



Eridge Circular walk

A heritage railway, a nature reserve and massive sandstone outcrops in the High Weald.



Length **Main Walk:** 16¾ km[†] (10.4 miles). Four hours 5 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 8½ hours.

Alternative Walk, starting from Ashurst: 14½ km[†] (9.0 miles). Three hours 30 minutes walking time.

† Subtract 2½ km (1.6 miles; 40 minutes) with shorter afternoon. See Walk Options below.

OS Map Explorer 135. Eridge, map reference TQ541347, is in East Sussex, 4 km **NE** of Crowborough.

Toughness 4 out of 10 (3 with shorter afternoon).

Features This walk covers similar ground to the western part of the Tunbridge Wells Circular walk (#19), using another railway line to access this attractive part of the High Weald from the other side. The stations at Eridge and Tunbridge Wells (West) are now connected again by the **Spa Valley Railway**, and on days when it is operating you are likely to see and hear vintage steam or diesel trains at several places along the route.

The morning section is an undulating route across typical High Weald territory, starting with a slightly longer route to Mottsmill Stream than that in the Eridge to Forest Row walk (#109). There is a choice of routes into **Groombridge**, one of many rural villages which developed away from the original hamlet with the arrival of the railway.

The afternoon section goes from Old Groombridge's village green to **Groombridge Place**, a beautiful Jacobean manor house surrounded by a

medieval moat. The full route goes back through the main part of Groombridge and continues past **Harrison's Rocks**, where you can usually watch climbers practising their skills on this massive outcrop of Ardingly sandstone. It then swings round to go through **Broadwater Warren** nature reserve (free entry), once a gloomy conifer forest which is gradually being restored to heathland and woodland by the RSPB. The southern part of Broadwater Forest contains another sandstone outcrop and the final section of the walk goes past the full length of **Eridge Rocks**, a nature reserve managed by the Sussex Wildlife Trust.

As with any walk in the High Weald, you will need to be prepared for muddy or waterlogged paths at almost any time of the year.

Walk Options

Directions are given for a shorter morning route from Ashurst, the station before Eridge on the same line. This **Alternative Walk** initially follows the Ashurst to Eridge walk (#236) before heading east through the **Burrswood** estate and a fine bluebell wood to Old Groombridge. As well as being an attractive route in its own right, this option would be worth considering if you missed the train for a group walk and wanted to catch up.

On both the Main and Alternative Walks there is the option of a **shorter afternoon**, cutting out the loop around Harrison's Rocks. You could also break off the main afternoon route at Harrison's Rocks and go directly to Eridge station via Forge Road.

If you want to abandon the walk in Groombridge and the heritage railway is operating, you could take a train back to Eridge or – in the other direction – to Tunbridge Wells (West), which is a short walk from the town's mainline station. A more prosaic option would be to take Metrobus 291 (hourly Mon–Sat, two-hourly Sun & BH) to East Grinstead or Tunbridge Wells.

Additional Notes

A link section was added in 2020 so that the full walk takes in both Harrison's Rocks and Broadwater Warren (previously you had to choose between them). The route through Broadwater Warren was also slightly lengthened to take advantage of the RSPB's restoration work in opening up some new heathland trails.

The alternative start from Ashurst was also added at this time. Some attractive sections had been dropped from Walk #236 when Burrswood Hospital (and its welcoming tearoom) closed in 2019, and they have been adapted for this walk.

The shorter afternoon route used to include a longer exploration of Broadwater Warren, but this relied on a permissive horse ride through Broadwater Forest which was blocked off in 2023.

