



Titty Hill, Rother Valley, Henley

Distance: 19 km=12 miles easy walking
or 2 sections of 13 km=8 miles and 10 km=6 miles

Region: West Sussex

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere)

Author: Hautboy

Refreshments: Henley, Redford(?)

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

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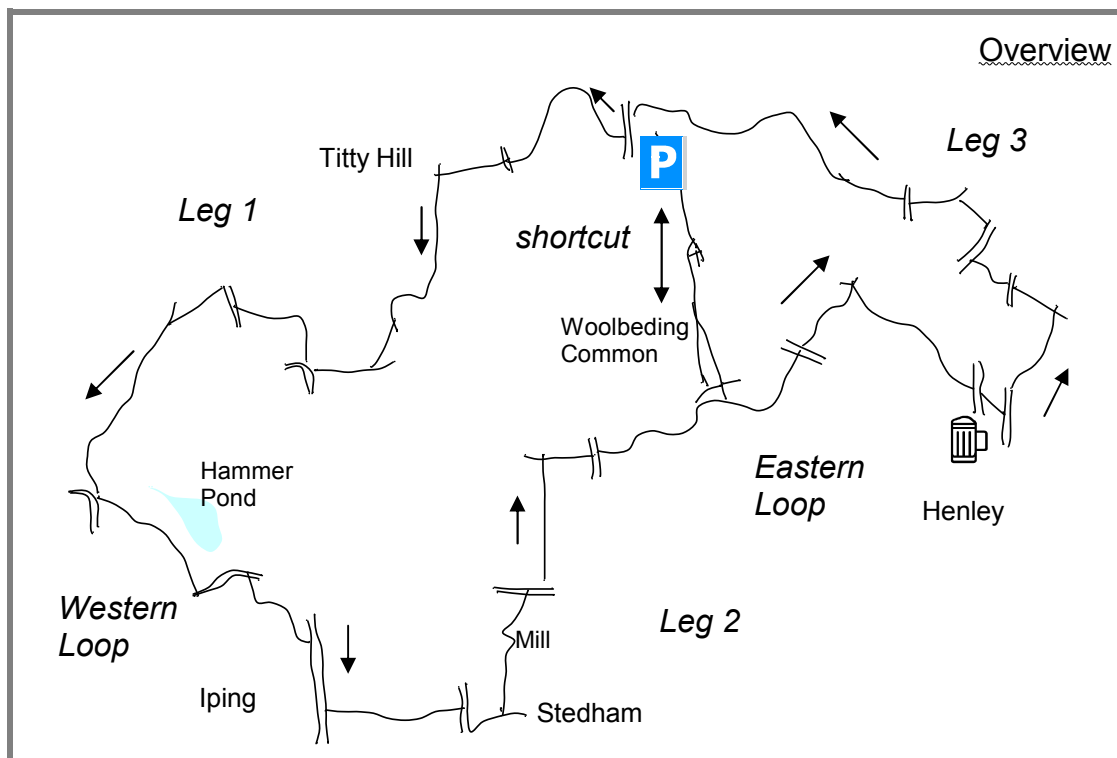
Hills, views, woodland, hidden lakes, heath

In Brief



This is a walk of haunting beauty in the fascinating and complex hills and moorlands of West Sussex, though easily accessible from London. The walk makes a satisfying day but it can be split into two shorter sections. The *Western Loop* visits Titty Hill, the Hammer Pond and the villages of the Rother Valley. The *Eastern Loop* visits Henley and the woodlands that surround it. The star refreshment stop is in Henley in the Eastern Loop, in the form of the *Duke of Cumberland*.

The walk begins in the isolated **National Trust** car park at **Woolbeding Common**, near Redford, West Sussex. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

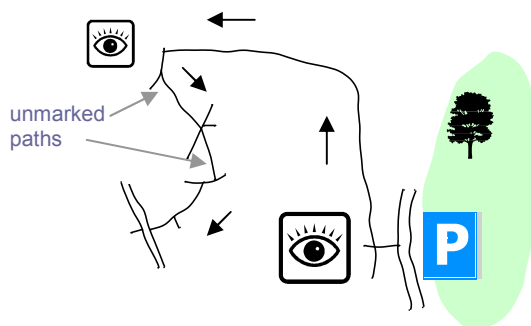


The Walk

Decision point. If you are doing the **Eastern Loop**, go to the end of this text and start with Section **B**. The text below is the start of the Western Loop and of the Full Walk.

