woods. Today many are dwarf plants and no longer need the chestnut poles.

**E** The Sarre Penn stream, may seem small but it regularly floods, turning a sleepy meandering stream to a raging torrent – accounting for the steep banks.

Divert at point 12 to Vale Farmhouse a Grade II Listed Building. In the gable at the south end has the date 1635 and the north gable 1645. The range of farm buildings included barns dating back to 1635, a later barn from the 1750's, oast houses from 1820's and a Dutch barn erected in the 1950's. Due to the proposed reservoir the 17th Century timber framed, mostly thatched, barn was painstakingly demolished over two years and was renovated and rebuilt at the Museum of Kent Rural Life near Maidstone.

**F** Blaxland Farm is a Medieval Hall House, built about 1480, on the site of an older settlement. Blaxland was one of the six ancient boroughs of Sturry. The name Blaxland appears to be Anglo-Saxon in origin. A descendant, John Blaxland lived at another Blaxland Farm in nearby Fordwich and was the Mayor in 1767 - 1774. His sons Gregory and John were among the first free settlers to emigrate to New South Wales. Gregory, along with William Lawson and William Charles Wentworth, were the pioneers who opened up the way over the Blue Mountains into the Australian interior in 1813.

Woods were busy places in the past - in contrast to the peace and tranquillity of today. Coppice was cut to provide fuel for domestic cooking and heating, as well as industries such as the salt pans at Seasalter and Chislet, charcoal for the Faversham gunpowder works and oak bark for Canterbury's leather tanning industry. Now wildlife is suffering because less coppice is cut. You can support woodland management and the wildlife that depends on it by buying local woodland products.



If you have enjoyed this walk why not try the others in this series?

- 1 Herne & West Blean
- 2 Tyler Hill
- 3 Dunkirk & Denstroude
- 4 Broad Oak, Tyler Hill & Herne

For more information on walking in The Blean, wildlife, history and local products visit [www.theblean.co.uk](http://www.theblean.co.uk), telephone 01227 862015 or email [blean.initiative@canterbury.gov.uk](mailto:blean.initiative@canterbury.gov.uk)

The Blean is the area of woodland, countryside and villages between the cathedral city of Canterbury and the coastal towns of Faversham, Whitstable and Herne Bay.

For a thousand years The Blean has remained one of the largest and most distinctive areas of woodland in the south east, covering some 3000 hectares – over 11 square miles! Not only is most of this classified as "ancient woodland" but over half is recognised as being nationally and even internationally important for wildlife.

This walk is one of a series produced by volunteers of the Blean Heritage & Community Group. The aim of the Blean Heritage Group is to encourage people to visit The Blean, to experience and enjoy its heritage and wildlife. Anyone interested in joining in any of the group's activities please contact us on 01227 372519.



**The Countryside Code Respect – Protect – Enjoy**

Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs. Leave gates and property as you find them. Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home. Keep dogs under close control. Consider other people. For further information please visit [www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk) or Tel: 08451 003298

