

Winchelsea to Hastings walk

The hardest walk in the book. A gentle start with the 1066 Path and a great pub for lunch. After lunch, a great coastal cliff walk with 4 steep climbs, Fairlight Glen naturist beach, fish and chips on Hastings seafront, so one for summer.



Fairlight Glen & a dip in the sea

Length 20.3km (12.6 miles), 6 hours. For the whole outing, including trains, meals, sights and a swim, allow at least 12 hours.

Toughness 9 out of 10.

OS Maps Explorer 124 or Landrangers 189 & 199. Winchelsea, map reference TQ 899 184, is in **East Sussex**, 3km south-west of Rye.

Features This delightful walk with lovely coastal views is the hardest in the book - it has a very hilly ending, and is best done in summer if you would like to swim, otherwise in spring when the woodland floor is covered in bluebells and other wildflowers and, in early May, the gorse is bright yellow. The inland start from Winchelsea is flat to begin with, with just 1 climb for lunch at an excellent and very pretty pub. After lunch the route heads to the coast and follows the coastal path, and there are **4 steep cliffs to climb** (with the Fireheights lookout, and Fairlight Glen beach in the middle). Hastings has a 'working beach', a resort beach, and a quaint old town.

Starting below Winchelsea (once a coastal port, but storms have since stranded it 2km inland), the walk follows the River Brede and canals to an early lunch at a 17th century pub near the church in Icklesham. The pub is quaint, and its beer garden has a lovely view, but don't dawdle, less than 5km of this walk is before lunch, and the ending is strenuous.

After lunch, the route crosses two relatively clear streams, both with ill-fitting names: Pannel Sewer and Marsham Sewer, to the coast at Cliff End.

From here, the walk follows the hilly coastline, with sea views. A detour off the coastal route through the houses of Fairlight is required, as a result of severe coastal erosion (an average 1.4 metres of cliff-face is lost annually in these parts). Thereafter you follow the coastline through Hastings Country Park, with 3 steep climbs out of the wooded Warren, Fairlight and Ecclesbourne Glens. The first summit is Fireheights, a coastguard lookout, with excellent views of the coastline. From here on, there are many side paths worth exploring to secluded viewpoints.

The very picturesque Fairlight Glen has a nudist beach where you can drip-dry in fine weather, if you don't happen to have a towel. The path down to it is officially closed due to landslips, but (at your own risk) duck under the fence by the 'closed' signs, and you will find a trail that is well maintained by locals. Swimming is good at high/medium tide, not so good at low tide due to rocks. At low tide (but you must follow local advice on this) the adventurous, at their own risk, may be able to walk along the beach from Fairlight Glen to Hastings, past a new 'under cliff' (landslip). It involves rock hopping along the beach - proper shoes required - it's harder work than the cliff top path.

Otherwise, the suggested route has more steep climbing crossing Ecclesbourne Glen (valley). The coast path here has now reopened after the 2014 landslip.

Finally, you can see Hastings, and you descend down steps into the old town, with its Net Shops on the 'working beach' (tall, black, wooden sheds that were built for hanging out fishermen's nets) and, inland, its lanes and twittens (narrow alleys) of half-timbered cottages. From here, it is a 20 minute walk through the town and along the seafront beneath the Norman castle to the station.

In summer, take sufficient water, and a hat

Walk Options

You could shorten the walk by getting a regular bus back to Winchelsea, or on to Hastings from near the pub at Icklesham to Hastings or a taxi

from the pub at Pett Level.

Starting from Rye

As Winchelsea has an infrequent train service, directions are also given to start the walk from Rye. Its a long, flat, peaceful path with views over the levels.

This makes a longer walk of **24km (15 miles)**. The OS map for the Rye to Winchelsea leg is Explorer 125.

Alternative route from Winchelsea to Icklesham

This route (see section C in the online directions below) takes you from Winchelsea station up into the pretty and historic village of Winchelsea (otherwise not visited on the main walk) and then by an attractive ridge route with fine views to the Queen's Head in Icklesham, the recommended lunch pub. It adds **0.7km (0.4 miles)** to the walk length.

