

SUSSEX HOSPICES TRAIL

PART 13:

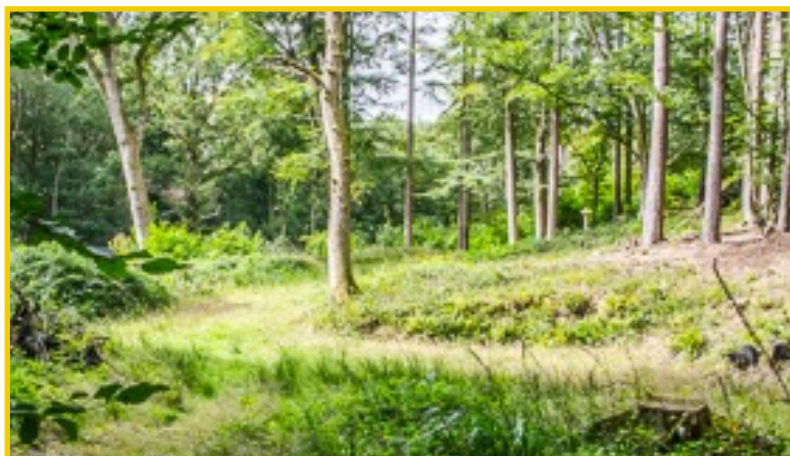
BATTLE TO ROBERTSBRIDGE



Challenging

6.5 Miles
Linear
3.5 hours

120519



Access Notes

1. This stretch has long climbs and descents throughout, but there are no particularly steep sections.
2. The paths, particularly through the woodlands and meadows, can be very muddy at times so good boots are a must (or wellingtons with grips in the wet winter months).
3. There are a couple of sections that are prone to becoming overgrown in the late summer, but these are very short.
4. You will need to negotiate several gates, footbridges and 9 stiles (all of which have dog gates or gaps in the fencing for Labrador-size dogs to climb through, but two of the stiles are very tall so lifting larger dogs over will be a real challenge!).
5. Whilst most of the route is livestock-free, you will cross two fields that are likely to be holding sheep and cattle. The cattle were very relaxed when we walked and the field is very large (allowing you to give them a wide berth), but take care with dogs all the same.
6. You will need to cross a quarry railway at an unsignalled crossing so look and listen for trains before you cross.
7. A small stretch of the route also crosses the former Battle Golf Course (closed in 2016) so, if this has re-opened, take care at this point.



A 6.5 mile linear walk from Battle rail station to Robertsbridge rail station forming the 13th stretch of the Sussex Hospices Trail.

This route takes you through the streets of the historically important Battle before heading north to join tranquil paths through beautiful stretches of woodland. Having passed through the village of Mountfield, with its beautiful church, the route continues north through the rolling parkland of the Mountfield Court Estate, with stunning views, to reach the small village of Robertsbridge. The return leg can be completed with a single 8 minute train journey.

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.

There are no facilities for the bulk of the route. There are plenty of cafes and pubs in Battle at the start of the walk or a couple of pubs and a cafe in Robertsbridge, just a short walk from the end of the walk.

Getting there

The walk starts at Battle rail station and finishes at Robertsbridge rail station. The two stations sit on the same line, usually connected by one train per hour. The return train journey between the two stations takes just 8 minutes. If you are coming by car, Battle rail station has its own large car park which costs £4.90 Mon-Fri, £3.50 on Saturdays and £1 on Sundays and Bank Holidays (correct August 2016).

Approximate post code **TN33 0DE**.

Walk Sections

Go → 1 Start to Netherfield Road

Leave Battle rail station and follow the small access road, Station Approach, up to the mini-roundabout at the top. Turn right here (signed towards Battle Abbey) and stay with this right-hand pavement passing a second mini-roundabout. Just as the road begins to climb, use the zebra crossing to swap to the left-hand pavement. At the next roundabout, stay with this left-hand pavement as it bears left into Upper Lake, soon passing St Mary's Church on your right and then becoming a raised



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pavement alongside Battle Abbey walls on your left. Stay alongside the main road, passing the entrance for battle Abbey on your left and bearing right to join the High Street.

(NOTE: If you are continuing your walk from Trail Part 12, pick up the directions from this point).

Stay with the left-hand pavement along Battle High Street, leading you between a range of shops and eateries and then passing Battle Museum on your left. At the roundabout, with the library on your left, you need to turn right (but to do this it is safest to use the two designated crossing points, ahead and then right). Follow the left-hand pavement of this side road, the A2100 signed to Sevenoaks and London. Ignore the first left-hand side road (a tarmac entrance slope), follow the left-hand pavement downhill and then take the next left turn, Netherfield Road (signed to Netherfield).

1 → 2 Netherfield Road to Old Golf Course



Follow Netherfield Road leading you steadily downhill (taking care as, whilst this is a residential road, there are no pavements). Just before you reach the side road on the right (Wattles Wish), dog leg left (up the slope) and then right to join a parallel housing access road (with houses to your left and a tree line on your right). This just allows you to avoid traffic for a short stretch of Netherfield Road.

