

Ashurst to Eridge walk

Gently undulating High Weald walk in the low hills and valleys around Tunbridge Wells

Length	<p>Main Walk, via Speldhurst: 21 km (13.0 miles). Five hours 10 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 10 hours.</p> <p>Shorter Walk, omitting Burrswood: 18 km (11.2 miles). Four hours 30 minutes walking time.</p> <p>Circular Walk, returning to Ashurst: 15¾ km (9.8 miles). Three hours 55 minutes walking time.</p> <p>Alternative Walk, via Langton Green: 14¼ km (8.9 miles). Three hours 30 minutes walking time.</p>
OS Maps	Explorers 135 & 147. Ashurst station, map reference TQ507388, is on the East Sussex/Kent border, between East Grinstead and Tunbridge Wells.
Toughness	5 out of 10 (4 for the Circular Walk, 3 for the Alternative Walk).
Features	From a remote station this walk climbs up the low hills between the River Medway and Tunbridge Wells, soon with some attractive views across a steep-sided open hillside reminiscent of wilder parts of Britain. A gently undulating route along field edges, country lanes and wooded valleys takes you to the village of Speldhurst , where the parish church of St Mary the Virgin contains a set of notable pre-Raphaelite stained glass windows.

After a lunch stop in the village's 16thC inn the walk loops back towards the **Burrswood** estate, situated in a wooded valley passed near the beginning of the walk. Its 19thC manor house is now a small NHS hospital, with walkers being encouraged to use the permissive paths through its grounds (and visit its tearoom). Its long driveway leads to the hamlet of Old Groombridge and the remainder of the walk is the same as the Short Walk ending to the [Eridge Circular walk](#) (#120b). This goes past [Groombridge Place](#), a beautiful Jacobean manor house surrounded by a medieval moat, then follows the course of the heritage [Spa Valley Railway](#)'s extension from Groombridge to Eridge. Along the way you can often see climbers practising their skills on an impressive outcrop of Ardingly sandstone, [Harrison's Rocks](#).

A relatively high proportion of this walk is on quiet country lanes, but the soils in the High Weald do not drain well and some stretches can be very muddy after wet weather.

Walk Options

For a **Shorter Walk** (saving 3 km) you could take a direct route into Old Groombridge, omitting the mid-afternoon loop through the Burrswood estate. Alternatively, you could head back to Ashurst station from Burrswood, completing a **Circular Walk**.

Directions are also included for a short **Alternative Walk** which omits the loop out to Speldhurst as well as Burrswood. Its lunchtime stop is in Langton Green, on the fringes of Tunbridge Wells.

On all the walk options which end in Eridge you could substitute the main ending of the [Eridge Circular walk](#) (#120), through Broadwater Warren and past Eridge Rocks (about 3 km longer).

You would need to print those directions from the other walk document.

Transport

Ashurst and Eridge are adjacent stations on the Oxted–Uckfield line, which has an hourly service from London Bridge, taking 50 minutes to Ashurst (longer on Sundays, when you have to change at East Croydon and/or Oxted). Buy a [return to Eridge](#), or Ashurst (Kent) for the Circular Walk.

If you want to cut the walk short several bus services go through Langton Green to Tunbridge Wells. The most frequent is Metrobus 291 (hourly Mon–Sat, two-hourly Sun & BH), which also goes through Groombridge. Less frequent services also go through Fordcombe and Speldhurst.

On days when the **Spa Valley Railway** (SVR) is operating you could also catch a steam train from Groombridge station, cutting out the last leg of the walk into Eridge (or travel in the other direction to Tunbridge Wells).

If driving, Ashurst station has a small free car park. The station car park at Eridge costs £2.80 Mon–Sat, £2.15 Sun (2018).

Suggested Train

Take the train nearest to **10:00** from **London Bridge to Ashurst**.

Lunch

On all the walk options a very early lunch is possible after about 4 km at the [Chafford Arms](#) (01892-731731) in **Fordcombe**, but the suggested places are about 45 minutes further on. On the main walk options the suggested lunch stop is the highly-rated [George & Dragon](#) (01892-863125) in **Speldhurst**, after 7 km. This deservedly popular inn serves excellent home-cooked food, much of it locally sourced, to 2.30pm (4pm Sun).

A later option (requiring a short detour) is **The Hare** (01892-862419) in **Langton Green**, which serves a wide variety of food all day. This is the suggested lunch stop on the **Alternative Walk**, after 6¾ km.

