



Moderate Terrain

10 Miles
Linear
5 hours

120519



Access Notes

1. The route has no steep sections, but there is a very long and steady climb for the first half and the equivalent descent for the second half.
2. The paths are almost all unmade and can get very muddy at times. Whilst most of the paths are well-walked, towards the end some of the paths are very narrow and are prone to becoming overgrown in late summer, so wear long trousers and carry a stick at this time of year.
3. There are some busy road crossings and a couple of 200m stretches along the edges of roads so take care of traffic at these points.
4. You will need to negotiate several gates, kissing gates, bridges and 8 stiles (6 of which have large gaps alongside, but 2 of which have only medium-size gaps so larger dogs may need a lift over).
5. You will be sharing some of the fields with sheep and two fields may be holding cattle so take care with dogs.

A 10 mile linear walk from Amberley to Halnaker, forming the 25th stretch of the Sussex Hospices Trail.

This stretch begins along the South Downs Way, crossing the pretty River Arun, before quickly joining the Monarch's Way which leads you gently uphill through the beautiful Houghton Forest to reach Bignor Hill. From this point, mid-way along your walk, you will be rewarded with outstanding views down to the south coast. The journey continues by following the line of an old Roman road, Stane Street, which today leads you through pastures, woodland, a vineyard and scrub to reach the tiny village of Halnaker.

There are no facilities for the bulk of the route. If you are looking for refreshments, The George and Dragon pub in Houghton is 1 mile into the route, there are benches for a picnic on Bignor Hill at the halfway point or you will find The Anglesey Arms pub in Halnaker at the end of the route.

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 starts at Amberley rail station (which is on the Bognor Regis to London Victoria line) and ends at the bus stops at Halnaker crossroads, neither of which have public parking available so it is best to travel by public transport. If you are coming by car, it is best to park in Chichester from where you can use public transport to access the route. Begin by catching the train to Amberley (changing at Barnham) to begin the walk. Once you have finished the route you can catch Bus Number 55 (which usually runs every 30 mins Mon-Sat) from Halnaker Crossroads to Chichester Bus Station (adjacent to the rail station) for your onward journey.

Walk Sections

Go → 1 Start to Houghton Village

Leave Amberley rail station into the parking area opposite the museum. Turn left down the access road (using the right-hand pavement as soon as possible) to reach the T-junction. Cross over to the far pavement and



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turn left along this, passing under the rail bridge. Immediately afterwards, turn right onto the gravel driveway (signed as a public footpath). Keep ahead, passing through the gap alongside a wooden gate and follow the stone track through the rough meadow, swinging left. Soon the path continues along a raised embankment with a fence on your right and the River Arun across to your left.

You will come to a stile ahead. NOTE: You may come across cattle in this next field. Cross the stile and follow the riverside embankment as it swings left to reach a footbridge. Cross this footbridge (via the two gates) and at the far side turn right to continue on the embankment (with the river now on your right). Just as the river bears right, turn left to leave the riverside path, passing through a gate on the path marked as the South Downs Way.

Keep directly ahead on the grass track through the length of the first rough pasture. In the corner, stay with the track as it swings right and, 50 metres later, turn left through the gate to continue on the South Downs Way. Follow the grass track between crop fields and you will emerge to a junction with a small road. Do NOT go ahead on the South Downs Way, instead turn left along the lane taking care of occasional traffic. Follow this lane first downhill and then uphill to reach the T-junction with the main road in Houghton village.

1 → 2 Houghton Village to A29 Crossing



NOTE: This next short stretch follows the main road which has intermittent pavement and verges so take particular care of traffic. Turn right along the road passing some pretty cottages and then The George and Dragon pub on your right. Immediately after the pub, fork right onto a stone access track and, 30 paces along, turn left up the steep grass bank (signed for Walkers). As you approach the road, swing sharp right to join the woodland path with the road running to your left.

At the top of this woodland path, you will come to a junction with a gravel driveway. Go straight ahead (skirting to the left of an island plantation) to join the continuing footpath. The path soon swings right, with open crop fields to your left. Soon you will have beautiful views across to your left, reaching far to the south. Further along, the path dog-legs right then left to continue through a tunnel of trees.

