Fancy Free Walks

point your feet on a new path

Burpham and Angmering Forest

Distance: 19½ km=12 miles or 18 km=11 miles easy walking

Region: West Sussex Date written: 14-apr-2015

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Refreshments: Hammerpot, Burpham

Map: Explorer 121 (Arundel) *but the maps in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Hills, views, National Park, woodland trails, village, pubs

In Brief

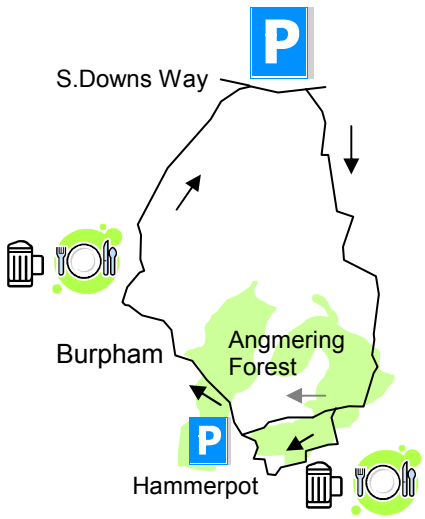
This is a vigorous walk entirely within the South Downs National Park. The start and finish are high on the open Downs with great views. The middle section is a long walk through one of the great forests of West Sussex.

For refreshments along the way, there are two excellent pubs, both with a chequered history. To enquire at the *Woodman's Arms*, ring 01903-871240. For the *George* at Burpham, ring 01903-883131.

There are no nettles or brambles to speak of on this walk, so shorts should not be a problem. There is always a certain amount of mud in the woods (dried in summer) but all the paths are very wide, making it easy to escape. Boots are therefore recommended. There are very few compulsory stiles and no main roads to cross, so the going is relatively easy, especially if you are walking your dog.

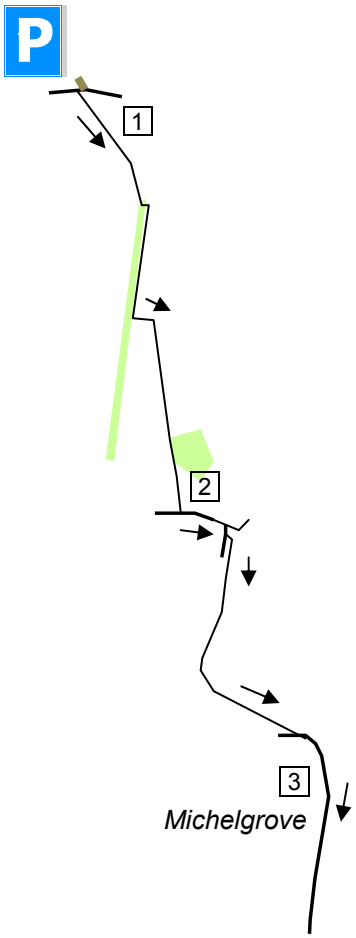
The walk begins at the **Kithurst Hill** car park, just south of the B2139 road between Amberley and Storrington, gridref TQ070125, approximate postcode **RH20 4HW**. You can also begin in the **Dover Lane** car park, Poling, near Arundel, postcode **BN18 9PX**. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

