

Ranscombe Farm Reserve poppy walk

When to walk: June to September (when the poppies are in bloom)

Difficulty: Easy terrain. Some steep slopes. Depending on weather,

(1) The walk starts on the edge of the grass field by the footpath marker sign, following the path down hill through the farmer's field. Usually, the farmer grows wheat in this field. Did you know to make a loaf of bread, you need two square metres of wheat?

(2) As you reach Longhoes Wood, the footpath goes steeply downhill, so please take care.

(3) At the bottom of the hill turn left at the wooden post into Longhoes Field. This field is renowned both locally and nationally for its display of rare flowers and poppies. The soil is very thin here, making it difficult to grow crops, but the way the farmer manages the field makes it ideal for farmland wild flowers.

(4) Turn left along the edge of the field and enjoy the poppies and views of the Medway Valley.

(5) When you reach the road, turn left and walk along the road for 15m up the hill. Keep an eye out for cars.

(6) Turn right to follow the path heading into the woodland.

(7) As you walk along the path you can hear the noise of the M2 getting louder. Before you get too close, stop and listen for birds. This is also a great area to look for beetles, bugs and butterflies that like to live on the dead wood and plants in the woodland.

(8) Continue straight on, bearing left at a junction (the other path leads down to an open field on the right - ignore this path).

(9) As the path leads out of the woods and into a large clearing, turn right to follow the path. Around you are trees that were recently coppiced. This is a traditional way of managing woodlands, producing a large amount of wood used for fencing and bio fuel. The trees grow back very quickly, but while they regrow, light is able to reach the ground, allowing a wide variety of plants to flourish at different times through the spring and summer, such as primroses, bluebells, violets and ox-eye daisies.

(10) Follow the path around the coppiced trees, keeping the taller trees to your right. When you meet a smaller path joining from the left, keep going straight, with taller trees now on either side of you.

(11) When you reach a crossroads, turn left. The path follows a wide grassy glade through the trees. These trees were cut 20 years ago, and you can see how the coppiced trees have grown back.

(12) When you reach the road, turn right. Keep an eye out for cars. Around you are arable fields, surrounded by grass margins. These margins are not footpaths, but areas of the fields not sprayed by the farmer to encourage wild plants and other wildlife.

(13) At the top of the hill there is a footpath crossing the road, turn left and follow the path back to the start point.

(14) Finish.

We hope you enjoyed your walk!

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Wildflowers to look out for:



Common Poppy
 © Katie Gardiner - Plantlife
 Usually blooms: June–Sept.



Corncockle
 © James Peat - Plantlife
 Usually blooms: June–August



Common Rock-rose
 © Cath Shellswell - Plantlife
 Usually blooms: June–August



Long Headed Poppy
 © J P Martin - Plantlife
 Usually blooms: May–July



Venus's Looking Glass
 © Kate Still - Plantlife
 Usually blooms: May–August



Viper's Bugloss
 © Stuart Anthony
 Usually blooms: June–August



Rough Poppy
 © J P Martin - Plantlife
 Usually blooms: June–August



Prickly Poppy
 © Jason Ball Sheepdrove
 Usually blooms: June–July



Field Pansy
 © Cath Shellswell - Plantlife
 Usually blooms: May–October

