



Marley Common

Distance: 12½ km=8 miles or 8 km=5 miles easy walking

Region: West Sussex

Author: Hautboy *comments please to feedback@fancyfreewalks.org*

Refreshments: Shottermill, after the walk

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere)

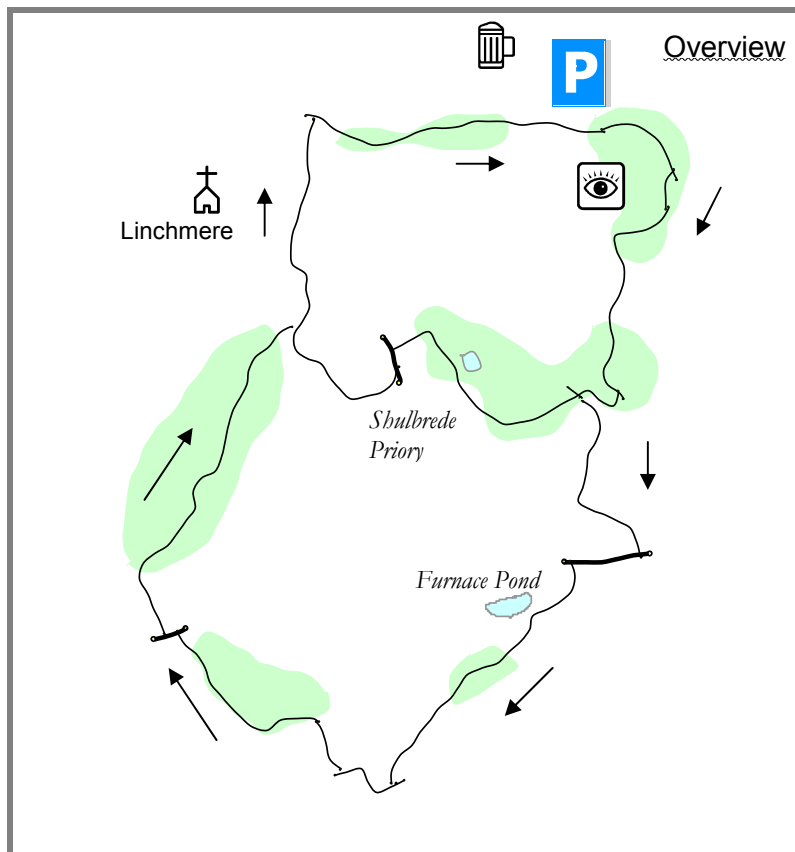
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Woodland, hills, heath

In Brief



This is a peaceful circular walk through the gentle hilly countryside of West Sussex, to the south and west of Haslemere, Surrey. Despite the hilly terrain, the going is easy. There are no towns or even villages directly en route, so you need to take a picnic or eat afterwards in one of the many facilities in Haslemere. There are just a few nettles but no mud for the most part, and the walk seems fine for a dog too. In spring time this walk is thronged by bluebells. This route uses some permissive horse paths across the heights. If you are in a large group, or have doubts, you can bypass that part using only official footpaths.

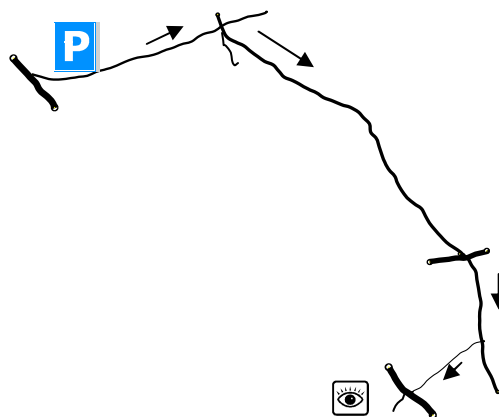


The walk begins at the **Marley Common Car Park** near Haslemere. See **Getting There** → at the end of this text for directions.

