



Poundgate and The Hurstwood

Distance: 11 km=7 miles

easy walking

Region: East Sussex

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Author: Stivaletti

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Refreshments: High Hurstwood

Map: Explorer 135 (Ashdown Forest) *but the maps in this guide should suffice*

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Woodland, grassy meadows, views, foodie pub

In Brief

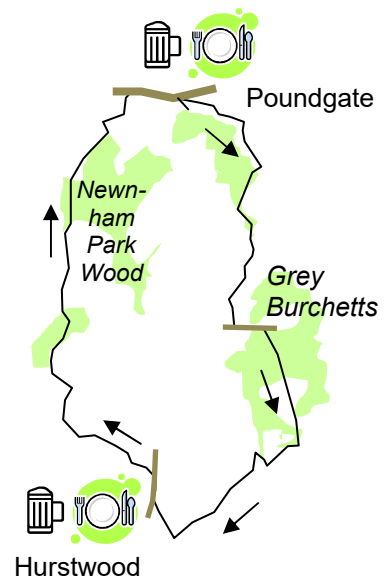
This walk is a peaceful and varied walk through the green countryside just south of Ashdown Forest in East Sussex. You will see woodland, green pastures and well-made farm tracks without ploughed fields. The only wildlife is some cheerful golfers at the start. At the mid-point there is a friendly pub which promises a superb menu. (To enquire at *The Hurstwood*, ring 01825-732257.)



You will encounter some nettles and brambles on this walk, making the wearing of shorts inadvisable. Although the paths are generally excellent, it is best to wear boots because of the very varied terrain. Your dog can come too.

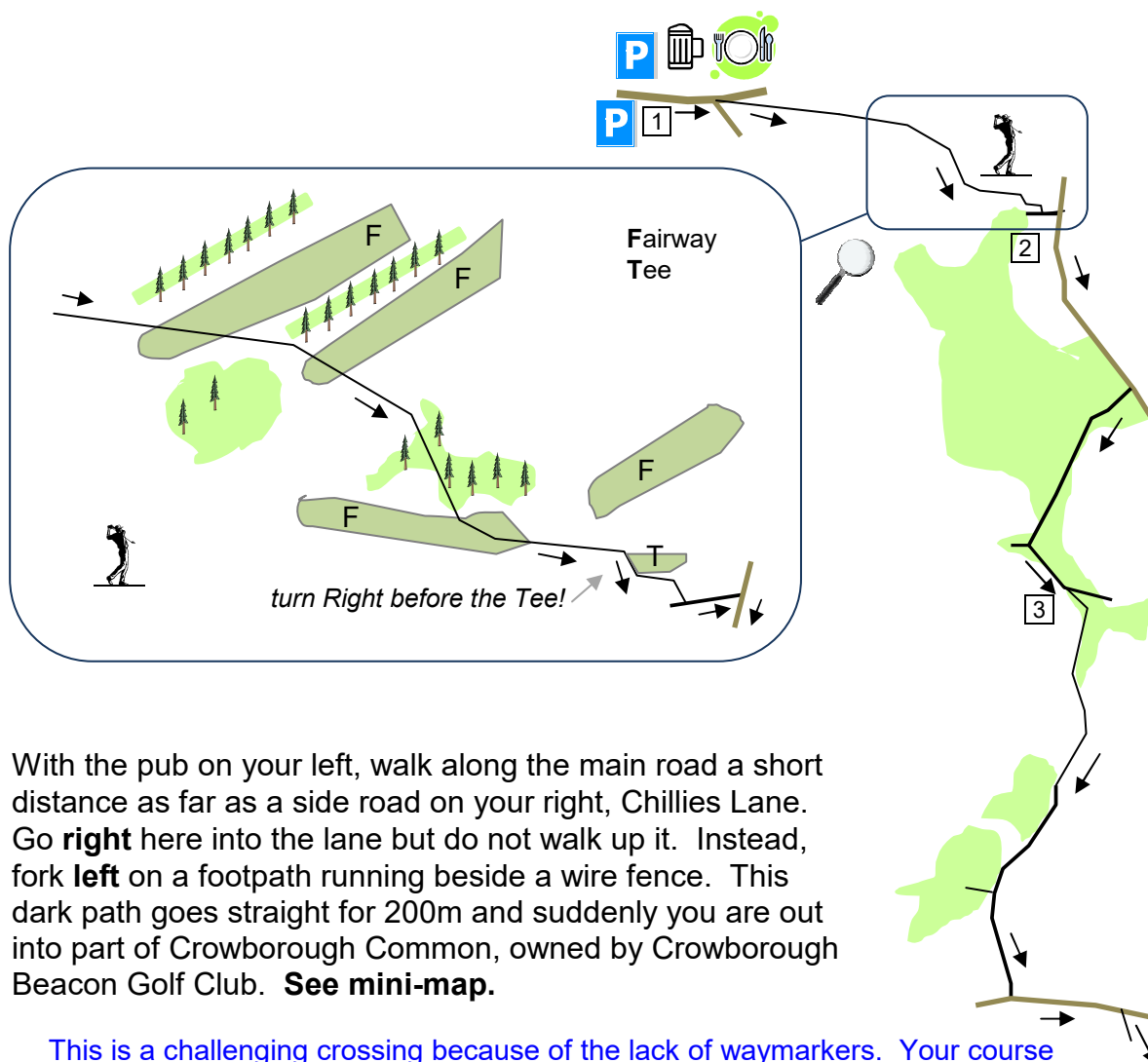
The walk begins by the *Crow and Gate* pub in **Poundgate** on the Uckfield Road, near Crowborough, East Sussex, postcode **TN6 3TA**. There is a designated parking area on the other side of the road from the pub. Also, the pub car park is not marked *patrons only* and it looks as if it's available to the public, although if you use it, you should use the pub in some way. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

