

Staplehurst to Cranbrook last checked	Frittenden to Bubhurst last checked	Goudhurst ending last checked	Sissinghurst village to Headcorn checked
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Staplehurst to Headcorn or Cranbrook

Length:	Staplehurst to Headcorn	12.8km (7.9 miles)
	Staplehurst to Sissinghurst	12.6km (7.8 miles)
	Staplehurst to Cranbrook	15.2km (9.4 miles)
	a) Staplehurst to Goudhurst	22.0km (13.6 miles)
	b) Long walk to Headcorn via Sissinghurst	19.8km (12.2 miles)
	c) Sissinghurst to Headcorn	11.8km (7.3 miles)

Toughness: 2 out of 10: 3 out of 10 to Cranbrook, 4 out of 10 to Goudhurst

Maps: OS Explorer 136 & 137; OS Landranger 188

Features

Once you get free of Staplehurst (where a new housing estate is being built at the start of the walk route - see paragraph 2 of the walk directions), the morning of this walk is an easy stroll through fields and woods in the Low Weald of Kent, with a very fine bluebell wood en route from mid April to early May, and good displays of wood anemones from mid March to mid April. The whole route is wonderful for wild flowers in late April and early May.

After lunch at **Frittenden** you then have the choice of carrying on over low-lying fields to the pretty Kent village of **Headcorn**, which has a railway station (*in which case you only need pages 1-6 of this document*), or diverting south to the National Trust-owned **Sissinghurst Castle**, the former home of the diplomat Harold Nicholson and Vita Sackville-West, the writer now more famous as the lesbian lover of Virginia Woolf.

The house was originally a moated Tudor mansion, which fell into disrepair until only a few buildings - including the gatetower and the stable buildings were left. Nicholson and Sackville-West bought the property in 1930 and created the famous gardens that are now maintained by the National Trust. Notoriously, each lived in their own separate building - Sackville-West in the tower, Nicholson in the nearby house, only coming together in the communal living room in the stable block. A member of the family still lives on the property, though it has been owned by the National Trust since 1962. The gardens are open daily from mid March to December, but the permissive paths across the estate used by this walk are open year round.

Beyond Sissinghurst the walk takes you to Sissinghurst village, passing through a wood with wood anemones in and bluebells in early spring. From the village there are buses back to Staplehurst station or you can continue for 2.6km (1.6 miles) to the pretty town of **Cranbrook**, which is

served by the same buses as Sissinghurst and which has various tea options and a working windmill that still grinds corn.

Other walk options

To do options a) or b), simply follow the main walk until prompted. For option c), start with the directions in paragraph 171 on page 12

a) Extension to Goudhurst: This option continues on from Cranbrook on the High Weald Landscape Trail for 6.8km (4.2 miles) to the attractive hilltop village of Goudhurst, making a total walk from Staplehurst of **22km (13.6 miles)**. A problem here is that the village has a rather restricted bus service (including no Sunday or bank holiday service) - see **Transport** below. The route at first passes through a large area of woodland and then across open hillsides with fine views of Goudhurst as you approach that have an almost Tuscan feel to them.

b) Long walk to Headcorn via Sissinghurst: This option allows you to visit Sissinghurst Castle and then end at Headcorn, but after a fairly long section on a quiet (almost entirely traffic-free) tarmac lane, the way is by little-used paths, with stiles and signposts that have not always been well-maintained, making route finding challenging at times. It is 9.5km (5.9 miles) from Sissinghurst Castle to Headcorn, making a total walk from Staplehurst of **18.8km (12.2 miles)**.

c) Sissinghurst to Headcorn: You can use Arriva bus no 5 from Staplehurst to start the walk from Sissinghurst village. Permissive National Trust paths take you to the Sissinghurst Gardens in **2.3km (1.4 miles)**, and you can then do the 9.5km (5.9 miles) option b) route to Headcorn as above: but see the description above for the challenges of this route. This makes a total walk from Sissinghurst village to Headcorn of **11.8km (7.3 miles)**. *To do this option start with the directions in paragraph 171 on page 12.*

Transport

Staplehurst is on the line between Tonbridge and Ashford, and is served by twice hourly Charing Cross and London Bridge. Journey time is about 1 hour. Catch the train nearest to **9.30am** from **Charing Cross** to **Staplehurst** to get to the lunch pub in time.

If ending at Headcorn, this is the station beyond Staplehurst, served by the same trains, so **buy a day return to Headcorn**.

If planning to finish in Sissinghurst or Cranbrook, **a day return to Staplehurst** is sufficient. Once you get to Sissinghurst village of Cranbrook, you will need to use **Arriva bus number 5** to get you back to Staplehurst station. At time of writing the buses go from Cranbrook go roughly hourly until 18.56, serving Sissinghurst village 7 minutes later. On Sunday the buses are only every two hours - 13.05, 15.05, 17.05 (the last bus).

