



Eartham and Halnaker

Distance: 18 km=11 miles, including ascent to the Windmill easy walking

Region: West Sussex

Date written: 23-mar-2014

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Last update: 22-oct-2018

Refreshments: Halnaker, Eartham

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

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

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Woodland trails, villages, views, pubs

In Brief

This is a magnificent walk over the South Downs near Chichester on long straight paths that make the walk seem shorter than the given length. On the way there are several surprises, including Halnaker Windmill and two good pubs, one especially celebrated in the region. (To reserve a table at the *George* at Eartham, ring 01243-814340.) As a climax, the route takes you through one of the largest and most impressive woods in Sussex.



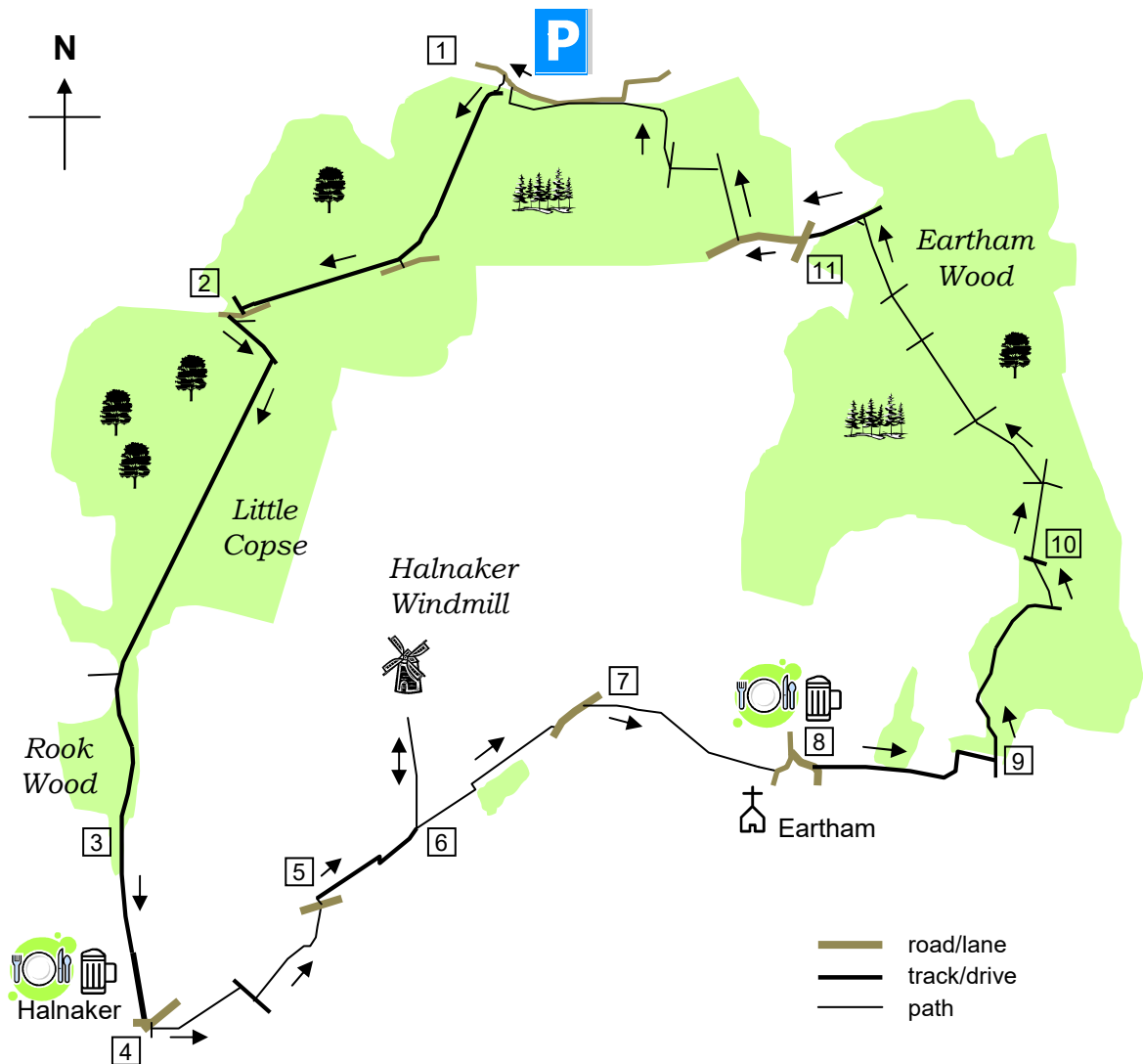
There are nettles and brambles on this walk, especially after the Windmill and in summer, so shorts should not be worn. This walk is generally dry underfoot and boots are best, as always, but not essential. It's excellent on a hot summer because of the plentiful shade. Your dog can come too if he is small or medium in size.