Bird's Eye View



The Walk

Leg 1: Poundgate to Grey Burchetts 3¼ km=2 miles



- 1 With the pub on your left, walk along the main road a short distance as far as a side road on your right, Chillies Lane. Go **right** here into the lane but do not walk up it. Instead, fork **left** on a footpath running beside a wire fence. This dark path goes straight for 200m and suddenly you are out into part of Crowborough Common, owned by Crowborough Beacon Golf Club. **See mini-map.**

This is a challenging crossing because of the lack of waymarkers. Your course is basically straight on, a fraction right, through pines and round the back of a tee to find an impossible exit. Ironically, the club “asks” walkers only to take marked paths but the (fairly cheerful) players are used to people wandering all over the course. Just look out for golf balls! Your aim is to turn **right** on a narrow tarmac lane at the far side. If you find the lane accidentally by some other route, so be it. A note of assurance: there is *nothing* like this again for the rest of this walk.

Keep your direction straight ahead for 100m, passing a golf hole on your right and a group of trees. Ahead to your left is a long line of pines but your route is a fraction to the **right**, through the pines, over a fairway, heading for another group of pines, a fraction right again. You are now walking through an untidy area of grass with young birch trees on your left, heading for another group of pines and a fairway. Here, on the edge of the fairway you will see a post with a yellow arrow. Turn **left** along the edge of the fairway and pick up a very clear sandy golfer's path. In 100m, you are nearing a flat teeing-off area, just on your right, before the thick woodland ahead. Turn **right before** the tee and go **left** round it on a very rough path which drops down so that you are looking up at the tee on your left. Incredibly, this is your exit. Your route is thick with undergrowth in summer and seems to be impenetrable. The “path” is *very hard to see*. Simply turn

right away from the tee through the very dense shrubbery. You pass a small (ironic) “public safety” notice and go over a small plank bridge to a stony drive.

