



Petworth Park, Lodsworth, Bexleyhill Parkland, Priory and Pinewoods

Distance: 26 km=16 miles (23 km=14 miles without the Park)
or 2 walks of 14½ km=9 miles
and 16 km=10 miles (13 km=8 miles without the Park)

easy walking

Region: West Sussex

Date written: 4-apr-2010

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Last update: 29-jul-2017

Refreshments: Easebourne, Henley (☎ see below)

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere)

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

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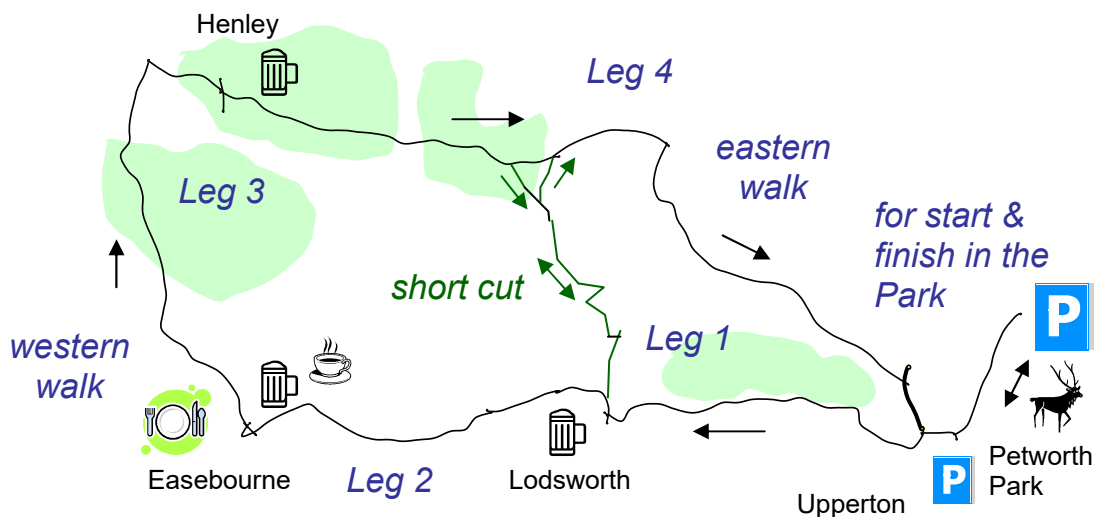
Parkland, villages, woodland, hills

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.

The walk can be divided into two shorter walks of 10 (or 8) and 9 miles.

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 few nettles and the walk should be fine for an athletic dog too.



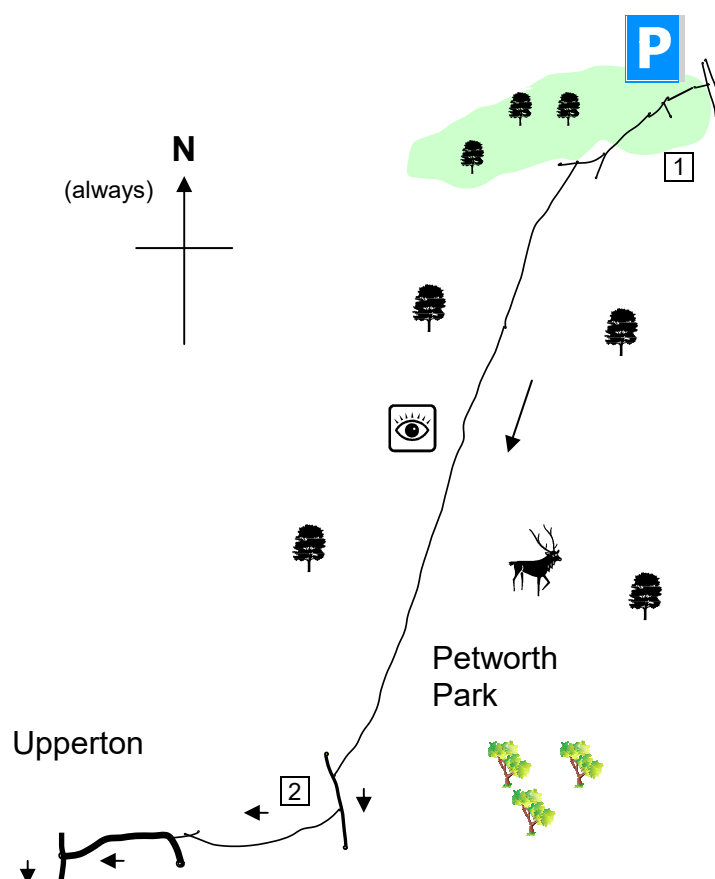
The **main walk** and the **Eastern Walk** begin at the **north** car park in **Petworth Park** off the A283, nearest **postcode GU28 9LS**, grid ref SU 965 239. The car park opens at 8 am and closes at dusk: re-check these times on the noticeboard. The cost to non-NT members is £3 (2015). So if there is any risk of not returning till it's pitch dark, an alternative start is **Upperton Village**, postcode **GU28 9BG**, though this misses a sublime start and finish.

