

Main walk last checked	Short walk checked	Long walk checked	
4 November 2023	6 November 2021	6 November 2021	
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Wadhurst via Bewl Water circular

Length:	Main walk:	17 km (10.6 miles)
	Short walk:	12.9km (8 miles)
	Long walk:	19.6km (12.2 miles)
	Figure of eight walk:	17.6km (10.9 miles) or 20.3km (12.6 miles)

All walks 1km (0.6 miles) shorter with main road ending, and 3.2km (2 miles) shorter if you get a bus from Wadhurst village

Toughness: 4 out of 10: mostly gentle gradients

Maps: OS Explorer 136, Landranger 188

Features

The area around Wadhurst is one of the prettiest parts of the Weald – a place of hidden valleys, ancient woods, and quaint old farms which feel far away from the hustle and bustle of modern life. This walk gives you a perfect introduction to it. Starting at Wadhurst station, it follows the Sussex Border Path to lunch at a pub in Cousley Wood (*reportedly **no longer doing food** - check before relying on it*), and then descends with fine panoramic views to Bewl Water Reservoir, whose shore is open and unfenced unlike many other reservoirs, and which makes a fine spot to while away some time on a sunny day.

You then have a choice of whether you do a shorter or longer exploration of the shores of the reservoir (see **Walk Options** on page 2) before climbing up to the hilltop village of Wadhurst, a classic Wealden settlement, where you can have tea in one of its cafes (Monday to Saturday), or in one of its two pubs.

After tea you can choose between a direct route to the station down the main road (but with a pavement all the way), or a quiet walk along the back lanes. It is 3.2km (2 miles) from Wadhurst to the station via the back lanes and it is probably best to allow at least an hour for this. For the shorter 2.2km (1.4 miles) by the main road, allow 40 minutes.

Walk options

You can both shorten and lengthen the main walk:

- A direct path from the reservoir up to Wadhurst village - a pleasant and gentle climb - reduces the distance from lunch to just 4.5km (2.8 miles) from lunch to tea and makes a **short walk of 12.9km (8 miles)**.
- The **main walk, 17km (10.6 miles)** long, spends more time exploring the shores of the reservoir and then returns to Wadhurst over lovely hilly territory with fine views. It is 8.5km (5.3 miles) from lunch to tea by this route.
- For an even fuller exploration of Bewl Water, the **long walk** takes you out around a beautiful promontory sticking out into the lake. It then follows the main walk's hilly route into Wadhurst. This walk is **19.6km (12.2 miles)** long and it is 11.1km (6.9 miles) from lunch to tea.

To do any of these walks, simply start with the main walk directions. You will be told when to switch to the short or long option and where to find the directions for them.

- You can also combine part of this walk with the short option (option a) of the **Wadhurst Circular** walk on this website to create a **Figure of eight walk** (ie having both lunch and tea in Wadhurst) offering a comprehensive introduction to the different types of scenery around the village. This walk is 7km (4.3 miles) in the morning and 7.4km (4.6 miles) from lunch to tea, which with a further 3.2km (2 miles) to the station gives a total walk length of **17.6km (10.9 miles)**. Or if you use the long walk option, it is 10.1km (6.3 miles) from lunch to tea, giving a total walk length of **20.3km (12.6 miles)**. To do this walk follow the Wadhurst Circular short walk as far as lunch, then see paragraph 96 on page 7.

Transport

Wadhurst station is on the Hastings Line, served by trains from **Charing Cross** via **London Bridge**. Take the train nearest to **10.10am** from London to get to lunch in time.

On Mondays to Saturdays you can shorten any of the walks by **3.2km (2 miles)** by taking the **254 bus** from Wadhurst village (the stop just outside the Greyhound pub, on the same side of the road) to Wadhurst station. Buses go roughly on the hour until 6pm. If you are heading for London it may make sense to stay on the bus to Tunbridge Wells station (about 20 minutes after Wadhurst) which has a much more frequent train service.

Lunch and tea places

The Old Vine, Cousley Wood (01892 784467 or 783666), 5.3km (3.3 miles) into the main, short and long walks is the only lunch option. *Unfortunately there are reports that this pub is **no longer serving food** - check before relying on it.*

Tea options are all in Wadhurst, which is 13.8 (8.6 miles) into the main walk, 9.8km (6.1 miles) into the short walk and 16.4km (10.2 miles) into the long walk. The best place currently seems to be **The Artful Grocers**, a food store with a cafe attached, which is open till 5pm Monday to Saturday. The **Piccolo** cafe keeps the same hours.

