



### Trail Summary

Trail : SUSSTR0023  
Activity : Walk  
Type : Nature  
Author : Ben Perkins  
Distance : 6.5 miles / 10.4 kms  
Ascent : 748 feet / 228 metres  
Location : TQ641316 / TN5 6BL

From the bustling High Wealden village of Wadhurst, this delightful walk descends to follow the shoreline of Bewl Bridge Reservoir. After almost 3 miles beside the water, the return route crosses undulating, well wooded countryside with superb views.

The trail has been taken from the book *Waterside Walks in Sussex* by Ben Perkins. It has been reproduced with the kind permission of the publisher, Countryside Books.

### Trail Description

The Bewl Bridge Reservoir, or Bewl Water, to give it the less functional label now in general use, is, at 770 acres, the largest area of inland water in South East England. With a 15 mile perimeter and a maximum capacity of nearly 7,000 million gallons, the statistics are certainly impressive. Since its completion over 20 years ago, the reservoir and shoreline have matured into an important wild life habitat. Although excluded from one designated nature reserve, the public have reasonable access to much of the water's edge along good paths and the walk makes the most of this asset. Bewl Water has also been developed as a trout fishery, and you will find the water clotted with anglers' boats during the summer fishing season.

1. To start the walk, make your way to the church, go through the main gateway and keep to the right edge of the churchyard. After less than 100 yards, fork right by a 'No cycling' notice and follow an enclosed path through to a lane. Turn right along the lane and, where it goes squarely right, turn left along the roughly metalled drive to Little Pell Farm, passing a large hop field on your right. Pass to the left of two barns and continue with a hedge and fence, left. A well defined rough track begins to drop down between sandy banks, rich with wild foxgloves in the early summer. The track narrows to a path and takes you down to a T-junction with a wider track.
2. Turn right, now on the reservoir perimeter path with the water soon in sight through trees and scrub on your left. After the best part of a mile the reservoir path diverts away from the water's edge, skirting to the right of the house and converted oast at Newbarn. Follow the drive from the house uphill until you can turn left along the concrete drive to Bryant's Farm. Although not signed as a right of way, it is a public footpath. On reaching a gateway, turn right over a stile, this time signposted as a footpath to Hook Hill.
3. Go straight across the end of an old road disappearing under the waters of the reservoir and shortly fork right up steps on a path which provides a drier alternative to a lower route which tends to flood when the water level is high. The waterside path continues with intermittent views across the reservoir to the dam and boat launching areas. After rounding a point a completely new view of another finger of the reservoir opens up.
4. Where the path doubles back to the left at the end of a narrow inlet of the reservoir, you should go ahead through a gate and along a short path which takes you out to a lane. Turn left and, after about 250 yards, turn right along the concrete access to Rosemary Cottage. Go ahead through a gate, leaving the cottage on your left, and continue forward along the right edge of two fields with a high hedge on your right. At Chesson's Farm pass between the buildings, then go ahead along the farm access drive to join a lane and turn left.

5. After about 200 yards, go right through a gate and follow a sunken grassy headland down into a valley. At the field corner, go through a gateway and turn left, still on a shallow sunken track. At the bottom of the hill go ahead through a gate, over a stream and on along a defined grassy strip between low banks. It becomes less clear as it climbs, veering slightly right to join a drive through a gate to the right of a single-storey brick cottage.
6. Turn left along this concrete drive. After almost 1/4 mile, turn right down steps, through a kissing gate and down into another valley with the spire of Wadhurst church in view ahead. Follow a fence on your right at first. Towards the bottom of the hill veer half left to find a stile in a crossing fence in the valley bottom. A clear path continues through Long Wood, a fine area of open oak woodland. Go through a gate, cross a footbridge and, where you have a choice of mown paths, keep left and climb with trees and scrub on your left. A trodden headland path with a fence, left, climbs steadily. Cross a drive and the stile opposite and veer half left across a field to join the B2099. Turn right for 1/2 mile, back into Wadhurst.

### Bewl Water Visitor Centre

The Bewl Water Visitor Centre, on the northern shore of the reservoir, is accessible from the B2100 road between Wadhurst and Lamberhurst. It incorporates information about the reservoir, an adventure playground and a refreshment kiosk, open in summer. From April to October the SS Frances Mary provides cruises with an opportunity to disembark and walk back to the Centre. If you are feeling really energetic you can hire a bicycle and complete the entire 13 mile perimeter cycle route.

### The Greyhound

The substantial village of Wadhurst, where the walk begins and ends, is an excellent centre for walks in the High Weald and offers most facilities. The Greyhound is a large, busy pub, well placed in the centre of the village, next to the start of the walk. The building dates from 1502 and gained a reputation as a centre for local smugglers. As a pub it has strong cricketing connections (Maurice Tait, the Kent player, was landlord for a time). Four regular beers are on offer, Bass, Young's Special, Harveys Sussex Ale and Everards Sussex Bitter, as well as a guest beer. Nine different wines are available by the glass. The food is all home made and there is a regularly changed blackboard menu of main dishes as well as a wide range of bar snacks, including a substantial 'breakfast roll' (bacon, sausage, mushrooms and tomatoes in a crusty roll). The pub is open from 11 am to 2.30 pm and 6 pm to 11 pm on Monday to Friday, 11 am to 11 pm on Saturday and 12 noon to 3 pm and 7 pm to 10.30 pm on Sunday. Food is served daily from 12 noon to 2 pm and 7 pm to 9.30 pm (9 pm on Sunday).



## Trail Map



### Location

From the A267 Eastbourne-to-Tunbridge Wells road, access to Wadhurst is via the B2100 at Mark Cross or the B2099 south of Frant. From the other direction (east) Wadhurst can be reached from the A21 Tunbridge Wells-to-Hastings road, using the B2100 from Lamberhurst or the B2087 at Flimwell, joining the B2099 at Ticehurst. Park in the larger of two free car parks in the centre of the village, signposted from the main street beside the Greyhound pub.