Following the Shoreline

Its possible for the adventurous, at their own risk, and on a falling tide only, to follow the shoreline. You must follow local advice on this.

Petts Level to Fairlight Glen beach **at low tide only**. Note that it is hard going (you have to hop from rock to rock in places), and there is no longer a way up to Fairlight Village (the old path fell into the sea). You pass a deserted beach though - you can see the houses above teetering on the edge due to cliff erosion.

Fairlight Glen beach to Hastings: You pass a new 'under cliff' (landslip). This is a good point to turn back, as after this, its rock hopping along the beach, even at low tide, with no access points - proper shoes required - its harder work than the cliff top path

Winchelsea or Rye Circular

By combining this walk as far as Pett Level with the latter part of [Walk 29 Hastings to Rye](#) in *Time Out Country Walks Volume 2* (directions also available on this site), you can create either a **Winchelsea Circular** walk of **16km (9.9 miles)** or a **Rye Circular** walk of **21.4km (13.3 miles)**. How to join up the two walks is indicated in section D in the online directions below.

History

The part-Norman **All Saints Church** at Icklesham contains a variety of architecture styles and has a nave and chancel that are not aligned with one another. A 1592 legacy notice in the church leaves over £3 a year 'for ever' for highway maintenance.

Ex-Beatle Paul McCartney, who lives a few miles from Winchelsea, funded the renovation of **Hog Hill** windmill (see map), which is visible from the walk route.

Iron Age chieftains had fortresses on both the east and west hills of Hastings. When the Romans left, the barbarian **Haestingas** tribe gave its name to the place, having to be subdued by King Offa in 771. William the Conqueror built his first **castle** here above the town. In 1287 large parts of Hastings were washed away in the **Great Storm**, the one that left Winchelsea stranded way inland. In medieval times, Hastings was one of the **Cinque Ports**, supplying 25 ships for 15 days a year for the country's defence purposes, in the days before the Royal Navy existed. (The Cinque ports, pronounced 'sink', were Sandwich, Dover, Hythe, Romney and Hastings, plus the two ancient towns of Rye and Winchelsea).

Travel

Take the train nearest to **10am** from **Charing Cross** Station to **Winchelsea**, (or the train nearest to **9am** to **Rye**, if doing the Rye start), changing at either Ashford International or Hastings. Journey time about 1 hour 50 minutes via Ashford or 2 hours via Hastings, depending on the connection. For a premium, you can reduce the journey time to 1 hour 20 minutes by taking the High Speed Train from **St Pancras** and changing at Ashford. Trains back from Hastings to Charing Cross run twice an hour (hourly in the evenings). Journey time 1 hour 30-45 minutes. Buy a day return to Winchelsea.

If doing the Rye Circular, trains back are hourly, changing at Ashford for either Charing Cross or St Pancras services. Winchelsea has trains every two hours, but the number 100 bus leaves for Rye from outside the New Inn hourly.

Note: There are 3 train routes to Hastings for the Rye / Winchelsea branch line. The High Speed route from St Pancras (change at Ashford International). The longer direct route from Charing Cross / London Bridge. And the even longer route from London Victoria via Clapham Junction and East Croydon. At times there are cheap 'super off peak' fares on Southeastern Trains from London terminals. In the past the Victoria route was cheapest.

If driving, you can park by Winchelsea station for free, or in Hastings, inland from Hastings County Park. There is a large pay-and-display car park by Rye station. There are half-hourly buses between Hastings, Icklesham, Winchelsea and Rye – routes 100 and 344.

Lunch

The early lunch stop is the **Queens Head** (tel 01424 814 552),

Parsonage Lane, Icklesham, which serves good food from midday to 2.45pm daily (all day at weekends), but tends to become rather crowded. Booking ahead advisable and essential at weekends. Its nice inside, and the beer garden has a beautiful view. However, this pub is very close to the Winchelsea start, leaving a long afternoon of four hours.

A very good alternative lunch pub, closer to mid-point in the walk, in the village of Pett, is **The Royal Oak Inn** (tel 01424 812 515) with comfortable inside dining areas and a beer garden at the rear. This walker friendly pub has a good, varied menu and serves lunch from 12 noon to 2.30pm Monday to Saturday and from 12 noon to 5.45pm on Sunday. The Royal Oak is an excellent alternative to the Queen's Head when the latter is booked up at weekends, and also makes for a welcoming mid-afternoon stop to take on liquid on a hot summer's day for those who had taken lunch earlier.

