



Welcome to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty an unspoilt medieval landscape.
A walk with two themes, beautiful views of the High Weald and impressive country houses

Distance and duration	7.6 miles / 12.2 kilometres 3.5 – 4 hours
Level	Moderate
Start point	Hill Top Shaw car park, RH19 4NG. On Google maps it is called West Hoathly Road Car Park. It is situated approximately 120 yds down the access road to Standen
Map reference	TQ388360 OS Explorer map 135 What3words:///lived.chef.reward
Other information	There are several stiles, none particularly tricky, and even more gates on this walk. Mainly easy walking, but there is one very steep descent, after crossing the Bluebell Railway. Please note that part of the walk is repeated in the opposite direction in the return route.

I-Spy - Things to look out for in the landscape



The walk

If you would like to visit Standen, perhaps to use the café or toilet facilities, without returning to your car first, at the end of the walk you need to take your NT membership card with you.

Leave the car park by a path going into trees at its southern end. When you get a T-junction of footpaths, with the left-hand option re-joining the driveway, turn right, onto the High Weald Landscape Train (HWLT). This path can get very muddy during wet spells.



You get good views towards the West Hoathly Ridge on your right as you walk along this stretch, and you may also catch sight of a large country manor house. This is Saint Hill Manor, built in 1792 and now the British headquarters of the Church of Scientology. You will get a better view of it on your way back.

Go through a kissing gate and then follow the path round to walk down the side of a field. You start to get views of Weir Wood Reservoir ahead. Go straight across at a crossroad of paths and continue into trees. Stay on the main path and descend to the left to walk along a sunken track. Ignore a signed path to the right and as you come out of the trees bear right towards a gate and a field. Turn right at the T-junction of paths at the bottom of the field and proceed through a gate into the trees. Follow the path, making sure that you keep the chain link fence on your left, down towards the reservoir, eventually coming out onto a quiet road, with locked gates on your left giving access to the reservoir.

Turn right onto the road and follow it, going past a small car park on the right, which could be used for parking for a shortened version of this walk, and parking areas on the left until you come to a T-junction with a much busier road. Cross over this road straightway, taking great care, turn right and walk about 20yds uphill on the left-hand side of the road.

Turn left onto a signed bridleway. This track takes you past some extraordinary rock formations, the Stone Farm Rocks SSSI, owned and managed by the British Mountaineering Council. The rocks are much used for climbing and bouldering and you could easily spend some time here watching these activities. The views from the area around the SSSI information board are also excellent.

The High Weald: An outstandingly beautiful medieval landscape...

At the end of the straight stretch, keep right on the track and bear left when it swings to the left and heads downhill. After about 400yds in total from where the track went round to the right, you will pass a fishing pond on the right-hand side and almost immediately come to a T-junction, with vineyard views ahead. Turn left here and go over a bridge, then carry straight on to walk through the middle of a number of buildings, forming part of the Kingscote Estate. You will pass the Kingscote Estate Winery and Produce Shop on the right and this offers refreshment opportunities, including delicious ice creams. *Vineyards are an increasingly significant component of the High Weald Landscape.*

Continue under a railway bridge, with the possibility of a Bluebell Railway train passing overhead, and then stay on the estate access road, ignoring footpaths going off to the left and carry on to the right where a track joins from the left. Continue for a further 700yds, walking through mixed forest.

When you reach an area on the left-side of the road used for parking, immediately take the path on the left. The footpath sign is missing here, but you are continuing on the HWLT through this pleasant woodland, popular with dog walkers. When you reach a crossroads of paths turn left along a signed path. Continue to cross a footbridge, then shortly afterwards go right at a junction, again following the signed route. Ignore paths going off to the left or right and continue ahead when a track joins from the left. Walk past Home Farm and on reaching a T-junction with a tarmac road turn left, following the signs. You will pass a parking area available for Gravetye Manor garden visits on Tuesdays and Fridays.

Gravetye Manor was built in 1958, but it was a later owner, William Robinson, a renowned gardener, who designed the formal gardens and the surrounding estate. He was at Gravetye Manor from 1885 until his death in 1935. In 1958 the building became an exceptional hotel, and this use has continued until the present day.

On reaching the gates to Gravetye Manor turn right and follow a track passing buildings on the right and passing through a gate. The boundary of the Gravetye Manor grounds is on the left and you will be following this boundary for a while. Bear left, signed, at a junction of paths to go downhill. You will pass splendid greenhouse on the left and you may get a glimpse of the gardens. When you reach the bottom of the hill follow the track round to the left, ignoring the deer gate ahead. Continue along the track, passing Moat House on your left to reach a garage and parking area.