On some of the walk options the pubs in Groombridge (see below) might also be able to provide a late lunch.

Tea

On the **Main Walk** you could break for mid-afternoon refreshment at the **Burrswood Tea Room** (01892-865991), which is open daily to 4.30pm (5.30pm summer Sundays). As there is nothing near Ashurst station, this is the suggested tea place on the **Circular Walk**. Allow at least half an hour to reach the station, 2 km away.

Several more refreshment stops are available in **Groombridge** on the route to Eridge. The **Crown Inn** (01892-864742) is at the top of the small village green and the **Junction Inn** (01892-864275) is in the main part of the village. When the SVR is operating you could nip into the nearby station, where there is a buffet on the platform.

At the end of these walk options **The Huntsman** pub (01892-864258) is ideally placed, a stone's throw from **Eridge** station. However, the pub is closed all day on Mondays and might also be closed on other midweek afternoons.

Help Us!

After the walk, we would love to get your [feedback](#)

Photos

Upload your photos to the [SWC Group on Flickr](#), and [videos to Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:



By Car

Start TN3 9TL **Finish** TN3 9LE

Help

National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

Version

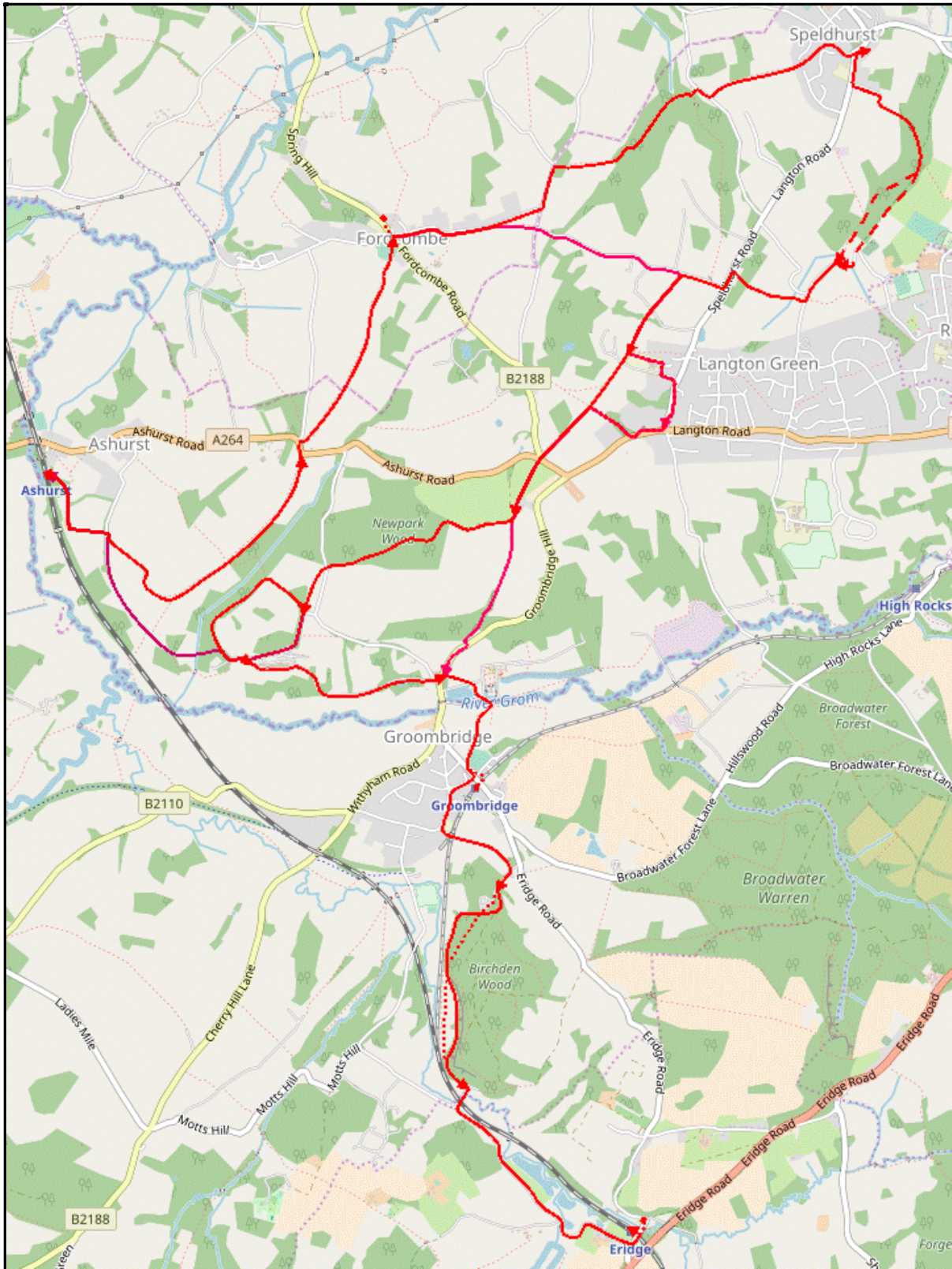
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Walk Directions