If you are only doing the shorter **Western Walk**, the starting point is the village of **Easebourne**, postcode **GU29 0AJ**. Park in the car park near the farm shop and café, or in a side street. Take Easebourne Street, opposite the church, going past the *White Horse*, and begin the walk at **Leg 3**.

The Walk

Prelude: Escape from the Park 1½ km=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.



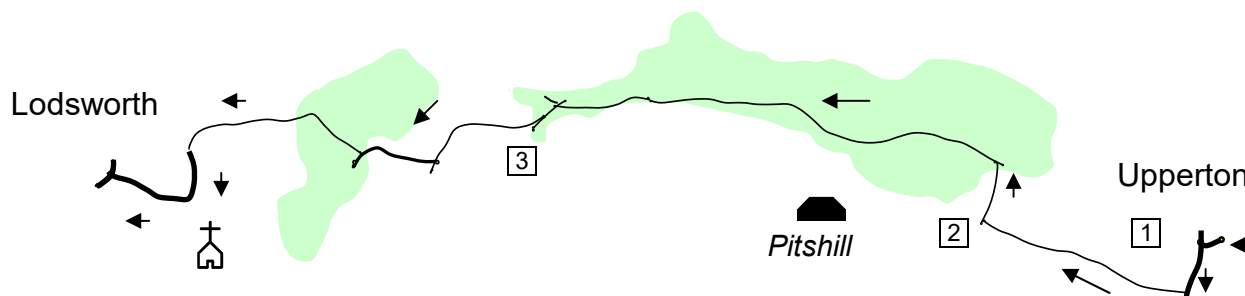
- 1 Take the the exit directly opposite the car park entrance and take the path bearing **left** uphill. This path leads out into the open with views ahead across the park. Near the top, at a crossing path, fork **right** keeping near the tree line on your right. When the path reaches the top near a 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 tracks and after some distance reaches almost to the far side of the Park until it comes to a T-junction with a wide track. Turn **left** on this track.

- After about 250m, you will see up on your right the corner of a fence and some of the houses of Upperton at the end of a triangular corner of the Park. Before you reach the fence corner, turn **right** on any convenient path (there are several possible paths here) that lead up towards the houses. As you approach the narrow point of the triangle you will see a gate in the wire fence. Go through the gate and, a few metres further, go **right** through a tall gate in the fence. This is Petworth Park's Upperton Gate. *Note that you are on part of the long-distance path known as the Serpent Trail.* It leads out to a driveway. Turn **left** on the drive, up to the road. Turn **right** on the road into Upperton village.

The walk may begin and end at Upperton, omitting Petworth Park. In this case, begin here with [Leg 1](#).

Leg 1: Upperton to Lodsworth 4 km=2½ miles



- At a T-junction in the village, leave the road by turning **left** opposite Home Farm House onto a minor lane. In about 100m, turn **right** by a signpost at Woodgers. The path leads down an avenue of orchard trees. *There are magnificent views left to the South Downs.* The path zigzags **right** and **left** through a gate and runs along the top of a wonderful south-facing sloping vineyard. At the corner, cross a lane via two gates and continue to a T-junction. You now have a fine view ahead of Pitshill House.

