

- 1** After passing through a gate in a hedge across the road, take the footpath slanting left. Take the second wicket gate, through to a field. (Not the first, which leads into a wood.) Through the gate take the diagonal up right to the corner of a wood. There, join the path running horizontally to the boundary of Woodpecker field. Through the gap in the hedge turn left upward.
- 2** After crossing a main track where LOOP turns right, instead continue forward and upward along the field boundary to reach the wood. Turn left and follow the wood until the track into the wood appears. Note: The path through wood and scrub can be muddy in places!
- 3** Continue along the LOOP until it curves right. Take the lesser path on through a gap in the hedge and bear right, in the middle of Skylark Field
- 4** You meet up with LOOP again; turn left and follow it down to Riddlesdown Road. Turn right up the road for a fair stretch, looking out for a flag pole.
- 5** At the mast turn left downhill to a gate. Then the path slants steeply downhill right, between two pieces of woodland, exiting onto Godstone Road. This track can be very slippery.

6 To leave out suburbia at the expense of also losing Kings Wood, take this shortcut through more meadows

Riddlesdown & Sanderstead to Whyteleafe countryside area

1 THIS PART OF THE WAY IS NOT FOR ANYONE SUFFERING A HEART CONDITION! Follow the metalled footpath and take the diagonally left path almost to the exit of the grounds. From there you'll see the steps to mount to the top through the wood.

2 Emerging onto the meadow bear right until you see a boundary fence. Follow alongside to the end and turn right into the meadow behind. It will curve round to meet a more permanent path and the London Loop

3 This turning is clearly signed to the right.

4 Watch for this turning into Selsdon Wood - it is not clearly signed.

5 There is a path alongside the road and a separate path to the right - overgrown with nettles at the eastern end.

6 Watch out for this turning, left across the main road. Once across there is a public bridleway sign.

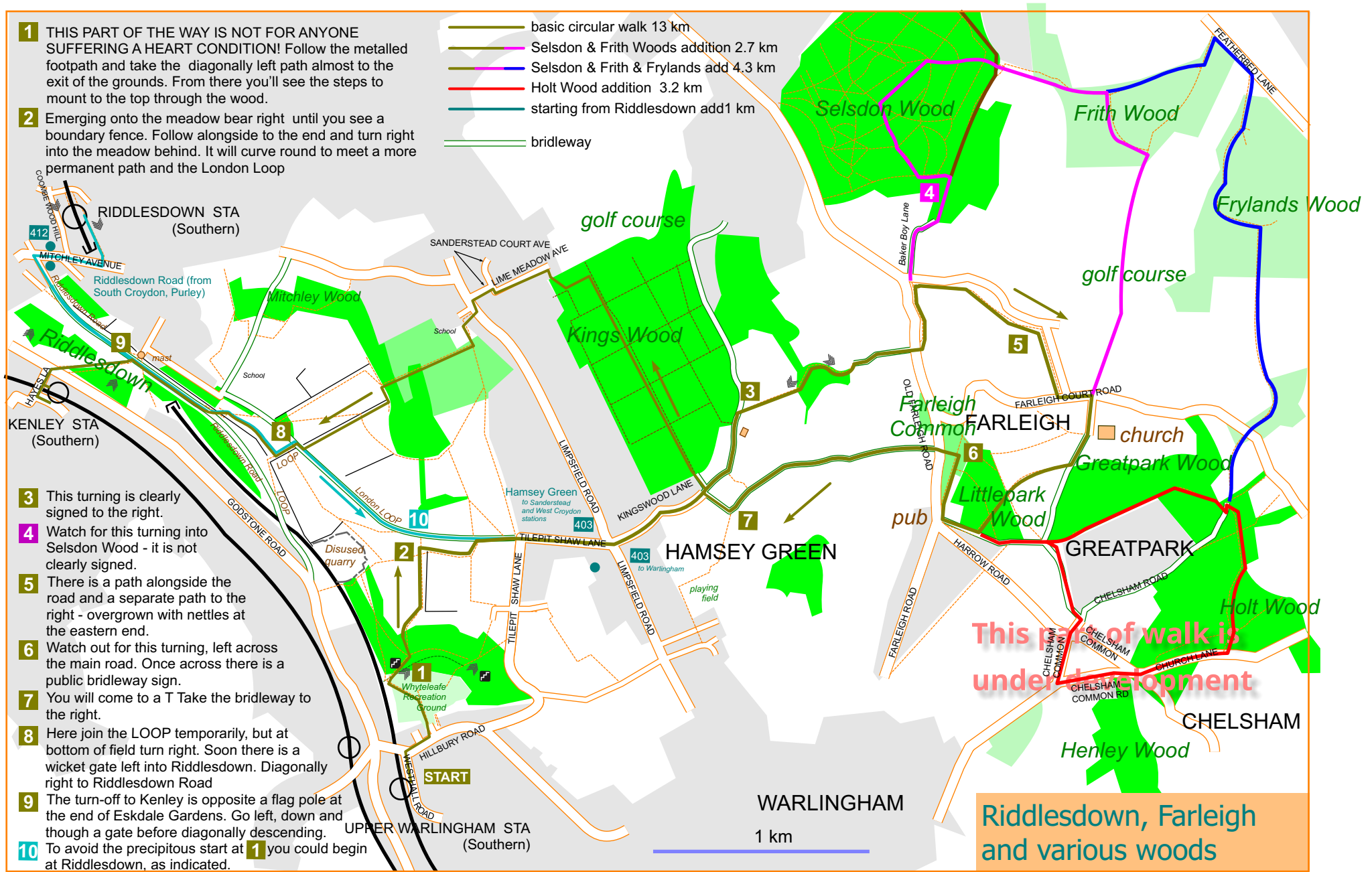
7 You will come to a T Take the bridleway to the right.

