



Marley Common

Distance: 13 km=8 miles or 8 km=5 miles

easy walking

Region: West Sussex

Date written: 9-apr-2010

Author: Hautboy

Date revised: 3-jul-2015

Refreshments: Haslemere after the walk

Last update: 26-apr-2016

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere)

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

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Woodland, hills, heath, views, history

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 nearby facilities in Haslemere.

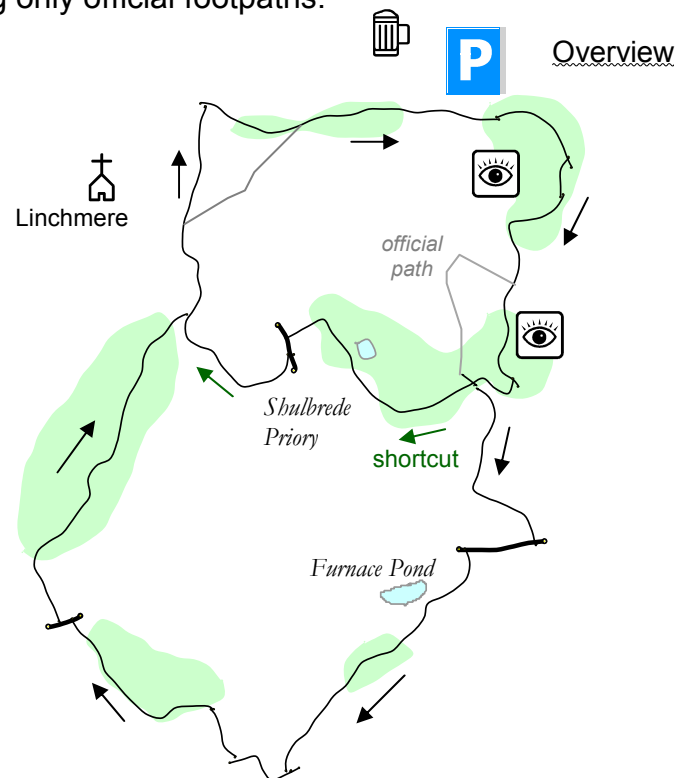
In spring time this walk is thronged by bluebells. The route uses some permissive horse paths across the heights. If you are in a large group, or have doubts, you can bypass that part using only official footpaths.



There are some nettles so bare legs are not advisable. During the dry season this walk is mud-free for the most part but in winter you will need boots to protect from mud. This walk is one of the best for your dog with only a few small stretches where he has to be on a lead.

There was a “**Temporary Closure Order**” (Nov 2015) on one of the paths used on this walk, due to “unsafe surface”. The path is quite walkable so the notice seems to apply only to horses.

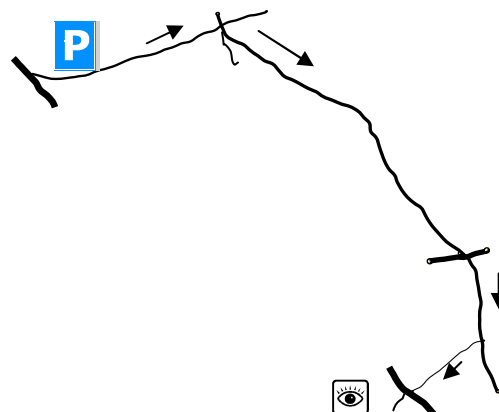
The walk begins at the **Marley Common Car Park** near Haslemere, nearest **postcode GU27 3RG**. See **Getting There** → at the end of this text for directions.