The walk begins at the car park in the hamlet of **Droke**, West Sussex, post-code **PO18 0JJ**. **Warning! isolated car park: leave car visibly empty - see [Guidelines](#).** For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

- 1 See map overleaf.** From the Droke car park, go out to the lane, turn **left** and, in 80m, opposite *Rubens Barn* (an upmarket B&B), turn **left** at a fingerpost on a bridleway. This narrow path leads up into woodland and veers right onto a wide path uphill. Stay on this chalky path as it becomes more grassy, leading up over the downland forest at a very gentle incline. At a fingerpost, another wide path joins you from the right. At the top, the path goes under power lines and shortly meets a path joining from the left. Immediately after this, at a junction, ignore a path on your left leading onto a road and instead bear **right**, staying on the main track. Your track runs long and straight, parallel to the road on your left. When you meet a wide crossing track, keep straight ahead, now on a more grassy path. At the top of a rise, before a field ahead, turn **left** on a path, through posts, to the road, Selhurstpark Road.



2 Turn **right** on the road and, in 60m, go **left** on a wide track, ignoring a stile and footpath on your left (*part of the Monarch's Way, a 990-km footpath from Worcester, where Charles II was defeated, to Shoreham-by-Sea*). Keep to the main path through a huge timber storage area belonging to Goodwood Estates. Just before a metal gate at a fingerpost veer **right** on a path. (*The private path straight ahead is Halnaker Gallop, a sweeping grass track that runs towards Halnaker Park, established in 1841 by Lord George Bentinck to train horses in preparation for Goodwood.*) Your long straight wide track leads downhill through thick woodland of Little Copse and continues between pine plantations. It soon gets even wider and you may have to skip over some deep ruts made by forestry vehicles. *In due course you will see open hillside to your left, the grounds of Halnaker Park.* After a total of 1½ km (1 mile), at the end of the straight section, ignore a footpath and a track on your right and keep ahead, the woodland of Rook Wood, now more mixed, the path less straight.

3 Finally you come out through a wooden gate beside a larger one into a meadow. *The flint wall on your right is a boundary of the Cass Sculpture Foundation, a large open-air gallery, open April-October.* *The large white house on the hill is Halnaker Park, one of Lutyen's last projects, built in 1938.* Next to it are the ruins of the Old Halnaker House. Go through a wooden gate on the other side and continue on a gravel track beside a wall on your right which conceals a piggery. You reach a tarmac lane at a bend: keep ahead, passing *Park Cottage* and, at

the end, turn **left** to reach the junction with the main A285 road in the hamlet of Halnaker. Your route is straight over in the direction of *Boxgrove Priory*, but first you may wish to turn left for a short break in the *Anglesey Arms*.



Halnaker (pronounced "Hannaker") is a "tything", i.e. a small section, of the nearby manor of Boxgrove. In Tudor times it was sometimes misspelt as "Halfnaked". It is well known for its windmill (seen shortly). It also lies on Stane Street, a Roman road running from London to Chichester which is 4 miles away. Another notable feature is the pub. The "Anglesey Arms" is a traditional country inn that does a lunch menu largely sourced locally. If you find the front entrance a little drab, this is because most visitors come in through the back where there is a large pretty garden.