Pitshill was built on this beautiful site by William Mitford of Petworth in 1760 and was completed by his son in 1794. It houses a rare copy of the Threnodia Carolina, Sir Thomas Herbert's account of the last years of Charles I. The Pitshill estate and house are the subject of an urgent campaign for restoration.

- Turn **right** at the T-junction, passing on the left the buildings of the Pitshill Stud with their little tower and weather-vane. The path bends left where you are joined by a path from the right. Bear **left** on the track and continue between upright posts. Keep to the higher path, avoiding a path forking right downhill. You are now walking with the Pitshill estate up on the left and the woodlands falling away to your right with extensive views. *In late spring the landscape here (indeed for much of this walk) is carpeted with bluebells.* After some distance on this high path, you are eventually met by a track coming in from the right. Turn **left** on the track, ignoring a stile on the opposite side. In just 50m, by a metal gate and a fingerpost, avoid the gate and go **right**, through a swing-gate in a wooden fence, into a meadow. Go through the

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.

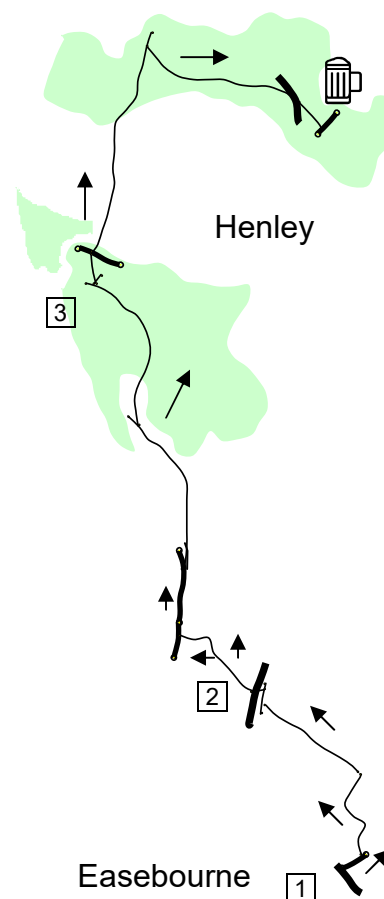
The church was well restored in Victorian times. It is notable for the fine carved memorials in the south east corner. One group is of the recumbent Sir Anthony Browne, died 1592, alongside his two noble wives Jane Ratcliffe and Magdalen Dacre. Another group is of the grieving William and Elizabeth Poyntz. 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 lichgate 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 5 km=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. (*The next stage coincides with another walk in this series – see the Titty Hill, Rother Valley, Henley walk.*)

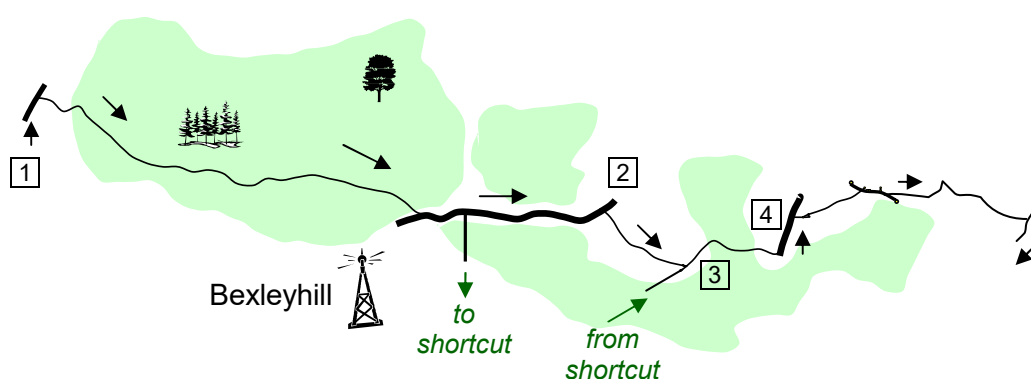
- 3 Ignore the path through the gate and take a much narrower path leading towards the left side of the house up ahead. This leads up to a road. Cross the road and take a footpath opposite. Soon, cross a farm track via two stiles. *Bluebells are abundant here in late spring.* The path gradually sinks to a ravine with tall beeches and finally reaches the hamlet of Verdley Edge. Go down the track through the hamlet but in just a few paces turn sharp **right** at a fingerpost. *The sign tells you that you are now on the Serpent Trail, a long-distance path.* After some distance, at a fingerpost, fork left, thus leaving the Serpent Trail. Follow the signs down gradually reaching the main road. Cross the road carefully and go down a tarmac track opposite, to the right of a bus stop, into the picturesque hamlet of Henley. When you meet the road at the bottom, turn **left**, reaching the *Duke of Cumberland*.



