



Hever to Dormans walk

Undulating walk passing 3 historic manor houses and climbing to an iron-age hillfort



Length	16.1 km (10.0 miles), 4.5 hours. For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow 8 hours.
OS Map	Landranger Map 187 and 188, Explorer Maps 146 and 147. Hever station, Kent TQ465445, Cowden station TQ477417, Cowden TQ465405, Dormans station TQ396416
Toughness	Difficulty rating of 4 out of 10. Note that after leaving the road at Cowden after lunch there are no further roads until reaching the outskirts of Dormansland at the end, and therefore no exits.
Features	The walk covers a fairly remote area of the borders of Kent, Surrey and Sussex (although the later is not visited). It passes 3 historic manor houses, each from different historic periods, and climbs to an iron-age hillfort.
Walk Options	The walk may be shortened by starting at Cowden station which reduces the distance by 3km (1.9m). Instructions for joining the main route are at the end.
Travel	Take the train nearest to 10am (before or after) to Hever on the Uckfield line. Monday to Saturday there is a direct train from London Bridge Station . Journey time 45 minutes (hourly service). On Sundays it is

necessary to get a train from **Victoria** Station at changing at **Oxted** on the East Grinstead line. Although this is a half-hourly service make sure you catch the right one as the connection is only hourly.

Trains back are from Dormans on the East Grinstead line with a half-hourly service. Buy a day return to Hever and a single from Dormans to Hurst Green.

Lunch [Fountain, Cowden](#), TN8 7JG, [01342 850528](tel:01342850528), after 6.0 km (3.8 miles). [Apr-22] Closed Monday lunchtimes, food till 2pm weekdays, 3pm weekends. A 18th century community pub owned by Harveys, one of their few in West Kent. It is popular for its fine food served in generous portions. A large conservatory and suntrap garden

Tea [Old House at Home](#), RH17 6QP, pub on the western side of Dormansland just off the route. It is 0.8km (0.5m) from the station. [May-23] Open all day.

Sights **Cowden** is a pretty village with several Grade II listed cottages. The spire of St Mary Magdalene Church is barely perceptibly out of perpendicular, giving rise to a rhyme: Cowden church, crooked steeple, Lying priest, deceitful people.

Sussex Border Path runs for 222km (138m) from Thorney Island to Rye closely following the Sussex border.

Waystrode Manor being originally a gift from King John in 1208, this restored 15th century, with 16th and 17th century additions, is Grade II* listed. The route of the old Roman London to Lewes road passes through its garden.

Crippenden Manor was built c1607 for the Tichborne family who supported the Parliamentarians in the Civil War and one of whom, Robert Tichborne, petitioned for the execution of Charles I and after the Restoration was imprisoned in Dover Castle and died in the Tower of London. The family however remained in the house until 1708. Grade II* listed.

Vanguard Way long distance path runs for 107km (66m) between Croydon and Newhaven developed and named by ramblers return in the guards van of a crowded train.

Dry Hill Fort is a large iron-age hillfort with 3 surrounding banks (highest 2.2m) and 2 ditches. With lots of nearby springs locally it is easy to see how it got its name although now a misnomer as now contains a covered reservoir. Good views to the NW on the descent.

Greathed Manor is a Grade II listed three storied manor house completed in 1868 for the Spender-Clay family. Herbert Spender-Clay MP was the founder of the Conservative 1922 Committee. The building was original called Ford Manor but the widowed Pauline Spender-Clay built a smaller house in the grounds and retained the house name. You have just passed its entrance. The main manor was then leased by the Country Houses Association who named it after their founder Admiral Greathed.

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** TN8 7ER **Finish** RH7 6NL

Help National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Traveline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

Version May-23 [Andy Poole](#)

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Walk Directions

1. Exit Hever station bearing right along the approach road. In 180m continue right along a quiet country lane. In 270m where the Eden Valley Walk crosses the road continue ahead on Chippens Lane signposted towards Hever village. Cross two streams in 150m and 350m respectively, then 100m after the second stream arrive at a road T junction where turn right towards Markbeeceh.
2. In 80m immediately to the left of Wedgwood's white gate turn ½ right on a path between garden fences. After 180m the garden fences end and you cross a stream continue on a woodland path with a barbed wire fence to the left. 180m later go through the high railway arch after which the path bends left and starts to climb through Oak Wood
3. In 800m the wood finishes the path continues with high electrified strips and a fallen wire fence on the left, and a tree line with a wooden fence on the right. After 200m pass a metal gate to a barn of Bramsell's Farm on the right, continuing ahead for 170m to reach a road.

