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Robertsbridge Circular

Classic High Weald, plus a castle and a steam railway.

Start and Finish: Robertsbridge station

Length: 18.5km (11.5 miles). For a shorter walk and other variations, see below **Walk options**.

Time: 5 hours 45 minutes. For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow 11 hours.

Transport: Hourly trains run between London Charing Cross and Robertsbridge (journey time: 1 hour 18 minutes). Take the train nearest to 9.50am. For the Battle walk buy a day return to Battle and take the train nearest to 9.30am, (unless choosing to stop at Staple Cross in which case take the train nearest to 10.30 am). For those driving, car parking (charged) is available at Robertsbridge station.

OS Landranger Map: 199

OS Explorer Map: 136

Robertsbridge, map reference TQ733235 is East Sussex 22km south-east of Tunbridge Wells.

Toughness: 4 out of 10

Walk Notes: This High Weald walk passes through rolling hills, woods, hop fields and orchards. A highlight of this walk is arriving for tea at picture-perfect Bodiam Castle, nestling in the Rother

Valley, with the hooting of the steam trains of the Rother Valley Railway nearby. From there the route continues on a gently undulating course to Salehurst, before a leisurely final stretch back into Robertsbridge.

Walk Options: Directions for the following options are given at the end of the main walk text.

a) Shorter walk: You may reduce the length of the main walk by over 4km (2.5 miles) to 14km (8.7 miles) by following the directions for this option at the end of the main walk text (it still starts at Robertsbridge station, but is different thereon), before picking up the main walk directions from [6].

b) Alternative linear walk finishing in Battle: Follow the short route directions as given until [A1], to then follow the directions at the end of the main walk text for a 17.2km walk.

c) Alternative morning route via Hurst Green for the main Robertsbridge Circular walk: Due to the The White Horse currently being closed, for the main walk, this option (which adds 0.8km) provides an alternative route with lunch at The Royal George, Hurst Green.

d) Alternative walk back to Robertsbridge along the river Rother

If you would prefer to end the walk with a flat easy walk back into Robertsbridge from Bodiam castle, then follow the **Alternative walk directions back to Robertsbridge** from [6]. This applies to the main walk plus (a) and (c) options and reduces the length of each walk by 0.5km. Please note between mid May and mid September the 700 metre footpath along the embankment of the river Rother may become overgrown. It is thus advisable not to take this alternative walk ending from Bodiam castle in summertime.

As a further option for shortening the walk, you may catch the 254 bus (hourly service until 5.20pm Mon-Sat) from outside Bodiam Castle (west side – Castle Inn pub side of the road) to Wadhurst and Tunbridge Wells railway stations. Call Traveline 0870 608 2608 for information.

Various other options for this walk are available on the website of the Saturday Walkers' Club www.walkingclub.org.uk in the 'Time Out Country Walks 2' section.

WALK DIRECTIONS

[1] [Numbers refer to the map]

Coming off the London train from platform 2 at **Robertsbridge Station** cross over the footbridge to platform 1 to the exit adjacent to the level crossing. Turn right onto the pavement and, after 15 metres, turn right and take the initially tarmac footpath marked by a stone footpath marker.

In 250 metres go through a metal kissing-gate into a field to go down its lower right-hand side.

In 220 metres at the bottom corner of the field, go over a plank bridge into the next field, to continue along the lower right-hand edge of this field.

After 240 metres at the right-hand corner of the field ignore a metal fieldgate on your right; to cross a footbridge. Turn left up a narrow field, your direction 260 degrees.

In 200 metres, at the top of this narrow field go through a gap in the hedgerow (passing by a redundant metal gate), to then turn sharp right uphill, up the right-hand side of the field, your direction 350 degrees. In 90 metres at the right-hand corner of the field, continue up a fenced-in footpath. In 80 metres turn right through a metal gate and turn left, to continue in your prior direction (310 degrees), along the left-hand edge of a field to cross over a stile after 100 metres. **[!]** Keep straight ahead and to the left down a footpath between fences. In 100 metres go over a plank footbridge across a stream, to come up into the corner of a field.

Go up diagonally across the field, your direction 290 degrees, to latterly descend towards a car-wide bridge with brick walls. (However depending on the time of year and the state of the field, you may prefer to go along the right-hand edge of the field and then turn left at the corner and continue along the field edge to the car-wide brick bridge.)

In 300 metres cross the bridge and continue ahead along the left-hand edge of the next field. In 90 metres at its left-hand corner, turn left into the next field and then right (briefly crossing the field's corner) to then go over a car wide bridge across a stream into the following field. Continue up the left-hand edge of this field, your direction 340 degrees.

After 140 metres go through a car-wide entrance to cross over into the next field to continue along the upper left-hand side of the field. In 230 metres, at the top corner of the field, you go through a metal fieldgate. After 30 metres you arrive at a footpath crosspaths at the centre of Squibs Farm, with a four-armed footpath signpost ahead. **[2]**

Veer to the right down a car-wide earth track. In 50 metres ignore a car-wide track off to the right to continue down a sunken footpath, your direction 70 degrees. In 250 metres you come out to veer right along the edge of a stream on your left-hand side. In 70 metres turn left to cross over the stream via a car-wide metal railed bridge.

Turn right along the edge of the next field alongside the stream. In 100 metres at the corner of the field, follow the field round to the left along its right hand-edge, with the railway to your right.

In 250 metres turn right and cross the railway line (flanked by two stiles). [3]

[If you are intending to take the alternative morning route via Hurst Green refer to the [Alternative morning route via Hurst Green directions.](#)]

Turn right, along a narrow strip of land, your direction 140 degrees. In 180 metres cross a stile and continue along the left-hand side of a field bordering a stream.

In 200 metres, at the end of the field, turn left to cross over a stile and a car-wide brick bridge over the stream, to go up a car-wide track, your direction 70 degrees. In 60 metres ignore a track leading off to your right into a field and continue uphill on a sunken path between trees. In 150 metres fork left through a trench uphill.

After 30 metres you come out of the trench into an open space. Continue along the left-hand side of the open space bordered by a fence. In 80 metres follow the path to the right and then left to pass by the private entrance to Ockham House on your right. 10 metres further on the footpath veers right uphill into a lightly wooded area to come out onto a driveway after 80 metres.

