

"EIGHTEEN ACRE", BULLINGSTONE WOOD, LEGGS LANE AND SHADWELL WOOD

Walk: 3¼ miles

Time: approx 1 hour 15 minutes

This is a circular walk through woods and open countryside and touching the edge of Langton Green at Leggs Lane. Like many woods in the area, Bullingstone Wood is a sight in spring when full of bluebells. Towards the end of the walk it passes through Shadwell Wood where it is thought there was once a well, St Chad's Well, from which its name derived. The present bridleway through Shadwell Wood follows the route of the old pack-horse road from London to Newhaven.

1. With your back to the lych-gate outside the Church turn right and proceed along Peshurst Road, round the right hand bend and continue for just over 100yds when, at the end of the high hedge on the left, is a sign stating "Public Footpath leading to Bullingstone Lane". Here, in the narrow gap is a metal gate incorporating the letters HHR on top, pass through this and continue the length of the path (WT76), past a path crossing and at the end you will arrive at a stile. Over this and across the field known as "The Eighteen Acre" and on reaching the other side you will come to a further stile. Cross this, and continue along the path with fences on both sides until at its end you meet Bullingstone Lane.

2. Turn right and, with "The Old Farmhouse" with a thatched barn on you right, continue for 100yds until you find on your left a pair of old timber framed semi-detached cottages, the second of which is "Holly Cottage". Between this and the next property, "Old Bullingstone" (it too with a thatched barn) is a "Public Footpath" finger post.

3. Follow this over the stile and down a narrow path and after 40yds the path divides - take the left hand fork (WT75). Down the steep slope, across the sleeper bridge over the stream at the bottom and up the path the other side. At the top bear left (there's a waymark post with a yellow arrow at the turn) and for a short distance the path widens along the flat, continue following the further posts for 200 yds when the path bears right and commences to rise. On your right is higher more open ground which is covered in bluebells in spring. At the top of the path is a metal gate with a stile over an old tree trunk on its left leading into a field.

4. Continue along the left side of the field to the next stile, also incorporating a tree trunk, cross the drive (a private drive to "Danemore Park" - a private house and estate whose entrance can be seen on the Speldhurst / Langton Road) and over the stile into the field the other side. Continue along the left side, passing a magnificent evergreen oak tree on your right and you come to a further stile in a "dog leg" leading you to a further field. Once there, turn right and walk along the right side of this field by the hedge, cross over a ditch at the end and arrive at a stile with a lane, Leggs Lane, behind.

5. Turn left and walk along the lane for 100 yards until you meet the Speldhurst / Langton Road. Cross over and turn left towards Speldhurst passing a pair of old timber framed semi-detached cottages, East Quintain and West Quintain, and immediately after the latter's garden you will see on the right in the hedge a footpath finger post and stile.

6. Take these into the field and follow the path leading diagonally right (WT84), through the gap and along the wide track into the next field. Proceed straight ahead across this second field and through the gateway of the corner of the next and then, with the hedge to your left, follow the path which after a while curves to the left and commences to go down hill diagonally. At the bottom is a bridge, cross this, up the other side and over the stile into the lane, Farnham Lane.

7. Turn left and walk along the lane passing an unmarked lane (Burnt House Lane) to the left until after 300 yards the lane curves to the right. On the left side is an old gate with a stile and a stone "Public Footpath" sign at ground level behind it.

8. Cross the stile and continue straight ahead going downhill through the field (WT79). At the bottom cross the sleeper bridge and, going diagonally to the left, continue along the left of this field until at the end is a further stile leading into a wood (Shadwell Wood).

9. Continue into the wood and after about 100yds a path joins from the right followed by one from the left (WT78). Ignoring these, proceed for about ¼ mile, passing over a board walk, then another, until it meets a bridleway (WT110). (This was once part of the pack-horse road from London to Newhaven). Turn diagonally left into this and after a short while it turns left and commences to go uphill and, ignoring a path (WT80) coming in from the right, continue until at the top there is a fork. Take the path (WT77) to the left leading downhill and ultimately to a metal handrail bridge over a stream.

10. Cross this and curve to the right going uphill and, after passing over a board walk, a short distance further on you come to a stile. Over this and up a narrow path with hedges on both sides until at the top there is a stile. Cross this, and the path curves to the right and soon after meets the end of a lane where you turn left into it. Proceed up the lane and at the top is the Speldhurst /Langton Road.

11. Turn right and Speldhurst Church can be seen no more than 200yds ahead.