8 Here join the LOOP temporarily, but at bottom of field turn right. Soon there is a wicket gate left into Riddlesdown. Diagonally right to Riddlesdown Road

9 The turn-off to Kenley is opposite a flag pole at the end of Eskdale Gardens. Go left, down and through a gate before diagonally descending.

10 To avoid the precipitous start at **1** you could begin at Riddlesdown, as indicated.

- basic circular walk 13 km
- Selsdon & Frith Woods addition 2.7 km
- Selsdon & Frith & Frylands add 4.3 km
- Holt Wood addition 3.2 km
- starting from Riddlesdown add 1 km
- bridleway



Riddlesdown, Farleigh and various woods

Riddlesdown

Riddlesdown is managed by the City of London. For most of its history, Riddlesdown was used as pasture and was one of many downs and commons in the area grazed by livestock. With the exception of Coombes Wood, the site was much more open.

The former road that runs through the middle of the site is believed to be of Roman origin and ran from London to the coast. It was probably a transport link between networks of Roman iron works across Southeast England and remained an active road for vehicles well into the 1970s.

The deep ditch running along the north-western boundary of Riddlesdown is protected as a Scheduled Ancient Monument and hints at early human activity on the site. Old trackways, causeways, depressions and even possible traces of Iron Age fields, led Croydon Council to designate the whole of Riddlesdown as an Archaeological Priority Zone.

Over the centuries, Riddlesdown has seen heavy industry, exotic pleasure gardens and even secret passages under the downs. Riddlesdown Quarry, on the western side of Riddlesdown is one of the few remaining chalk exposures in the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation in this part of the North Downs. Chalk was mined at the quarry from the late 1700s until 1967. A narrow gauge railway transported the chalk to four conical shaped kilns. In 1996, the quarry was bought by the City of London Corporation. Today, it is recognised as a Regionally Important Geological Site, as well as being part of Riddlesdown's Site of Special Scientific

Interest. Closed to the public except for guided walks, there are several vantage points to see it on Riddlesdown and Kenley Common.

Sanderstead to Whyteleafe Countryside Area

This 200-acre area includes downland, fields, woodland and scrub. Access requires a climb, wherever you start from, but the meadows are stunning in the spring/early summer.

The name Whyteleafe originated from White Leaf field, referring to the chalk loving whitebeam tree, common on the North Downs. During Victorian times the name was adopted for the area and the spelling gentrified.

Local people, led by Sir William Jones, raised money to buy the land now forming the recreation ground in 1924.

The Skylark Field, named after the ground nesting bird, was once part of a larger common, consisting of Hamsey Heath and Ryddlesdowne, which was grazed by tenants from both Sanderstead and Warlingham. Halfway along the bridleway westward from Tithepit Shaw Lane is an Ordnance Survey Triangulation Point.

Kings Wood

Maps of 1823 bear the name Sanderstead Wood; the change of name may have been a mistake by the early surveyors of Ordnance Survey Maps.

The wood covers some 147.5 acres and is on relatively flat ground. It was purchased in 1937 under the Green Belt Act and is now public open space. It was originally laid out for shooting, with wide rides dissecting the woodland. The beaters used to work through each section systematically, driving

game towards the guns. The keepers cottage still stands in the woods and forms part of a Kennels complex for park security dogs. At one time each path crossing was marked by four tall conifers but few of these remain today.

There is the site of a Romano-British settlement on the northern boundary, a small farmstead undisturbed for 2000 years. Both to the east and to the west of the farmstead run established Iron Age trackways and the Kings Wood site was directly connected to both and probably included a settlement.

During the dig of 1959 a chance strike by a pick axe hit a large Roman burial-urn. This led to the discovery of a small first century children's cemetery a few feet beyond the gateway to the settlement .

May is one of the best months to visit Kings Wood when the ground is covered with Bluebells growing between the Oak, Sweet Chestnut, Birch and Hazel.