Transport

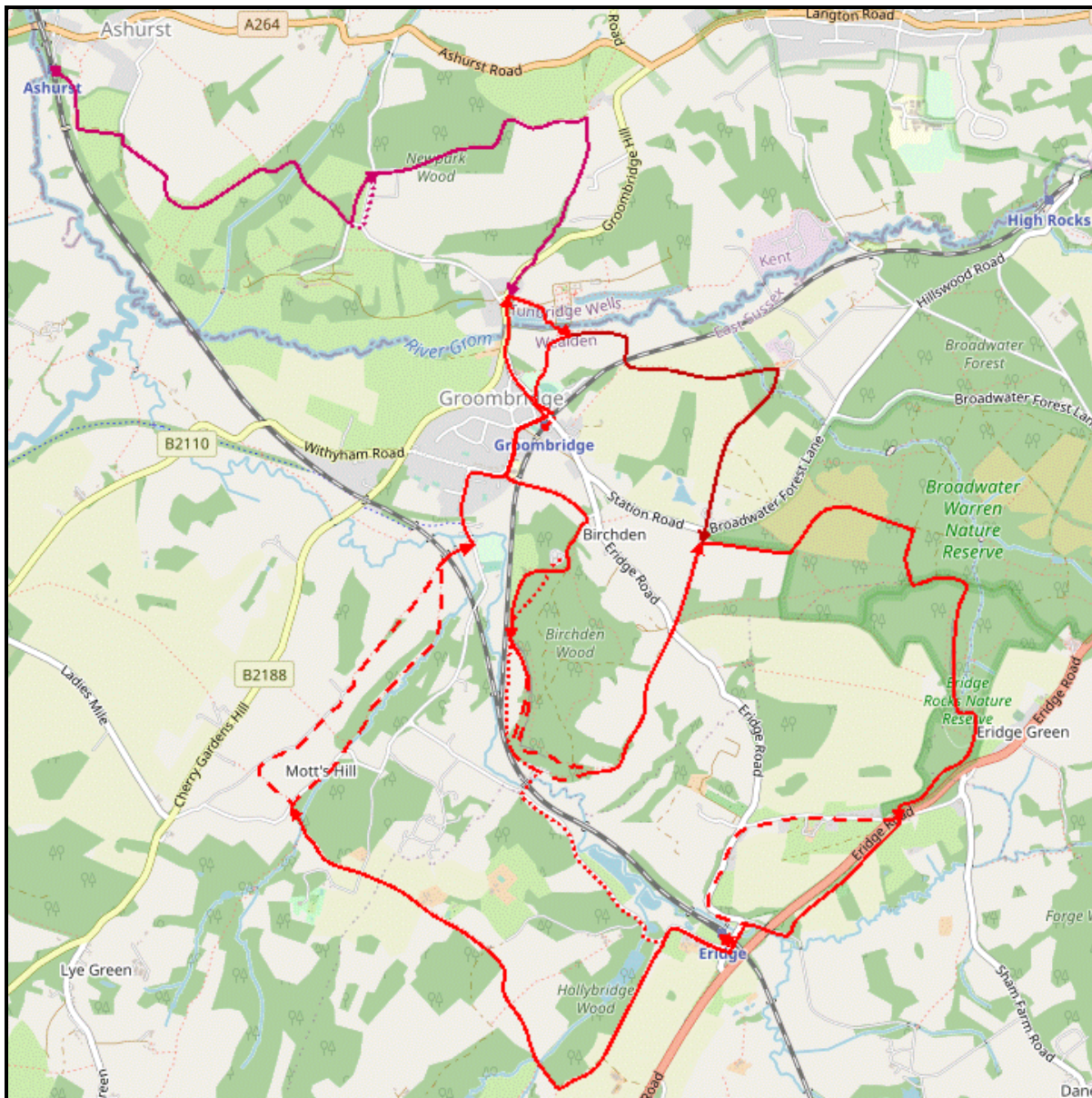
There is a direct hourly service from London Bridge to Eridge (Mon–Sat), taking 56 minutes. On Sundays you have to travel from Victoria and change at Oxted, with a longer journey time of around 75 minutes.

If driving, there are some parking spaces outside Eridge station. The station car park costs around £3 Mon–Sat, £2.50 Sun (2023).

Suggested Train	Take the train nearest to 10:00 from London Bridge to Eridge . As the Alternative Walk has a relatively short morning section you could start this variation an hour later.
Lunch	The suggested lunch pub in Groombridge (after 7 km, or 4¾ km on the Alternative Walk) is the 16 th C Crown Inn (01892-864742; food to 2.30pm Tue–Fri, 3pm Sat, 5pm Sun; closed Mon). It has some outdoor seating overlooking the village green and serves good food including some unusual international dishes. There is an alternative pub ten minutes away in the main part of the village, but the Junction Inn (01892-864275) is closed Mon–Thu lunchtimes.
Tea	At the end of the walk The Huntsman pub (01892-864258; closed from 6pm Sun until 4pm Tue) is a stone's throw from Eridge station. There is no other place nearby but you could break your return journey at Oxted, which has several cafés and coffee shops plus a JD Wetherspoon's pub right next to the station, the Oxted Inn (01883-723440).
Help Us!	After the walk, please leave a comment, it really helps. Thanks! You can also upload photos to the   SWC Group on Flickr (upload your photos) and videos to  Youtube. This walk's tags are:
By Car	Start TN3 9LE
Help	National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Traveline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234
Version	Nov-23 
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Walk Directions

Walk Map



All maps © OpenStreetMap contributors

Walk Options (Main | Alt.)