Walk Map



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Walk Options (Main)

- M. Main Walk, via Speldhurst (21 km)
 - a. Shorter Walk, omitting Burrswood (18 km)
 - b. Circular Walk, returning to Ashurst (15¾ km)
 - c. Alternative Walk, via Langton Green (14¼ km)

Walk Directions

1. Ashurst Station to Stone Cross (2½ km)

The first 600m is the same as Walks #29 & #110.

From the station's small car park do not take the obvious way out to the A264, but **take the private road in the opposite direction**, heading **S** and briefly joining the **Sussex Border Path¹** (SBP). This driveway winds uphill and curves to the right where a footpath joins from the left. After 200m along a level stretch, **turn left** to go up a grassy track between hedges.

At the top turn right briefly onto a track, then in 40m **turn left** through a wooden fieldgate into the bottom corner of a large field, leaving the SBP. Continue up its left-hand edge, climbing steadily for 300m with increasingly fine views across the Medway valley.

At the top ignore a gap in the hedge ahead and **turn right** to go around the field edge, with the hedge on your left. Follow it round to the left, then go through a new metal gate (replacing a dilapidated stile on its left) to continue along the top of another field.

In 150m, just before the next corner, **go over a stile on the left** into the top of a steep-sided valley, joining the **Wealdway²** (WW). Follow a grassy path near the top of this picturesque valley, with Burrs Wood off to the right. In 400m go through a metal kissing gate to the left of a wooden fieldgate to continue along a narrow field.

At the far end go through another metal kissing gate onto a short path through some trees and continue on a grassy strip alongside a wooden fence. Where the way ahead is blocked by trees veer right as indicated onto a narrow path beside a brick wall. Follow this out through another gate to emerge onto the A264 at a bend.

2. Stone Cross to Fordcombe (1¼ km)

Keep left for an awkward little stretch alongside the A264, still on the WW. The onward route is the minor road branching off to the right where the A264 bends sharply left, so where you have a clear view in both directions **cross the main road with great care**.

At this junction turn right into Broad Lane and almost immediately **turn right again** into the driveway to Stone Cross Farm, a public footpath. Follow this round to the left and onto a farm track, then in 25m **go over a stile on the left** to continue in the same direction along the edge of a field.

Go along the right-hand edge of three large fields for 1 km. The path continues with a hedge separating you from a fourth field and comes out in the corner of a village green. Make your way around the cricket pitch to the opposite corner, aiming just to the right of the pavilion, to reach the B2188 near the village sign for **Fordcombe³**. The walk continues along Fordcombe Lane opposite, but follow the detour below if you want an early lunch stop at the Chafford Arms.

- **Detour to the Chafford Arms (+250m)**

Turn left onto the main road, passing the village school and crossing over at some point; the pub is on the right-hand side of the road opposite the church. Return the same way.

If you are doing the Alternative Walk (omitting Speldhurst), go to §11.

3. Fordcombe to Speldhurst (3¼ km)

Leave the village on Fordcombe Lane, heading **E** and going past a long string of cottages. Follow this quiet lane for 900m, all the way to a T-junction where you turn left. After a further 250m of road walking along Poundsbridge Hill, **turn right** onto a signposted footpath opposite Coopers Lane.

Go over a stile, through a belt of trees and over another stile. Follow a grassy path diagonally across a field, over another stile and keep ahead across a larger field. In the far corner go over another stile into Avery's Wood.

The woodland path heads **NE** along the top of a wooded valley, gradually descending. In 100m it turns right and drops further downhill, then bends left to continue in the same direction as before. In a further 300m a tricky little descent over tree roots takes you down to a footbridge across the stream at the bottom of the valley.

