



Haywards Heath Circular via Lindfield walk

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



Length

Main Walk: 18¾ km[†] (11.7 miles). Four hours 20 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, buses, sights and meals, allow at least 8 hours 30 minutes.

Main Walk, finishing at Lindfield: 15¾ km[†] (9.8 miles). Three hours 40 minutes walking time.

Short Walk, diverting to Horsted Keynes: 12¾ km[†] (7.9 miles). Three hours walking time.

Garden Walk, to Sheffield Park Garden & Station: 13¼ km (8.2 miles). Three hours walking time.

Railway Walk, from Horsted Keynes to Sheffield Park: 10¼ km[‡] (6.4 miles). Two hours 25 minutes walking time.

† Subtract 2¼ km (1.4 miles; 30 minutes) if starting from Lindfield.

‡ Add 2¼ km (1.4 miles; 30+ minutes) if also visiting Sheffield Park Garden.

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

3 out of 10 (2 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 a limited 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 lunch pub's nautical name is a reminder of the canal traffic on the **Ouse Navigation** in the pre-railway era.

The 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 An earlier 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.

Walk Options The return leg back to Haywards Heath is fairly long but you can make use of the 270 bus route to shorten it. As noted above you can simply cut out the final 3 km by finishing in **Lindfield**. On days with a limited service the **Short Walk** might be more convenient, since you can break off earlier and catch the bus from **Horsted Keynes**.

Directions are also included for the following two special variations, but the normal public transport options are currently problematic.

One of the original motivations for this walk was to provide an option to visit the National Trust's magnificent **Sheffield Park and Garden**, and accordingly the **Garden Walk** replaces the afternoon section with a short route to this attraction. However, its weekend bus service to Haywards Heath was withdrawn in April 2019 and in practice you would probably need to call a taxi to return there.

Another motivation was to combine a walk with an outing on the Bluebell Railway. The **Railway Walk** extends the idea of finishing at Sheffield Park with a completely different start: travelling out via **East Grinstead** and completing the outward journey on the heritage railway to **Horsted Keynes**, then returning along the entire line from **Sheffield Park**. If you caught the first train out on their standard peak service days you would be able to complete the walk in time to catch the last normal service back to East Grinstead at 4pm; if there was a later train you might also be able to fit in a quick visit to the nearby NT garden.

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 an hourly local town service, Compass 30 (Mon–Sat). The last service back from Lindfield is at around 7.30pm (5pm Sun & BH). The only one of these which also serves **Horsted Keynes** is the 270.

*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 around £11 Mon–Fri, £7 Sat, £3 Sun & BH (2024). Car drivers might prefer to do the Short Circular Walk as there is a free car park in Lindfield, signposted from the High Street by the Bent Arms.

At weekends Compass 121 runs from **Sheffield Park Station** (but not the NT Garden) to Cooksbridge and Lewes (last bus 4.30pm Sat, 3.15pm Sun). On Saturdays you could change at North Chailey for Compass 31 to Haywards Heath.

As noted above, on the **Railway Walk** you travel via **East Grinstead** from **Victoria** (half-hourly). To complete the journey you need to buy an **All Day Rover** ticket on the heritage railway; in 2024 the full price was £28.50 (cheaper if bought in advance) but there is sometimes a 2-for-1 offer with a rail ticket. The Rover ticket covers the journey back from Sheffield Park and admission to all the station facilities (locomotive shed, carriage works, etc).

Suggested Train	<p>If you are starting the walk from Haywards Heath, take the train nearest to 10:00 from London Bridge or Victoria.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>If you are doing the Railway Walk, take a train from Victoria to East Grinstead which will connect with the first service to Horsted Keynes.</p>
Lunch	<p>The only conveniently-placed pub on the walk route (after 7¾ km from Haywards Heath, 5½ km from Lindfield, 7 km from Horsted Keynes) is the Sloop Inn (01444-831219; food to 2.30pm Mon–Fri, all day Sat, 4pm Sun) at Freshfield Bridges, which has an attractive beer garden. It reopened in April 2016 after being closed for 18 months while its new owners carried out a major refurbishment.</p>
Tea	<p>Even if you are doing the full walk it is worth investigating the coffee shops in Lindfield's attractive High Street. Tucked away behind a wine merchant at #70 Lindfield Coffee Works (01444-482140; open to 4.45pm Mon–Sat; closed Sun) is an “artisan coffee bar and roastery”, which also supplies the Black Duck (01444-484123) coffee shop at #43. The Somers Vintage Tea Rooms (01444-483993) at #64A will probably have closed for the day, but you might be in time for Slake (01444-482411; open to 4pm Mon–Sat, 3pm Sun), a small café opposite the village pond.</p>

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** (01444-487588) at #47.