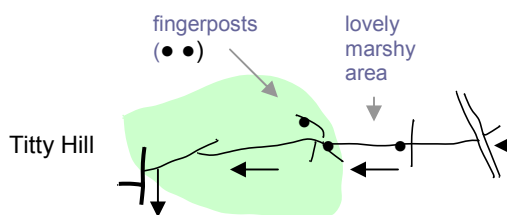
Leg 1: Woolbeding Common to Iping, 8 km (5½ miles)

- 1 Cross the lane to a seat and admire the view westwards into Hampshire. Go forward 3m and turn **right** on a narrow level path that runs along the rim. This leads to a seat and a fingerpost near the lane. Keep ahead on a wider track, still staying level. When the track nears a triangulation pillar, veer **left** with the track. In a few metres, take either of two parallel paths that finally lead up to a seat (“*in memory of Barbara*”) with more views.

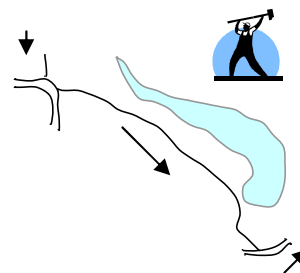


Turn **left** and in 15m fork **left** on a narrow path steeply downhill. You meet a junction at the bottom with a signpost. Take the **second** path on the right – one *not* pointed to by the signpost – heading for a house in the valley. The path descends, goes through some woodland and passes by a pond on the left. It then crosses a patch of grass by houses and reaches a track where you turn **right**. Follow the track uphill to two more houses on the right. Opposite the driveway to the second house (Redford House), at a post that may be partially hidden in bracken, turn **left** on a narrow path. *At the next signpost, the path on the left leads to a large beautiful lake, but this is not on the route.* The path eventually leads down to the road near Redford.

- 2 Cross straight over the road to a path opposite. The path leads through woods to a signposted 4-way junction. Go straight across the junction on a path in a luminous area of marsh grass with very young birches. You reach another fingerpost on the edge of an oak forest. Go straight ahead here with another 4-way fingerpost a few metres on your right and veer fractionally left on a path that continues through woods. Follow this charming woodland path to a T-junction. Turn **left** here. This path leads up to a track. Turn **left** on the track and in a few paces reach the hamlet of Titty Hill with its charming green and cottages.

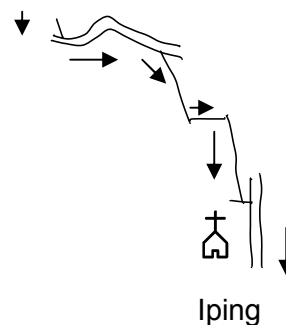


- 6 Do not join the road but turn immediately **left** by a gate onto another footpath. In 70m, fork **left** as indicated by the fingerpost. The path runs high above the valley on the left in which the Hammer Stream runs to enter the great Hammer Pond. This area was a centre of the iron industry for many years before the age of coal. *The path here goes through a Buddhist retreat (over on your left) and they request you to be quiet.*



[March 2012: one walker believes you *may* be able to go along the side of the hill, through the grounds of the retreat rather than along the bottom of the valley which may be a bit muddy.] Eventually the path runs between flimsy railings then over a bridge and stile to a lane. Turn **left** on the lane.

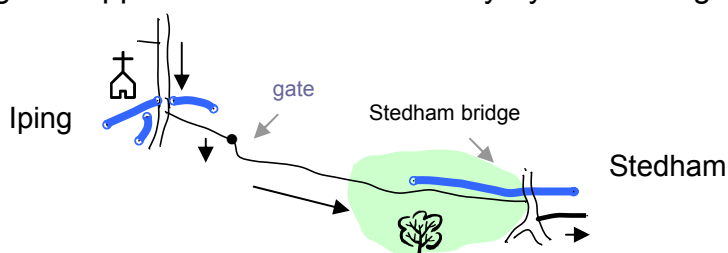
- 7 Follow the lane uphill between banks until it levels out and emerges into the open. Here turn half **right** at the opening to a field and cross the field diagonally. In the opposite corner, go over a stile on the **left** (not through the gap ahead). Continue beside a hedge on the right and when the hedge ends, bear **right**, heading along the length of the meadow in the direction of some houses, keeping close to the left hand side. At the end, go over a stile onto a track, turn **left** and immediately **right** on the road. Welcome to Iping!