Bird's Eye View



The Walk

Leg 1: Kithurst Hill to Michelgrove 5 km=3 miles



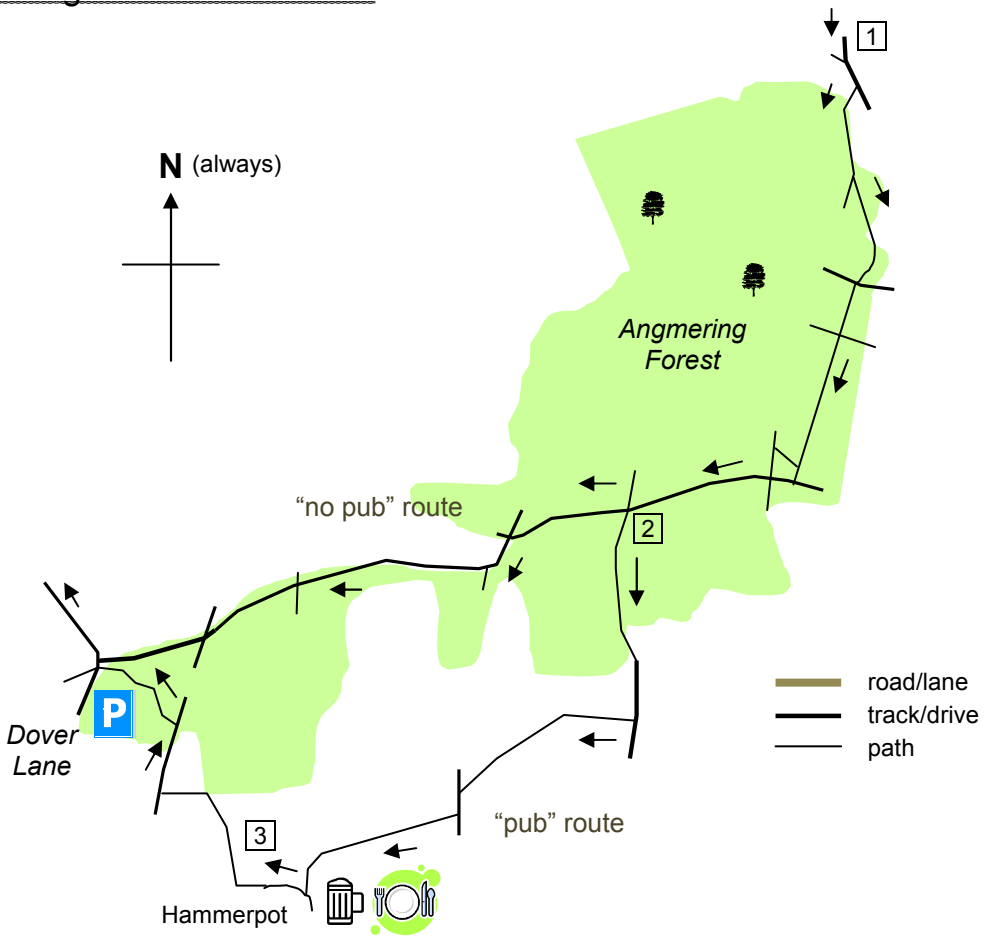
1 Starting in the Kithurst Hill car park, with your back to the approach lane, facing the view south, go through a large double metal gate, turn **right** on the track and immediately turn sharp **left** opposite a fingerpost onto a bridleway indicated by a blue arrow which goes across the centre of a field. At the other side, go over a crossing track by a fingerpost and continue ahead down the centre of the next field, with great views ahead and probably the incessant peep-peep of skylarks. At the other side you meet a line of trees. Turn **left** at a fingerpost and, in 25m, turn **right** by another fingerpost on a path that runs beside the line of trees. After 250m, a signed bridleway joins you from the right. At the end of the field, at a fingerpost, turn **left** on a wide chalky path and, in 150m, turn **right** at another post on a very wide track. At the end, you pass some trees on your left and reach Lee Farm at a T-junction.

2 Turn **left** on a concrete track, going away from the farm, approaching some hilly sheep pastures which make a charming picture in spring time. Shortly you reach two fingerposts by some metal gates. Bear **right** to the right-hand fingerpost and go through a small metal gate into the pasture. The tarmac drive on the right is a private drive belonging to the Angmering Park Estate. Walkers have a shorter route over the hill which is fine, except possibly for the ploughed field. Interestingly, all the mountain bikers *do* use the private drive! Walk along the sheep pasture parallel to the drive, veering away slightly left to go through a metal gate and uphill on a track. At the top, go through a large metal gate and keep straight ahead over a crossing track on a wide grassy path across the centre of the field. Continue similarly across the next field which is normally cropped. At the end, go through a small metal gate and turn **left**, thus joining that private drive.

