



Charlwood: The *Half Moon* (Pub Walk)

Distance: 6½ km=4 miles

easy walking with some gradients

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: Charlwood

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Map: Explorer 146 (Dorking) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Village, woodland, bluebells, meadows

In Brief

This pub is a famous gem in a quaint lane of a picturesque village close to the Norman church of St Nicholas (see below). Hard to believe, this pub is a favourite “local” for Gatwick Airport and, looking at Google Earth, the village seems to sit just to one side of the main runway – although you *definitely* would never normally guess that: the village and this walk are among the most *quiet and peaceful* you will find anywhere. The *Half Moon* was recently refurbished with a traditional look and a long informal dining area. According to the reviews, prices are not outlandish. Three real ales are on tap, usually Black Sheep, Doombar and Tribute, and fish is a star menu item. There are also snacks. The terrace is small but cosy and there is a pleasant garden. It gets quite busy Sunday lunch times. (To enquire, ring 01293-863414.)



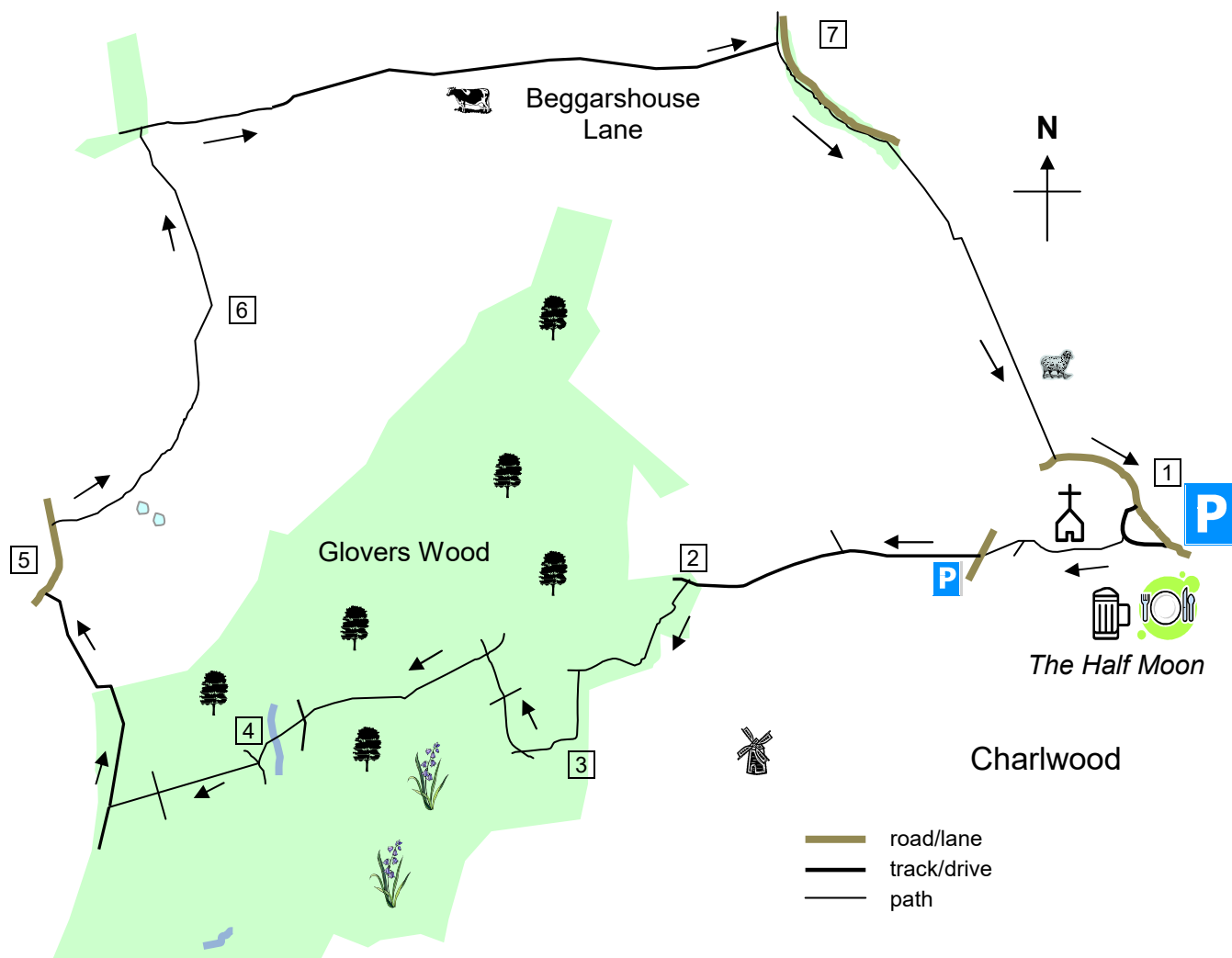
?? Part of this circular walk goes through Glover’s Wood, famous for its bluebells. So late spring is a good time. (There is also a special *Bluebell Walk* in this series.) There are two brief sections with nettles or brambles, enough to make shorts uncomfortable. Any sensible footwear should be fine. Your dog is also welcome everywhere and should manage the stiles.

