



SUSSEX HOSPICES TRAIL

PART 17:

HEATHFIELD TO UCKFIELD



Moderate Terrain

10 Miles
Linear
5 hours

120509



Access Notes



- 1. The terrain is mainly flat with gentle inclines and one slightly steeper incline just before section 9.*
- 2. There are several gates and steps to negotiate plus a variety of stiles to cross (suitable throughout for medium sized dogs, but larger dogs may need a hand over some of them).*
- 3. You are likely to come across sheep and cattle in a few of the fields. (There is one field where the farmer has suffered a savage attack on his sheep and insists that all dogs must be on a lead or they could be shot. This field is well-signposted on the route). Some of the paths are little used and there are one or two muddy sections.*
- 4. You will need to cross a rail line at an unsignalled crossing so look and listen carefully for trains before you cross.*

A 10 mile linear walk from Heathfield to Uckfield rail station, forming the 17th stretch of the Sussex Hospices Trail.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This linear walk uses a bus journey for the return leg which runs Mon-Fri ONLY. At weekends you will need to use taxis or make other arrangements.

The route encompasses sections of the Cuckoo Trail, the Vanguard Way and the Weald Way and includes broad-leaf woodlands, grazing pastures, streams, meadows and river banks with two short stretches of country lane, mainly within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The final section of this walk is through the Hempstead Meadow Nature Reserve following the banks of the river Uck. A boardwalk crosses the wet grassland that hosts an abundance of marshland plants and wildlife.

After 6 miles you can break your journey at the Blackboys Inn, a 14th century pub and restaurant offering traditional home cooking and bed and breakfast. Beyond Blackboys you pass four historic mills including Tickerage Mill, the former country home of actress Vivien Leigh, Uptons Mill, Heavers Mill and Hempstead Mill. There is a Waitrose supermarket adjacent to Uckfield rail station at the end of the walk.

The hospices of Sussex are dedicated to providing specialist end-of-life care. Friends of Sussex Hospices has worked with partners and supporters to create the Sussex Hospices Trail, a 200 mile long-distance path to support and raise awareness of the twelve hospice care providers that serve the adults and children of Sussex.

Getting there

The walk begins on Heathfield High Street and ends at Uckfield rail station and, as a linear route, you will need to arrange transport for the return leg. The exact start point for the walk is the Number 251 and 252 bus stop in Heathfield High Street, adjacent to the Heathfield and Waldron Parish Offices. If you are coming by bus, buses run between Eastbourne, Hailsham and Tunbridge Wells. If you are coming by car, there is ample free car parking in Heathfield and a dedicated Cuckoo Trail car park (also free) at the entrance to Newnham Way, opposite Waitrose supermarket. For the return leg from Uckfield to Heathfield, you can catch Bus 231 from Uckfield High Street bus stop directly back to Heathfield. Buses normally run Mon-Fri, but there is NO SERVICE at weekends. Check timetables before you travel and at weekends you will need to make other arrangements, using taxis or two cars.



Get the AllTrails App for a smarter walking experience. 75K walking guides in the palm of your hand with live maps that show your progress as you walk. Say goodbye to wrong turns.

alltrails.com



Walk Sections

Go ➔ 1 Start to Cuckoo Trail Exit



From the bus stop beside Heathfield & Waldron Parish Council offices, proceed eastwards 150 metres along the High Street until you reach the Union Church where you turn right into Station Road. (NOTE: If you are continuing your walk from Trail Part 16, pick up the directions from this point.) Walk down the hill, crossing Station Approach, and join the Cuckoo Trail from the free car park at the entrance to Newnham Way (and opposite the Waitrose supermarket). This is well signposted.

Follow the Cuckoo Trail ahead. The Cuckoo Trail is a leisure route for cyclists, walkers and horse-riders running for 11 miles along the route of the old Cuckoo Line Railway, (closed in 1968 in the Beeching Cuts).