Eventually you will emerge from the trees to reach the edge of two crop fields. Walk straight ahead on the obvious grass path which leads you between the two fields. At the top you will come to the crossing point of the A29 road. Cross over, taking extreme care as this is a fast moving road, and go straight ahead on the bridleway.

2 → 3 A29 Crossing to Bignor Hill



A few paces in you will come to a small fork, take the right-hand branch (straight ahead) staying close to the crop field on your right. Directly ahead you will have good views of the two radio masts sitting on the summit of Bignor Hill. The path merges with another one (coming in from behind on your left) and, soon afterwards, you will come to a waymarker post with blue arrows. Turn left here (signed for the Monarch's Way) and follow the path downhill into the trees.

You will come to a T-junction with a wider forest track. (If you glance left here you will see the parking area for Houghton Forest which has toilets and a cafe should you want to make a detour). For the main route, turn right to join the wide forest track. You will pass a Forestry Commission sign marking the start of Houghton Forest. Continue past a green Public Bridleway forestry sign and soon afterwards you will come to a fork (within a wider stone area). Take the left-hand branch and then go straight ahead at the small crossroads. NOTE: This area can get muddy at times.

Follow this path climbing steadily for about 800 metres, to reach a staggered T-junction marked with a fingerpost. Bear right to continue on the main woodland public bridleway. For most of your journey so far, you have been following the Monarch's Way. This 615-mile long-distance path from Worcester to Shoreham-by-Sea is meant to represent the escape route of King Charles II after his battle defeat in 1651.

Simply keep ahead, ignoring any paths to the side, for almost a mile and you will pass the reverse of another Houghton Forest sign (marking the point at which you leave the forest). Soon afterwards, you will come to a National Trust sign for Bignor Hill.

3 → 4 Bignor Hill to Stane Street



Keep ahead on the bridleway track, now with woodland to your left and a crop field to your right. Pass through the gate ahead (you may occasionally come across livestock here), go through the next gate and, a little further along, you will come to a crossroads of bridleways marked with a fingerpost. There is a bench carved from a tree trunk on the right here, an ideal spot to pause for a picnic as you are at the summit of your climb. There are fabulous views on your left, all the way to the coast and beyond.

Go straight ahead at this crossroads, passing a second bench on your right, to reach a fork. Stay with the main stone bridleway which bears left here. At the end of this stretch you will reach a junction fingerpost at the beginning of woodland (known as Gumber Corner). Go straight ahead on the track, still signed as part of the Monarch's Way.

Pass through a bridle gate and, just a few paces later, you will come to another crossroads of bridleways. NOTE: You are likely to come across cattle or sheep in the next two fields. Turn left here, passing through a gate, to join the line of the old Roman road, Stane Street.

4 → 5 Stane Street to Eartham Road



Follow the grass path ahead, with a wire fence running on your left. Simply keep ahead along this obvious grass path, staying close to the fence on your left and ignoring any side paths to the left. Just before you reach the first gate ahead, glance to the left and you will see the buildings of Gumber Farm. This working farm is also home to a bunkbarn offering simple and isolated sleeping dorms for walkers.

Go through the gate ahead and continue on the Stane Street grass bank directly ahead. This stretch follows a very obvious ridge that dates from Roman times. This ridge (or agger) was

the embankment that supported the road surface and gave it a proper draining base. Continue on the same path ahead (which later leads you between lines of trees along the field edges) passing through two bridle gates along the way. The second gate leads you into Eartham Woods and, a few metres in, you will come to a junction of six paths (with a large fingerpost).

Go straight ahead on the stone track signed to Halnaker, still part of Stane Street. Stane Street is the 56-mile Roman road which connected London to Chichester. The exact date of construction is uncertain but archaeological finds suggest that the road was certainly in use by 70AD. The old flint road surface is exposed on this stretch and the road seems little different from the time when the Legions left Britain. Ignore all side turns for almost a mile and you will emerge, passing alongside a vehicle barrier, to reach a stone parking area alongside the road to Eartham.