Otherwise the **Jempsons** supermarket has a tea and coffee machine and good selection of cakes (you could take them to the churchyard - see paragraph 85 on page 7 - where there is a bench), while the **One Shop** convenience store has a Costa Coffee machine. Both shops are open till 10pm Monday to Saturday.

Of Wadhurst's two pubs, the **Greyhound**, the first you come to, is currently (November 2023) **closed** and to let, but 100 metres up the road the **White Hart** has been revamped and is now quite smart, serving tea in pots.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Wadhurst station to Cousley Wood (5.3km/3.3 miles)

1. Coming off the platform at Wadhurst station, turn left in the car park to come to the main road in 80 metres. Turn left on this.
2. In 80 metres take a minor road downhill to the right, signposted to Woods Green.
3. In 70 metres ignore a signposted path up a driveway to the right, and in another 40 metres, at the bottom of the dip, ignore another driveway to the left. But in another 10 metres turn left off the road across a footbridge, a signposted bridleway.
4. Follow this bridleway for 650 metres until it comes to a road. (In more detail: At first the bridleway climbs into a wood, and then it descends alongside an open field. Going back into the woods, it crosses a stream and comes to the road in another 150 metres.)
5. When you come to the road, turn left downhill between high hedges.
6. In 350 metres, at the bottom of the hill, you pass an idyllic house on a knoll to the right and start to climb uphill again.
7. In 150 metres, as the road comes up into a wooded area, **turn sharp right**, onto a tarmac drive marked "Great Shoemiths Farm only: Private". (Despite this, it is a right of way.)
8. Follow the tarmac drive to the farm, with a metal fence to the right. In 600 metres, when you get close to the farm buildings, ignore a footpath across a stone bridge to the right and instead walk up the driveway towards the farm complex.
9. In another 80 metres, 5 metres **before** a fieldgate across the drive (usually open), **turn right over a stile**, following a footpath arrow, **ignoring** a wooden gate with a footpath arrow on it to the right of the fieldgate.
10. In 30 metres pass round to the right of a pond surrounded by trees. Beyond go straight on across a field towards a fieldgate in 100 metres.
11. Pass through the gate and cross a ditch on a grass bridge and head slightly left, towards a gap in the hedge on the far side of the next field, 60 metres to the left of a clump of trees.
12. In 120 metres pass through this gap, and veer right, aiming for the right-hand edge of another clump of trees on the far side of the field.
13. In 250 metres pass the right-hand corner of the clump of trees and head for a stile in the hedge 80 metres ahead.
14. After the stile keep on down the left-hand edge of a field, passing a clump of trees on the right halfway.
15. In 220 metres pass a line of tall oaks, (which is all that remains of a former field boundary) and veer right to carry on down the left-hand edge of the next field.
16. In 170 metres, at the end of the field, the path ahead, between two hedges, is rather overgrown, and currently (November 2023) the best option is to veer left into the neighbouring field and carry on down its right-hand edge.
17. In 150 metres cross a stile to the left of a wooden gate and again veer left into the neighbouring field, as the path ahead is blocked.
18. In another 100 metres, just past a house and tennis court, turn right along the edge of the house garden.
19. In 80 metres pass through a metal fieldgate and turn left on a tarmac lane, which comes from the house to your right.
20. Follow this lane past other houses. In 100 metres it turns right uphill and in 250 metres more left downhill across a dip to come in 180 metres to a crossroads with a village green ahead of you.
21. Keep to the right of a hummock on the green ahead and beyond it veer slightly left, diagonally downhill across the green, heading for a house converted from a barn 80 metres away on its far side.
22. Turn right in front of this house, and then just beyond it turn left through a double wooden fieldgate up a tarmac drive, signposted on the opposite side of the road as the Sussex Border Path.

23. Pass through a gate in 70 metres and on uphill on a grassy track.
24. In 120 metres, at the top of the hill, pass through a kissing gate and veer right along the edge of a triangular field, following a fence on your left-hand side.
25. In 120 metres cross the remains of a stile and carry on along the right-hand edge of the next field, still with a fence to your left.
26. In 200 metres cross the remains of a stile to the left of a metal fieldgate. Keep straight on between two fenced plantations of trees, ignoring a fieldgate to the left 30 metres ahead.
27. In 250 metres this brings you to a moderately busy road: cross this with care and turn left along its far side.
28. In 120 metres ignore a road to the left to Hook Green, and keep straight on into the village of Cousley Wood for a further 350 metres until you come to **The Old Vine**, the suggested lunchtime pub, on the right-hand side of the road.