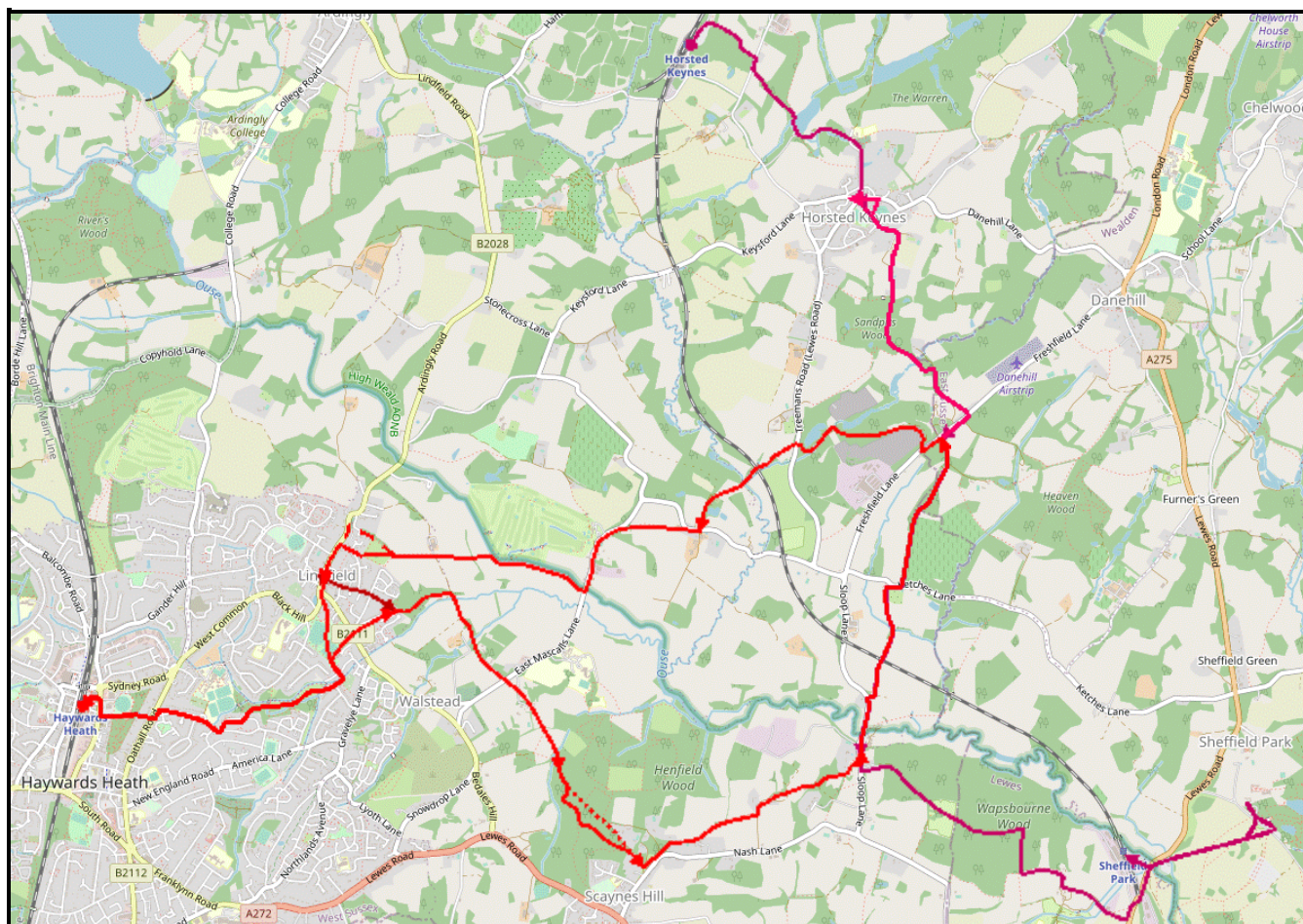
There are two friendly pubs in **Horsted Keynes** if you divert to this village, the **Crown Inn** (01825-791609) and the **Green Man** (01825-790656), although the latter is usually closed on weekday afternoons. On both of these shorter options you could catch the bus first and have tea while waiting for the train, as if you were completing the full walk. There is a café in the large **Waitrose** store 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 **Garden Walk** the **Coach House Tearoom** is just outside Sheffield Park and Garden, serving hot food until 2.30pm and tea to 5pm. On the **Railway Walk** ticket holders can get refreshment at the **Bessemer Arms** on the platform at Sheffield Park station.