3 Stay on the tarmac drive, past more sheep pastures and paddocks, avoiding all turn-offs, to come through a small gate beside an automatic one into the hamlet of Michelgrove, site of one of England's lost great houses.

Michelgrove was one of the largest and most famous houses in the county and was the home of the Shelley family from the late 1400s to 1800. (The poet Shelley was a relative.) It was built around 1540 by Sir William Shelley and enlarged later by his descendants. In 1828 it passed to the Duke of Norfolk who demolished it, taking its most notable fixtures to other sites such as Burton Park.

Leg 2: Michelgrove to Dover Lane 5 km=3 miles or 3¾ km=2¼ miles



1 Follow the drive down through trees. As you come out into the open, where a drive joins from the right, go another 50m and turn **right** opposite a finger-post on a path which goes between fields and up into woods. In 150m or so, you reach a fork. Take the **left** fork, the footpath. (The *right* fork, the bridleway, is part of the Monarch's Way long-distance path which would eventually lead to the pub in Burpham by a shorter route, although not described in this text, re-joining the walk at section 8). Follow this rooty stony path uphill and, at the top, bear **right** with the path to meet a track and a 4-way fingerpost. Go straight over the track on a (somewhat muddy) footpath. This path goes over a crossing path and straight on between a coppice, glowing with bluebells in spring, and a conifer forest. (If this path is muddy, there is a parallel path on the left between the trees which is dry.) Just before the end of the path, ignore a footpath on the right and immediately, at a T-junction, turn **right** on a rather muddy but thankfully wide bridleway. In 100m, go straight over a junction of paths and continue on the main track. A narrow parallel path on the left has the advantage of relative dryness and, in spring, bluebells. Continue over an unsigned path, past timber stacks, and continue down to the bottom of a shallow valley where there is a 4-way fingerpost.

Decision point. If you do *not* want a break at the pub in Hammerpot, skip forward in this text and do the section called **Hammerpot Bypass**. (There is a good pub in Burpham.) If you would like an extra break now – and some respite from the dark wood – continue with the next section.)

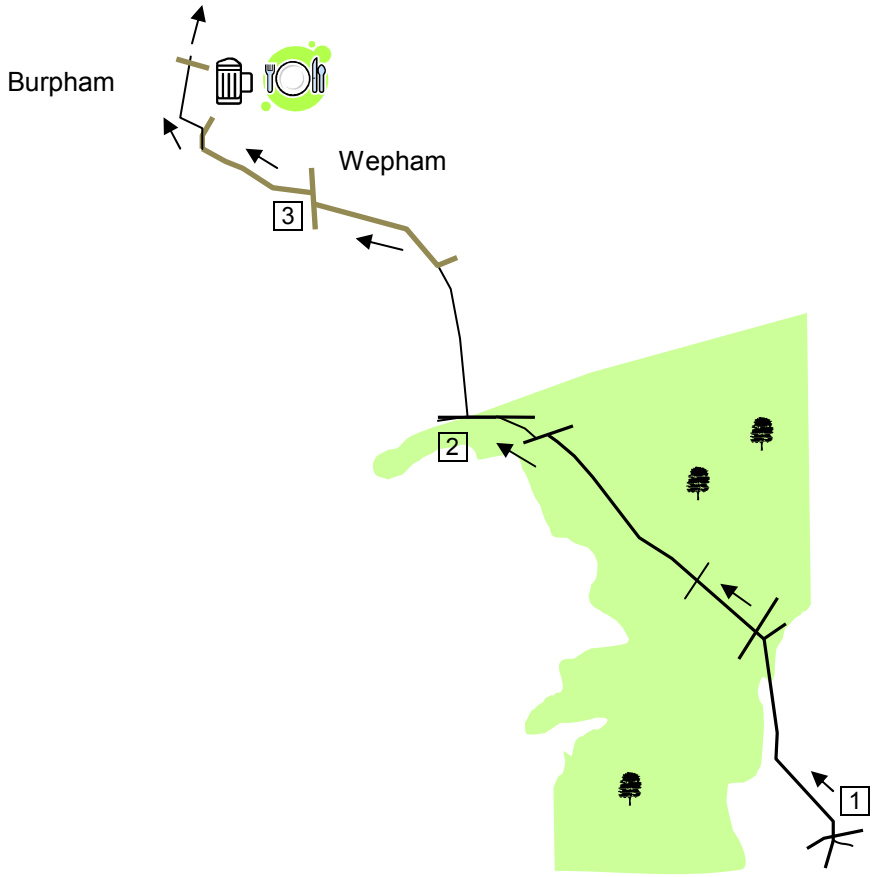
2 Turn **left** at the fingerpost on a wide, fairly clean path. It takes you over a stile beside a metal gate. You come past some farm buildings and cottages, ignoring a footpath on your left. Continue through the hamlet of Old Selden Farm (the farm is also a B&B). Just after the last garden wall, turn **right** on a grassy footpath beside a wire fence on your right. Go over a stile and through a strip of woodland, then diagonally **left** on a path across the next field. At the other side, go over a plank bridge and along a path beside a wire fence on your left, with a house soon on your right. You come out to a driveway. Turn **left** on the drive for 70m, then **right** at a fingerpost on a footpath that runs along the right-hand side of a large sloping field. After a line of gorse, your path goes over a 2-plank bridge to a T-junction with a track. Turn **left** on the track, using the dry side path, go through a small metal gate and turn **left** on a curving tarmac drive to reach the *Woodman's Arms* at Hammerpot.