Cousley Wood to the top of the reservoir (2.8km/1.7 mi)

29. After lunch come out of the pub, and turn right and in 30 metres turn right again (or if not stopping for lunch, turn right 30 metres beyond the pub), to take a narrow lane downhill.
30. In 150 metres turn left with the lane. Follow the lane downhill, with distant views of Bewl Water reservoir after a while.
31. In 900 metres, just before a farm (Bewl Water Oast), turn left through a kissing gate on a path between fences.
32. Follow this path for 270 metres until it enters a wood (ie trees both sides of the path). Once in the wood, follow the path round to the left along a fence. In 25 metres ignore a path to the left and curve right with the fence.
33. In 30 metres more pass through a gap in the fence and turn right at a T-junction onto a broad path that descends through the wood for around 120 metres to the edge of Bewl Water.
34. Turn right onto the lakeside path. Follow this path for a kilometre. You pass through several wooded sections, with two or three gaps giving views of

the reservoir. Ignore paths up into the woods to the right during this section.

35. Towards the end of the reservoir (which is sometimes dry in its upper reaches), the path goes along a grassy strip (slithery mud in winter) between bushes and trees. After 250 metres of this, the path becomes more stony again and curves left. (Ignore a not always very visible grassy footpath straight ahead on this bend, which leads towards an open field.)
36. Just after the curve you cross a stream. **In another 70 metres you can see a stile on the right**, marked "Footpath to Wadhurst 1 mile" (This is clearly signed, but can be hidden from view by vegetation until you are right upon it). **Here you have a choice:**
 - **To do the short walk**, going directly uphill to Wadhurst, *turn right over the stile* and continue with the directions in the next section.
 - **To continue with the main walk**, (which is another 5.7km/3.6 miles to Wadhurst from this point) or to do the **long walk**, ignore the stile and *keep straight ahead on the track*. Continue with paragraph 42 on page 5.

Short route to Wadhurst village (1.7km/1.1 miles)

*This is the **short walk** route.*

37. After crossing the stile, veer left into a field and keep up its right-hand edge, with a wood to the right.
38. In 200 metres, 50 metres beyond the end of the wood, cross a stile on the right-hand edge of the field, to emerge onto a car-wide path.
39. Follow this path (soon a farm track) uphill for 700 metres all the way to a farm. Carry on through the farm buildings, still on the track, until in 250 metres you come to a road. Keep straight uphill on this road.
40. In 400 metres, this brings you to the centre of **Wadhurst village**, opposite the **Greyhound** pub. Just to the right of the pub is **The Artful Grocers** (which has a cafe).
41. Otherwise, turn right down into the main street of the village. In 100 metres more on the left is the **White Hart** pub, with the **One Shop**

convenience store just beyond it. In 60 metres more **Jempsons** supermarket is on the left, with the **Piccolo** cafe just beyond it.

- After tea, you can if you wish **carry on along the main road** to Wadhurst station, which is a 2.2km (1.4 mile) walk (*allow 40 minutes*) with pavement all the way. However for **a more tranquil route**, which is 1km (0.6 miles longer) - *allow an hour* - see paragraph 85 on page 7.

Top of reservoir to Bryants Farm (1.9km/1.2 miles)

*This is the continuation of the **main** and **long** walks.*

42. Keep straight on along the track, with fields beyond a wooden fence intermittently to your right and woods (flooded when the reservoir is full) to your left, for 500 metres, during which time it twice curves sharp left over creeks (the second one an inlet when the reservoir is high), almost doubling back on itself.
43. 200 metres after the second creek you emerge into the open, with what should be a view of the reservoir to your left: when full it can come up to within 20 metres of the fence to your right, but when the weather has been dry you may just see a green valley.
44. Keep along the reservoir edge with a fence to your right, curving to the right around a promontory and along what is another arm of the reservoir when it is full.
45. In 350 metres, just after you round the promontory, the open space narrows between the fence right and thickets left. In another 150 metres the path curves left to cross a stream and again almost doubles back on itself.
46. In 100 metres you emerge into another open section, though with willows blocking your view of the reservoir initially.
47. In 200 metres you are back into woods again. In another 100 metres **turn right uphill** through a gate following a sign for 'Bewl Water Route'.
48. Climb directly uphill on a car-wide gravel path, turning left with it in 100 metres to climb uphill more gently.
49. In 250 metres you come to a road and turn right on it, uphill.
50. In 50 metres a footpath is signposted to the left down a concrete track. Here you have a choice
 - **To do the long walk** (6.5km/4 miles to Wadhurst from this point) *turn left* down this track and continue with the directions in the next section.
 - **To continue with the main walk** (3.8km/2.4 miles to Wadhurst from this point), ignore the turning to the left and *keep straight ahead* on the road. Continue with the directions in paragraph 65 on page 6.

