

Points of Interest

Kingscote Estate and vineyard

Mill Place Farm house, a grade II listed building, is a fine example of a medieval hall house. Built in 1320, it was originally one large open room covered by a vast roof with a fire in the centre. Over the centuries many changes were made, including the creation of a first-floor and individual bedrooms. The current owner restored the house using traditional methods and materials – the original structure was in good condition, although hidden behind years of alteration and decoration.

Once part of the property owned by William Robinson at Gravetye, Alison Monge bought the farm house and the 150 acre Kingscote Estate from the Forestry Commission in the late 1990s. This was not always a remote, quiet rural area. The Weald was rich in iron ore and also had an abundance of wood and water needed for its processing; this was a busy industrial landscape. Mill Place Farm house was originally the home of a medieval iron master who ran a foundry in the valley.

Since 2010, 15 acres of vines have been planted. A modern winery has been built with the technology to make still and sparkling wines on site. In addition, a two acre apple orchard was planted in 2011 with 14 varieties of English apples these are used to make a champagne-style 'cyder'.

Kingscote Station

On the north edge of the map showing this walk is Kingscote Station on the Bluebell Railway. Cycles of all sizes can be hired from the station booking office, on which to explore the surrounding country lanes and tracks through Gravetye Woods. Behind platform 2 is a picnic area, ideal for watching the trains go by. Over the summer months drinks and snacks are also available from 'The Well House' beside this area.

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Country Walks from Gravetye Manor

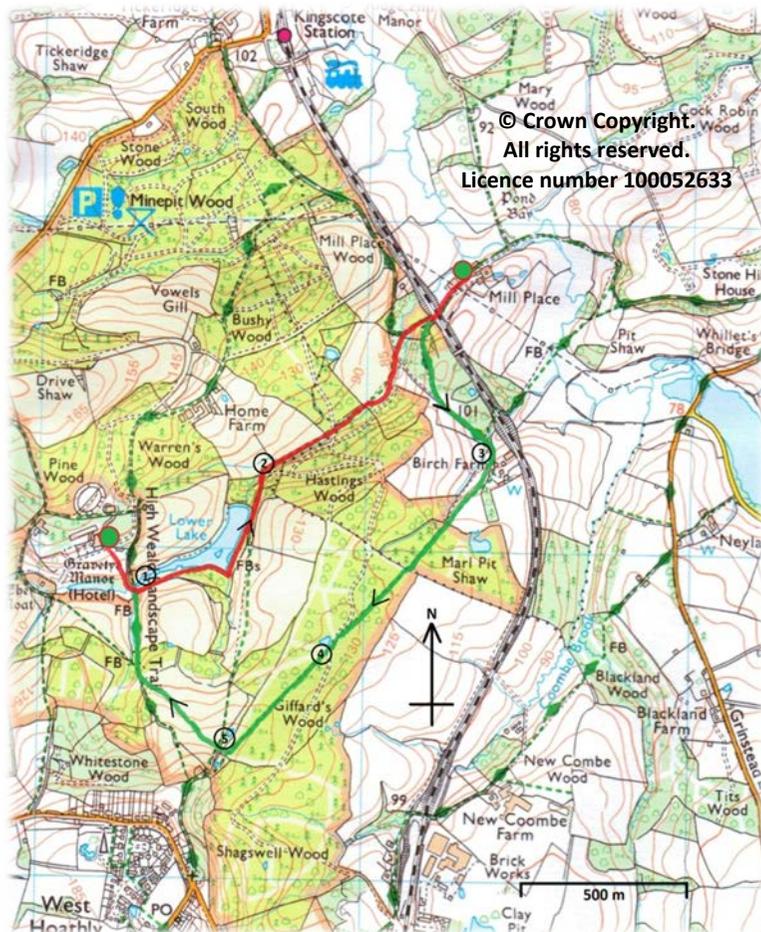


No. 5

'The Vineyard Walk'

The Vineyard Walk

The full circular walk is 4.5km (2¾ miles). It will take around 30 minutes to reach the vineyard following the red route and 45 minutes to return via the green woodland route.



Route Directions

From the main steps turn right to pass under the pergola and through the wooden gates. Turn half left following the sign 'to the lakes' down the grassy track away from the house. Near the bottom of the hill pass through the ornate metal gates and turn right on a broad crossing track. Cross the stone bridge over the stream and turn immediately left through a wooden gate **1** to follow the lakeside path.

At the eastern end of the lake join a broader track from the right and follow it downhill. at the bottom of which cross a small stream and turn immediately right following the public footpath **2**. A kissing gate leads into tall trees; go straight over a crossing track and on leaving the trees keep right around the open field ahead towards a fingerpost. On the far side exit the field through a gate, go straight over the tarmac drive and in 25m turn right on a wide track which crosses a stream and passes under the Bluebell Railway.

Walk towards the buildings of Mill Place Farm and you will see the Kingscote Winery visitor centre on your left.

There is an opportunity to taste their recent vintages; buy a bottle or two to take back with you and enjoy some refreshment in the delightful garden to the rear of the centre. Please consult with Reception before commencing your walk if you are interested in taking a tour of the vineyard.



When suitably refreshed, retrace your steps along the drive to pass under the railway bridge. In just 25m take the left fork following a public footpath sign heading uphill on a rougher track. The track levels off and joins a tarmac drive. Turn left to follow the drive as it drops into a small valley and then begins to climb towards Birch Farm. Just before reaching the farmhouse turn right following a footpath fingerpost over a stile into an open field **3**.

Exit the far corner over a second stile into the woods and climb steadily, ignoring crossing paths, until the path levels off and meets a broad permissive bridleway. Turn left and in less than 100m look for a fingerpost to the right indicating a wide public footpath. Turn half right to follow the track but take care now in less than 20m the public path goes half left on a much narrower track **4**.



Follow this for a further 500m and at the next unmarked crossing path turn right to the edge of the woods. Enter an open field with views of Gravetye Manor across the valley **5**.

Continue directly ahead to the tall line of trees and on reaching them turn right to follow the line downhill to the bottom corner of the field. Here descend stone steps into the woods on a rough path over a plank bridge. Ignore a footpath left and continue ahead to shortly cross a stile. Walk ahead across a sloping open field, keeping ALL the bushes to your left. Head into the bottom left hand corner of this field and enter the woods through a gap in the hedge.

Pass through a kissing gate, cross the stone bridge and in 25m turn left through the ornate iron gates to follow the path back up to the hotel.