



Haywards Heath Circular via Lindfield walk

A gently undulating walk in the low hills around the Ouse Valley.

Length

Main Walk: 19 km (11.8 miles). Four hours 35 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, buses, sights and meals, allow at least 8 hours 30 minutes.

Short Circular Walk, from Lindfield: 13½ km (8.4 miles). Three hours 15 minutes walking time.

Alternative Walk (to Sheffield Park Garden): 12 km (7.5 miles). Two hours 55 minutes walking time.

Bluebell Railway Walk (from Horsted Keynes to Sheffield Park): 12½ km (7.8 miles). Three hours 5 minutes walking time.

OS Map

Explorer 135. Haywards Heath, map reference TQ330246, is in West Sussex, 20 km **N** of Brighton. Lindfield is 2 km **NE** of Haywards Heath.

Toughness

4 out of 10 (3 for all the shorter options).

Features

This walk takes in the low hills on either side of the Ouse Valley, on the southern edge of the High Weald. Earlier versions relied on buses to get to the start and finish points, but a route has now been provided to and from Haywards Heath station to make the walk feasible on days when there is no bus service. There is quite a lot of this expanding commuter town to get through but the link route takes advantage of the **Scrase Valley Local Nature Reserve** and a few open spaces to minimise the trudge along residential streets.

After passing through a second Nature Reserve on the outskirts of Lindfield the walk route follows the **Sussex Ouse Valley Way** along the hills to the south of the **River Ouse**. You drop down to the river at Freshfield Bridges, where the lunchtime pub's nautical name is a reminder of the canal traffic on the **Ouse Navigation** in the pre-railway era.

The Main Walk's afternoon route loops back to **Lindfield** on the opposite side of the river, with two chances of a close encounter with a steam train as you cross the route of the **Bluebell Railway**, one of the oldest and most successful preservation railways in the country. After a break for tea in this pretty Sussex village the full walk completes a circuit back to Haywards Heath.

As with any walk in the High Weald, you will need to be prepared for muddy or waterlogged paths at almost any time of the year.

Additional Notes

The previous version of this walk started in Horsted Keynes and finished in Lindfield, but this made it impracticable on days with a limited bus service to these outlying villages. However, much of the new link route between Haywards Heath station and Lindfield is the same in both directions, so it is worth considering the bus for one of these legs on days when there is a convenient service.

Walk Options

As noted above you may be able to shorten the Main Walk by starting and/or finishing in **Lindfield**. Directions are also provided for the following two special variations, but note that these are subject to even more transport restrictions (see Transport below for full details).

The **Alternative Walk** replaces the afternoon section with a short route to the National Trust's magnificent **Sheffield Park and Garden**; garden admission (2018) is £11.90 but there is no charge to enter the surrounding parkland. At the end of your visit you would need to catch a bus back to Haywards Heath.

The **Bluebell Railway Walk** extends this idea of finishing at Sheffield Park with a completely different start. For this variation you travel via **East Grinstead** and complete the outward journey on the heritage railway to **Horsted Keynes**, with the return journey back along the entire line from **Sheffield Park**. If you caught the first train out on their peak service days you would be able to complete the walk in time to catch the last one back at 4pm, but you would only have enough time to explore the National Trust garden on summer Saturdays, when there is a later train at 5.15pm.

This second variation has been retained from the previous version of this walk even though it only has a tenuous connection with the revised Main Walk.

Transport

Haywards Heath is on the main Brighton line, with frequent Thameslink services from **St Pancras**, **Blackfriars** and **London Bridge**, plus Southern trains from **Victoria**. The journey time from London Bridge or Victoria is around 40-45 minutes. On the Thameslink route you can get cheap Super Off-Peak tickets from central and north London (Sat, Sun & BH), but these are not valid on Southern services.

Lindfield is served by several bus routes from Haywards Heath, but only one operates on Sundays and Bank Holidays. Metrobus 270 runs hourly (two-hourly Sun & BH) and Metrobus 272 two-hourly (Mon–Sat). There is also a half-hourly local town service which takes a slightly longer route, Compass 30/31 (Mon–Sat). The last service back from Lindfield is at around 7.15pm (6pm Sat, 5pm Sun & BH).

*If you are planning to take the bus in both directions you can save money by asking for **PlusBus** when you buy your rail ticket to Haywards Heath. With a railcard, the additional cost is about the same as one single bus fare.*

If driving, Haywards Heath station car park costs £8.35 Mon–Fri, £5.15 Sat, £2.15 Sun & BH (2018). Car drivers might prefer to do the Short Circular Walk, since there is a free car park in Lindfield at the top of the village, near the Bent Arms.

At the end of the **Alternative Walk** there are two limited bus services from **Sheffield Park** at weekends: Compass 769 (summer Sun & BH) goes to Haywards Heath but Compass 121 (Sat) goes to Lewes and you would have to change at North Chailey for Compass 31 to Haywards Heath.

As noted above, on the **Bluebell Railway Walk** you travel via **East Grinstead** from **Victoria** (half-hourly). To complete the journey you need to buy an **All Line Return** ticket on the heritage railway (£19 in 2018, cheaper if bought in advance). This covers the journey back from Sheffield Park and admission to all the station facilities (locomotive shed, carriage works, etc).