M. Main Walk (16¾ km)

i. Main Walk, with shorter afternoon (14¼ km)

a. Alternative Walk, starting from Ashurst (14½ km)

ai. Alternative Walk, with shorter afternoon (12 km)

Walk Directions

If you are doing the Alternative Walk (from Ashurst), start at §D.

A. Eridge Station to Mott's Hill (3½ km)

1. Leave the station – shared with the **Spa Valley Railway**¹ (SVR) – and turn right. In 50m **turn right again** into Forge Road, passing the station platforms on your right and heading in the same direction as London-bound trains.
2. In 300m the road bends left to skirt around several large ponds. Where it dips and curves back to the right, **bear left** onto the driveway to “The Lodge” and two other houses, which is also a public footpath.

3. After passing the houses keep ahead on a narrow path, with glimpses of a lake behind the trees on your right. At the end go through a metal kissing gate and continue along the right-hand edge of a large field, with a wood on your right. On the far side keep ahead on a farm track for 300m, soon alongside another wood.
4. At the end of the wood **turn right** at a footpath signpost, joining the **Sussex Border Path**² (SBP). Go downhill on a concrete farm track, which can be very muddy near the bottom. After crossing a stream go through a kissing gate at the end of the hedge on your right and follow a path diagonally up a field.
5. In the top corner go through a wide gap and bear left to go alongside a clump of trees and across the next field. Go straight across a track with a four-way footpath signpost to continue along the edge of another field. At the end of the trees on your left **turn half-right** as indicated and cut across the field to the corner of a wood (Little Wigsell). Bear left to go down the left-hand field edge.
6. At the bottom cross a farm track and go over a new wooden footbridge into a meadow. Follow a grassy path uphill, passing a tree-lined pond on your right and gradually approaching Marchant Wood on your left. Keep ahead alongside a garden hedge and continue in the same direction across a field.
7. Follow a clear path along the right-hand edge of the next field, then straight ahead across three more fields as you go over the brow of the hill. Eventually the path takes you through a metal side gate in a belt of trees into a meadow. Keep right to go downhill, staying close to Rocks Wood on your right and passing through a gap in a line of trees halfway down.
8. In the bottom right-hand corner of the meadow cross **Mottsmill Stream**³ on a new wooden footbridge flanked by metal gates and follow a path slanting up through the trees, now also on the **High Weald Landscape Trail**⁴ (HWLT). At the top go over a stile in the hedge onto a lane (Mott's Hill).

B. Mott's Hill to Corseley Road (2 • 1¾ km)

There is a choice of routes for this section. The SBP & HWLT follow the lower route in [10], with more road walking but also a bluebell wood and a tree-lined valley. The slightly longer higher route has fine views across the Weald.

9. Higher route (2 km)

- a. Turn right briefly onto the lane, then in 25m **turn left** onto a narrow footpath. Continue up a large field towards a prominent red house 250m away. Turn right in front of the house to go along a farm track, heading **NE**.
- b. In 600m the lane swings left and comes to a junction by an outbuilding. Fork right to stay on the main track, passing some run-down farm buildings on the left and leading out into a field.
- c. Follow a clear path all the way down this large farm field. After jinking left and right it straightens out to head **NE**, twice going alongside a belt of trees. As the path approaches the railway embankment it merges with the lower route from the right.
- d. Go under the railway bridge and keep ahead across two small fields, crossing Mottsmill Stream on a wooden footbridge in the middle. On the far side go over a stile onto a lane (Corseley Road).

10. Lower route (1¾ km)

- a. Turn right onto the lane and follow it gently downhill for 400m. Just before it bends right to go back uphill, **veer left** onto a signposted footpath going through a small parking area for "Valley Cottage".

- b. Pass to the left of the garage and keep ahead on the main path through a wood (Long Shaw), with Mottsmill Stream down to your right. After leaving the wood continue through a long narrow valley.
- c. At the end follow the path up a short slope to the left, over a stile and in the same direction across the shoulder of a large field. Just before the path reaches the railway embankment it merges with the higher route from the left.
- d. Go under the railway bridge and keep ahead across two small fields, crossing Mottsmill Stream on a wooden footbridge in the middle. On the far side go over a stile onto a lane (Corseley Road).

