



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

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Refreshments: Chiddingfold

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

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Two villages, long woodland trails, canal

In Brief

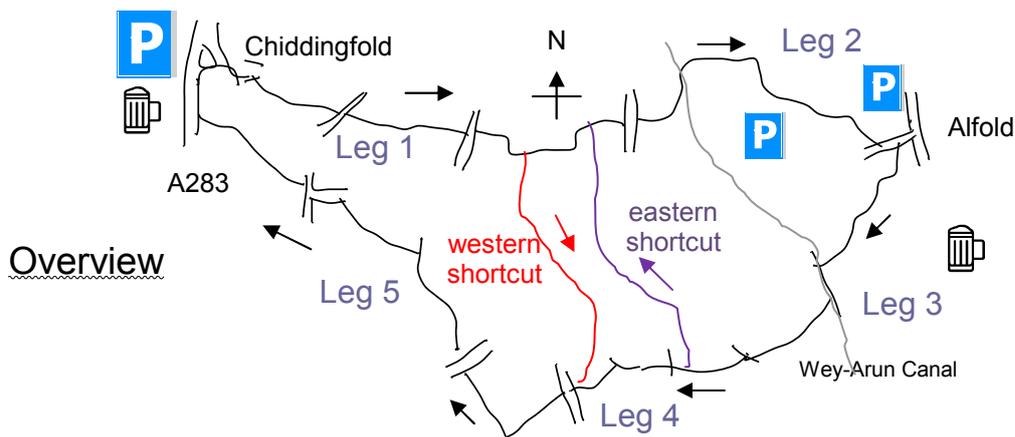
This is a circular walk in dense, varied countryside between two villages. The villages differ from each other but not in their charm. The country between them is remarkable. There is almost no road walking. You will see fine houses, magical woodland glades, beautiful wild forest and residual parts of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



The **full walk** begins in **Chiddingfold (postcode GU8 4TX)** or **Alfold (postcode GU6 8ET)**. But, now that the pub in Alfold has closed, it may be better to start in **Alfold** with lunch in Chiddingfold, where there is a good choice of refreshment, and with a shorter return leg. This walk is also 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). For full details see the end of this document → **Getting There**.

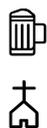


This is a wealden walk so in winter some short muddy sections are inevitable but most can easily be hopped over. So, except after a long dry spell, boots are essential. A stick is recommended. This walk should be ok for a fit dog. There are no nettles or briars to speak of.



Overview

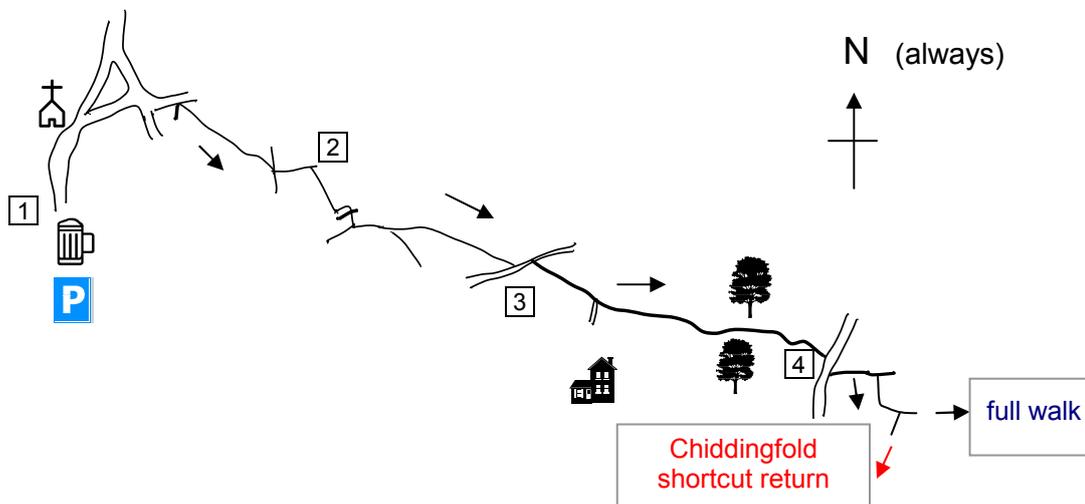
The Walk



There is a shop at Chiddingfold and the Crown Inn (founded 1250) and the Swan Inn serve 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