For option **a) Extension to Goudhurst**, the buses work best Mondays to Fridays, when bus number 27 takes you in just 13 minutes to Marden railway station (the station before Staplehurst and so covered by a Staplehurst day return) at 17.15 or 18.45. On Saturdays only the 17.15 runs, but there is an 18.31 number 297 bus (direction Tenterden) to Cranbrook, arriving 18.46, in time to catch the 18.56 number 5 bus to Staplehurst station mentioned in the previous paragraph. In the other direction the 297 goes to Tunbridge Wells, the last bus from Goudhurst being the 18.11. This takes 50 minutes, but Tunbridge Wells has a regular train service to London until late. You would probably need to buy a train ticket from Tunbridge Wells to Tonbridge, though a Staplehurst return may just be accepted if you explain you have done a walk. *There are no buses from Goudhurst on Sundays or bank holidays.*

Lunch

The Bell & Jorrocks, *Frittenden (01580 852415)*. Food served noon-3.00pm Wednesday to Sunday. Located 7.1km (4.4 miles) from the start of the walk, this is the suggested lunch stop and the only lunch option if doing the standard walk to Headcorn. Groups should definitely book, as this is a small family-run pub and cannot cope with large numbers of customers turning up unexpectedly

On the Sissinghurst, Cranbrook or Goudhurst endings of the walk **Sissinghurst Castle Gardens**, 3.2km (2 miles) beyond Frittenden - or 2.3k (1.4 miles) from the start of option c) - have a National Trust self-service restaurant and tea room which can be accessed without paying an entrance fee to the site. It does hot meals from midday to 3pm, and serves tea until 5.30pm daily from mid March to the end of December. There is also a separate small cafe, near the entrance to the car park.

If you are doing the Cranbrook or Goudhurst endings, the **Milk House** pub, (01580 720200 www.themilkhouse.co.uk), a gastro pub in Sissinghurst village, is a possible late lunch stop, 12.6km (7.8 miles) into the walk.

Tea

The **Village Tea Rooms** (01622 890682) are a very nice tea option in Headcorn, but they close rather early at 4.45pm Mondays to Saturdays and 4.30pm on Sunday. **Costa Coffee** close by is open until 7pm Monday to Saturday and 6pm Sundays. A better choice, however, is **George and Dragon** (01622 890239), a very friendly and cosy pub which offers both full cream teas and excellent food well into the evening.

On the Sissinghurst and Cranbrook endings, **Sissinghurst Castle's** self-service restaurant is the obvious tea stop if you have had lunch in Frittenden. 2.3km/1.4 miles further on, the **Milk House** in Sissinghurst village is another possible tea stop. See **Lunch** above for more details of these.

Otherwise, it is a good idea to hold fire until **Cranbrook**, which has several tea options. These include **Arthur's** opposite the **George Hotel** (the obvious pub option), which has a good range of cakes and some comfortable armchair seating around the back, and is open till 5pm daily (possibly not Sundays). Nearby, **Cocolicious** is a trendy patisserie, also open till 5pm, and around the corner the more traditional **Waterloo House tea room** 01580 713802 is open till 5pm daily in spring and summer, but only 4pm in winter. There is also a **Costa Coffee** 100 metres beyond the number 5 bus stop, open till 7pm Monday Saturday and 6pm Sunday.

If you end in **Goudhurst**, the **Star & Eagle Hotel** does tea in pots: alternatively the **Vine Inn** has the advantage of overlooking the bus stop and has outside tables where you can sit and wait for your bus. The high street does have a cafe or two but they close at 5pm.

WALK DIRECTIONS

For option c) Sissinghurst to Headcorn start with paragraph 171 on page 12.

Staplehurst station to church (2.7km/1.7 mi)

1. Cross the footbridge at Staplehurst station and go up the station approach which curves left to reach the main road. Turn right.
2. In 80 metres turn left into Fishers Road.
 - A large **housing estate** was under construction at the end of this road in early 2018. The route as in May 2018 is described in paragraphs 3 to 9 below and in theory a footpath should be maintained on this route through the new housing estate. But if you find this impassable due to construction, the following diversion may be useful: 100 metres after turning left into Fischer's Road turn right into Newlyn Drive. In 60 metres ignore

*Fishers Close to the left but in a further 60 metres follow the road as it turns left. In 70 metres turn right into Hurst Close. In 330 metres, at the junction with Headcorn Road, turn left. In 350 metres pass the Redrow "Woodlands Green" development and then Pile Lane on the left (now closed to traffic).
Continue with paragraph 10.*

3. In 200 metres you come into an area of new housing. Keep straight ahead and in 120 metres there is a double garage ahead: take a footpath along a fence to the left of the garage.
4. In 20 metres turn right with the path along the back of the garage, between house gardens.
5. In 50 metres cross a stile and keep straight on, with gardens to your right, up a part overgrown path which in 15 metres veers left into a sometimes boggy area between ponds.