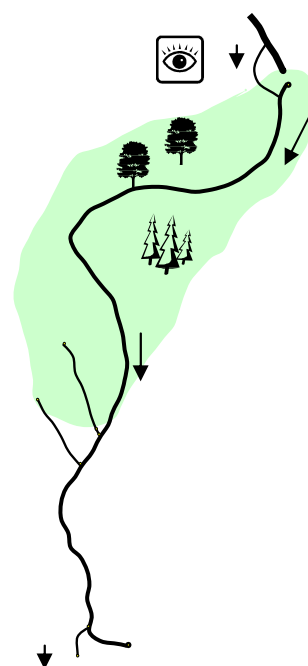
The Walk

Leg 1: Marley Common to the Heights 2½ km=1½ miles

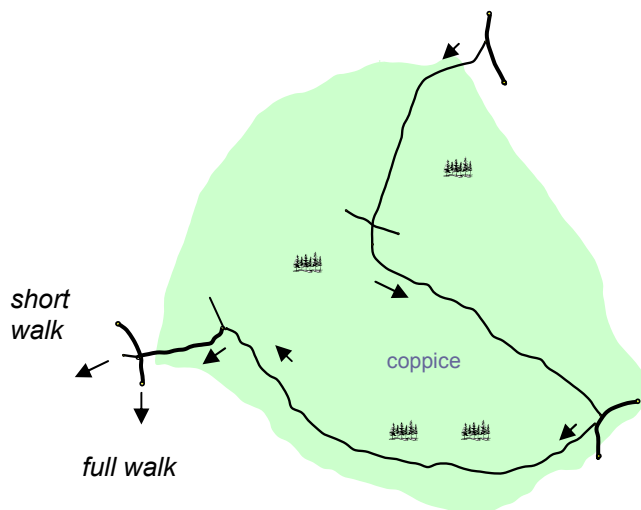
- 1 Go past the noticeboard and through the gate straight ahead (not the one on the left). In less than 100m, you reach a fingerpost. Turn **right** here, immediately avoiding a path that forks right. You are on part of the Sussex Border Path. Soon you go over a crossing path, pass a house on your left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



- 2 In 30m, turn **left** passing a rustic 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** on this path. In 100m, at a 3-way fingerpost, keep straight ahead on the level path. Your wide path 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 sharp 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 takes a shorter route on permissive horse paths and forestry tracks over the heights where walkers are also allowed.* Keep **straight on** at the fingerpost. 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 a 4-way junction at the top, go straight ahead, joining a wider track. The path goes steeply down initially but then veers left uphill again. On your right is another view to Black Down and beyond to the Hampshire Hangers, truly dreamy and majestic. You reach a T-junction. Veer **right** and, in 15m, turn **right** again on a path downhill through the coppice widened by forestry work. In 200m, you reach a junction where a straight forestry path goes uphill ahead. Leave the path here by wheeling sharp **left** downhill steeply on a wide foresters' path. In 50m, at the bottom, you come to a 4-way junction. Left and right is the official footpath, with the marker post hidden in bracken. Straight ahead is a narrow path into woods.

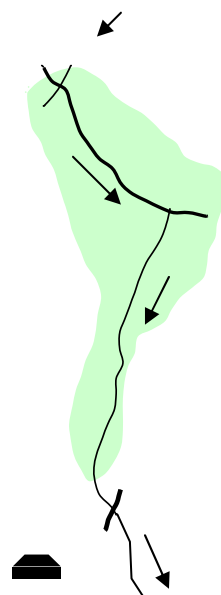


Decision Point

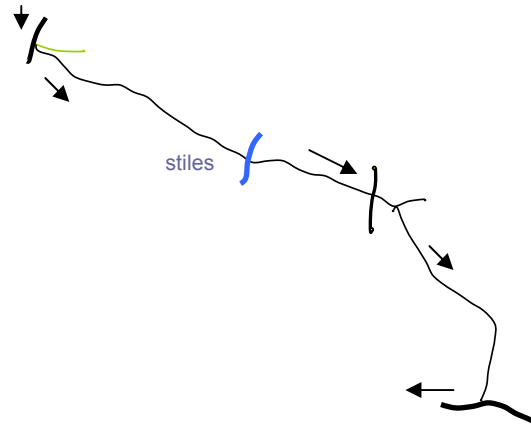
If you would like to do the **shorter** version of this walk, refer to the end of this text, do the *Shulbrede Shortcut* and rejoin the walk further down. The **full walk** continues with the next Leg.

