



Chiddingfold, Alfold, Forests and Canal

Distance: 22½ km=14 miles or two shorter walks of 13 km = 8 miles
and 11 km = 7 miles easy-to-moderate walking

Region: Surrey, West Sussex

written: 13/04/09

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Refreshments: Chiddingfold, Alfold (?)

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere) and 134 (Crawley)

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

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Two villages, long woodland trails, canal

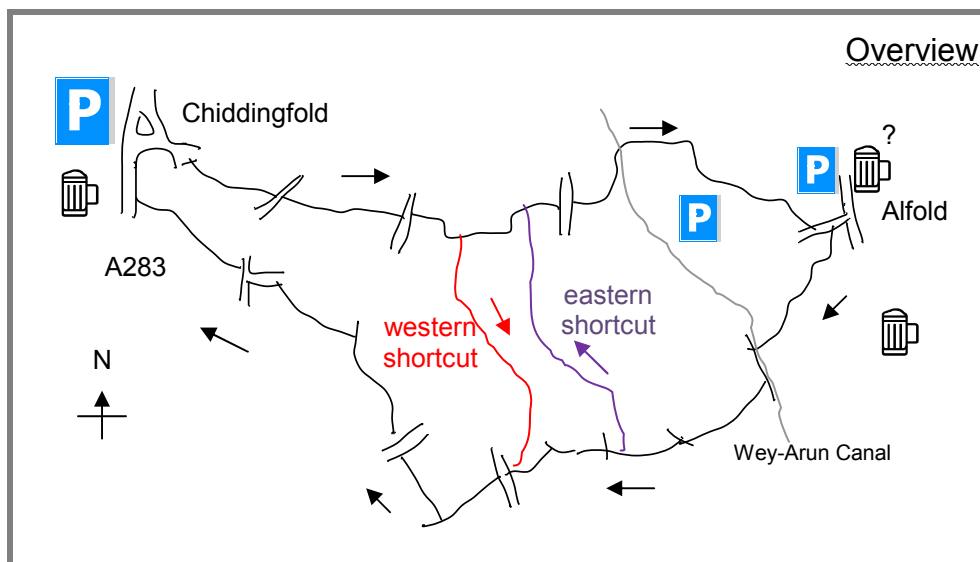
In Brief

This is a circular walk in dense, varied countryside between two villages. The villages differ from each other but not in their charm. The country between them is remarkable. There is almost no road walking. You will see fine houses, magical woodland glades, beautiful wild forest and residual parts of the old Wey-Arun Canal.

This walk can be divided into two shorter “halves”, one based in Chiddingfold, the **Western Loop**, (13 km=8 miles) and one based in Alfold the **Eastern Loop** (11 km=7 miles).



This is a wealden walk so in winter some short muddy sections are inevitable. Most can easily be hopped over but the brief path up to Follies Farm may be damp, as are a few patches elsewhere. So, except after a long dry spell, boots are essential. A stick is recommended. This walk should be ok for your dog. There are no nettles or briars to speak of.



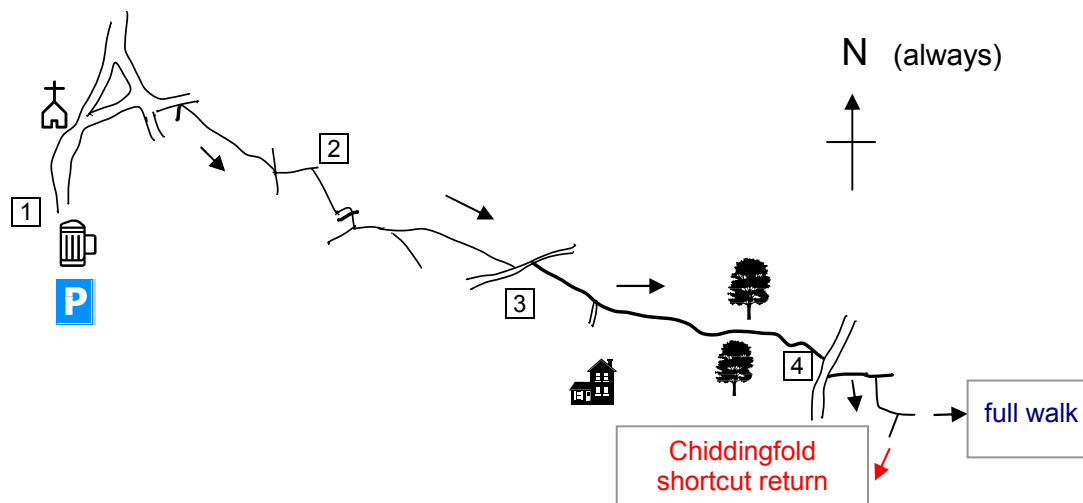
The *full walk* and *Western Loop* begin in Chiddingfold, postcode GU8 4TX. The *Eastern Loop* begins in Alfold, postcode GU6 8ET: begin with **Leg 3**. You can of course start the main walk in Alfold too with a good lunch break in Chiddingfold. For full details see the end of this document → **Getting There**.

