



Sussex Hospices Trail

Part 21:

BALCOMBE TO HORSHAM



Moderate Terrain

**11 Miles
Linear
5 to 6 hours**

120519



Access Notes

1. The Weald is well known for its mud and after rain the trail can be heavy going in places.
2. You will need to negotiate a number of stiles, kissing gates, narrow footbridges and short sections of steep steps through some of the woodlands.
3. There are a few road crossings that need care and one section of very busy road at Handcross which has no pavement and needs extra care.
4. The final stretch of the route takes you along the residential outskirts of Horsham.
5. Dogs should have no problem on this walk but take care with them as there may be livestock grazing in the fields.



An 11 mile linear walk from Balcombe rail station to Horsham rail station in West Sussex, forming the 21st stretch of the Sussex Hospices Trail.

The route takes in the High Weald Landscape of the Sussex countryside and passes through a changing scenery of working farms, rolling fields and mature woodlands. You will also pass through Nymans ancient woodland, set in a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, with its magnificent Redwoods and clear lakes. The return leg can be completed with a 30-minute train journey which includes one change.

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.

Toilets are available at the rail stations at each end and at Nymans where you will also find the National Trust cafe (entrance fees apply). Picnic opportunities can be found at many of the locations on route.

Getting there

The walk starts at Balcombe rail station car park and ends at Horsham rail station. The two stations are connected by a regular train service but you will need to make one change at Three Bridges station. If you are coming by car there are pay and display car parks at both stations.

Approximate postcode for Balcombe station **RH17 6JQ**.

Walk Sections



Start to Bury Wood

From the road entrance of the station car park, take the clearly signed footpath to the right, away from the main road, heading down a number of steps and through a small copse to reach a stile. Cross over this stile into a small field, walking a short distance to a second stile. Cross this stile, down another short flight of steps to reach a country road. Turn left along the road and then almost immediately on your right you will see a fingerpost and a stile. Cross over the stile and climb steadily along the footpath to reach another stile which leads you into a second field. Walk along the left-hand



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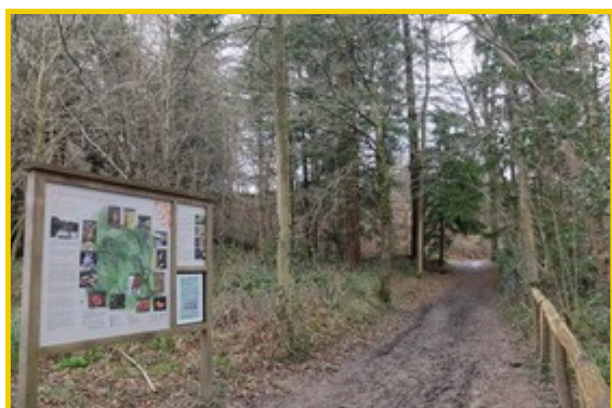
edge of this second field towards a metal gate at the end, which leads you onto a quiet country road. At this point you will have some great views of the Sussex weald.

Leave the field through the gate and turn right, heading a short distance up the road. At reaching the fork in the road, marked by a fingerpost, bear left and continue along this quiet road passing a small farm pond on your right and cottages either side of the road. The road at

this point now becomes a farm track and will lead you through Westup Farm. Keep on this track passing through a small copse and over a stile at the end with views of open fields ahead.

Having crossed the stile, take the clearly marked right-hand footpath, and keeping the woodland edge on your right, follow the field path downhill. A stile at the field edge leads you into a second field. Keeping the fence line to your right, walk along this field until you reach a stile at the entrance to a woodland.

1 → 2 Bury Wood to Nymans



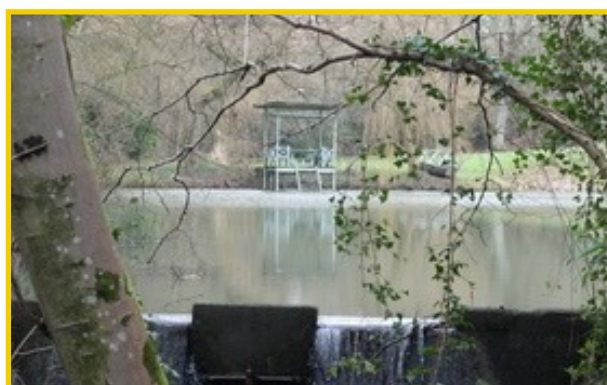
Cross over the stile and follow along the marked footpath through Bury Wood, down a steep set of steps to reach a narrow footbridge over a stream. Cross over the stream and ascend another set of steps until you reach the woodland edge, bear left and follow the footpath to a country road. Cross the road onto a tarmac driveway with a cottage on your right and pillar gates straight ahead; this is the entrance to Ditton Place. Ditton Place is an impressive Grade II listed building. Built in 1904 by the firm of Cecil Brewer and Dunbar Smith in Neo William and Mary style. The client was A B Horne, the owner of Prudential Insurance, who used the house as a summer residence. The house has now been converted into apartments.