6. In 50 metres more cross a plank bridge and pass through a metal kissing gate into a field. **More houses seem to be planned here, so take whatever footpath route is indicated** - possibly a fenced tarmac path. The next paragraph describes the position **before** construction work started.
7. Carry on up the left-hand edge of the field. In 100 metres the path passes into another field and again keeps on up its left-hand edge. In 60 metres curve right with the end of a field. In 40 metres turn left through a kissing gate into the next field.
8. Head across this next field for 120 metres to cross a stile in the far corner. Turn right on the road beyond (Pile Lane), passing Home Farm on your left. (More houses are being built to the right of this lane, so its quiet rural character may change...)
9. In 350 metres, at a T-junction, turn left along a road.
10. In 180 metres, just past an engineering works on the left, turn right at a footpath sign on to an enclosed path between fields.
11. In 500 metres, at the top of the field, veer right with the path over a farm track and continue onwards on a fenced-in path up the right-hand edge of a field.
12. In 350 metres, at the top of the field, pass through a metal gate and turn right past a wooden barrier out to a tarmac lane (Chapel Lane).
13. Follow the lane for 100 metres and then turn left at a footpath sign along an enclosed path that leads into the churchyard of All Saints, Staplehurst.

Staplehurst church to Frittenden (4.4km/2.7 miles)

14. Go straight on through the churchyard, with the church on your right. (*Worth a visit for its leaning pillars. There are also some rather slight remains of an anchorite cell.*) In 60 metres bear slightly left to pass to the left of a low stone wall.
15. In 80 metres go through a gap in a hedge into a new graveyard and keep on down its right-hand edge.
16. In 30 metres more go through a wooden gate, then in 7 metres turn left through another gate and go half right diagonally across a field.
17. In 100 metres pass through a gap to follow a path with a fence on the right that comes out onto a road in 150 metres.
18. Cross the road and turn left for 20 metres, then turn right through a gate up a path into a wood.
19. In 200 metres, 30 metres after crossing a stream, ignore a path to the left and instead veer right on a path that in another 25 metres or so goes alongside a ditch and metal fence.
20. In 70 metres more go through a metal kissing gate into the grounds of a large house. Follow a path which curves left through the trees around the edge of a lawn.
21. In 70 metres the path emerges onto the lawn: go straight ahead across it, parallel to its right-hand edge 40 metres away, passing to the right of a large evergreen tree in 40 metres and then in 40 metres more to the left of a clump of trees.
22. Beyond this the path veers right for 70 metres to a path junction in front of a hedge. Keep straight ahead here across a stile, ignoring a path forking to the left.
23. In 30 metres you emerge into a huge field. Veer slightly left across this, heading just to the right of a large oak tree in 120 metres (direction 130 degrees)
24. Continue in the same direction for another 120 metres to the far side of the field. Here cross a stile to the right of a metal fieldgate. Continue diagonally, ie in the same direction, across the next field, approaching the wood to the left in 300 metres.
25. At the corner of the wood cross a stile beside a fieldgate and then turn right into another field. Turn half left diagonally across this (direction 140 degrees) to a concealed gate halfway along its upper edge.
26. In 200 metres pass through a gate into a wood (*locked in May 2018, though since it is a public footpath, it should not be*) and in 30 metres come out into a field to turn left along its top edge beside the wood. The woodland here has **wood anemones** in late March and early April, and then a magnificent

display of **bluebells** from mid April to early May.

27. Follow the edge of the field along the wood edge for 1km, with a kink uphill to the left halfway, until it eventually leads through a kissing gate to a lane.
28. Turn right on the lane. (*In late March and early April if you **turn left** on the lane you come in 300 metres or so to a magnificent wood anemone wood, just as the lane turns right: retrace your steps after seeing this*).
29. Stay on this lane as it bends left, right and then left, and then finally a big long curve to the right.
30. In 500 metres, at the far end of this big long curve, ignore a signposted footpath to the right across a field.
31. In another 50 metres, as the road bends left, ignore a signposted path to the right up a track. But in another 40 metres take a signposted path to the right across a stile to the right of a fieldgate.
32. Go up the right-hand edge of a field, passing through a gap (gate missing) in 40 metres.
33. In 70 metres, at the end of this field pass through a metal kissing gate. Continue onwards up a path between trees.
34. In 130 metres pass through another metal kissing gate and turn right for 10 metres and then left through a rusty kissing gate.
35. Carry on uphill, passing to the right of a large horse chestnut tree in 30 metres, another in 40 metres more and a third 50 metres further on.
36. In 100 metres more, at the top of the field, pass through a kissing gate and turn left along the edge of a large field.
37. In 130 metres pass through a metal kissing gate and keep alongside the field edge as the church steeple comes into sight.
38. In 300 metres go through a kissing gate into the churchyard of St Mary's, **Frittenden**.
 - At this point, if you do not **do not** want to have **lunch at the Bell & Jorrocks pub**, and you are walking to **Sissinghurst, Cranbrook** or **Goudhurst** (*including b) Long walk to Headcorn via Sissinghurst*) keep to the right-

hand edge of the churchyard to exit via the main gate and turn right on the road. Now follow the directions in paragraph 74 on page 7.