The Walk



There is a shop at Chiddingfold and the Crown Inn (founded 1250) serves good food. Chiddingfold church, which dates back to around 1190, and its churchyard with its notable brick-vaulted graves are worth visiting.

Leg 1: Chiddingfold to Burningfold Manor 4½ km=3 miles

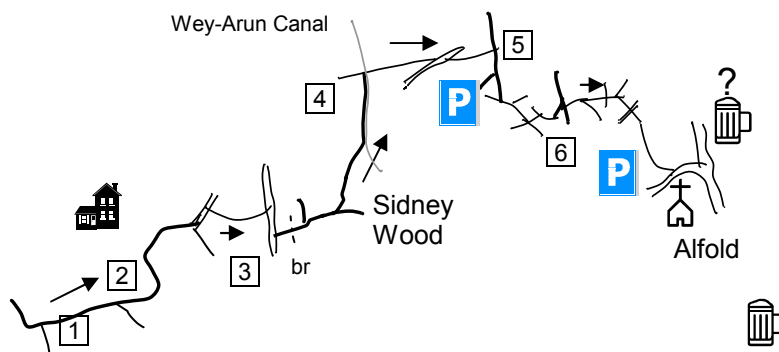


- 1 Walk along the southeast side of the Green away from the church, *Crown Inn* and shop, past some fine houses, to the far corner. Turn **right** and immediately **left** up Pockford Road, past the Post Office, *Pound*, *Autumn*, *Spring* and *Rose Cottages*. Opposite *Solars*, go over a stile on the **right** into a meadow, ignoring a bridleway to its right. Cross the meadow diagonally to another stile, cross the next field, pass through a wide strip of woodland with a bridge, cross another field, a thin line of trees and another field. Go through a gap in a hedge and turn immediately **left** alongside the hedge. Turn **right** round the corner of the meadow, soon going downhill.
- 2 At the next corner, turn **left** on a path, **right** over a large wooden bridge and **left** on a path, at first parallel to the stream. You are now in fine woodland, the ground thick with wild garlic and, in the spring, bluebells. Always keep to the main path, avoiding all turnings off, as it veers away from the stream and ascends. At a junction by a fingerpost, keep straight ahead on the main path, slightly left. (The fingerpost used to be wrong by pointing only right but it may have been corrected.) Eventually the path goes past a small garden gate on the right and the garden and house of *Deerfold* with its tennis court and meets a road. Turn **left** on the road.
- 3 After 150m, turn **right** on a bridleway by Dunsfold Ryse Farm and go straight ahead on the track for some distance, passing the drive to *Dunsfold Ryse* by a pond on the right, after which the track becomes a green path. Continue through a gate into the vast, spectacular area of protected forest of Lagfold Copse. After a long straight stretch between tall trees go through two wooden gates between gardens and turn **right** on a road beside imposing *Dunsfold House*.

- 4 In 120m, opposite *Keystone House*, turn **left** onto a fine driveway for Burningfold Manor. In 100m the bridleway runs on the right parallel to the drive. *Hascombe Hill* is visible on the left. The bridleway bends **right** into the wood and then **left** through larches. In just 20m, you come to a signpost.

Decision point. If are doing only the shorter **Western Loop**, skip to near the end of this document and follow the **Chiddingfold Shortcut**. If you are doing the full walk, continue with the next section.