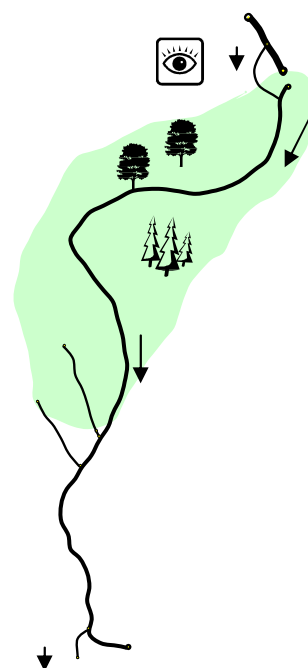
The Walk

Leg 1: Marley Common to the Heights

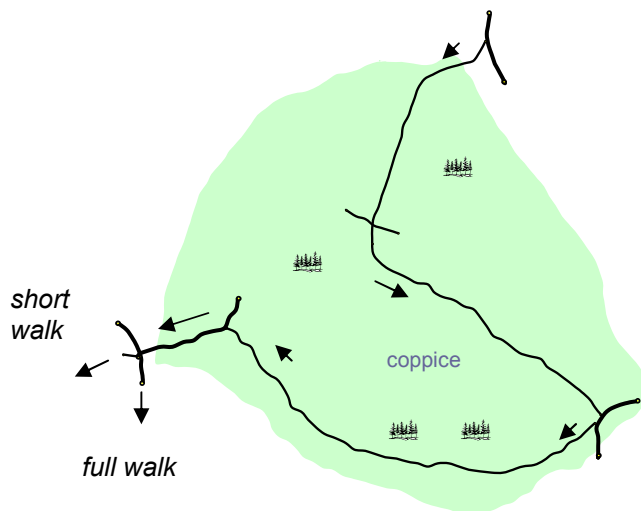
- 1 Go past the noticeboard and through the gate straight ahead (not the one on the left). In less than 100m, you reach a fingerpost. Turn **right** here, immediately avoiding a path forking right. You are on part of the Sussex Border Path. Soon you go over a crossing path, pass a house on your left and approach two wooden gates. Go through the one on the left, cross a driveway and continue on a woodland path. In 50m, turn **right** on a wide path that leads to a lane. Crossing the lane, you reach a small parking area with a really *stunning* view southwards to the terrain you will be covering. Cross the grass, forking **left**.



- 2 Turn **left** in front of a seat from where you can admire the view. Follow the narrow level path along the contour which curves left to meet a wide sunken path. Turn **right** here. Soon, at a 3-way fingerpost, keep straight ahead on the level path. The track now goes through a more open area of coppice (an ancient sustainable way of harvesting trees by cutting them close to the root). *This coppiced area is extensive and you will be passing through it on the return leg.* The path wheels left. Soon, avoid a right turn at a post with a yellow arrow. In 50m there is another junction with a 3-way fingerpost. On the map, an official footpath turns right here and follows the long contour with a left hairpin return stretch. However, the route here goes **straight on** and takes a shorter route on permissive horse paths over the heights where careful walkers are tolerated. In about 200m, at the top of an uphill stretch, you come to a post with a yellow arrow. Turn **right** here uphill, thus leaving the official footpath.



- 3 At the top, go straight ahead over a crossing track. The path goes down initially but then goes uphill again. You reach a T-junction in a more open area. Veer **right** and, in 10m, turn **right** again on a narrow path through the coppice. In 200m, the path wheels **left** downhill onto a wide foresters' path coming down from the right, with fine views ahead. At the bottom of the slope, you come to a junction with a wide track curving off right, a narrow path ahead and an official footpath on the left.

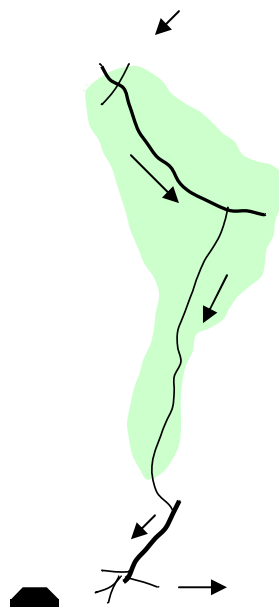


Decision Point

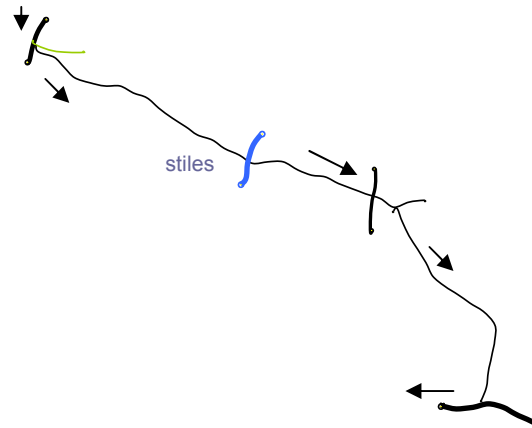
If you would like to do the **shorter** version of this walk, refer to the end of this text, do the *Shulbrede Shortcut* and rejoin the walk further down. The **full walk** continues with the next Leg.