C. Corseley Road to Old Groombridge (1½ km)

11. Turn left onto Corseley Road, which you will be following for 800m. After crossing **Eridge Stream**³ and passing a water treatment works go past the start of the **Forest Way**⁵ on the left (leaving the SBP) and continue uphill, taking care as there is no pavement on this stretch. At the top follow the road round to the right.
12. In 200m the road turns sharply left and you leave the HWLT, which takes a path to the right of a primary school (the main afternoon route). Continue along the road for a further 250m, passing the church of **St Thomas the Apostle**⁶ and some residential streets.
13. At a junction with Orchard Rise on the left, **turn right** into a byway and immediately **fork left** into a cul-de-sac, Gromenfield. Where this turns left, keep ahead on a short tarmac path to reach Station Road. Unless you want to look down on the SVR's **Groombridge station**⁷ from the bridge on the right, **turn left** onto the road.
 - Access to the platform itself is via the old station building ahead, doubling back under the road bridge; there is another chance to visit it on the main afternoon route.
14. Going down Station Road you come to the **Junction Inn** on the left, the first of the two pubs in the village. At the end of the road bear right onto the B2110 at a mini-roundabout. After crossing the **River Grom**³ keep right to stay on the main road as it goes uphill alongside the sloping village green⁸. At the top cross the main road carefully for the suggested lunch pub, the **Crown Inn**.

Continue the directions at §F.

D. Ashurst Station to Burrswood (2¼ km)

The first 1½ km is the same as Walk #236.

15. From the station's small car park do not take the obvious way out to the A264, but **take the private road in the opposite direction**, heading **S** and briefly joining the **Sussex Border Path**² (SBP). This driveway winds uphill and curves right where a footpath joins from the left.
16. After 200m along a level stretch, **turn left** to go up a grassy track between hedges. At the top turn right briefly onto a track, then in 40m **turn left** through a metal side gate into the bottom corner of a large field, leaving the SBP.
17. Go up the left-hand field edge, climbing steadily for 300m with increasingly fine views across the Medway Valley. At the top ignore a gap in the hedge ahead and **turn right** to go around the top of the field, curving left alongside the hedge. In 100m **veer left** through a metal side gate to continue along the top of another field.
18. In 150m, just before the next corner, **go over a stile on the left** into a steep-sided valley, with **Burrs Wood** off to the right. Go straight ahead along the side of this picturesque valley for 400m. On the far side ignore the fieldgate ahead (the continuation of Walk #236) and **bear right** to come to a small metal gate in the tree boundary.

19. Go through the gate and follow the footpath down into the wooded valley, soon bending left to descend less steeply. In a further 125m the right of way turns right to go steeply down to a bridge across the stream at the bottom.
 - At a potentially muddy spot about 50m before this turning there is a somewhat easier unofficial path slanting down to the bridge.
20. After crossing the stream follow the path up the other side of the valley. Keep ahead at a path crossing, still climbing steadily and curving round to the right.
21. At the top of the wood **bear left** onto the continuation of the right of way, a tree-lined path climbing more gently between fields. In 300m the footpath meets the tarmac driveway to the **Burrswood**⁹ mansion (not visible from the walk route) at a sharp bend.

E. Burrswood to Old Groombridge (2½ km)

The main route for the next 300m is not on a designated right of way, but at the time of writing there was a sign welcoming walkers into Burrs Wood. If it appears that permissive access has been withdrawn, follow the alternative directions in [23].

22. Main route

Do not join the new driveway but **turn sharp left** (almost doubling back) onto a broad tree-lined path, the old estate driveway. This curves gently round to the right and eventually leads out past a metal fieldgate (and another 'Welcome' notice) onto Groombridge Road.

23. Road route

Bear left onto the new driveway (which is the continuation of the right of way) to come out onto Groombridge Road in 50m. Turn left and go along this quiet lane for 300m to meet the exit from the old driveway opposite the entrance to Newpark Farm.