39. Otherwise, **for lunch at the Bell and Jorrocks** or the direct ending to **Headcorn**, go straight on past the church entrance and carry on in the same direction to exit the churchyard in another 70 metres
40. Carry on down an enclosed path with a building to your right. In 70 metres more keep down the left-hand edge of a green space.
41. In 100 metres pass through a metal gate and turn left on a road. In 150 metres you come to the **Bell and Jorrocks**, the recommended lunch pub.

*After lunch, for **Sissinghurst, Cranbrook** or **Goudhurst** - including b) Long walk to Headcorn via Sissinghurst - follow the directions in paragraph 71 on page 6.*

*For the direct ending to **Headcorn**, continue with the directions in paragraph 42 below.*

Frittenden to Bubhurst **(1.6km/1 mile)**

42. After lunch, come out of the pub and turn left up Biddenden Road
43. In 200 metres, just before the Providence Chapel, turn left at a footpath sign. Cross a stile into a field and keep to its right-hand edge
44. Cross a further stile and then pass through two kissing gates.
45. With a pond on the right, enter a small wood and soon fork left over a stile into a large field.
46. Head downhill (direction 65 degrees) towards a hidden stile to the left of a clump of trees.
47. Cross the stile and go across the next field (direction 55 degrees) to cross another stile and continue in the same direction across the following field to a stile midway along its far side.
48. Cross the stile and go straight on along the right-hand edge of a field.
49. Cross a stile and turn right for 50 metres to go over a plank bridge and another stile. Then follow the field edge as it turns left.

50. In 150 metres pass into the next field (crossing a ditch, with a partial line of trees left and a fieldgate right). In another 70 metres pass through a gate ahead in the field corner, ignoring another such gate to the right.

Bubhurst to Headcorn
(4.1km/2.5 miles)

51. Veer left through some shrubs to emerge in 10 metres into a field. Go diagonally across this (or round its edge if this is easier) heading towards a large oak in its far corner.
52. Turn right along the field edge when you get to the large oak and keep on up the left-hand edge of the next field.
53. In 200 metres turn left up a grassy track, with a hedgerow right and a wood and wire field fence to your left.
54. In 400 metres, as you approach farm buildings, veer to the **right** of a pond (concealed by willows in summer) to then resume your former direction and go past stables (vehicles and other farmyard clutter may conceal the way here).
55. Beyond the stables keep straight on along a path on a field edge.
56. 150 metres after the stables, and before some houses ahead, the track turns left. You immediately come to a junction with a fieldgate to your right, with a tarmac driveway passing the houses beyond it. Ahead of you is a grassy track along a field edge, with a gate into a field just on the right-hand side of it and another ahead.
57. *The tarmac driveway looks like a convenient way to get to your next turning here, which is the signposted path into a field you can see 150 metres down it on the right. But sadly this is **NOT** a right of way. Instead go **10 metres down the grassy track** along the field edge and then **turn right through the fieldgate** here (*not the one at the end of the track*) to walk down the length of the field, roughly parallel to the tarmac driveway.*
58. In 180 metres, about halfway along the far end of the field, there is a black metal gate in the hedgerow, not immediately visible until you get close to it: go through this and turn right on the road.
59. In 40 metres turn right up a track to Little Brookwood Cottages. In 20 metres turn left up a signposted path into a field.
60. Go straight out across the field on a path heading for a point roughly halfway along its far edge (as seen from this point), your direction 50 degrees.
61. In 500 metres cross a stream and go along the left-hand edge of the next field, following it round alongside a wood (which has a fine display of **bluebells** in late April and early May).
62. In 500 metres, just past the end of the wood, cross a stile on the left. Pass Brookwood Farm House to the right. Then go over two stiles and follow the right-hand edge of a field, alongside a wood.
63. At the end of the wood in 300 metres cross a concrete bridge over a large stream, then turn left and immediately right to go along a path with a long row of trees to your left.
64. Cross a lane and then a stile, to continue along the right-hand side of a field.
65. In 200 metres go through a gap to go half right across the corner of the next field. Here cross a stile and follow an enclosed path to cross the River Beult on a concrete bridge.
66. In another 150 metres go up steps to cross the railway line with care and continue ahead.
67. In 100 metres keep straight on along the edge of a grassy space to enter the churchyard in another 100 metres. Turn right on a path down the edge of the churchyard.
68. In 150 metres keep on down the main road through the village.
69. In 100 metres you come to the **George and Dragon** on the left, with Cost Coffee just before it and the **Village Tea Rooms** just beyond.
70. Keep on down the road for 350 metres to come to the approach road Headcorn station on the right.