Leg 2: The Heights to Furnace Pond

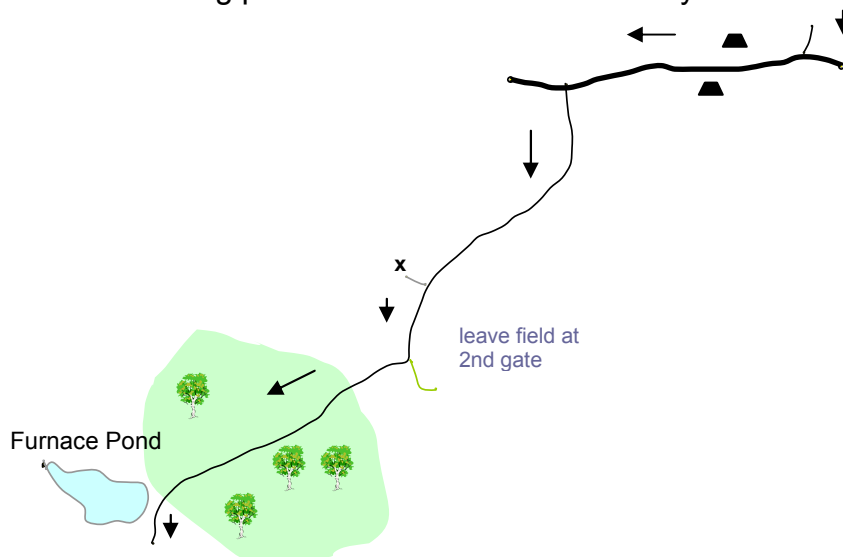
- 1 Turn **left** on the marked footpath. In under 200m, at a 3-way fingerpost, turn **right** downhill. The path runs beside a meadow on the left with Bexleyheath aerial visible in the distance. It crosses a path obliquely and runs close to a hill on your right with tall pines. It descends finally to a wide stony track. Turn **right** on the track which soon reaches *Greenhill House* and its garden and numerous out-buildings. Go over a stile by a metal gate near the house.



- 2 Turn **left** away from the house and garden along a wide strip of land between fences. At the time of writing, this land is clearly under development. Head towards the **right**-hand of two wooden gates at the far end. Keep to the left of that gate and in 10m go over a stile. Continue diagonally across a meadow down to the far corner under a large oak where another footpath joins from the right. Cross a stream via two stiles. Cross the meadow, a stile, a driveway and a stile opposite into another meadow. Fork **right** immediately at a 3-way fingerpost and aim for the far corner where the driveway from the nearby house meets the road, where there is a hidden kissing gate. Exit to the road and turn **right**.



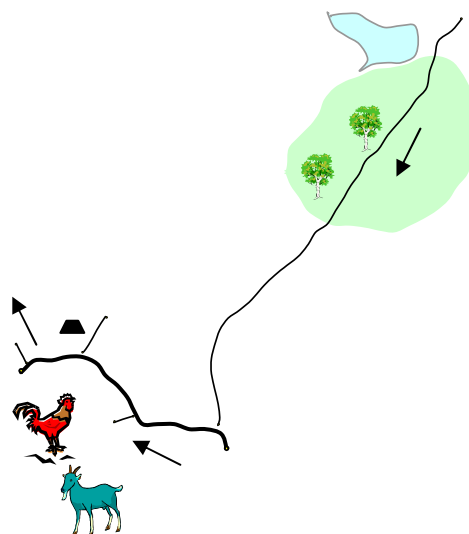
- 3 Go past a duckpond by a fine stone wall and *Highbuilding Farm* which houses a centre where church organs are manufactured. After about 200m of road walking, just after the last semi-detached house, turn **left** opposite a fingerpost and through a metal gate into a large meadow. Keep to the right and pass through two more metal gates. About half way along the side of a meadow, ignore a metal gate down a slope on the right but go through the next metal gate on the **right**, where there is a yellow arrow. This wide path goes over a stream and a crossing path and under wires and finally reaches Furnace Pond.