At the end of the housing access road, merge back onto Netherfield Road and follow this (still taking care of traffic) for about 0.6 miles, climbing steadily all the way. About 50 paces before you reach the national speed limit signs (this is immediately after the last house on the right, Pegasus, and opposite The Minstrels on your left) turn right onto the grass footpath which runs immediately to the left of the Pegasus driveway.

Follow this path between hedgerows and at the end you will

come to a wide metal gate, with great views across the wooded valley ahead. This marks the start of the former Battle Golf Course, which was closed in 2016. At the time of writing, there were no firm plans for the site so you may come across a new golf course or a completely different land use.

2 → 3 Old Golf Course to Eatenden Lane



Pass alongside the gate, cross straight over the access road and go straight ahead on the bridle path between hedgerows. About 25 paces along, you will see a fingerpost on your left (this marks the junction between a footpath and the bridleway but it is easy to miss, so keep your eyes peeled). Turn left on the narrow path through the scrub to emerge to the edge of an old fairway.

Walk at about 1 o'clock (passing just to the right of the mound of a former green). Maintain this direction, heading steadily downhill, through the dip and continuing up a slope. At the far side, the path enters Burnthouse Wood. NOTE: The paths in this woodland are beautiful, but a little neglected. You may come across fallen branches and old wire fencing across the path so watch your step.

Follow the woodland path leading you fairly steeply downhill. At the bottom of the slope a wooden footbridge leads you over a stream and the woodland footpath continues ahead. Cross a second footbridge and, 30 paces later, follow the waymarker arrow which guides you to the left. The path leads you through a small open glade to reach a T-junction (marked with a fingerpost).

Turn right to join the grass track leading you steadily uphill. The woodlands to the sides are called Goldspur Wood (to your right) and Eatenden Wood (to your left). Keep ahead at two crossroads and you will emerge, alongside a pair of vehicle gates, to Eatenden Lane.

3 → 4 Eatenden Lane to Quarry Rail Crossing

Cross over the lane and go straight ahead to join the next stretch of woodland path (which begins just to the right of the vehicle gate). NOTE: It is notoriously easy to end up on the wrong path through this woodland (even we did it!) so follow the next paragraph of directions carefully.

The path leads you past a collection of beautiful old coppiced beech trees on your right and then winds for a short stretch through an often muddy patch (lined with tall grass marsh



plants). As you emerge from this you will be at a (subtle!) junction of paths. The most obvious path dog legs left and then right, but do NOT take this. Instead take the right-hand branch (at about 1 o'clock, with a mound line of beech trees on your left) and just a few paces along (at a subtle fork) keep right again joining a path through tall grass marsh plants. This soon becomes a more obvious proper footpath.

Follow this long straight path ahead, leading you steadily downhill, with shallow ditches each side. (If this description does not seem right, please double check your location on the App's live GPS map!!). At the bottom of the slope, the path skirts just to the right of a grass meadow (visible through the trees to your left), to reach a stile ahead. Cross this to enter a large grass meadow and walk directly ahead, passing under power lines to reach the wide gate and stile at the far side. Do NOT pass through the gate, instead turn left immediately before the gate to join a subtle grass path with the fence running on your right.

A few paces after this fence ends, fork right through the hedgerow, to pass through a hidden metal kissing gate. You are now entering Lower Hucksteep Wood. Follow the narrow woodland path ahead. NOTE: You are now approaching a quarry access road so keep children and dogs close. At the end of the path, go through the staggered barrier, cross the road with care and take the next staggered barrier ahead to re-enter the woodland where you will see a T-junction.

Turn left and follow the woodland path with the access road to your left and a rail line running to your right. Cross a footbridge over a stream and, a short distance later, you will emerge into a stone loading area for the quarry. Gypsum was discovered here in the 1800s and ore is still mined today. Maintain your direction across this stone area to reach a single wooden gate, marking the footpath crossing of the quarry's rail line. This is an official crossing point but is unsignalled, so look and listen carefully for trains before you cross.

4 → 5 Quarry Rail Crossing to Mountfield Court Estate

Cross the rail line via the two gates and continue ahead on the woodland path. Pass through a wooden gate and keep ahead to join a tarmac access lane. Stay alongside the woodland and wire fence on your right, passing through (or alongside) a pair of gates and then turning immediately right to enter a parking area (this was holding a number of community transport buses when we walked).

Stay alongside the wire fence on your right (passing behind the buses if necessary) and leave the parking area on the narrow path in the top right-hand corner. (There is a waymarker here but this is often hidden by the vehicles). Follow this narrow woodland path which soon swings right leading you over the top



of the main railway line (visible down to your right). Cross the stile ahead to reach the edge of a crop field (with Mountfield Church visible ahead).