Continue up the driveway. (After 20 metres there is an unmarked path forking

off to the left, which runs parallel to the lane, leading through a wooded area to the left of the lane, which eventually peters out.) After 750 metres and 70 metres before the driveway reaches the main road, where the driveway veers to the right, continue straight ahead on a footpath across the left-hand edge of a grassy open space. In 60 metres, go through an opening to the left of a metal fieldgate and cross over a stile, which brings you out to the A21.

*Cross over the A21 with care, and turn left to continue for 120 metres along the grass verge, before crossing back over the A21 to arrive at the **White Horse**, the recommended lunch stop.*

After lunch, coming out of the pub, cross over the main road and turn right to go along the slip road, (leading off the main road), signposted to Bodiam and Staplecross. In 30 metres turn left onto a lane, your direction 70 degrees. Follow the lane, which after 350 metres curves round to the left, your direction north. In a further 400 metres, just before a collection of houses, the lane forks to the left and to the right.

Fork right, along a fenced in car wide tarmac track, your initial direction 80 degrees. In 80 metres (with an oast house ahead of you) follow the car wide track round to the left. In 40 metres turn right through a wooden gate. Continue ahead, passing a slate-roofed building on your right. After 30 metres you come to two adjacent gates. Go through the left-hand metal gate and, after 40 metres, cross a shingle car turning area. Go along a shingle footpath for 40 metres and then go through a wooden gate into a field.

Cross over the field, your direction 40 degrees.

In 600 metres, at the far end of the field, veer slightly to the right and take the footpath through a wood, your direction 70 degrees.

In 100 metres you come out of the wood into a field. Veer left down the left-hand

edge of the field bordered by Mill Wood, your direction 20 degrees.

After 340 metres, at the corner of Mill Wood, continue down across the field towards a gap on the far side, your direction now 50 degrees. In 260 metres go through the gap into a wooded area, to follow a car-wide track for 80 metres into the next field. **[4]** Remain on the track along the lower left-hand edge of this field.

After 400 metres, on reaching the corner of this field, at a path junction, *turn left along a car-wide earth track between hedgerows*, your initial direction 10 degrees.

In 200 metres you pass to the right of a metal fieldgate and *come out onto a lane*. *Turn right* and cross a bridge after 35 metres, just before you reach the crossroads with the main B2244 road.

(If stopping at the Waterside Café: At the crossroads, cross over and turn left to go along the right-hand verge of the main road. In 220 metres, turn right into the entrance to Hawkhurst Fish Farm and the Waterside Café therein. After lunch retrace your steps back to the crossroads and turn left up Conghurst Lane.)

Cross over and go up Conghurst Lane. After 450 metres the lane curves to the left where you pass by Carpenters Cottage on your right. In a further 300 metres, as the lane curves to the right, you pass by Coach Hill Cottages on your left and, 100 metres further on *where the lane curves sharply to the left, turn right onto a drive* marked 'Conghurst Farm – Private drive', your direction 130 degrees.

In 100 metres you pass by Conghurst Barn (a converted oast house) followed by Ragstone Barn on your right. Continue down this drive past farm buildings, ignoring ways off. In 220 metres you pass by a small pond on your right and come out to a field. Continue down a car-wide earth track along the left-hand edge of the field.

In 250 metres ignore an unmarked footpath off to your left and continue down. **[!]** In 70 metres *turn right, (as indicated by a yellow footpath arrow on a a derelict large wooden post to your right), to go along the bottom left-hand edge of a field*, bordered by a hedgerow, your direction 190 degrees.

In 340 metres, at the bottom corner of the field, cross over into the next field and go along an embankment, your direction 230 degrees. In 60 metres go over a footbridge and a stile, to go up the right-hand edge of a field, your direction 210 degrees.

In 250 metres follow the corner of the field round and up to the left along a field boundary on your right, your direction 110 degrees. After 400 metres at a path T-junction, *just before some farm buildings, turn left onto a farm track*, your direction 80 degrees. *In 100 metres [5] turn right, down a car-wide track*, your direction 170 degrees.

In 300 metres you reach the bottom corner of the field and cross over a stream. In 15 metres go over a stile and uphill along a car-wide earth track, bordered by hedgerows. After 150 metres you pass under some mini pylon cables. In 100 metres the earth track comes out to a shingle track to continue downhill.

In 80 metres you pass by a farm building on your left and a small pond on your right (often dried up in summer) and go through a metal kissing gate. After 10 metres you come out onto a lane with a house on the right. Continue down the lane.

In 130 metres you pass by a house on your left with a hop field behind it. Continue along this winding lane for 500 metres *until it reaches a T-junction with a road*.

Turn right and in 15 metres turn left across the road to go through a (usually open) metal fieldgate into a field and turn half right, diagonally up across it, towards a squeeze stile to the right of a large oak

tree, your direction 160 degrees. In 200 metres, *at the top of the field, go through the squeeze stile and turn left* as indicated by a wooden footpath signpost, to go along the bottom edge of a small field.

In 70 metres cross a stile into the next small field, and follow the footpath as it veers to the right and uphill. In 80 metres cross a stile and continue across a concrete driveway straight-ahead *to the top of the hill* for 50 metres.

Just past some double wooden fieldgates on your right, *turn right to go down the right-hand edge of a field*, bordered by a wire fence with wooden posts, your direction 190 degrees. In 300 metres *cross over a stile and enter the grounds of Bodiam Castle*. Turn half-right to reach the entrance to the castle after 70 metres.

If not visiting Bodiam, at the entrance of the castle, follow the shingle path to the right of the fortress, with the moat and castle on your left. After 220 metres, where the footpath forks, take the right-hand fork away from the castle towards the tearoom and main exit. In 180 metres you arrive at the **Bodiam Castle tearoom**.

Coming out of the main exit [6] next to the tea room and toilets, *cross over the road and turn right to go past the Castle Inn*. Turn left along a lane, with a green on your right, your direction west. In 70 metres, at the end of the green, continue along the lane.

In 450 metres, when the tarmac lane comes to an end, you pass to the right of a metal fieldgate. Continue, along a decayed tarmac car-wide track for 700 metres *to reach some light industrial buildings ahead*. (Ignore a permissive path forking up to the right.) Go through a wooden fieldgate and then round a metal fieldgate and continue along a service road through a small rural industrial estate.