24. If coming from the old driveway, go straight across the lane onto a farm track (with a well-concealed footpath signpost). Go past some buildings on the left and keep ahead into **Newpark Wood**, initially heading **E**. Follow the main path all the way through the wood, with occasional yellow waymarkers to keep you on the right of way.
25. In about 500m the path swings left, then curves back to the right through some dense rhododendrons in the north-eastern corner of the wood. Leave the wood through a wooden fieldgate and continue on a grassy track between tall hedges. In 125m ignore gates on both sides leading into fields and stay on the track as it turns half-left.
26. In a further 250m you reach a major path junction. Just beyond a gate on the right leading into a field with a large new barn, **turn right** onto a tree-lined farm track heading **S**, joining the **Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk**¹⁰ (TWCW).
27. This soon becomes an enclosed path which you follow in much the same direction for 500m, negotiating gates and stiles as necessary. The path goes between fields, past a cluster of farm buildings on the left and finally alongside a copse. At the end go over a stile into **Beech Wood**.
28. Continue on a faint woodland path, which soon swings right to go past a large oak tree. The path then veers left and goes steadily downhill near the left-hand edge of the wood, with occasional yellow waymarkers to confirm the route.
29. In 250m the footpath emerges onto the B2110 where you turn right to go along its pavement, still downhill. In 200m you come to the **Crown Inn** on your right, at the top of a sloping village green⁸.

F. Old Groombridge to Groombridge Place (½ km)

30. From the pub cross the B2110 carefully and go through a wooden gate onto a footpath, joining (or continuing on) the **Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk**¹⁰ (TWCW). The path goes between an attractive cottage and the brick-built church of **St John the Evangelist**¹¹.
31. Go through another gate into a field and follow a grassy path sloping gently downhill, with a glimpse of **Groombridge Place Gardens**¹² ahead on your left. In the bottom corner go through an iron gate, across an old driveway and onto a path alongside a lake.
32. At the end go down a few steps on the left to head directly towards **Groombridge Place**¹³, framed by four giant redwood trees. Bear right as indicated and cross a tarmac driveway to continue between the moat and the **River Grom**³. Near the back of the house **turn right** and cross the river on a stone bridge.

If you are doing the shorter afternoon (omitting Harrison's Rocks), go to §I.

G. Groombridge Place to Harrison's Rocks (2¼ km)

33. On the other side of the bridge continue briefly along a track, then take a potentially muddy path between low wire fences, slanting off to the right. Follow it round to the left and uphill. At the top of the slope go through a gate and continue near the left-hand side of a recreation ground.
34. After passing a children's playground on the right leave the ground through a side gate and turn left onto Station Road, with the **Junction Inn** opposite. Fork left into a side street (Newton Willows), towards the old **Groombridge station**⁷ building.
 - Before continuing the walk (back to Station Road via a flight of steps on the right) you might like to make a short out-and-back detour through the old station building and round to the new platform for the **Spa Valley Railway**¹ (SVR) on the other side of the road bridge; there is a kiosk on the platform serving snacks when trains are running.

The route now retraces the outward route of the Main Walk for 400m.
35. After going up the steps cross over Station Road and go through the small wooden gate opposite onto a tarmac path. Keep ahead along a cul-de-sac (Gromenfield) and turn right at the end to come out onto Corseley Road. Turn left and follow this tree-lined street for 250m to a sharp right-hand bend, passing the church of **St Thomas the Apostle**⁶ and a primary school on the left.
36. At this bend **turn left** onto a tarmac path alongside the school, joining the **High Weald Landscape Trail**⁴ (HWLT). Cross the railway on a long footbridge and continue on an enclosed path between fields for 400m. At the end go through a kissing gate and turn right onto the access road for Birchden Wood.
37. Follow the road downhill and round to the left. Take the forestry track passing to the left of the car park (which has a toilet block in the centre) and **turn right** at the back onto a woodland path heading **W** along the edge of **Birchden Wood**. Unless you want to cut through a corner of this open access wood, follow the public footpath out into a more open area.
 - Climbers use these short cuts to reach Harrison's Rocks, but the woodland paths are crossed by tiny streams and can be tricky after heavy rain.
38. On the suggested route the footpath soon veers left and crosses a stream at a potentially muddy spot, then gradually approaches the embankment carrying the SVR. At its closest point there are two openings into the wood: the short cut from the car park and (50m further on) a wooden gate with a sign for **Harrison's Rocks**.

If you want to cut the walk short and go directly to Eridge station, follow the directions below.