Leg 2: The Heights to Furnace Pond 2½ km=1½ miles

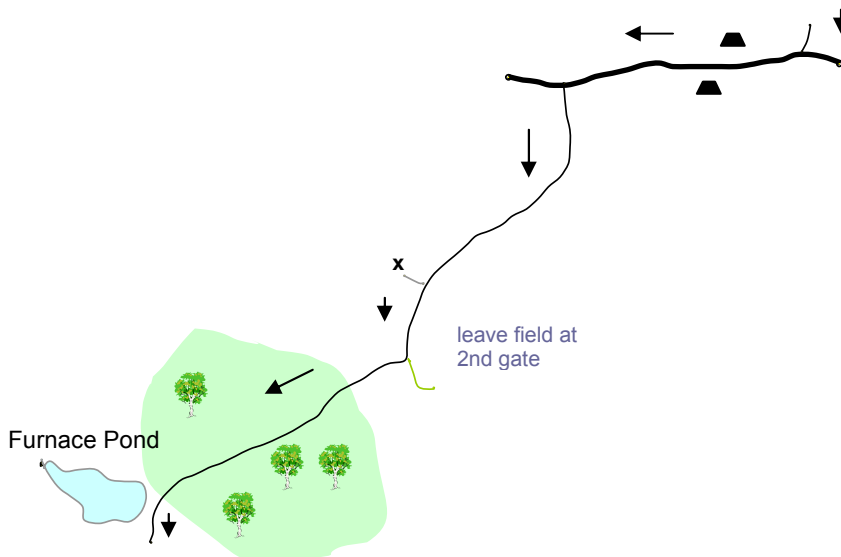
- 1 Turn **left** on the marked footpath. In under 200m, at a 3-way fingerpost, turn **right** downhill. The path runs beside a meadow on the left with Bexleyheath aerial visible in the distance. It crosses a path obliquely and runs close to a hill on your right with tall pines. It descends finally to come out of the wood to meet a wide stony crossing track. Cross straight over the track on a narrow path along the grass with a wire fence on your left. *Greenhill House with its garden and clock turret is visible on your right.*



- 2 This new footpath takes you down four steps, over a bridge and through a wooden swing gate. The path now crosses the next meadow diagonally, down to the far corner under a large oak where another footpath joins from the right at a fingerpost. Cross a stream here via two stiles. Traverse a meadow, a stile (or large metal gate), a driveway and a stile (or large stiff metal gate) 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 (rather tight) kissing gate. Exit to the road and turn **right**.



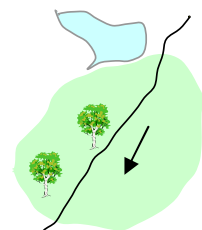
- 3 Go past a duckpond by a fine stone wall and *Highbuilding Farm* which houses a centre where church organs are manufactured. After about 200m of road walking, just after the last semi-detached house, turn **left** opposite a fingerpost and through a metal gate into a large meadow. Keep to the right-hand side and pass through two more (usually open) 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** in a corner, where there is a yellow arrow. This wide path goes through woodland, over a stream and a crossing path, through a cleared area with evidence of forestry work, and under wires and finally reaches Furnace Pond.