On the far side follow the path up and round to the right. At the top of some steps you come to a path junction and **turn left**, joining the **Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk⁴** (TWCW). A short path alongside a wooden fence takes you out to a minor road (Bullingstone Lane).

Turn right to go uphill on the lane for 100m, then **turn left** onto a signposted footpath. Simply follow this fenced path for 800m through a wooded area, across the middle of a large field and finally between houses to a street (Penshurst Road) in the village of Speldhurst.

Turn right onto the street and follow it round a left-hand bend to a road junction, with the church of **St Mary the Virgin⁵** (which is well worth a visit) on the left. You will be leaving the village along Langton Road to the right, but to visit the suggested lunchtime pub continue down the road ahead for 50m to find the **George & Dragon** on the right.

4. Speldhurst to Farnham Lane (1¾ km)

From the pub go back up the hill and turn left into Langton Road, finally leaving the WW but staying on a link route for the TWCW. In 175m **turn left** into a tarmac driveway leading to a number of houses, which is also a public footpath. In front of the last house follow the path round to the right and back to the left. Go through a squeeze gate onto a narrow path initially between hedges, then downhill into a wood.

Follow the path across a stream on a narrow footbridge and up a slope on the other side, now heading **S**. At the top the path merges with a bridleway from the left. Stay on the main path as it drops downhill again, leaving the TWCW which branches off to the left. After the path swings round to the right and levels out you come to a fork, where the lower route is slightly nicer but potentially muddy.

a. Lower route

Fork right onto a footpath through the middle of the wood, in some places on boardwalks where it runs close to a stream. In 450m keep ahead at a path crossing, then shortly afterwards go over a stile to leave the wood. Continue in the same direction along a field edge, over the stream and up a slope in a second field. At the top go over a stile and bear right onto a minor road (Farnham Lane).

b. Upper route

Fork left onto a bridleway along the edge of the wood, climbing gently at first. In 600m you join a minor road (Farnham Lane) at a hairpin bend. Keep right to go downhill on the lane, round a right-hand bend and back uphill. At the top the lane bends left where the lower route rejoins from a field on the right.

5. Farnham Lane to Ashurst Place (1¾ km)

Go along Farnham Lane and keep ahead at a road junction after 250m. In a further 50m, with footpaths on both sides, **go over a stile on the right** and down across a small field. At the bottom cross a stream on a footbridge and **turn half-left**, following a faint grassy path slanting gently uphill. At the top of the slope go past the left-hand end of a line of trees and bear right to continue along the top of the field, with trees on your right and heading **W**.

In the next corner **veer right and left** through a gap in the trees to continue in much the same direction (slightly to the right) across another field, towards a wide gap in the belt of trees on the far side. Go through these trees, passing a pond on your left, into a small field with a cottage ahead. **Turn half-right** to go past the right-hand end of its garden hedge and bear left to go alongside it. A stile in the hedge ahead takes you out onto Speldhurst Road.

Turn left and go along the pavement past the cottage, then **turn right** at a road junction into Leggs Lane. Go along this lane for 300m, passing footpaths on both sides (where you rejoin the TWCW), then **turn left** through a wooden kissing gate onto the second footpath on this side of the road.

Follow a grassy path across the field, gradually moving away from the left-hand edge. On the far side go through a wooden kissing gate in a belt of trees and continue in the same direction across two more small fields, crossing the driveway to Shirley Hall via more kissing gates in the middle.

After passing through another belt of trees keep ahead along a broad strip of grass for 200m, with a recreation ground behind the trees on your left. At the end of the trees you are level with Ashurst Place on your right and there is a small open area on your left.

6. Ashurst Place to Top Hill (1¼ or 2 km)

If you want a late lunch stop at The Hare, follow the directions in §6b.

a. Main route (1¼ km)

Continue along the grassy strip, now with a school playing field behind the trees on your left. In 100m go over a stile, across the driveway to Ashurst Place and through an old squeeze gate to continue along the left-hand edge of a field.

In the next corner go over the left-hand of two stiles to maintain direction on a short path between fences, then along the left-hand edge of another field. On the far side keep ahead over a pair of stiles, where the longer route rejoins from the fenced path on the left.

b. Route via Langton Green (2 km)

Veer left across the open area. There are various routes out to Speldhurst Road 350m ahead, but the most direct (eg. along the right-hand side of the recreation ground past Langton Pavilion and the Village Hall) would result in a longer section along the road.