Frittenden to Sissinghurst
Castle (3.2km/2 miles)

71. Coming out of the Bell and Jorrocks pub, retrace your steps by going

- straight ahead up the road, signposted to Sissinghurst and Cranbrook.
72. In 200 metres you pass a green area behind a hedge on your right, and beyond that the primary school.
 73. In another 150 metres you are level with the main arched gate into the churchyard.
 74. In another 70 metres, just past the brown wood-sided village hall on your left, turn left up a signposted footpath.
 75. In 60 metres cross a stile to the left of a fieldgate and keep straight on down across the field ahead
 76. In 100 metres go through a wooden kissing gate and head out half right across a big open field towards a hard to see gap in the hedge on its far side.
 77. In 250 metres pass through this gap and keep more or less straight on across the next field, aiming for a mini-pylon pole 120 metres away. At the pole, fork right, heading for another mini-pylon pole 80 metres away on the corner of the field boundary (**not the pole 100 metres straight ahead**).
 78. At this second mini-pylon pole veer a third left away from the line of pylons across the field ahead aiming for a point under some tall trees roughly halfway along its far edge.
If crops block your way at any point, your goal is a lane to the left. Get there by any means you can and turn right on it. Continue with the directions in paragraph 81 below.
 79. In 300 metres, at the far end of this field, cross a stile and veer slightly left to another stile visible 200 metres ahead between two bushes (which surround a small bog).
 80. Cross this stile and veer slightly left, passing to the left of a lone tree in the field in 100 metres. Carry on past this almost to the corner of the field. Here cross a stile to the right of a fieldgate (*on the left-hand edge of the field: NOT the more visible metal gate in the hedge ahead*) and turn right on a road.
 81. In 300 metres at a road T-junction, keep straight on up a driveway, signposted Castlefield, Old Brickyard Cottage, ignoring the entrance to some warehouses to the right of it.
 82. In 100 metres pass a timber-sided house on your left and keep on up an earth track.
 83. In 70 metres you emerge onto the right-hand edge of a field and keep straight on along it. In another 80 metres carry on down a path between hedges.
 84. In 300 metres you can see **Sissinghurst Castle** on the hill ahead to the left. Keep on up the path between hedges, and in 500 metres you come to a three way track junction.
 - **To bypass Sissinghurst Castle** and its tea rooms and carry straight on to Sissinghurst village, Cranbrook and Goudhurst, take the right fork (more or less straight on) at this junction, going gently uphill. In 300 metres, by a red tile-sided house, veer left to cross two gravel tracks and then veer slightly right across an orchard on a path that is not very clear, but which goes down a more slightly more widely spaced row. Continue with the directions in paragraph 90 below.
 85. Otherwise, turn left at the junction towards the buildings of Sissinghurst Castle. In 200 metres go through the arch to find the tea room, the **Granary Restaurant**, to your right beyond it, and the entrance to the gardens on your left.
For b) Long Walk to Headcorn via Sissinghurst (9.5km/5.9 miles from this point) refer to the directions in paragraph 145 on page 10.
To continue to the bus stop in Sissinghurst village, Cranbrook or Goudhurst continue with the directions in paragraph 86 below.
- Sissinghurst Castle to Sissinghurst village (2.3km/1.4 miles)**
86. From the archway or the **Granary Restaurant** entrance walk straight ahead towards the house entrance.
 87. In 70 metres, when level with the start of the house, turn right up a tarmac path, passing an oast house-topped barn and toilets to your right.
 88. In 120 metres more, just in front of the **Old Dairy** shop and cafe to your right, ignore two tracks to the left leading to the car park and instead

keep ahead up a track. Soon there is a fenced-off field to your right.

89. In 250 metres, where the field to the right ends, and when nearly level with a red-tiled house to the right, fork left up a track and then immediately veer left into an orchard. Cross this diagonally on a path that is not very clear, but which goes down a more slightly more widely spaced row.
90. In 200 metres, on the far side of the orchard, do **not** go through the gap/fieldgate in the hedge ahead, but instead veer right along the hedge for 40 metres to pass through a gate to the right of a double fieldgate. Keep on down the left-hand edge of the field beyond.
91. In 70 metres, where the hedge ends to your left, turn left through a gate to the right of a double fieldgate and keep on down the left-hand edge of a field.
92. In 180 metres, at the bottom of the field, pass through a gate and across a footbridge to carry on down a path into the woods.
93. In 50 metres ignore a path to the right into the woods. But in 10 metres more, at a junction with a track, turn right, ignoring faint paths ahead and half right.
*This track can be very muddy in winter, though a path that shadows it about 10 metres to the right avoids the worst of the mud. Another **alternative** is to turn left at the track junction mentioned in the paragraph above, and then right on the approach road to Sissinghurst: you can follow this to the main road and then turn right to reach Sissinghurst village.*
94. Otherwise, follow the track through the woods (**wood anemones** and **bluebells** here in early spring).
95. In 700 metres, at the end of the wood, pass through a wooden barrier and turn left across a footbridge.
96. Keep up the left-hand edge of an orchard. In 100 metres veer left through a gap onto a tarmac drive coming from a "Wastewater Treatment Works" and carry on up the drive.
97. In 300 metres turn right onto a main road. In 200 metres you pass a church and in another 100 metres the **Milk House** pub to the right.