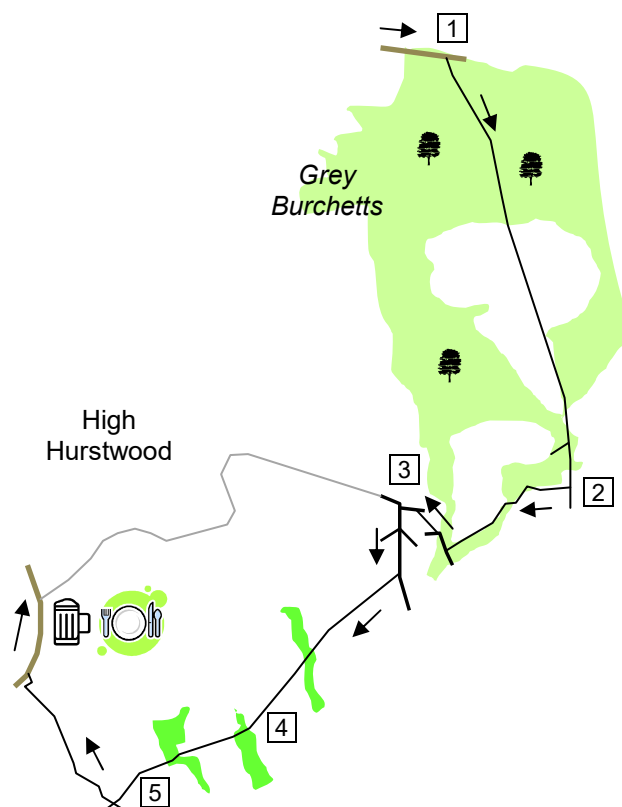
- 2 Turn **left** on the drive for 50m to a tarmac lane and turn **right** on it. The lane runs downhill, passing *Sinnocks* and *The Cottage* before running straight. After another 150m, with some more houses visible on the left ahead, go **right** between stumps on a bridleway into woods. The path descends between banks and take you over a sturdy bridge. This woodland path (with a few patches of mud in places), beside a bank of tall beech trees, becomes wide and raised, running through a dense woodland of tall oaks and beeches with the sound of water on one side, then the other. 400m from the lane, at a T-junction, turn **left** through a small metal gate beside a large one and proceed along the left-hand side of a sloping meadow.

- 3 In 100m, keep **right** to stay on the grass verge, avoiding a large metal gate on the farm track. In another 50m, at the corner of the meadow, avoid a gap straight ahead and instead turn **right** uphill beside a band of ash trees on your left. Soon you break cover from the foliage to be rewarded with great views to your left. After a small metal gate beside a large one, veer **right** on a dusty drive beside a house. The driveway curves left, passes another house, *Grovehurst*, and exits beside a pond on your right. Veer **right** on a tarmac drive, through an open wooden gate. Stay on the drive, ignoring a small wooden gate and footpath on your right, till you reach a road. Turn **left** on the road. In 250m, you will notice two large wooden gates on your right. Go **right** here on a narrow path into Grey Burchetts Wood.



Leg 2: Grey Burchetts to High Hurstwood 3¼ km=2 miles

- 1 Your path takes you through a wonderland of tall trees of every kind. After a pleasant nature walk of 400m or so, you pass between two wooden gates and emerge from the wood, passing on your right a field with equipment which appears to be for dog training. You now have hay fields on both sides. Your path gets wider and goes down through more woodland for another 300m, after which you meet a pair of wooden gates across the path. (Just before the gates, ignore a stile and fingerpost on your right: that path is too overgrown.) Go through the gates. Immediately after some barns, about 20m before a tarmac lane ahead, turn **right** under a large oak tree on a signed footpath.



- 2 Cross a patch of grass to go over a stile and along the right-hand side of a meadow. In under 100m, as the edge of the meadow curves left, fork **right** to go over a stile and down into trees. After crossing an open area with patches of nettles, zigzag right-left to go through an open metal gate and along the left-hand side of a meadow, crossing under wires. At the bottom, go through an open metal gate and turn **right** on a wide farm track. Almost at once, the track bends left towards the buildings and farmyard of Holders Farm. Leave the track here **before** the bend by keeping ahead over a crooked stile. Follow this rather nettly path through trees and out to a driveway from a house on your right. Turn **left** on the drive to reach a wider farm track. Turning **right** and keeping **left**, and **left** again at the next junction would lead you on a winding tarmac drive, past houses, to the pub, but the route chosen in the next sections is much more rewarding.
- 3 Turn sharp **left** on the track. In 50m, take the **middle** of three tracks (the two on the sides leading into private property). In another 100m, just before a large wooden gate, turn **right** through a gap in the hedge onto a sign-posted footpath. Keep **left** beside a fence, over a V-stile and into a field of wild flowers. Follow the left-hand perimeter, whilst the flowers give way to a cereal crop. In the corner, keep straight on through a wide band of trees into another field of cereal crops. Cut directly across the corner to a wooden swing-gate in the hedge ahead (or go left round the corner), leading into a hay field. Keep dead straight across the field in the same direction across the centre.
- 4 As you near the other side, look out for another wooden swing-gate under the largest tree. Go through the swing-gate (the people here must be very thin!) into another hay field. Keep straight ahead along the edge for 50m until the edge of the field curves away to your left. Now maintain your direction across the centre of the field, passing a small reedy pond on your left. As you approach the other side, head for a small rectangular recess in the far edge. Near the left-hand corner of this recess you will find another swing-gate. Go through it and through a wide band of trees and through another (more generous) swing-gate.
- 5 Keep ahead down the left-hand side of the field. As you reach the bottom of the field, you will see a bridge in the far left-hand corner (and, straight ahead, you may notice another wooden bridge). Do not go over the bridge but turn **right** in the field, passing between the wood on your left and a little rectangular fenced pond on your right. Continue over a stile in the hedge into a rough meadow of wild grass. Stay near the left-hand edge. Your path is narrow and twisty and you need to concentrate to follow a rather scratchy route dominated by wild plants growing profusely: the tall white delicate meadowsweet, coarse yellow groundsel and the little bright yellow flowers of trefoil. Finally, you pass to the left of a weeping willow, go round the corner of a wire fence and **left** on a drive, immediately reaching a road. Turn **right** on the road, quickly reaching *The Hurstwood* for a welcome rest-up.



