

Turn left following the track as it swings right around the top edge of the field. Then follow the tall line of trees downhill towards the hotel. At the bottom corner of the field walk down stone steps into the woods. Where the path forks, keep right and continue ahead past a stile to follow the path besides the brambles. In a few metres the footpath sign goes left into the trees – ignore this and keep in the clear, to the right of the gorse bushes. This leads to a kissing gate onto the bridge where your walk began. Turn left through the heavy iron gate and walk back up to the hotel.

Points of Interest

KINGSCOTE ESTATE once belonged to William Robinson of Gravetye. In 1998 it was bought from the Forestry Commission by Christen and Alison Monge who started the vineyard in 2010. It is now owned by the Chateau de Berne (the second largest rose producer in Provence) and 60 acres of vines have been planted, many of which are seen during the course of this walk. The magnificent 15th century tithe barn has been converted into a tasting room and shop.

WEIR WOOD RESERVOIR was created in the 1954 by damming the River Medway to meet an ever increasing demand for water. The eastern end is used for sailing and fishing. In 1966 the reservoir was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest due to the range of resident and migrant birds, and in 1981 the western end became a Local Nature Reserve. Many birds regularly nest here, including 12 pairs of herons in the heronry. It is also noted for having the greatest concentration of nesting great-crested grebes in Sussex.

The camp site our route passes through is **BLACKLAND FARM**. It is owned by Girlguiding UK but is open to all. The site covers 120 acres of fields and woods with a wide range of activities are on offer, including canoeing, climbing, bush craft, archery and trampolining.

Volunteers now run a passenger service along 11 miles of the **BLUEBELL RAILWAY** between Sheffield Park and East Grinstead, stopping at Horsted Keynes and Kingscote. In the early 1960s it was hoped to re-open the entire line from East Grinstead to Lewes and run a commercial service but these plans proved impossible. The railway now runs one of the finest collections of rolling stock of any preserved line.

compiled for
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by



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Country Walks from Gravetye Manor

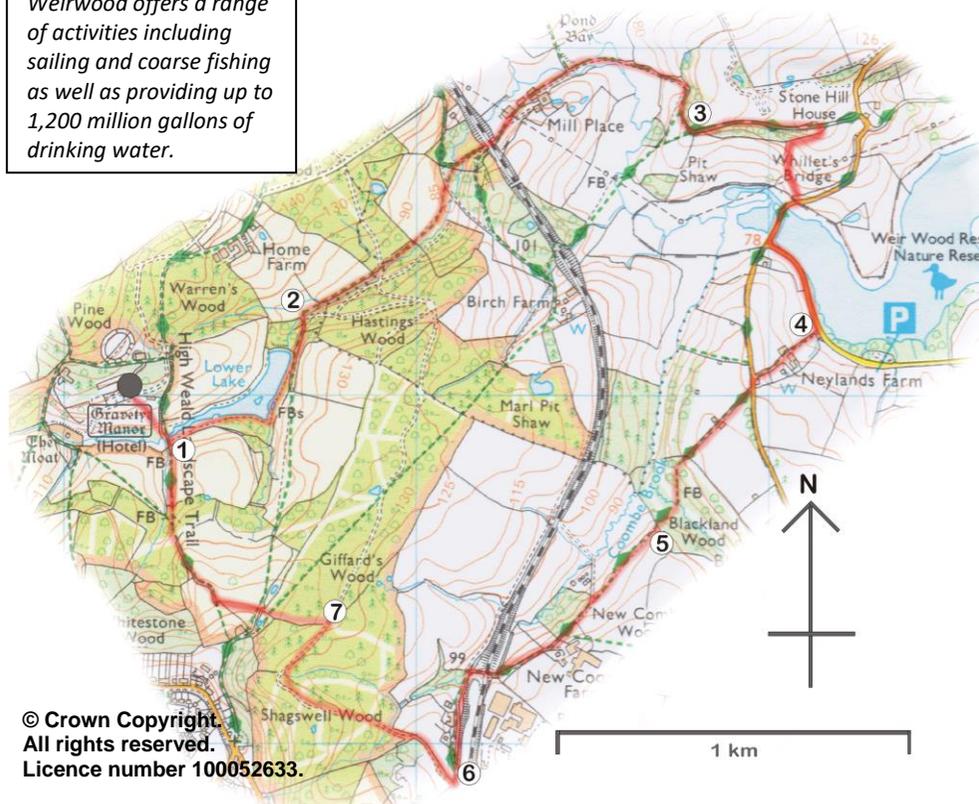


No. 3 ‘The Weirwood Walk’

The Weirwood Walk

This is a fairly energetic, circular walk of 8 km (5 miles) taking in Kingscote Vineyard, 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.



Route Directions

From the main steps turn right to pass under the pergola and through the wooden gates. Turn half left down the grassy track beneath the trees. Near the bottom of the hill pass through the heavy metal gates and turn right on a broad crossing track. Cross the bridge over the stream and turn immediately left (1) past the 'Gravetye Lake' sign, then step down the bank to follow the broad lakeside path.

At the eastern end of the lake join a broader track from the right and follow it downhill.

(2) At the bottom of the hill besides an old gate, turn right following the public footpath sign.



After two fields cross a broad track and continue ahead following the sign into tall trees. On leaving these turn slightly left across an open field to 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 arch of the Bluebell Railway.

Walk past the tasting room of Kingscote Vineyard and after crossing a brick bridge over the broad stream turn right following the bridleway signs. The track curves right and begins climbing. At the brow of the hill turn left following the bridleway sign (3) into a sunken path beneath the trees. The path continues climbing gently with the strange shapes of Stone Farm Rocks shortly appearing down to your right.

Just before the path begins to descend there is an information board away to your right. Turn right here around the large rock and immediately look for a narrow footpath to the left, heading downhill slightly away from the rocks. In 75m turn left through a metal gate. Head downhill to pass to the right of the electricity pylon and, after another metal gate, 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 (4) following a fingerpost up the hillside (at this point there is a clear view of the reservoir to the left). The path forks right then passes between school buildings to join a tarmac drive up to the main road. Turn left past the cottages and then immediately right at the almost hidden footpath sign through a permanent campsite. As the track begins to drop into woods keep left to a wide bridge over a stream. Follow the signs uphill leading into more open countryside (5) and a path enclosed between wire fences. The path becomes a concrete drive as it passes New Coombe Farm then crosses a stile and passes under the railway line. In a further 350m reach a public road with the remains of Sharpthorne Station to your left (6).

At this point turn immediately right into Bluebell Lane and then right again following the permissive bridleway past the modern houses. The broad track goes left initially through the woods and then starts a short, steady climb. At the brow of the hill it curves steadily right. In a further 200m, just after entering the tall pines, there is a broad, crossing, unmarked path. Turn left heading uphill on a rutted track. In 75m meet a crossing, marked footpath and cross straight over to reach an open field with clear views of Gravetye Manor across the valley (7).