Unfortunately, what used to be your late lunch option, the Smuggler Inn at Pett Level, just below the sea wall, CLOSED in 2018 and is no more.

Tea Inland from Fireheights is the Coastguards Tea room, which use to serve as an early tea option before tackling the steep glens. It reopened in autumn 2021 after a period of closure. Nearby the Coastguards Visitor Centre and Cafe is also due to reopen early in 2022.

You go past numerous tea places on the route through Hastings, with at least two good pubs in the old town. In the new part of the town and along the sea front there are several fish and chip shops and diners.

On the Winchelsea Circular the **New Inn** does cakes and tea. The old town in Rye has various options on the Rye Circular walk.

Updates **Use the online version - route changes due to coastal landslips.** There is also an optional start from Rye, which has more trains than Winchelsea.

Coast path reopened Nov 2021. Minor updates to pubs and tea places, May 2022.

Landslip **Landslip at Ecclesbourne Glen**

The coast path has been repaired and reopened, and will become part of the England Coast Path - Oct-21

The 2013-16 landslips have greened over, and are no longer visible. [Jun-21]

Ecclesbourne Glen is a hanging valley [] on the coast path between Hastings' East Hill and Fairlight Glen. The coast path was closed at this point after a major landslide in winter 2013/14. A replacement path was destroyed by subsequent landslips in winter 2014/15. No further attempt to repair it has been made. There were further landslips in winter 15/16, but the area has now greened over and stable. The landslide is now deemed dormant, and the path was finally repaired in autumn 2021. The England Coast Path will be re-routed from an inland detour to use the repaired path.*

[] The Glen doesn't quite go down to the beach, there's a low cliff at the end, just a little too high and vertical to climb up/down.*

Local campaigners lost a battle with a caravan park (who they blame for the landslide, but whom consultants cleared of any blame), and fought long acrimonious battles with an intransigent Hastings Council. Luckily, they kept 'banging on' at the council, and won the battle to reopen the path. See: [Save Our Glen \(Facebook\)](#)

Fairlight Glen Beach

The path down to Fairlight Glen naturist beach (Covehurst Bay on the OS map, but this name isn't used locally) has been officially "closed" for many years. However, the path is currently in good condition, as a local has been maintaining it, and he's done an excellent job. If walking up from the beach, look for subtle white paint on some trees by the start. If you can manage a style, you should be fine [Jun-21]

This area is very active - there are landslips every few years. From the beach, on a falling tide, it's possible to walk west to Hastings although it's heavy going over the pebbles. You pass a new undercliff on the way, but beware, there are no escape routes from the beach until Hastings. You can also walk east to Petts Level beach, passing a sandy beach below Fairlight village. Beware - you can only get around the headland at low tide. You could climb the cliff to Fairlight Village in an emergency (you'd have to trespass through someone's garden to get to the top).

County Park

- [History of Hastings Country Park](#)

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After the walk, we would love to get your [feedback](#)

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By Car **Start** TN36 4JX **Finish** TN34 1BA

Help National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33
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Walk Directions

A) Rye railway station to Winchelsea railway station

This alternate start is provided as Winchelsea has infrequent trains.

1. *Turn right* coming out of **Rye railway station** ticket office, along the pavement. In 150 metres cross over the road (with a level crossing on your right hand side), to turn left.
2. After 80 metres *turn right* along Wish Street.
3. In 130 metres you pass a mini roundabout on your left-hand side and after a further 30 metres cross a road bridge over the river Tillingham. Immediately over this bridge *turn right* along a concrete footpath, marked by a 1066 Country Walk (CW) footpath signpost, your direction 290°.
4. In 30 metres go through a wooden gate and after a further 60 metres *cross over the railway line*, (flanked by two metal gates).
5. After 25 metres go through a wooden gate into a park and *turn left* along a tarmac path along the parks edge.
6. In 140 metres, leave the park over a wooden bridge, to continue along the (now fenced in) tarmac path. After 150 metres (having crossed two more footbridges), follow the path round to the right, your direction 300°. In 180 metres you go through some wooden car blocking bollards, to then turn left along a car wide tarmac bridleway, your direction 220°.
7. You now follow the 1066 CW signs to **Winchelsea** station, but in more detail: After 20 metres you pass by a red bricked utility building on your right hand side, to go through a metal gate. The path now becomes a narrow track with the old coastline cliff on your right, and a ditch stream on your left. Continue along this path, going through four metal gates (to the right of wooden fieldgates) along the way.
8. After 1.6km you go through a metal gate (to the right of a cattle grid), to join Dumb Woman's Lane and continue ahead in the same direction, 260°.

