



WALKS AT WORTH ABBEY

A WALK TO THE QUIET GARDEN

Distance: 0.88 mi

Duration: 22mins

Difficulty: Easy

Activity Type: Hiking

Elevation: Difference in elevation from
highest to lowest: 512-406ft = 106ft

Map: OS Explorer 135, Ashdown Forest

Description: The route follows grassy tracks and farm paths, with generally good walking conditions. The ground is mostly grass or compacted track, with some uneven footing, particularly near field edges and gates. The terrain is gently undulating, with a few mild inclines and downhill stretches, but no steep gradients. The walk is unhurried and open, passing between fields, trees and farm buildings, and feels rural and peaceful throughout. Sturdy footwear is recommended, especially in wet weather when some sections may be soft or slippery.



A walk from the Abbey Church to the Quiet Garden

- 1 Leave the Abbey Piazza heading east towards the Abbey car park. As you walk, take in the view across to the South Downs on your right.

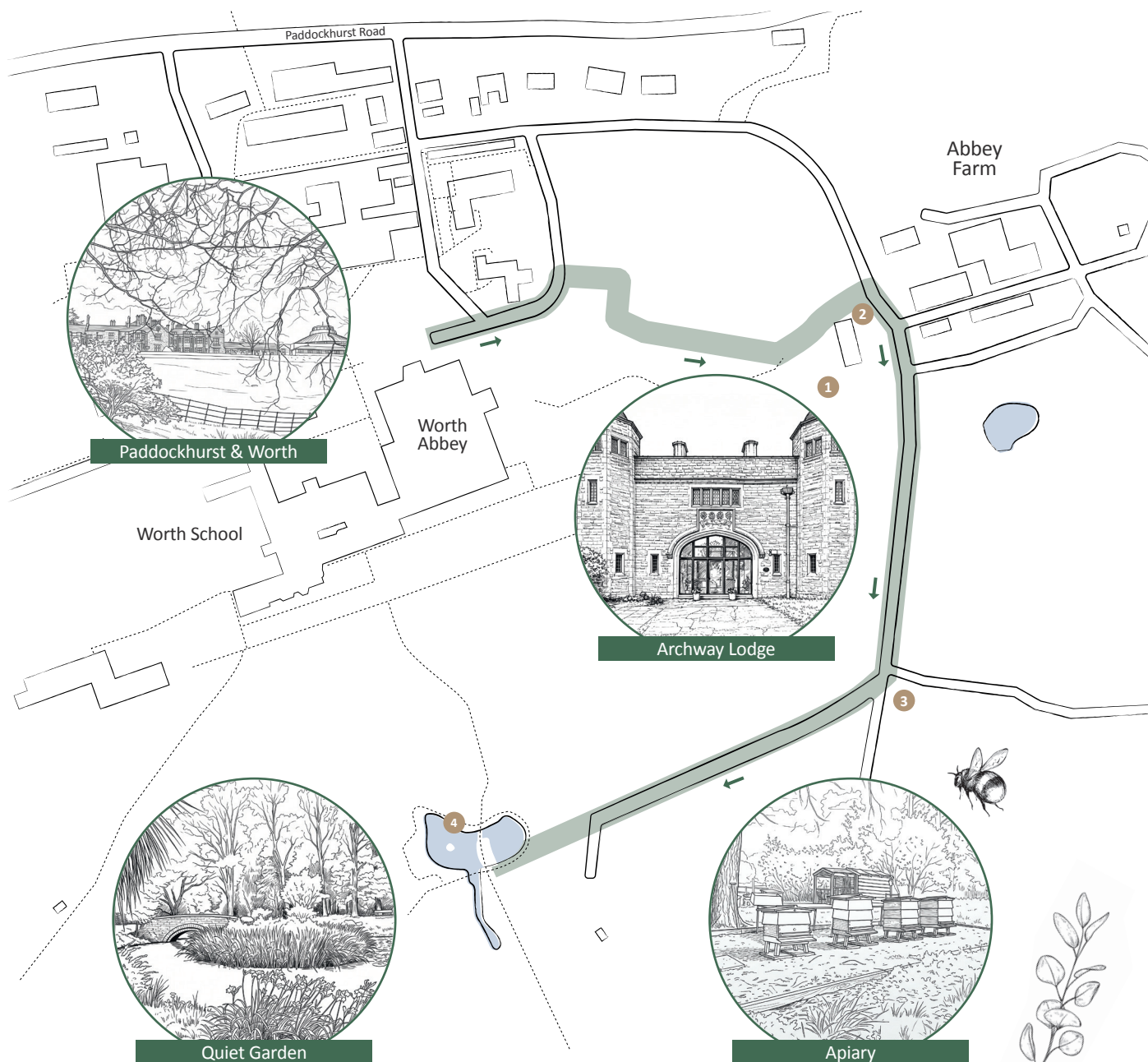
At the lower edge of the car park, look for a grass path (unmarked) running along its lower boundary, with the monastery's private garden on your right. Follow this path as it gently curves to the left, passing a gate and a sign marking the Private Monastery enclosure on your right.