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# the Blean

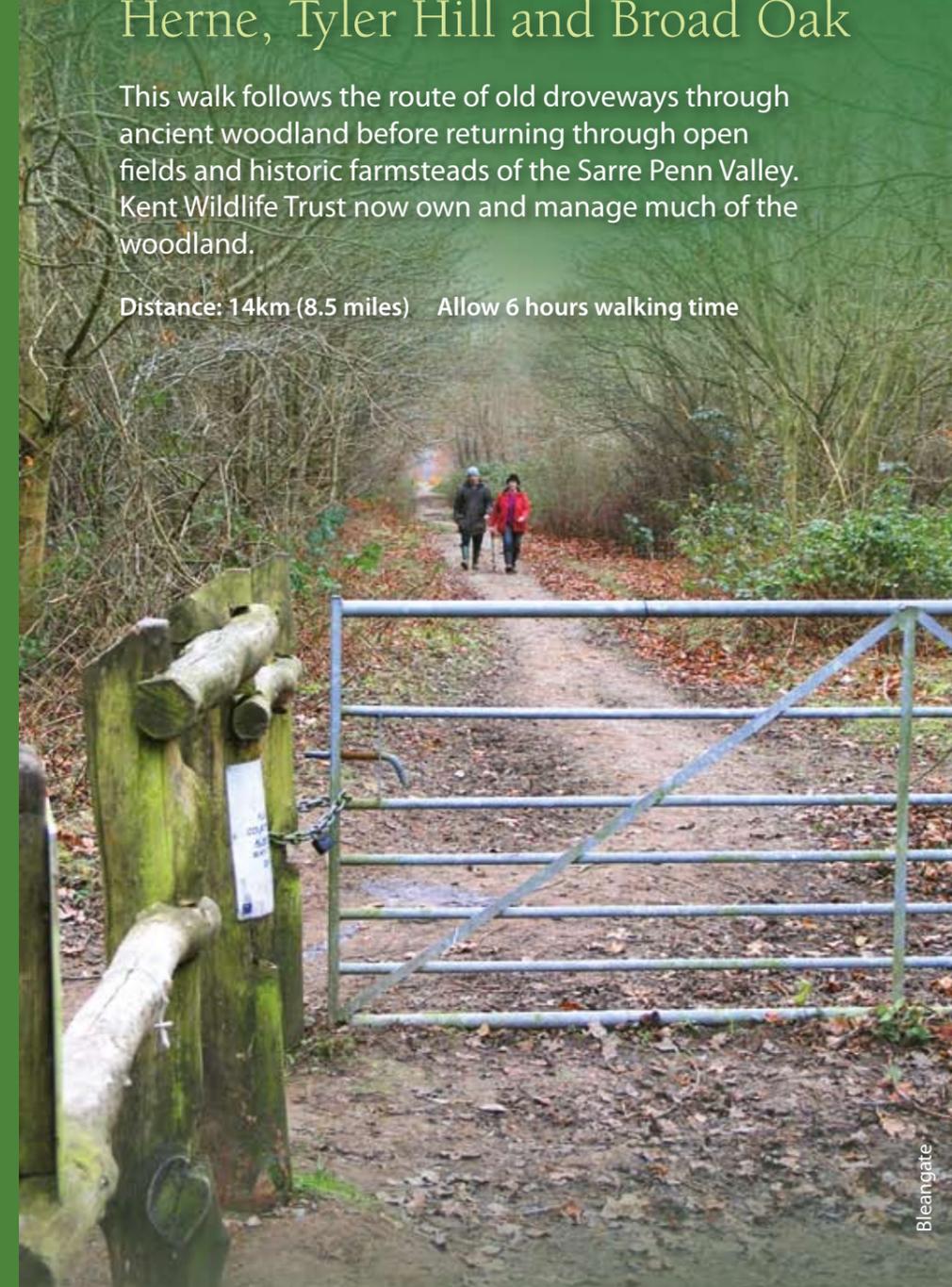
Canterbury & Swale's Ancient Woodland

## CIRCULAR WALK No. 4

### Herne, Tyler Hill and Broad Oak

This walk follows the route of old droveways through ancient woodland before returning through open fields and historic farmsteads of the Sarre Penn Valley. Kent Wildlife Trust now own and manage much of the woodland.

Distance: 14km (8.5 miles) Allow 6 hours walking time



Bleangate



**Information:** The walk has stiles, steps and some moderate gradients. The Blean is on heavy clay so can get wet and very muddy – boots are recommended. Please note that dogs must be kept under close control at all times.

**Start Point:** Start at any of the three villages.

- 1 Herne Common, Anemone Way (A291) TR175651.
- 8 Tyler Hill, Recreation Ground, Summer Lane TR141609
- 11 Broad Oak, Mayton Lane, TR167615.

**By bus:** Canterbury, Whitstable, Herne Bay triangle buses no's 4 or 6 depending on direction. Visit [www.stagecoach.com](http://www.stagecoach.com) or telephone 0871 200 2233.

OS map Explorer™ 150 Canterbury & the Isle of Thanet 1:25000 scale

## Herne to Tyler Hill, 7km

800m south-west of Herne Village at the old Herne hospital, almost opposite the First & Last pub

- 1 Turn right out of Anemone Way and walk along Canterbury Road to the junction with Bullockstone Road. Cross Bullockstone Road and turn right into Braggs Lane. Walk to the gate across the end of the lane - 'Bleangate' (950m).
- 2 Cross the stile and with your back to the gate take the path 4m to the right. *This path is not waymarked and is shown by the dotted line on the map.* Continue all the way down the slope, which runs alongside the banks of the 'Old Droveaway', as named on the 1840 title map. At the bottom, about 655m, turn left before you reach the ditch. Follow the winding path along the inside edge of the wood until you reach a T-junction (500m).
- 3 Turn left and continue uphill, following the bank of the West Blean/Thornden Radfall on your right. At the top of the slope follow the path, bearing left under high voltage wires (pylons) and then under low voltage wires (poles) about 830m. Continue for a further 20m until you reach a path on your right (marked by a green dot on a post at the time of writing).
- 4 Turn right and continue through conifer then scrub until you come to a crossroads (170m). Go straight across, through more scrub and then deciduous wood until you come to a fork (100m). Take the rising left path and continue south-westerly following the 'The Radfall', on your right. Ignore all other paths until you reach the major forest track, 'New Road' (490m).
- 5 Turn right onto the 'New Road'. After 40m, before a pond, turn left. Walk for 500m, cross over a major woodland track, go a further 300m and meet two public footpaths, continue straight on, for 124m until you reach a T-junction.
- 6 Turn right and cross The Radfall, continue on this path down into the valley, across a stream and up the other side to a T-junction, (970m) where you turn right to Tyler Hill. *Turn left to Mayton Farm if following the short cut.*
- 7 Having turned right you will reach a cross roads after 143m. Straight on takes you into Tyler Hill in less than 600m. When you reach Hackington Road, turn left onto the path behind the houses until you get to Tyler Hill Memorial Hall Recreation Ground, Summer Lane and the public footpath on the far right of the field.