After 200 metres *just past an office building on your right, fork left to cross a footbridge after 10 metres*. Veer right along the edge of a pond. In 50 metres, fork right (away from the pond) along a path through a wooded area. In 40 metres go past a redundant stile to emerge into a field and turn right.

In 20 metres go over a stile to cross a field, towards a stile to the left of a wooden fieldgate, your direction 260 degrees.

In 200 metres go over the stile [7] and cross the B2244 road and a stile on the other side taking you into a field. Turn left and up the left-hand edge of the field. In 60 metres, at the field corner, follow it round to the right, your direction now 260 degrees.

In 100 metres, at the far left-hand corner of the field, you go over a stile and a two-plank bridge. *Go across the next field, up towards the right-hand side of a clump of trees*, your direction 260 degrees.

In 250 metres, *on reaching the clump of trees on your left*, you pass by a (hidden by foliage) wooden footpath post and continue straight ahead, your direction west, towards a stile on the far side of the field, with a three-armed footpath signpost, 180 metres distant. [!] *Do not cross the stile, but turn left down the right-hand edge of the field*.

In 450 metres, *at the bottom corner of the field, with the wooded field boundary on your right, curve to the right through a gap in the wooded boundary and down to a footbridge* after 40 metres.

Having crossed the footbridge follow the footpath up through a wooded field boundary, your direction west. In 200 metres turn left as indicated by a post with a yellow footpath arrow. In 25 metres cross over a stile and continue along the lower left-hand edge of a field, your direction 240 degrees.

In 180 metres, at the bottom corner of the field, cross over a stile and turn left

and then right through an orchard, your direction 260 degrees. *In 160 metres, at the end of the orchard field, turn right, your direction 10 degrees. In 50 metres turn left and cross over a stream into the next orchard field, to go up across it, your direction west.*

In 130 metres, at the far side of the orchard and just before some mini pylon cables, turn left, your direction south, downhill for 60 metres where you [!] turn right, marked by an easily missed footpath post. In 25 metres go over a stile and continue ahead to cross a field, your direction 280 degrees.

In 170 metres go over a stile into the next field. (Ahead of you, 650 metres distant, you can see the tower of the church of St Mary's, Salehurst, which you will be visiting.)

Cross this field, your direction west, aiming for the corner of the adjacent field jutting into this one. (With crop in field, the path may take you out to the right of the corner of the adjacent field, in which case turn left to follow the right hand edge.) In 200 metres continue along the right-hand edge of the field bordered by a hedgerow.

In 150 metres at the field corner, turn right for 10 metres along a lane and then left to continue in the same direction as before up the right-hand edge of a field.

After 120 metres cross over into the following field. In 180 metres, on approaching the top right-hand field corner, ignore a car wide track straight ahead and fork left along the right-hand edge of the field for 60 metres to enter the churchyard between two large oak trees.

*Having visited **St Mary's, Salehurst**, go down the steps from the main entrance (with the **Salehurst Halt** 40 metres ahead on your left), and turn left, and then left again after 15 metres to go down a car-wide drive. In 30 metres, where the drive curves to the right, continue straight ahead, along the*

bridleway, your direction 70 degrees. In 50 metres the bridleway curves to the right before straightening out. Continue downhill with a metal pole fence alongside.

In 130 metres, at the end of this fence you pass by a pillbox off to your right. In 120 metres go over a footbridge across the river Rother. On the other side cross a stile on your right and go diagonally across a field towards a metal fieldgate in the far corner of the field and passing to the right of a mini pylon pole, your direction 240 degrees. (Depending on the time of year and the state of the field, rather than crossing the stile and walking diagonally across the field, you may prefer to continue south along the bridleway and then, at the junction with the lane, turn right and walk along to the fieldgate.)

In 250 metres, at the opposite corner of the field, go through a car-wide exit [8] and turn right along a lane, your direction west. In 300 metres ignore a lane off to the left at a lane junction [9] and continue straight ahead along this lane for 400 metres, heading towards the A21, your direction still west. Just before the A21, take the tarmac path that forks left off the lane. After 80 metres turn right across the footbridge over the A21.

Continue ahead down Fair Lane, your direction west. In 250 metres you reach a T-junction with the Seven Stars pub on your left. Turn left up the High Street, passing by the entrance to the Seven Stars on your left.

*In 40 metres you pass by Station Road on your right, and in 90 metres turn right to cross over the road to go down a tarmac footpath between the Robertsbridge town sign on your right and the clock war memorial on your left, with the **George** pub beyond.*

Continue along this footpath between houses and back gardens. In 200 metres you cross over a car-wide bridge and, in 15 metres, turn right onto Willowbank. In 35 metres turn left along Station Road.

In 180 metres you reach the **Ostrich** pub on your left and, 25 metres further, on the right-hand side of the road, Robertsbridge station.

WALK OPTIONS

a) Shorter walk:

Coming off the London train from platform 2 at **Robertsbridge Station** go through the exit into the station car park and *turn right for 40 metres to then cross over (Station) road and turn left*. After 200 metres *turn right, along Willowbank*.

After 35 metres, *just before a brick bridge, fork left*, your direction east, along a car-wide footpath, crossing over a stream after 15 metres. Continue along the footpath between houses and gardens. In 200 metres the footpath leads out to a road between the clock war memorial on your right and the Robertsbridge town sign on your left.

Cross over the road to go up a gravel footpath (to the right of a bookshop). Follow this fenced-in footpath, ignoring a left turn off after 160 metres. After a further 30 metres *turn left down a short driveway for 5 metres to a lane and then turn right*.

In 100 metres *leave the lane to fork right up a tarmac path to cross the A21 via a footbridge, to then turn right*, initially parallel to the A21.

Follow the footpath as it curves to the left. In 200 metres you come out into a field and continue down, along the right-hand edge of the field, your direction 140 degrees. In 50 metres, where the edge of the field kinks round to the right, continue to the bottom of the field. **[A1]**

[If you are intending to take the walk finishing at Battle refer to the **(b)Alternative linear walk finishing in Battle directions.**]

Otherwise, in 90 metres go through a gap in the hedgerow boundary and cross a stream to go uphill between wire-mesh fencing. In 50 metres *ignore a stile ahead to turn half left along a footpath through a wood*, your direction 80 degrees. In 100 metres *at a crosspaths, turn half left*, down a wide earth track, your direction 40 degrees.

