

Withyham Walks 2011

Walk no. 4 2.5 miles – 1½ hours

A short walk around Blackham

Start/Finish by Blackham Church (Grid ref. TQ498401)

Ordnance Survey Explorer map no. 147 – 'Sevenoaks & Tonbridge' is recommended.

From the church, walk west up Oak Lane (SP East Grinstead). After 100m, cross a stile on the left, and walk gently downhill towards another stile. Cross this, and continue on the same line to pass under power lines to the valley bottom. Enter a copse and cross a small stream and boggy area on a boardwalk. At the other side, climb diagonally across a scrubby field (still on the same south-east line) to the opposite corner. The path goes through some brambles to a stile into another field. Cross this and, still on the same line, aim for the stile onto the main road on the other side.

Staying on the same side of the road, cross the drive on your right and enter the field on the other side via another stile. Go down the right side of the field alongside the hedge & fence. Pass through the wood at the bottom, crossing the stream and climbing up the steps, keeping the hedge on your right. Pass between Stephnetts Farmhouse & Barn (now a house) keeping the barn on your right, to reach the lane.

Turn left here and cross the road (which can be busy, so take care). After 50m, turn right into the drive to Tollhurst Farm (with footpath fingerpost). Follow the drive through the farm, past a house and barn on your left, until you reach a gate into a field by a fingerpost, showing a bridleway going left & right. Turn right along a track. After 75m, turn left onto a path across a field towards the railway. Cross a substantial bridge and go down the field to the footbridge into Kent. Note the fine views across the Kent Water valley in front of you.

Turn around and walk back up the field, this time bearing left towards a clump of trees. Walk through them, with a pond on your left. This place is called Snailsgate, a long-abandoned homestead. Carry on uphill in the same direction to a level crossing over the railway. Cross and continue over a scrubby field to a gate. On the other side turn left on a metalled track. Follow to the end to join the road again. Turn left to return to your starting place at Blackham Church.