



Rudgwick: The Blue Ship (pub walk)

Distance 4½ km=2¾ miles or 4 km=2½ miles

easy walking

Region: West Sussex

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Refreshments: The Haven

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Map: Explorer 134 (Horsham) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Peace and quiet, woodland, lake, meadows, village pub

In Brief

No one is sure how the *Blue Ship* got its name, since it's miles from the sea and, come to that, miles from anywhere. Its remoteness is a big attraction and you have a feeling of triumph after following the narrow lane to the pub which looks like a Victorian cottage (although parts are apparently 15th century). There is a charming garden on the side and plants for sale. The pub has no bar, just a hatch where they dispense the H&B Badger brews (sometimes with a guest beer) direct from the barrels. There is a menu of fairly standard fare and it's worth remembering that you can have tea or other hot beverages.

The *Blue Ship* is open every day except (non-holiday) Mondays. Food is available during "normal" mealtimes but, please note, the pub closes at 3pm on Sundays. For further information, ring 01403-822709.

24 Mar 2019: important! Opening days and times have changed for this week, according to a notice posted up on the door. Presumably this situation is temporary (due to illness, holiday etc.). The essential point is: closed lunchtime all this week, Mar 26-29, open Saturday. It is vital to ring (see above) before planning to come.

This peaceful walk takes you through woods and meadows, on easy trails through typical countryside, without any ploughed fields.

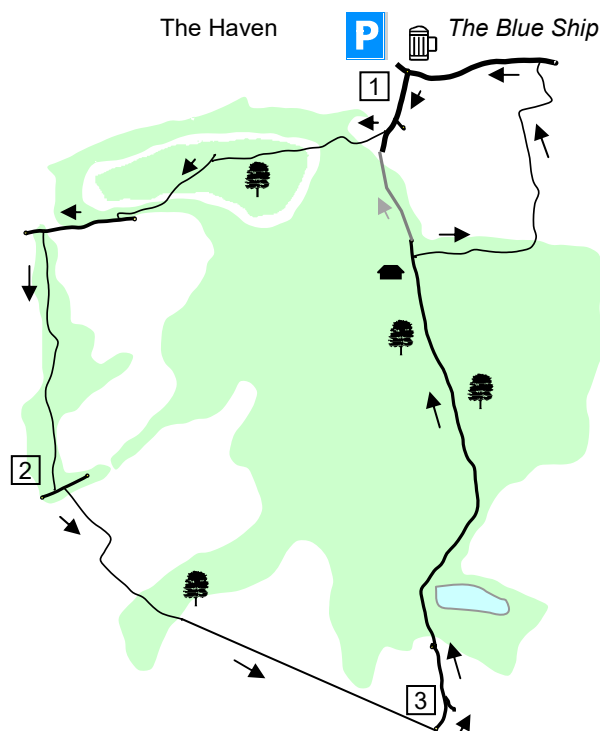


There are a some patches of nettles and brambles on this walk so shorts are not advisable. Sensible walking shoes or trainers are fine and your dog can come too and is welcome in the pub.

The walk begins at the **Blue Ship Inn, The Haven, postcode RH14 9BS** grid ref TQ 084 305. Since you will be walking, park over the road where there is some parking space on a roadside dirt patch. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

Map of the Walk



- 1 With your back to the pub, go ahead along the lane opposite, signposted *Oakhurst*. Ignore Marles Lane, a dead end, on the left and pass *Hall House* on the right. 50m after, turn **right** at a fingerpost into woods, with stables on your right. **There is some undergrowth at the start which clears.** The path wheels left over a two-plank bridge and crosses a grassy circular ride into more oak woodland in the centre. In 180m, at a T-junction with a fingerpost, turn **left**. The path takes you back to the grassy ride. Turn **right** on the grass and, in nearly 100m, go **left** through a small wooden gate next to a large wooden gate. Turn **right** on a tarmac lane by Heathers Farm and, in 150m, just after a house on the left, go **left** at a fingerpost over a little bridge on a bridleway. **More short-term undergrowth.** On the left are the gardens and tennis court of the farm house. After woods of oak and hawthorn, the path bends left between two posts and immediately right again through the woodland of Long Copse with oaks and maples, later going over a bridge. At the end, turn **left** on a lane.
- 2 In just 10m, turn **right** through a gate (easier than the stile) and go along the right-hand side of a field passing some small houses. At the far corner of a farm building, turn **right** along the edge and **left** again at the next corner. At the end, go down through undergrowth and trees to approach a sunken lane with steps each side. (You can avoid both sets of steps using a bank if you like.) Go down steps, up steps and cross a rocky stream by means a long bridge. The rough path runs between two hay fields for about 300m, going under wires and running beside a wire fence on the left. Near the end, it passes a willow pond in the garden on your left. Turn **left** at a fingerpost by a hedge at Leverance Farm.

3 In 20m, turn **left** again at a fingerpost on a wide bridleway. The bridleway becomes concrete as it goes through the woodland of Leverance Copse and passes long Muttons Pond on your right. Stay on the bridleway as it bends left. (A footpath here on the right, through a gate, was discarded for this walk because the cattle cluster round the gate and churn up mud as well as worrying some walkers.) The bridleway is now concrete and becomes tarmac before two houses. Just 50m after passing the last gate of the grounds of the house, you will see a fingerpost on your right on a crossing path.

Decision point. If you are already feeling thirsty or peckish, simply stay on the lane, which becomes Marles Lane (the cul-de-sac); keep ahead where it meets a road, straight back to the pub.

Turn **right** at the fingerpost. The path goes through woodland and a fir plantation, soon zigzagging left-right over a ditch. As you meet the corner of a meadow, by a fingerpost, turn **left** on a path that follows a belt of oak and ash between two meadows. As you enter an open meadow, turn sharp **right** as directed by the fingerpost go through a gap and turn **left** along the edge of another large pasture.

There may be a lovely herd of frisian cows in this field, cut off from you by an electric fence (a single wire). In high summer, you may be hemmed in rather awkwardly between the hedge and the wire, despite our efforts to get the path widened. If this is the case, you should be justified in using the meadow on *this* side of the hedgerow (gently stamp on / step over the low wire), leaving only a short easy section beside the cattle pasture.

In the corner, keep left and turn **right**, as directed by the signpost, on a fenced path and, at the next corner, go **left** similarly. Go over a pair of stiles, turn **left** at the corner, **right** over a new 3-plank bridge and **left** on a lane, quickly taking you back to the pub where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: the pub is in a lane off the Haven Road, half way between Five Oaks and Bucks Green (Rudgwick). The lane is signposted *Garlands 1 Okehurst 2*. For non-locals, the easiest way is to take the A29 to just north of Five Oaks and turn (sharp **right** if coming from the north, forking **left** if coming from the south) onto Haven Road, follow it for 2 km (nearly 1½ miles) and turn **left** in the village.

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