In 140 metres, *at the corner of the wood, veer left and cross over a stile to leave the wood* to go down the right-hand side of a field, your direction 340 degrees.

In 100 metres cross a stile and in 10 metres *turn half right onto a concrete driveway*. After 150 metres, *at a T-junction, turn left*, your direction 330 degrees. **[9]** *After 120 metres you reach another T-junction and turn right*, your direction east.

Continue along this lane for 1km to reach a converted oast-house on your right, a house on your left and double gates ahead leading to (the remains of) Robertsbridge Abbey (closed). Follow the lane as it curves to the right and, after 100 metres, curves to the left. In 140 metres you *pass by a three-armed footpath signpost and pass round a wooden fieldgate to continue along the lane*, your direction 80 degrees. In 60 metres, *where the lane curves to the right, turn left over a stile (right of a wooden fieldgate)*, following a wooden signpost.

Go along the left-hand edge of a field to its corner to *cross over a stile after 120 metres and turn right along a fenced in footpath*. In 100 metres you *come out into a field, to continue along its the left-hand edge*, your direction 80 degrees.

In 150 metres, just before the corner of the field **[A2]**, keep straight on past a three-way wooden post and *cross over into the next field*. *Turn right*, as marked by a yellow arrow on a wooden footpath sign, your direction 170 degrees.

In 100 metres, on reaching the right-hand corner of the field, follow the field

boundary round to the left, your direction 70 degrees. After 500 metres cross over into the next field and continue along its right-hand edge, with a wood on your right, towards some large buildings.

After 280 metres, (50 metres to the left of the right-hand field corner) go over a footbridge into the next field, to go along its right hand side, bordered by a wire fence (with the corrugated buildings beyond), your direction 100 degrees.

[!] In 70 metres *follow the fence round to the right, now with a tree nursery on your left. After 160 metres cross over a footbridge and follow the footpath through a lightly wooded area for 40 metres to cross over a stile out onto the B2244 road.*

Cross this busy road with care and continue ahead, going up a footpath through a wood. In 30 metres you pass by a wooden fieldgate on your right, and continue straight on gradually uphill, your direction east, along the right edge of a wood, with a fence 10 metres off to your right.

In 100 metres you emerge from the wood into the bottom of an orchard. *Cross a car-wide track to go uphill along a 10 metre-wide path through the orchard, your direction 110 degrees. In 140 metres, at the top edge of the orchard, turn left. Follow the orchard edge as it curves to the right and uphill.*

In 120 metres, *at the top right-hand corner of the orchard, go past a redundant stile to veer to the right up a footpath through a wood, your initial direction 150 degrees. In 100 metres the footpath merges with a wide path from the right. After 150 metres you emerge from the wood and pass by a three-armed wooden footpath signpost. Continue up a sunken path through a wooded field boundary, your direction 80 degrees.*

In 350 metres, *at a footpath junction marked by a three-way arrow post, ignore a stile to the right and follow a*

*sunken footpath half left uphill, your initial direction 100 degrees. In 160 metres this path merges with a car-wide track from the right. In 50 metres you come out onto a road. Cross this road to go up Shoreham Lane, signposted 'Ewhurst Green 1 ¼'. In 50 metres turn left across a stile. **[A3]***

Go down across the field passing to the left of a tree 40 metres ahead, aiming for a mini pylon pole with a transformer box mounted on it (which is often hidden by foliage in summer, but the cable run into the trees gives it away), your direction 10 degrees.

In 250 metres *by the corner of the adjacent land (which juts onto this field), continue down the left-hand side of the field, to go through a metal kissing gate into Bramley organic orchard.*

In 70 metres at a path T-junction, turn right to continue through the orchard, your direction 80 degrees.

In 250 metres cross a footbridge and leave the orchard to go up a footpath through a wood. In 200 metres cross a stile to emerge from the wood and continue across a field, up towards a wooden fieldgate, your direction 80 degrees. In 120 metres *cross a stile to the left of the wooden fieldgate and continue, along a lane, towards Ewhurst Green.*

In 220 metres, turn left, as marked by a wooden footpath signpost, just before the driveway leading down to Romney Lodge (a house with a large pond in its front garden), your direction 340 degrees.

Go down a car-wide earth track for 100 metres to cross a stile to the left of a metal fieldgate. *Continue straight down the middle of the field, your direction 330 degrees, with a hedgerow up to your right. Where the hedgerow turns right in 220 metres, curve slightly left downhill towards a metal gate 150 metres distant. (The metal gate is to the right of a metal fieldgate and 15 metres left of a mini pylon pole.)*

Go through the gate and turn right. In 50 metres cross over a footbridge with a stile on it and go along the left-hand edge of a field, your direction 350 degrees. In 300 metres, at the corner of the field, cross over a footbridge flanked by two stiles and continue in the same direction, passing a dilapidated corrugated metal barn on your right.

*In 50 metres turn left to cross a stile and, after 2 metres, go over a stile on your right. Cross the **Rother Valley Steam Railway** track, climb over a stile and turn right to go along the right-hand edge of the field parallel to the railway.*

In 150 metres, on reaching the field corner follow it round to the left, and continue along the right-hand edge of the field, your direction 340 degrees. In 240 metres, at the next field corner, go up onto the flood protection embankment and turn left with the river Rother on your right. After 280 metres, as you approach Bodiam Road Bridge, drop down to the left to cross over a stile to the right of a metal fieldgate (50 metres to the left of Bodiam Bridge).

*Having crossed over the stile, turn right to go along the pavement to cross over Bodiam Bridge and after a further 80 metres, you reach the **Castle Inn** on your left for lunch. (Alternatively, 10 metres after Bodiam Bridge, turn right through the gate for the Bodiam Castle tearoom for lunch.)*

To continue the walk, refer to the main [walk directions from \[6\]](#).

b) Alternative linear walk finishing in Battle:

Follow the short walk directions until [A1].