Turn left and follow the left-hand field boundary leading you steadily uphill. In the top corner, emerge through (or alongside) the gate and keep ahead along the tarmac drive, passing the village hall on your left. At the T-junction, turn right along the village road (taking care of traffic) and soon passing Mountfield Church on your right. Just before the village road bends left, you will see a private road gateway and cattle grid on your left, marking the entrance for Mountfield Court Estate. NOTE: You are likely to come across sheep from this point. Pass through the gate just to the left of the cattle grid to enter the estate.

5 → 6 Mountfield Court Estate to Railway Tunnel



Follow the tarmac access drive ahead, with the open rolling grass parkland across to your left. Use the gate to pass alongside the next cattle grid and follow the tarmac driveway ahead (passing the farmhouse of New House Farm on your right). Stay with the driveway, leading you steadily uphill through a tunnel of trees and you will emerge at a fork in the driveway, with the beautiful buildings of Mountfield Court ahead.

Mountfield Court was built around 1715 by James Nicholl JP, then Sussex High Sheriff. On his death it passed to his cousin, John Nicholl, who became a Baron of the Cinque Ports. The property stayed in the Nicholl family until about 1865 when it was acquired by Edward Christopher Egerton, Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and whose descendants still live there. Mountfield Court opens its gardens every year in aid of St Michael's Hospice.

Keep left at the driveway fork, passing to the left of the main house (and ignoring a stile on your left). There are beautiful views at this point, ahead and to your left. Keep straight ahead

on the tarmac drive which then becomes a stone and grass track. The track leads you steadily downhill, with an open grass field on your right and a fence running on your left. Just before the bottom of this field, ignore the branch to the left, instead keep straight ahead through some trees to reach the next wide gate ahead.

NOTE: You are likely to come across both sheep and cattle in this next large pasture. Pass through the gate and walk at about 1 o'clock, passing immediately to the left of the circular copse of trees and pond in the field's centre. Just beyond the copse, veer slightly left to join the grass vehicle track which leads you through a line of trees (passing a disused stile). Keep ahead on the grass track, passing more trees on your left. Stay with the main track, veering slightly left, then right, then left again, to lead you through the tree belt (via sleepers) at the bottom corner of this pasture. Keep straight ahead across the next narrow stretch of pasture and pass through the wide metal gate ahead to reach the railway tunnel.

6 → 7 **Railway Tunnel to Bishop's Lane**



Pass through the railway tunnel and go through the next wide metal gate to enter the next large meadow. Turn immediately right (walking directly under the power lines) and cross the footbridge over the stream ahead (which includes a step stile). Follow this narrow path through the scrub, still following the route of the power lines. NOTE: This stretch can be a bit overgrown, but it is not very long.

After passing the first double wooden pylon, the path veers left, leaving the power lines behind and leading you through the woodland. At the end of the woodland, another wooden footbridge (with step stile) leads you into the next meadow. Cross this field at about 1 o'clock and, at the far side, a large footbridge (with squeeze stiles) leads you through the trees. Beyond the bridge, turn immediately right (passing a disused stile) and staying fairly close to the line of stream and trees on your right. Continue along the right-hand boundary of this meadow, now with the wire mesh fencing of the railway running on your right.

In the corner, where the field edge turns left, turn right over a tall stile (this is surrounded by mesh but there is a more open wire fence just to the left which is helpful for dogs) to leave the field. Cross the footbridge to reach a T-junction and turn left. Follow this narrow path with the stream running on your left and the railway to your right. Take care as the path is narrow and the stream banks are steep.

Cross the next tall stile ahead and follow the obvious grass path which leads you back over the stream via a wooden footbridge. Immediately after the bridge, turn right and follow the grass path through this rough meadow, with the rail line running immediately on your right. Maintain your direction, crossing one boardwalk along the way, and eventually the path enters trees

and swings left to cross a final footbridge.

Beyond this, turn right (following the tree line on your right) and a final stile leads you out to a tarmac access drive. Turn right along this drive, taking care of traffic, and follow this as it swings right leading you over the stream and under the rail bridge. A short distance later you will come to a T-junction with Bishop's Lane.

7 → 8 **Bishop's Lane to End**



Turn left along the lane and follow this under the railway bridge (taking care of traffic on this bend). Pass two pairs of semi-detached houses on your right and, immediately afterwards, turn right onto the tarmac footpath. Keep ahead along the residential cul-de-sac, Mill Rise, to reach the T-junction with the main road. Turn right, heading towards the level crossing.

Just before you reach the level crossing you will see a footpath on your left, take this if you are continuing onto Trail Part 14. Otherwise cross the level crossing and you will see Robertsbridge rail station on your left, marking the end of this stretch of the Sussex Hospices Trail. If you are looking for refreshments, keep ahead and you will find a couple of pubs and a cafe in the centre of Robertsbridge.

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

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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.

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The creation of this stretch of the trail was possible thanks to the kind donation from Pashley Manor Gardens. To read more about the sponsors of this Trail visit hospicetrail.co.uk