To catch the bus from here to Staplehurst carry on along the road past the Milk House to find the bus stop on the right-hand side of the road in another 300 metres, just beyond a turning right to Frittenden.

Sissinghurst village to Cranbrook (2.6km/1.6 miles)

98. When level with the Milk House pub, turn left down Chapel Lane.
99. In 30 metres, just before a white-sided house, turn right up a signposted footpath, a gravel track
100. In 60 metres, where the track ends at the gate to Playstole, keep to the right of the hedge up a narrow path with wooden garden fences to your right initially.
101. In 120 metres ignore a path to your left and an earth track to your right to keep straight on up an enclosed path, with a fence to your left initially and then a line of trees.
102. In 150 metres there is an arable field to the left. A local's path veers left into this and along its edge, but the right of way sticks to the fence and is soon enclosed by hedges. However this enclosed path eventually merges with the field edge path anyway, so it does not matter which you use.
103. In 300 metres, at the far end of the field, the path is enclosed once more.
104. In another 180 metres descend steps to cross a sunken road and climb up the other side. Pass through a kissing gate into a field
105. Carry straight on downhill, passing a mini-pylon pole in 25 metres. In another 130 metres, at the bottom of the hill, pass through a metal kissing gate and on uphill through the wood on a car-wide path. (There is wood sorrel to the left of this path in April)
106. In 200 metres you come to the top of the hill. In another 100 metres pass through a wooden kissing gate and cross a concrete track and a 10 metre-wide grass strip to keep straight on down another concrete track, with a hedge to the right and a gentle view to the left
107. You now follow this path all the way into Cranbrook. In 500 metres it becomes an earth path. In another 400 metres you pass through a decaying

kissing gate and carry on down a fenced path.

- 108.** In 60 metres more cross a road and carry on up steps beyond. Keep on down the left-hand edge of playing fields.
- 109.** In 200 metres keep to the left of a playground. In another 100 metres veer left through a churchyard.
- 110.** Pass to the right of the church in another 100 metres and in 80 metres you come to the main street of **Cranbrook**. Ahead of you is the **George Hotel**.
- **Turning left** on the main road in 40 metres you come to **Arthur's** coffee shop on the left, and 80 metres beyond that the **Cocolicious** patisserie. 40 metres beyond that you come to a three-way road junction, with a fine view of Cranbrook's **windmill** ahead. On the left here is the **Waterloo House tea room**. The **windmill**, which is still able to grind corn by windpower alone, is open from 2.30 to 5pm on Saturdays and bank holiday Mondays from April to September. To visit it keep ahead at the three-way road junction. *For **Costa Coffee** follow the directions to the bus stop below: it is 100 metres beyond it on the right.*
 - For the **Arriva bus no 5 to Staplehurst** (ultimate destination Maidstone) return to the point where the path through the churchyard joined the road and carry on around the corner up the main street of the town (***or turn right on the main road if coming down from the churchyard***). The stop is in 150 metres on the **right-hand side** of the road. *Don't go to the earlier bus stop on the left-hand side, as this is the service to Hawkhurst.*

Cranbrook to Goudhurst **(6.8km/4.2 miles)**

- 111.** Follow the directions to the bus stop in Goudhurst in the previous section, and then continue on up the road, the main street of Cranbrook.
- 112.** In 350 metres ignore Wheatfield Drive on the right, but in 70 metres more turn right up New Road, following a footpath sign.

- 113.** In 220 metres cross a main road and keep on up a track, passing a fieldgate in 10 metres.
- 114.** In 200 metres fork left off the track at a footpath post onto a path that in 100 metres starts to descend in a slight gully. (Ignore the footpath to the left at the start of this).
- 115.** In 100 metres, at a track, turn right for 10 metres and then left to resume the route downhill on a path to the right of a slight gully.
- 116.** In another 60 metres fork left on a broad path going downhill under the trees.
- 117.** In 200 metres more you come to a wide earth track where you go left.
- 118.** In 300 metres you pass over the top of a hill and down the other side, still on the track.
- 119.** In another 300 metres, just before an area of new trees, turn right at a footpath post up a side track, signposted High Weald Landscape Trail.
- 120.** In 100 metres, at the bottom of a dip, the track becomes a path and veers left up into the woods. (Ignore paths left and right at the start of the woods.)
- 121.** In 300 metres you emerge onto a tarmac drive coming from a fieldgate to the right. Carry on up this in the same direction as before.
- 122.** In 400 metres you emerge between fields.
- 123.** In 250 metres, just before a house turn left with a tarmac drive.
- 124.** In 100 metres turn right to come in 30 metres to a road. Cross this with care to take a path 10 metres to the left (to the left end of a wood fence). This takes you along the right-hand edge of a field.
- 125.** In 350 metres, at the end of the field, cross a footbridge and carry on up the right-hand edge of the next field.
- 126.** In 130 metres, at the top of the field, pass through a metal gate and out onto the drive of a house. Keep straight on, ignoring ways to houses left and right.
- 127.** In 400 metres, just as the track starts to descend, turn left onto another track.