Leg 2: Burningfold Manor to Alfold 4½ km=3 miles



- 1 Ignore the right turn and continue straight on. Where the path emerges from the trees, go straight ahead on a track. Burningfold Manor is over on the left. The track crosses a stream, curves left and right, goes past farm buildings and then cottages.
- 2 Continue a little further and, after *Hurlands* on the right, take a marked footpath on the **right**, through a gate (either the small or the large one). Very soon, just after the pond on the left, turn **left** over a stile with a removable trellis that has to be carefully replaced. [Jan 2012: this trellis has been removed and the field is in a state of flux: you need to be careful !] Cross the meadow half **right** to a stile. (The stile is directly opposite the central strut of the large open barn on your right.) Cross a strip of woodland and another stile into a flowery meadow. Stay on the left side, to a road where you turn **right**.
- 3 In 90m, past *Sprunks Cottage*, take a footpath on the **left**. The path skirts some huts on the left, zigzags and goes over a bridge into the vast labyrinth of Sidney Wood. Go straight on uphill, avoiding the track on the left. In 50m, fork **left** uphill. After a climb, the path meets a remnant of the old Wey Arun Canal. *In the 19th century this canal made it possible to travel by boat from London to Littlehampton on the south coast. Much of it has now been restored by The Wey & Arun Canal Trust and boat trips can be taken on several large sections.* Go straight on with the canal on your right. At a signpost, keep to the canalside. You pass two land bridges and a milestone showing "Wey 9½ miles, Arun 13½ miles". Eventually you reach a T-junction with a metal gate where you turn **right**.
- 4 Continue on the broad path, avoiding a bridleway on the right, and soon a field and house come into view over on the right. *Fir Tree Copse on your left is a nature reserve carpeted in spring by bluebells, but it is not on this route.* Eventually the path joins a tarmac driveway coming in from the right. Use any of the smaller paths on the right to switch to a wide path running parallel to the driveway on the right. The path gradually diverges from the driveway and eventually reaches a T-junction with a broad track near the Sidney Wood car park where you turn **right**.

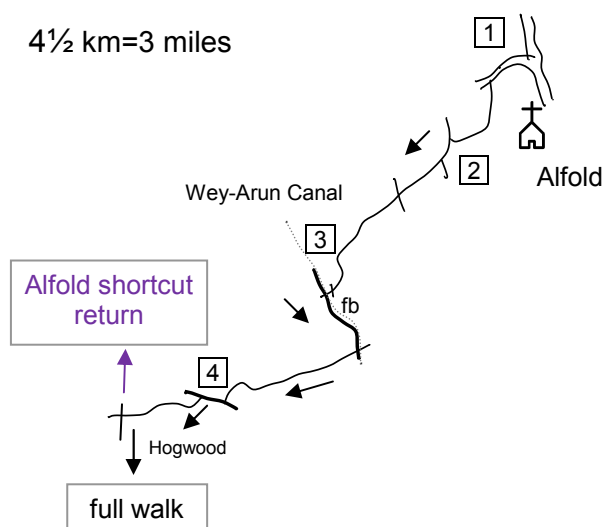
- 5 Stay on the main track through a metal barrier ahead, ignoring a small path left. The track curves gently right and straightens. Here, about 150m after the barrier, turn **left** on a clear path that crosses the track diagonally. (The right-hand path leads through trees to the far end of the car park.) In 40m fork **right** with the main path. In another 250m, at a T-junction, turn **left** on a wide straight path. In just 50m, you come to a major junction. Go straight on past a sign *Riding By Permit Only* and cross a wide muddy horse track, continuing over, shifting a little to the right, on a signposted footpath, just to the right of a sign for the *Springbok Estate*.
- 6 In just over 100m, fork **left** to a rickety stile into a meadow ahead. (A number of stiles have thankfully been replaced by gates. Please read "stile or gate" for several in this walk.) Stay on the left side of the meadow, cross a track via two stiles and cross the centre of the next meadow. Over a stile into another meadow, turn **right** to a new metal swing-gate visible ahead in a fence. Cross a farm driveway through a second swing-gate. Walk straight ahead along the next meadow lengthwise with the farm buildings on your right until you see a stile on the **left** near a corner which you cross over a bridge into a small field. Keep to the right and go over another rickety stile to an enclosed footpath. This leads to a road where you turn **left**. Shortly, just after *Rectory Cottage*, turn **right** into the main churchyard of Alfold church and go round the church, past the stocks and the picturesque Church Cottages to the main road and the village centre.

