



Barns Green: *The Queens Head* (pub walk) Bloody Mary takes a stroll

Distance: 8 km=5 miles

easy walking

Region: West Sussex

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Refreshments: Barns Green

Map: Explorer 134 (Horsham) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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Pub, green floral meadows, isolated church, wild roses, woodland paths

In Brief

There's nothing you won't like about the *Queens Head* pub, except perhaps the pallid face of Mary Tudor on the signboard. If you ask them if they sell many Bloody Marys you get a *that's-the-hundredth-time-today* look. Until 1852, the pub was known as the *Bricklayers Arms* and that reminds you that people come here from all walks of life: the locals from the surrounding villages together with country householders seeking a good atmosphere and Sunday lunch. The regular nosh is unpretentious but should satisfy all, especially the locally-sourced meat and the cod which is "hand battered". Recently this pub has become more gentrified with more emphasis on dining. However, the *Queens Head* is still friendly and raises a smile as soon as you enter.

This is a calming walk through quiet green meadows and woodland, with one or two surprises, especially the church at the tiny village of Itchingfield.

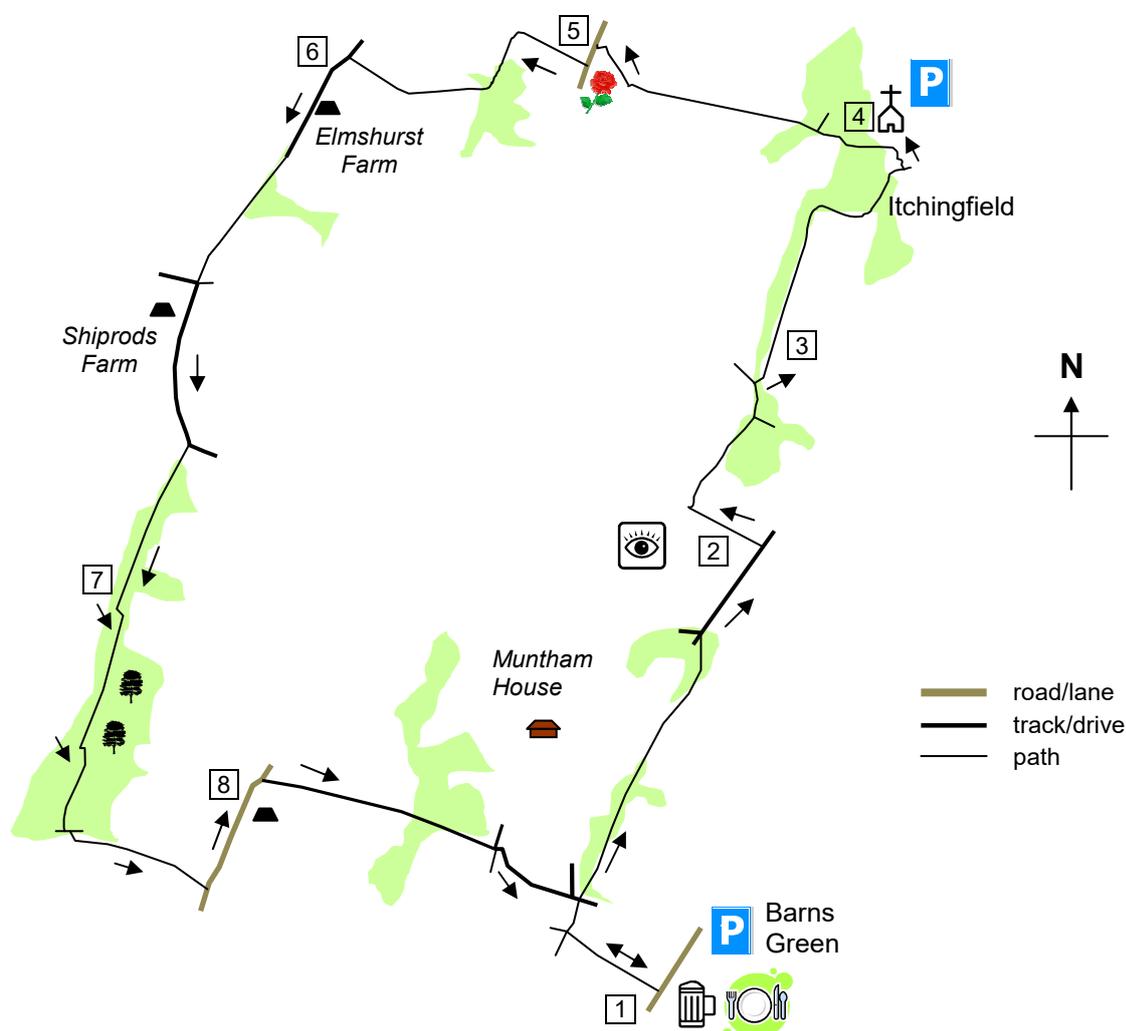


There are some fringes of nettles which are difficult to avoid if you are not wearing long trousers. When this walk was researched in the summer of 2016, despite the recent heavy rains, the paths chosen were all firm and *reasonably dry*. As always, boots are the best option though. This walk would be fine with your dog: all the stiles have a gap or a doggy gate and there is *no livestock*.

The walk begins in the village of **Barns Green**, near Horsham, West Sussex, postcode **RH13 0PS**, opposite the *Queens Head* pub. You could also park by **Itchingfield Church**, postcode **RH13 0RR**, assuming that there is no special service in progress, placing the pub $\frac{2}{3}$ of the way round. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

Barns Green was once called Slaughterford and the name persists in some place names. It was always no more than a small collection of houses and farms, expanding a little after the war to resettle homeless people. The village lies on the railway line between Horsham and Billingshurst but it is too insignificant to have its own railway halt.