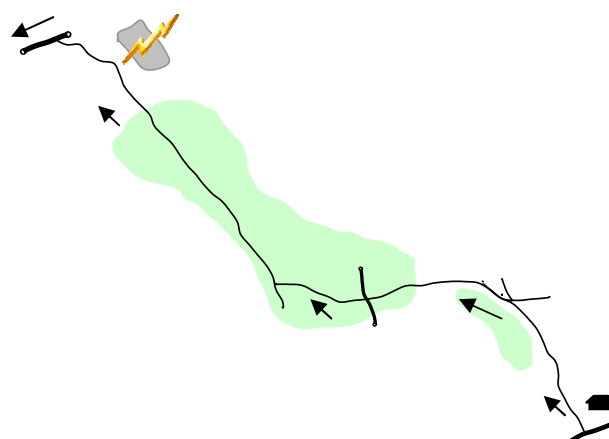
On this side of the pond are the remains of Fernhurst Furnace, some of the best preserved in the Sussex Weald. The iron industry flourished here in the 17th and 18th centuries using local ore, charcoal and water power, before the use of coal moved the iron industry up North. The furnace site was recorded and excavated by a local unit in 1989, and it is the subject of a vigorous preservation campaign to rescue it from erosion. The site holds open days and historical events.

Leg 3: Furnace Pond to Newlands Cottage

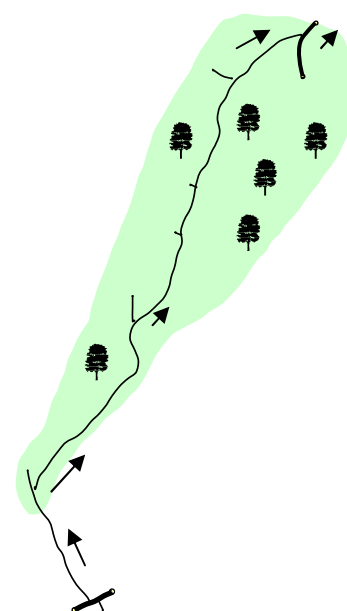
- 1 Bear **left** with the pond on your right. Just after the pond, ignore a left turn at a fingerpost. After a forested area, go through a gate with a wooden barrier and continue along the left-hand side of a long meadow. At the far end, go over a stile and turn **right** on a tarmac driveway. In 100m, ignore a footpath left. (*This is where another walk in this series briefly intersects – see [Woolbeding Common and Temple of the Winds](#).*) At the bottom, where the drive goes over a stream keep straight ahead uphill with a house (*Ingleby*) on your right. *Upper North Farm on the left has goats and free-range chickens.* Just before a gate into the farm, by a pond, turn **right** along the edge of the lawn of the house you just passed.



- 2 Keep to the left-hand side of a flowery meadow and into woodland. In under 100m you come to a crossing track near a fingerpost. Turn **left** here on a track. The path crosses the track under wires, continues on a lovely grassy course, and reaches a T-junction with another path. Turn **right** here. The path follows a fine woodland course beside a bank, passes a huge electricity relay station on the right and comes out to a road. Turn **left** on the road.



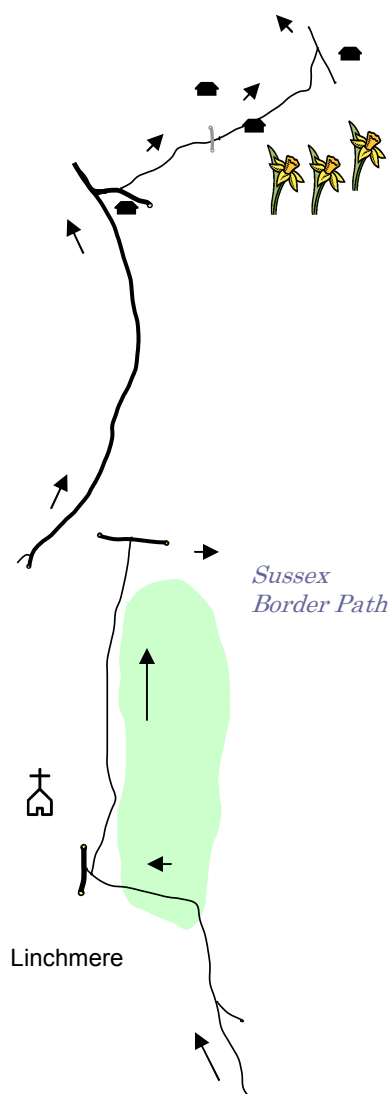
- 3 In just 30m, turn **right** on a bridleway. *There are fine views right to Marley Heights (near the outward leg) and Blackdown beyond.* As you enter woodland you come to a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **right** here on a footpath which follows a rather untidy route through a coppice and then enters a plantation of pines. Fork **right** here as indicated by the yellow arrow. Keep at all times to the marked path through memorable sections of woodland called *Bird Piece* and *Leithe*. When you come to a marshy area, you will find a little bank on the right to escape it. Just after this, at a 3-way fingerpost, go straight ahead. In spring this area is festooned beneath your feet by bluebells. Later, fork **right** as directed by a fingerpost, soon reaching *Newlands Cottage*. Keep **left** on the driveway which soon goes over a stream and curves round to the right.