Help Us!	After the walk, please leave a comment, it really helps. Thanks! You can also upload photos to the   SWC Group on Flickr (upload your photos) and videos to  Youtube. This walk's tags are:
By Car	Start RH16 1DJ
Help	National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Traveline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234
Version	Oct-24 Sean
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Walk Directions

Walk Map



All maps © OpenStreetMap contributors

Walk Options (Main+Short)

M. Main Walk (18¾ km)

- i. Main Walk, starting from Lindfield (16½ km)
- a. Main Walk, finishing at Lindfield (15¾ km)
- ai. Short Circular Walk, from Lindfield (13½ km)
- b. Short Walk, diverting to Horsted Keynes (12¾ km)
- bi. Short Walk, starting from Lindfield (10½ km)
- g. Garden Walk, to Sheffield Park Gardens (13¼ km)
- r. Railway Walk, from Horsted Keynes to Sheffield Park (10¼ • 12½ km)

Walk Directions

If you are doing one of the shorter options from Lindfield, start at [8] in §B.

If you are doing the Railway Walk from Horsted Keynes Station, start at §J.

A. Haywards Heath Station to Lindfield (Eastern Road) (2¾ km)

1. 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. Go past a large Waitrose and turn right at the roundabout into Perrymount Road, heading **S** (passing the stop for buses to Lindfield).

2. Cross the road at the pedestrian lights and continue past Clair Hall. At the end of its car park **turn left** onto a tarmac lane leading into **Clair Park**. Keep ahead on a broad tarmac path through the recreation ground, passing a pavilion and climbing gently.
3. 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.
4. **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.
5. 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.
6. 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**. Head for the road on the right-hand side of the common (the B2111).
7. The shortest route is to cut across the grass towards a side street about 100m in from the right-hand corner, although you will then have to negotiate a small ditch in front of the road. After doing this, cross the B2111 carefully and continue along the side street (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.

B. Lindfield High Street • Eastern Road to Costells Wood (2½ • 2 km)

8. Starting from Lindfield High Street (+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 Waitrose and turn right at the roundabout for the bus stop in Perrymount Road. Alight at the **Lindfield High Street** stop, just past the large village pond.*

The walk starts along a passageway to the right of the United Reformed Church, on the eastern side of the High Street opposite Denmans Lane. The path leads into a residential street (Chaloner Road, which becomes Newton Road) which you continue along for 400m, curving gently to the right. At the far end of Newton Road **turn left** into Eastern Road, joining the route from Haywards Heath.

9. 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.
 - The directions below are for the most direct route through this small nature reserve to an unmarked exit at its easternmost point, but you could use the reserve map at the entrance to devise a longer route. If you do this, resume the directions at [12].
10. For the suggested route go through the gate to the right of the information panel onto a path which curves round to the left. As it approaches a wooded area stay on the main path, avoiding paths to both sides. After a short distance inside the wood **fork right, then left** at the next two junctions.