9. After 250 metres at a junction *turn left* along a lane signposted 'Winchelsea station and 1066 CW', your direction 160°.

B) Winchelsea railway station to Icklesham (lunch pub)

This is the start of the main walk in the book. Here you have a choice of routes to the lunch pub, the main route across the valley, or a new alternative along a ridge.

B1) The main walk across the valley

1. **[1]** Coming off the only platform at **Winchelsea railway station**, at the tarmac road *turn right* across the railway line, your direction 170°. (Or if coming from Rye, keep straight on past the station on the road). Bear left with this road, a waterway to your right. In 450 metres ignore a concrete car wide path off to the right (next to a mini pylon pole with a grey transformer box) beside the River Brede. In 220 metres ignore a stile to the left and cross the River Brede bridge. (Looking back from this bridge, the town of Rye can be seen on a hilltop and, on its right, Camber Castle, built by Henry VIII in 1540.)
2. In 180 metres, at the A259 road, *turn right* on a concrete car lane that is signposted as a footpath, your direction 310°.
3. Go over a stile (to the left of a wooden fieldgate) to go along a concrete car wide track. In 50 metres continue along a narrow earth track. In a further 70 metres, go through a wooden gate, and in 25 metres go across a wooden footbridge over a stream and through a wooden gate.
4. *Turn left* with the stream (which is often dried up in summer) and trees on your left-hand side, your direction 240°.
5. But in 100 metres, **[!]** as the wood to your left begins to bear left, *fork right* with no clear path, towards an isolated wooden gate visible ahead, at a bearing of 260°
6. In 40 metres you pass a sometimes soggy ditch on your right-hand side. In a further 70 metres go through a wooden gate to the left-hand side of a wooden fieldgate to cross a stream. Head across this field aiming for a wooden gate on the far side, your direction 290°.
7. In 200 metres go through the wooden gate (with a wooden fieldgate on its right-hand side) **[2]** into the next field. Head across this field, your direction 260°. (However depending on the time of the year and the state of the field you may find it easier to continue with the **River Brede** on your right hand side.)
8. In 400 metres you go through a wooden gate at the corner fencing on your left hand side (with a wooden footpath post 'Icklesham') to continue in the same direction on a car wide track with a field fencing on your right.
9. In 220 metres, by a brick water-pumping hut on your left-hand side, go through a wooden kissing gate (to the right of a metal fieldgate), to carry on with the river on your right-hand side.

- L0. In 450 metres go over a stile (a metal fieldgate on its left-hand side).
- L1. In 400 metres go over a stile; in a further 40 metres, *cross over the railway line*.
- L2. The other side, *bear left* on a track alongside the river for 30 metres, then go over a stile and *turn left* along the fence, due west.
- L3. In 55 metres **[3]** cross a grassy bridge and go through a metal fieldgate and over a stile and again over the railway line. In 20 metres go over a stile and straight on, with a waterway on your right-hand side and heading directly for Icklesham church, already visible in the distance.
- L4. Keep on through stiles and fences and, four fields and 800 metres later **[4]**, you **[!]** *go over a stile* (with a metal fieldgate and a concrete grid on its right-hand side) and ignore the main left fork (a car wide grassy road) to take a fork *bearing right*, following a faint path and heading between two mini-pylon poles visible on top of the hill ahead, your initial direction 200°.
- L5. In 400 metres, on the brow of the hill, go under the mini-pylon cables. In a further 35 metres go over a stile into the corner of the car park of the suggested lunch pub, the **Queens Head, Icklesham** (its name is painted on the roof tiles), to reach its back entrance after 50 metres. *After lunch resume the directions at section D below*