- 128.** In 300 metres, at a track crossroads, go right.
- 129.** In 200 metres, at the next track crossroads, with a field ahead, go left (with a view of Goudhurst across the valley now to your right).
- 130.** In 150 metres, by a pond left, the technical route of the High Weald Landscape Trail seems to be the left fork, into a field and down its right-hand edge, but this way is indistinct and it is easier to ignore the left fork and keep to the track.
- 131.** In 100 metres the track emerges from the wood and carries on down the right-hand side of a field.
- 132.** In 200 metres the track passes through another small wood. 200 metres beyond this point the track curves left across the middle of the field, a point marked by a footpath post. Here leave the track to keep on downhill on the right-hand edge of a rough field (no clear path).
- 133.** Keep to the field edge to its very far right-hand corner in 300 metres. Here cross a footbridge and a track and pass through a tree boundary into another field. Veer right, downhill, across this.
- 134.** In 150 metres, at the bottom of the field, cross a footbridge to pass into another field. Veer left to follow its right-hand upper edge.
- 135.** In 300 metres, at the far end of the field, turn right uphill on a track.
- 136.** In 120 metres cross a road and keep on uphill over a stile on a grassy path to the right of a field.
- 137.** In 170 metres the path rather bizarrely goes up into a horse exercise paddock: keep on down its right-hand side.
- 138.** In 80 metres emerge onto a road and carry on uphill.
- 139.** In 150 metres, just after a half-timbered house, go right up Maypole Lane.
- 140.** In 130 metres, just before the road merges with another road (Tidymotts Lane), veer left up across the grass bank, cross Tidymotts Lane, and go up a path, signposted High Weald Landscape Trail.
- 141.** In 170 metres you come to a road. Cross it and carry on up the left-hand edge of the churchyard.
- 142.** In 60 metres turn left in front of the main door of the church to reach the main road. The **Star and Eagle Hotel**, a possible tea stop is on the left.
- 143.** Keep on down the main road through the village centre (one or two **cafes** here).
- 144.** In 130 metres, at a major crossroads, go sharp right around **The Vine** pub (whose front garden overlooks the bus stop) down North Road. The **bus stop** for Marden or Tunbridge Wells is on the left in 50 metres.

Sissinghurst Castle to Bubhurst (5.4km/3.4 miles)

- 145.** Coming out of the Granary Restaurant at Sissinghurst Castle, turn left and left again to go through the arch through the barn. On the far side turn right onto a car-wide track.
- 146.** In 60 metres you have Sissinghurst gardens on your right. In 100 metres, where the gardens end, keep straight on down the track.
- 147.** In 600 metres the track crosses a stream and passes through a line of trees, starting to climb uphill. In 200 metres more, at the top of the hill, turn right on a road.
- 148.** In 600 metres, at a road junction, turn left. Stay on this quiet lane, ignoring ways off
- 149.** In 1.1 kilometres, 10 metres before you come to a junction with a main road, and just beyond Wealden House on your left, turn left up a signposted footpath. (*Ignore the signposted footpath into a field 120 metres before this.*)
- 150.** At first this is a driveway to a house but **in 10 metres**, just beyond a fence left, **veer left up a path** on the left-hand edge of the garden, with a fence and hedge to your left, and shrubs to your right.
- 151.** In 50 metres cross a stile into a field. Keep on up its right-hand edge. In 60 metres pass through a gap into another field
- 152.** **The exit of this new field is hard to see.** Veer left diagonally across the field to find a stile on its left-hand edge, 50 metres from its far corner (and just before two large oak trees).