Suggested Train

If you are starting the walk from **Haywards Heath**, take the train nearest to **10:00** from **London Bridge** (or **Victoria**).

If you are starting from **Lindfield**, take a train which will enable you to catch a bus from Haywards Heath at around 11-11.30am.

If you are doing the **Bluebell Railway Walk**, take a train from **Victoria** to **East Grinstead** which will connect with the first service to **Horsted Keynes**.

Lunch

The only conveniently-placed pub on the walk route is **The Sloop Inn** (01444-831219) at Freshfield Bridges, 7¾ km from Haywards Heath (5¼ km from Lindfield; 7 km from Horsted Keynes). This has an attractive beer garden and serves food to 2.30pm (3pm weekends), but is closed Mondays (except BH). It reopened in April 2016 after being closed for 18 months while its new owners carried out a major refurbishment.

Tea

Even if you are doing the full walk it is worth stopping in Lindfield's attractive High Street. A nice tea place here is the small **Somers Vintage Tea Rooms** (01444-483993; open until 4.30pm Tue–Fri, 5pm Sat, 4pm Sun, closed Mon) at #64; further down **Field & Forrest** (01444-483700; open until 5pm Mon–Sat, 3pm Sun) at #43 is a Deli-Café with a few tables inside. Alternatively there are three pubs before you reach the bus stop: **The Bent Arms** (01444-483146) serves tea and coffee and has a large back garden; the others are **The Red Lion** (01444-484305) at #60 and **The Stand Up Inn** (01444-482995) at #47.

At the end of the full walk there is a café in the large new **Waitrose** next to **Haywards Heath** station, while for stronger fare you could try the **Burrell Arms** (01444-453214) on the other side of the roundabout. There is also a coffee shop inside the station booking hall and kiosks on the platforms.

On the Alternative Walk the **Coach House Tearoom** is just outside Sheffield Park and Garden, serving hot food until 2.30pm and tea to 5pm. On the Bluebell Railway Walk refreshments are available at the **Bessemer Arms** on the platform at Sheffield Park station.

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** RH16 1DJ

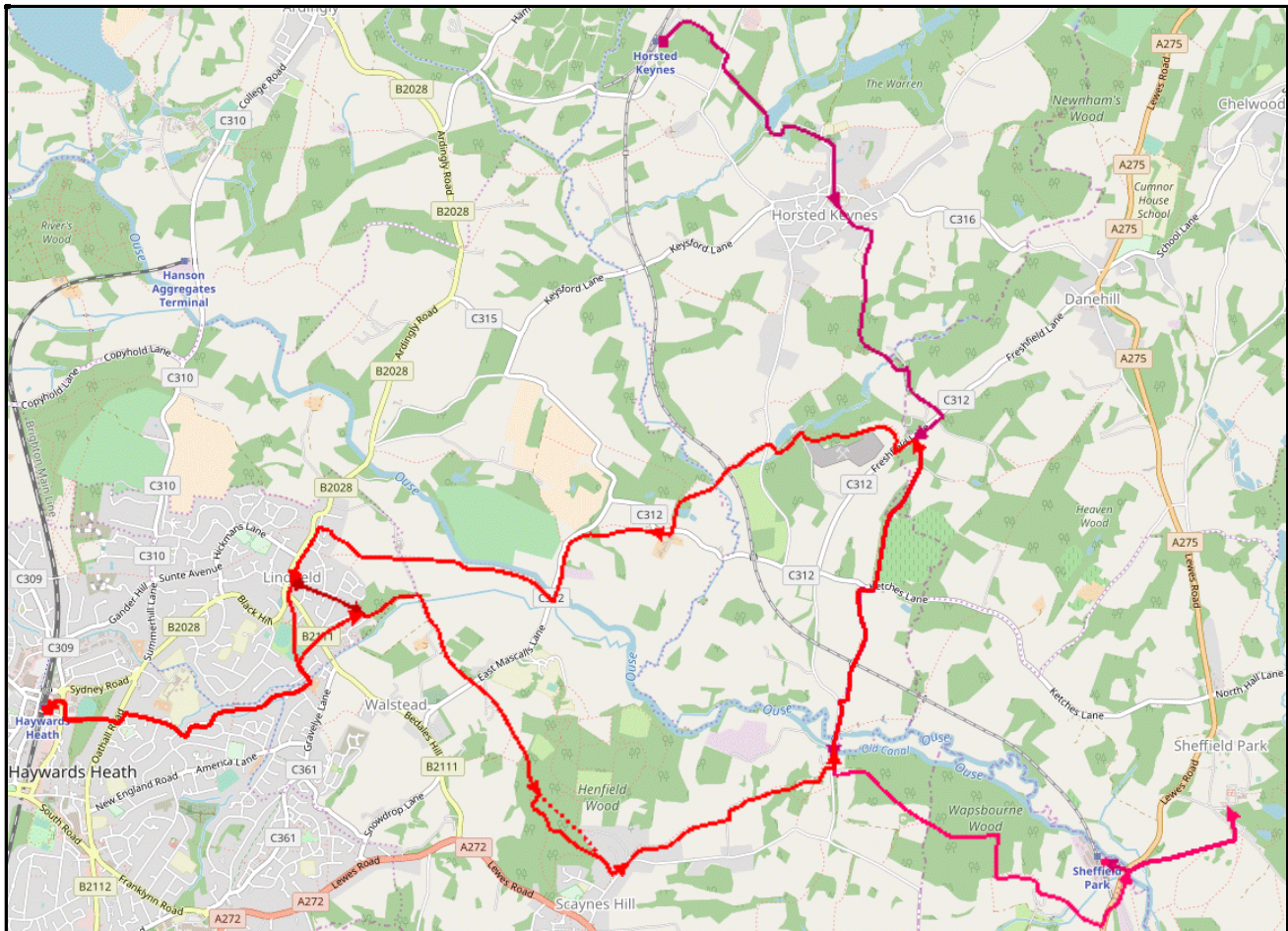
Help National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233
(12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