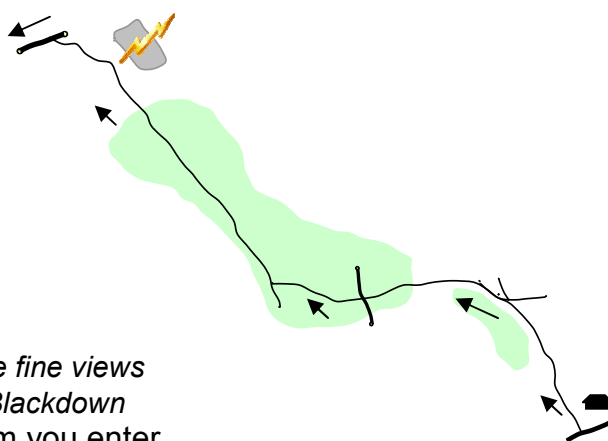
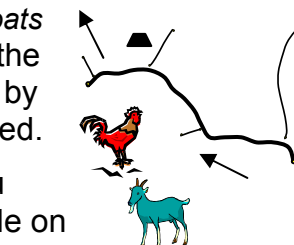
On this side of the pond are the remains of Fernhurst Furnace, some of the best preserved in the Sussex Weald. The iron industry flourished here in the 1600s and 1700s using local ore, charcoal and water power, before the use of coal moved the iron industry up North. The furnace site was recorded and 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 4¾ km=3 miles

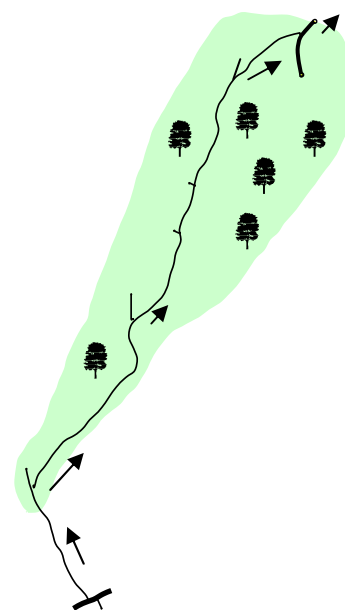
- 1 Bear **left** with the pond on your right. Just after the pond, ignore a left turn at a fingerpost. After an open planted area, go through a (broken, open) gate with a wooden barrier and continue along the left-hand side of a long meadow. At the far end, go over a stile and turn **right** on a tarmac driveway. In 100m, ignore a footpath left. (*This is where another walk in this series briefly intersects – see “Woolbeding Common and the 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 a fenced path by the edge of the lawn of the house you just passed.



- 2 Your path enters woodland. In under 100m you come to a crossing track near a fingerpost visible on your right. Ignoring the fingerpost, turn **left** here the wide forestry track. In 250m, the track meets a crossing path under wires. Cross straight over on a lovely, much narrower, grassy course in a botanically rich area [2015: round a fallen tree]. You reach a T-junction with another path by a fingerpost. Turn **right** here. The path follows a fine woodland course beside a bank, over a 2-plank bridge, passes a huge electricity relay station on the right and comes out to a road. Turn **left** on the road.



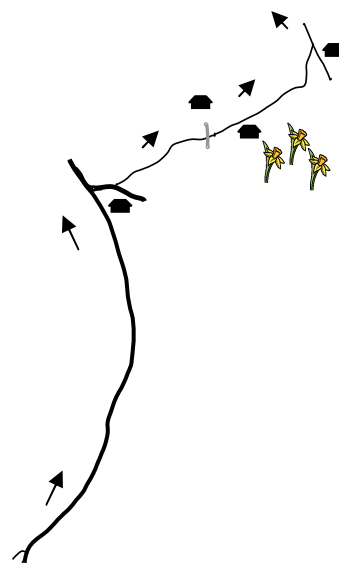
- 3 In just 30m, turn **right** on a bridleway. *There are fine views right to Marley Heights (near the outward leg) and Blackdown beyond.* After ascending a gentle slope for 400m you enter woodland and arrive at a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **right** here on a narrower footpath, over a ditch. The path goes through a coppice, enters a plantation of pines, widens for forestry work, runs uphill. Keep to the main level path which forks right and curves right (*the post with the yellow arrow is ingeniously concealed*). Keep at all times to the marked path through memorable sections of woodland called *Bird Piece* and *Leithe*. Where the wide foresters' track curves right into a cleared area, keep straight ahead on the original narrow path. When you come to a marshy area, you will find a little bank on the right to escape it. (*Do not try to go through the marsh: it is deceptively deep and gooey!*) Just after this, at a 3-way fingerpost, go straight ahead. Your path goes right around an obstruction and passes a marker post under a magnificent beech tree. A fingerpost now directs you to fork off right. You must **leave** the path here by forking **right** as directed, with a ditch on your right. [2015: unfortunately this right-forking path is blocked by a fallen chestnut: you need to cross the ditch and the bank on your right and cross back after the obstruction.] Soon you reach *Newlands Cottage*. Keep **left** on the driveway which soon goes over a stream and curves round to the right.