- 153.** Cross the stile and a footbridge to carry on down the right-hand edge of the next field.
- 154.** In 100 metres, in the corner of the field, cross a footbridge with a stile either end, and turn right along the field edge. In 60 metres follow the field edge round to the left.
- 155.** In 300 metres, at the far end of the field, go right into the next field, following a footpath arrow.
- 156.** In 30 metres go left through a fieldgate and on up the right-hand edge of the next field
- 157.** In 100 metres go through a fieldgate and veer slightly left towards a fieldgate at the base of the hill. In 100 metres pass through this and up a track with a hedge right and a fence left and right.
- 158.** In 180 metres, at the top of the track, curve right towards farm buildings and then left up a car-wide track to the left of a wood and tile barn.
- 159.** [!] The official footpath route is to turn left before the pond, go to the front of the house, and then right up its drive to the road. *(If unsure here, you could just carry on along the track to the right of the pond and through more farm buildings to the road, but this is not a right of way).*
- 160.** At the road turn left. In 150 metres, just before houses to the right (possibly not visible in summer), turn right over a stile, following a footpath signpost
- 161.** Keep on up the left-hand edge of a field. In 130 metres, at the top of the hill, cross a stile and pass through a gap in the hedge. Turn left along the field edge.
- 162.** In 40 metres turn right down between two fields, passing to the right of a thicket in 30 metres.
- 163.** In 80 metres, before a second thicket, the path forks. Keep to the **left** of the thicket and then in 10 metres keep going diagonally out across the field (ie leaving the field edge), aiming for a point about 40 metres to the left of an area of trees in its far corner 150 metres away. The black metal gate in the hedge here is hard to see till you actually come to it, but there is a wooden footbridge before it.
- If you can't find this path**, or don't want to cross a field of crops, keep to the right-hand edge of this field, and then instead of leaving it by the footbridge at the bottom, curve left around the field edge, passing an area of trees on your right, and then on back up the far edge of the field: you should find the footbridge and gate to the right 40 metres beyond the trees.
- 164.** Beyond the gate go half right across a field corner to come to a stile in 50 metres. Cross this and keep on in the same direction across the next field, aiming for a point 100 metres away on the far side of the field just to the right of a mini-pylon.
- 165.** 20 metres to the right of the mini-pylon descend a short bank and cross a stile. The original path crossed a stile to the right of the next mini-pylon, on the far side of the field. Since this is now gone (and fenced off), the nearest approximation to the right of way is to go through the fieldgate 80 metres to the left of the pylon.
- 166.** Once through the gate go straight ahead down the left-hand edge of the next field to pass through another gate in 80 metres
- 167.** **The way forward is not obvious** (*I suspect another stile has been lost here*) but if you go forward 60 metres, you can see a metal fieldgate to your left. Go through this and then in 30 metres turn right through a rusted metal fieldgate onto a road.
- 168.** Turn left on the road, passing an old house and then the entrance to Little Bubhurst Barn on your right. In another 60 metres, where the lane curves left, turn right through a fieldgate, following a footpath sign.
- 169.** Keep to the left-hand edge of the field for 30 metres, and then turn left through a fieldgate. Keep to the left-hand edge of this field. In 130 metres, on its far side, turn right just **before** a gap/fieldgate up the far edge of the field.
- 170.** In 50 metres turn left through a metal gate, cross a footbridge and then turn immediately right another metal gate. *You now follow the directions in paragraph 51 on page 6.*

**Sissinghurst village to
Sissinghurst Castle
(2.3km/1.4 miles)**

This is the start of option

c) Sissinghurst to Headcorn.

- 171.** To find the bus stop in Staplehurst, come out of the station and follow the station approach road as it curves left around the car park to come to the main road. Across the main road slightly to the right is the bus stop for Sissinghurst village.
- 172.** Getting off the bus in the centre of Sissinghurst village, walk back down the road (ie reversing the direction the bus has just come).
- 173.** In 400 metres, 100 metres after the houses end, turn left down a tarmac drive, with a field to the right.
- 174.** In 250 metres, just before the gates of a Waste Water Treatment Works, veer left into an orchard and keep on downhill on its right-hand side.
- 175.** In 100 metres cross a footbridge and turn right through a wooden kissing gate onto a woodland path.
- *This path can be very muddy in winter. A less muddy alternative veers to the left off it in 15 metres and winds through the trees - sometimes indistinctly - roughly parallel to the main path.*
- 176.** In 600 metres you come to the end of the wood. Here turn left off the track up a path just inside the wood edge.
- (Note that there are some cleared patches in the wood: don't mistake these for its end: when you come to the very end of the wood you will not be in any doubt. **If you go too far along the track** you will come to a fieldgate with the car road to Sissinghurst Castle beyond: the left turn is 50 metres **before** this gate)*
- *If you are on the alternative path mentioned in paragraph 175, you will come to a T-junction with the path just inside the wood edge: ie shrubs block your onward route. Here turn left.*
- 177.** In 50 metres you emerge into a field and carry on up its right-hand side.
- 178.** In 200 metres, at the top of the field, go through a gate to the left of a double fieldgate and turn right along the field edge.
- 179.** In 60 metres pass through a gate to the left of a double fieldgate. Beyond keep to the field edge initially, veering left after 40 metres to follow a path diagonally across an orchard as indicated by an arrow on a post.
- 180.** In 200 metres, on the far side of the orchard, turn right on a part earth track, and then merge with a gravel track coming from a red-tiled house. Keep on along this, with a field to your left and a line of trees to your right.
- 181.** In 250 metres, at the end of the track, go diagonally across a tarmac area in front of the **Old Dairy** shop and cafe left, to keep on down a tarmac path signposted 'Garden, Tickets, Toilets'.
- 182.** In 80 metres pass the toilets and Visitor Reception on your left, and then an oast house-topped barn left: after the barn turn left to reach the **Granary Restaurant**, the main tea room at Sissinghurst.

To continue the walk to Headcorn refer to paragraph 145 on page 10.