Version Oct-18

Copyright © [Saturday Walkers Club](http://www.walkingclub.org.uk). All Rights Reserved. No commercial use. No copying. No derivatives. Free with attribution for one time non-commercial use only. www.walkingclub.org.uk/site/license.shtml

Walk Directions

Walk Map



All maps © [OpenStreetMap](https://www.openstreetmap.org/) contributors

Walk Options (Main)

- M. Main Walk (19 km)
 - i. Main Walk, finishing at Lindfield (16 km)
 - ii. Main Walk, starting from Lindfield (16½ km)
 - iii. Short Circular Walk, from Lindfield (13½ km)
- a. Alternative Walk, to Sheffield Park Garden (12 km)
- b. Bluebell Railway Walk, from Horsted Keynes to Sheffield Park (12½ km)

Walk Directions

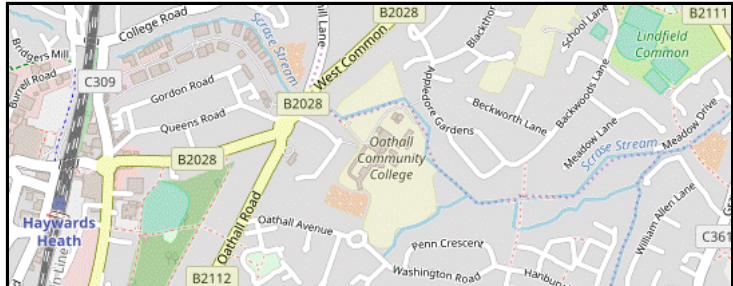
If you are doing one of the shorter options from Lindfield, start at §2.

If you are doing the Bluebell Railway Walk from Horsted Keynes, start at §10.

1. Haywards Heath Station to Eastern Road (3 km)

Go down steps at the London end of the platform to leave the station through its booking hall and bear right across its forecourt to a road. At a large roundabout go across the car park entrance and turn right into Perrymount Road, heading **S** (passing the stop for buses to Lindfield). Cross the road at the pedestrian lights and continue past Clair Hall. At the end of its car park **turn left** into a tarmac lane leading to Haywards Heath Recreation Ground, signposted as a public footpath.

Keep ahead on a broad tarmac path through the recreation ground, passing a pavilion and climbing gently. On the far side take a broad path leading out to the B2112. Cross over at the pedestrian lights and turn left, then take the first right into Oathall Avenue, downhill. In 300m take a



path straight across a roundabout and continue on the road for a further 150m, passing a college sports ground on the left. **Turn left** into Penn Crescent and follow it round a bend to the right, up to a wide gap between houses #35 & #37.

Turn left here and cut diagonally across a small open area to enter **Scrase Valley Local Nature Reserve**¹. Follow the main path through the woodland, curving round to the right to head **E**. After a well-signposted diversion around an ancient oak tree keep ahead at a crosspaths, ignoring a footbridge over Scrase Stream on the left. Follow the path alongside the stream for a further 400m (ducking under a large pipeline along the way), where you leave the reserve via a footbridge over another branch of the stream.

Continue on a surfaced path alongside Scrase Stream for 100m to a path junction in front of allotments. Turn left to cross the stream on a footbridge and continue on a short path between houses, across a residential street and along another fenced path. At the end the path turns half-right across a small open space and comes to the southern corner of Lindfield Common.

200m ahead there is a road running along the far side of the common (the B2111) and you will be continuing on Eastern Road which leads off it, 100m in from the right-hand corner. The shortest route is to cut across the grass towards the middle of the far side, although you will have to negotiate a small ditch in front of the road if you do this. Cross the B2111 to continue along Eastern Road, ignoring Luxford Road branching off to the left. In 300m you pass Newton Road on the left, the route from Lindfield High Street.

Continue the directions at §3.

2. Lindfield High Street to Eastern Road (½ km)

If you are catching a bus from Haywards Heath, leave the station through its booking hall beneath the London end of the platform and bear right across the station forecourt to a road. Go past a large new Waitrose and turn right at the roundabout for the bus stop in Perrymount Road. Alight at the Lindfield Post Office stop.

The walk starts along a passageway to the right of the United Reformed Church, on the eastern side of Lindfield's High Street near the Post Office. The path leads into Newton Road and you continue along this residential street for 400m, gently curving to the right. The road ends at a T-junction with Eastern Road where you **turn left**, joining the route from Haywards Heath.

3. Eastern Road to Costells Wood (2 km)

Immediately after the junction with Newton Road follow Eastern Road round to the right, ignoring a path ahead which leads to a housing estate. Just before the end of this short cul-de-sac **bear left** into the small car park for **Eastern Road Local Nature Reserve**².