In 90 metres go through a gap in the hedgerow boundary and cross a stream to go uphill between wire-mesh fencing. In 50 metres go over a (broken) stile ahead to go up through a wood, your initial direction 150 degrees.

After 130 metres at a path T-junction turn right up a car-wide track, your direction 210 degrees. In 160 metres go over a cross paths (marked by a footpath post on your right) to continue up the car-wide track, your direction 230 degrees.

After 160 metres you emerge from the wood at the edge of a field. Turn left along its edge and in 15 metres cross over a stile into a field, to go (initially) up its right-hand edge, your direction 160 degrees. In 200 metres, at the right-hand corner of the field, cross a stile (right of a wooden fieldgate) to go up a car-wide track through a wooded area. In 60 metres cross a stile (left of a wooden fieldgate), and in 25 metres at a path T-junction turn left down a car-wide bridleway, your direction east.

In 100 metres you emerge from the wooded area into a field and follow its left-hand side, your initial direction 70 degrees. In 450 metres at the bottom left-hand corner of the field go through a fence gap and continue down through a wooded area, your direction 60 degrees.

*In 80 metres you emerge from the wooded area onto a lane **[B1]** (with a four-armed path signpost on your left-hand side) to continue down a car-wide shingle track. In 120 metres you pass by a white clapboard bungalow on your right-hand side. In a further 100 metres and 40 metres before a T-junction ahead turn right through a wooden fieldgate into a field. Turn half right across this field, aiming for a metal fieldgate, your direction 160 degrees.*

In 140 metres go through the metal fieldgate into the corner of a field (with a ditch stream on your right), to go diagonally across it on an indistinct footpath, aiming for a wooden footbridge (250 metres distant) on the far side, your direction 150 degrees. (The footpath across this field can become boggy, so you may have to skirt round to the right.)

Cross over the footbridge and veer right into a field, to continue up its left-hand side, bordered by a fenced-in wood, your initial direction 150 degrees.

After 240 metres, just beyond the top corner of the wood on your left-hand side, turn left to go over a stile after 40 metres, to go up the left-hand side of an orchard with the fenced-in wood on your left-hand side, your direction 80 degrees. After 150 metres, at the left-hand orchard corner, go over a stile into a field. Veer right up across the field aiming just to the left of a clump of trees in the field, towards a stile beyond (on the edge of a fenced-in wood), your direction east.

In 250 metres cross over the stile and turn right along a bridleway (which may be overgrown in summer) to go along the edge of the fenced-in wood, passing fields and orchards on your right-hand side.

In 750 metres the bridleway leads into a wood; continue along a well-defined path, your direction initially 110 degrees. In 650 metres go down a short but steep bridleway descent to cross the B2244 and go up the steep ascent (with a stone public bridleway marker on its left-hand side) on the other side. (If not confident with this steep crossing: Turn left down a path (with the road down below) for 150 metres to come down to the road. Cross over the road (opposite a metal fieldgate) and turn right for 30 metres to then fork left up some steps to continue along an embankment to link up with the route after 120 metres.)

Continue along the right-hand side of the wood with fields off on your right-hand side, your direction 100 degrees. After 300 metres the field on your right-hand side ends; continue up a well-defined path through the wood. In 240 metres a path merges from the right; continue along what is now a wooded field boundary, your direction 80 degrees.

After 150 metres you come out to a concrete road between houses and after a further 50 metres pass a three armed path signpost on your right-hand side. In

100 metres you reach the centre of Staple Cross, **[B2]** with the **Cross Inn** opposite.

There are now two alternatives. **[I]** Take the original route, or **[II]** Take a straightforward option avoiding earthworks / overgrown sections (at time of writing).

[I] Continue in the same direction along the left-hand pavement of the main (B2165) road (sign-posted Northiam, Beckley and Rye), your direction 80 degrees. In 200 metres you pass by a children's playground on your left-hand side immediately followed by St Mark's Church.

In 180 metres you pass by the entrance to Brayburn Barn on your left-hand side. In a further 30 metres cross the road to reach a shingle car-wide track (with a stone public footpath marker and a wooden signpost on the right). (Do not go down this track.) Follow the standard route **(i)**, or an alternative route **(ii)** if earthworks for (i).

(i) Continue in the same direction along the main road. *After 20 metres, just before Brabans Cottage, turn right (unmarked) to go through a car wide wooden gate with a sign for 'Sideways' (house) to go down the left-hand side of a driveway. After 30 metres follow the edge of the garden fencing round to your left. In 20 metres go through a wooden gate into a field with fenced paths forking left and right around the field edge. Go along its left-hand side bordered by gardens, your direction east. In 90 metres at the left-hand corner of the field, go through a wooden gate and turn right down a car wide grass track, your direction 170 degrees. In 45 metres go over a stile to the right of a metal fieldgate into a field. Rejoin the route at the asterisk [*] below.*

(ii) Continue in the same direction along the main road passing houses on your right hand side. *After 140 metres turn right through a metal fieldgate to go*

down a car wide grass track, your direction 170 degrees. In 80 metres go over a stile to the right of a metal fieldgate into a field.

[*] Veer slightly left down across the field towards a metal fieldgate, which you go through after 60 metres. Continue down this next field, your direction 150 degrees, passing just to the right of a mini pylon pole after 60 metres, aiming for a metal fieldgate at the bottom (not the left-hand corner) of the field.

In a further 100 metres at the bottom, go through the metal fieldgate into a wooded area and over a bridge. After 15 metres follow the path round to the right. In 30 metres the path curves left to go up the right-hand side of a lightly wooded area with young trees on your left-hand side. In 120 metres (just before a mini pylon pole) *veer right as marked by a footpath post, to cross a stile and turn left up a field* slicing off its left-hand corner, your direction 200 degrees.

In 100 metres go over a stile to go up the left-hand side of the next field, your direction 160 degrees. After 160 metres, at the left-hand corner of the field, cross a stile (to the left of a metal fieldgate) onto a fenced-in footpath along the left-hand edge of a field, your direction 200 degrees. In 200 metres cross a stile (to the left of a metal fieldgate) to go along the left-hand side of the next field in the same direction.

After 150 metres at the left-hand field corner cross a stile into the next field and *veer slightly to the right aiming for a metal fieldgate opposite*, your direction south.