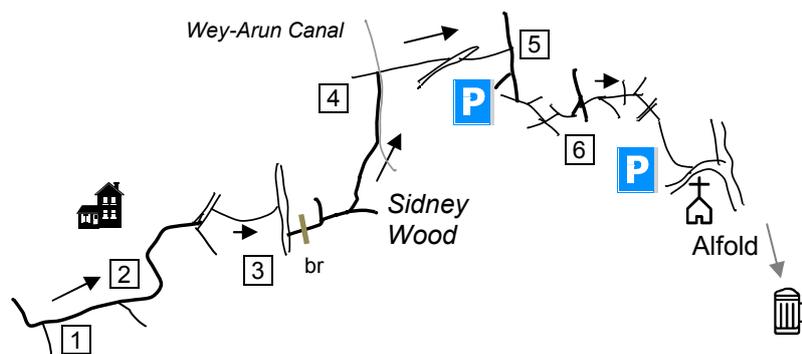


- 1 Walk along the right-hand side of the Green away from the church, *Crown Inn* and shop, past some fine houses, to the far corner. Turn **right** and immediately **left** up Pockford Road, past the Post Office, *Pound, Autumn, Spring and Rose Cottages*. Opposite *Solars*, go over a stile on the **right** 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, ignore the path ahead across the meadow and turn instead immediately **left** alongside the hedge. Turn **right** round the corner of the meadow, soon going downhill.
- 2 At the bottom corner, turn **left** on a path into woodland, **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. 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 signposted bridleway next to the entrance to *Dunsfold Ryse*, using the small wooden gate, and go straight ahead on the track. The track runs for some distance, becoming grassy, going over a stream and passing the drive to *Dunsfold Ryse* by a pond on the right, after which it becomes a grassy again. Avoid a gate into a meadow on your right and continue ahead through a large wooden gate into the vast, spectacular area of protected forest of Lagfold Copse. After a long straight stretch between tall trees, keeping straight ahead at a junction of paths, go through two wooden gates either side of a path between gardens and turn **right** on a road beside imposing *Dunsfold House*.

- 4 In 120m, opposite *Keystone House*, turn **left** onto a tree-lined driveway for *Burningfold Manor*. In 100m, at a fingerpost, 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 only 30m, 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 your left. The track crosses a stream, passing a polo pitch, curves left and right, and goes past farm buildings and cottages. Just after *Howicks*, ignore a footpath on your right.

The Eastern Loop re-joins the main walks here.

- 2 In 120m, after *Hurlands*, 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, go through a double wooden gate and keep dead straight across the next meadow. [2013: there is building work in progress; the situation may change.] You reach a [2013: redundant] 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. Keep to the left side, to reach a road. Turn **right** on the road.

- 3 In 90m, past *Sprunks Cottage*, take a footpath on the **left** through a swing-gate. This wide 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 short 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, incidentally joining the Wey-South long-distance path. At a marker post, keep to the canalside. You pass two land bridges and a milestone showing the distance to those two rivers. Where you eventually reach a T-junction with a metal gate, turn **right** on it.

- 4 Continue on the path, immediately passing another metal gate. Soon, a field and house come into view over on your right. *Fir Tree Copse* on your left is a nature reserve carpeted in spring by bluebells, but it is not on this route. Where your path meets a diagonally crossing bridleway just before a tarmac drive, veer **left** on it. The path runs parallel to the drive on your right

and soon merges with it. Now cross straight over the drive and take a signposted bridleway which runs parallel the drive, this time with the drive on your left. The path runs for a good 100m close to the drive, then gradually diverges from it and eventually reaches a T-junction with a broad track near the Sidney Wood car park. Turn **right** on this track.



5 Stay on the main track past a metal barrier ahead and, in 30m, ignore a small path on your left. The track curves gently right and straightens. Here, about 150m after the barrier, turn **left** on a narrow but clear path that crosses the track diagonally. (The right-hand path leads through trees to the far end of the car park.) In 50m, fork **right** with the main path. Continue another 250m, ignoring a junction at a marker post, to reach a T-junction. Turn **left** here 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 footpath by a yellow marker, just to the right of a sign for the *Springbok Estate*.