- 4 Having crossed over the main road (or turning left if coming back from the pub), immediately after a track on the left, turn **left** on a signed footpath, going through a swing-gate at first keeping close to the low wall on your left. Just after the end of a wooden fence, at a 3-way fingerpost, turn sharp **left** and follow a line of ash trees which shortly becomes a double line. [Halnaker Windmill, your optional destination, is visible on the hill ahead.](#) You pass a vineyard on your left belonging to the Tinwood Estate. *You are apparently in the sunniest part of Britain, a micro-climate ideal for wine growing.* A swing-gate takes you down to Tinwood Lane. Turn **right** and, in 50m, turn **left** over a stile into a meadow. Cross straight over, going over another stile, and across the centre of a crop field, with new houses showing on your left. Your path goes down a shallow bank and zigzags right-left up into another field. Follow a path that runs about 10m from the left-hand edge, finally exiting to the main road.
- 5 Cross the main road carefully. Avoiding the private track ahead, turn **right** on a track for Warehead Farm, marked as a footpath. At *Mill Cottage* keep straight ahead. *This track, including a section of the main road just behind you, form part of the Roman road Stane Street. You can see it on the map as a long straight line.* Just before a metal gate, your path goes **right** over a stile and **left** again on a high narrow path, giving you views down to the right to an abandoned quarry, now used for motor sports. You can return to the wider track at any convenient gap. Where the track ends at a metal gate, your route continues, keeping to the right, straight ahead on a narrow path. [But you can now take a quick trip up to Halnaker Windmill, ½ km there and back, well worth the diversion both for the mill itself, and also for the great views from the top, an ideal picnic spot:](#) fork **left** through a new metal kissing-gate and follow a path up the left-hand side of a field to reach the mill, along with day trippers and families. [\[2015: the mill is currently fenced off, awaiting repairs.\]](#) At top you have views of the Solent, Chichester, the nearby coastal resorts and the wooded hills as far as Arundel to the east.

Halnaker Mill has stood at least since Tudor times. The current building is a simple tower four storeys high with a beehive cap. It used to be turned by hand to face the wind until a fantail was fitted. But it has not worked since 1905 when it was damaged by lightning. It was restored just for show without machinery and fantail. A restoration project is now nearly complete (2018).

- 6 After your optional trip to the windmill, continue as before along the narrow path beside a wire fence on your right. [\[Jul 2014: overgrown but passable.\]](#) After a stile, continue ahead beside another fence and a vineyard. After another stile, proceed along the right-hand side of a large sloping meadow. [\[Jul 2014: if too overgrown, turn left, walk on the right-hand side of the field and cut through a gap; then turn right and rejoin the footpath after 50m or so.\]](#) As the

edge veers left, your path goes through a gap on the **right**, through the remains of a fence and straight down between fields. *The small farmhouse on the left is Seabeach House, a highly regarded B&B.* In the bottom corner, go **right** by an unneeded stile into a layby and turn **left** on the main road. You pass a house with an aviary and the entrance to *Selhurst Park*. Just 30m after this, fork **right** at a fingerpost on a footpath.

- 7 Your rooty path runs through low woodland. Keep ahead over a stile, cross a track and follow a new wire fence on your left to a broken stile (difficult to see in the hedge) into a large field. Your destination now is the far right-hand corner. The fingerpost here points a little to the **right**, after which your path meets a short wooden post and continues down on a much clearer path. *Sometimes the ploughman forgets to mark the path. Consequently, you may see an improvised path leading straight ahead; if you take this, turn **right** at the next field boundary and **left** at the wooden post. You can also turn **right** and **left** along the edge.* Follow the wide path downhill and go through an old kissing-gate, then straight down between two pines. A narrow path leads between thorn bushes. Go through a wooden gate and up to join a drive beside a cemetery and the *Old Vicarage* in Eartham, coming out opposite the church.

