

Hastings Ferny Glens

This is an unusual walk taking you through several of the Ferny Glens in Hastings. Although there are places where you are walking in suburban streets, there are also long sections of wood and parkland where you would think you were miles from the town.

The walk is about 4 miles long of undulating woodland, one of its delights is the descent into Old Roar Ghyll which has its own micro-climate with rare plants and unusual atmosphere .

The Walk directions may seem complicated but they are the best route we have found that takes in the two lovely green areas of Hastings.

We will meet at the top of St Helen's Park Road where it joins Langham Drive. If anyone needs the loo they are welcome to use my house No. 5 Ewhurst Close. Bring a picnic and either enjoy the meadows or Barbeque area in St Helen's Wood or alternatively bring picnic chairs and enjoy your lunch in my garden or in wet weather my house.

1. At the top of St Helen's Park Road where it meets Langham Drive there is an entrance into St Helen's Wood. Turn left into the wood and follow the path downhill to the clearing and Barbeque area. This is a crossroad – left to St Helens Avenue, right to St Helens Church and straight on to the Arbortorum - turning slightly to the right of this track heading down the hill to a bridge across the stream.
2. When you reach the stream turn right keeping the stream to your left and walk alongside the stream. On reaching a very muddy Pond? Go across the bridge and turn left along the board walk. (At this point if you are lucky there will be a small waterfall on your left). Following the board walk and meander through the woods you will come to another bridge at this point bear right along the stream with the stream on our left. Eventually cross the stream and walk into the meadow clearing.
3. Turning left walk through the meadow (beware there may be horses grazing) go through the gate between the fields and continue on to the Arbortorum. At this point walk up the hill and taking a path at the top turning right and meander through the trees to the end joining Hillside Road.
4. Continue on Hillside Road and in a few yards there is a gap between the houses on the left go through the gap onto Sheerwater Crescent and turn right. At the end of the Crescent turn right onto Parkstone Road and then left onto Old Roar Road. *This area was a favourite walking place of artists Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Lizzie Siddal – they are supposed to have scratched their initials on a stone near the waterfall but I have been unable to find it.*
5. Continue on down the road going through the gate. Continue past the Roundel on your left until you see a ghyll on your left. Soon after this there is a red dogpoo bin and a path which keeps you in the valley, turn left onto the path and cross the bridge, stay on the path it will lead you away from the ghyll into a suburban road.
6. Turn right and walk down until you come to number 21 where there is an unmarked path to the right which will lead you back to the ghyll. Follow the path down the ghyll as it crosses and re-crosses the stream. When you come to the big road bridge make sure you take the lower path which keeps you in the valley and gradually flattens out and becomes marshy with ponds and eventually the reservoir in Alexander Park.
7. At the bottom of the reservoir cross St Helen's Road by the bollards and walk down the hill towards town for just a few yards then you will see a twitten going up steps leading away from the road and the park. At the top of the twitten turn left and then immediately right

into Park Crescent. Stay on Park Crescent on the left hand side of the road and walk until it becomes a track and then a twitten which goes to the right of some new houses.

8. Follow the path by the boundary fence which doubles back a bit. Turn right into a road with modern houses and almost immediately you will see ahead of you another twitten. Turn right at the end of it – opposite is a school – and continue along Park Avenue until it joins a track.
9. Slightly to the right you will see an entrance to St Helen's Wood local nature reserve. Go through the gate and straight down the hill between the trees – there is a meadow to the left with grazing horses - At the bottom turn left along the track and first right down the hill. This eventually brings you back to the Barbeque area.
10. Go straight across and up the hill to St Helen's Park Road.