11. This manoeuvre takes you onto a path through scrubland near the eastern edge of the reserve, with the tree-lined Scrase Stream just off to your right. Where the path curves sharply round to the left after 100m, ***ford a ditch on your right*** via some planks and bear right to leave the reserve.
12. Continue on a well-used (and potentially muddy) permissive path heading **E** through the right-hand side of some 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.
13. 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 the path across a couple of footbridges and onto a long driveway leading to a road (East Mascalls Lane).
14. Cross the road carefully and take the footpath opposite straight across a field. Cross a driveway, go through a metal gate and bear right as indicated to cross a meadow, skirting around some boggy patches if necessary. On the far side go over a stile and continue past a few houses and a garage into a field. Continue in the same direction across this and the next field towards a wood.
15. At the bottom of the second field go through a metal kissing gate. Cross a footbridge over a stream and follow the potentially muddy woodland path round to the right. In 100m another footpath joins from the right and you pass a Woodlands Trust sign welcoming you to **Costells Wood**.

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

16. After a steady climb you come out of the trees onto a broad grassy strip underneath power lines. The suggested route is to detour off the SOVW onto a roughly parallel path through the Open Access woodland.
 - For a simpler route you could bear left onto the grassy strip (the continuation of the public footpath), forking right after 350m at a three-way footpath signpost; the main route later rejoins from a path on the right. If you do this, resume the directions at [20].
17. For the suggested route ***go straight across*** the track onto a path to the right of a bench. Follow the path downhill and round to the left, crossing the outflow from a small pond. After a short climb the path levels out and heads **SE** through the wood.
18. 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.
19. After crossing the stream 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 follow the main path through the wood, later curving slightly to the left. At a path T-junction turn left to return to the grassy strip and turn right onto it, rejoining the public footpath.
20. Simply follow the grassy strip under the power lines, heading **SE**. After going alongside a parallel driveway on the right for 100m the path leads out through a fieldgate onto **Scaynes Hill Common**.

D. Scaynes Hill Common to Freshfield Bridges (2 km)

21. ***Turn left*** and follow a grassy path curving round to a car park in the far corner, 125m away. Go through it and take the driveway ahead leading to Yew Tree Cottage (rejoining the SOVW). At the end of the drive veer right in front of a tall hedge and go past a fieldgate onto a grassy strip between hedges. At the end keep left to continue on a narrow and potentially very muddy enclosed path.

22. At the end of this awkward little stretch go through a wooden kissing gate and bear left as indicated to go diagonally across a meadow. On the far side go through another gate onto a short path past a large oak tree and a pond into a field. **Turn right** to go along its edge and continue in the same direction across the next field. On the far side go through a metal gate and down a few steps to a lane.
23. 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 through a copse. Ignore a fieldgate on the left. At the end of the track go through a metal kissing gate into the top of a large field, with fine views ahead across the Ouse valley.
24. Go diagonally down across this field, heading **ENE** towards a footpath waymarker beside a projecting clump of trees. Keep ahead down the right-hand edge of the field, towards a metal fieldgate. Go through a side gate 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.
25. Follow the public footpath as it curves gently to the right, later passing some ponds in the trees off to your left. The path continues alongside a fence with a field on the right. At the end keep ahead across a small open area and go through a wooden gate into a small field. Follow a grassy path across it, passing a house on the left.
26. In the far right-hand corner go over a stile and turn right onto a driveway, which leads out to a minor road (Sloop Lane). Turn left onto the road, leaving the SOVW. To visit the suggested lunch pub you can cross the road here and go through its car park and beer garden to the **Sloop Inn**.

If you are doing the Garden Walk (to Sheffield Park Garden), go to §M.

E. Freshfield Bridges to Freshfield Lane (2½ km)

27. Turn right out of the pub to head **N** on Sloop Lane, **taking care as there is no pavement** and you have 350m of road walking. You soon cross two bridges, the first over the disused **Ouse Navigation**⁴ and 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.
28. 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.
29. On the other side keep ahead on a woodchip track, gently downhill. Where it curves right, **turn left** at a footpath signpost and cross a stream in the hedge. Bear left to follow a grassy path up a meadow, towards the left-hand end of a garden hedge. Continue alongside it, soon with glimpses of an attractive garden dotted with fruit trees.
30. At the end of the garden veer right to go through a wooden gate and continue briefly along a minor road (Ketcher's Lane), passing a large old house "Town Place" on the right and a small pond on the left. Immediately afterwards **turn left** through a side gate to head **N** up the right-hand edge of a large field, with **Bluebell Vineyard**⁶ beyond the fence on your right.
31. After going through a couple of wooden gates the path leads into a wood. Follow the path through the wood, then along the left-hand edge of another field and finally through a belt of trees. At a T-junction turn left onto a farm track and follow it out to a road (Freshfield Lane).