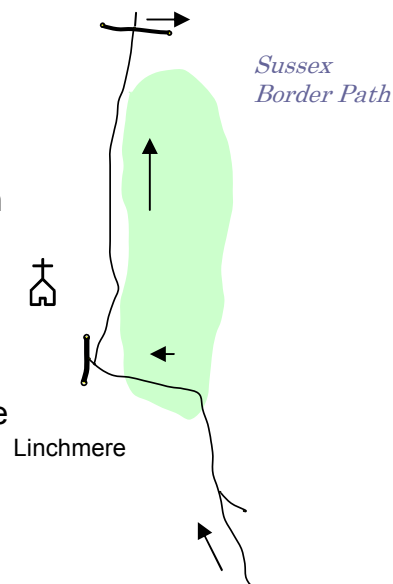
Leg 4: Newlands Cottage to Marley Common 3¼ km=2 miles

The Shulbrede Shortcut rejoins the walk here.

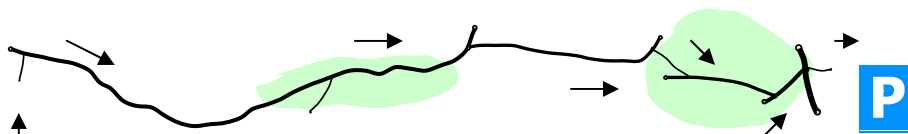
- 1 Finally the driveway comes to a cottage aptly named *Corner Cottage* by the road into Linchmere. The route however is **right** on the road. In just 40m, turn **left** on a signed footpath leading to some of the fine houses of Linchmere. At a driveway, continue straight ahead (although you may first 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 a gravel yard close to the back garden where it immediately forks **left** just before a shed. *The path here is fringed by primroses in early spring.* The path leads up to a house and continues alongside its large converted 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.) At a 3-way fingerpost, join a track coming from the right. Soon you are close to the village of Linchmere and reach a signpost, just before the top of a slope, 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 soon runs along the backs of gardens and beside a meadow on your right, through an old kissing gate. Eventually, you come to a 4-way junction. Turn **right** on the crossing path.



- 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 nearly 1 km, your path joins a tarmac drive by *Harboury* and, at *Manorcroft*, keeps right on the track, leaving the tarmac that forks off left. The track passes various stud farms and fine houses. Just past *Marley Farm House*, the track, now more of a lane, bends left. Leave the lane here by going straight ahead on a signed path into woodland. At the next intersection, turn **left** on a tarmac driveway back to the road and the car park where the walk began.