There is a fuller description of Henley and its pub in another walk in this series "Woolbeding Common & Temple of the Winds". Note that the Duke of Cumberland, being so popular, is often fully booked for lunch and it is advisable to make a telephone reservation on 01428 652280.



Leg 4: Henley to Upperton 8½ km=5½ miles



- 1 Opposite the *Duke of Cumberland*, by a 'phone box, turn **right** on a footpath, marked as the Serpent Trail. Just past *Yew Tree Cottage*, turn **left** as indicated by a fingerpost. The footpath takes you over a stream via a two-plank bridge whereupon a forestry tracks joins from the left. (*Careful! Some walkers go wrong here.*) From here you need to keep an eye open for those yellow arrows and/or purple Serpent Trail signs, always going in the same (easterly) direction. Nearly 2 km from Henley, the marked path meets a lane. Turn **left** on the lane through



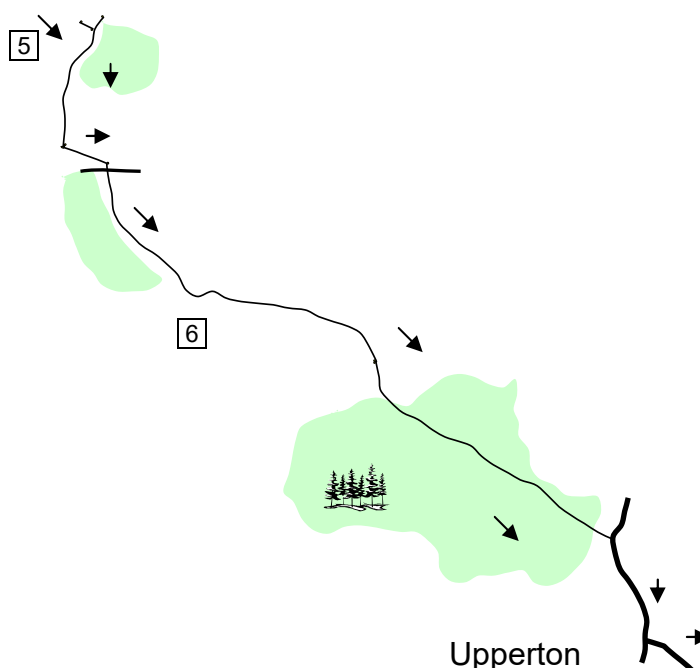
Bexleyhill. *The big relay mast, so visible from afar, is up on your right, unseeable through the trees. At Nightingales, ignore two footpaths right. 40m later on your right is the entrance drive for Tanglewood.*

Decision point. If you are doing the shorter **Western Walk**, skip to near the end of this text and do the **Lodsworth-Lickfold Axis (South)** shortcut. Otherwise ...

- 2 Continue along the road for another 350m. Shortly after a left bend, there is a more open area on your right and you see a small fingerpost, slightly set back from the road on your left. Turn **right** here on a footpath. This pleasant grassy path runs between birch and bracken and, in 400m, reaches a T-junction and a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **left** at the T-junction.

The **Lodsworth-Lickfold Axis (North)** shortcut joins the main walk here.

- 3 After nearly 200m, turn **right** as indicated by blue arrows on a post. Veer **right** towards a house, ignoring a footpath left, and follow the drive to a road. Turn **left** on the road. In 100m, turn **right** over a stile.
- 4 Go along the right-hand side of a meadow. At the first corner, at a fingerpost, ignore a right fork and continue across the centre of the meadow, going over a stile in the process. (*Careful! Some walkers go wrong here.*) The path goes over a tiny stream and a stile and turns right. It then goes left and right around field corners, over a plank bridge and reaches a fingerpost. Here turn **right** by a (redundant) stile and immediately **left**, as indicated, along the left-hand side of a field. At the end, go over a (broken and avoidable) stile and sharp **right** on a track next to woodland called *Dirty Bridge Field*.