In 130 metres go through the fieldgate to follow a car-wide grass track round to the right (with a pond on your right-hand side).

In 50 metres *turn left either through a metal fieldgate* (marked by a wooden footpath post in the hedge on your right-hand side) or over a stile 10 metres further along *to go down the left-hand*

side of a field, your direction 170 degrees. After 220 metres at the left-hand corner of the field go over a stile into another field, to go down its right-hand side. In 200 metres at the lower right-hand field corner, go past an old metal fieldgate to veer right up a lane (Ellenwhorne), your direction south.

In 150 metres, *at a T-junction with the main road, cross over and turn left* (the safest place to cross) along the grass verge.

Skip section [II] below and pick up the directions at [B3] below.

[II] When you get to the road opposite The Cross Inn, cross the road and turn right slightly downhill (or if coming out of the pub turn left downhill).

In 150 metres take care, as the road narrows between hedges: there is just about enough verge on the left-hand side to walk upon.

In another 200 metres, 50 metres past an oast house, turn left up a side road, Beacon Lane

In 400 metres, at the top of a hill, turn left up a gravel track to Apple Tree Cottage, The Barn and Wish House, a signposted footpath.

Keep along this track, ignoring ways off, until in 400 metres you come to a farm. In the farmyard, turn right just before a gate leading to a farmhouse, and then left passing a barn on your right and the farmhouse on your left.

50 metres after the barn, turn right over a stile into a field, a signposted footpath. In 60 metres ignore a stile to the left, to keep on down the left-hand field edge.

In 220 metres at the left-hand field corner go over a stile into another field, to go down its right-hand side.

In 200 metres, at the bottom of this field, go past an old metal fieldgate, to veer right up a tarmac lane, your direction south.

In 150 metres, at a T-junction with the main road, cross over and turn left (the safest place to cross) along the grass verge.

[B3] *In 80 metres turn right over a stile into a wood and go along a footpath (which can become overgrown in summer) on the left-hand side of the wood, your direction 210 degrees. In 250 metres the wood clears and in a further 30 metres at a cross-roads (marked by a footpath signpost) turn right along a car-wide track, your direction 280 degrees.*

In 45 metres at another path T-junction (with a derelict building ahead to your right) turn left down a car-wide track, your direction 210 degrees. After 300 metres at a dip in the path ignore a footpath to your left (marked by a three-armed footpath signpost on your left). In 80 metres go past a metal fieldgate to continue up the footpath.

After 70 metres go through a 2-metre high metal kissing gate to emerge from the wood into a field. Go up across the field, aiming just to the right of a line of trees, your direction 210 degrees. In 300 metres, at the start of the line of trees, go to the left with the line of trees on your right hand side, aiming for a tall metal kissing gate to the left of a metal fieldgate.

In 150 metres go through the tall kissing gate into a wood, to then cross a lane after 50 metres and follow the footpath keeping to the left-hand edge of the wood (initially up and with a wooden garden fence on your left-hand side), your initial direction south.

After 300 metres *turn right onto a lane, with houses on your left.*

In 180 metres *where the lane curves round to the left, continue ahead to turn*

left through a metal kissing gate into a field to go down its upper left-hand side (the first of four fields in succession), your direction 200 degrees. In 450 metres, having gone down the left-hand side of three fields, go through a metal gate into the fourth field, to join the right-hand side of the field. In 150 metres at the lower right-hand corner, go through a wooden gate, onto a short stretch of paving stones and on down a tarmac lane. In 200 metres the lane curves to the right, with a shingle car-wide track down ahead. You have two options: (i) Take the route for the pub lunch, or (ii) Skip the pub lunch.

(i) Pub lunch: Continue ahead down the shingle car-wide track. After 120 metres, at a T-junction with the main road, turn left to reach **The Queens Head** after 150 metres. After lunch turn right back up the main road. In 220 metres you pass by Balcombe Green on your right-hand side. Rejoin the route at the double asterisk [**] below.

(ii) No pub lunch: *Follow the tarmac lane round and down to the right. In 50 metres at a T-junction with the main road turn right along the road.*

[]** After 150 metres you *pass by the entrance to the village hall on your right-hand side. [!] In 60 metres turn left to cross the road to go through a metal kissing gate (immediately to the right of the entrance to Gate Cottage), to along left-hand side of a small field.*

In 35 metres go through a metal gate into a field and turn right to cross it aiming for a metal fieldgate (initially hidden by the crest of the field) to the right-hand side of a fenced-in clump of trees, your direction 260 degrees. In 160 metres go through a metal gate (left of the fieldgate) into the next field to veer slightly right down across the field, aiming for (an initially hidden) metal fieldgate, your direction 280 degrees. After 150 metres go through a metal gate (left of the fieldgate) to go down across the next field, towards a car-wide gap in the wooded boundary at the bottom.

In 50 metres go through a metal fieldgate, cross a footbridge over a stream and go through a wooden kissing gate into a field, to turn right along its right-hand side, your direction 300 degrees.

In 80 metres just past a large pond off on your right-hand side the footpath ascends. In a further 70 metres, at the upper right-hand corner of the field, go through a wooden kissing gate to go up a fenced-in footpath with a wood on your right-hand side.

[B4] In 90 metres *cross a car wide track flanked by two wooden gates into a field with two metal fieldgates on your right to turn half left* across this field aiming for a metal gate (initially hidden), your direction 200 degrees. In 250 metres go through the metal gate and cross the busy A21 with care.

Go into the field opposite and continue down its right-hand side, with a wooded boundary. In 200 metres, at the right-hand corner of the field, cross over a wooden footbridge to go along the right-hand side of the next field.

After 180 metres, *near the right-hand corner of the field* and by a four-armed footpath signpost, *cross over a wooden footbridge and veer right up into a wood* with a dilapidated 2 metre high fence on your left-hand side, your direction 260 degrees.

In 70 metres, at a path T-junction with a three-way signpost, *turn left up a footpath* (with a 2 metre high fence on its right-hand side), your direction 150 degrees. In 140 metres, a path comes in from the left. Veer right, with a field on your left-hand side. In 60 metres you pass by the corner of the field (with a metal fieldgate entrance) on your left-hand side. In a further 7 metres the footpath forks.