Bryants Farm to Ward's Lane - long walk route (3.2km/2 miles)

51. Having turned left on the concrete track, pass a vehicle blocking barrier in 10 metres and carry on downhill.
52. In another 280 metres, just before a set of gateposts with no gate, turn right off the drive following a signposted footpath to Hook Hill.
53. Initially the path descends steps and has fences on both sides. In 80 metres the path turns left onto a long straight stretch. (The trees to the immediate left of this path are flooded when the reservoir is full, but the path is above the water level.)
54. In 400 metres there is a brief open section, with a bench and a view. In another 30 metres you pass a hut and in 10 metres descend to cross a track with a gate across it (a former road cut off by the reservoir) to re-enter woods.
55. In 100 metres there is a path forking right up steps. If the reservoir is full to the brim you must take this right-hand path, but otherwise simply keep straight ahead. Both paths meet again in 150 metres (when steps join from the right).
56. 300 metres after the paths reunite you come out into the open for 100 metres before plunging into the wood again.
57. In another 100 metres, having climbed up the far side of a slight dip, you emerge from the wood, with a field fence to your right and a house (a converted oast house) away to the right. Keep on down the field edge and

in 30 metres turn right with the fence to keep along its edge.

- 58. In 150 metres you emerge into the open. There is a bench to the left and when the reservoir is full the water is just a few metres below this.
- 59. After 500 metres on this open section you come to the top of an inlet (dry when the reservoir is low). Here leave the shore of the reservoir on a path fenced in between fields.
- 60. In 150 metres cross a road and go through a kissing gate up a permissive path into an arable field along the line of a windbreak hedge.
- 61. In 170 metres, at the top of the field, turn left along another windbreak hedge.
- 62. In 150 metres, at the end of the windbreak hedge, veer slightly right to pass through a gate in a hedge ahead. Turn right uphill beyond it, with the hedge to your right.
- 63. In 300 metres enter a farmyard: keep straight on through it and on uphill on the farm's tarmac entrance road.
- 64. In 350 metres at a T-junction with a road turn left.

Continue with paragraph 67 below.

Bryants Farm to Ward's Lane: main walk route (0.6km/0.4 miles)

- 65. In 200 metres, at a road T-junction, turn right, still following the signpost for 'Bewl Water Route'.
- 66. In 200 metres ignore a drive to the right to Southfields and in 150 metres more ignore a tarmac drive to the left.

Continue with the directions in the next section.

Ward's Lane to Wadhurst village (3.2km/2 miles)

- 67. In another 150 metres, at the point where trees start on the right-hand side of the road, turn right through a fieldgate with a yellow arrow on it and keep on down the right-hand side of a field. (Wadhurst church spire is straight ahead on the horizon.)

- 68. In 200 metres, at the bottom of the field, pass through a line of trees and turn left along its far side, with the valley to your right. Descend in a deepening gully along the edge of the field.
- 69. In 200 metres this brings you to double fieldgates: pass through them and carry on up a grassy track, with a fence and wood to your right.
- 70. After about 100 metres veer left away from the wood, following the faint track as it curves right and up around the bowl of the hill, eventually heading for a point between two houses at the top of the hill.
- 71. In another 200 metres aim to the right of the first house and a large tree to its right (after which you can see there are actually three houses, two of them now ahead of you). 20 metres beyond the tree, pass through a fieldgate and turn left on a tarmac drive.
- 72. Follow the drive as it curves right uphill. In 200 metres, as the gradient eases, a fine view opens out to the right, again with the spire of Wadhurst church on the horizon.
- 73. In another 170 metres, where a field ends to your right, turn right down stone steps and through a rusty metal kissing gate to carry on downhill with a wire fence and hedge to your right.
- 74. After 100 metres veer slightly left away from the fence, heading for a point about 100 metres to the left of the bottom right-hand corner of the field.
- 75. In 150 metres or so, as you approach the tree boundary, you can see that the actual exit from the field is further left, through a metal gate about 70 metres to the left of two large oak trees.
- 76. Pass through this gate and beyond it veer left onto a clear path through the wood.
- 77. In 100 metres this path veers right to cross a ditch on a car-wide bridge with metal rails. Beyond this veer slightly right to follow a track that emerges in 30 metres into a large field (ignoring a fieldgate to the left).
- 78. Veer left up the edge of this field, climbing steadily with a fence to your left.