39. Direct Route to Eridge Station (+2½ km)

- Ignore both gates and continue along the public footpath, parallel to the railway embankment. In 700m you go through a gate at **Birchden Forge**¹⁴ and then **turn right** at a footpath junction in front of Forge Farm Oast, leaving the HWLT & TWCW.
- Follow its driveway out towards the railway line, with **Eridge Stream**³ flowing over a weir in the garden on the left. After going over a level crossing (where the first track is the SVR and the second is the main line) you come to a T-junction with a lane (Forge Road).
- Turn left and go all the way along this lane, parallel to the railway. In 1 km it skirts around some large ponds and on the final 400m you can see the platforms of Eridge station across the fields on your left.
- At the T-junction at the end of Forge Road turn left to reach the station entrance. Trains to London and Uckfield both leave from the platform down to the left; the one on the right is for the SVR.
 - If you want some refreshment while waiting for a train, **The Huntsman** pub is on the left-hand side, 100m past the station entrance (return the same way).

H. Harrison's Rocks to Broadwater Warren (2½ km)

40. For the full walk go through the gate for the rocks and turn right, leaving the HWLT & TWCW. This path gradually diverges from the public footpath alongside the railway embankment and soon reaches the start of the sandstone outcrop. After about 250m it forks, with the right-hand (lower) path being the one intended for walkers.

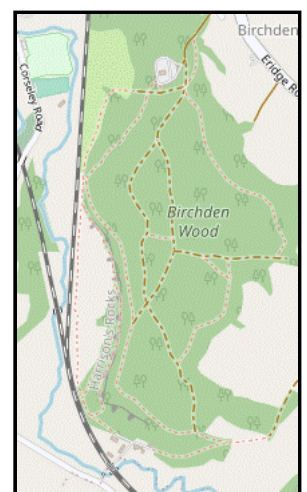
For a closer look at the rocks you can take the slightly awkward higher route in [42].

41. Lower Route

- Fork right** onto the "walkers' path", which runs a little way below the rocks and gradually curves back towards the railway line. Eventually you go through a gate and turn left, rejoining the public footpath (now some way above the tracks).
- In 200m go through a gate at **Birchden Forge**¹⁴ and keep ahead at a footpath junction in front of the attractive Forge Farm Oast, staying on the HWLT & TWCW.
- After passing Forge Farm House keep ahead on a broad grassy path, climbing gently and soon curving round to the left to go along the southern edge of Birchden Wood.
- After passing an old fieldgate ignore a side path up to the left and follow the footpath out of the wood, where it merges with a woodland path from the left (the higher route).

42. Higher Route

- Fork left** onto the "climbers' path" alongside the base of the rocks. If you persevere with this uneven path (rather than taking one of the narrow link paths down to the lower route) it eventually turns sharply left at a corner in the outcrop.
- A little further on you cross a small dip on a plank bridge with a wooden handrail and go up a short slope. At this point (where you can see the end of the outcrop, about 50m ahead) **veer left** towards what looks like a dead end but actually leads to a flight of stone steps cut into a cleft in the rocks.
- Go up these steps and veer left onto one of the paths through the undergrowth to reach a broad forest track in Birchden Wood. Turn right onto this track, soon with a fence on your right. In 150m, after the track has curved left, **turn right** onto a path heading **ESE**.
- Follow this path out of the wood, rejoining the HWLT & TWCW where it merges with the public footpath coming up from the right (the lower route).



43. After leaving the wood you might have to negotiate a potentially muddy narrow stretch between hedges for about 100m. The footpath then turns half-left and becomes a pleasant tree-lined green lane, with glimpses across a valley on the right.
44. In 400m you pass the buildings of **Pinstraw Farm** and carry on along the farm track. This comes out onto Eridge Road at a junction, Park Corner. Cross the road carefully (slightly to the left) to continue in much the same direction on Park Corner Lane, leaving both waymarked trails.
45. Go all the way along this quiet lane, initially with a wood on the right and then gently downhill between fields. Just before the lane comes to a T-junction with Broadwater Forest Lane **turn right** through a wooden kissing gate into the RSPB's **Broadwater Warren**¹⁵ nature reserve.
Continue the directions at §J.

