



Southborough Common

Iron working was important in the area dating back to prehistoric times with the valley stream providing power for several iron works with blooms smelted at Vauxhall Furnace before being transported to nearby **BROKES MILL FORGE**. The industry lasted well into the 18th Century and was superseded by gunpowder manufacture.

The valley mill built in 1772 blew up within months of starting production and was replaced in 1845 by a corn mill which operated right up to the early 1920s.

There was a large brickworks at Southborough from the 1840s. Sadly the brickworks chimney at Forge Farm is all that remains.

Nearby Barnett's Wood Local Nature Reserve is managed by the Kent High Weald Partnership to maintain a variety of habitats including woods, streams, meadows and ponds. The Reserve supports an abundance of wildlife as well as providing recreational facilities for the local community.



EXPLOREKENT.ORG: RIDE // WALK // CYCLE // CANOE



Kent **HIGH WEALD**  
protect / explore / enjoy

Cover photo Toad Rock, Rusthall

Tunbridge Wells Common

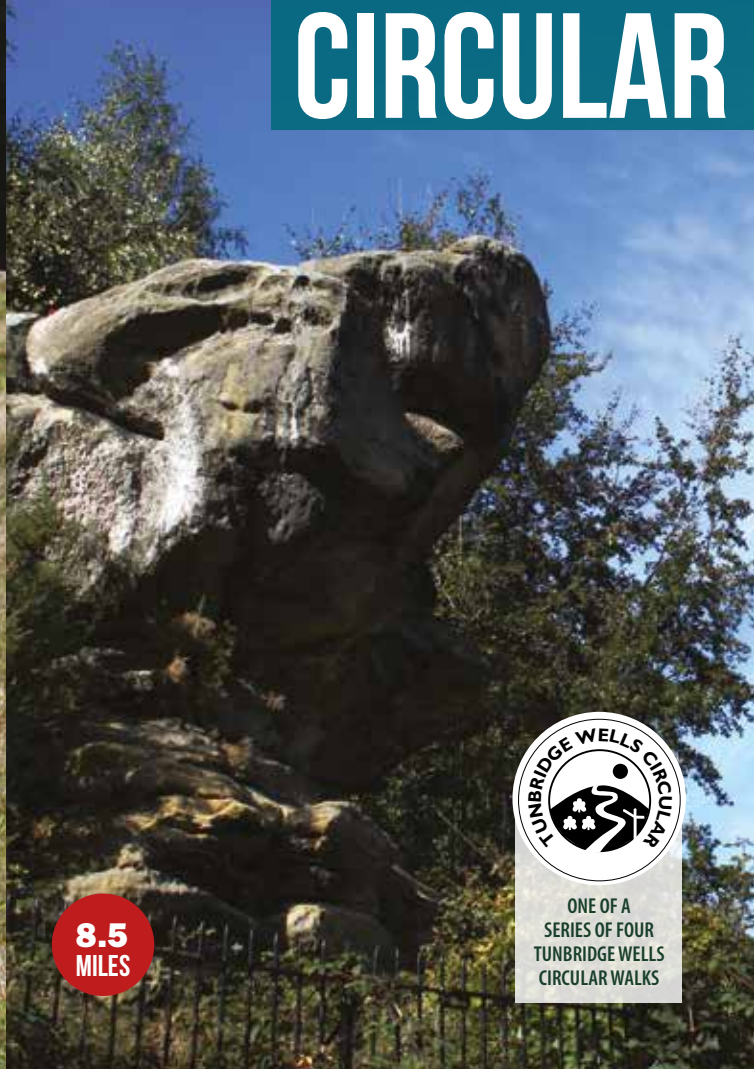
Explore Kent  
Kent County Council  
Invicta House,  
Maidstone, ME14 1XX

[explorekent.org](http://explorekent.org)



EXPLOREKENT.ORG

# SOUTHBOROUGH CIRCULAR



**8.5  
MILES**



ONE OF A  
SERIES OF FOUR  
TUNBRIDGE WELLS  
CIRCULAR WALKS

# SOUTHBOROUGH CIRCULAR

8.5  
MILES

This walk gives a glimpse of the High Weald's industrial past as it passes through areas connected with the iron and brick making industries, even the manufacture of gunpowder.

Starting at the pantiles, the route follows a clockwise direction through Tunbridge Wells Common then heads northwards through Rusthall towards Speldhurst. The walk then heads eastwards through Southborough Common before heading back southwards to High Brooms where you can board the train for Tunbridge Wells Central station.

This interesting walk passes through a variety of landscapes including Commons, ghyll woodland, open farmland and characteristic settlements

St Mary's, Speldhurst

George and Dragon



Wellington Rocks, Tunbridge Wells Common

## INTERESTING FEATURES

### TUNBRIDGE WELLS AND RUSTHALL COMMONS

both contain outcrops of sandrock which generations have enjoyed scrambling over. Sandrock was formed from sandstone over 130 million years ago when rivers deposited beds of sand and clay over a vast plain which then rose up, resulting in softer clays, sands and chalk being eroded away.

**THE COMMONS** were cleared of woodland in the 8th century leaving heathland which was grazed by Commoners who were able to cut heather and bracken for animal bedding as well as extract marl, sand and stone.

Around this time the settlement of **RUSTHALL** established, named after the rusty coloured chalybeate springs, the water was rich in minerals and iron salts very characteristic of this area of the High Weald.

**SPELDHURST** is the oldest parish in the area, dating back to the 13th century. The



Holden Pond, Southborough

walk passes a 19th century watermill a wonderful legacy from when corn production was at its height in the Weald.

**SOUTHBOROUGH COMMON** was once grazed as a mix of sandy heathland and wood pasture and has recently been brought back under management to create a more open woodland habitat. Over 200 years ago the common was surrounded by thriving industries such as forges, tanyards, brick making and cricket ball manufacture – cricket has been played on the Common for over 200 years!

# SOUTHBOROUGH CIRCULAR

8.5  
MILES

X2

- Start/Finish
- 13 miles (21km)
- Take the train
- Gate
- Stile

Crown Copyright and database right 2017 Ordnance Survey 100019238

