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3 June 2006	25 November 2006	17 November 2007	
Current status	Document last updated: 18 November 2007		
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Wadhurst via Bewl Water circular

Length: 12.7km (7.9 miles) – 1km (0.6 miles) shorter with road ending

Toughness: 5

Transport: The walk starts and ends at Wadhurst station, on the Hastings Line, served by trains from Charing Cross via London Bridge.

Suggested train: for the normal walk, the train nearest to 10.10am from Charing Cross. For the longer option, the train nearest to 9.10am

Walk notes Apart from at the very end, this is a completely different route from the Wadhurst short and main walks in Time Out Country Walks Book two. It follows the Sussex Border Path to the large reservoir of Bewl Water, and then follows its banks back to Wadhurst village for tea. This is beautiful country, full of hidden valleys and picturesque farms. Being the Weald, the route is almost never flat, but the gradients on this route are always gentle.

Walk options – a longer alternative You can combine this walk as far as Bewl Water with the Wadhurst Long Walk route also available on this website (see Book 2, Wadhurst, Updates). On reaching Bewl Water, turn left rather than right along its shore, and in 2.6km (1.6 miles) you get to the Bewl Water Visitors Centre, You can then follow the Wadhurst Long Walk instructions. It is 8.7km (5.4 miles) from the start of this walk to the Visitor's Centre and 18km (11.2 miles) from there to Robertsbridge, making a total walk of 26.7 km (16.6 miles). You can shorten this by 2 miles (3km) by finishing at Etchingam Station, but then there is no tea option.

Lunch and tea places

The Old Vine, Cousley Wood, East Sussex, TN5 6ER (01892 782271), 5km (3 miles) into the walk is a cosy pub with a big old fashioned fireplace in winter, and some outside tables in summer. It offers a basic menu, but with big portions, from 12 to 2pm daily. This is the recommended lunch stop on the regular walk

The Look Out Restaurant, Bewl Water Visitor's Centre (01892 890171) www.bewl.co.uk serves food from 10.30-5pm daily from April to October, and on Saturdays and Sundays only from November to March. This is the recommended lunch stop on the longer walk

Wealden Wholefoods Cafe, High Street, Wadhurst, TN5 6AA (01892 783065) www.wealdenwholefoods.co.uk provides a fine tea with an interesting range of cakes from 9am-4.45pm Monday to Saturday. This is the recommended tea stop

White Hart, High Street, Wadhurst, TN5 6AP (01892 782878) is an alternative tea stop if you don't get to the Wealden Wholefoods Cafe in time.

The **Ostrich** pub in Robertsbridge (see the Robertsbridge Walk in Time Out Country Walks Book 2) is the suggested tea stop on the longer walk option

WALK DIRECTIONS

Coming off the platform from Wadhurst station, walk down through the car park for 20 metres, then *turn left to go down to the main road*. In 80 metres, *turn left on the main road*. In 60 metres, *take a minor road to the right*, signposted to Woods Green, which quickly descends downhill, your direction 100 degrees

In 70 metres, ignore a signposted path up a driveway to the right, and in another 60 metres, *at the bottom of the dip*, ignore another driveway to the left and *curve sharp right with the road*. *Almost immediately, turn left off the road*, however, up a bridleway.

In 50 metres, this goes into a wood and then on uphill. In another 200 metres, you emerge from the wood onto a path that descends gently downhill, fenced off from a field to the left. In 170 metres, at the far end of the field, this enters a wood and in 70 metres crosses a stream and starts to climb again. In 140 metres, *you come to a road, where you go left, downhill, between high hedges*.

In 350 metres, at the bottom of the hill, you pass an idyllic house on a knoll to the right, and start to climb uphill again. [!] In 130 metres, as the road comes up into a wooded area,

turn sharp right, through a gate marked "Great Shoemiths Farm: Private" (this is a right of way), your direction 100 initially.

Follow the tarmac lane to the farm, with a metal fence to the right. In 650 metres, when you get close to the farm buildings, ignore a footpath across a stone bridge to the right, and instead *walk up the driveway towards the farm complex*. In another 60 metres, pass through a gate to the right of a wooden fieldgate, and then immediately *turn right, just in front of a garage, across a stile* (currently dilapidated), your direction south.

Pass immediately to the right of a pond, and then go straight on across a field towards a fieldgate in 100 metres. *Beyond the gate, cross a ditch on a grass bridge, and head slightly left, towards a gap in the hedge on the far side of the field, 60 metres to the left of a clump of trees*, your direction 100 degrees.

In 150 metres, *pass through this gap, and veer right heading just to the right of another clump of trees*, your direction 130 degrees. In 300 metres, *pass this clump of trees and head for a stile* in the hedge 100 metres ahead,

and about 100 metres to the right of the field edge.

In 70 metres, pass a redundant stile to the left. In 110 metres, at the far end of the field, ignore an opening to the left, and go right across a stile, your direction 160 degrees. Beyond this, veer left with the field edge towards a distant house. In 140 metres, pass through a metal fieldgate, and carry on along a path with a fence to the left and hedge and ditch to the right, your direction 100 degrees.

In 250 metres, *just pass a house and tennis court to the right, this widens into a small field and you are forced by a hedge ahead to turn right, uphill.* In 50 metres, *you come to a tarmac lane* leading to the house to the right, and *turn left* onto this, your direction 100 degrees.

