

# Walk 13 – The Ascension

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**Description:** A solid circular walk that begins on the outskirts of Haysden Country Park and ascends to the lofty heights of beautiful Bidborough.

**Length:** 4.6 miles / 7.5 km (approximately 2 hours, longer if stopping at The Kentish Hare)

**Grade:** A little challenging

**Good for:** Heavenly views and formidable climbs

1. Turn right out of Haysden Water car park and follow Lower Haysden lane with care for approximately 450 metres. Continue past Great Haysden cottages and then follow the lane until you come to a gap in the hedge.
2. Climb the stile and walk over the embankment, then cross the field and climb a second stile. Turn left and then turn right, following the track marks through the field.
3. Once you reach the hedge, climb the stile and follow the path besides a paddock, before passing through a small metal gate as you pass through Great Haysden farm.

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4. After climbing another stile, walk across the driveway (on your right you will see an old Victorian pumping station). Cross the field and then climb one more stile, continuing through the field.

5. Go through the metal kissing gate then turn left, continuing to the fence before climbing the stile. Continue with care and keep any dogs on a short lead as this field is home to some particularly curious horses.

6. Follow alongside the trees until you reach the far left corner of the field, at which point pass through the kissing gate and join the road.

7. Turn right and proceed with caution for 120 metres, before turning left into Gate Farm Road. Walk uphill for approximately 70 metres before taking the path through the hedge on your left. This is slightly overgrown, so keep your eyes peeled.

8. After passing through the hedgerow you will emerge into a large field. Take a deep breath and begin your climb as you follow the path uphill. Continue until you pass a pylon then take the path to the right of the trees which will lead you to a chain gate.

10. Proceed upwards before walking through another chain gate and then through some trees. After emerging into another clearing, walk straight on and pass through a final chain gate, then on through a small wooden gate which takes you out onto Gate Farm Road.

11. Follow the road with care for 260 metres until you reach Bidborough Ridge. Turn right and you will see the Kentish Hare ahead of you. Please check their opening times in advance if you plan to stop.

12. When ready to continue your walk, turn left and walk down High Street until you come to St Lawrence Church.

13. Pass through the lych gate and walk uphill through the church yard. Continue round to the right of the church and then walk down the steps and through the South lych gate.

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14. Turn left past Rock Cottage and then round to the left and past the school. Follow the lane past the recreation grounds and allotments, then follow the footpath down the alleyway.

15. Walk through the wooden gate and cross over the little bridge into Brookhurst/Bomb crater field. Take the path through the centre of the field and leave via the metal kissing gate. Look back at this point and you can just make out the church on the top of the hill.

16. When you reach the cross roads in the path, turn left, walk downhill and continue past the large lake. Follow the path uphill through the woods and then past a large wooden gate as you re-enter suburban Bidborough.

17. Cross over St Lawrence Avenue and then continue into the alleyway, walking between the large hedges. When the path meets a junction turn right and follow this until you find yourself at Bidborough Ridge.

18. Cross over the road with care and then turn right as you follow the pavement along the top of the ridge. Continue past the view point for approximately 350 metres and you will reach a footpath marker.

19. Turn left through the hedge and follow the path downhill through Beechy Toll. This is quite steep and can get slippery when muddy, so do take care.

20. Pass through the metal side gate and then follow the wide grassy path downhill. Continue along the edge of the field as it curves round until you see a path turning off to the left through a gap in the hedge.

21. Walk through this gap and then follow the trees until you see a path on your left, cutting across the field of barley. Once you reach the bottom of the field you will come to a gap in the hedge which leads onto Upper Haysden Lane.

22. Cross the road with care and you will see another gap in the hedge by the layby. Walk through this and across the ditch before continuing straight on. At the end of the field turn left and cross the little bridge and then turn right under Manor Farm subway.

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23. Walk on through the blackberry bushes and then follow the path round and across the lawn at Manor Farm oast houses, before passing through the large wooden gate.
24. Continue past Haysden House and then walk straight down the lane, passing the row of cottages until you see the old mission church in front of you.
25. Walk straight ahead, following Lower Haysden Lane with care for 150 metres before turning off through the large gate to the right.
26. At the end of the bridleway turn left and then continue straight on - ignoring the footpath signs that lead over the little wooden bridge.
27. Once you reach the end of this path, take an immediate left (before the embankment) and then follow this path until you reach Lower Haysden Lane once more.
28. Turn right and walk under the flyover bridge, Haysden Water car park will be on your right, marking the end of your walk.

*If you've enjoyed this walk then please tag your photos #walktonbridge on Instagram or share with a friend. Visit my website for more beautiful walks in and around Tonbridge.*

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When enjoying this walk, please remember to follow the countryside code:

## ***Respect other people***

*Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors*

*Park carefully so access to gateways and driveways are clear*

*Leave gates and property as you find them*

*Stay on footpaths but give way to others where it's narrow*

## ***Protect the natural environment***

*Leave no trace of your visit - take all your litter home*

*Don't have BBQs or fires*

*Keep dogs under effective control*

*Bag and bin your dog poo.*

## ***Enjoy the outdoors***

*Plan ahead, check what facilities are open, be prepared*

*Follow advice and local signs and obey social distancing measures*