



Parkland, Priory and Pinewoods Petworth Park, Lodsworth, Bexleyhill

Distance 26km=16 miles, easy but lengthy walking
reducible to 23km=14 miles by omitting the Park

Region: West Sussex

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Refreshments: Easebourne, Henley (☎ see below)

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere)

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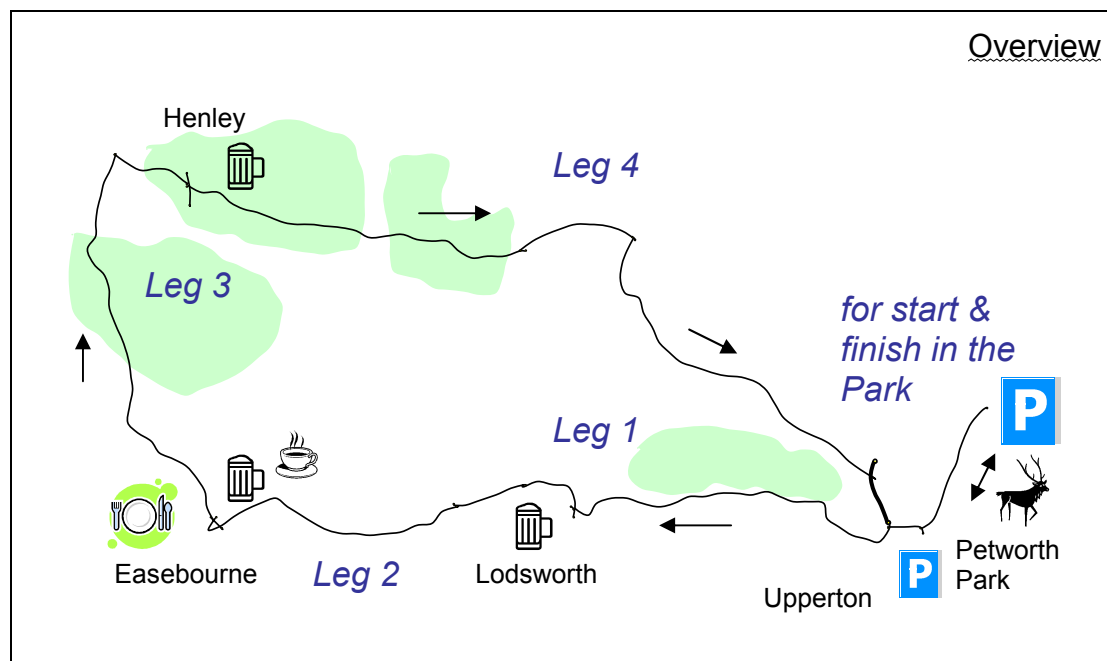
Parkland, villages, woodland, hills

In Brief

This circular walk in West Sussex is a full day's excursion. It is mostly a level walk but its length makes it fairly strenuous, although the beauty of the landscape will lighten your feet. There are fine views all the way, to the South Downs on the way out and to Black Down and the Greensand hills on the way back.



There was some mud when this walk was researched, but that was after weeks of heavy winter rain. Because of the length, comfortable boots are recommended. There are no nettles and the walk should be fine for an athletic dog too.