4. Turn left on the road for 250m to reach Markbeech church. Immediately before the church turn sharp right on a track going through two gates, the first wooden with a Thames Water sign and then a metal one.
5. Once through the gate continue ahead on the track for 12m to a broken stile, then turn $\frac{1}{2}$ right on a faint grassy track going just to the right of a prominent tree 140m away. At the tree bear left to follow the field edge for another 220m to a stile in the fence on the left.
6. Having crossed the stile turn right to follow the right hand side of the field descending to a field corner in 200m. Cross a stile to the right of a metal gate entering a wood. Cross a stream 20m later and continue on wide path through the wood. In 100m pass a house on the right and continue on its unsurfaced driveway, bearing right 40m later ignoring the path ahead.
7. Cross a stream in 20m and continue up the track for 500m to reach Pyle Gate Farm bearing left in front of The Oast House. Ignore the first track on the right and go right with the main track shortly after, with a large barn and bus request stop ahead! Arrive at the B2026 in 80m.
8. Cross the busy road with care, go through a gate and pass run-down farm buildings to a barn visible 60m ahead. At this barn turn left and then right on a signposted path immediately left of the barn passing through a wide barbed wire gate to do so. In 10m there is another wide gate with a metal path gate to the right of it. Go through the latter and immediately turn left passing the wider gate. Staying high in the field go to a hedged corner and go left around it to another path gate.
9. Once through this gate head $\frac{1}{2}$ right downhill, with a pond in trees shortly on the right, down to the far field corner 400m away to cross a stream on a wooden footbridge. On the far side continue ahead with a conifer tree belt to the left joining a track in 200m at the top of the field.
10. Continue left on the track for 300m after which it narrows and bends several times to pass a large white cottage. ! Do not go down the gravelled driveway of the cottage but bear left on a narrow path beside a wooden fence around a corner to a stile.
11. Cross the stile into a field and go $\frac{1}{2}$ left for 160m to a kissinggate leading to a road on the edge of **Cowden**. Turn right on the road to reach the church in 70m where bear right into the High Street. Pass North Street on the right (the way the route continues after lunch) to continue on the High Street around a left hand bend to the Fountain pub on the next corner.
12. After lunch return along the High Street and turn left into North Street joining the **Sussex Border Path** (SBP). In 200m it bends left, becoming Spode Lane. Ignoring a footpath on the right after 60m continue on the road until it bends sharply right 230m later, where upon go straight ahead, ignoring a path going left, along a driveway marked with small white posts and ponds to the right.

