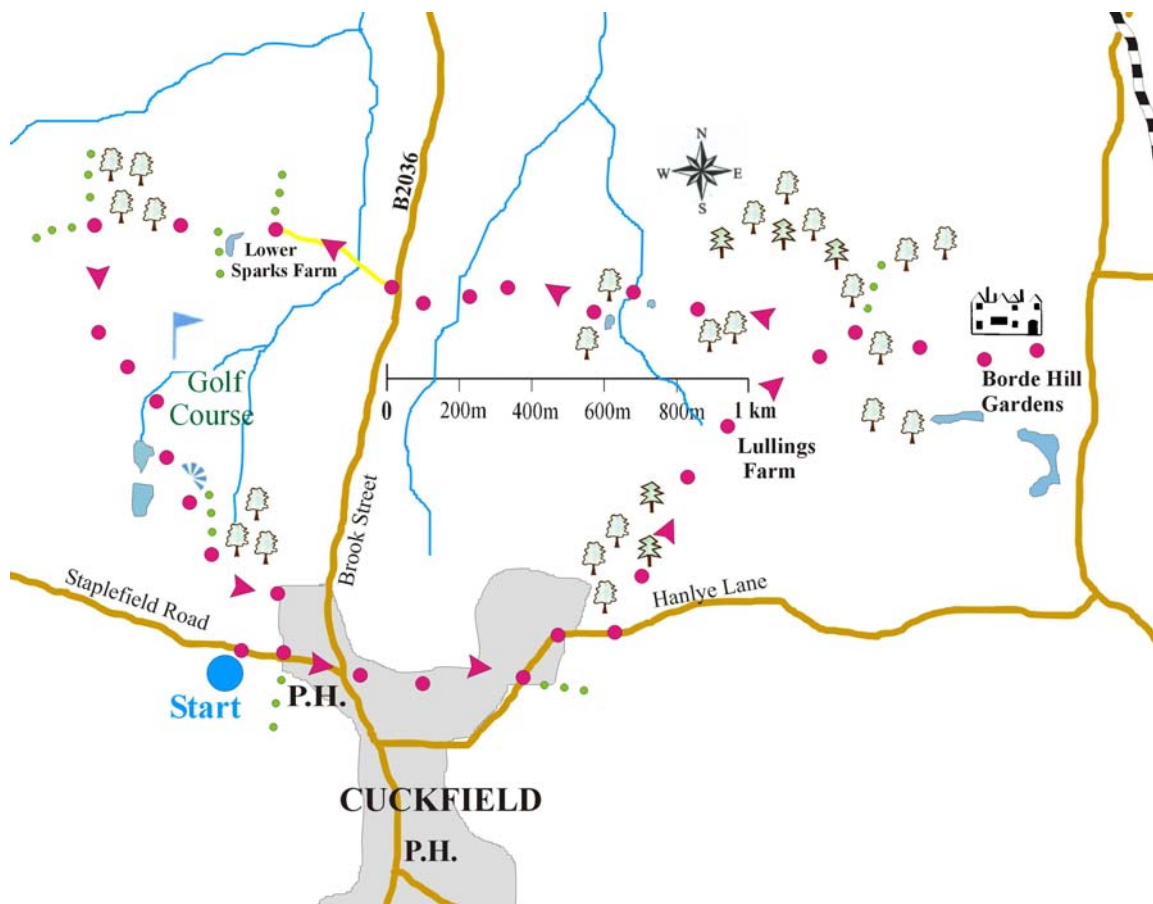


# Cuckfield

- Start & Finish:** Whiteman's Green Recreation Ground car park ½ mile north of Cuckfield centre on the B2115 to Warninglid.
- Distance:** 4 ¼ miles (7 kms). Plus an extra ¾ mile if visiting Borde Hill Garden. Allow 2 ½ hours walking.
- Terrain:** Mostly firm tracks but with two muddy bits. Easy climb up the golf course.
- Stile Count:** 6
- Toilets:** By the car park in Broad Street
- Refreshments:** Plenty of choice in the village. Tearooms at Borde Hill Garden.



From the car park return to the main road and turn right towards Cuckfield.

**The first references to the town are made in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century when it appears as 'Cucufeld' – which can reliably and rather romantically be interpreted as 'Clearing of the Cuckoo'.**

Walk past the petrol station to the Ship Inn and cross the road to the footpath, almost hidden behind the road signs. This tarmac path leads between fences and hedges, past three cul-de-sacs, to the Ardingly Road opposite Longacre Crescent. Cross the road carefully, turn left to the mini roundabout and then follow the main road half right as it becomes Hanlye Lane. Follow the tarmac

path on the right hand side of the road as it passes behind a small hedge. In less than 100m there is gap in the hedge opposite the drive to Lullings Farm. Cross the road again here and follow the bridleway down the broad drive past Gore's Wood towards the farm.