The Woodman's Arms is a Fullers Pub with a pleasant little garden on the side. Originally a pair of cottages for estate workers, it became a pub in about 1650. In 2004 a fire broke out, completely destroying the pub. The tenants, Brian and Karen Liston, had only been at the Woodman's for seven weeks at the time of the fire, but they oversaw its rebuilding in the same style as the original, (including the thatched roof) and the pub re-opened in 2005. The Woodman's offers an impressive menu of traditional English fare, including the famous Sussex Smokies and Steak and Ale pies. Food is served all day Saturday and till 4pm Sunday, "usual" times otherwise. Oddly, they don't serve beer from the Hammerpot Brewery right here in the village. For that, you have to go to the next pub, the George at Burpham.

3 After your break, go back the way you came along the curving tarmac drive but keep going round till it comes back to the main A27 road. Turn **right** on a tarmac path beside the main road. In 100m, go **right** by an unneeded stile and along the left-hand side of a field. At a fingerpost, bear **left** over a stile or through a large (usually open) wooden gate. Follow this pleasant wide grassy path and, at the end, turn **right** on a fine wide tarmac drive lined with trees. This is the main approach drive for the Angmering Park estate. Just before some timber stacks, turn **left**, as signed, on a wide footpath. The woodlands on your left are notable for their bluebells in spring. This winding route goes through Butler's Copse and leads to the Dover Lane car park. Pass the car park on your left, passing a green *Footpath* sign, to reach a major junction of tarmac tracks. Avoid a tarmac track coming in from your right but turn **right** on a drive that has meadows on both sides.

The Hammerpot Bypass shortcut re-joins the main walk here.

Leg 3: Dover Lane to Burpham 4 km=2½ miles



1 The drive immediately bends left in front of a large wooden gate. In 250m, the drive curves right by a flint house, passing a field of colourful poultry and a water plant, reaching a junction of tracks. Veer **left**, ignoring a path on your right. Your track passes an unneeded stile and metal gate and takes you to another multiple junction. Ignore a wide footpath on your left and keep straight ahead uphill on a wide cinder path. You now have an easy 1 km walk through the forest, going over a crossing path at one stage. It ends at a T-junction with a tarmac track. Turn **left** on this track. This track is part of the Monarch's Way (MW).