You will be taking a fairly direct route through this small nature reserve to an (unofficial) exit at its easternmost point, but you could use the reserve map at the entrance to devise a longer route.

For the suggested route, take the right-hand path into the reserve. This soon splits into three and you **fork right, then left** to take the central path into woodland. Inside the wood you again **fork right, then left** at the next two junctions. This takes you along a path through scrubland at the edge of the reserve for 100m, with Scrase Stream in the trees on your right. Where the path curves sharply round to the left, **ford a stream on your right** via stepping stones and turn right to leave the reserve. Continue on a well-used (and potentially muddy) permissive path heading **E** across more scrubland.

In 200m you reach a T-junction and **turn right** onto a farm track, joining the **Sussex Ouse Valley Way**³ (SOVW): for the most part you will be following this all the way to Freshfield Bridges. The track crosses Scrase Stream on a wide concrete bridge and climbs gently. In 200m, after passing a track off to the right, **veer left** at a footpath sign onto a narrow path running parallel to the farm track. Follow this path across a couple of footbridges and onto a long tarmac driveway, which eventually comes out onto a road (East Mascalls Lane).

Cross the road carefully and take the footpath opposite across a field. On the far side cross a driveway and follow a grassy path half-right across the next field, then over a stile and past a few houses. Pass to the right of a garage and go across a patch of grass towards a fieldgate. Continue in the same direction across two fields towards a wood.

At the bottom of the second field go through a metal kissing gate, across a footbridge and follow the potentially muddy woodland path round to the right. Another footpath later joins from the right and the path curves slightly to the left. After a steady climb you come out of the trees onto a broad strip of grass underneath power lines.

4. Through Costells Wood to Scaynes Hill Common (1 km)

Costells Wood is Open Access and the suggested route leaves the public footpath to meander through it. If you would prefer to take a simpler and more direct route, follow the directions in §4b.

a. Main route

For the suggested route, **go straight across** the grassy track (slightly to the left) and take the path to the right of a bench, passing a Woodland Trust sign for Costells Wood. Follow the path downhill and then round to the left, crossing the outflow from a small pond on a footbridge. After a short climb the path levels out and heads **SE** through the wood.

In 150m ignore a path off to the right. In a further 50m, as the main path swings right, **fork left** onto a faint path into the trees. This soon veers left and takes you down a flight of earth steps. Go around a pond to continue along the bottom of a ghyll, at first with a stream on your left. After crossing this the path merges with other paths coming down from the left, then crosses another stream on a plank bridge.

Keep ahead up a flight of earth steps and continue in the same direction for about 250m through a more open part of the wood, staying on the main path. This gradually approaches the public footpath on the left and eventually joins it underneath a junction of power lines. Turn half-right onto this footpath, ignoring paths on the right back into the wood.

b. Direct route

For the shorter route, bear left onto the broad grassy track under the power lines, which is the continuation of the public footpath. In 350m **fork right** at a three-way footpath signpost, temporarily leaving the SOVW. The footpath continues alongside the wood, with the main route rejoining from the right underneath a junction of power lines.

Go along the main path, heading **SE**. In 100m a footpath signpost suggests that you should bear right onto a parallel driveway, but it is simpler to stay on the (permissive) main path. After passing a Woodland Trust panel about Costells Wood you go out past a

fieldgate onto Scaynes Hill Common. **Turn left** and go diagonally across the small common to a car park in the far corner, 125m away.

5. Scaynes Hill Common to Freshfield Bridges (1¾ km)

Go through the small car park and take the driveway ahead leading to Yew Tree Cottage (rejoining the SOVW). At the end of the drive veer right in front of the house and go over a stile beside a fieldgate onto a broad grassy strip between hedges. At the end go through a wooden side gate to continue on a narrow enclosed path which leads into a field.

Bear left as indicated to go diagonally across the field. On the far side go through a new wooden kissing gate onto a short path past a large oak tree and a pond into another field. **Turn right** to go along its edge and continue in the same direction across the next field. On the far side go down a bank to a lane.

Turn left and follow the lane round a bend to the right. Just before it leads up to some outbuildings by a house, **veer left** as indicated onto a track going downhill and curving round to the right. Ignore a fieldgate on the left. At the end of the track go through a metal kissing gate into the top of a field, with fine views ahead across the Ouse Valley. Go diagonally down across this field, heading **ENE** towards a marker post beside a projecting clump of trees on the right-hand side of the field.

There has been some new housing development nearby so be prepared for a footpath diversion here, perhaps around the right-hand edge of the field.

Continue in the same direction past the post towards a fieldgate. Go through this into a wood and **immediately veer left** off the main track (which curves round to the right) onto a clear path running along the bottom of a gully.

The walk route originally took the main path because the public footpath was not clearly defined and difficult to follow. The new route is shorter and easier.

Follow the public footpath as it curves gently to the right, with ponds in the trees off to your left. The path continues alongside a fence with a field on the right. At the end of the fence keep ahead across a small open area and go through a new wooden gate into a field. Follow a grassy path across this field, passing a house on the left.

In the far right-hand corner go over a stile and turn right onto a driveway, which soon comes to a minor road (Sloop Lane). The suggested lunchtime pub, the **Sloop Inn**, is down the road on the left; if you cross the road here you can reach it through its car park and beer garden.