Follow the tarmac drive through the grounds of Ditton Place, bearing left as you reach the main house. Continue to follow the track until reaching a metal kissing gate. Pass through the gate, taking the left-hand footpath along the field edge until reaching another kissing gate. Pass through this gate and descend down through woodland, crossing over a narrow footbridge and then climb steadily up through the woodland until reaching the woodland edge. Bear left along the footpath and pass through a gap to the side of a metal gate and into a field.

Follow the obvious path diagonally right across the field and pass through another metal gate. Turn right, and follow the footpath for a short distance passing through a further 3 metal gates until reaching a small tarmac driveway.

Head left down this driveway and, on reaching the fork in the track, bear right and then turn immediately left at the fingerpost. Keep bearing left, walking through a small field until reaching a narrow footbridge over a stream. Cross over the footbridge and pass through a metal gate ahead of you. Bear right, keeping to the field boundary, until reaching a driveway at the entrance to Oldhouse. Walk over the driveway towards a metal gate in the corner of the field. Pass through the gate into woodland, following the fairly steep footpath and steps, down the hill, crossing over a boardwalk to emerge at one of the entrances to Nymans woodland. It is clearly marked here by a large interpretation board and a 'Welcome to Nymans countryside' sign.

2 → 3 Nymans to Handcross

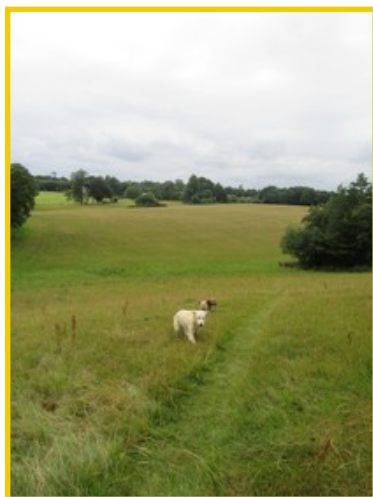


Nymans is one of the National Trust's premier gardens, combining tranquil ancient woodland with their magnificent Redwoods, to its rare and unusual plant collection. If you have time, take a visit to the elegant house which reflects the personalities and stories of the original owners, the talented Messel family, from the Countess of Rosse to Oliver Messel and photographer Lord Snowdon. There is a shop, plant centre and cafe (NT membership or full entrance fee is required to access the cafe and toilets).

Take the footpath to the right at the interpretation board and walk along this path, keeping a series of lakes on your right, until reaching a fingerpost marked 'millennium route 8'. Turn left at this post and continue walking along the woodland path, eventually crossing over a wooden footbridge, turning immediately left, signposted 'route 22'. Having turned left, climb steadily up through the wood, emerging at a crossroads in the footpath, go straight over here and continue up, along the path, passing Nymans café on your left, until reaching the end of the footpath at the side of a main road (B2114) in the village of Handcross.

3 → 4 Handcross to Carterslodge Pond

From the end of this footpath look right (at about 2 o'clock) and you will see a Sussex Ouse Valley Way footpath sign. Head towards this sign by turning right along the pavement and then immediately left along the B2110. Continue along this road until you cross over the busy A23 via a road bridge.



Just north along the A23 is the town of Crawley which is home to St Catherine's Hospice. St Catherine's Hospice is a charity dedicated to providing specialised end of life care and support to local people, their families, friends and carers. The hospice provides high quality hospice care, free of charge, to people living in Crawley, Horsham, Mid Sussex and East Surrey. The staff at St Catherine's respond to the needs of each individual, helping people achieve the best

possible quality of life caring for people in the hospice, in their homes and in nursing homes. Like all Sussex hospices, they critically rely on voluntary donations and legacies and the care they give is only made possible thanks to the generosity of supporters and volunteers.

Turn left at the next roundabout. Walk a short distance along this road and turn right at the first bridleway sign, onto to a quiet tarmac driveway (Park Road). Pass immediately through a wooden gate and continue for some distance, ignoring a marked left/right turn at a crossroads. Just before reaching a house with a distinctive white, 5-bar gate, turn right, passing through a small gate and follow a marked footpath into a field.