B2) Alternative route along the ridge

1. Coming off the platform at Winchelsea railway station turn right along the road (or carry on past it on the road if coming from the Rye start).
2. In 800 metres you come to a junction on a hairpin bend of a busy main road, the A259. *Cross the hairpin with great care and go uphill on the main road* using the narrow concrete verge alongside the crash barrier to the left of the road.
3. In 180 metres *fork left off the main road through an old city gate* (the Pipewell Gate of old Winchelsea) onto a residential road.
4. In 100 metres turn right uphill on another residential street.
5. In 80 metres ignore roads right and left. In another 120 metres you come to the centre of Winchelsea. Here keep *straight on* along the road, with the church to your left and the **New Inn** to your right.
6. In 250 metres you leave the houses behind. In another 300 metres, *as the road you are on turns sharp right, keep straight on down a minor road*. In 200 metres this curves right downhill and then left again. In 300 metres it passes under an old city gate - the New Gate - whose distance from the houses today shows how Winchelsea has shrunk since its heyday as a medieval port.
7. There is soon a fine view of Pett Level to your left. In 220 metres, at the end of this section, ignore a signposted path to the left and curve right with the road, uphill between high banks. In 220 metres, at the top of the hill, you emerge from the banks and carry on along the road between hedges.

8. In a further 150 metres, as the hedge to the left ends, ignore a stile to the right, but in 20 metres *fork left through a gate to the left of a wooden fieldgate*, signposted 1066 Country Walk. Head diagonally up across an arable field, heading for the left-hand edge of a clump of trees.
9. In 130 metres *pass to the left of the clump of trees* and keep straight on along the right-hand edge of a field.
10. In 80 metres cross a stile to the right of a wooden fieldgate, ignoring a signposted path to the left. Keep on along the right-hand edge of the next field.
11. In 110 metres cross a stile into another field and keep straight on across it, heading slightly to the left of the windmill (possibly now without its sails) on the hill ahead.
12. In 220 metres *cross a stile and keep straight on along a road*. In 90 metres, just after a white house on the left, *turn right through a metal gate* to the right of a fieldgate and *carry on uphill towards the windmill*.
13. In 130 metres, at the top of the hill, pass to the right of the windmill and bear very slightly left to descend the hill again. In 130 metres *pass through a gate and go straight on down a tarmac road*.
14. **[!]** In 40 metres *turn right through a small gap in the hedge* following a 1066 Country Walk signpost, *and immediately turn left again* to follow the hedge along the left-hand edge of a field.
15. In 70 metres pass through a kissing gate and keep on up the right-hand edge of a field. In 300 metres more *pass through a kissing gate and turn right on a tarmac drive* towards oast houses.
16. In 20 metres *fork left off the driveway up a fenced path*, following a 1066 Walk sign.
17. In 150 metres the path emerges onto a grassy strip with a driveway ahead. *Turn left* along the grassy strip, with a hedge to the right.
18. In 200 metres ignore a fork right to the church (unless you want to visit it). In 130 metres you emerge onto a road. **If you do not want to stop for lunch at the Queen's Head**, turn left on this road and resume the directions at point 49 below. **For lunch at the Queen's Head** turn right on the road.
19. In 80 metres *cross the busy A259 with care and go straight ahead* up Parsonage Lane, a dead end road.
20. In 100 metres, in front of a white house, fork right: the **Queen's Head Inn**, the recommended early lunch stop, is 30 metres ahead.

C) Icklesham (lunch pub) to Hastings

1. **Both the main route, and the ridge alternative continue.**
2. Come out of the pub and *turn left* on the lane, coming to the A259 crossroads in 130 metres. Cross over the A259 into Workhouse Lane. In 40 metres you come to the driveway of Chantry House, marked as a footpath.

