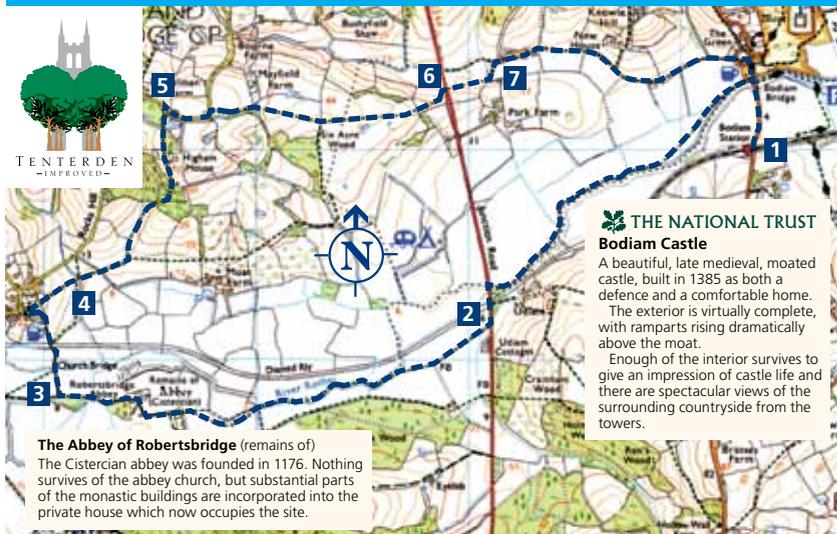




Railtrail 2 – Bodiam Station (circular)



THE NATIONAL TRUST Bodiam Castle

A beautiful, late medieval, moated castle, built in 1385 as both a defence and a comfortable home. The exterior is virtually complete, with ramparts rising dramatically above the moat. Enough of the interior survives to give an impression of castle life and there are spectacular views of the surrounding countryside from the towers.

The Abbey of Robertsbridge (remains of)

The Cistercian abbey was founded in 1176. Nothing survives of the abbey church, but substantial parts of the monastic buildings are incorporated into the private house which now occupies the site.

1 From Bodiam Station go left, downhill on the road, towards Bodiam Castle, to reach a stone bridge over the River Rother. (*Busy road, take care.*)

Cross the bridge, and go immediately left, through a narrow gap, to descend steps to the riverbank. Keeping the river to your left, continue along the bank to reach the B2244 (Junction Road), adjacent to Udiham Farmhouse. (*Busy road, take care.*)

Cross to the opposite side of road and go left. Follow the road for approx. 200 yds (183m) and immediately before reaching a narrow bridge over a drainage channel go right, at a finger-post, to cross a stile into a field.

2 Continue with a drainage channel to your left to reach a footpath finger-post, near a concrete bridge over the channel.

Do not cross the bridge. Keep ahead, towards a WW2 concrete 'pill box'. Pass to the left of the 'pill box' and maintain

direction on a raised path, with the drainage channel to your left and the River Rother to your right. Take care where the path narrows or lies close to the waterway.

Shortly after a line of tall trees comes in from the left to meet the path, go left, down steps. At the bottom of the steps go right.

Continue with hedgerow and a raised bank to your right, and the edge of woodland to the left, to reach a railed paddock near a house.

Follow a path curving to the right of the paddock, enclosed between the rails and a raised bank. After approx. 150 yds (137m), go left to cross a stile. Keep ahead, with a fence on your right, towards a gate in the corner of the paddock.

Exit the paddock, via a stile to the left of a gate, to join a surfaced track.

Go right and follow the road between buildings until you reach a brideway finger-post on the right.

3 Continue on the brideway, to cross a bridge over the river, then continue on a path bordered by stone markers. The path curves left, uphill, passing a churchyard on right, to emerge onto a metalled road in the village of Salehurst.

Ascend the steps at the front of the church and proceed to the rear, (either side to the building) to follow a path through the graveyard.

The path passes between two large trees to emerge into a field. Go left, to the corner of the field, then go right, with the field boundary to your left, to cross a railed stream bridge and reach metal field gates.