**Look more carefully at the hedge on your right. It hides a wealth of different plant species. Count how many you can spot in a 30m section (you don't need to know what they are) and multiply this by 100. This will give you the approximate age of the hedgerow in years.**

Near the bottom of the hill the drive to Lullings Farm sweeps right but we continue straight ahead towards a pair of stone gate posts.

**As you pass through this entrance to the Borde Hill Estate note the date of 1915 on the wall of Stone Lodge and the coat of arms bearing four unicorns. The grand house of Borde Hill was built in 1601 by Stephen Borde who soon after was knighted and became the High Sheriff of Sussex. The gardens are open 21<sup>st</sup> March to 3<sup>rd</sup> September from 10am – 6 pm and admission is currently £7.50 (2008 details - check before visiting).**

The drive sweeps slowly right and you are now on the edge of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Some 500m after Stone Lodge there is a beautiful evergreen oak (*Quercus Ilex*) on the right of the drive, which then splits with one arm swinging right towards the house and the other continuing straight ahead.

If you plan to visit the house and gardens, with the tearooms and toilets\*, take the drive to the right, which in a further 500m will bring you to the entrance. After your visit return by the same route to the evergreen oak where the drive splits.

Our route from here is through a wooden gate, on the opposite side of the drive to the oak, heading west along the High Weald Landscape Trail. The drive by which we entered the estate is clearly visible on our left. Do not drop down the hill to the right but stay level across the field ahead and in 200m cross a stile besides a gate and turn very slightly right. Keep to the right of the wood, known as The Tolls, as you now begin to descend this muddy hill. Cows have never been great respecters of footpaths!

At the end of the wood the path levels out to cross a second stile into an open field. Go to the right of the wood ahead and in the bottom left hand corner of the field cross a plank bridge and a stile into a copse. The marked footpath will lead you to another stile out of the copse. We now follow the hedge line on the right around the next large field. Soon after the houses of Brook Street come into view look for a right turn to drop down a steep bank and cross a stile through the hedge and cross a small field onto the drive to Tanyard Farm.

Note the interesting contrast between the front and rear of this lovely building whose drive leads up to the main road where we must cross carefully and turn right past the telephone kiosk. Take the immediate left turn into Sparks Lane and at the bottom of the dip cross a stream.

**The streams we cross during this walk are all leading to the River Ouse which rises in St. Leonard's Forest near Horsham – surprisingly close to the source of the Arun.. It passes through the county town of Lewes before discharging into the sea at the cross channel port of Newhaven.**

In another 200m, besides Lower Sparks Farm, tarmac drives sweep both left and right. Our route is straight ahead along an improved bridleway, which passes through a small wood before opening out into a large field where there is a crossing footpath. Here turn left over a plank bridge to follow the high hedge on your right besides the 9 hole Cuckfield Golf Course. At the bottom of a very clear dip ahead, besides a partially hidden fingerpost on the right, the worn path turns half left uphill to cross the fairways and, as it passes one of the 'greens', look to your left for a splendid view of the Balcombe Viaduct.

**This was built in 1840 to carry the London to Brighton railway over the Ouse Valley. Its 37 arches rise a hundred feet above the river and contain 12 ½ million bricks, mostly made locally. Amazingly there are as many bricks below the ground as above it.**

Now descend another dip to cross the stream ahead on a plank bridge and climb gently to the right of the 8<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> tees and then follow the obvious path uphill to pass the 2<sup>nd</sup> tee and continue ahead to exit the course through a gap into the woods.

On leaving the woods pass through a kissing gate and follow the open field around to the left to exit through a second kissing gate onto a lane where we turn right to return to the main road at Whiteman's Green. The car park where we began is just across the road to our right.

**Before leaving the car park look at the stone memorial to Gideon Mantell who in 1822 identified fossils found at this spot by his wife Mary Anne as belonging to a gigantic plant-eating reptile, which he named Iguanodon. These creatures lived here just 125 million years ago. They were 10m long and weighed four tons. Keep your eyes open!**

**This walk was researched and written for Mid Sussex District Council by Footprints of Sussex who lead local guided walks throughout the year. [www.footprintsofsussex.co.uk](http://www.footprintsofsussex.co.uk)**

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The excellent 120 page full colour guidebook to the High Weald Landscape Trail is now available at just £5.00 + £1.25 p&p. Please send cheque or postal order to:

**Footprints, Pear Tree Cottage, Jarvis Lane, Steyning, West Sussex BN44 3GL .**