3. **To bypass the church**, simply continue on the lane. In 60 metres the main route rejoins from the left and you continue at the asterisk **[*]** in point 49 below.
4. **To visit the church**, *turn left* on to the driveway of Chantry House, which leads in 130 metres to **All Saints Church, Icklesham**. Coming out of the church door *turn 90° left* to go through the churchyard, your direction south. In 20 metres ignore a stile 10 metres ahead and *fork right through a gap* in the blackberry bushes into an orchard.
5. Ignoring another stile 8 metres to the left, *you turn right* to go alongside the orchard fence on your left, your initial direction 280°. In 130 metres you rejoin Workhouse Lane and *go left* heading due south.
6. **[*]** In 200 metres, by a tarmac road right (Laurel Lane), go over a stile to the left of a metal fieldgate onto a footpath. Go 240° to the far right-hand corner of the field, 120 metres away. Here you go through a metal fieldgate, and on diagonally across this small field aiming for its far corner, your direction 230°.
7. In 70 metres cross a stile and carry on in the same direction, towards a stile visible ahead (3 metres to the left of the leftmost metal fieldgate), some 100 metres distant.
8. Go over this stile and slice the corner of the next field, your direction 220°, and in 130 metres go through a metal fieldgate and *turn left* down a car wide shingle track. You may now be able to see the sea away to your left-hand side. In 120 metres ignore a fork right to the farmhouse.
9. Go straight on through the farmyard. In 90 metres at the end of the farmyard go through a metal fieldgate on your right and *turn left*, your direction 220°, with a field fence on your left-hand side.
10. In 80 metres you pass a large pond on your right-hand side. In 70 metres go through a metal fieldgate to continue down the farm track, between hedges. Pett church is visible on the far horizon.
11. In 140 metres go through a fieldgate and *quarter right*, making for a bridge, your direction 210°.
12. In 150 metres you go through a metal fieldgate to cross this bridge over **Pannel Sewer** to follow a mini pylon cable run in a southerly direction, towards a fieldgate.
13. In 130 metres go through this fieldgate (there is another one 5 metres to its left). *Go right*, your direction 250°, with the field fence on your right-hand side.
14. In 70 metres, cross a ditch into the next field. *Go left* up its left-hand side (with the ditch on your left-hand side), your direction 200°.
15. In 100 metres you come to a fenced wood, where you *go rightwards* along the fence until, in 60 metres, *you go left* through a metal gate set in the fence and so into the wood, and up a track, your direction 230°.
16. In 160 metres exit the wood by a stile. *Turn half-left* up across a field (there is no distinct path), aiming to pass 50 metres to the left of some farm buildings, to

continue across the field towards the far top left corner of the field, your direction 140°. In 250 metres, near a mini-pylon pole (with a grey transformer box), you cross two stiles on to a tarmac lane.

17. *Turn left* and after 8 metres *turn right* over a stile **[5]**.
18. *Go left* for 10 metres, *then right* following the hedge on your left-hand side, your direction 160°.
19. In 220 metres, at the bottom left-hand corner of the field, *go right*, your direction 260°, with the field hedge on your left-hand side.
20. In 60 metres go over a stile on your left, and onwards, uphill, your direction 165° across the field. *Go straight on* towards and past a mini-pylon pole in the middle of the field (the pole is about 5 metres to the right of the path, although there may be no path maintained in winter).
21. In 300 metres, go over a stile and *veer left*, your direction 140°, up across a field.
22. In 160 metres you go over a stile and across a tarmac road to the **Royal Oak Inn, Pett**, your alternative lunch stop.
23. Go around the right-hand side of the pub to carry on, down a tarmac road, your direction 140°.
24. In 200 metres you pass an entrance to Gatehurst Farm to your right.
25. In a further 100 metres **[6]**, *turn right* up a low bank to go over a stile which has a post marked to Cliff End
26. *Go diagonally* across the field, your direction 130°, aiming 40 metres to the left of a brick structure (which was the base of a radar transmitting tower in World War II, used to guide British planes back home).
27. In 170 metres, with a fine panoramic view to admire, go over a stile signposted to Pett Level and continue on in the same direction, down towards a (not initially visible) stile, 50 metres to the right of the far field corner.
28. In 180 metres go over the stile and continue in a similar direction, 150°, down towards a (not initially visible) footbridge.
29. In 190 metres go over the wooden footbridge and cross the **Marsham Sewer** to go straight on towards another footbridge. In 60 metres cross this wooden footbridge over a stream and go straight on, keeping to the left.
30. In 50 metres *turn left* through a wooden fieldgate (the post marked with a yellow arrow), to go along the bottom of a farmhouse garden for 10 metres to then go through another fieldgate into the bottom corner of a field. *Go diagonally* across this field for 200 metres, your direction east, and go over a stile in the opposite corner of the field.
31. *Bear left* on the tarmac road. In 40 metres you reach a driveway on your right.
32. **I** If you wish to visit **Pett Level** beach, continue along the road for 350 metres.