The suggested route is to head for the far right-hand corner of the open area and go through an old gate onto a tarmac path between a basketball court and the school field. At a path T-junction **turn right** and follow it out to a residential street. Keep ahead past houses to a T-junction and turn left onto Lampington Row. This goes past more houses and bends round to the right to meet Speldhurst Road.

The Hare is 250m ahead (on this side of the road) at its T-junction with the A264, but it is safer to cross over and use the footway on the far side, then cross back again when opposite the village green.

On leaving the pub turn right to go alongside the A264 for 150m (you can detour through the churchyard of **All Saints**⁶ for a brief respite from the traffic). At the end of the pavement **veer right** through a wooden kissing gate onto a woodland path.

Keep right through this small wood, at first alongside a wooden fence and then some sandstone rocks. Continue on a potentially muddy fenced path between fields for 125m to a path crossing with stiles on both sides and **go over the stile on the left**.

Follow a clear path for 400m, heading **SW**: between fields, through trees on the edge of a copse and finally straight ahead across another field. At the end go out through a metal kissing gate onto the B2188, near its junction with the A264. Cross both roads carefully onto a strip of grass alongside the main road, with a stile in the line of trees ahead.

Go over the stile and follow a grassy path straight ahead across a large field, aiming to the right of some cottages and passing an isolated oak tree in the middle. In the far corner make your way across a potentially muddy area and go through a couple of fieldgates to a T-junction with a farm track.

If you are doing the Shorter Walk (omitting Burrswood), go to §13.

7. Top Hill to the Burrswood Estate (1½ km)

Turn right onto the farm track, which in 30m comes to a metal gate leading into a field with a barn. Do not go through the gate but **fork right** onto a track heading **W** between tall hedges, leaving the TWCW. In 250m ignore gates on both sides leading into fields and stay on the track as it turns half-right. At the end of the track go through a wooden fieldgate into the north-eastern corner of Newpark Wood.

You will be going all the way through this private wood for about 800m to its south-western corner, with occasional waymarkers to keep you on the right of way. The footpath initially swings left to head **SW**, then in 200m forks right to head **W**. In 250m keep ahead at a major path crossing. In 200m you reach the southern edge of the wood (with allotments on the left) and continue past farm buildings. For the final 150m keep left, eventually going past a house and out onto a lane (Groombridge Road).

Go straight across the lane onto a permissive path into the **Burrswood** estate. Follow this broad tree-lined path (the old driveway to the mansion) for 300m, curving gently round to the left, to reach the modern driveway leading to **Burrswood Hospital**⁷.

If you are doing the Circular Walk (returning to Ashurst), go to §10.

8. Through Burrswood to its Tea Room (1¼ or ½ km)

For a short cut you can take the direct route in §8b.

a. Main route (1¼ km)

Do not join the driveway but **turn sharp right** onto a public footpath into Burrs Wood, initially heading **NW**. In 300m you come to a T-junction at the top of a wooded valley. Ignore the footpath sign pointing right and **turn left** onto a permissive path, down the side of the valley and merging with a broad path from the right at the bottom of the slope.

You now follow this broad level path all the way through the wood, about 500m. You soon pass a pond on the left with very clear water, and just past this you might hear the repetitive sound of a hydraulic ram inside a metal container covered with vegetation. 200m further on, keep left at a three-way path junction and continue to the end of the wood.

Bear left onto a driveway, with views down to your right of the River Grom flowing through a meadow. In 150m you come to a pair of car parks and **veer right** through the lower car park. Go down a wide path to the right of a low building to come out onto the **Tea Room** terrace, by its entrance.

b. Short cut (½ km)

Keep ahead and follow the driveway gently downhill for 400m, curving round to the right halfway along. Stay on the main drive as it turns sharply left towards the church and hospital buildings, then **veer right** through the small Bocky's Car Park. **Turn left** down a wide path to the right of a low building to come out onto the **Tea Room** terrace, by its entrance.

Signs to the Tea Room direct visitors down a winding path in front of the church and through a reception area (turning left and then right) to the terrace, but this is not recommended with muddy boots.

9. Burrswood Tea Room to Old Groombridge (1¼ km)

To continue the walk to Eridge, make your way down from the Tea Room terrace and go across the grass onto a path to the right of the church. Continue past the front of the mansion⁸, either going through or skirting around its formal gardens. On the far side bear left to join its driveway, heading away from the house. Follow this past a few houses and then down to the right, passing a 'No Exit' sign (for vehicles).

