

## GROOMBRIDGE TO BOARSHEAD

The walk starts from a beauty spot at Harrison's Rocks. These are of Ardingly Stone and are owned by the British Mountaineering Council. Many would-be climbers come to practice their skills here. Birchden Woods are pleasant to walk through and the more open countryside around Boarshead provides many extensive views. There is a very rural and pleasant pub at Boarshead. The car park is in Aytton's Wood (Groombridge) off the minor road which runs from Groombridge to Eridge Station. Turn left almost immediately into a lane signposted "Harrisons". Picnic tables, toilets and some shelter is provided. There is a small voluntary charge for these facilities.

Distance: 5 or 6 miles (8 or 9.6 kilometres) Map reference: O.S. Explorer 135, 533364

From the [car park](#) look in the bottom left hand corner for a well worn path leading to a gate and stile and out of the wood (High Weald Landscape Trail). Go round to the left to follow a path alongside the railway line with Harrison's Rocks up on your left. This path is about three quarters of a mile long and passes through Birchden Forge and on to Forge Farm with an attractive oast house. In the eighteenth century this place would have been a hive of great activity where iron workers would have been producing cannon and ammunition.

To continue your walk, turn right here just before the oast house, cross the river and the railway line to reach a minor road where you turn left.

This road leads to Eridge Station, but in about half a mile you will take the second footpath off to the right at The Lodge, (fingerpost on your left). Pass Hamsell Lake House on your left. Soon the path deteriorates and becomes a narrow path, overgrown and enclosed by trees, (see marker). Below on the right is a lake. The path eventually comes into the open via a stile. Cross the field and come to a bridleway on the corner. Bear right at fingerpost and in about 300 yards you will reach a fingerpost bearing the green Sussex Border Path logo.

Here you may wish to take the shorter route. If so, turn off right downhill. At the bottom of the hill on the right is a stile. It is here that the longer walk will rejoin the shorter walk.

To continue with the shorter route see paragraph below marked with asterisk.\*

The following are your instructions for the longer route. Do not turn right but proceed straight ahead.

Your track enters a gully and then brings you to a field with lovely views to the right. Keep forward to a stile in the fence on your left. Turn right in this lane to pass a few houses until at Renby End the lane turns left and shortly you go right to Legg's Field. The footpath soon forks. Take the left fork into the orchards of Laurel Tree Fruit Farm. This area is known as Boarshead.

Continue your walk to the right going downhill keeping to the edge of the woodland on your right. Should you wish to visit the pub, "The Boars Head" follow the path several yards to a way-mark pointing off to the left.

Follow this then turn left again at a T-junction and fingerpost, leave the orchard by the main gate. Cross the road (A26) and walk to the right to a turning on the left and then at a T-junction go right for the pub.

To rejoin the walk, retrace your steps back through Laurel Tree Orchard and the two fingerposts to join the path alongside the wood going downhill with the wood on your right. Cross the stile tucked in a corner, and continue downhill across a field and going left to a sheltered corner by a stream. Climb up a bank into the field ahead and turn right to walk up the side of this field to a lone oak tree and fingerpost. Continue along the edge, bearing right, (ie. headland path) down to the bottom and round to the left to a T-junction. Look left for a stile in the corner. You are back onto the Sussex Border Path and have met up with the route of the shorter walk coming from the right.

\*At the stile on the right cross over and walk up the slope diagonally to the left to a gap and stile (hidden in the hedge) and so into the next field. The path is now marked on the ground and leads to a cross path. Continue straight ahead. At first you will be walking alongside a small wood on your left, then keep in the same direction to a marker post on your left. Bear right across to fingerpost and follow this wood (Marchant Wood) round the corner and still keeping to the wood you come to a broken stile into a lane.

Cross the lane and over footbridge and stile and walk ahead up the slope towards the buildings of Bullfinches, still keeping to the Sussex Border Path. Pass Bullfinches keeping it on your right. Before you cross over the stile turn to admire the views. The path runs straight ahead across four fields, some with stiles, with good views all the way.

At the end of the fourth field is a corner of woodland, "Rocks Wood" on your right. Pass through gate/stile and follow the boundary of the wood down the slope for approximately 100 yards and bear right to a gate on your right leading into the wood. There is a notice here inviting you to enjoy this private "Rocks Wood". Follow the path right through keeping straight on ignoring paths off left and right to emerge on a corner of a narrow road.

Go forward and pass a house on your right (Gateway Cottage) to cross a stile into a field on the right. Cross this field diagonally left to the right hand end of a line of trees and Oast House in the distance, cross a stile and then steeply down to the left hand corner, over another stile and so onto a narrow road. Turn right.

In about 350 yards turn left into the track leading to Forge Farm which you used at the beginning of the walk. This time, at the Oast House turn right pass farm houses and over a stile. The path is narrow but very pleasant and goes uphill to a gate/stile. Just beyond the stile turn left into a narrow path running up a bank and into Birchden Wood.

Turn left at the top of the bank and follow the well marked track over a stile and along a permissive path. You will pass a wooden barrier on the way and then bear left along the path until it turns to the right and becomes the main sandy track. The rocky outcrops on your left are part of Harrison's Rocks and splendid views are to be found between the trees. A little time exploring this area could be very rewarding. Great care must be taken, however, to watch your step.

To return to the car park, keep forward and follow the main sandy track. At a large notice board on the left the track divides. Either track leads to the car park. The track to the left is more attractive but in winter can be muddy. At the bottom you reach a T-junction and turn right. As you continue along this wooded track you will pass by the gate and stile near the car park.