79. In 400 metres, at the end of the field, you come to a dark wood. Turn right directly uphill along its edge.
80. Halfway up this climb turn around for a fine view. Otherwise, in 200 metres, at the top of the hill, exit the field by a concealed gap in its top left-hand corner (**not** the more obvious car wide gap 30 metres to the right of the corner).
81. Cross the lane and pass to the right of a metal fieldgate (or cross a stile to its left).
82. Veer diagonally left across the field beyond, on a faint grassy path that heads for its far corner.
83. In 250 metres, when you reach this corner, cross a stile and turn right on the main road (there is a pavement).
84. In 600 metres you come to the centre of Wadhurst, passing the **Greyhound Inn** on your left first, with the **bus stop** for the 254 just before it. Just beyond it on the left is **The Artful Grocers** (which has a cafe). In 100 metres more on the same side is the **White Hart** pub, with the **One Shop** convenience store just beyond it. In 60 metres more **Jempsons** supermarket is on the left, with the **Piccolo** cafe just beyond it.
 - After tea, you can if you wish **carry on along the main road** to Wadhurst station, which is a 2.2km (1.4 mile) walk (*allow 40 minutes*) with pavement all the way. However for **a more tranquil route**, 1km (0.6 miles) longer (*allow an hour*), see the next section.

To Wadhurst station via the back lanes (3.2km/2 miles)

85. Turn sharp right up the little side road (Church Street) *opposite* the White Hart – and in 50 metres turn left along the brick path into the churchyard.
86. Follow the path round the left side of the church, to reach a metal kissing gate in 70 metres. Beyond this, keep on along an earth footpath, with the graveyard on your right.
87. In 250 metres go down some steps and turn left down a lane.
88. In 150 metres take the lane forking left uphill.

89. In 400 metres keep straight on across a crossroads, on Turners Green Road.
90. In 150 metres fork left, and in 70 metres keep straight on at another crossroads, still on Turners Green Road.
91. In 180 metres, as a lane comes in from the right, turn left across a stile, heading towards the left side of a house on the far side of the field.
92. In 100 metres pass through a gate and in another 100 metres pass through a kissing gate and continue down the right-hand edge of a field with a fence left.
93. In 150 metres exit the bottom of the field and turn left down a lane.
94. In 180 metres turn right at a T-junction.
95. Stay on this lane for a kilometre, until it turns left and climbs steeply uphill for 130 metres to the main road. Turn left on the main road for 80 metres to reach **Wadhurst station** through its car park on your right.

Wadhurst village to Bewl Water (1.7km/1.1 miles)

*This is the link route from Wadhurst village for the **Figure of eight walk**. First follow the **short walk** directions for the **Wadhurst Circular** walk (book 2 walk 18, option a), also on this website, as far as lunch in Wadhurst, a distance of 7km (4.3 miles).*

96. After lunch turn right out of the **White Hart** pub and walk down the main road to the **Greyhound pub**, 100 metres beyond the White Hart.
97. Take the side road *opposite* the Greyhound, Blacksmiths Lane, and carry on downhill along it.
98. In 400 metres where the lane turns left, carry straight on down a track towards a farm.
99. In 150 metres pass the farm buildings. In another 70 metres, where the track veers right before a barn, go straight on through a fieldgate (or over the stile to its left), passing to the left of another small barn in 70 metres and then on along the left-hand edge of a field on a farm track.

- 100.** In another 130 metres pass through the left-hand of two fieldgates. The track is now enclosed by hedges either side and runs between fields.
- 101.** In 350 metres, where the track ends by veering right to a fieldgate, keep straight on down a footpath, still with fields left and right.
- 102.** In another 100 metres cross a stile into a field and carry on down its left-hand edge, skirting around a small wood.
- 103.** In 200 metres, at the bottom left-hand corner of the field, cross a stile and turn right at a T-junction with a car-wide gravel path

Now continue with paragraph 42 on page 5.