Follow this lane past other houses. In 100 metres, it turns right uphill for about 240 metres, and then turns left downhill again for 90 metres, and then uphill again for 40 metres, coming to a crossroads 60 metres later, with a village green ahead of you. *Turn left along the edge of the village green, and then in 80 metres at a T-junction, right,* still keeping to its edge (or walk across the centre of it!).

In 60 metres, *you pass a barn converted into a house on your left, and just beyond this, turn left up a signposted footpath* (still the Sussex Border Path), between two houses. Pass through a gate in 50 metres, and on uphill on a grassy track, your direction 80. *In 120 metres, at the top of the hill, follow the path across a stile* and veer right, towards a fieldgate in the far corner of the field (not the nearer one to the left), your direction 140 degrees. *In 90 metres, cross a stile* to the right of this fieldgate, and carry on along the right hand edge of the next field.

In 200 metres, cross a stile to the left of a metal fieldgate. Beyond this, ignore a locked fieldgate ahead, and take the broad track forking right past it, along the edge of a plantation of trees, your direction 120 degrees. In 170 metres, *this brings you to a main road, the B2100, where you turn left.*

In 130 metres, ignore a road to the left to Hook Green, and keep straight on into the village of Coulseley Wood for a further 350 metres until you come to **The Old Vine**, the suggested lunchtime pub, on the right hand side of the road.

After lunch, come out of the pub, and turn right and in 30 metres right again (or if not stopping for lunch, turn right 30 metres beyond the pub), to take a narrow lane downhill, your direction 190 degrees. *In 120 metres, ignore a signposted footpath straight ahead to turn left with the lane. Follow the lane downhill for another 800 metres,* with increasingly fine views of Bewl Water reservoir below, *until you get to a farm (Bewl Water Oast). Here, turn left,* through a kissing gate, on a path between fences.

Follow this path for 270 metres until it enters a wood. Here follow the path round to the left between fences (the only possible route), your direction 60 degrees. In 20 metres, ignore a path to the left and curve right with the fence. *In 20 metres more, turn right at a T-junction onto a broad path* that curves right down through the wood for around 100 metres to the edge of Bewl Water. *Turn right onto the lakeside path* (unless you are doing the long walk alternative, in which case turn left)

Follow this path for just over a kilometre, along the edge of the reservoir. You pass through several wooded sections, emerging from them to have views of the reservoir once

more. Ignore paths up into the woods to the right during these sections.

Towards the end of the reservoir (which is sometimes dry in its upper reaches), the path is funnelled between two lines of trees/bushes about 20 metres apart. About 150 metres after this point, there is a path junction, marked by a low footpath post directly ahead. Ignore the grassy footpath straight ahead (yellow arrow), which seems to lead towards an open field, and instead curve left on the car-wide gravel path, following a blue bridleway arrow.

In 30 metres, you cross a stream. [!] In another 70 metres, turn right over a stile onto a footpath marked "Wadhurst 1 mile" (This is clearly signed, but hidden from view by vegetation until you are right upon it).

Follow this path all the way uphill to Wadhurst village: immediately after the stile it veers left into a field, to follow the field's right hand edge, gently uphill, with trees to the right. In 200 metres, the route curves right to cross a stile, and carry on up a broad path under trees.

In 200 metres this path turns into a farm track, and in another 400 metres it emerges through a gate to run down the right hand side of an open field. In 100 metres more you come to the buildings of Little Pell Farm. Pass a barn on your left, and veer slightly right with the track for 60 metres, to cross a stile to the right of a fieldgate.

Beyond the gate, carry on up the farm track for another 200 metres to emerge onto the bend of a tarmac road. Ignore the road to the right to keep straight uphill on the lane. In 400 metres, *this brings you to the centre of Wadhurst village, opposite the Greyhound pub. Turn right here, and in 100 metres or so the **White Hart** is on your left, and the **Wealden***

Wholefoods Cafe, the suggested tea stop, in 80 metres more on the right.

To finish the walk, you can simply carry on along the main road past the Wealden Wholefoods Cafe to Wadhurst station. There is a pavement all the way, and this is not an unpleasant 2.4km (1.5 mile) walk.

However, an alternative and more tranquil route is to *turn left out of the Wealden Wholefoods Cafe (ie, retracing your steps), and in 30 metres, turn left again onto Church Street. In 50 metres, turn left along the brick path into the churchyard.*

Follow the path round the left side of the church, to reach a metal kissing gate in 60 metres. Beyond this, keep on along an earth footpath, with the graveyard on your right. In 250 metres, pass through a squeeze gate and in 170 metres, just past a wooden bench, turn left down some steps and turn left down a lane.

In 150 metres, *take the lane forking left uphill. In 400 metres, keep straight on across a crossroads, on Turners Green Road. In 150 metres, fork left, and in 70 metres keep straight on at another crossroads, still on Turners Green Road.*

In 180 metres, as a lane comes in from the right, turn left across a stile, heading towards the left side of a house on the far side of the field, your direction west. In 200 metres, cross a stile and continue down the right hand edge of a field, with a garden to the right. In 120 metres, go through a metal fieldgate and turn left down a lane. In 180 metres, turn right at a T-junction.

Stay on this lane for a kilometre, until it turns left and climbs steeply uphill to the main road. Turn left on the main road for 80 metres to reach the station through its car park on your right.