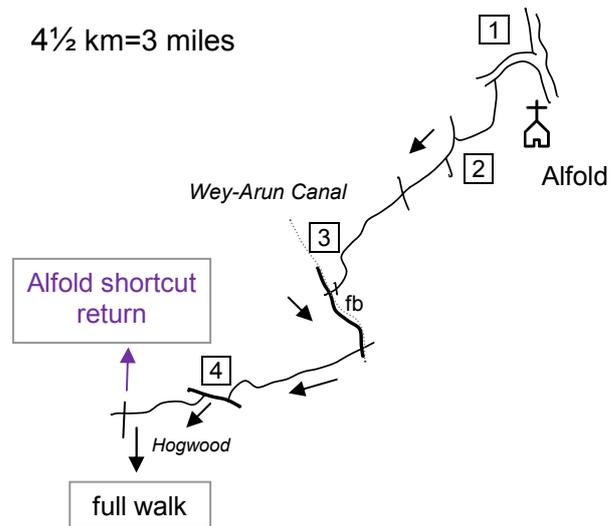
6 In just over 100m, fork **left** to a modern swing-gate into a meadow ahead. Stay on the left side of the meadow, cross a track via two more gates and cross the centre of the next meadow. Going through a gate into another meadow, turn **right** to a gate visible ahead in a fence. Cross a farm driveway through a second gate. Walk straight ahead along the next meadow lengthwise with the farm buildings on your right until you see a stile on the **left** just before a jutting corner. Cross the stile, going over a bridge into a small field. Keep to the right and go over another rickety stile to an enclosed footpath. This leads, via an unneeded stile, to a road. Turn **left** on the road. Ignore the first footpath right but, just after *Rectory Cottage*, turn **right** into the main churchyard of Alfold church. *A visit to this ancient church is not to be missed.* 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.



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. (See the walk in this series "Rudgwick, the Canal and a Watermill" for the interesting story behind this pub.)

Leg 3: Alfold to Hogwood 4½ km=3 miles



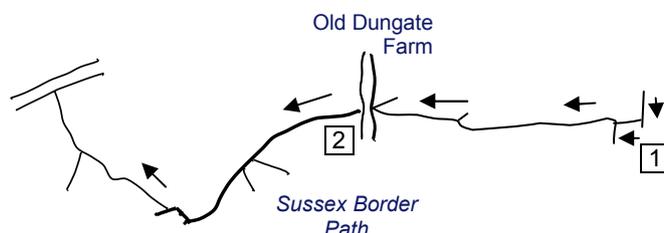
- 1 Walk back the way you came, either through the churchyard or down the lane, and turn **left** just after *Rectory Cottage* on a track by a sign for Alfold Cemetery. Keep to the left through the cemetery, go over a stile and down a grassy strip. *The South Downs are visible ahead on a good day.* Go 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 two horse meadows. 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 diagonally **right** across the meadow to a metal farm gate in the opposite corner. Go across the next field in the same direction and, at the other side, go through a small wooden gate. Cross a bridleway by a 4-way fingerpost, go through another small wooden gate and keep along the right hand side of the next field which curves round left. Go through a small wooden gate in the corner and across the centre of the next field along a grassy strip. Go through yet another small wooden gate and straight ahead through a metal gate by a lake. Go over a small footbridge and up to a stile and a large wooden bridge over the canal. 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 distances to the rivers. 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 over the River Lox and a stile and cross straight over a narrow 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 wide 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



near 1 km, after a plantation on your left and just before the path enters an area of tall forest trees, you pass a marker post on the right with arrows.

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

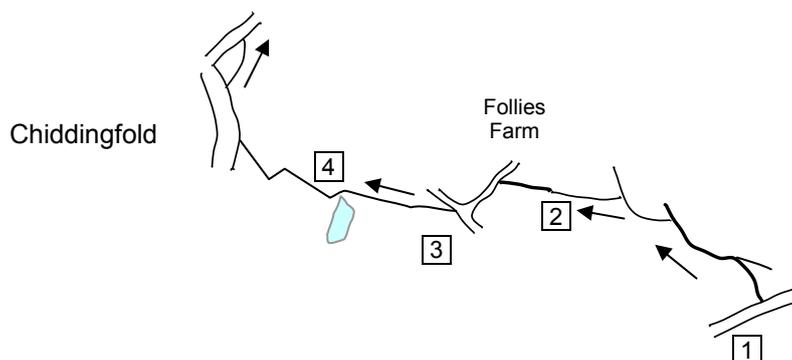


- 1 Turn **left** at the marker post, thus rejoining the SBP, going past tall pines. In 50m, at a post with a yellow arrow, turn **right**, still on the SBP, on a narrow woodland path. In 200m, the path reaches a fingerpost. Ignore the fingerpost and continue on the path as it bends round to the right. 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, turn **left** and follow the track out to a road.

[The Western Loop re-joins the main walk here.](#)

- 2 Cross straight over to an enclosed bridleway next to *Primrose View*, beside a new fence on your left. Go past houses and, at a junction and a footpath sign, keep straight ahead on a residential track. Continue between houses and gardens, at one point going close to a house on your left along its gravel drive, and ignore two signposted footpaths on the left. The path goes through a small metal gate to run alongside a field on your 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. Keep to the main path through Fisherlane Wood, faithfully observing the blue arrows, as follows. Your path passes a new seat on the right and, in 30m, turns **left** at a T-junction. It immediately bends round **right**. In less than 200m, the path veers **right** on a path coming from your left. Where the path comes to a T-junction with a wide forestry track, turn **right**. The track leads in about 450m to a wooden barrier and a road.