If you are doing the Short Walk (to Horsted Keynes), go to §I.

F. Freshfield Lane to Monteswood Lane (2¼ km)

32. Cross Freshfield Lane carefully and turn left onto a path along the grass verge, now on the **Sussex Diamond Way**⁷ (SDW); you will be following this waymarked route all the way to the outskirts of Lindfield. In 100m the path veers right into the trees and after a short climb comes to a fence festooned with warning notices in front of a huge clay pit.
33. Turn right and follow the path as it curves left alongside the perimeter fence of **Freshfield Lane Brickworks**⁸, 500m away on the left. After 200m turn left to go along the left-hand side of a broad grassy strip, now with the quarry behind a bank on your left.
34. Follow the path into a wood and continue on the waymarked route down through the trees for 400m, with "Keep Out" notices to keep you on the right of way. The path eventually swings right and crosses Danehill Brook on a wooden footbridge, with a large flooded clay pit ahead.
35. Turn left and make your way across this rather unappealing area, churned up by works vehicles. After passing a vehicle access track 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 wooden stile and **immediately turn left** down a few steps to a lane (Treemans Road).
36. Cross the lane carefully to continue on the footpath opposite (slightly to the left). Go through a wooden gate in the belt of trees and 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 across the single-track **Bluebell Railway**.
37. Go over Danehill Brook on a footbridge and along a short raised path through a belt of trees. At the end go through a wooden gate and cross a wide concrete bridge over Cockhaise Brook into the bottom of a large field. Bear slightly right up the slope on a faint grassy path towards an exit in its far right-hand corner. Go out along a short track to a junction of farm tracks, turn left and follow the track for 250m to Monteswood Lane.

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

38. 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 metal kissing gate into a large field (which might be partitioned with wire fences). Follow the line indicated by several large oak trees strung out ahead across the field.
39. On the far side of the field go through a gate into a coppiced wood. Follow a short path through it 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.
40. You pass the entrance to Lindfield 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, followed by East Mascalls Farm. After the road crosses the **River Ouse** at East Mascalls Bridge **immediately turn right** through a metal gate into the corner of a large field.
41. For the next 750m simply follow the tree-lined field edge, with glimpses of the golf course across the river. After the path 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 go through a gap in the trees and across a footbridge with metal handrails.

42. Go 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 300m go straight ahead at a footpath junction into **Wilderness Field** on the outskirts of **Lindfield**⁹, finally leaving the SDW.

If you want to visit the parish church, take the alternative route in [44].

43. Main route

- Take the centre path across the meadow, which gradually curves round to its far left-hand corner. Leave the meadow and follow a rather gloomy path out to a residential street (Brushes Lane).
- Keep ahead on this lane, soon passing the car park and garden of the **Bent Arms** on the left. At the end turn left onto the High Street.

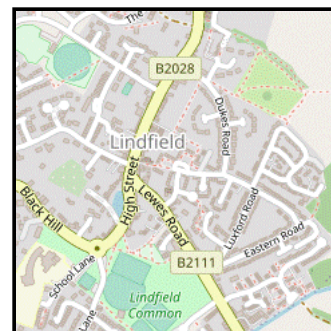
44. Alternative route (+125m)

- Take the path along the right-hand edge of the meadow. In the corner go out onto a tree-lined path and continue along a street (Francis Road). After this street turns right go through a gate on the left into the churchyard of **All Saints**¹⁰.
- Leave the churchyard through its main gate and go down the High Street, passing the historic **Church House**¹¹ on the left (no longer a pub, despite the new inn sign). In 100m you rejoin the main route by the **Bent Arms**.

45. Go down Lindfield's attractive High Street, containing several more possible refreshment places. Tucked away in a side street (Alma Road) behind a wine merchant at #70 is **Lindfield Coffee Works**, followed by the **Somers Vintage Tea Rooms**, the **Red Lion** pub (and the historic **Toll House**¹²), all on the left-hand side of the road.

46. In a further 100m you pass the **Stand Up Inn** and the **Black Duck** (a small coffee shop) on the right-hand side of the road. If you venture past the bus stop opposite these two places to the village pond you will find a small café on the left, **Slake**.