If you are doing the Alternative Walk to Sheffield Park Garden, go to §13.

6. Freshfield Bridges to Freshfield Lane (2½ km)

Turn right out of the pub to head **N** on Sloop Lane, taking care as you have 350m of road walking with no pavement. You soon cross two bridges, the first over a disused canal, part of the **Ouse Navigation**⁴, the second over the **River Ouse** itself. Ignore a footpath on the right at Freshfield Mill Farm and stay on the road up to a left-hand bend, where you **turn right** at a footpath sign.

Instead of going into the field ahead **veer left** up a bank and follow a path through a few trees to a stile leading into the bottom corner of another field. Go over the stile and **turn left** to head **N** again, directly uphill. As you climb through the field you will see a brick bridge ahead which takes you over the **Bluebell Railway**⁵.

On the other side of the bridge keep ahead on a broad grassy track between fences. This goes downhill and then curves right, where you **turn left** at a footpath sign to cross a plank bridge in the hedge. Bear left to follow a grassy path up a field, towards the left-hand end of a hedge. Continue alongside the hedge, soon with a view into an attractive garden dotted with fruit trees. At the end of the garden veer right to go through a wooden gate onto a minor road (Ketches Lane).

Continue briefly along the road. After passing a large old house (Town Place) on the right and a small pond on the left, **turn left** through a gate to head **N** up the right-hand edge of a large field, with **Bluebell Vineyard**⁶ behind the fence on your right. After

going through a couple of wooden gates the path leads into a wood. Follow the path through the wood and then along the left-hand edge of another field. In the corner keep ahead through some trees to a T-junction with a farm track. Turn left and follow this track out to a road (Freshfield Lane).

7. Freshfield Lane to Monteswood Lane (2½ km)

With the driveway to Latchetts opposite, cross Freshfield Lane carefully and turn left to walk along the grass verge. In 100m (and 25m before reaching another driveway) **turn right** at an inconspicuous footpath sign onto a short path climbing through the trees. This soon comes to a fence in front of a huge clay pit, with **Freshfield Lane Brickworks**⁷ 500m away on the left.

Turn right and follow the path as it curves left alongside the perimeter fence. After 200m you turn left to go along the left-hand side of a broad grassy strip, now with the quarry behind a bank on your left. Follow the path into a wood and continue on the waymarked route down through the trees for 400m: there are "Keep Out" notices to keep you on the right path. On leaving the wood follow the path down to the right and across Danehill Brook on a wooden footbridge.

Turn left and make your way across a potentially muddy area churned up by works vehicles, with a large flooded clay pit on your right. After passing a concrete bridge used by these vehicles keep left on a path through woodland, staying fairly close to the lake. In 200m follow the path round to the right and uphill. In a further 75m go over a new wooden stile and immediately **turn left** down a few steps to a lane (Treemans Road).

Cross the lane carefully and continue on the footpath opposite (slightly to the left). After going through a belt of trees follow the waymarked route as it heads roughly **SW** for about 300m, gently downhill across a series of paddocks. Eventually you reach the bottom corner of a field where a short path takes you onto the **Bluebell Railway**.

After carefully crossing the track continue on a footbridge over Danehill Brook and a short raised path through a belt of trees. At the end go through a wooden gate and across a wide concrete bridge over Cockhaise Brook, which takes you into the bottom of a field.

Bear right up the slope (with no clear path) and make your way across the field towards a fieldgate in the far right-hand corner. Go past this and along a short track to a junction of farm tracks. Turn left and go along this track for 250m to Monteswood Lane.

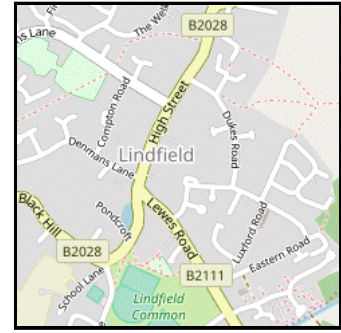
8. Monteswood Lane to Lindfield High Street (3¼ km)

Turn right onto the road, passing Cockhaise Cottages. In 75m, where the road bends right, **keep ahead** on a farm track. Go past a barn and then through a swing gate into a large field, which at the time of writing was partitioned with (possibly temporary) wire fences. Follow the line indicated by several large oak trees ahead, which lead you across the field to a gate into a wood.

Follow a short path through the wood to a road (Montes Hill) and turn left. You have 500m of road walking with a few awkward bends to negotiate, so **take care as there is no pavement for most of the way**. You pass the entrance to a golf club on the right and the gates to East Mascalls on the left. After a left-hand bend at the top of a short rise you pass this attractive old house with its walled garden. Further down the road you pass East Mascalls Farm before finally crossing the **River Ouse**. Immediately afterwards **turn right** through a metal gate into the corner of a large field.

For the next 600m simply follow the tree-lined field edge alongside the river. After the river has curved gently round to the right, and 150m before the end of the field, **turn left** onto a grassy path heading directly away from the river. On the far side of the field go through a gap in the trees and across a footbridge with metal handrails. Continue up the right-hand side of the next field. In the top corner go over a stile and keep ahead on a track between fences.