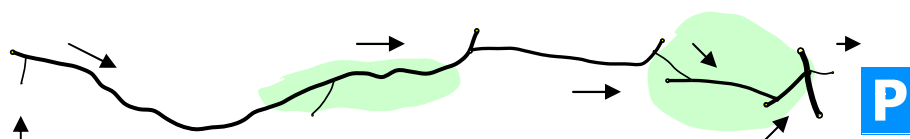
Leg 4: Newlands Cottage to Marley Common

The Shulbrede Shortcut rejoins the walk here.

- 1 Finally the driveway comes to a cottage aptly named *Corner Cottage* by the road into Linchmere. The route however is **right** on the road. In just 40m, turn **left** on a signed footpath leading to some of the fine houses of Linchmere. At a driveway, continue straight ahead (although you may first want to sneak a peek at the delectable *Waterhouse Cottage* on the left). The driveway leads into the grounds of *Lynchmere Cottage* (yes, this is correct!) and runs close beside the house into the back garden where it immediately forks **left** by a hedge. *The path here is fringed by primroses in early spring.* The path leads up to a house and continues alongside its large garage.
- 2 Stay on the track, gently rising. (*There is a short cut via a turning sharp right, but it has a steep section and cuts out a fine stretch of landscape.*) Soon you are close to the village of Linchmere and reach a signpost near the road. *If you would like to visit the village, you can make a small diversion by continuing to the road and turning right. The churchyard reveals among other things the grave of Richard Dimbleby.* Afterwards, pick up the *Sussex Border Path*, just off the next road to the right. Turn **right** at the sign, following another path that runs along the backs of gardens. Eventually, you come to a 4-way junction. Turn **right** on the broad track.



- 3 You are now on the Sussex Border Path (SBP). *There is a quite lovely meadow in a valley to your left.* Follow the SBP avoiding all turnings off. After *Fernowls* especially, stay ahead on the track, avoiding the tarmac that forks off left. The track passes various stud farms and fine houses. Just past *The Close*, the track, now more of a lane, bends left and you leave it by going straight ahead on a signed path into woodland. A track joins from the right. At the next intersection, turn **left** on a driveway back to the road and the car park where the walk began.

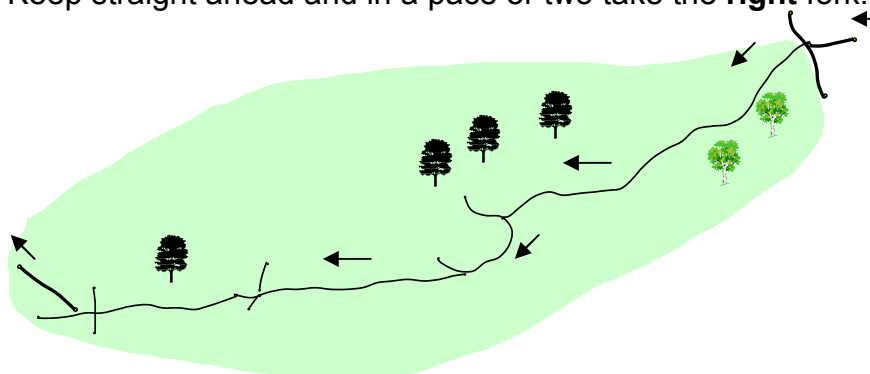


For final refreshments, the *Mill Tavern* in Shottermill, near the road to the car park, is a fine pub with an excellent range of beers and a wide range food.