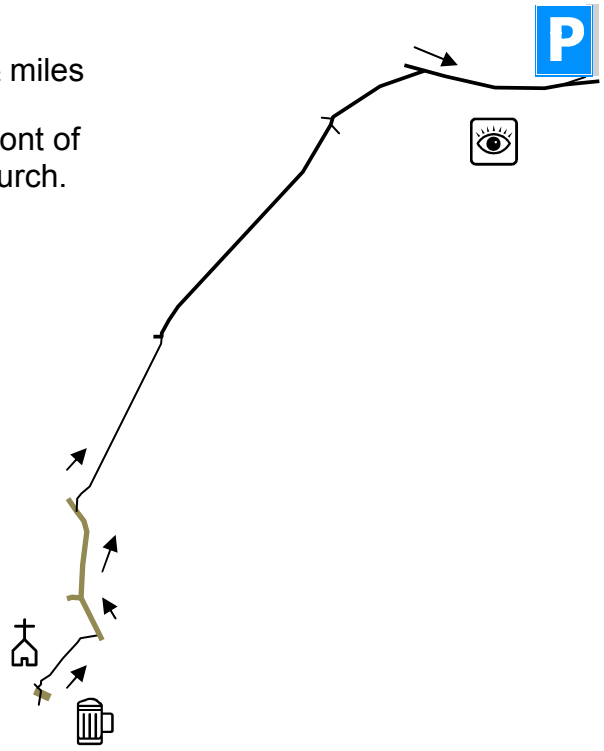
2 In 30m, turn **right** on a bridleway downhill. Go quickly over a crossing track and continue downhill, still on the MW, quite steeply. At the bottom you join a wide track from the right and come down to the head of a long narrow meadow. Turn **right** here on a track and, in 30m, continue ahead uphill, avoiding a private path on your left. At the top, your path takes you through a small metal gate to meet a concrete farm drive at a bend. Keep straight ahead in the direction of the bridleway sign. *The historic town of Arundel is on view on your left.* The drive runs downhill into the village of Wepham.

3 Turn **right** on the lane in Wepham. (The map shows a footpath straight ahead but the house owners have blocked it, although the road through the village is pleasant enough.) Immediately turn **left** on a side lane marked *to Splash Farm*. Ignore a stile on the right and continue down the lane. Ignore more footpaths left and right as you go. You pass the "Splash" where there is a stream, docile in summer, with a little path and bridge to take you over it. Where the lane bends right by Splash Farm, go straight ahead up steps.

Turn **left** over (or, if thin, past) a stile into a grassy space. Keep ahead across the centre, over another squeezable stile, and turn **right** towards a sports pavilion. Continue on a short drive to the lane in Burpham by the *George* pub.

The "George" at Burpham was on the brink of closing by 2013, another victim of the recession. Then three regulars clubbed together and bought the freehold. They offered shares to the other villagers and a further twelve families became involved. Not content with running "just a village pub", they installed a top-drawer kitchen, real ale pumps and superior loos. One feature is a selection of six local Sussex cheeses. They can be washed down with Arundel, Horsham Best and the (very local) Hammerpot.

Leg 4: Burpham to Kithurst Hill 5½ km=3½ miles



After your break, go straight over the lane in front of the pub and take the tarmac path up to the church.

Burpham goes back to Saxon times and stands on a "Burgh", a Saxon fortification, above the level of the flood-prone River Arun. Burpham was one of 30-odd defensive sites established by Alfred the Great to defend England from Danish / Viking invaders and provided 720 men-at-arms. The "Burghal Hidage" document produced around the year 900 lists Burpham alongside Winchester, Southampton and Lewes. Without places like Burpham we might all have been speaking Danish now and would not have needed subtitles to watch "The Killing". One of several literary sons of Burpham was Mervyn Peake writer of the pioneering 1948 "Gormenghast" fantasy trilogy.

Burpham's church of St Mary is early Norman, although a church stood here before 1066. If you find the clock in the tower has stopped, please inform the churchwarden as we're assured it does usually work!