In 275m you reach a junction where the way ahead leads into a field, but you **turn right** to stay on the public footpath. Follow this enclosed path round a bend to the left and eventually into a short street. Keep ahead and follow it briefly round to the right, then turn left into the churchyard of **All Saints**⁸. At its main entrance turn left and leave the churchyard to go down the attractive High Street into the centre of **Lindfield**⁹.



As you go down the High Street you pass refreshment places like the **Bent Arms**, the **Somers Vintage Tea Rooms** and the **Red Lion** pub, and may also find some shops and restaurants advertising tea and cakes. Near the bottom of the hill, opposite the Post Office, are the **Stand Up Inn** and a small delicatessen, **Field & Forrest**.

If you are finishing the walk here most of the bus services to Haywards Heath are going down the High Street and stop outside the Post Office. However, you can also catch a town service from the stop opposite, which goes a short way up the hill before circling back to Haywards Heath.

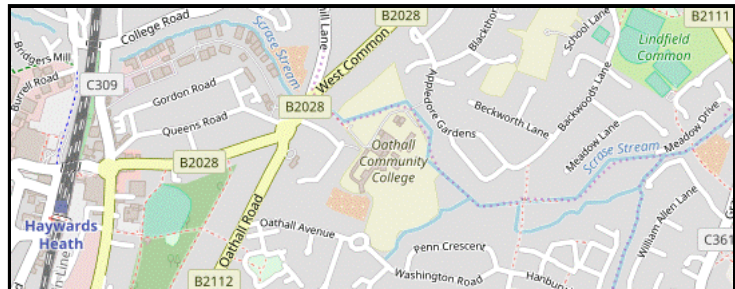
*At Haywards Heath alight from the bus at the **Perrymount Rd/Stn** stop, just past a roundabout and opposite a large new Waitrose store. Cross Perrymount Road at the roundabout and go past the store (which has a café) on your left to reach the station entrance.*

9. Lindfield High Street to Haywards Heath Station (3 km)

To complete the full walk back to Haywards Heath, continue down the High Street. After passing the attractive village pond bear left onto a corner of Lindfield Common. Keep the cricket pitch on your right and head for the opposite corner 300m away, where you pass some tennis courts on your right. Leave the common and go diagonally across a small open space.

The remainder of the walk is the reverse of the outward route from Haywards Heath.

Follow a short fenced path between houses, across a residential street and along another path. Immediately after crossing Scrase Stream on a footbridge **turn right** at a three-way path junction and follow a path alongside the stream, which in 100m leads you into **Scrase Valley Local Nature Reserve**¹.



Fork right and follow the main path all the way through the reserve, ignoring paths off and keeping the stream on your right for the next 400m, where you enter woodland. After a diversion around an ancient oak tree keep left at the remaining path junctions to emerge from the trees in the corner of a small open space.

Go diagonally across this and turn right into Penn Crescent. In 200m turn right at a T-junction and follow the road down past a college sports ground, straight across a roundabout, then uphill for 300m to a main road (the B2112). Turn left, cross the road at the pedestrian lights and continue on the broad path leading into Haywards Heath Recreation Ground. Keep ahead on the main path, down past a pavilion and out along a driveway to Perrymount Road. You can see the station ahead but you have to turn right onto the main road, cross over at the pedestrian lights and turn left at the roundabout for the station entrance.

10. Horsted Keynes Station to the village (2¼ km)

Turn left out of the **Bluebell Railway**⁵ station¹⁰. Continue past the visitors car park and up a grassy slope, used as a picnic area. At the top **turn right** and go through a metal kissing gate onto a path heading **E** alongside Leamland Wood. In 200m there is a stile into the field on your left, just before the path curves right.

The OS map shows the right of way as cutting across a corner of the field and the owners have provided wooden gates in the paddock fences to permit this, but clearly they would prefer walkers to go around the edge of the field.

For an easier route, therefore, continue on the enclosed path around the field edge. At the corner of the field go down an earth bank and turn right onto a minor road. In 100m **go over a stile on the left** onto a wide strip of grassland dotted with trees. At the end of this go over another stile and follow a woodland path downhill for 350m, ignoring ways off.

At the bottom of the wood **turn right** at a three-way footpath signpost onto a grassy track. This curves to the left around Mill Lake and comes to a path crossing where you **turn left**. After passing a brick and timber barn, with a house ahead, turn left onto a wide grassy path alongside the beautiful garden of the picturesque **Old Mill House**¹¹, with its restored water wheel on the far side.

At the end of the garden follow the path round to the right as it becomes a potentially muddy track climbing through a wood. At the top you come to a T-junction with Church Lane, with a school opposite. Cross the road and take the gravel path opposite (slightly to the right), past Spring Cottage into the churchyard. Continue along a brick path to the main door of **St Giles** church¹²; this is worth visiting and you might like to explore the churchyard too.

Leave the churchyard by its main gate to rejoin Church Lane by some attractive old cottages. Follow the road down across a dip, passing the impressive gates to the Old Rectory on your left. As you climb towards the centre of **Horsted Keynes**¹³, keep ahead at a junction to go more steeply uphill past a few houses to the main road at the top. Cross the main road carefully (slightly away from the road junction, as indicated) onto the south side of the long village green.