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

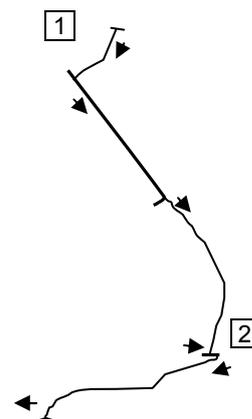


- 1 Cross straight over the road past a metal barrier into Tugley Wood. Stay on the main broad forestry path as it curves quickly right and left and, 450m later, curves right again. About 200m after this second right curve, you need to look out for a footpath sign (a yellow arrow) on the left. *Don't miss this path!* Fork **left** on this narrow footpath. In about 100m, your path comes to a T-junction indicated by a post with yellow arrows pointing left and right. Turn **left** here on a path that is grassy and sometimes marshy. The path takes you over an old brick bridge and eventually runs uphill to reach a wooden barrier. 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. 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 wooden gate at each end, towards a small house, then straight ahead through another gate to a road. Turn **left** on the road.
- 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 tight on the **right** and alongside a sheep pasture. The path veers right by a metal gate through a free-range area for partridges and, at a magical spot, crosses a bridge over a weir, across a stream, by a lake whose surface in some seasons seems to boil with ducks. Go up steps to a stile and then along the right hand side of a meadow. *With the sun probably now in the west, the perfect grass of this long meadow has an intense sheen.*
- 4 In 100m turn **right** over a stile and bear **left** down into a wood, then over another stile back into the open. Your path runs beside two fields on the left, along the top of a ridge. Stay on the left by the fence until just before the end of the second field you see a yellow arrow. Turn **right** here down steps and along the **left** hand side of a sheep meadow, over another stile and on the **right**-hand side of another meadow, approaching the first houses of Chiddingfold. In a short distance, take a path running parallel on the right past back gardens and down to a main road where you turn **right**. Go over a bridge, past the Swan Inn and, just after a butcher's shop, turn **right** through a passage that leads back to the Green where the walk began.

Chiddingfold Shortcut 2 km = 1¼ miles

Take this short cut if you want to do only the **Western Loop** of the walk, omitting the canal and Alfold.

- 1 Turn sharp **right** at the junction. (The turning is a metre or so before the fingerpost.) The path runs between conifers, passes a circular horse exerciser and goes over a stile. The narrow woodland path soon meets a straight stony crossing track. Turn **left** on the track through Tidy's Copse. Where, after 500m, the track bends sharp right, leave it by continuing straight ahead on a narrow woodland path. You are in a beautiful wood dominated by tall oaks. After 200m or so, your path goes over a narrow crossing path and is dominated by young beeches. If it becomes very dense and overgrown, you must persist because this section ends shortly. In 150m, you reach a wide track. Turn **left** on the track, but for only 20m.



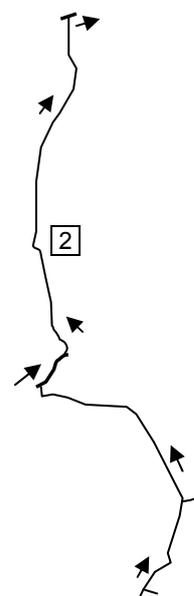
- 2 Turn sharp **right** on a bridleway that crosses diagonally, marked by a fingerpost, before a sign reading *Riding By Permit Only*. The terrain is now wet grass and muddy patches at first that you can skip over. The path soon has a meadow on the left and woodland on the right. This path can be very muddy in parts but there are dry fringes and this section is short. The path joins the Sussex Border Path (SBP) by *Old Dungate Farm* and comes out to a road.

Now re-join the main walk at **Leg 4 section 2**.

Alfold Shortcut 2½ km = 1½ miles

Take this short cut if you want to do only the **Eastern Loop**, omitting the area around Chiddingfold.

- 1 Turn **right** at the marker post into a wood of tall oaks. At a 3-way junction by a farm, turn **left** on an unsigned forest path. You have the farm and then a large meadow on your right. The path turns right and left and goes over a stream. [2013: if you see a sign "temporary prohibition", this only applies to riders.] Finally, you reach some sheds, part of the settlement of Upper Ifold, and come to a T-junction. Turn **right** on a track and immediately **right** again at a 3-way signpost by a fence and follow the drive. After the drive curves right, turn **left** by a yellow arrow over a 3-plank bridge. The path is enclosed between wire fences. It bends right over a long bridge and stile into a meadow.
- 2 Keep to the right-hand side of the pasture next to the stream and where the stream rounds a corner keep straight ahead to a stile on the other side. Go up 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 round 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.

