

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. Walk down stone steps to a plank bridge into the woods. Ignore a path to the left and continue ahead over a stile to follow the path besides the gorse bushes which leads to a kissing gate onto the stone bridge where your walk began. Turn left through the wrought iron gates and walk up to the hotel.

Points of Interest

WEIR WOOD RESERVOIR was created in the mid-1950s by damming the River Medway to meet an ever increasing demand for water. It is owned by Southern Water and the eastern end is used for sailing and fishing. In 1966 the western end was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest due to the range of resident and migrant birds. It is noted for its breeding population of great crested grebes and herons regularly breed in the heronry. Other birds include the kingfisher, tern, osprey, teal and, in winter, the tufted, pochard and goldeneye ducks. In 1981 this area also became a Local Nature Reserve.

The camp site our route passes through is **BLACKLAND FARM**. It is owned by Girlguiding UK but is open to all groups. The site covers 120 acres of fields and woods with equipped and unequipped camp sites available. There is a very wide range of activities on offer, including canoeing, kayaking, climbing, abseiling, archery and trampolining.

The **BLUEBELL RAILWAY**. It was originally intended in 1959 to re-open the entire line from East Grinstead to Lewes and run a commercial service, however these plans soon fell apart. The then Lewes and East Grinstead Railway Preservation Society was unable to acquire the whole line and there was little support from the local population. A revised project was agreed and in the summer of 1960 a 5 mile section of the line opened between Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes. Trains only ran at weekends but passenger numbers exceeded all expectations and it was proven that the service could be successfully run by volunteers. Since then things have not always been easy – there have been financial and other difficulties. But the railway now runs one of the finest collection of rolling stock on any preserved line. The line has been extended as far as Kingscote with plans to re-open the line into East Grinstead in 2013.

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Country Walks from Gravetye Manor



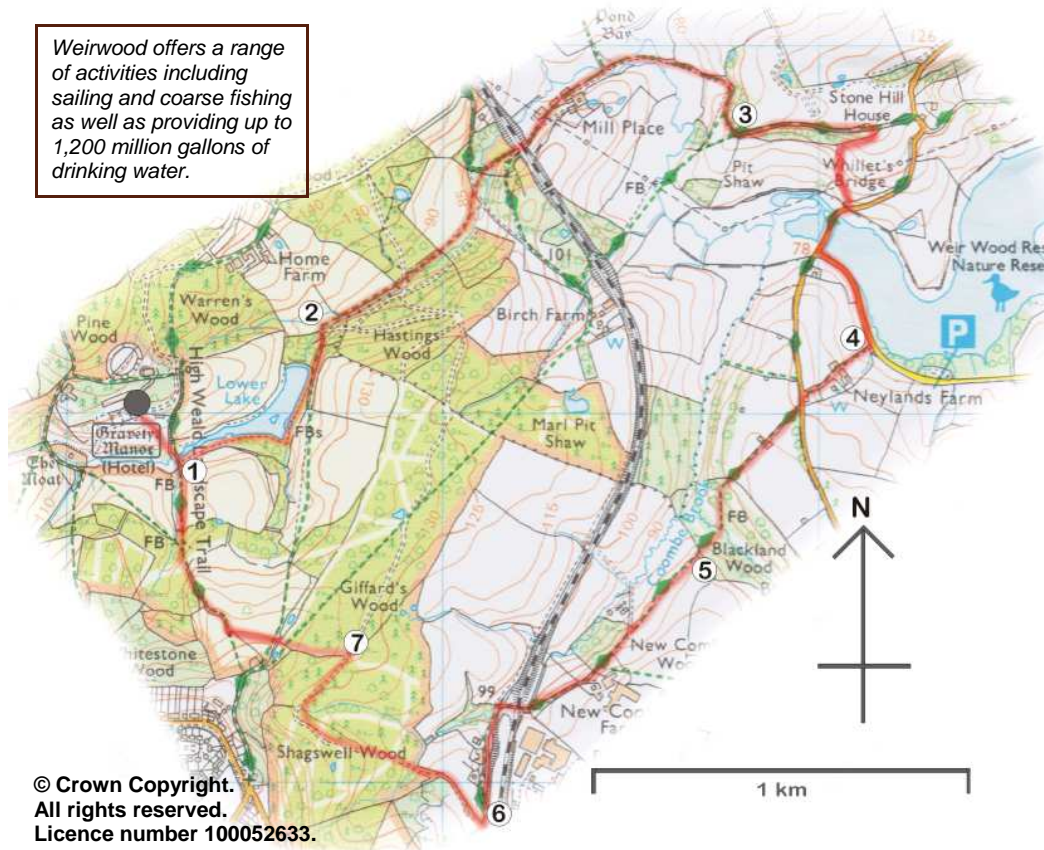
No. 3

‘The Weirwood Walk’

The Weirwood Walk

This is a fairly energetic, circular walk of 8 km (5 miles) taking in Stone Farm Rocks, the Reservoir Nature Reserve and the Bluebell Railway. Some of the paths will be muddy after wet weather and good footwear would be sensible.

Weirwood offers a range of activities including sailing and coarse fishing as well as providing up to 1,200 million gallons of drinking water.



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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 to follow the lakeside path ①



At the eastern end of the lake join a broader track from the right and follow it downhill. At the bottom of the hill besides an iron gate, turn right following the public footpath sign ②. A kissing gate leads into tall trees and on leaving these turn slightly left across the open field to another kissing gate in the hedge line opposite. Go straight over the tarmac drive and in a further 25m turn right on a wide bridleway over a stream to pass under the Bluebell Railway.

Walk through the buildings of Mill Place Farm and after crossing a brick bridge over the broad stream continue to the right following the bridleway signs. The track curves right and begins climbing. At the brow of the hill turn left following the fingerpost through a gate into a sunken path ③. The path continues climbing gently with the strange shapes of Stone Farm Rocks down to your right.

Just as the path begins to descend there is an information board. Turn right here and walk in the opposite direction along the foot of the rocks. In 75m reach a flat, sandy area faced with six large rocks. Take four steps down to a lower area and turn left down a narrow, twisting path to a stile leading onto an open field. Pass to the right of the electricity pylon and drop over a stile to the public road and turn right.

After crossing a stream cross the road carefully and turn left into Legsheath Lane. In 300m turn right following a fingerpost ④ up towards a new building on the hillside. The path passes between school buildings and joins a tarmac drive up to the main road. Turn left past Neylands Farm Cottages and in a further 20m turn right along the Sussex Border Path through a permanent campsite. As the track begins to drop into woods keep left to a bridge over a stream. Climb then to a stile leading into more open countryside and a path enclosed between wire fences ⑤ (take care since these fences may be electrified). The path becomes a concrete drive as it passes New Coombe Farm then crosses a stile and passes under the railway line to eventually reach a public road with the remains of Sharpthorne Station ⑥ to your left.



At this point turn immediately right into Bluebell Lane and then right again following the permissive bridleway into the Gravetye Estate. The broad track climbs initially through the woods and curves steadily right. A little over 10 minutes after entering the estate the track straightens and reaches the brow of a small hill. On this brow there is a broad, crossing, unmarked path ⑦. Turn left heading slightly uphill on a deeply rutted track. In 75m meet a crossing, marked footpath and cross straight over to enter an open field with views of Gravetye Manor across the valley.