I. Groombridge Place to Broadwater Warren direct (2¼ km)

46. On the other side of the bridge **turn left** to go along an avenue of lime trees, leaving the TWCW. At the far end continue on a fenced path to the far right-hand corner of a meadow. Follow a potentially muddy path round to the right through undergrowth, then under a railway bridge. Go over a stile and **turn left**, soon going over another stile into a meadow.
47. Follow a faint path heading **E**, passing several tall trees and gradually moving away from the railway line. On the far side go over a stile in the hedge and continue in the same direction across another large meadow, with a small dip in the middle. On the far side keep ahead alongside a projecting group of trees to the bottom corner. Follow the path past a pond and up a gentle slope to the buildings at South Farm.
48. At the top **turn right** at a signposted footpath junction. Go past some outbuildings and down a grassy slope, bearing slightly right to continue along the left-hand edge of a small field, heading **S**. In the corner cross a stream and keep ahead on a broad woodland path, climbing gently. At the top follow the path out of the wood into a large field.
49. Keep left to go all the way along the left-hand edge of the field, climbing steadily at first and passing a double metal fieldgate where the field levels out. In the left-hand corner go through a new wooden kissing gate and continue in much the same direction on a path along the edge of a wood, gently downhill with a vineyard off to the right.
50. At the bottom of the slope keep ahead on a broad track between a cluster of converted buildings at Birchden Farm. Go past a redundant stile and continue alongside the grounds of the old farmhouse to come out onto Broadwater Forest Lane at its junction with Station Road (on the right) and Park Corner Lane (ahead).
51. Cross the road carefully (slightly to the right) and go through a wooden kissing gate on the left-hand side of Park Corner Lane into the RSPB's **Broadwater Warren**¹⁵ nature reserve.

J. Broadwater Warren to the A26 (3¼ km)

Parts of the nature reserve are occasionally closed off. If you come across a locked gate on the route described below, use the map to devise an alternative.

52. Follow the path along the edge of a wood for 450m, heading **E** with a large field on the right. Eventually the path veers left and meets a broad track. Go straight across this and through a wooden side gate onto another track heading **NNE**.

53. The track soon emerges onto the restored western heath and gradually curves round to the right. After passing a "Heathland birds" panel and a clump of conifers in the centre of the heath **keep ahead** where another track merges from the left.

54. At the end of the heathland go through a gate and keep ahead on the broad track, climbing gently through woodland. In 150m **turn right** at a major path crossing to head **S** on another track. The track turns slight left and comes to a T-junction.

55. **Turn left** at the junction to head **E** on another broad track for 300m, passing a "Wildlife corridor" panel along the way. You come to a small clearing and a new wildlife pond overlooked by a magnificent 300-year veteran oak, both described on information panels.

56. **Turn right** at the clearing onto a broad path heading **S**, with a sign welcoming you to **Eridge Rocks**¹⁶ Nature Reserve. In 100m bear left to stay on the main path, then keep ahead at a path crossing to pass the start of the sandstone outcrop on your right.

57. In about 500m the path (still alongside the rocks) curves to the left and then back to the right, eventually coming to a small car park with an information panel. Go through the car park and bear right across its access road onto a narrow path into the trees, heading **SW**.

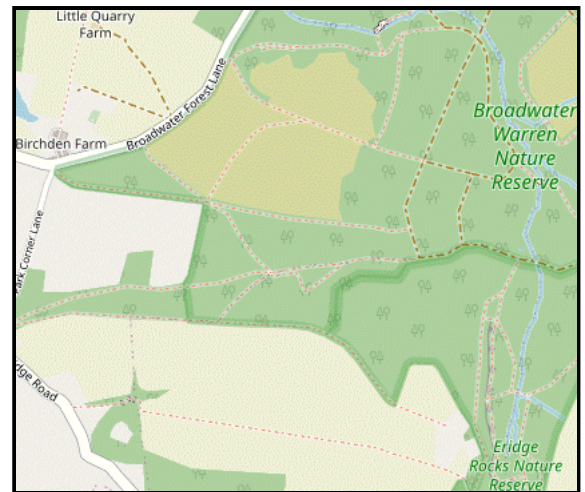
58. Follow this undulating woodland path for 600m, which unfortunately runs fairly close to the A26 for much of the way before veering left to meet it. Go through a metal fieldgate and turn right onto the tarmac footway beside the main road.

K. The A26 to Eridge Station (1¼ • 1¾ km)

The shortest route to complete the walk is along a bridleway close to the A26. This is obviously not ideal and for a quieter alternative you can take the longer route in [60]. However, there is more traffic than you might expect on the gloomy sunken lane leading down to the station, so this option is not advisable in poor light.