Follow this long tree-lined driveway as it curves back to the left, heading **E** for 750m past fields and fishing ponds. At the end of the drive you go past Burrswood Lodge and emerge onto the side of a sloping green in Old Groombridge. Go straight across a minor road onto a short lane cutting across the green to its top corner, where the **Crown Inn** on your left is another possible refreshment stop.

Continue the directions at §14.

10. Burrswood to Ashurst Station (2½ km)

Keep ahead and follow the driveway gently downhill for 400m, curving round to the right halfway along. Stay on the main drive as it turns sharply left towards the church and hospital buildings, then **veer right** through the small Bocky's Car Park. **Turn left** down a wide path to the right of a low building to come out onto the **Tea Room** terrace, by its entrance.

Signs to the Tea Room direct visitors down a winding path in front of the church and through a reception area (turning left and then right) to the terrace, but this is not recommended with muddy boots.

To continue the walk to Ashurst, retrace your steps past the side of the Tea Room and across Bocky's Car Park. Turn left onto the driveway in front of the small Wellspring Car Park. After passing a few cottages there are views down to your left of the River Grom flowing through a meadow. At the end of the field on your right **veer right** onto a signposted permissive path into Burrs Wood.

You will be turning off this path after just 100m, but **the path crossing is easy to miss**. It is best to look on the right for a stile leading into a field; at this point **turn left** (away from the stile) onto a narrow path going down through the trees. Depending on the conditions there may be alternative paths bypassing some muddy stretches on the main path, but all routes should take you down to a plank bridge over a stream at the bottom of the wood, into a field.

Follow a grassy path straight ahead across the field. On the far side go through a belt of trees, over a stile and bear right to come out into the corner of a long narrow field. Go diagonally across this, alongside a low bank on your right. In the far corner keep right as you go past a footpath signpost for the Sussex Border Path West.

The final part of the walk is the reverse of Walks #29 & #110, which continue down the broad grassy strip on the left and under the railway, following the Wealdway.

For the next 500m stay near the field boundary on your right, climbing gently and gradually curving round to the right. At the end of the last field go over a stile next to a fieldgate onto a tree-lined track. At the top of the slope you go past an opening on the right (your outward route) and now retrace your steps back to Ashurst station: in 40m **turn left** down a grassy track between hedges and turn right at the bottom onto a track leading to the station car park. Cross the footbridge to Platform 1 for trains to London.

11. Fordcombe to Langton Green (3 km)

Leave the village on Fordcombe Lane, heading **E** and going past a long string of cottages. In 600m, shortly after passing 'National Speed Limit' road signs, **go over a stile on the right** and follow a grassy path near the right-hand edge of a field.

At the far end pass to the right of a hedge surrounding a house. Go through a small metal gate and over a stile onto a minor road (Old House Lane) at a junction. Cross the road carefully to continue in the same direction on Leggs Lane, leaving the WW.

In 600m you pass Shirley Lodge on your right, then in a further 250m the driveway to Danemore Farm on the left. Shortly afterwards **turn right** through a wooden kissing gate onto a signposted footpath, joining the **Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk**⁴ (TWCW).

Follow a grassy path across the field, gradually moving away from the left-hand edge. On the far side go through a wooden kissing gate in a belt of trees and continue in the same direction across two more small fields, crossing the driveway to Shirley Hall via more kissing gates in the middle.

After passing through another belt of trees keep ahead along a broad strip of grass for 200m, with a recreation ground behind the trees on your left. At the end of the trees you are level with Ashurst Place on your right and there is a small open area on your left.

Veer left across the open area. There are various routes out to Speldhurst Road 350m ahead, but the most direct (eg. along the right-hand side of the recreation ground past Langton Pavilion and the Village Hall) would result in a longer section along the road.

The suggested route is to head for the far right-hand corner of the open area and go through an old gate onto a tarmac path between a basketball court and the school field. At a path T-junction **turn right** and follow it out to a residential street. Keep ahead past houses to a T-junction and turn left onto Lampington Row. This goes past more houses and bends round to the right to meet Speldhurst Road.

The Hare is 250m ahead (on this side of the road) at its T-junction with the A264, but it is safer to cross over and use the footway on the far side, then cross back again when opposite the village green.

12. Langton Green to Top Hill (1¼ km)

On leaving the pub turn right to go alongside the A264 for 150m (you can detour through the churchyard of **All Saints**⁶ for a brief respite from the traffic). At the end of the pavement **veer right** through a wooden kissing gate onto a woodland path.