33. For the **Winchelsea** or **Rye Circular** walks, where the road turns left in 200 metres, with public conveniences to your right, switch to the walk directions of **Walk 29 Hastings to Rye** in *Time Out Country Walks Volume 2*, directions for which are also available on this site. Pick up these directions just after point **[4]** at the point marked **[!]**.
34. Otherwise *turn right* up the driveway for 8 metres, to then *fork right up four steps* on to a path with the Saxon Shore Way emblem on a post **[7]**. Go up this path for 550 metres, crossing over two driveways (after which you can hear and see the sea below on your left), and enter the National Trust's land at **Fairlight**.
35. Ignore a stile to the right to keep on the coastal path.
36. In 450 metres ignore a stile on your right-hand side to go down some steps with wooden railings and then straight on.
37. In 120 metres follow the path round to the right to continue along a fenced-in path bordering a garden off to your left. In 90 metres the path curves to the right (away from the garden) and in 20 metres, *fork left* through a wooden horse blocking barrier. In 15 metres *turn right* down a car wide shingle track (Sea Road), your direction 300°.
38. After 70 metres at a junction, *turn left* up a lane (Lower Waites Lane), your direction 190°.
39. In 350 metres take the first turning *left* (*Cliff Way*) by the 'Sea Road Closed' sign, your direction 160°.
40. In 100 metres take the fenced-in footpath *right*, 5 metres before the entrance to Fairhaven on your right-hand side, your direction 250°.
41. In 160 metres you come out on to a T-junction with a tarmac road (Rockmead Road) and *turn left* up it, your direction 150°. In 60 metres, follow the now gravel road round to the right.
42. At the end of Rockmead Road, in 300 metres, by the 30mph sign, you keep *straight on*, going along Bramble Way, ignoring all possible ways off. In 170 metres, at a T-junction, *go left*, your direction 170°.
43. In 100 metres, at a T-junction, *turn right* on Channel Way, your direction 250°.
44. Ignoring all ways off, after 450 metres you enter a narrower path **[8]**.
45. In 80 metres go through a wooden kissing gate, at last leaving the outskirts of Fairlight Cove village behind you, to enter the **Firehills** of **Hastings Country Park** and *fork left*, your direction 230°.
46. You now follow the cliff walk for 5.5km to the top of the East Hill funicular railway at the double asterisk **[**]** below.
47. In more detail: Keep on this main path. In 350 metres, 20 metres before a bench ahead of you, *fork right uphill* with the broad grassy way, your direction 300°.

