

Brightling Needle

7 miles 4 hours

Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps 124 and 136

Refreshments: No refreshments on route but pubs in Burwash.

This walk starts by going through fields down into the Dudwell valley and passing Rudyard Kipling's former house, Batemans. The walk continues past Batemans mill pond and then follows the Dudwell River for a short distance before the long steady climb up the southern side of the Dudwell valley. The walk enters High wood and then continues into Leggett's wood. These woods are owned by the forestry commission and many of the rides are bordered by wild flowers during the summer and in the autumn can be spectacular as the leaves change colour. The walk then passes close to the British Gypsum mine before entering Beaks Wood. Beaks Wood is privately owned and is visited less than the previous woods. Continuing, the walk crosses the 4.7km-long conveyor which carries the gypsum from the mine to the factory. The walk continues to climb steadily eventually arriving at one of Mad Jack Fuller's Follies "Brightling Needle". Sadly there is no public access and the only view of the folly is through the hedge. The obelisk itself is 20 meters high. At 187 meters above sea level this is the one of the highest points in East Sussex. Views from here on a clear day stretch to the coast at Eastbourne and the Southdowns. From here it is downhill back to Batemans, initially through pasture and then woodland.

There is some road walking, the roads are quiet and without pavement but traffic can be fast moving so care is needed. Some of the fields are full of wild flowers in the summer and the forest has many different flowers at different times of year. Paths can be muddy and at times overgrown.

Directions: Start Burwash car park. OS Grid ref. TQ673 246. Nearest post code TN19 7ET.

1. Leave the car park by the path between the toilets and the Bear Motel into a field and continue downhill with the hedge on the right to locate a footbridge. Turn right across the bridge and then follow the fence across the next field to a small gate.
2. Pass through the gate and then continue in the same direction keeping the hedge on the right, to locate a footpath gate in the hedge. Go through the gate and then head downhill to the bottom right hand corner of the field. Go through the gateway and then continue downhill, keeping the hedge on your left.
3. Cross a stile onto the road and then turn right. Follow the road to Batemans House. In front of the house take the farm drive on the left. Continue along the farm drive to pass to the left of some cottages and then immediately take the track on the right beside the cottages.
4. Follow the track around the mill pond. Continue to follow a path beside the mill stream. Cross the millstream where it joins the river and then continue with the river on your right to a kissing gate into a field.
5. Continue across the field, following the hedge on the left. When near to the far end of the field, go through the gate on the left and then turn right following the edge of the field to a gate. *Sometimes there is an electric fence along the edge of this field, if so you will go through a small gate before you get to the main field gate.*

6. Don't go through the main field gate but turn left to a smaller gate. Pass through this gate and head uphill to a kissing gate into the forest. Pass through the kissing gate and follow the path through the forest to join a forest ride.
7. Turn left on the forest ride and then where the ride forks, keep right and then at the next junction continue forward onto the smaller path opposite. After a few yards, and before crossing a stream, turn right on to a footpath. Cross two foot bridges then turn left uphill. (Path can be indistinct here but continue uphill with the gully to your left).
8. Where the path joins a ride continue straight across and follow a small footpath to eventually climb steps up to a forest ride. The footpath after this point becomes very muddy so a much better route is to turn left on the forest ride and then turn right onto a small track. Continue to a forest ride and then turn left and then right. At the next path crossing continue straight across and follow the path to a road.
9. It is safest to cross the road first and then turn right along the road, to then take a path on the right beside the entrance to the British Gypsum Mine (Path can be difficult to see, it is in the wooded strip to the left of the Gypsum mine gate). Follow this path to cross a stile into a field and then turn right to follow the fence to the bottom of the field, half way down the field there is an old land slip which is now overgrown with bramble. It is better to detour from the fence to go round this area. Continue to the bottom of the field and cross the stile.
10. Having crossed the stile into the forest, follow the path and then when you reach a ride with electricity pylons continue forward to the path opposite.
11. At the next path junction turn right onto a track. Continue on this track over the Gypsum mine conveyor belt and then continue forward on the right-hand of the two tracks ahead. Continue to follow the track through the forest to then eventually cross a field to a road.
12. Turn right on the road and then at a junction turn right. At the next junction keep left, and then go straight over at the cross roads. Brightling needle can be seen through the hedge on the right (there is no public access to the needle). There are good views of the Southdowns to the left.
13. Continue on the road to pass Barn House on the left and then take the concrete driveway to Little Worge Farm on the left. Continue on the driveway to pass to the left of a house and then turn right through a gate into a small field. Go straight across the field to a stile.
14. Having crossed the stile, continue downhill with a woodland on the right and then go through a gap in the hedge and continue in the next field to the far bottom right hand corner. Cross a stile in the corner of the field and continue forward between fences to some cattle handling pens.
15. On reaching the cattle pens, take a stile on the left and follow the fence to cross another stile onto the road. Turn left on the road and after passing Perch Hill Farm on the right, take the next driveway on the right. Where the driveway turns left, continue forward to pass to the right of a house and continue onto a small path through the forest to a turning area.
16. At the turning area, continue forward to a ride and then go left and almost immediately there are two small paths on the right. Take the first one down to a gate into a field (the second

one is the one you came up). Go through the gate and turn left following the edge of the field to a gate back into the forest.

17. Pass through the gate and follow the small path downhill through the forest to a farm and then take the track passing to the right of the farm buildings. Continue forward on the track, passing through a gate to follow an access road through another gate and then to join the road at the front of Batemans House.
18. Turn right on the road and follow to a farm. Just before the farm buildings, take a small path on the left into a small wood and then go through a footpath gate. Continue forward with the farm and woodland on the right.
19. Cross the next stile and a footbridge and then continue up the left hand side of the field to the top corner. Go through a gap in the hedge into woodland and then follow a path keeping left at a junction of paths. Cross a footbridge into a field and then go uphill following the left hand edge of the field back to the car park.