Alfold's name is a rendering of 'old fold' ('fold' in the sense of 'animal enclosure' - think of 'sheepfold'). Being virtually lost in the great forest, it counted for little in Norman times and later became a centre for smuggling. Local farmers would be gifted a bottle of brandy for allowing their barns to be used for contraband. The church of St Nicholas was recorded in the time of Henry III (roughly mid-1200s) but dates back at least two centuries earlier. In fact, the beautiful font dates from 1080. The oak timbers are probably 14th century. The Crown Inn (Greene King), opposite Chestnut and Pig Poke cottages, has several real ales and home cooked food. At the time of writing, it has just changed tenant and things are a bit chaotic.



At the year of this revision (2011), the Crown Inn is still closed. If you started the walk in Alfold and have a car, the "Sir Roger Tichborne" at Alfold Bars is only 700m south on the main road. It is open all day every day and has a good lunchtime menu.

Leg 3: Alfold to Hogwood 4½ km=3 miles



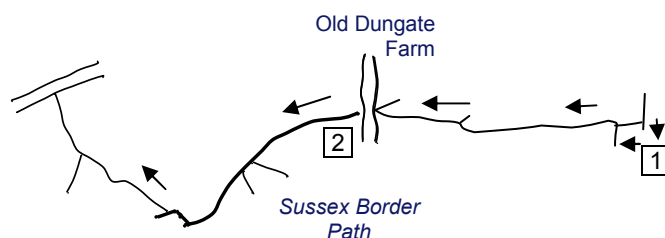
- 1 Walk back the way you came, either through the churchyard or down the lane, and turn **left** just after *Rectory Cottage* on a track by a sign for Alfold Cemetery. Keep to the left through the cemetery, go through a kissing gate in the corner, over a stile and down a grassy strip. *The South Downs are*

visible ahead on a good day. Go over a stile and straight over a small meadow heading just to the right of the farm ahead. The path goes over a bridge and stile and up the left hand side of the horse meadow. At the end, bear slightly right and go over two driveways, over a stile in the wooden fence and turn **left** on a horse exercise track.

- 2 Where the horse track curves right, go straight on over a stile in the corner and **half right** across the meadow to a metal gate in the opposite corner. Go across the next field in the same direction, through a gate, across a bridleway by a 4-way fingerpost and along and round the right hand side of the field. Go over a stile in the corner and across the centre of the next field. Go over yet another stile and straight ahead through a metal gate by a lake. Go over a footbridge and up to a stile and a large wooden bridge over the canal after which you turn **left** along the canal side.
- 3 Once again, you are on the Wey-Arun Canal. Go past a footpath sign on the right and another milestone indicating *Wey 11½ miles, Arun 11½ miles*. At a 4-way fingerpost with a major crossing of tracks, turn **right**. You are now on the Sussex Border Path (SBP). *The Sussex Border Path runs from Rye in the east to Emsworth in the west, with another section from East Grinstead down to near Brighton. It passes through some of the most remote and peaceful parts of Southern England.* Go over a bridge and stile and keep to the left side of a small meadow, then onwards between fields and woodland and through a gate. Soon there are boards over a muddy area and you have woodland on the left which in spring is full of bluebells. Eventually you approach a large modern house on the left with simulated cows. Follow the fence round right and, at a signpost, turn **left** again, staying on the SBP. Just after a swing-gate, at a T-junction, turn **right** on a track.
- 4 In 100m, at a Forestry Commission sign, leave the SBP by turning **left** on an unmarked path which immediately curves right, at first going parallel to the track you were on. You are now in the beautiful Hogwood in part of West Sussex. Stay on the main path at all times as it winds left and right. After some distance, you pass a marker post on the right with arrows, just before the path enters an area of tall forest trees.

Decision point. If are doing only the shorter **Eastern Loop**, skip to near the end of this document and follow the **Alfold Shortcut**. If you are doing the full walk, continue with the next section.