11. Horsted Keynes (village) to Freshfield Lane (2¼ km)

Where the driveway off the road junction turns right towards the village car park, **go straight ahead** on Chapel Lane, signposted as the **Sussex Border Path**¹⁴ (SBP) and heading **SE**. In 200m **keep ahead** at a junction to join a tarmac lane, which curves gently round to the left.

At the end of a sharp right-hand bend, **turn left** through a wooden gate to the right of a gravel driveway onto an inconspicuous public footpath (briefly leaving the SBP). This short path goes between a bungalow and a hedge, parallel to the lane. Go over a stile and continue near the right-hand edge of a field, then through a gate onto an enclosed path. At the end briefly join a driveway, then veer right and left to rejoin the SBP, going gently downhill on a track.

In 200m keep left at a path junction to enter Sandpits Wood. Continue along the main path as it descends and curves gradually round to the left, ignoring a couple of footpaths off to the right. In 600m the path widens and veers left and right to cross Danehill Brook. Follow the track uphill, turning left near the top of the slope. This leads to a tarmac driveway and you **turn right** onto it, climbing again.

The drive eventually levels out, with a hedge on the right and a wire fence on the left. As indicated by a footpath signpost, **bear left** onto a grassy path alongside the fence. This comes out onto a road (Freshfield Lane), where you **turn right**. Go along the road for 250m (leaving the SBP, which takes an earlier turning on the left to Butchers Barn) and **turn left** into the driveway to Kidborough Farm, signposted as a public footpath.

12. Freshfield Lane to Freshfield Bridges (2½ km)

The farm driveway curves right to head **S**. In 200m **turn right** at a three-way signpost onto a short track leading into a field, with a fine view of the South Downs ahead. Go along its right-hand edge for 125m and continue in the same direction through a wood. At the end of the wood go through a wooden gate, past a **Bluebell Vineyard**⁶ sign, then through another gate. Go all the way down the left-hand edge of a large field, with the vineyard on your left.

The path comes out onto Ketcher's Lane. Turn right onto the road to go past a large old house (Town Place), then **bear left** through a wooden gate into a field. Follow a grassy path round to the left alongside the house's attractive garden, dotted with fruit trees. At

the end of the garden keep ahead on a grassy path leading down to the bottom corner of the field.

Cross a stream on a wooden footbridge here and turn right to go uphill on a broad grassy track between fences. Near the end veer right and left to go over the **Bluebell Railway** on a brick bridge. On the other side keep ahead across the grass, gently downhill and heading towards a road.

In the bottom corner of the field go over a stile on the right and follow a path through some trees, down a bank and out to a road. Turn left onto the road and follow it round a right-hand bend, *taking care as there is no pavement*. In 250m you pass Freshfield Mill Farm and then cross two bridges, the first over the **River Ouse** and the second over the disused **Ouse Navigation**⁴. Just after this you come to the suggested lunchtime pub, the **Sloop Inn**.

13. Freshfield Bridges to Sheffield Bridge (3¼ km)

Turn left out of the pub (or leave through its beer garden and car park). 50m past the car park entrance, *turn left* into the driveway to "Bacon Wish" and "Field Cottage", joining the **Sussex Ouse Valley Way**³ (SOVW): you will be following this all the way to Sheffield Bridge. After passing between the two houses keep ahead on a track leading into a wood.

In 100m, with a "Private" sign ahead, *turn half-right* onto a narrow path through the trees, initially heading **SE**. Follow this clear path for 400m, eventually leaving the wood through a new wooden gate. Keep ahead across a field; as you approach some trees and a three-way footpath signpost *bear left* to stay in the field. After going between some rows of newly-planted trees go through another wooden gate into **Wapsbourne Wood**.

Follow the path through the partly-coppiced wood for about 500m, heading roughly **E**. The waymarked path then takes a couple of right turns and briefly joins a broad track before another "Private" sign makes you turn half-left to head **S**. Continue gently downhill in this direction for 250m to reach the edge of the wood, where a wooden footbridge takes you over a ditch onto the edge of a large field.

Turn left and go along the wide grassy field edge for 300m. At the corner of the field go over a stile and turn right to go alongside a wooden fence, then through a gate and along a driveway. Follow this round to the left by a stable and go past a large old house (Wapsbourne Farm). Now simply continue along this driveway for 500m as it heads **E** towards the A275.

Just before reaching the main road, turn left as indicated to walk along the edge of a field, with the road behind the hedge on your right. In the next corner go out onto this busy road and *cross over with care* to continue along a wide grass verge. In 300m you come to the entrance to the Bluebell Railway in front of Sheffield Bridge (leaving the SOVW, which turns right to follow the River Ouse downstream).

If you want to finish the walk without visiting the NT Garden, follow the directions below to catch a bus or the Bluebell Railway train to East Grinstead.

- To Sheffield Park Station *direct* (+200m)

Buses for Haywards Heath (and Lewes) stop at the far end of the station approach road. For the railway, keep ahead on a pedestrian walkway leading to the **station**¹⁵.

Ticket holders can get refreshments at the **Bessemer Arms**¹⁶ on the station platform.

14. Sheffield Bridge to Sheffield Park Garden (1 km)

Continue along the A275 past the station approach road, crossing the **River Ouse**. Shortly after passing an overspill car park for the Bluebell Railway, *turn right* off the road onto a signposted path through some trees. Go through a wooden gate into the National Trust's **South Park**, where an information panel shows some short circular walks around this parkland.