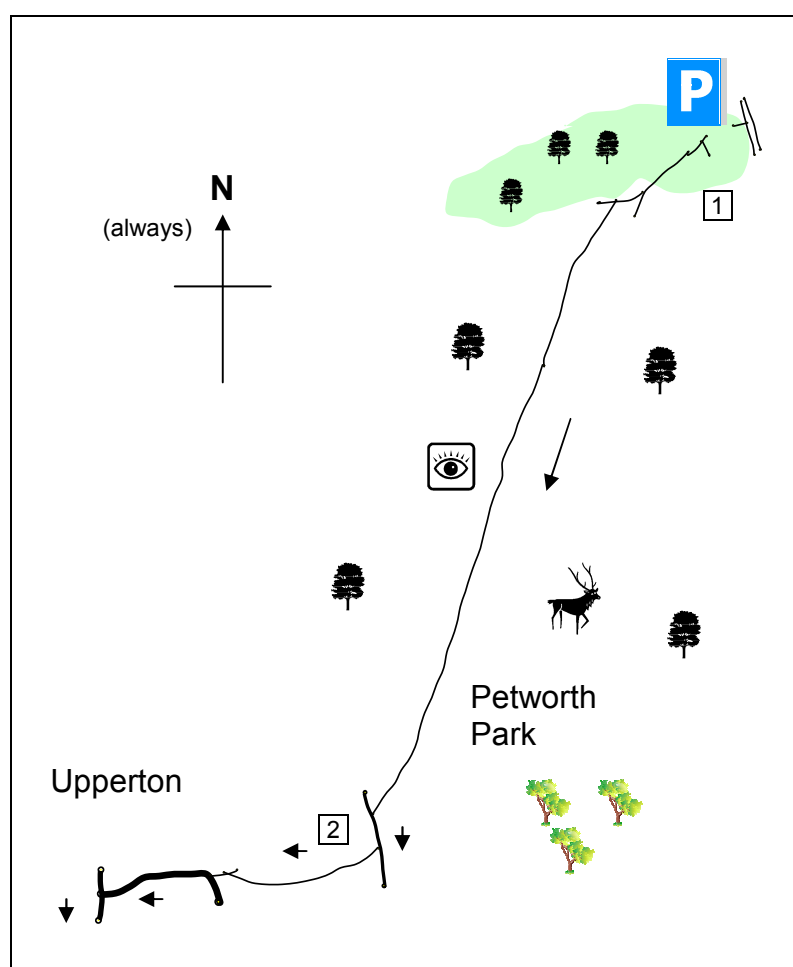


The walk begins at the **north** car park in **Petworth Park** off the A283. The car park closes at dusk - check the times on the noticeboard. So if there is any risk of not returning till it's pitch dark, an alternative start is **Upperton Village**, though this misses a sublime start and finish.

The Walk

Prelude: Escape from the Park 1½km=1 mile

Petworth's 700-acre (283 ha) Park was designed by Capability Brown from 1751 to 1764. He moved thousands of tons of soil and replanted whole clumps of trees to produce the deceptively natural look of parkland receding into countryside for which English gardens are so renowned. The Park inspired several landscapes by JMW Turner. It also contains the oldest and largest herd of fallow deer in England. Petworth House, also National Trust, which is only just visible a mile away, houses a stunning collection of paintings by Van Dyke, Reynolds, Claude Lorrain and others.



- 1 With your back to the entrance to the car park, turn **left** towards the notice board but fork **right** taking the next path to the right of the one that runs past the noticeboard. This path leads uphill out into the open with views ahead across the park. Near the top, at a crossing path, fork **right** keeping near the tree line on your right. When the path reaches the top near a seat, fork **left**, leaving the path that runs close to the tree line and heading down a grassy path in the direction of the line of pines that fringe the Park in the distance. The path runs across the open parkland crossing a stream and two wider

- 3 On the other side, the path goes over a stile, along an enclosed path, over two more stiles and down to a lane. Turn **left** on the lane. Shortly, just before *Goldways*, turn **right** on a bridleway. The bridleway bends sharply **left** and after this you should turn **right** with the main bridleway avoiding a path going straight on. At a junction of paths, bear left to cross Eel Bridge over the River Lod, a tributary of the River Rother. Continue on the bridleway towards the houses of Lodsworth, avoiding a footpath right. At a T-junction at the top, turn **left** to a lane and turn **left** on the lane past the immaculate house at *St Peter's Well* to St Peter's Church.

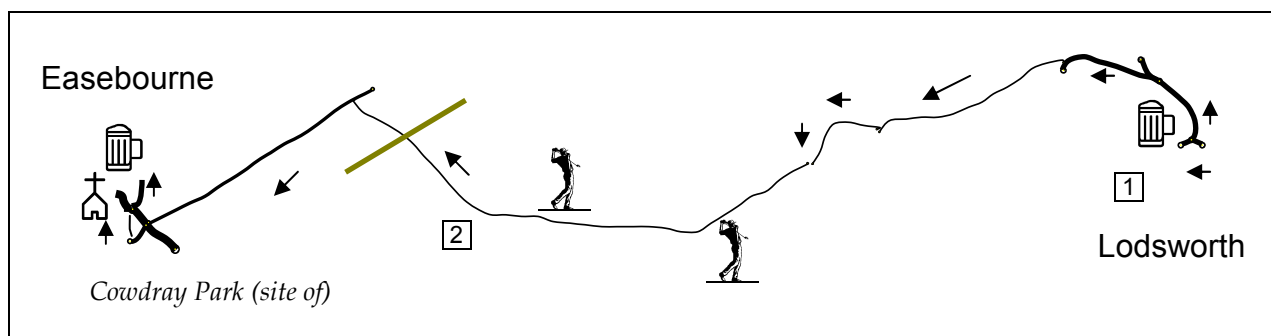
The spring at St Peter's Well was a place of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages, supposedly a cure for eye diseases. The church of St Peter with its fine old tower is unfortunately usually locked but the setting is memorable.