To continue the walk turn left. Alternatively, for a break and refreshments turn right down the alleyway to the Ivy House Pub.

## Tyler Hill to Broad Oak, 3km

Recreation Ground, Summer Lane. The public car park is in Fleets Lane behind the Ivy House Pub

- 8 Take the public footpath to the left of the Memorial Hall. Keeping to the right of the recreation ground continue to the far right (south-east) corner and enter Great Hall Wood. Keep to the path, bear left and then take the left fork. *You should still be able to see part of The Radfall on your left, all the time you are in the wood.*  
  
Keep to this path, ignoring others. After the second crossroad (230m), the path goes down into a small valley where you will cross a stream. Continue up until you reach the junction with a public footpath on the left (210m). Go straight on, cross two small bridges and emerge out of Great Hall Wood and into open fields. Bear left onto a public footpath, continuing straight on under the power lines, until you meet another public footpath on your left after 250m. *This is the end of the short-cut.*
  - 9 Carry straight on to Mayton Farm along the track. Turn right just before the large group of farm buildings onto a public footpath, keeping the buildings to your left. At the last barn, bear right to the corner of the field (*sometimes overgrown with weeds*). Follow the public footpath aiming for the right hand end of the copse of trees. Continue past the copse straight down to the bottom of the valley. Cross the bridge over the stream (500m).  
  
Work your way up the next field to the left hand (south-east) corner, where you will find a crossroads (145m). Go straight on over a small bridge and into an orchard. Turn right and walk to the top of the orchard. Turn left and carry on to the far end, going under both low & high voltage wires to the corner of the orchard (300m).
  - 10 Pass the double gates on your right and continue along a narrow path until you emerge onto Heel Lane. Pass a couple of cottages and continue to the end of the road until you meet a junction at Mayton Lane (400m). Turn right and continue uphill along the lane until you reach a public footpath sign on the left pointing into an orchard (300m).
- For a break and refreshments continue straight on for the Golden Lion or the Royal Oak Pubs.
- ## Broad Oak to Herne, 4km
- Starting from here go past Golden Lion pub in Mayton Lane and turn right at footpath sign into orchard.
- 11 Once in the orchard turn left immediately onto the public footpath and follow the hedge down in a northerly direction. Approximately halfway down, bear right to pass the entrance to another orchard and follow the next hedge down to the bottom (240m). Look for the gap directly ahead in the bottom hedge and walk into next field. Continue straight on to the foot bridge (240m). Cross the foot bridge, over the Sarre Penn and continue up the hill to a track (330m). *Look out for the 17th century Vale Farm House on your right as you climb the valley.*
  - 12 Walk straight across the track and continue on footpath heading in a northerly direction, down the other side to steps and bridge (250m). *This bridge crosses another part of the Sarre Penn beside an old oak tree.* After you pass the oak, take a 10° angle to the left (in a northerly direction) and aim for the corner of the hedge and trees near the top of the field (170m). Keeping the hedge to your left, walk up to the top left-hand corner of the field and climb the steps (75m).

- 13 Continue NNW in a straight line to the gate and stile on far side of the field (170m). Cross stile to next field and continue slightly right (northerly) to next gate and stile (115m). Cross stile and continue straight ahead bearing left (NNW) to next stile (190m). Cross this stile.  
  
*A diversion to the left will take you to the Medieval Hall House of Blaxland Farm.*

- 14 After the stile, turn right onto footpath. At the next field cross diagonally (NNW) to reach the far right corner and entrance to West Blean Wood (170m). Enter the wood and follow the footpath in a northerly direction to a diagonal crossroads (70m). Go straight across and follow the path, crossing 'New Road' diagonally after 190m. Bear left, passing the fire pond on your left to Bleangate and Braggs Lane (960m).

Retrace your steps to Anemone Way and refreshment at the First & Last Pub or down in Herne Village.



C Drover



E Vale Farm