Leg 4: Hogwood to Tugley Wood 4 km=2 ½ miles

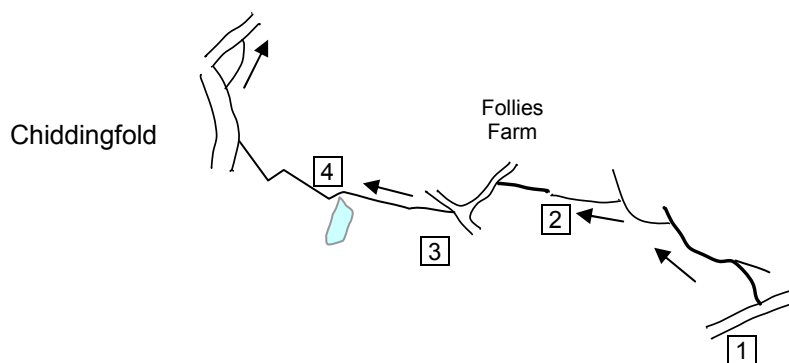


- 1 Turn **left** at the marker post, thus rejoining the SBP. In 50m, at a post with a yellow arrow, turn **right**, still on the SBP, on a narrow woodland path. In 200m, the path reaches a fingerpost. Ignore the fingerpost and continue on the path as it bends round to the right. In a few metres, turn **left** again with the path, still on the SBP. The path now follows an attractive route, always roughly straight on. On two occasions, the path descends to cross a small

wooden bridge and rises quite steeply on the other side. Eventually, at a post with yellow arrows, keep straight ahead. As you near a field ahead, two fingerposts point you left and then right. Cross a stile into a dairy pasture and follow the hedge on your right, heading for *Old Dungate Farm* ahead. On reaching the farm, follow the track out to a road.

- 2 Cross straight over to an enclosed footpath next to *Primrose View*. Go past houses and, at a junction and a footpath sign, keep straight ahead on a residential track. Continue between houses and gardens and ignore two signposted footpaths on the left. The path goes through a gate to run alongside a meadow on the left. At a metal gate with a *private* sign, turn **right** with the path but continue into the wood at a fingerpost, thus leaving the SBP which turns left again. Follow the main path through Fisherlane Wood, faithfully observing the blue arrows and therefore turning **left** at one T-junction and later veering **right** at another wherever the blue arrows indicate. When the path comes to a T-junction with a wide forestry track, turn **right**. The track leads in about 450m to a road.

Leg 5: Tugley Wood to Follies Farm & Chiddingfold 4 km=2 ½ miles



- 1 Cross straight over the road through a barrier into Tugley Wood. Stay on the main broad forestry path as it curves right and left and, 450m later, curves right again. About 200m after this second right curve, you need to look out for a footpath sign (a yellow arrow) on the left. Don't miss this! Fork **left** on this narrow footpath which has been rutted in part by vehicles. In about 100m, the path comes to a T-junction indicated by a post with yellow arrows pointing left and right. Turn **left** here on a path that was once grassy and marshy but is now very deeply rutted by forestry vehicles. This stretch is tiresome but mercifully short as it eventually runs uphill and reaches a wooden barrier where you continue ahead.
- 2 You now have a fine grassy path between woodland on the left and a meadow on the right and you walk beside the lovely garden of Follies Farm. [Jan 2012: one walker reports two truculent dogs here; please be wary. However, the owners of the property are amiable.] Stay by the fence on the right and continue on the driveway which in spring is fringed with white daffodils. Just before a cattle grid, fork **right**. *This is a pig breeding area and you will notice the tracery on the metal door of a pig killing a partridge with two porkers topping the gate posts.* Proceed on a lovely grass strip with a new wooden gate on each side towards a small house, then straight ahead through another gate to a road where you turn **left**.
- 3 At a T-junction with another road, go straight on up an imposing drive for *Old Pickhurst*. Before the gate posts, go over grass and a stile on the **right** and alongside a meadow. The path veers right by a metal gate through a fee-range area for partridges and, at a magical spot, crosses a bridge over a weir by a lake whose surface sometimes seems to boil with ducks. Go up steps to a stile and

path is enclosed between wire fences. It goes over another bridge and bends right over a bridge and stile into a meadow.

- 2 Keep to the right-hand side of the pasture next to a stream and where the stream rounds a corner keep straight ahead to a stile on the other side. Go along the right-hand side of the next meadow. In the corner, go over a stile and straight on through the wood of young birches. Soon your path runs beside a meadow on your left and, as you go over a stile, the beautiful large timbered house *Howicks* comes into view. The path goes beside a fence of the house. At the end, continue by a metal gate to meet a lane. Turn **right** on the lane.

Now rejoin the main walk at **Leg 2** section **2**.

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Getting there

To get to Chiddingfold, if coming from the London area, take the A3 through Guildford. Turn off at Milford and take the A283 Petworth road. There is plenty of parking on the south east side of the green at Chiddingfold. Sidney Wood car park is an alternative start.

To get to Alfold, if coming from London, take the A281 from Guildford and fork right at Alfold Crossways onto the B2131. Park on the roadside in the village.