*If you are taking the bus to Haywards Heath alight at the **Perrymount Road** stop, just past a roundabout and opposite a large 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.*



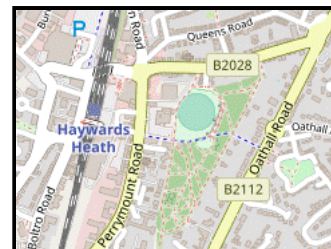
H. Lindfield High Street to Haywards Heath Station (3 km)

47. 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 then go diagonally across the grass to the opposite corner, where you pass some tennis courts on your right. Go past a small parking area onto a tarmac path across a small open space.

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

48. Continue on 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 onto a path alongside the stream, which in 100m leads you into **Scrase Valley Local Nature Reserve**¹.
49. **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.

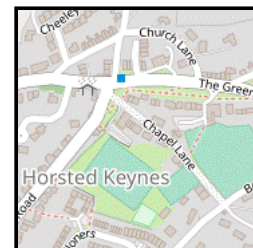
50. Go diagonally across this and turn right into Penn Crescent. In 200m turn right at a T-junction and follow the road down past a college sports ground, straight across a roundabout, then uphill for 300m to a main road (the B2112). Turn left, cross the road at the pedestrian lights and continue on the broad path leading into **Clair Park**.



51. Keep ahead on the main path through the recreation ground, past a pavilion and out along a driveway to Perrymount Road. You can see the station ahead but you have to turn right, cross the main road at the pedestrian lights and turn left at the roundabout (passing a large Waitrose store, which has a café) to reach the station entrance.

I. Freshfield Lane to Horsted Keynes (village) (2½ km)

52. Turn right onto the road, **taking care as there is no pavement**. In 200m you pass a farm lane on the right, then in a further 50m **turn left** onto a signposted bridleway, now on the **Sussex Border Path**¹³ (SBP). This soon widens out into a broad grassy path, with a wire fence on the right.
53. At the far end the path merges with a tarmac driveway. Follow this downhill and round a right-hand bend. In 300m, with a "Private" sign ahead, **turn left** onto a track. This soon turns sharply right, descends and crosses Danehill Brook at the bottom of a dip. Follow the bridleway gently uphill through **Sandpits Wood** for 600m, gradually curving round to the right and ignoring a couple of footpaths off to the left.
54. At the end of the wood ignore another footpath on the left and bear right onto a lane (Wyatts Lane) on the outskirts of **Horsted Keynes**¹⁴. In 200m the lane swings round to the left but the suggested route is to **bear right** and take an enclosed footpath to the right of a driveway (briefly leaving the SBP).
55. On the suggested route you soon go through a wooden kissing gate into a field and continue near its left-hand edge, then through another gate. Follow the path between a hedge and a bungalow, then out through a gate on the left to rejoin Wyatts Lane (and the SBP) at a sharp bend.
56. In 150m keep ahead at a crossroads, now on Chapel Lane and with the village cricket ground behind the hedge on your right. In 100m there is a signposted footpath through a narrow gap in this hedge.



The main route goes past two pubs and along the village green, but if you are in a hurry you can take a direct route to the bus stop in [58].

57. Main route

- Turn right** onto the footpath and cut across a corner of the cricket ground towards the back of the **Crown Inn**¹⁵, 50m away. If you are not visiting this pub you can go past the side of the building onto the long village green, with the village stores across the main road (called The Green).
- The stop for buses to Lindfield and Haywards Heath is 175m away to the left, just beyond the road junction at the western end of the village green. Along the way you pass the **Green Man** on the right-hand side of the road (by the stop for buses to East Grinstead).

58. Direct route (–100m)

- a. Stay on Chapel Lane, which leads into Lewes Road near the western end of the long village green. Bear right across the grass towards its junction with the main road through the village (Station Road to the left of the junction, The Green to the right).
- b. The stop for buses to Lindfield and Haywards Heath is just off to the left on Station Road. If you have time for a refreshment break, the **Green Man** is off to the right on the other side of The Green (by the stop for buses to East Grinstead).