The name Iping comes from the name of a Saxon chief "Ipa". Just north of here was a Roman settlement, a walled town of modest size. The River Rother runs through the village and the bridge over it is partly from the 17th century with its four round arches. Just west of there are mill buildings. The mill was valued at 3s.4d. in the Domesday Book. At different times there were a wheat-mill, a malt-mill, a fulling-mill and a paper-mill here. Iping is the setting for H.G.Wells' book "The Invisible Man".

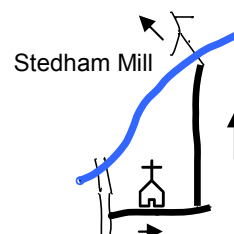
Leg 2: Iping to Henley. 6 km (4 miles)

- 1 Pass St Mary's Church and a sign for the New Lipchis Way and continue along the road to the picturesque bridge and river course from where the old newly-converted mill buildings can be seen. In a few paces, opposite a private drive, turn **left** on a bridleway. Join a gravel drive straight ahead going between gardens. In a few paces, turn **right** through a metal gate on a path running parallel to the drive. The path runs between meadows and then through woodland with the River Rother down on the left. Finally, it ends at a road in Stedham. *As a quick diversion here, it is worth walking a few paces to the left to admire the old bridge and the view of Stedham Hall along the riverside.* Turn **right** on the road into Stedham and walk up to the triangular green opposite the fine 17th-century Tye Hill cottage.

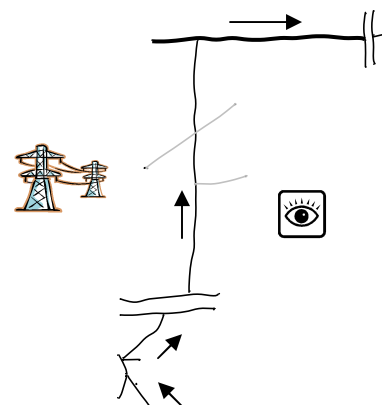


The parish of Stedham, like so many in this area, is long and thin, going up to near the Surrey border. The church of St James is mentioned in the Domesday Book and was probably extended in the 13th and again in the 17th century. One of its windows is 12th century. Stedham Hall, north of the church, is a building of stone and timber-framing dating from the middle of the 16th century but with many later alterations. The village is well worth exploring and it is easy to navigate a little circular walk around the green. The Hamilton Arms in School Lane is unfortunately a bit off the route but it is probably worth the effort for those that like authentic Thai food.

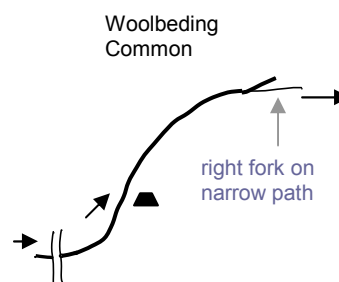
- 2 Fork **left** at the triangular green and go past the church. From here, the Hall is visible over on the left. (If you take the path to the church, you have to jump down to the road or backtrack as there is no path on the other side.) At a junction, turn **left** with the tarmac lane. The lane passes the entrance to Stedham Hall and then a stud that keeps Lipizzaner horses. *You can tell how ancient some of the hedges here are from Hooper's Rule: "the number of different species in thirty yards of a hedge equals roughly the hedge's age in centuries".* The lane ends at the picturesque *Stedham Mill*, an old flour mill, beside the River Rother. Cross the river here over the little footbridge by the weir. (The stepping stones are *not* usable.)



- 3 Continue uphill on the other side, ignoring a footpath on the right. The path crosses an unneeded stile and reaches a road. Turn **right** and in 50m **left** up and over a stile into a field. Continue along the left hand side of the field, gently uphill. *You may have noticed that the walks in this series try to avoid ploughed fields and the word "meadow" is used for the pleasant grassy ones. But the purpose will become clear when you look back on nearing the top: a fine view of the South Downs.* In the next corner, go over a stile and continue similarly, passing under power lines. At the next corner go over a stile and turn **right** on a grassy track between fields. At the corner, exit to the road.