Keep right through this small wood, at first alongside a wooden fence and then some sandstone rocks. Continue on a potentially muddy fenced path between fields for 125m to a path crossing with stiles on both sides and **go over the stile on the left**.

Follow a clear path for 400m, heading **SW**: between fields, through trees on the edge of a copse and finally straight ahead across another field. At the end go out through a metal kissing gate onto the B2188, near its junction with the A264. Cross both roads carefully onto a strip of grass alongside the main road, with a stile in the line of trees ahead.

Go over the stile and follow a grassy path straight ahead across a large field, aiming to the right of some cottages and passing an isolated oak tree in the middle. In the far corner make your way across a potentially muddy area and go through a couple of fieldgates to a T-junction with a farm track.

13. Top Hill to Old Groombridge *direct* (1 km)

Turn right onto the farm track, which in 30m comes to a metal gate leading into a field with a barn. Do not go through the gate but **fork left** onto a track heading **S** through a belt of trees. Follow this enclosed path in much the same direction for 500m, going through gates and stiles as necessary: between fields, past a cluster of farm buildings on the left and finally alongside a wood. At the end go over a stile into Beech Wood.

The woodland path swings right and goes past a large oak tree, then veers left downhill. You pass several footpath waymarkers as you descend near the left-hand edge of the wood. In 250m the path emerges onto the B2110 where you turn right to go along its pavement, still descending. In 200m you come to the **Crown Inn** on your right, at the top of a sloping village green.

14. Old Groombridge to Aytton's Wood (2 km)

The remainder of this walk is the same as Walk #120b.

At the top of the village green⁹ cross the B2110 carefully and go through a wooden gate onto a footpath, still on the TWCW. You pass the brick-built church of **St John the Evangelist**¹⁰ off to your right and continue on a grassy path sloping down towards the right-hand side of a large field. Go through an old iron gate, across a driveway and onto a path alongside a lake, with **Groombridge Place**¹¹ off to the left.

Follow the path down a few steps on the left to head directly towards the manor house, framed by four giant redwood trees. Bear right as indicated and go across a tarmac driveway to continue between the moat and the River Grom. Near the back of the house **turn right** to go over the river on a stone bridge. Go straight across a tree-lined avenue and **turn half-right** onto a broad grassy path between low wire fences.

At the field edge follow the path round to the left and uphill, then through a gate at the top into the corner of a recreation ground. Continue between its left-hand edge and a line of tall trees, later with a children's playground on your right. Go out through a side

gate and turn left onto Station Road, with the **Junction Inn** opposite. The main route continues up the road for 100m, but follow the short detour below if you want a closer look at the **Spa Valley Railway**¹² (SVR).

- **Detour to Groombridge Station (+250m)**

Bear left into Newton Willows, towards the old station building. Go through it and round to the new platform¹³ on the other side of the road bridge, where there is a kiosk serving snacks when trains are running. If you are not finishing the walk with a trip on the SVR, return to the access road and turn left. Go up a flight of steps and straight across Station Road.

On the main route, **turn right** off Station Road opposite the steps signposted to the SVR. Go through a small wooden gate onto an unmarked tarmac path and keep ahead along a cul-de-sac (Gromenfield). At the end turn right and then left onto Corseley Road. Go along this road for 250m, past a church and a school, to a sharp right-hand bend.

Instead of following the road round to the right, **turn left** onto a tarmac path, joining the **High Weald Landscape Trail**¹⁴ (HWLT). Cross the railway on a footbridge and continue on an enclosed path alongside fields for 400m. Go through a kissing gate and turn right onto the access road for Aytton's Wood car park. In 150m a signpost indicates that the public footpath turns left into the wood.

15. Aytton's Wood to Forge Farm Oast (1½ km)

The route described below follows the public footpath, but you could also stay on the road and go down through the car park onto one of the paths used by climbers to reach the start of Harrison's Rocks.

For the suggested route **turn left** and follow the potentially muddy footpath downhill and round to the right. Cross over a forestry track and continue on a path through trees, skirting the car park on your right and keeping ahead at path crossings (unless you want to cut through the open access **Birchden Wood** on the left).

The footpath comes out into a more open area and then turns left to continue alongside the wood, gradually approaching the embankment carrying the SVR. At the closest point to the railway there are two ways into the wood; the first is the route from the car park and the second (a wooden gate 50m further on) has a sign for **Harrison's Rocks**¹⁵.