Continue along the lane to a T-junction opposite some fine regency houses. At the corner is the past residence of *E.H. Shepard*, the illustrator of *Winnie-the-Pooh*. The adventurer *Ranulph Fiennes* and *Barbara Ward*, economist and author of "*Only One Earth*", are also present and past residents of Lodsworth.



Turn **right** on the main road. At the little green, fork **left** signposted *Village Hall* by the *Hollist Arms*, a fairly standard pub.

Leg 2: Lodsworth to Easebourne 4km=2½ miles



- 1 Follow the lane, ignoring turnings off, until it bends left at *Heath End Farm*. Leave the lane here by keeping ahead on a bridleway. Where the bridleway curves left and comes to a 3-way fingerpost, turn **right** on a footpath across the green space of Cowdray Park. (In fact there is a choice of two possible right turns each with its own sign. The second is easier.) At the end of the field, turn left around it and shortly, at a fingerpost, fork **right** over a stile and go diagonally on a clear path across the parkland. The path skirts a pond on your right and goes through a swing gate. Continue in the same direction, slightly uphill, ignoring a path left and a path right that runs beside the fence. Copious mistletoe is evident in the treetops here.
- 2 As you near the top, ignore a path forking left at a fingerpost. Whilst watching out for golf balls, pass another fingerpost at the top of the green by links. Pass another fingerpost and follow the path down into trees. Go by another fingerpost and leave the golfers' path by escaping across the grass where indicated by yet another fingerpost. The path goes near a bell on the left which should *not* be touched, through a gate and across a field. At the bottom you come to a crossing path in a line of trees. This path is known as *The Race*. Turn **left** here ignoring the gate ahead. Eventually you come to the main road just outside the village of Easebourne.

Easebourne, pronounced “Ezborn” or “Ezbun”, is a modest village and parish dominated by the great Priory and the remains of Cowdray House. Famous residents include Billie Piper and Laurence Fox. It is well-known locally for its fine golf course and its polo ground (in common with its larger neighbour Midhurst). The Augustinian Priory was founded in the 1200s by the local de Bohun family. The Tudor Cowdray House was built in the early 1500s but was devastated by fire in 1793 and has not been occupied since then.

Cross the road and walk into the grounds of the Priory where there is a tea room, a small diversion a little further along, open 9-5. Turn **right** before the Priory building into the churchyard of St Mary.

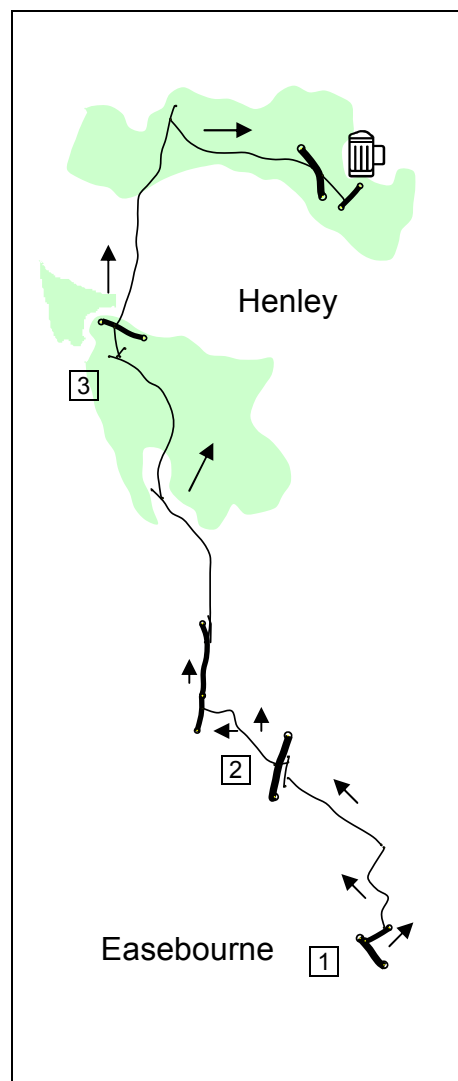
The church was well restored in Victorian times. It is notable for the fine carved memorials in the south east corner. One group is of the recumbent Sir Anthony Browne, died 1592, alongside his two noble wives Jane Ratcliffe and Magdalen Dacre. Another group is of the grieving William and Elizabeth Poyntz. Their two sons William and Courtney were boating in 1815 off Bognor with their father. Elizabeth reputedly had a superstitious dread of water and had stayed at home and was watching from the window with her three daughters when a sudden squall capsized the boat and the two boys drowned.