The walk begins next to the *Half Moon* pub in Charlwood village, **postcode RH6 0DS**, or in **Glovers Road**, Charlwood, postcode **RH6 0EH**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

Charlwood is known for its proximity to Gatwick Airport but you would hardly guess that while walking through this tranquil medieval village. One noble resident was John de Gatwyck who went on a crusade in 1311 and paid for an extension to the church. Charlwood parish has over 80 listed buildings and features, including 28 medieval open hall cottages (originally built without chimneys) and many crown post timber-framed houses.

The church of St Nicholas dates from 1080 but the Norman structure has many later alterations. Near the entrance are two medieval wall paintings. One, dating from 1290, tells the story of St. Margaret. The other narrates the miraculous resurrection of three scholars who had been 'cut up and salted as pork'. They are reproduced in a modern painting on the west wall. The wooden screen is also medieval and is unique in the country for its size.



- 1 Go through the churchyard with the church on your right. Ignore a signed footpath on the left. Cross a road and continue up Grovers Road. Ignore a footpath right and continue by the black wrought iron gate of *The Glovers* with its intriguing scrapyard of old planes, along a path beside the driveway between fences, then through a wooden swing-gate. The path goes between fences and meadows, through another swing-gate, and enters Glover's Wood.

Glover's Wood is a site of special scientific interest and one of the largest areas of woodland in the Surrey Weald, situated on Paludina limestone overlying Weald Clay. It covers 96 hectares, of which 28 hectares were acquired by the Woodland Trust in 1983.

It would be too easy just to keep straight on along the main footpath and over the bridge, but you would skip the best parts. So this guide takes you first on a brief scenic circuit through this wonderful wood.

- 2 Turn immediately **left** on a woodland trail, going along a little walkway. The path skirts a small pond with a bench seat, going over a small bridge. There are wooden slats to assist you. In late spring you will get your first sight of the extensive bluebells for which this wood is so famous. After a short flight of



shallow steps, fork **left**, staying on the edge of the wood close to the meadow on your left. In another 200m, at a junction near the corner of the meadow, turn **left**, staying on the edge of the wood near the green meadow. Clearly visible on your left now is Lowfield Heath Windmill.

Lowfield Heath Windmill is a grade-II-listed post mill but its origin is a mystery. It goes back at least to 1741 and was probably moved to this site (windmills were sometimes relocated) but from where? It ceased to operate from wind in 1880 but worked on by steam power. In the 1930s it was revived for aesthetic reasons but within 25 years it was derelict again. After a campaign, it was restored in 1989 and subsequently was put into full working order. The windmill is open on the last Sunday of each month, on National Mills Day and at the Heritage Open Weekend.