- 5 Follow the track over a bridge with little brick pillars and immediately go **left** at a post into a field. Continue along the right-hand side of the field. The footpath goes **left** at the field corner, then **right** on a stony path over a stream, over a farm lane and along the right-hand side of a field. Continue along the right-hand side of the next field, over a stile avoiding a crossing

path, along the right-hand of another field and out to a track via another stile. Turn **left** on the track and **right** before Lodge Farm across a bridge over a very ample stream.

- 6 Just before the fence, go through a swing gate on the **right** and veer **left** alongside the hedge, continuing across the centre of the meadow. The path then curves round the **right**-hand side of the narrow meadow and exits in the corner over a stile and onto a track. Turn **right** on the track. The track becomes a drive and comes out to a rough lane. Turn **left** on the lane and in just 30m turn **right** at a fingerpost on a footpath. This path leads through fine woodland, over streams, becoming steeper as it proceeds. Finally it emerges to the perimeter road of Petworth Park immediately opposite the tower folly near the wall. Turn **right** on the road and follow it into Upperton. (There is no entrance gate nearby.)

Postlude: Return through the Park 1½ km = 1 mile

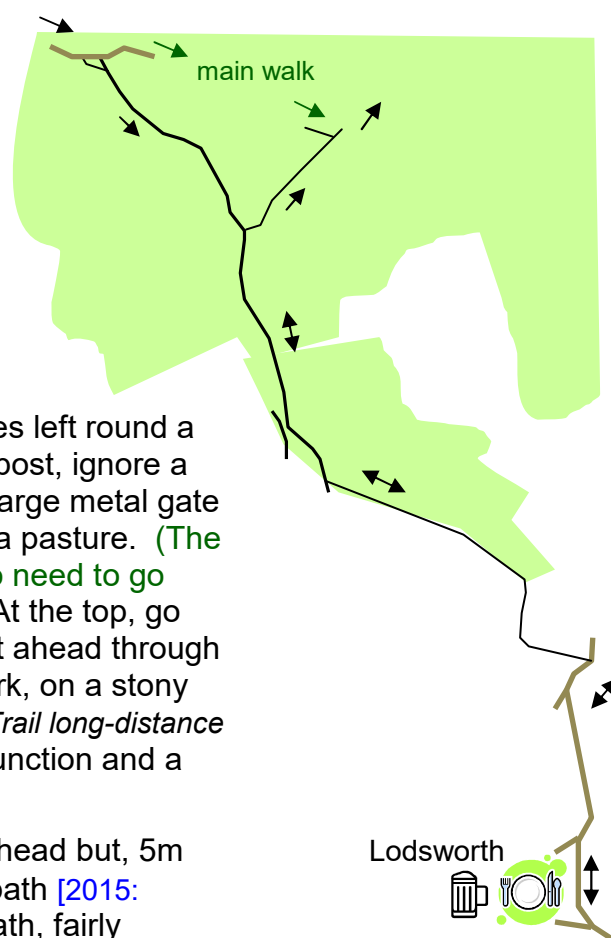
Refer to the first mini-map, reversing the arrows. Go through the village and turn **left** at the entrance to the same gate by which you entered the village at the start of the walk. Go down on an indistinct path to meet a wide track. Turn **left** on the track and shortly fork **right**, gradually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

Lodsworth-Lickfold Axis (North) 3 km = 2 miles

Take this shortcut if you are doing the shorter **Eastern Walk**.

- 1 Continue along the main road in Lodsworth, passing the *Lodsworth Larder*, passing Shepherds Lane on your left. Continue another 400m, where you pass School Lane on your left at the end of the village. Go another 100m and turn **left** on a drive for Redlands Farm, by a fingerpost. Follow the drive and stay on it as it curves right through the farm going through two large metal gates. The drive becomes a wide grassy path that curves left round a meadow and under power lines. At a fingerpost, ignore a right turn. Your path goes through another large metal gate and continues along the right-hand edge of a pasture. (The author passed some docile cattle and felt no need to go round them despite ample room to do so.) At the top, go through a large metal gate and keep straight ahead through woodland, possibly with signs of forestry work, on a stony path uphill. Note that you are on the *Serpent Trail* long-distance footpath. In 150m or so, you approach a T-junction and a fingerpost.