Follow the footpath along the field, leading you through a woodland and emerging at a kissing gate to an open field. Go through the kissing gate, following the signs for the High Weald Landscape Trail, walk along the field and woodland edge until reaching a quiet country road. Cross the road, turn right, and then turn almost immediately left opposite a cottage, following a footpath sign through a small section of scrub to a kissing gate. Go through the gate and head diagonally right, down the hill along the clearly worn path. At reaching the bottom of the field, ignore the path into the woods, keeping to the field path with the woodland edge on your right. At the end of this field, pass through a kissing gate into a second field and another gate at the end leads you into a third field. Follow the footpath, heading towards the far corner of the field and a kissing gate, go through this, onto a private drive, leading onto a very busy main road. (WARNING: THIS SECTION OF ROAD IS FAST MOVING AND THERE IS NO PAVEMENT SO TAKE EXTRA CARE WHEN WALKING HERE).

Turn left out of the driveway, walking along the verge of the main road until you reach a right-hand turn into Carters Lodge Lane. Take this right turn and walk down the lane onto the dam wall of Carterslodge Pond.



Carterslodge Pond to St Leonard's Forest

Walk over the dam wall of Carterslodge Pond and climb steadily up, passing a number of farmhouses and eventually reaching a right-hand bend in the lane. Ignore the bend to the right and instead walk straight ahead onto a marked footpath. Walk along this path with open fields and views on both sides as it begins to drop down towards a gate and a woodland edge. Go through the gate, following the footpath signs to the left and walk down through the woodland to reach a small ford and a footbridge. Cross the ford and head diagonally left across the obvious path through the centre of the field.



At the end of the field do not go through the gate but turn right and head up along the path through woodland until you reach a small country road. Cross the road and continue on the footpath, descending down through another wood and cross a wide footbridge over a stream at the bottom. Ascend the other side to eventually emerge onto a wide woodland track in St Leonard's Forest.



St Leonard's Forest to Motocross Track



St Leonard's Forest is an 85ha Forestry Commission-owned site just a few miles from the hustle and bustle of Horsham and Crawley. Being a former medieval hunting forest, it wasn't as densely wooded as it is today. It was once very important for rabbit farming, and was also heavily mined in iron ore to for the local furnaces. It is steeped in cultural history; with the 6th century French hermit, St Leonard, reportedly slaying a fearsome dragon on the site!

From the woodland follow the footpath sign to the left, then turn immediately right at the path junction. Walk straight until you reach a crossroads in the path, turn left here and then bear immediately right heading through the woodland. At the end of this path, bear left, re-joining the main High Weald Landscape Trail. Walk along this trail, ignoring the signed path to your right until you reach a woodland pond on your right. Continue past the pond, following the footpath signs and head up through a small woodland, to reach a wide opening. Take care at this opening as it is used by motocross bikes and may be very busy if a race is on.

6 → 7

Motocross Track to Hampers Lane



Bearing left through the opening, walk along onto the obvious gravel track and head left, down the track to a metal kissing gate. Go through this, crossing over a gravel lane to a clearly marked footpath which takes you along a path between two lines of deer fencing and into a second open field. Cross this field to reach a small woodland. Follow the path through the woodland until reaching a dilapidated stile and a gate at a junction in the path.

Turn right at the junction and follow the track through the woodland, ignoring the footpath signs on your left, until reaching a tarmac lane with the entrance to St Leonard's Park House on your right.

7 → 8

Hampers Lane to End



With the entrance to St Leonard's Park House on your right, turn left and walk along the quiet country lane (Hampers Lane), passing a small number of properties, woodland and narrow streams until eventually the lane becomes more residential and you emerge at a crossroads. Go ahead and cross over the road to follow the right-hand pavement. Walk along the pavement to the end then go ahead again, crossing over another road and joining the left-hand pavement and cycle track of Depot Road. You are now on the outskirts of Horsham.

Horsham is a market town on the upper reaches of the River Arun in the centre of the Sussex Weald. The town has historically been known for horse trading in early medieval times, iron and brick making up until the 20th century, and brewing more recently. Although some of these survive, with the exception of iron smelting they are on a small scale and no longer employ large numbers of workers. The town retains its reputation for individuality and attracts shoppers from a wide area.

Keeping on the left-hand pavement, walk all the way along Depot Road, crossing a number of side roads until reaching the T-junction at the end. Cross over the road to reach the far pavement and turn left along this, following the High Weald footpath sign. At the next High Weald sign, opposite The Bedford pub, turn right and Horsham Station and car park will be in front of you, marking the end of Part 21 of the Sussex Hospice Trail.

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>

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.

Sponsored by Tim and Helen Wonnacott

The creation of this stretch of the trail was possible thanks to the kind donation from Tim and Helen Wonnacott. Tim is a Patron of Friends of Sussex Hospices who believes that the many public footpaths in Sussex are one of the great joys of living in this county.

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