Take the broad grassy path gently uphill, slightly away from the fence on the right. As you pass to the left of a clump of trees on the horizon you will see the NT car park ahead. Leave the parkland via a kissing gate and veer left through the car park to find the entrance to **Sheffield Park and Garden**¹⁷ at the back.

The **Coach House Tearoom** is down a short driveway to the left of the garden entrance, at the end of which you pass the stop for buses to Haywards Heath (and Lewes). The gates to **Sheffield Park House**¹⁸ (not open to the public) are off to the right of the tearoom.



15. Sheffield Park Garden to the Station (1¼ km)

After visiting the garden and/or tearoom retrace your steps through South Park. Turn left onto the A275 to return to Sheffield Bridge.

Buses for Haywards Heath (and Lewes) stop at the far end of the station approach road. For the railway, keep ahead on a pedestrian walkway leading to the **station**¹⁵. Ticket holders can get refreshments at the **Bessemer Arms**¹⁶ on the station platform.

Walk Notes

1. **Scrase Valley Local Nature Reserve** was originally part of a farm. When Haywards Heath expanded after WWI the stream's floodplain would have been deemed unsuitable for building and the 15-acre site has become an important refuge for wildlife.
2. **Eastern Road Local Nature Reserve** may not look particularly attractive but it is a definite improvement on its past use as a landfill site and sewage works. Much of the 9-acre site has been left alone to regenerate naturally.
3. The **Sussex Ouse Valley Way** runs for 68 km, closely following the course of the River Ouse from its source in Lower Beeding to Seaford.
4. The **Ouse Navigation** was completed in 1812, making the river navigable as far as Balcombe (hence the nautical pub name). It was built to transport bricks, clay and other material from the Weald but by the 1840s this function was being taken over by the railways.
5. The **Bluebell Railway** began operating a steam railway between Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes in 1960, just two years after British Rail closed the line from East Grinstead to Lewes. In 1994 it was extended north as far as Kingscote, and after a major project to clear a cutting of landfill waste the link to East Grinstead was eventually restored in 2013.
6. **Bluebell Vineyard** produces the Hindleap range of English sparkling wines.
7. Now part of Michelmersh plc, **Freshfield Lane Brickworks** produces 32 million bricks annually. Wealden clay has been used to make bricks on this site for over 100 years.
8. **All Saints, Lindfield** dates from the 13thC or possibly earlier, but it underwent two major restorations in Victorian times and there is little trace of the medieval church.
9. The name **Lindfield** means 'open land with lime trees' and these are still in evidence along its attractive High Street, full of picturesque old buildings. A plaque near the village pond records its regular wins as Best Kept Village in Sussex; there are no recent triumphs because (it is said) the village was asked to withdraw to give others a chance.
10. **Horsted Keynes Station** has been re-created as it was when part of the Southern Railway network in 1935. It is surprisingly large for a sleepy country station on a secondary line, some way from the village it was built to serve. There is a £2.50 admission charge for non-travellers when trains are running, rather more than the 1d platform ticket in 1935.
11. **Old Mill House** was built around 1450. The old wooden mill with overshot water wheel was still being used 500 years later and remains in working order.
12. **St Giles, Horsted Keynes** was probably built on the site of a pagan temple as its orientation is towards the midsummer sunrise instead of the usual E-W. There may have been a church here in Saxon times and it still has some Norman features. In the north wall of the chancel a small figure of a Crusader with a lion at his feet is thought to be a 'heart shrine'. The graves of **Harold MacMillan** (Prime Minister 1957-63; later the Earl of Stockton) and members of his family are to the east of the church, surrounded on three sides by a hedge.

13. The Saxon manor of **Horsted** (meaning a place where horses are kept) was given to the Norman knight Ralf de Cahaignes by William the Conqueror. The anglicized version of his name changed over the centuries to **Keynes** but the pronunciation stayed as *canes*, not *keens*.
14. The **Sussex Border Path** runs for 240 km along the length of West & East Sussex, from Thorney Island on the Hampshire border to Rye.
15. The headquarters of the Bluebell Railway, **Sheffield Park Station** has been re-created as it was when part of the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway network at the end of the 19thC. An admission charge (£3 when trains are running) lets non-travellers access the platforms, locomotive shed, refreshment room, etc.
16. The **Bessemer Arms** is named after the doughty lady whose spirited attempts to prevent British Rail closing the line spurred the formation of the heritage railway.
17. **Sheffield Park and Garden** was laid out by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown in the 18thC and further developed by its owner in the early 20thC. Set around four lakes, it is renowned for its rhododendrons and azaleas in early summer and stunning tree colours in autumn, but is worth visiting at almost any time of the year.
18. Originally a Tudor manor house, **Sheffield Park House** was extensively remodelled in the 18thC in the then-fashionable 'Strawberry Hill Gothic' style. It remained in private ownership when the National Trust bought the Garden in 1954 and is not open to the public.

» *Last updated: June 5, 2018*

© [Saturday Walkers Club](#). All Rights Reserved. No commercial use. No copying. No derivatives. Free with attribution for one time non-commercial use only.
www.walkingclub.org.uk/site/license.shtml

[Saturday Walkers Club](#) • © 2000-2018 All Rights Reserved • saturdaywalkers@walkingclub.org.uk