- 1 Directly opposite the pub, take a narrow path signposted as a bridleway. In 200m or so, you reach a 4-way fingerpost. Turn **right** here, still on the bridleway. Where, in 80m, you reach a tarmac drive, go straight over through a bypassable small wooden gate on a woodland path. *On your left is Muntham House, now a school for boys with special needs.* Ignore a crossing path at a 4-way fingerpost. After 700m on this path, you come through a patch of woodland and through a small wooden gate to the right of a larger wooden gate on a drive coming from the school. Avoid a track sharp left and keep straight ahead on an easy straight track. In 230m, you come to a 4-way fingerpost. Turn **left** here over a stile into a meadow. (The track also leads onwards to Itchingfield but the route chosen for this walk is a series of lush meadows giving you a sudden surprise encounter with the church.)
- 2 Walk along the right-hand side of the meadow with great views left to the South Downs and some solitary rugby posts. At the other side, cross over a farmer's path and immediately turn very sharp **right** and **left** to go over a stile and a 2-plank bridge with handrail. Go along the right-hand side of a grassy field and, at the other side, keep ahead through a wooden swing-gate and continue as before in the next field. In 100m, ignore a swing-gate

on your right and continue beside the meadow, but only for another 50m. Under a large oak tree, avoid a path ahead that cuts across the meadow and instead go **right** through a wooden swing-gate and over a 2-plank bridge into the adjoining field.

- 3 Turn immediately **left** along the left-hand side of this grassy field. In 100m, in the corner, go over a 2-plank bridge into the next meadow and continue as before. [You can see the cedar by Itchingfield Church ahead.](#) In 50m, ignore a 4-way fingerpost. In 250m, in the far corner, go **right** and, at the next corner, **left**. Just before the next corner, your path takes you **left** into the woods and down over a bridge with handrails. Just after the bridge, avoid a gate leading into a meadow and keep **left** on a path into the woods. The path leads over a 2-plank bridge and up, past an old kissing-gate, into the precincts of St Nicholas' church, Itchingfield. Go past the little timbered Priest's House and turn **left** to the church.

St Nicolas Church in Itchingfield was built around 1125 and two walls and some windows survive from that time. Some more windows are from the 1400s and there is an aumbry (a cupboard used to store sacred paraphernalia) dating from the 1100s. The oak bell tower is unique and you won't have seen the like in this country. It is completely free-standing. There is still a medieval staircase to the belfry, too fragile to use. The charming timbered Priest's House in the churchyard dates from the Middle Ages. The church was extended in 1865 by no less than Sir George Gilbert Scott, designer of St Pancras Station.