Cross a stile, to the right of the gates, cross over a track and take the right of two field entrances opposite. There is a waymark on a post in the hedge.

4 Keeping hedgerow and an adjacent ditch to your left, continue uphill. Follow the hedgerow round to the left and continue ahead, keeping the hedge, then woodland to your left, to reach the field corner.

The woodland ahead is now bordered by high mesh fencing. Go right and continue uphill, following the line of this fence for 100 yds (91m), to reach the stile in the field corner.

Cross the stile and go right, uphill, on an enclosed path to reach another stile. Cross the stile into a paddock.

Go left, keeping a railed fence to your left, and follow the perimeter of the paddock to reach another stile. Cross the stile and keep ahead along a railed fence to reach a surfaced driveway.

Keep ahead, uphill on the driveway for approx. 100 yds (91m), ignoring a waymark on the first gate on the left, to reach a another waymarked gate in the fence on the left. (This is just before the gatehouse with large iron entrance gates).

Pass through the gate, keeping the gatehouse fence to your right. Keeping to the right, proceed through a small orchard and pass through a gate into a meadow garden.

Keep ahead to reach a gate at the corner of the garden. Pass through the gate to join a drive, bordered by a hedge.

Go right on the drive and after 10 yds (9m) go left, through a small iron gate in the hedge, into a garden.

Keep ahead on the pathway, to pass through a trellis arch and exit via a small gate to join a road.

5 Go right on the road, which after approx. 200 yds (183m) bends sharply left.

Just after the bend, cross a stile into a field and keep ahead, with the field edge to your right. The path descends gently with a series of ponds visible in the adjacent field. On reaching the field corner, keep ahead between two small ponds and cross a stile into a large field.

Keep ahead, on a path that runs across the middle of the field, to reach a stile in a hedge. Cross the stile into another large field.

Keep ahead for approx. 200 yds (183m), keeping to the higher ground and heading to the left of a wooded area surrounding a pond. Continue ahead, downhill, keeping midway between the field edges, until a field gate can be seen ahead.

Head slightly to the left of this gate to locate a gap in the hedge that gives access to a railed footbridge, with a stile beyond.

Cross the footbridge, and the stile, into the next field. Keep ahead, with a boundary of old oak trees to your right, to reach the field corner.

Go left and descend along the field edge to field gate and adjacent stile. Cross the stile to emerge onto a roadside verge.

6 Cross the road to a gate and stile on the other side. (*Busy road, take care.*) Cross the stile into a field and follow the direction indicated by a finger-post, across the centre of the field, to reach the corner junction of two hedgerows jutting into the field.

Keep ahead for 10 yds (9m) to find a stile in the hedge on the left. Cross the stile and keep ahead, to the left of a wooden barrier to a ditch, to reach a railed garden fence.

Go right, keeping the fence to your left, and follow a path around to the left, with a large pond on the right. Cross a waymarked footbridge to emerge onto a metalled road in front of a group of office buildings.

7 Go right, and follow the road, to reach a metal gate by the final building (green roofed).

Go through a gap, to the left of the gate and, ignoring side turnings, keep ahead on road.

Cross a stile to the right of a metal gate, and ignoring a side turning, keep ahead on the road to eventually reach a red brick bungalow.

Cross a stile, to left of a gate, and keep ahead along the road, passing a playing field on the right, to emerge onto the main road in Bodiam, by the Castle Inn.

Go right, on the road, to return to Bodiam Station. (*Busy road, take care.*)

Trail Information

Distance: 6 miles (9.7km).

Time for walk: 3½ hours.

Time of train journey: Tenterden to Bodiam – 47 minutes (approx).

Maps: OS Explorer 136.

Parking: Tenterden Station.

Grid reference: TQ882335.

Start of walk: Bodiam Station.

Terrain: Waterside, woodland and field paths.

Refreshment:

Tenterden Station Refreshment Rooms.

N.T. tearoom and public house in Bodiam.

Public house in Salehurst.

Public Transport:

Buses: Traveline - 0870 6082608.