- 2 Do *not* go as far as the wide forestry track ahead but, 5m **before** the track, turn **right** down a narrow path [2015: immediately climbing over a fallen oak]. Your path, fairly straight and level, goes through beautiful mixed woodland.



In 300m or so, you pass three houses and gardens. Only 20m after the last of these houses, look for a fingerpost on

your right. Turn **right** here on a narrow bridleway downhill through bracken. [Care! you need to concentrate over the next section.](#) (The official bridleway forks left through the middle of the bracken; it is now obscured and disused for reasons soon to be clear.) After emerging from the bracken, go another 15m to an apparent fork in the path. Keep **left** at the fork, going through an area with a bank of tree roots about 10m on your right. The official bridleway runs parallel on your left beside the main wood by a ditch and a low bank. Shift **left** to re-join the bridleway. In only about 50m, there are some large fallen tree branches across the path (the reason why the bridleway is disused). Make a wide arc right and left round this obstacle to re-join the bridleway. In another 200m you reach a 3-way fingerpost. Keep straight on.

[Now re-join the main walk at Leg 4 section 3.](#)

Lodsworth-Lickfold Axis (South) 3 km = 2 miles

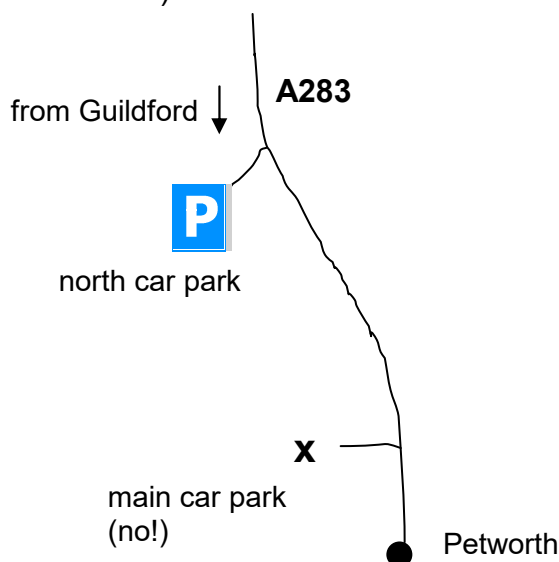
[Take this shortcut if you are doing the shorter **Western Walk**.](#)

- 1 **Same mini-map as North.** Turn **right** into the drive for *Tanglewood*. (Strictly, you should have followed the left-hand fingerpost at *Nightingales*, but the path is choked by balsam weeds.) Follow the drive through woodland, soon enriched by tall beeches. The drive rises and twists and approaches a house. Keep ahead, passing two more houses and gardens. Your route is now a pleasant narrow woodland path. [\[2015: soon you need to climb over a fallen oak.\]](#) 300m or so after the last house, you reach a 4-way junction by a fingerpost. Turn **left** on a bridleway. In 150m or so, you reach an open pasture with good views on your left down to Lodsworth.
- 2 Turn **left** through a large metal gate into the pasture and go down the left-hand side. [\(The author passed some docile cattle and felt no need to go round them despite ample room to do so.\)](#) Just after some power lines, go through a large metal gate and continue on a grassy path. At a fingerpost, ignore a left turn and keep right towards farm buildings. Go through two large metal gates and continue a head on a tarmac drive. At a fingerpost, ignore a footpath on your right and stay on the drive. (The footpath also leads into the village but the path between houses is rather overgrown.) Continue to a road and turn **right** into the village of Lodsworth. In 400m or so, you pass the *Lodsworth Larder* and the *Hollist Arms* pub. Turn sharp **right** after the pub on a lane signposted *Village Hall*.

[Now re-join the main walk at the start of Leg 2.](#)

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.



If you are doing only the **Western Walk**, the start is in **Easebourne** village, reachable on the A286 from Haslemere.

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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