5 → 6 Eartham Road to A285



Walk to the left-hand edge of this parking area and then cross the road to join the narrow woodland path opposite (the black and white chevron road sign points the way). Follow this narrow footpath leading you through the trees. Cross over a clearing (that carries a set of power lines) and continue ahead on the woodland path. You will emerge from this second stretch of trees to reach a staggered crossroads with a grass track (marked with a fingerpost). Go straight ahead to continue on the public footpath.

This stretch is narrow and can get overgrown at times. You will pass between two lines of beautiful old coppiced hazel trees before passing through more dense woodland scrub. You will come to a crossroads with a farm track (with crop fields each side). Down to the left you will see the buildings of Eartham House, a historic country house which today is home to a private school. The manor dates from the 1300s and the present house was remodelled by Sir Edwin Lutyens, most famous as the architect of The Cenotaph.

Go straight ahead on the footpath which continues through the woodland belt comprising yew trees, coppiced hazel and beech. (Once again, a couple of stretches can be very narrow and overgrown, but persevere if you can). You will come to a stile ahead, cross this and bear right to continue on the narrow path to reach a junction with a grass track. Turn left along this and then turn right to reach a metal gate (with stile alongside). Go through this gate and you will come to a junction with the A285.

6 → 7

A285 to Mill Lane Junction



NOTE: The next 250 metres follow the edge of this quite fast moving road, so take extreme care and use the grass verge as much as possible. Turn left along the road and, after 250 metres, a wider grass verge begins. Continue along the roadside verge, passing under the power lines, to reach a parking lay-by on your right. Half way along this lay-by turn right, crossing an old stile, to join the signed footpath. Bear left to follow the grass path which leads you diagonally uphill through the crop field (running directly underneath the power lines).

At the top of the field, cross over the grass track and go straight ahead to continue on the footpath (passing just to the left of a wooden pylon). You will emerge to the edge of a rough meadow, bear left to follow the left-hand edge of this (with the power lines running just to your left). When the hedgerow on your left ends (with a farm track to your left), dog leg left then right (crossing a stile) to join the enclosed path which runs underneath the power lines. To your left you will see a section of vineyard, belonging to Tinwood Estate, producers of English sparkling wine.

Cross the next stile ahead, to join a wider section of track, known as Mill Lane. The lane takes its name from the disused Halnaker Windmill and, if the hedgerow on your right is not too tall, you may get a glimpse of the mill. Further along, ignore the footpath signed sharp right, simply keep ahead (crossing two more stiles along the way) to reach the start of an old sunken beech-lined lane. Keep ahead along this, later passing Mill Cottage on your right, to reach the junction with the A285.

7 → 8

Mill Lane Junction to End



NOTE: THE A285 CAN BE VERY BUSY HERE, SO CROSS WITH GREAT CARE. Cross over the A285 to reach the gap in the hedge which leads you into the crop field. Follow the obvious wide footpath through this field, swinging right and then left. At the end, keep ahead on the grass path through the tree belt and then continue ahead on the wide path through the

second crop field. At the far side, a stile leads you into a third field (a private paddock). Walk straight across this and exit via the stile at the far side.

Turn right to join the quiet tarmac access lane, Tinwood Lane, and continue to reach the T-junction with the A285. Cross over to the far pavement and turn left along this. Follow the pavement leading you into Halnaker, passing the Anglesey Arms pub on your left. Swap to the left-hand pavement at this point, pass the blacksmiths on your right and you will come to the crossroads with The Street (with The Old Store ahead and to your right). This crossroads marks the end of this stretch of the Sussex Hospices Trail. Go straight ahead for just a few paces and you will come to the bus stop and bus shelter on your left, from where you can catch the bus to Chichester.

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 SHTR16 £5 to 70070

Friends of Sussex Hospices, Registered Charity
No. 1089306

Dedicated to all Sussex Hospices in Memory of Reynie Thorne

The creation of this stretch of the trail was possible thanks to the kind donation from Chris and Karen Thorne, dedicated to all the Sussex Hospices. Chris' Mum, Reynie Thorne, spent her final days in St Wilfred's in 2010 where she was looked after with such amazing care and compassion. To read more about the sponsors of this Trail visit hospicestrail.co.uk

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.

