

Walk 3

Handcross to Balcombe

(4 miles / 6.5km)

Grading = Moderate

OS Explorer maps 134
(Crawley & North Horsham)
& 135 (Ashdown Forest)

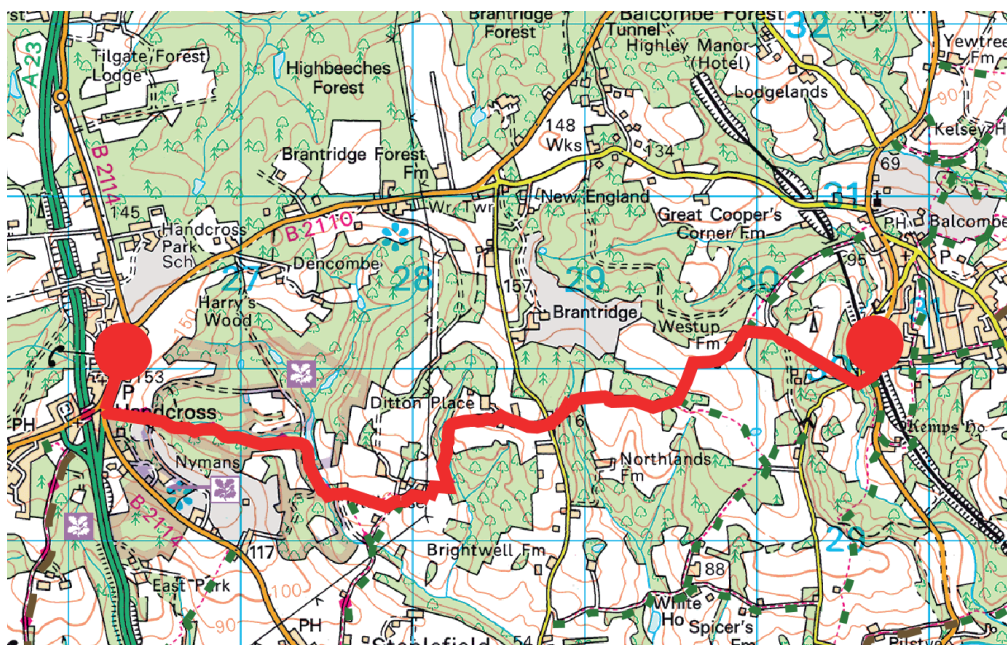


Start point:

Handcross Recreation Ground (car park),
High Street RH17 6DU

End point:

Balcombe Railway Station (car park),
London Road, Balcombe RH17 6JQ



1. Exit the car park (WAYMARKER 3) and turn right through the centre of Handcross toward the Red Lion pub. Cross the road to a small area of grass and a seat and turn left along the public footpath which leads through Nyman's Woods (National Trust) between two of Nyman's car parks, followed by a steep descent to a path.
2. The path narrows and continues to descend through trees with some steps and can be very muddy after wet weather. At the bottom it joins another path coming in from the left. Bear right over a little stream (dry in the summer) then keep round to the left (do not ascend the path straight on).
3. The path continues along the right bank of a small stream and widens to a track as it enters an avenue of redwoods. A pond and a lake can be seen below on the left. At the far end of the lake keep straight on (do not cross the bridge onto the dam). There is now a large garden to your left.
4. Following the footpath sign, bear to the left at a redwood with a slight descent and a sharp left down to a bridge over a stream with a dam to your left. Ahead a boardwalk leads over wet ground to a steep flight of muddy steps up to a gate into a field.
5. Continue straight ahead along the side of the field with a hedge to your left, over a drive, past a post box labelled Old House Private Mail Only. The hedge turns left but keep straight ahead heading just left of a pylon on the skyline to pick up the hedge again on your left by the vineyard.
6. Go through the gate at the far end of the field, bear left to cross a stream (dry in summer) by a wooden plank bridge, then up a slope keeping the fence on your left and grass to your right to emerge onto a drive. Turn right and immediately left up a drive which curves to the left leading to Allen's Farm.
7. A short way up the drive stone steps on the right-hand side lead up the bank to gate into a field. Straight ahead is a gate beyond which are power lines. Go under these and then immediately turn left through a gate into another field.
8. Go diagonally to the right across this field heading

towards a large gate in the right hand corner. Cross the stile beside a five bar gate. On the other side of this gate a path leads through the wood with a field to the left and a deep wooded valley on the right. The path turns right and descends steeply to the stream. Ignore the paths marked private on the right and descend to water level, and a bridge will be seen ahead.

9. Cross this and follow the path up with the stream to your left. The slope is gentle at first, but the path curves to the right and steepens leading to a rocky sandstone path with a stream that flows down it in wet weather. Take great care as the stones are very slippery when wet!
10. Go through kissing gate into a field with an impressive house (Ditton Place, 1905, once a school, now apartments) ahead. Ascend the right-hand edge of the field past a house and through a gate at the top corner onto their drive. Leaving Ditton Place to your left go along the drive bearing right to eventually emerge onto Brantbridge Lane.

*Halfway Point (2 miles / 3 km):
Brantbridge Lane*

11. Cross Brantbridge Lane to a footpath through the hedge a few yards to your left, cross a track and walk on into the woods, the path bears left and right and then descends steeply down some rough steps into a gully. The plank bridge at the bottom is narrow and there is wooden railing on only one side so go cautiously across the small stream and back up the steep steps on the other side. Continue to follow the waymarked path uphill.
12. At the top, go over a stile into a cattle field, keep to left and walk on to a gate and stile into another field with a small pond to your left. Keep straight on along the edge of the field where there are views of the South Downs on a clear day.
13. Go left over a stile at the footpath sign and follow the path to the right of the boundary hedge for a short way until you reach a wider track which turns right toward Westup Farm. Walk through the farmyard to the tarmac driveway, past the house on your right and go down the hill with a large pond to your left.

14. The footpath goes left through a gate and about 30 degrees diagonally across the field toward some tall pine trees, then over a stile into a copse.
15. Come out of the woods onto a road and turn left, go over the railway bridge then take the footpath off to the left. Walk up a short steep section to a stile and onto the London Road B2036. There is a layby for parking on the opposite side of the road, just to the north of the church.
16. Cross the road using the island and turn right, then turn left along the pavement signposted toward Borde Hill Gardens until you reach the Half Moon Inn.
17. At the pub, use the island to cross over and walk along Balcombe Hill a short way until you reach a red phone box and post box on your right. Turn left down Stockcroft Road, past the Victory Hall, then go right at the bowls club down a tarmac path between two hedges which leads to the recreation ground.
18. Go straight on through the recreation ground, follow the narrow footpath round the back of some flats, then when the path opens out follow the footpath sign and keep walking on the pavement on the right. Turn right down Newlands and just before the postbox cross over the road, turn right and go down the footpath that leads to Balcombe Station.
19. Cross the main road by the red telephone box (WAYMARKER 4), go over the station bridge and walk along the platform to the car park.