Go straight ahead at the crossing tracks marked by the metal fencing on either side. The trail then crosses the Old Ghyll Road where you need to be aware of the 2-way traffic. Pass by the track-side garden displaying an interesting variety of old railway memorabilia on the left (pictured). Cross Ghyll Road at the pedestrian lights following the signs for the Cuckoo Trail at the top of Tree Tops Way.

After 80 metres, at the crossing tracks, turn right, leaving the Cuckoo Trail and going through the metal gate marked 'Private Farm & Woodland'. NOTE: It is easy to miss this turning as the signposting would appear to deny access.

1 ➔ 2 Cuckoo Trail Exit to Little London Road



(The exit from the Cuckoo Trail can be identified by the featured image). Just 40 metres from the metal gate, a stile is hidden by undergrowth on the left (this is before the farm buildings). Cross

this, follow the short length of wooden ranch-style fencing on your right and then walk diagonally right across the field (NOTE: there may be cattle in this field) towards the wooden gate just in sight. Take the stile to the right of the gate to enter the dense ancient woodland. Proceed straight ahead crossing the wooden bridge and following the wire stock fencing on the right.

At the crossing tracks, take the path straight ahead (staggered slightly). Cross the stile into the field (NOTE: You are likely to find sheep in this field and dog-owners are warned that dogs not on a lead could be shot, as this farmer has suffered a severe and vicious attack on his lambs).

Follow the path straight ahead across the meadow heading for the clearing on the right and in front of the white house. Approach the metal gate and take the stile on the right. Follow the unmade track to a further stile (this will be a tight fit for large dogs). Keep the wooden fence on your left and go through the metal gate to bring you onto the main Heathfield Road at Little London. This is the A267 that runs between Cross in Hand and Horam.

2 ➔ 3 Little London Road to Hanging Birch Lane



Cross the main road diagonally right and enter the lane beside the Old Cannon House. After 50 metres, cross into the drive marked The Cottage and Garden Cottage and take the single white wooden gate (pictured). Follow the narrow track that leads down beside a wooden fence. The footpath into the woodland track is now clearly signposted. As the track winds downhill it bends to the right and you must watch carefully for the narrow, overgrown path that leads off on the left (this is signposted but can be easily missed). The steps, (with wooden handrail) can be seen just ahead of you and will help to identify the turning.

Take the steps, cross the wooden bridge and emerge from the dark woodland into the sunlit meadow ahead where you walk uphill following the wire stock fencing on your left. Cross the stile to the left of the metal gate. Shortly beyond is a further stile taking you into Hanging Birch Lane.

3 ➔ 4 Hanging Birch Lane to North Street

Turn right in Hanging Birch Lane, and almost immediately take the left turn into Back Lane, signposted Waldron 3/4.

After a short distance, take the first turning on the right, marked Whitehouse Lane, and go down the hill taking care of traffic. At the bottom of the hill, pass the junction of Ragged



Dog Lane on the left, cross the bridge and turn right into the wide gravel entrance. Cross the stile on the right of the double metal gates.

Follow the unmade track and cross the stile on the left that is just before the locked metal gate that bars your route ahead (marked 'Private'). Turn right and follow the fence, pass through the metal gate and head left up the hill, to cross the stile ahead into a field (likely to be holding sheep).

Head for the clearing in the trees at the far end of the field, directly ahead of you. Pass through a metal farm gate and go uphill, curling round a small pond on the left. Pass through a further metal gate (ignoring the track on the right). Walk straight ahead and then curve to the right, passing in front of the derelict farm building. Head for the wooden gate in the hedgerow and take the kissing gate into North Street.

4 → 5 North Street to Possingworth Lane



From the kissing gate into North Street, turn right following the road as it bends to the left. Take the first turning on the left, marked Harpers Lane, and go straight over the crossroads into Brittenden Lane. After a short distance, a junction of 4 paths can be seen on a sharp bend. Take the first path on the left, signposted Oak Meadow (pictured). After 50 metres, take the signposted bridleway straight ahead.

Along the woodland path a large tree trunk blocks the route (at time of writing). This can be avoided by detouring slightly to the right and you can then resume your path. The bridleway is often boggy and uneven as it progresses through dense woodland. The path ends when it reaches Possingworth Lane.