Proceed through the deer gate ahead and follow the path round, very shortly coming out into an open area. Take the faint path to the right here, climbing uphill. Make sure you look back a few times as you climb as you will get excellent views of Gravetye Manor and its grounds. Keep left as the path is joined by another path coming from the right. After going slightly downhill into trees you come to a signed junction where you turn right into the woods. After going up some steps you reach another open area where you should carry on straight ahead uphill, with trees on your right. At the top you reach a junction with a path coming in from the left and going into the woods

At this point you have the option of extending the walk into West Hoathly, perhaps to view the outside of the Priest House, look at the church and explore the graveyard with its excellent view of the High Weald or visit The Cat, a pub with an excellent reputation for its food. However, for the main walk stay out in the open. The views to the North from this point are excellent on a fine day and it would make a good spot for a picnic.

To continue on the walk, turn left (NE) onto the path along the edge of the open area, with trees on the right (if you are returning from West Hoathly you will need to turn right at this point). At the end of the open area, follow the path round to the left and after about 100 yds turn right onto another grassy track, which you follow straight ahead right across the next open area, eventually heading downhill towards a signpost.

Follow the signed route ahead on a track that goes into woods, with Lower Lake soon appearing on the left. You will soon pass a clearing on the left, at the top of the lake, which would make another good picnic spot, taking advantage of the fallen tree for seating. Carry on along the track, which heads downhill. At the bottom there is a signpost with a finger missing. This finger should be pointing right, which is the direction you need to take. After 270 yds you reach a crossing track.

Go straight ahead, but slightly to the left, here, as the path further away from the stream is better underfoot. After crossing a boardwalk, you come out into the open where you should proceed ahead, but slightly to the left, heading for a gate. Go through the gate and cross the tarmac track, taking the path opposite staggered slightly to the left.

After a short distance you will come to a T-junction, where you should join the track heading right, towards a railway bridge. You will probably recognise this from the outward route, but now, instead of passing under the bridge you should turn sharp right to join the signed footpath just before you get there. *There is, of course, the option of making a diversion to visit the Winery for refreshments, afterwards returning to join the route or continue by reversing the outward route.*

Follow the path through the trees, coming out onto a crossing hard track. Turn left here and follow the track for about 250 yds. Just before you reach the lowest point, turn left onto a narrow path, with a fence on the right-hand side.

Follow this path, going over a footbridge to reach a stile. Go over the stile and then walk `steeply uphill, taking advantage of the handrail, if necessary, to reach the Bluebell Railway track. Cross the track with care and then go steeply downhill, again using the handrail, if necessary, to cross a stile. Follow the path ahead through the trees, through a gate, across a track and then through another gate.

Go straight across the field, with a vineyard to your left. You will come to a boardwalk, indicating that it can get very wet here and shortly afterwards you need to follow a signed route to the right. This takes you through a gate, over a footbridge and then across a low barrier at the other end.

Head half left here, following a faint path, to go through a gap between two groups of trees. Carry on straight ahead, uphill here, heading for the trees at the top. You will pass a signpost a bit to the left but carry on along the path towards the gate that you will be able to see at the top.

Go through the gate and turn right to re-join the outward route. There is a vineyard, part of the Kingscote Estate, on the right-hand side and you will then be walking above Stoneham Rocks.

When you reach the road, cross it straightaway with great care and then walk downhill on the left-hand side for about 20yds, before turning left onto the quiet road. Follow the road to the locked gates and

turn onto the path which you follow uphill, keeping the chain link fence on your right and turning right where the fence does.

Eventually you pass through a gate to come out into a field. Follow the enclosed path along the boundary for a short distance, turning left uphill at a signpost before the pylons. Follow the path uphill, towards a gate. Go through the gate and follow the signed path to the left and then straight ahead uphill. You pass through a slightly overgrown bit and then come out into a field. Turn right here to head uphill, with a hedge on your right. You will come to a crossroad of paths and if you look to the right here you will be able to see Standen.

If you have a NT membership card with you, you can go through the gate to the right here to enter the Standen grounds and then continue into the gardens, following the guidance on the notice on the gate.

Go straight across at the junction and continue uphill and then slightly to the left to go through a gate. Follow the path, looking out for good views of Saint Hill Manor at one point. As you approach the access road to Standen turn left into the trees to follow the path back to the car park.

You might want to combine this walk with a visit to Standen, a National Trust property. The house, an important Arts and Crafts family home, was designed by Philip Webb and has Morris and Co. interiors. The house is set in a 12-acre hillside garden, with magnificent views at various places, and a delightful wider estate.

Updated August 2022

Please follow the Countryside Code:

Respect other people

- Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- Park carefully so access to gateways and driveways is clear
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Follow paths but give way to others where it's narrow

Protect the natural environment

- Leave no trace of your visit, take all your litter home
- Don't have BBQs or fires
- Keep dogs under effective control
- Dog poo - bag it and bin it

Enjoy the outdoors

- Plan ahead, check what facilities are open, be prepared
- Follow advice and local signs and obey social distancing measures

Wildlife, including nesting birds, may have moved into new areas and land managers may have provided extra protection for wildlife. Be vigilant and comply with these protective measures so that you do not disrupt the local wildlife