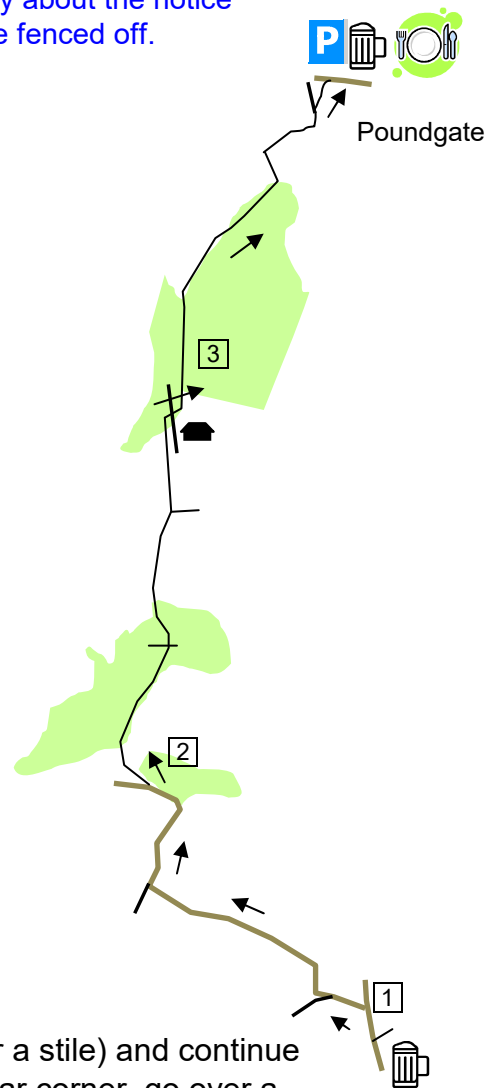
The “Hurstwood” was originally called the “Maypole” and with the new name came a new identity as a gastropub offering some dishes that really stand out, all at fairly reasonable prices. You’re bound to feel you’re walking into a restaurant, but you can use The “Hurstwood” as a regular pub with its three good ales (two Harveys and a guest beer), bar “nibbles” (but no bar snacks as such) and its charming patio and garden on the side. The small staff are a friendly crew but please be patient and allow for a relaxed service, as befits this quiet corner of England. The pub closes at 5.30 on Sunday. To reserve a table, ring 01825-732257.

Leg 3: High Hurstwood to Poundgate 4½ km=3 miles

- 1 After a possible break, with the pub on your right, walk up the main road using the footway. In 100m or so, take the first lane on your **left**, Perrymans Lane. At the bottom of an incline, ignore a footpath right and immediately take the **right** fork, choosing the tarmac rather than a concrete drive. Continue another 750m on this quiet lane, passing some small houses at first before open country. At a T-junction, where a farm drive joins from your left, turn **right**, staying on the tarmac lane. After 300m, the lane bends left. Ignore a footpath here on your right. In 150m, fork **right** on a dark wide path thus leaving the lane. **Don't worry about the notice warning about livestock: there are only sheep and they are fenced off.**