5 → 6

Possingworth Lane to Blackboys Inn



At Possingworth Lane turn right and walk 250 metres down the hill to the vehicle layby on the left, where you will see a gate with a stile to the right of it. Cross this stile and turn right almost immediately. Pass through the gate ahead of you and turn left, ignoring the bridge ahead. Follow the course of the stream on your right and ignore the first metal five bar gate.

At the 3-way signpost turn right and go through the metal gate. Turn right and almost immediately left, following the hedge on your left. This area of meadow is very boggy and you may need to skirt out to the right to avoid the worst of it, heading for the metal five bar gate ahead. Pass through the gate and take the wide grassy track through the woodland and crop fields. As you go up the hill there is a large pond on the right, visible through the trees.

Pass through the five bar wooden gate to continue up the hill where the industrial factory buildings of Dower House Farm can be seen on your right.

When you reach the concrete path, turn left and, after 50 metres, the signpost for Blackboys is found on the right. Turn right and walk along the hedged path. 15 metres before the metal gate ahead, there is a very tricky turn to the right (that may be concealed by the overgrown bushes and undergrowth and can be seen in the featured image). The small stile becomes immediately obvious and takes you into a field (likely to be holding sheep or cattle). NOTE: This stile looks impassable to dogs but has removable wooden sticks to keep the livestock in and allow access for dogs. Remember to replace the sticks once your dog has passed through.

Follow the stock fencing on the left and exit the field through the metal gate, then follow the path ahead. At the signpost, proceed straight ahead.

Approximately 20 metres before the wooden gate onto Hollow Lane, turn right, cross the wooden bridge, climb the steps and then go straight ahead. You can now hear the hum of the traffic on the B2192. Follow the footpath signs to bear left to the B2192 and you will see the Blackboys Inn (a good option for hospitality) ahead of you.

6 → 7

Blackboys Inn to Tickerage Mill

Leaving the Blackboys Inn, which is set back from the main road, turn left into School Lane (or turn right and immediately left into School Lane if you have not visited the pub) and walk along the pavement, until you meet the B2102. Turn Left, signposted Framfield & Uckfield, and, after 75 metres (and precisely where a 'SLOW' sign is painted on the



road), turn right onto the footpath that runs between a hedge and wire stock fencing. The signpost leads you through allotments and on to the Vanguard Way straight ahead, ignoring the footpath marked to the right. Follow the track until you reach Terminus Road.

Upon reaching Terminus Road, turn left and, after 40 metres, take the footpath on the right (beside a white cottage) to continue on the Vanguard Way (VGW). Follow the narrow path that takes you down the hill and up the other side where you meet the unmade Tickerage Lane. Here the Weald Way (WW) joins the VGW. Turn right onto the private lane and proceed ahead, ignoring the signposted footpath on the left.

7 → 8 Tickerage Mill to Uptons Mill



On your right, pass the splendid, Queen Anne, Tickerage Mill House, the onetime country home of actress Vivien Leigh. The featured image is unfortunately not visible from the lane. Cross the bridge over the millstream with views over the mill race where the famous actress was known to bathe and her ashes were finally scattered.

You will now leave the VGW by taking the stile on the left after Mill Cottage, and signposted WW on the fingerpost. Keeping the hedge on your left, cross the meadow and go through the small wooden gate, following the WW signs. Walk between the hedge and ranch-style fencing until the path opens, out passing a small pond. Cross the stile that takes you into Pound Lane.

Cross Pound Lane and take the overgrown stile (or the adjacent open gate) ahead. Keep the hedge on your left and continue for 500 metres, going through a single metal gate and passing a large pond seen through the trees on the left. Here you will find a wealth of marshy plants, Himalayan Balsam, Queen Anne's Lace and tall thistles. Finally, a single wooden gate takes you into Streele Lane.