Take the right-hand fork uphill, your direction south. In 70 metres (with a large barn ahead up to your right) turn left for 15 metres, then turn right along a

car wide track. After 50 metres cross over a stile to go along a fenced-in footpath through a wooded area, your direction west.

In 370 metres, at the corner of the wood (with a dilapidated metal fieldgate to your right), follow the footpath round and down to the left. In 80 metres you pass by some houses on your left-hand side and in 50 metres go down a shingle lane.

After 120 metres you *join a main road going past the entrance to Rutherford Business Park* on your right-hand side. *40 metres after the entrance turn right* down a track. In 12 metres go over a stile to the left of a metal fieldgate onto a fenced in car-wide track. In 90 metres veer slightly left off the car-wide track along a fenced-in footpath to cross a stile after 25 metres into a field.

Turn half left up across this field aiming for a gap in the hedgerow on the upper side, your direction 250 degrees. (The gap is 15 metres to the right of a mini pylon pole on the field border. Depending on the time of year and the state of the field you may prefer to follow the left-hand edge of the field to reach the gap.)

After 170 metres go through the gap into the next field and turn right along its right-hand edge, your direction west. *In 140 metres cross into the following field and turn half left* (initially) up across this field aiming for its far corner, your direction 260 degrees.

After 250 metres, at the far corner, cross over into the next field and continue straight across it aiming for a metal gate on the upper far side (40 metres to the left of the field corner), your direction 230 degrees.

In 240 metres go through the metal gate and turn right along a lane to cross a bridge (over the railway) after 50 metres, to continue up the lane. In 450 metres you pass by a thatched clapboard house on your right-hand side. In a further 70 metres you pass by a house on your right-hand side.

After a further 25 metres *turn left up a car-wide track* (marked by a three-armed signpost on your left-hand side), *along the bottom of a field* with a hedgerow on your left-hand side. In 120 metres go into a small field and follow a footpath along its left-hand side. In 70 metres go through a tree arbour to then continue up the left-hand side of another small field.

In 80 metres, *at the lower left-hand corner of this small field, veer left through a gap in the hedge and go into the next field. [B5] Go straight down across this field* aiming for the right-hand side of a house on the far side, your direction 170 degrees. (Battle Abbey and church are now visible in the distance.)

After 180 metres pass by the house on your left-hand side to cross into the next field. Ignore a car-wide lane veering off to the left to continue in the same direction down across this field, your direction south.

In 250 metres *turn right along a lane for 20 metres and then turn left* (immediately after crossing a stream) and follow a footpath slicing the corner off the edge of a small field. After 80 metres *cross over a wooden footbridge and fork right* to go up a footpath that curves around the right-hand side of the field gradually uphill towards the church.

In 200 metres go over a stile to go up a footpath passing by the church on your left-hand side. After 120 metres *turn right along the main road*. After 70 metres cross the road to reach the main entrance to Battle Abbey on your left-hand side. The **Pilgrims Rest**, the recommended tea stop, is directly ahead.

From the Pilgrims restaurant go past Battle Abbey entrance on your right-hand side to turn right along the raised pavement along the main road with the Abbey wall on your right. After 200 metres, at a roundabout, veer right downhill. In 250 metres turn left down the station approach road to reach the station after 180 metres.

c) Alternative morning route via Hurst Green for the main Robertsbridge Circular walk:

Standard Robertsbridge walk directions to [3].

Having crossed the railway line and stile. *Turn left along a narrow strip of land*, (which may be thick with nettles in the summer), your direction 320 degrees. In 180 metres, turn right to cross a car wide plank bridge over a stream to then turn left over a stile, to follow a footpath along the left hand side of a field, which after 45 metres turns right at the field corner, to continue along its left-hand side aiming in the direction of some houses ahead.

After 50 metres go over a stile (left of a wooden fieldgate), to continue up a car wide track, your direction 30 degrees.

In 80 metres go past a red slate house on your left to continue up a lane, ignoring any turn offs.

In 1km you *come out to a T-junction with the A265. Turn left* down along the A265, your direction 280 degrees. *In 30 metres, cross over this road with care, and go up some dilapidated steps* (with a concrete public footpath marker at the base of the steps).

After 30 metres you come out to the corner of a field. Turn left to go up the left-hand side of the field, your direction 10 degrees. After 200 metres at the left-hand corner of the field (near a mini pylon pole on your left-hand side), go through a gap (marked by a footpath post) to go along a path which becomes fenced in after a few metres, your direction 350 degrees.

In 150 metres you *come out to a lane. Turn right* along the lane, your direction 60 degrees. *After 160 metres, turn left* up a car wide track, (immediately past the entrance to Beagles Boundary on your left, and marked by a concrete public footpath marker), your direction 350 degrees.

After 60 metres pass to the left of a metal fieldgate to enter a wooded area. In 7 metres *at the corner of a wooden garden fence on your right, turn right* along a footpath, with the wooden fence on your right, your direction 70 degrees.

After 300 metres having continued along with garden fencing on your right, continue straight ahead across a crosspaths (marked by a 5 way wooden footpath signpost), your direction 40 degrees.

In 350 metres the now fenced in tarmac footpath, comes out to a driveway entrance, which you cross. Continue along a tarmac fenced in footpath. In 60 metres ignore a footpath off to the right and after 25 metres, *turn right through a wooden gate into the churchyard* of Holy Trinity, Hurst Green. Follow the path, through the churchyard for 100 metres, to *exit via a lychgate onto the A21. Turn right* along the pavement. In 240 metres just past the Tower and clock on your left, cross over the main road via a pelican crossing.

If you are *stopping for lunch at the Royal George, turn right* to reach The **Royal George** after 50 metres. *Otherwise turn left and after 10 metres turn right* along an initially tarmac lane passing the Tower and Clock on your left, your direction 60 degrees.

After 400 metres go through some black metal gates, the entrance to Driftways Farm, and continue straight ahead along a car wide earth track, your direction 70 degrees. In 100 metres having passed a house and farm buildings on your left, go through a metal gate to the right of a metal fieldgate and continue along a car wide concrete track, your direction 80 degrees.