Turn **right** just before the church and go through the churchyard. Go up a few steps to cross the wall and take a path ahead along the right-hand side of a large field. *The view here is a classic one with sheep in the valley on your right with hills beyond.* In the far corner, go down to a lane and turn **left** on it with more views left to Arundel Castle and Cathedral, now in full profile. At a junction, keep straight ahead as for *Peppering High Barn*. The lane curves left past a little green with a bench. Just after the last building, fork **right** at a fingerpost as indicated by a yellow arrow. Follow the concrete path, going through a small wooden gate. You now have a very easy long pacy stroll to the path on top of the South Downs. After 1 km you join a bridleway coming from your left. Keep going gently up on a nice wide dry path. After nearly 1½ km, as you enter a band of trees, ignore a bridleway on your right and immediately ignore one on your left, keeping ahead, a fraction right. At the top, by a (usually open) metal gate, veer **right** to join the South Downs Way. Your final stretch has a distant view of the sea and some woodland before leading you safely back to Kithurst Hill where the walk began.

Hammerpot Bypass

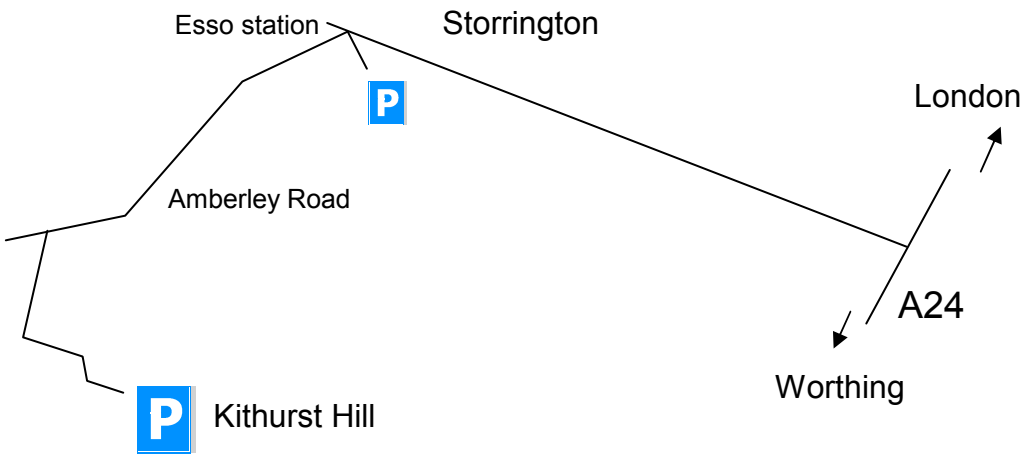
Take this shortcut if you do *not* want to have a break at the inn in Hammerpot.

Continue straight ahead at the 4-way fingerpost, slightly uphill on what should be a nice dry path. In 350m, at a T-junction and a fingerpost, turn **left**, ignoring a path straight ahead. Your path runs beside a field on your right and curves right to a fingerpost. Veer **right** here, ignoring the left turn. In late spring, there are bluebells in the woods on your left; later in the trees on your right too, where the is a little winding path that goes through them, avoiding the main track. At a 4-way fingerpost go straight over, past a large metal gate. In 250m or so, your path passes some farm buildings, goes over a diagonal crossing driveway and becomes tarmac. Continue for another 300m or so on the tarmac until you pass the Dover Lane car park on your left and reach a junction of drives. Turn **right** on a drive that has meadows on both sides.

Now pick up the main walk again at the start of Leg 3.

Getting there

By car: Storrington is signed off the A24 (London-Worthing) road. For the Kithurst Hill car park, take the B2139 after Storrington, signposted Amberley, and in about 1½ miles, turn **left** on a narrow lane. (There is only a small wooden sign indicating the Car Park.) If the lane seems rather rough, don't wrorry. Follow it up to the top of the Downs, ending at the Car Park.



The Dover Lane car park is off the A27 but you must approach it *from the west* (from Arundel) because of the dual carriageway. (However, there is a U-turn available just west of it.) It is one mile east of the turn-off for Blakehurst and is marked with a junction road sign and a slip road.

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