Exit via the lych gate and cross the road again. *The village store is at hand but is closed weekends from Saturday lunchtime.* Go up Easebourne Street, passing a snug little pub the *White Horse* (Greene King) which offers ‘quality home-cooked food’.



Leg 3: Easebourne to Henley 5km=3 miles

- 1 Just after the *White Horse*, turn **left** on an unmarked footpath. Follow it as it bends right round some houses and at the end turn **left** on a track beside a cemetery. After about 100m, don't miss a sign where the path zigzags **right-left** into a field and turns **right** around it. At a fingerpost before wires, turn **left**. The path leads to a stile and down steps to a wide track. Turn **right** on the track for just a few paces. Just before a white cottage, turn sharp **left** and scramble up a bank to the main road, the A286.
- 2 Cross the road very carefully to a lane opposite, marked as a footpath. By the entrance to Whittlers Farm, go over a stile into a meadow and immediately ascend the grassy slope on the **left**. The path runs parallel to the drive and past the buildings of the Farm. At the far side, go over a stile and down steps to a farm lane. Turn **right** on the lane. You pass some cottages and, about 100m after the last of them, you come to a waymarker post. Fork **right** here and follow the lovely grassy path. There are two waymarkers now which you must not miss, since it is easy to get distracted by the beauty all around. Just past the low brick shed on the right, there is a fingerpost pointing you on a **left** fork. Not long after, there is a waymarker post directing you on a **right** fork. The path leads up through coppices and finally reaches a junction with a gate on the right.

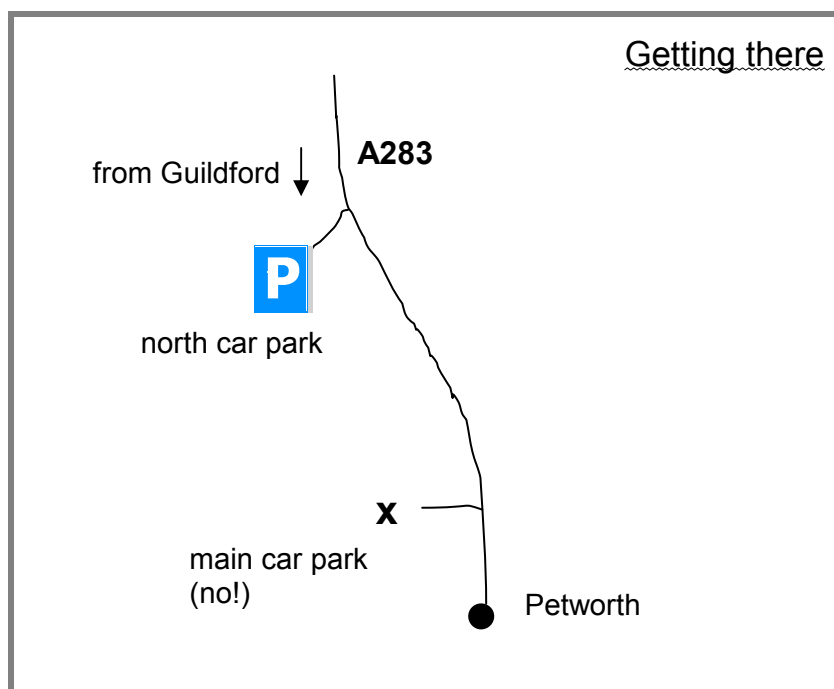


Postlude: Return through the Park 1½km = 1 mile

Refer to the first mini-map, reversing the arrows. Go through the village and turn **left** at the entrance to the same gate by which you entered the village at the start of the walk. Go down on an indistinct path to meet a wide track. Turn **left** on the track and shortly fork **right**, gradually returning to the distant line of trees and the car park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: If you know Petworth House, the **north** car park in Petworth Park is **not** the car park near the house but the one a good mile north, just off the A283. To get there from the north (Surrey or London) side, take the A283 through Milford and Chiddingfold. About 3 miles (5 km) after Northchapel, you go under high-tension grid lines. The car park is about ½ mile (900m) further, on the right. Alternative car parking is in Lodsworth (opposite St Peters Well) and Easebourne.



By bus/train: Stagecoach Worthing–Midhurst (passing Pulborough station) or Compass Horsham–Petworth (passing Horsham station), followed by a different crossing of the Park.

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