- 4 Cross the road to a public footpath with a sign for *Dene House*. Keep ahead on the main stony track that runs under trees, avoiding branching off into the open area. You are now back on Woolbeding Common, albeit in a part remote from the starting point. On reaching a house on the right, keep ahead uphill in an open landscape. Near the top, with trees visible ahead, you see a yellow arrow indicating a narrow path forking **right**.

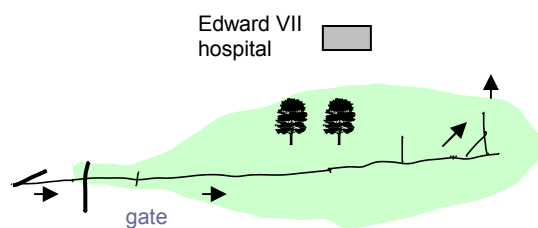


Decision Point. If you are doing only the **Western Loop**, you should now take the short cut back to the car park: go to Section **A** near the end of this text.

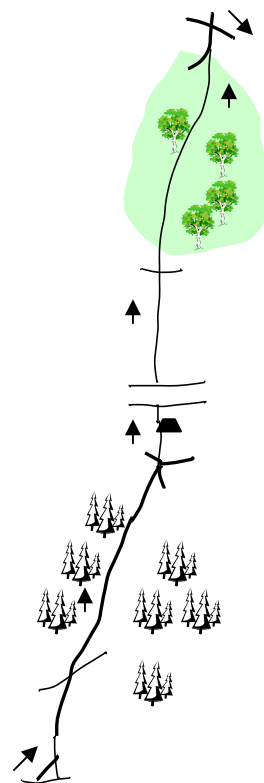
To continue the full walk, take the indicated **right** fork.

- 5 There are views right across the fields. Go over a crossing track at another post with yellow arrows. At a National Trust sign for Woolbeding Common, go over a stile by a gate. Continue through chestnut woods. Soon the green-shuttered buildings of the King Edward VII hospital come into view on the left. After this, ignore an unmarked

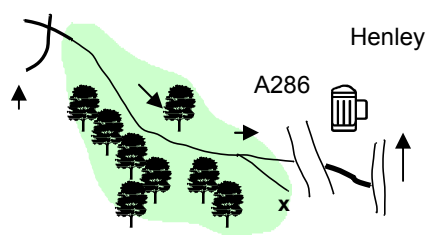
wide path left at a junction. Just 50m further, at an oblique crossing path, turn **left**. (There is a signposted left turn a few metres further – this left turn simply cuts a corner.)



- 6 Continue through a conifer plantation. Soon you reach an oblique crossing path where you continue ahead through more plantations. Eventually you reach a gate on the right with a fingerpost and a house ahead. Go straight ahead on a narrow path heading just to the left of the house. This leads up to a road. Go straight across the road on a signposted footpath. The path later crosses a track via two stiles. This ancient byway gradually descends through tall beeches and eventually arrives at the small settlement of Verdley Edge. Go down a grass slope and join the drive ahead. *You are now on part of the Serpent Trail, a 108-km sinewy path from Petersfield to Haslemere.*



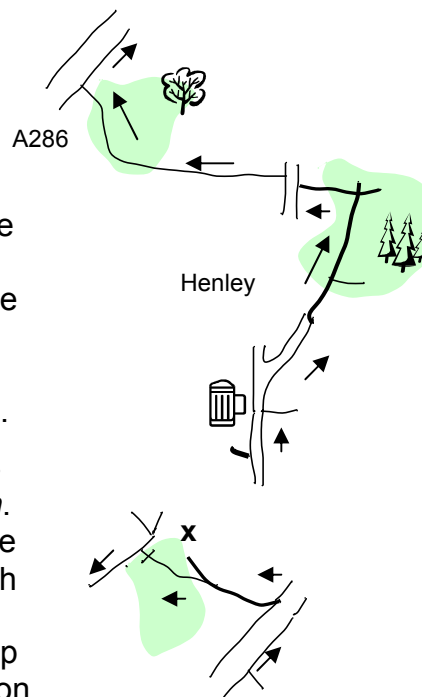
- 7 In 30m, turn sharp **right** at a crossing with a fingerpost, going past *The Lodge* and outbuildings with a clock. The path goes up through woods and becomes sunken. There is probably the sound of traffic from the busy A286 road below. After some distance at a fingerpost, fork **left**, thus leaving the Serpent Trail. Eventually the path descends to the main road. Cross it carefully to a bus stop opposite and go down a drive to its **right**. At the bottom, turn sharp **left** on a lane in the hamlet of Henley and in a few paces reach the *Duke of Cumberland*.