- 3 Keep to the main path as it curves right away from the edge. In another 120m you meet a wide path which crosses your route diagonally. Veer **right** here to join this wide path. In another 100m go straight on over a 4-way junction. In another 120m you meet a wide crossing path. Turn **left** here, thus regaining the official footpath, as indicated by a yellow arrow on a post. The footpath runs for 300m or so through the wood and goes straight over a crossing path. About 50m later, your path goes down steps and across a new (repaired) bridge over a stream.
- 4 Your path immediately wheels left up more steps on the other side. Continue dead straight on, avoiding several paths branching off. In about 150m, continue straight on over a diagonal crossing path, still following the yellow arrow. Eventually you come to a T-junction with a wide official cinder bridleway. Turn sharp **right** on this path. Follow this wide woodland path for 200m, with a meadow visible on your left through trees. You meet a hayfield and your path zigzags left-right round the corner. Your path now runs for 200m between hedges and comes out to a road. Turn **right** on the road.
- 5 In only 100m, go **right** over a stile into a grassy field. (On rare occasions you may see quiet cattle in this field; keep to one side.) Keep ahead, not far from the right-hand side, aiming for a stile visible in the hedgerow ahead. Just on your right is a copse with two small ponds. Go over the stile (or squeeze past it) and set a course across the large meadow aiming just to the left of some houses. You pass through a gap in the central grass strip (2018: the farmer has provided a gap in the fence for walkers). As you approach the other side, **avoid** a stile on your right which is on a bend in the field edge, and continue another 40m into the corner. As you cross the stile, you find that there are in fact two stiles, with a bridge in between.
- 6 Continue along the right-hand side of a meadow, over two more stiles either side of an overgrown farm track and along the right-hand side of the next meadow. Just before the corner, your path veers **right** by a holly bush and a wooden fence on a woodland path. Go over a stile in the corner and a little bridge with rails and turn **right** on a wide path with a meadow on your left. This is Beggarshouse Lane, an ancient byway. You pass straight on between the metal gates of Greenings Farm. Ignore a footpath on the right shortly after the farm. The wood on your left is Beggar's Gill and, beyond, you have a good view of the North Downs. You pass *Beggars Cottage* and *Eastlands*, ignoring a footpath on the left, and reach the start of some tarmac. Continue all the way to a main road and turn **right**.



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Use the narrow path on the right through trees running close to the main road. It eventually passes the entrance to Barfield Farm. Fork **right** here on a signposted footpath. Your path runs beside a fence, passing a useless stile. It then zigzags left-right between gates onto a rather overgrown path, giving you a glimpse of Gatwick Airport with sheep and horse pastures each side. You finally exit via a stile or a gate to a track and thence out to a road. Turn **left** on the road, passing the little gem *Laurel Cottage*. Keep **right** at the road junction, quickly taking you back to the village and the *Half Moon* pub/restaurant where the walk began.



Getting there

By car: One way, out of many, to get to Charlwood, if coming from the north, is via Betchworth. Go south on Station Road, reachable via the A24 and Headley or via Dorking and the A25. Turn left at a T-junction and first right through Betchworth village, continue on the Sowerhill Road to Leigh where you need to turn left at a T-junction. This road leads you to Charlwood village. Turn very sharp right just after a builder's works, opposite a timbered house, signed *The Half Moon*.

Another way is via the M23. Come off at the Gatwick Airport exit. Follow signs for the A23 until you see a left turn at a roundabout for *Charlwood*. Go past the *Greyhound* pub and 400m later veer left on a narrow lane to the *Half Moon*.

In case there are no spaces free near the pub you can:

- Park in **Glovers Road**, postcode **RH6 0EH** (see the map) which is on your route and has plenty of space, *but don't miss a visit to the church!*
- Or continue a little further along the main road and park in a side road, **Chapel Road**, on your left.

By bus/train: bus 526/527 from Crawley station . Check the timetables.

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