The suggested route is to leave the public footpath and take a permissive path closer to the rocks. If you decide to stay on the footpath alongside the SVR it goes up a slope and through a wooden fieldgate after 500m, where the main route rejoins from the left. If you take this route, continue the directions at [•] below.

For the suggested route, **go through the gate** and turn right to reach the start of the rocks. Where the path splits the easier route is to fork right through a lightly-wooded area, a little way below the rocks. For a closer look at the climbers you can fork left and go along the uneven path at the base of the rocks, then return on one of the link paths before the line of the rocks turns sharply left. At the edge of the wood go through a wooden fieldgate and turn left onto the public footpath.

[•] Follow the footpath downhill, initially close to the railway below on your right. Go through a gate and past a few cottages to come to an attractive oast-house conversion on the site of **Birchden Forge**¹⁶.



16. Forge Farm Oast to Eridge Station (1¾ km)

At a path junction in front of Forge Farm Oast **turn right** onto the house's driveway, leaving the HWLT and TWCW. After going over a level crossing (where the first track is the SVR and the second is the main line) you come to a T-junction with a lane (Forge Road).

Turn left and go along this quiet lane for about 1½ km, parallel to the railway. Shortly after the lane skirts around some large ponds you will see the platforms of Eridge station off to your left. Turn left at a T-junction to reach the station entrance.

- **Detour to The Huntsman (+200m)**

If you want some refreshment before the journey home continue past the station; the pub is on the left-hand side of the road. Return the same way.

Walk Notes

1. The **Sussex Border Path** runs for 240 km along the length of West & East Sussex, from Thorney Island on the Hampshire border to Rye.
2. The **Wealdway** runs for 130 km through the Kent and Sussex Weald, from Gravesend on the Thames estuary to the outskirts of Eastbourne.
3. **Fordcombe** developed to support a large paper mill on the River Medway. In its heyday the town's shops included a cricket ball maker, as can be seen on the village sign.
4. The 44 km **Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk** (formerly the High Weald Walk) was established by the Borough Council as one of its centenary events in 1989.
5. **St Mary the Virgin, Speldhurst** is the same design as an earlier 15thC church which had been destroyed by fire in 1791. Its 'wretched' replacement had fallen into disrepair and the present church was built in 1871 to a much higher standard. It is decorated throughout with pre-Raphaelite stained glass windows from Morris & Co, designed by Edward Burne-Jones.
6. **All Saints, Langton Green** is a Gothic Revival church in Early English style, built in 1863 to a design by Sir Giles Gilbert-Scott. Like its larger neighbour at Speldhurst it contains some pre-Raphaelite stained glass windows, including one by William Morris.
7. The 40-bed **Burrswood Hospital** offers rehabilitation and post-operative care with a strong Christian theme.
8. The mansion at **Burrswood** was designed by Decimus Burton for David Salomons, who had bought the estate (once part of Groombridge Place) in 1832.
9. The cluster of houses around the village green is the original settlement ('old' **Groombridge**, in Kent). The railway led to the development of the new village across the River Grom, in East Sussex.
10. **St John the Evangelist** was built in 1625 as a private chapel for Groombridge Place, only becoming the parish church in 1872. It has some unusual features, such as a one-handed clock.
11. The present house at **Groombridge Place** was built in the early 17thC on the site of a medieval moated house (and possibly an earlier Saxon fort). A 12 year-old French Count was held hostage here in the Hundred Years War until his ransom was paid 30 years later. It was the setting for Peter Greenaway's 1982 film *The Draughtsman's Contract* and was used for Longbourn in the 2005 adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice*.
12. The **Spa Valley Railway** restored a public service between Tunbridge Wells West and Groombridge in 1997, extending this to Eridge in 2011. The line had been closed by British Rail in 1985, some years after the Beeching Report.
13. The SVR had to re-site the platform at **Groombridge station** on the other side of the road bridge because the station building had been converted into a private residence. The line through Groombridge used to carry trains to London, Three Bridges, Brighton and Eastbourne.
14. The **High Weald Landscape Trail** runs for 145 km across the length of the High Weald, mostly near its northern edge, from Horsham in West Sussex to Rye.
15. **Harrison's Rocks** are managed by the British Mountaineering Council. The path along the base of the rocks is a good place to observe climbers on this outcrop of Ardingly sandstone.
16. Ammunition was manufactured at **Birchden Forge** until the mid-18thC.

» *Last updated: August 25, 2018*

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