Henley is a hamlet with just sixteen houses, one of which is the Duke of Cumberland pub. For a longer description, see another walk in this series: "Woolbedding Common & The Temple of the Winds".

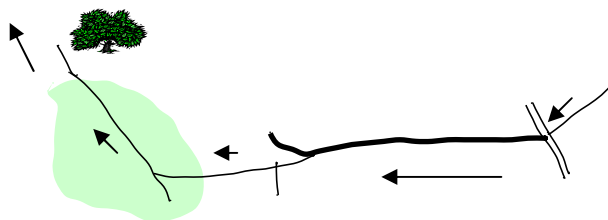
Leg 3: Henley to Woolbeding Common, 5 km (3½ miles)

1 Continue down the lane, ignoring the first signposted track on the right and, just past a red 'phone box and Old Smugglers, take the **right** fork. This lane passes two lovely old cottages and becomes a track. Shortly, ignore a track on the right. Later, at a major crossing track with a 4-way fingerpost and a gate on the right, go **left**. The path leads to a lane. Go straight over, fractionally right, along the right hand side of a meadow, and along a grassy path. The path bends right before metal buildings, goes over a bridge and reaches the main road. Turn **right** along the road.

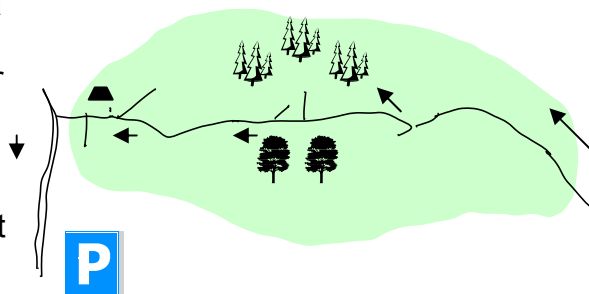


2 Go past Daves Farm on the right and shortly after this turn sharp **left** on a track signposted to *Lassams Farm*. As you reach the fence of the garden of a house on the right, veer **left** off the track at a fingerpost on a footpath across the grass. In the far left corner, the path goes through woods, steeply down, over a 2-plank bridge, up the other side to a track and junction with two houses on the right. Turn **left** on the woodland track.

3 At a crossing of tracks, go straight ahead on a tarmac drive. Just after a gate on the right to *Stable Cottage*, fork **left** on a track, as waymarked, and shortly at a junction ignore a left turn. At a T-junction, turn **right** as indicated by a fingerpost. The track passes a pond on the right. Where the fence curves right, the path stays with it and reaches an unneeded stile. The path now crosses a meadow with a large lone oak tree in the middle.



4 On the other side of the meadow, keep straight ahead through a dark wood and then on a level grassy path. The path becomes very wide and curves left. At a fingerpost, turn **right**. The wide path passes through more forest, both conifer and broadleaf. Ignore all paths on the right, including a marked footpath. Eventually the path goes by a wooden gate where you keep straight ahead past a garden and house on the right. Ignore a footpath in the left and at a T-junction turn **left**. You are now on a sunken lane that shortly leads back to the car park.