- 4 Keep left, past the west side of the church with its free-standing wooden tower and under the great yew tree. Your path takes you through a small wooden gate, down steps and **left** beside a pasture. It zigzags down to a modern kissing-gate, over a 2-plank bridge and on a path between wire fences. Shortly, at a 3-way fingerpost, ignore a path on the right. Your path crosses a stream via a long bridge and takes you up steps, through a wooden swing-gate into a floral meadow. Go straight ahead on a path across the centre. *You may have noticed for some time that you are on the West Sussex Literary Trail; this is a 55-mile walk from Horsham to Chichester, along which you meet Shelley, William Penn, John Galsworthy and Hilaire Belloc.* Your path veers **right** to go through a gap past a fingerpost leading into the next meadow. Keep ahead on a faint path which runs about 15m from the left-hand edge. Your route veers **left** through a wooden swing-gate and then **right** on a narrow path parallel to a driveway on your left belonging to *The Warren*, Bashurst Hill. [The whole length of the hedge is a line of wild roses and their wafted fragrance in summer is one of the joys of this walk.](#) The scented path finally goes through a small wooden gate, **left** to join the drive and **right** to a tarmac lane.

- 5 Turn **left** on the lane and, in 50m, turn **right** on a driveway for Black Cherry Farm, still on the *Literary Trail*. The drive bends left to reach a large metal security gate. Here, go over a flimsy stile and shortly, at another gate, keep to the left on a fenced path, as directed, joining a track leading into a large pasture. Bear a fraction right to walk beside a wire fence that separates you from a smaller sheep field. At the other side, go over two stiles, over a grassy crossing path, through a large wooden gate and straight ahead along the left-hand side of a meadow. At the other side, go over a rare "T-V" stile and turn **left** on a wide track, signposted as a bridleway.

- 6 Keep ahead past the house and buildings of Elmshurst Farm and go through a small wooden gate beside a large one. You are now on a fine surfaced woodland path. In 200m or so, your path narrows and runs in a more open landscape. You come through a small metal gate and arrive at a signposted junction of tracks. Keep straight on, passing Shiprods Farmhouse on your right and follow a concrete drive running beside open fields. In 150m, the drive veers left beside a wood. Where the track bends left into an avenue of oaks, leave it by keeping **right** on a rough track. Ignore a stile on your right after 100m. After 250m through handsome woodland, just as the line of oaks on your right ends, look to your left for a metal kissing-gate. *Don't miss this turn!* Go through this gate and follow a parallel path in the wood.
- 7 In 120m, you glimpse from your woodland path a boundary between fields on your right. Opposite the next field boundary, 200m later, your path suddenly kinks left and right at a fingerpost, now deeper in the wood. After a twisty 200m, you come out of the wood onto a grassy bank just before a stream. Turn **left** and immediately turn **right** over a 2-plank bridge with handrail, leading into a large meadow of waving grass. Turn **left** along the left-hand edge of the meadow. In 100m, you pass some field gates on your left and go over a wide plank bridge. Continue to the far corner and go through a metal kissing-gate, over a 2-plank bridge to a tarmac lane. Turn **left** on the lane.
- 8 In 150m, you pass an untidy farm and, just as the lane curves right, an old farm house (in a pitiful state in 2016). Immediately after the house, turn **right** on a signposted track, which is surfaced at first, then degrades as it runs 200m straight across the centre of a meadow. At the other side go through a large metal gate into woodland. This path runs under trees, tarmacked in patches, and comes out after 200m to a junction of tracks opposite a house called *Owlers*. Ignore a wooden gate into a pasture on your right and turn **right** on a wide track. The track veers left and, after 200m, you pass the entrance to Muntham House school. In just 20m, opposite a wooden gate on your left, turn **right** on a bridleway which may be familiar from your outward journey. In 80m, at a 4-way fingerpost, turn **left** on a narrow bridleway, leading, in 200m or so, to the road in the village of Barns Green, opposite the *Queens Head* where the walk began.



Getting there

By car: Barns Green is easiest to reach via the A29, just north of Billingshurst. If coming from the north, look for a sign *Barns Green 3* about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile before the roundabout where the Billingshurst bypass begins. (If you miss it, you can turn round at the roundabout.) Follow the bendy road $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to a T-junction. Turn **right** and, in 75 yds, turn **left** at an old-fashioned signpost for *Barns Green*. Follow this very bendy road for $1\frac{1}{4}$ miles and park opposite the *Queens Head* where there is usually plenty of room. (The pub has a car park but you might be monopolising space for too long on a 5-mile walk: ask the landlord?).

By bus/train: buses 74, 75, 76 from Horsham station, not Sunday. Check the timetables.

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