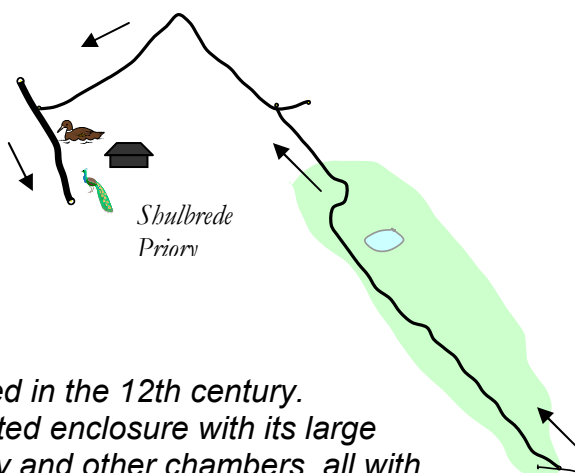
The Shulbrede Shortcut

Take this shortcut if you are doing the shorter version of the walk.

- 1 Go straight on at the junction on the narrow path ahead through attractive woodland. The path ends at a T-junction with a wide path at a bend. Turn **left**, thus in effect going straight ahead. The path goes over a stream and curves right. Ignore a right fork immediately after and, at another minor junction, keep straight ahead. You come to a junction with a little finger-post. Keep straight ahead and in a pace or two take the **right** fork.

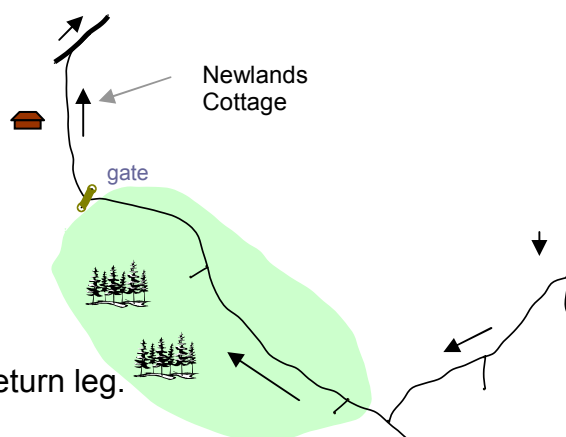


- 2 After some distance, this path passes a historic pond on your right, interesting for its drowned trees. After the pond, the path zig-zags right and left. Soon it passes junction with a path off to the right which you ignore and then turns left and reaches a road by a garden with an aviary. Turn **left** on the road, passing Shulbrede Priory on your left, accompanied by many waterfowl and peafowl.



Shulbrede Augustinian Priory was founded in the 12th century. Excavations have revealed a 4-acre moated enclosure with its large church, cloisters, chapter house, refectory and other chambers, all with thick walls, tiled floors and roof beams. Much has been preserved in good condition and, for the rest, some sturdy walls and many ground-level excavations remain to be seen. The priory was a part of Cowdray estate from the Dissolution until 1902, when it came into the possession of the Ponsonbys. The priory is open to visitors by appointment (tel 01428 653 049) and also on Sunday and Monday of the late May and August bank holidays.

- 3 Just after the farm on the right, turn **right** on a marked footpath. Ignore a left turn at a fingerpost. At a T-junction turn right on a grassy path and follow it, ignoring some more tempting grassy paths on the left. Eventually you come to a gate by the garden of Newlands Cottage. Veer right here through another gate and out to a driveway. Turn **right** on the drive.



The walk now resumes at stage **3** of the return leg.

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Getting there

By car: To reach the **Marley Common National Trust Car Park** from the **north**, take the A286 to Haslemere. Turn right in the town, on the A287, following signs for *Hindhead*, going past the station. When you see a sign for *Liphook*, fork **left** on the B2131 Liphook Road. After going over traffic lights by a church and veering left under a railway bridge, you come to a roundabout. Turn **left** here in the direction of Midhurst but only for a few metres. Just before Arnold's Garage, turn **right** on narrow Marley Lane. Follow the lane for just over 1 km (1200 yds) to the car park on the left.

From the **south**, take the A286 from Midhurst, passing through Fernhurst; shortly after the Kingsley Green signpost, look out for a crossroads sign and turn left there - this is Marley Lane; ignore the first small Marley Common National Trust Car Park on your left and carry on; the walk starts from the next and larger Marley Common National Trust Car Park on your right with an access road to houses on your left.