59. Main route (1¼ km)

- For the direct route to the station, **cross the A26 with great care** and turn right. Go through a lay-by onto a bridleway signposted as Cycle Route 21, with the A26 partially screened by young trees. As it descends there are glimpses of **Wildwood Vineyard**¹⁷ through the trees on the left.
- At the bottom of the slope bear right onto the driveway from Hamsell Manor. Go under the main road and bear left onto a lane, with **The Huntsman** pub opposite.
- The station entrance is 100m past the pub, on the right. Trains to London and Uckfield both leave from the platform down to the left; the one on the right is for the SVR.



60. Alternative route (1¾ km)

- a. For the quieter route follow the tarmac footway up to a side road (The Forstal). Turn right and go along this quiet lane for 750m, with fine views across the Medway Valley.
- b. The Forstal ends at a T-junction where you turn left to go downhill on Groombridge Lane. **Take great care along this narrow lane** as it descends between increasingly high earth banks.
- c. At the bottom of the hill the lane curves left. On the right you pass a few buildings, the access road to Eridge station's car park and **The Huntsman's** beer garden, with the pub itself up ahead on the corner where the lane turns sharply right.
 - If you are not stopping for refreshment you can take the road into the car park. The platform you come to is the one for the SVR, so you would need to cross the footbridge for mainline trains.
- d. The main station entrance is 100m beyond the front of the pub, on the right. Trains to London and Uckfield both leave from the platform down to the left; the one on the right is for the SVR.

Walk Notes

1. The **Spa Valley Railway** began operating steam and diesel trains from Tunbridge Wells West in 1997, at first to Groombridge and then Eridge in 2011. The line had been closed by British Rail in 1985, some years after the Beeching Report.
2. The **Sussex Border Path** runs for 240 km along the length of West & East Sussex, from Thorney Island on the Hampshire border to Rye.
3. **Mottsmill Stream, Eridge Stream** and the **River Grom** are all tributaries of the **River Medway**, joining the main river 2 km west of Groombridge.
4. The **High Weald Landscape Trail** runs for 145 km across the length of the High Weald, mostly near its northern edge, from Horsham in West Sussex to Rye.
5. The **Forest Way** runs for 17 km between East Grinstead and Groombridge, along part of a branch line closed by Beeching in 1966. It is now a popular cycle route.
6. **St Thomas the Apostle, Groombridge** (in the diocese of Chichester) was designed by the famous architect Norman Shaw. It was built to serve the new community which developed after the arrival of the railway and opened in 1884.
7. The line through **Groombridge station** used to carry trains to London, Three Bridges, Brighton and Eastbourne. The SVR platform had to be re-sited on the other side of the road bridge because the station building had been converted into a private residence.
8. The cluster of houses around the village green was the original settlement ('old' **Groombridge**, in Kent). The railway led to the development of the new village across the River Grom, in East Sussex.
9. The **Burrswood** estate was once part of Groombridge Place and later owned by David Salomons, who became the first Jewish Lord Mayor of London in 1855. The mansion became a private hospital in 1948 but this closed in 2019.
10. The 44 km **Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk** (formerly the High Weald Walk) was established by the Borough Council as one of its centenary events in 1989.
11. **St John the Evangelist, Groombridge** (in the diocese of Rochester) was built in 1625 as a private chapel for Groombridge Place, only becoming the parish church in 1872. It has some unusual features, such as a one-handed clock.
12. **Groombridge Place Gardens** are a popular visitor attraction, combining 17thC formal walled gardens designed as 'outside rooms' of the house, and the **Enchanted Forest** which aims to "intrigue, amuse and entertain".
13. The present house at **Groombridge Place** was built in the early 17thC on the site of a medieval moated house (and possibly an earlier Saxon fort). A 12 year-old French Count was held hostage here in the Hundred Years War until his ransom was paid 30 years later. It was the setting for Peter Greenaway's 1982 film *The Draughtsman's Contract* and was used for Longbourn in the 2005 adaptation of *Pride & Prejudice*.

14. Ammunition was manufactured at **Birchden Forge** until the mid-18thC.
15. The **Broadwater Warren** nature reserve was acquired by the RSPB in 2007. The society is gradually transforming the “dark and lifeless” Broadwater Forest to “a mosaic of open heathland, woodland and boggy valley mire”.
16. **Eridge Rocks** is a Site of Special Scientific Interest because the rocks support a great variety of tiny ferns, mosses, lichens and liverworts. Some climbing is permitted but there are more restrictions than at Harrison's Rocks.
17. **Wildwood Vineyard** was planted in 2016 and produced its first harvest (of Regent red, Bacchus white and Pinot Noir rosé still wines) in 2018.

» *Last updated: November 21, 2023*

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