8 → 9 Uptons Mill to Sandy Lane



On entry to Streele Lane, the Grade II listed Heavers Mill is ahead of you and, 100 metres down the road to the left, can be seen the 16th century, timber-framed, Uptons Mill (pictured). This has been re-fronted with red brick and grey headers on the ground floor and tile-hung above and is well worth the small diversion.

Resume your journey by crossing Streele Lane and take the stile ahead, beside the metal gate signposted WW. Follow the wire stock fence and take the single metal gate. Go straight ahead and a single wooden gate takes you onto the footbridge that crosses Tickerage Stream. Turn half right across a field and follow the course of the stream on your right where you will find the perfect picnic spot for yourself and a welcome swimming pool for your dog (although it is possible that there may be cattle in this field).

As the stream bends sharply to the right, a 3-way fingerpost points left where you leave the WW. As you look across the field to the left, you will see the stile that will take you into a wood. (Do not use the field gate a few metres to the right). Boarding will take you over the ditch and steps take you onto the path that climbs steadily up through the wood.

Take the stile out of the woodland and follow the path up the hill with the wire stock fencing on your right and ignoring any gaps and the track to the right. Go through the open (rusty) gate and you will see Brett Cottages on the right and Sandy Lane straight ahead.

9 → 10 Sandy Lane to Hempstead Mill



Turn right into Sandy Lane and pass the thatched Pound House on your left. Walk 800 metres along Sandy Lane and go straight over the crossroads with Etchingwood Lane. Just before the first bungalow on the right (Spurling Gate), turn right and

immediately left in the vehicle layby. The wooden gate takes you downhill along a wide wooded and uneven path.

When you reach the railway crossing, cross the tracks with care and close the gates behind you. Continue ahead into Hempstead Lane and passing the Sussex Horse Rescue Trust on your right.

10 → 11 Hempstead Mill to End



As you cross the bridge over the River Uck, you will see Hempstead Mill (pictured) on the right. This Grade II Listed, English Heritage, former mill house, is now sadly falling into disrepair, though its faded splendour is perfectly matched by the now tranquil mill race with overhanging Willow branches and wild flowers to create a gracious scene.

Walking on, the road bends to the left and, at the junction of Hempstead Lane and Browns Lane, take Brown's Path on the left (recognisable by the single concrete obelisk in the centre of the path). When the path reaches a road junction, cross diagonally to the left and take the twitten ahead. This is an old road now closed to vehicles and leads to Hempstead Fields, a children's play area. Turn left down beside the Guide Hut and walk downhill through the play area, turning right at the bottom onto the boardwalk which leads across the flooded nature reserve bordering the River Uck. The swampy borders support a variety of wildlife typical of undeveloped river corridors; including birds such as snipe and kingfisher and plants such as primrose, bluebell, tussock sedge and ferns. They are a valuable foraging area for bats.

Uckfield station platform signs can be seen on the left as you emerge, wholly unexpectedly, into Waitrose car park via a kissing gate. Ahead is the main road at the foot of Uckfield High Street and the Bridge Cottage Heritage Centre, a Medieval Wealden Hall House built around 1436 and well worth a visit. On your left is Uckfield Station, where this stretch of the Sussex Hospices Trail ends, with hourly trains to London Victoria via Buxted and Crowborough.

Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and a map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

We hope you have enjoyed walking this stretch of the Sussex Hospices Trail. Hospices deliver their services for free but such care is not cheap and they largely depend on funds raised from their local communities. We would be very grateful if you would consider making a donation either to your local hospice, wherever that may be, or to the Friends of Sussex Hospices in order to support these invaluable services.

To donate £5 to the Friends of Sussex Hospices text
SHTRI6 £5 to 70070

Friends of Sussex Hospices, Registered
Charity No. 1089306

[http://www.friendsofsussexhospices.org.uk/
how-you-can-help/donations](http://www.friendsofsussexhospices.org.uk/how-you-can-help/donations)

Sponsored by Buxted Construction

The creation of this stretch of the trail was possible thanks to the kind donation from Judith and Bob Ruthven on behalf of Buxted Construction.

To read more about the sponsors of this Trail visit hospicetrail.co.uk