At the end of the path, turn right. You will pass a large stone building on your right, Archway Lodge.

Archway Lodge marks the eastern entrance to the former Cowdray estate. The welcoming inscription reads: "When Ye Come We Are Glad; When Ye Go We Are Sad." The four trees carved into the stone symbolise the four seasons of the year.

The building, dated 1897 as inscribed on the stonework, was originally occupied by gardeners working on the estate. When the monastic community first arrived in 1933, it continued to house gardeners and later a retired Worth school teacher, who built the brick extension to the south. In time, a school bursar and her family lived here and added the glazed section around the arch, creating a sitting room.

Today, the building retains its distinctive and characterful appearance. Now available as for short-term stays, it offers five bedrooms and commands some of the finest views across the estate.



- 2 Follow the path down the track. At the bottom, you will see the Worth apiary on your left, set behind a fence.



Fr Bede was the first monk to establish beehives on this site. After his death, others continued the tradition, which remains an important part of life on the estate today. With the support of Worth School, the number of hives have increased, and they are now used to help teach pupils how to care for bees.

The honey produced here is sold in the Abbey Bookshop. The apiary also plays a valuable role in supporting biodiversity across the estate, reflecting the community's commitment to caring for the natural environment.

- 3 Follow the path as it winds gently to the right. If you look back up the hill, you will see the Monastery, the Abbey Church, and Paddockhurst House—now Worth School—set above you on the hillside to your right.

The first owner of Paddockhurst House was Robert Whitehead, who retired here after inventing the torpedo. Initially, the British Navy was reluctant to adopt this new and controversial technology, while the Austro-Hungarian Navy supported its development. By the time of the First World War, the torpedo had become a significant naval weapon, widely used in modern warfare.

Lord Cowdray, who later owned the estate, made his fortune through major engineering projects, including tunnelling, harbour construction, and railway works both in Britain and overseas. During wartime, many ships were vulnerable to torpedo attack, highlighting the profound impact of this invention on naval history.



- 4 You will see a five-bar gate ahead; looking straight ahead of you on the path, it will lead you directly to the Quiet Garden.

Part of the Quiet Garden Association, this space is intended to encourage the use of the outdoors for prayer and reflection. The garden itself is arranged around the pond, an important feature in the original design of the main building by the architect Adam Smith.

During the Cowdray era, the fields between the pond and the house were laid out as a golf course.

- 5 To return to the Abbey, retrace your steps. Alternatively, you may wish to explore further into the parkland and wider estate.



Find this walk on the OS app

Discover 500 acres of woodland, meadow, and parkland at Worth Abbey. Wander through diverse landscapes, enjoy views of the South Downs, and experience a place of peace, wildlife, and reflection.

To discover more about
Worth Abbey visit: worthabbey.net



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