After 200 metres the concrete track ends. Continue straight ahead, your direction 70 degrees, down a car wide earth track, alongside high trees on your right for 40 metres and then on your left. After 220 metres at the end of a line of

trees, cross over into the next field and continue in the same direction down a car wide track across the field.

In 100 metres having crossed the field, enter the next field and *pass a small green metal hay store on your left and then turn half right* down a car wide track across the field, your direction 120 degrees. In 100 metres *cross a stream into the next field and continue up a car wide track for 40 metres. Turn left to go along the upper right hand edge of this narrow field*, with trees on your right, your direction 60 degrees.

In 120 metres cross over into the next narrow field and continue along the upper right hand edge of the field. In 220 metres at the upper right hand corner of the field, continue straight ahead to enter Mill Wood, your direction 80 degrees.

After 60 metres you emerge from Mill Wood into a field and turn left down the left-hand edge of the field. In 50 metres at the bottom left hand corner of the field follow the field edge round to the right to continue down the bottom left hand edge of the field, your direction 80 degrees. In 300 metres at the far left-hand corner of this field, *turn left* to follow a car wide track for 100 metres into the next field.

To continue the walk refer to the main (standard) walk directions from [4].

d) Alternative walk directions back to Robertsbridge (along the river Rother)

Come out of the main exit next to the NT tea room & toilets **[6]** to *cross the road and turn left*. In 30 metres, *immediately before Bodiam Bridge, turn right to go through a gap between a hedge and the bridge*. Follow the path along the river in a south-west direction.

In 1.5 km you come *out onto a busy B road [D1]* (take care on this road along which traffic sometimes comes quite fast). *Turn left*, to immediately cross a road

bridge, your direction south, to keep on a grass verge (protected by wooden bollards) on the left hand side of the road. In 120 metres at the end of the grass verge and immediately before a metal road crash barrier, cross over with care to continue along the right-hand side of the road. *In a further 40 metres turn right across a stile immediately before a road bridge, to follow a footpath signpost, your direction 240 degrees, to go along the left hand edge of a field with a ditch on your left.*

In 400 metres at the corner of this field, continue straight on passing a pillbox on your right. In 20 metres you go up onto an embankment, with the River Rother on your right and a stream on your left.

After 700 metres (having crossed two footbridges along the way) follow the footpath left down some steps into a field [D2]. Turn right, along the right hand edge of the field, your direction 250 degrees. In 150 metres at the field boundary, ignore the footpath to the right to continue straight ahead along a footpath on the right-hand side of a field. (Note if recent heavy rainfall this may be flooded, in which case take the footpath to the right, which will link up after 150 metres)

In 200 metres at the right-hand corner of the field continue ahead, to come out onto a concrete car wide track after 10 metres. Turn left along the track, your direction 190 degrees. After 50 metres turn right as marked by a bridleway post and follow the bridleway round with the house on your right. In 180 metres, turn left onto a lane, your direction west. In 140 metres the lane curves to the right, and after 90 metres curves to the left as you pass the double gates on your right leading to (remains of) Robertsbridge Abbey (closed). Continue along this lane for 1km to reach a lane junction with a lane off to left, (Redlands)[9] to join up with the standard walk route.

Lunch and Tea places

Bodiam Castle tearoom *Bodiam, nr Robertsbridge, TN23 5UA (01580 830436)*. **Open** Early Feb-Oct 10am-5pm daily; early Nov-23 Dec 10am-4pm Wed-Sun; Jan-early Feb 10am-4pm Sat, Sun. This is the suggested tea stop for the main walk.

Castle Inn *Bodiam, Main Street, Bodium, TN32 5UB (01580 830330)*. **Open** 10am-3pm, 5-11pm Mon-Thu; 11am-11pm Fri, Sat; noon-10.30pm Sun. **Food served** noon-2pm, 7-9pm daily. Located 8km from the start of the walk, the Castle serves moderately inventive food and has a west-facing garden. This is the suggested lunch stop for the shorter walk option.

The Cross Inn *Cripps Corner Rd, Staplecross, TN32 5QA (01580 830217)*
This is the early lunch stop for the walk to Battle, situated 6 km from the start of the walk to Battle.

The Eurasia Restaurant, The Royal George *54 London Road, Hurst Green, TN19 7PN (01580 860200)*. Situated 5½km from the start of the walk.

The George *High Street, Robertsbridge, TN32 5AW (01580 880315)*. **Open** – check website. **Food served** – check website This pub serves tea and coffee.

The Ostrich *Station Road, Robertsbridge, TN32 5DG (01580 881737)*. **Open** 11am-11pm Mon-Sat; noon-10.30pm Sun. This pub serves tea and coffee.

The Pilgrims Rest *1 High Street, Battle, East Sussex. TN33 0AE (01424 772314)* This is the recommended tea place for the walk ending at Battle.

The Queens Head *Seddlescombe, TN33 0QA (01424 870228)* food 12 - 2.30pm every day. This is the later recommended lunch stop for the walk to Battle, situated 11.2 km from the start of the walk to Battle.

The Salehurst Halt *Church Lane, Robertsbridge, TN32 5PH (01580 880620)*. **Open** – check website. **Food served** – check website This pub serves tea and coffee.

Waterside Café *Hawkhurst Fish Farm, Hastings Road, TN18 4RT (01580 754000)*.
Open daily 9am - 4pm.

~~**White Horse** *Hurst Green, Etchingam, Silver Hill, TN19 7PU (01580 860235)*. **Open** noon-11pm Mon-Sat; noon-10.30pm Sun. **Food served** noon-9.30pm daily. Situated 5km from the start of the walk, the White Horse serves imaginative food and has a large west facing garden. This is the suggested lunch stop for the main (or long) walk. Booking is advised. Closed. For the main walk take option (c) via Hurst Green for a pub lunch.~~

	Walk	Length (km)	Ostrich	George	W'side Café	Eurasia	Castle	Salehurst Halt	George/Ostrich
20	Main walk	18.5	Start		8.5		12.5	16.5	End
20a	Short	14		0.5			8	12	
20c	via Hurst Grn.	19.3				5.5	13.3	17.3	
					Cross Inn		Queens Head	Pilgrims Rest	
20b	To Battle	17.2	Start	0.5	6		11	End	