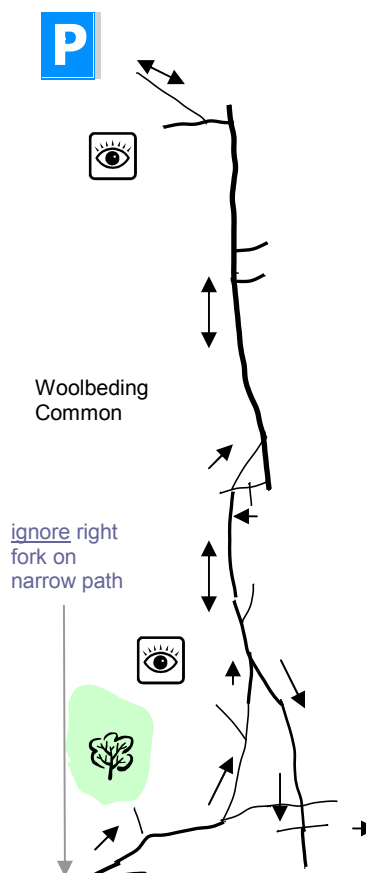
For refreshments, the Old Post Office in Redford does simple (but good) lunches and is licensed. They also do slap-up roasts on a Sunday, plus excellent cakes at any time. The "Rising Sun" in Milland is a quite excellent nearby inn, open all day at weekends.

Short Cut Finish of the Western Loop, 1½km (1 mile)

- A** Take this short cut if you have decided to do only the **Western Loop** and to return to the car park on Woolbeding Common.

Follow the upward arrows in the map opposite.

Ignore the marked footpath on the right and stay on the wide track. Ignore a gate on the left at the corner of a wood but, 50m after the gate, turn **left** on a grassy path leading gently uphill. Near the top, ignore a track branching off left and continue ahead towards the tree line. A path joins from the left and then a signposted path from the right. 50m later, **ignore** the footpath forking right at the fingerpost. (The route given here runs parallel to the official footpath and is more attractive.) Eventually this wide open moorland path comes to a small car park. (Be sure not to stray too far from the tree line on the right. If you find yourself entering a tangled wood with a large No Riding sign, you need to head right (east) to find the little car park and the track) Continue straight ahead and join a wide gravel track coming from the right. The track passes the entrance to Scotland Farmhouse after which, ignore a right turn. At the next 3-way fingerpost, turn **left**. In 60m, fork **right** on a lesser path which leads down to the car park. *For refreshments, see the end of the main walk.*



Start of the Eastern Loop, 1½km (1 mile)

- B** Do this section at the start if you are only doing the **Eastern Loop**, missing Titty Hill, the Hammer Pond and the Rother Valley villages.

Before beginning the walk, cross the lane to a seat and admire the magnificent view from Woolbeding Common across to Hampshire and further south on a clear day to the South Downs. Return to the car park to begin the walk.

Follow the downward arrows in the map above. From the car park, take a path on the left of the notice board marked as the *Serpent Trail*. Soon this joins a sandy track coming from the right. At a T-junction, turn **right** on a wide gravel track. Ignore a left turn at a junction, pass the entrance to Scotland Farm and, at the next 3-way junction post, turn **right**. In 10m, at a 3-way fingerposted junction, keep straight ahead. (The route given here runs parallel to the official footpath and is more attractive.) In 15m, at a crossing path, turn **left**. After some distance with fine views, the wide open moorland path is joined by a marked footpath coming in from the left. 30m further, fork **left**, as indicated by another fingerpost. This path leads through a fine area of heather. At the bottom, go over a crossing track into trees. In 40m, at a marked 4-way crossing, turn **left** on a narrow path.

The walk now continues from Leg 2 section **5**.

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Getting there

The **National Trust** car park at **Woolbeding Common** is in a beautiful isolated spot near Redford, West Sussex.

To get there from the London area, take the A286 Haslemere road from Milford. Go through Haslemere, following signs to Midhurst, still on the A286. On reaching the centre of Fernhurst, at a crossroads, turn **right** on Vann Road, signposted *Redford, Milland*. After 2.3 miles (3.7km), at a T-junction, turn **left** signposted *Redford*. After 0.4 miles (0.6km), turn **left** again signposted *Redford*. The road goes past Linch Church and after a mile (1.6km) it goes through Redford, as indicated by the welcome sign. About 1 mile (1.6km) after the end-of-speed-limit sign, look out for a road sign indicating a road junction on the left. Just after the road sign, slow down and look for a narrow lane – almost a track. Turn **left** here. It may seem barely navigable, but don't worry – this is correct. The lane runs gently uphill for 1.5km (nearly a mile) until eventually you turn **right** into the car park.