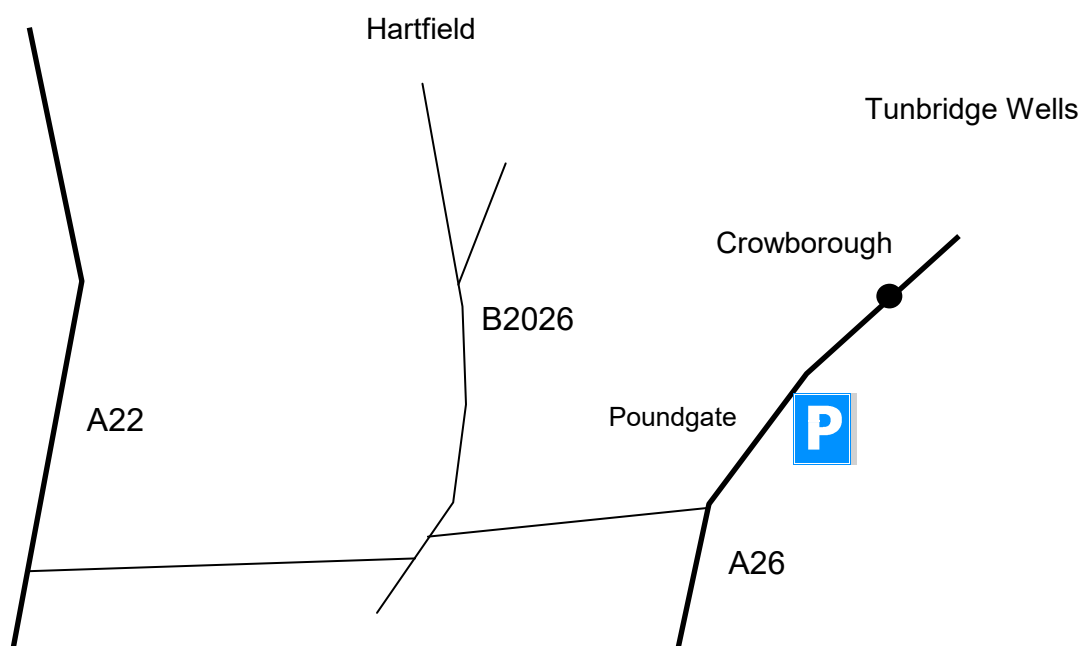
- 2 After slipping past a large metal gate and following a corridor of trees, you enter Quarry Wood. Your path keeps to the right-hand boundary so that fields are visible on your right. After 300m, your path goes deeper into the wood and you cross a forester's path. In a further 100m, your path leads you over a stile and along a grassy path beside a wire fence. After 400m beside this long pasture, ignore a fingerpost with a junction on your right. **(If you see a path closure notice here, it does not apply to any part of your route.)** Continue through a small wooden gate on a mown path to arrive at the drive coming from Stroods House Farm. Do not turn left on the drive but cross directly over it, next to a grid, and up some steps. Proceed up through trees and turn **left** in front of a wire fence. In 100m, the path crosses a drive by a house, goes under some wires and continues straight on beside a pine plantation. This is Newnham Park Wood where deer abound.

- 3 You exit the wood through a large metal gate (or over a stile) and continue along the right-hand side of a large meadow. In the far corner, go over a stile and into the woods. Your path is now a woodland path, although the meadow is still visible on your left. Follow this winding course, keeping the meadow in view. Finally you come over a (squeezable) stile onto a fenced path running between two meadows. At the end, turn **right** near a redundant stile along the left-hand side of a meadow. In the next corner, go over a stile and keep **right** beside a curving wire fence. Go through a large metal gate and straight ahead between farm buildings on a concrete track. Immediately after the farm, fork **right** over a low stile and follow a path between fences. At the other side, go over a stile to the main road where, on your right, is the *Crow and Gate* where the walk began.



Getting there

By car: Poundgate is 1½ miles southwest of the centre of Crowborough, East Sussex. The “straightforward” route, if coming from the north, is the A26 from Tunbridge Wells, through Crowborough. To avoid the towns, you can take the B2026 through Edenbridge and Hartfield and turn **left**, signposted *Crowborough*, 5 miles south of Hartfield. Another variation is the A22 and turn **left** just before Nutley (just after the 30mph sign), signposted *Crowborough*, which comes to the same junction.



By bus/train: bus 29 from Tun.Wells or Crowborough, including Sundays. Check the timetables.

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