*If you are taking the bus to Haywards Heath alight at the **Perrymount Road** stop, just past a roundabout and opposite a large 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.*

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

59. Turn left out of the **Bluebell Railway**⁵ **station**¹⁶ onto a track going uphill past the visitors' car park. At the top of the slope **turn right** and go through a metal kissing gate onto an enclosed path heading **E** alongside Leamland Wood. In 200m **go over a stile** in the fence on the left to continue on a grassy strip between the fence and paddocks; in a further 200m another stile takes you back over the fence.
In the past it was easier to ignore the first stile and stay on the narrow enclosed path, but this is becoming overgrown.
60. Go down an earth bank and turn right onto a minor road (Cinder Hill Lane). In 100m **go over a stile on the left** and follow a path through a strip of grassland dotted with trees, then steadily downhill through a wood. At the bottom **turn right** at a three-way footpath signpost onto a grassy path. This curves gently to the left around **Mill Lake**¹⁷ and comes to a path crossing where you **turn left**.
61. After passing a brick and timber barn, with a house ahead, turn left onto a wide grassy path alongside the garden of the picturesque **Old Mill House**¹⁸, with the old mill and 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.
62. Cross the lane and go a short distance along the school driveway opposite, then **turn right** onto a brick path through the churchyard. **St Giles** church¹⁹ is worth visiting and you might like to explore the churchyard too. Leave by the path from its south door to rejoin Church Lane by some attractive old cottages.
63. Follow the lane across a dip, passing the imposing gates to the Old Rectory on the left. As you climb towards the centre of **Horsted Keynes**¹⁴ **keep ahead** at a road junction to go more steeply uphill on a broad tarmac path. At the top veer left as indicated (to a safer crossing point) and **cross the main road carefully** onto the south side of the long village green.

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

64. From the road junction opposite the path from the church take the lane signposted to the village car park. Where it turns sharply right **go straight ahead** on Chapel Lane, signposted as the **Sussex Border Path**¹³ (SBP) and heading **SE**. In 200m **keep ahead** at a crossroads, now on Wyatts Lane.
65. 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.
66. Go through a wooden kissing gate into a field and continue near its right-hand edge, then through another gate onto an enclosed path. After briefly joining a driveway veer right and left to rejoin Wyatts Lane (and the SBP) at a bend. Follow the lane gently downhill for 200m and keep left at a path junction to enter **Sandpits Wood**.

67. Stay on the bridleway as it goes gently downhill and curves gradually round to the left, ignoring a couple of footpaths off to the right. In 600m the path veers left and right to cross Danehill Brook, then goes back uphill. At the top of the slope it turns sharply left and comes to a tarmac driveway.
68. **Turn right** and follow the drive uphill for 300m, round a left-hand bend. After it levels out there is a hedge on the right and a wire fence on the left. As indicated by a footpath signpost, **bear left** off the drive to stay alongside the fence. This broad grassy path leads out to a road (Freshfield Lane).
69. **Turn right** onto the road, taking care as there is no pavement. You soon leave the SBP, which turns off towards Butchers Barn after 50m. In a further 200m **turn left** onto the driveway to Kidborough Farm, signposted as a public footpath.

L. Freshfield Lane to Freshfield Bridges (2½ km)

70. The driveway curves right to head **S**. In 200m **turn right** onto a short track leading into a field, with a glimpse of the South Downs ahead. Go along the right-hand field edge and then through a wood. At the far end follow the path through a pair of wooden gates to continue along the left-hand edge of a large field, with **Bluebell Vineyard**⁶ beyond the fence on your left.
71. In the field corner go through a side gate and turn right briefly onto a minor road (Ketches Lane). After passing a large old house "Town Place" **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 bear slightly left to go down to the bottom corner of the field.
72. Cross a stream on a wooden footbridge and turn right to go uphill on a woodchip track between fences. Near the end veer right and left to go over the **Bluebell Railway** on a brick bridge. Keep ahead across a large field, gently downhill and heading towards a road.
73. In the bottom field corner go over a stile on the right and follow a path through a few 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 lunch pub, the **Sloop Inn**.

M. Freshfield Bridges to Sheffield Park Station (3¼ • 5½ km)

74. Turn left out of the pub (or leave through its beer garden and car park). 50m past its 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.
75. 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**.
76. Follow the path through the coppice 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.