18. Keep along the coastal way as much as possible. In 500 metres you have to head uphill towards the radar station. Then in 130 metres, by a bench below this station, *go left* to keep on the coastal way, your direction 240°.
19. In 40 metres you pass a post (24) saying 'Hastings 3¼ miles' to carry on downhill.
20. In 400 metres, by a bench and a multi-path junction (marked by a post), *go left down some steps*. In 200 metres you cross a stream at the bottom of **Warren Glen** to go up the other side on a wide grassy way. Ignore ways off. In 300 metres, by post 18 (Hastings 2½ miles), *go up steps*.
21. At the top of the steps is a stone slab known as 'Lovers' Seat' - the slab has been dragged back inland from the cliffs where two lovers met in secret in the 1780s; the cliffs have now been eroded and have fallen into the sea. 60 metres from the top of these steps, you pass a post (Hastings 2½ miles).
22. In 80 metres *go down* some steps. At the bottom of these, *follow the post 17 left* to Fairlight Glen (¼ mile).
23. After 150 metres where a wooden fence blocks the old coastal path ahead, *turn right* down the new path with the wooden fence on your left hand side, your direction 260°. In 100 metres go down some steps and turn right to rejoin the old coastal path. In 140 metres, at the bottom, you come to a stream **[9]**.
24. A wooden fence on your left has a County Park sign which says the path to **Fairlight Glen nudist** beach is closed and that the path down to it is at "you own risk". In fact it has been rebuilt by locals, and (at the time of writing - the area is subject to erosion) was safe to use. If you wish to visit this remote beach for a swim, climb over the fence, and follow the well-used path down to the beach.
25. **[!]** At a low and falling tide only, it is possible to walk along the beach from Fairlight to Hastings. It is interesting, past a new landslip, but hard going in places (proper boots recommended!) along the pebble/rocky beach. It is at your own risk, and you are strongly advised to seek local advice on the current state of the beach before doing this. There are no escape routes once you start.
26. The main walk's onward route is straight on. In 40 metres you pass post 16 to emerge from a wooded area after 40 metres, to continue on a wide grassy way uphill, your direction 220°.
27. In 220 metres it is steeply up steps again. In 35 metres you pass post 14 (Hastings 2 miles). 100 metres beyond the top of the steps, you come to post 12 (Hastings 1¾ miles) where you keep left.
28. In 500 metres ignore a fork by post 8 up to the right to keep on along the car wide grass path (with a fence on its right hand side), your direction 240°.
29. In 600 metres you come to a bench with a view out over the beach ahead and you go *sharp right*, your direction 35°. In 30 metres, *go left* your direction 340°, soon down steps.

50. At the bottom of this **Ecclesbourne Glen** you cross a stream, by a post, and keep straight on upwards on the main steps, ignoring ways off to the right and left.
51. This uphill path, out of the valley, is the site of a 2014 landslip. The path was repaired and reopened in autumn 2021.
52. At the top of the steps, by a post, *go left*, your direction 210°, with a wooden field fence on your left-hand side.
53. In 350 metres, **Hastings** can be seen at last and you are now on the grassy clifftop above the town. In a further 450 metres, as you head gently downhill, you pass by a replica of the old warning beacons that spread news of the rapidly approaching Spanish Armada in 1588.
54. **[**]** In 60 metres you reach the top of the East Hill funicular railway on your left. You now pick up a tarmac path and a *paved stepway going downwards*, soon seeing the black wooden **Net Shops** on the beach to your left.
55. At the bottom, cross the tarmac Tackleway and continue on down Crown Lane to the next crossing, All Saints Street, where the **Crown Inn** is on your right-hand side. *Turn right* on All Saints Street.
56. In 90 metres you pass the **Cinque Port Arms** pub. 15 metres beyond it, *go left* down Bourne Passage. In 40 metres cross (via a pelican crossing) the A259 to continue up Roebuck Street.
57. On the A259/The Bourne, there is a bus stop for buses back to Winchelsea and Rye for drivers
58. In 60 metres, by the **Duke of Wellington** pub on your left-hand side, *turn left* into the High Street, your direction 220°.
59. In 80 metres you pass the **Electric Palace Cinema** on your left-hand side. In a further 25 metres, you pass the **Jenny Lind** pub on your right-hand side and **The Land of Green Ginger Café** on your left-hand side, a possible tea stop.
70. In 40 metres *turn left* up Swan Terrace, your direction 310°, passing the Church of St Clements on your right-hand side.
71. Then *turn left* on Hill Street.
72. In 80 metres, at the end of Hill Street, *go down some steps, bearing right*, past **Ye Olde Pump House** pub into George Street, where you *go right*, your direction 230°.
73. In 230 metres at the junction with the A259 coastal road, *turn right* along it. After 250 metres by the roundabout fountain on your left, *fork right* along a pedestrianised road. In 70 metres you go through a subway and in a further 160 metres at a six-way crossroads, continue in the same direction up Havelock Road, your direction north-west.
74. In 200 metres cross over Devonshire Road and *veer left* to go up Station Approach to reach **Hastings Railway Station** after 130 metres.

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