13. In 100m pass **Waystrode Manor** on the left and 50m later where the driveway bends left, go slightly right through a gate onto a woodland path with a short flight of steps part way along. 120m from the gate at a path junction fork right, leaving the SBP, and 70m later bending right with a stream down below on the left.
14. In 200m cross a stream and continue uphill until exiting the wood 150m later through a metal gate. Follow a faint grassy path that slowly climbs the field almost parallel to the fence below. An oast house of Leighton Manor Farm soon becomes visible. The path direction is just to the right of it. Reaching a wire fence in 300m turn right beside it for 100m to go through a gate leading to the farm driveway.
15. Do not take the large stone bridge opposite but bear $\frac{1}{2}$ right to a smaller wooden one leading up to a path gate into a field. Cross the field to a pair of metal gates, one wide, one small 100m away, and continue $\frac{1}{2}$ left in the second field for 120m to another pair of gates to the right of a prominent tree. In the third field again turn $\frac{1}{2}$ left, passing a direction post, for 140m where a metal gate leads to a track.
16. Once through the gate continue ahead for 25m to cross a stream on a wide muddy bridge and in 10 more metres bend right with the bridleway climbing through the woods. In 180m ignore a crossing gravelled track, then immediately turn left on a path to a visible footbridge and stile.
17. Once over these climb the left hand side of the field towards a large brick house, **Crippenden Manor**. Where the wood edge bears left, bear instead slightly right aiming for a large metal gate to the right of a black barn, which in turn is just to the right of the brick house. Once through the gate continue for 40m to a junction of paved farm tracks.
18. Turn right here for 160m passing several stable blocks. Towards the bottom of the hill where the driveway bears right turn left through wide wooden gates on another bridleway and fork right. In 80m the bridleway bends right into Ten Acre Wood crossing a stream.
19. Follow the path, ignoring a field on the left after 350m, staying on the bridleway for another 200m where the wood ends at a T junction of bridleways. Turn left for 250m with woods on the left to another junction. Ignore the left turn and continue ahead (again with SBP) shortly bending right with the edge of the woods. The path bends round to the left entering another wood 200m later.
20. In a further 200m at a bridleway junction turn sharp left (2 fence posts are topped in blue on the left, one for the path you are on and one to the left of the required path) once more leaving the SBP. The wood ends 250m later with a large pond on the right and a field on the left. Continue on the enclosed path, slowly bending right to reach yet another bridleway junction in 250m, shortly after a house becoming visible on the left.
21. At the junction turn right, joining the **Vanguard Way** (VW), on a wide gravelly uphill path continuing to the top of **Dry Hill** with its flat top. The bridleway continues

- along the edge with trees to the left, to a corner of reservoir fencing, where it bends first left then right with views opening up to the left.
22. In 400m the track reaches Dry Hill Farm where turn right with cottages on the left (still on VW and briefly with SBP once more). In 100m, just after the last cottage, turn left on a twisting path going downhill for 550m (VW still) to Matthew's Bug Hotel, after which it levels out until the wood ends in a further 130m. A hedged path between fields then continues ahead.
 23. In 300m at the foot of the hill reach another bridleway junction and turn left (leaving the VW) passing a house in 60m. The track comes to an end 200m later and continue ahead through a gate into muddy woodland with a stream on the left at first, then on the right.
 24. After 300m pass a house on the right and continue ahead on their driveway, bending left then sharply right to a junction of paved driveways at Home Farm. Turn right here with the stream reappearing on the left once more and feeding into ponds.
 25. In 140m the paved drive meets that of Ford Manor, which is mostly hidden by trees, and then 40m later the drive of the more impressive **Greathed Manor**. Continue on the paved drive for a further 400m to a gatehouse and its two gate posts either side of the drive. Here turn $\frac{1}{2}$ left on a signed footpath.
 26. The path can be wet being in a little gully but after 110m go through a gate to continue along the bottom edge of the field with more views of Greathed Manor to the left. In 600m at the end of the field bend left for 15m then sharp left for another 15m to return to the original path where turn left (or if you have managed to stay on the original path just keep ahead) for 90m to reach a road on the outskirts of Dormansland.
 27. Cross the road to take a concrete path to the right of a flight of steps. Emerge into a driveway and then to the High St. Turn left passing the Village Store on the right and the Royal Oak on the left and continue for 50m to go $\frac{1}{2}$ right into a recreation ground with toilets on the right. Beyond the toilets the path swings right passing tennis courts and play areas to reach the back of houses in 250m. Pass between garden fences to reach West Street.
 28. The Old House at Home pub is 50m to the right, but the route goes left, forking right into The Platt in 70m and arriving at a T junction in a further 200m. Turn right here soon bending left and then in 60m where the road ends take the paved path ahead between hedges.
 29. Following the paved path all the way, ignoring all side turnings including a major crossing track after 400m, to arrive besides Dormans station in 600m. Cross the railway footbridge before descending to the far platform for London bound trains.

From Cowden station

1. Exit Cowden station to the right along the approach road and bearing right where the approach road splits in 40m. In another 40m at the end of the approach road turn right to cross beneath the railway and 15m later cross a stile on the right onto a woodland path with a stream on the left and the railway to the right.
2. In 500m at a path junction continue ahead, and again when an unmarked path goes left over a long wooden footbridge 100m later. 70m after the path to the left (170m from the path going right) arrive at a prominent tree. A track continues ahead and to the left. Turn left onto the track and continue on the main route from point 7 above.

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