77. 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.
78. Just before reaching the main road, turn left as indicated along the edge of a field, with the A275 behind the hedge on your right. In the next corner go through the hedge and **cross this busy main road 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** (where the SOVW turns right to follow the River Ouse downstream).

If you want to visit the NT Garden or its parkland before heading to the Bluebell Railway station, follow the directions below.

79. To Sheffield Park Garden and back (+2¼ 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. For the NT Garden 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**²⁰ at the back.
- The **Coach House Tearoom** is down a short driveway to the left of the garden entrance, just past the gates to **Sheffield Park House**²¹ (not open to the public).
- After visiting the garden and/or tearoom retrace your outward route through South Park. Turn left onto the A275 to return to Sheffield Bridge.



80. To complete the walk, go up the station approach road. The bus stop (Saturdays only) is at the far end. For the heritage railway, keep ahead on a pedestrian walkway leading to the Bluebell Railway **station**²². Ticket holders can get refreshments at the **Bessemer Arms**²³ on the station platform.

Walk Notes

- Scrase Valley Local Nature Reserve** was originally part of a farm on the floodplain of Scrase Stream. When Haywards Heath expanded after WW II it would have been deemed unsuitable for building and the 15-acre site has become an important refuge for wildlife.
- Eastern Road Local Nature Reserve** was originally a landfill site and sewage works. Much of the 9-acre site has been left alone to regenerate naturally.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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. It was extended north as far as Kingscote in 1994, and to East Grinstead in 2013 after a major project to clear a cutting of landfill waste.

6. **Bluebell Vineyard** was planted with Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier vines in 2005. It produces the Hindleap range of sparkling wines and (since 2019) the Ashdown range of still wines.
7. The **Sussex Diamond Way** runs for 97 km, from Midhurst to Heathfield through the Low Weald. It was devised by the Sussex branch of the Ramblers to mark its 60th anniversary in 1995.
8. **Freshfield Lane Brickworks** (now part of Michelmersh plc) produces 32 million bricks annually. Wealden clay has been used to make bricks on this site for over 100 years.
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. **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. A writ issued in 1429 for the arrest of a priest at the church stated that he used the alias Friar Tuck, so he might have been one of the outlaws immortalised in the Robin Hood fables.
11. **Church House** at the top of the High Street is still known locally as **The Tiger**, but this former coaching inn closed in 1916 and became the church hall. The new sign was erected in 2016 to commemorate its former use. Like several other large houses on the High Street, it was built in the early 15thC as a Wealden-style open hall house.
12. The **Toll House** was built in around 1630. Lindfield was on the turnpike road to Brighton and in 1803 it became the cottage where tolls were collected. The tollgate was finally removed in 1884 (and burnt in the High Street on Bonfire Night).
13. The **Sussex Border Path** runs for 240 km along the length of West & East Sussex, from Thorney Island on the Hampshire border to Rye.
14. The name **Horsted** means 'a place where horses are kept'. The Saxon manor was given to the Norman knight Ralf de Cahaigues by William the Conqueror. The anglicized version of his name changed over the centuries to **Keynes** but the pronunciation stayed as *canes*, not *keens*.
15. The **Crown Inn** was seriously damaged by fire after being struck by lightning in 2003, and was closed for six years.
16. **Horsted Keynes Station** has been restored to the Southern Railway period in the mid-1920s. 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 £3 admission charge for non-travellers when trains are running, rather more than the 1d platform ticket in 1935.
17. **Mill Lake** is one of a series of lakes created to supply water for the local mills. It is now a popular fishing pond.
18. **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.
19. **St Giles, Horsted Keynes** is oriented towards the midsummer sunrise instead of the usual E-W, so was probably built on the site of a pagan temple. 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.
20. **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.
21. 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.

22. The headquarters of the Bluebell Railway, **Sheffield Park Station** has been restored in the style of the London, Brighton & South Coast Railway period in the 1880s. An admission charge (£5 when trains are running; redeemable against purchases) lets non-travellers access the platforms, locomotive shed, refreshment room, etc.
23. The **Bessemer Arms** is named after the doughty lady who fought British Rail's plan to close the line. Although ultimately unsuccessful her spirited attempts spurred the formation of the heritage railway.

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