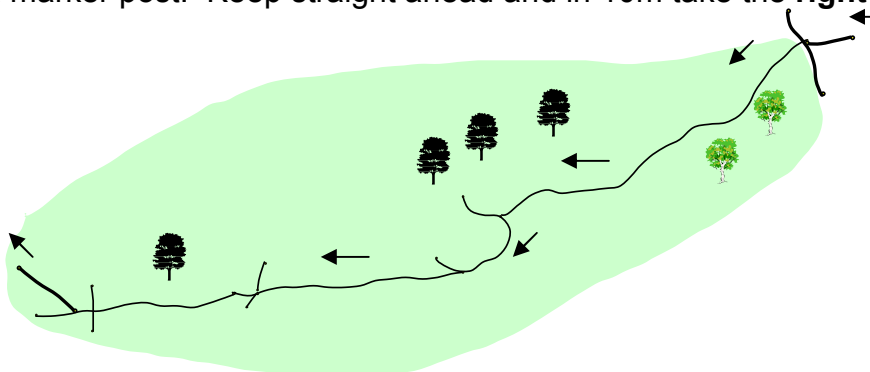


For final refreshments, there are the nearby hostelries of the *Prince of Wales* in Hammer Vale (postcode GU27 1QH) and the *Royal Oak* in Critchmere Hill (postcode GU27 1LS).

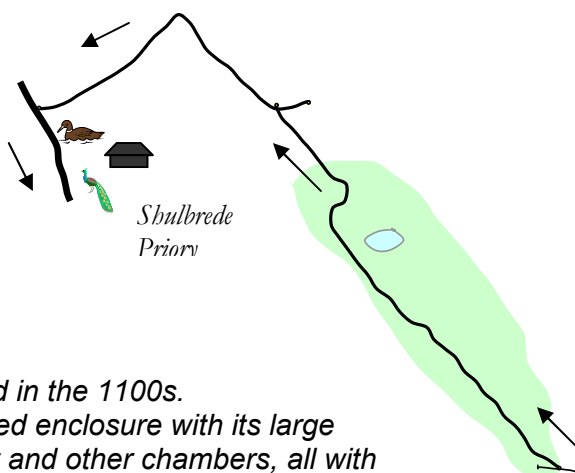
The Shulbrede Shortcut 2¼ km=1½ miles

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 100m later, keep straight ahead. In 80m, you come to a junction with a marker post. Keep straight ahead and in 10m take the **right** fork.

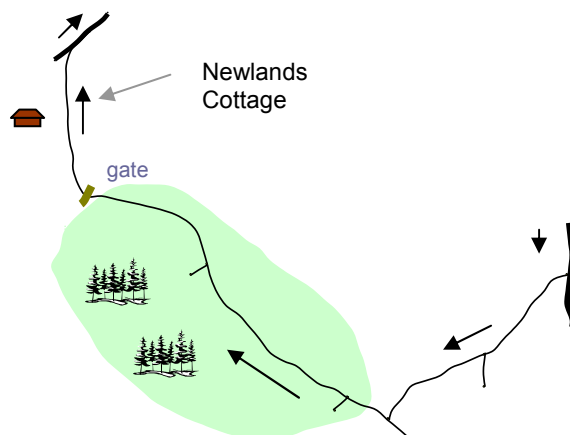


- 2 In 350m, this path passes a historic pond on your right, interesting for its drowned trees. After the pond, the path curves left to a T-junction. Turn **left** here on a wide track. In 100m, ignore a junction on the right. Your path turns left and reaches a road by a garden with an aviary. Turn **left** on the road, passing Shulbrede Priory on your left, accompanied by many waterfowl.



Shulbrede Augustinian Priory was founded in the 1100s. 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. It is now a private house. The Priory is open to visitors some bank holidays, Sunday and Monday, from 2 to 6 pm.

- 3 Just after a free-range poultry farm on the right, turn **right** on a signposted footpath and keep straight on for 250m to a fingerpost T-junction. Turn **right** on a grassy path as indicated and follow it, ignoring a wide path on your left and keeping straight on at all times as the path gradually narrows and rises. Eventually you come to a gate by the garden of Newlands Cottage. Veer **right** through the gate and follow the fence out to a shingle driveway. Turn **right** on the driveway.



Your walk now resumes from the start of **Leg 4** above.

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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, along a shopping street and past an Esso filling station. Shortly after, 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 yards 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 cross-roads 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.

Getting there (from the north)