The little village of Eartham is dominated by its tiny Norman church and its huge Eartham House. The earlier building was acquired by the statesman and MP William Huskisson who suffered the indignity in 1830 of being run over and killed by Stephenson's "Rocket" locomotive. The current building was designed by Lutyens in 1905 in a style he used again, as you saw, for Halnaker House. The house is now Great Ballard school. The church of St Margaret, which is a must-see, is Norman with 13th-century additions.



Turn **left** on the road to reach the *George* pub/restaurant.



The regulars at the "George and Dragon" (as it then was) 170 years ago would be astonished to see crowds coming a fair distance for the food, drink and atmosphere of this gem of a pub. When Goodwood is in season you will certainly need to book a table in the rather prettified interior. The menu includes popcorn mussels and three vegetarian dishes with extras on a chalkboard, plus four local real ales on tap. For those heading for the pretty garden on the side, it's worth noting that they also do teas and ices. The cheerful staff are very friendly to walkers.

- 8 After possible refreshment, turn **right** on the major road (in the opposite direction from the pub). In 100m, at a bend in the road, fork **left** onto a farm track marked as a footpath. Your path goes down then uphill between a large field on your right and a succession of smaller fields and woodland on your left. Where, at the end of the large field, you come to a junction with a track on your left, keep straight across into another field and turn **left** along the edge. Turn **right** in the corner and, in the far corner, go over a stile down to a T-junction and a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **left** here on a broad forest track.

- 9 Stay on this flinty track as it rises and falls over several mounds, soon entering a deeper wood where in late spring bluebells cover the ground. *[Care! some walkers went wrong in this section; first marker post not seen.]* Your path runs along a bank and, at a marker post, drops to the left. It then curves right and finally meets a 3-way junction and a marker post. Turn sharp **left** at the junction on a track downhill. You reach a crossing path



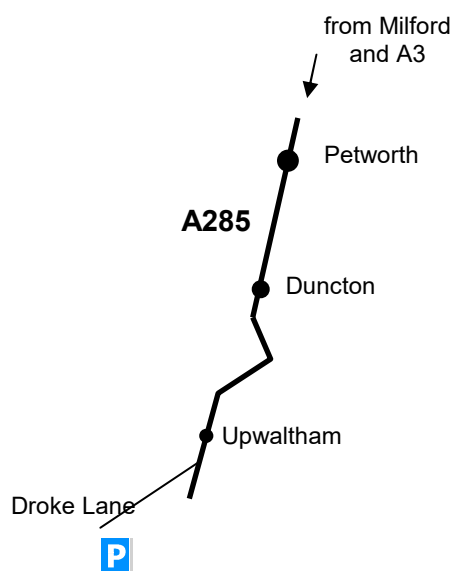
and another marker post. Welcome to Eartham Wood, one of the most awe-inspiring woods in the whole of Sussex.

- 10 Ignore both signed paths left and right and go straight over on a wide grassy path. There is a (fallen) sign stating *no horses* at the start but there are unmistakable signs of hoof prints. After 350m or so on this beautiful woodland path, you reach a crossing path. Turn **left** and immediately fork **right** on another splendid straight path. After 200m the path curves a fraction left and rises a little. In another 250m, at the top, you meet a major sandy track. Go straight over on a grassy path. In 500m, you cross another wide sandy track, followed in 300m by a more modest crossing path. In a further 350m, you finally approach a field ahead as another path joins from the left. Immediately fork **left** on a narrow path and turn **left** at a T-junction on a wide track that runs beside the field on your right. You shortly pass *Benges Cottage* and reach the A285 again at a road junction.
- 11 Go straight over the road junction and take a minor road opposite (Selhurst-park Road again), passing tourist signs for Goodwood. In 300m, just before a small seasonal car park, turn **right** opposite a fingerpost over a bank into the woods. Keep straight ahead avoiding a path on the left, going slightly downhill on a wide grassy path. In 350m you meet a post with (very faded) coloured arrows. Turn **left** here into a woodland coppice going downhill. Avoid turnings off to go quite steeply down to the bottom of the valley and a junction of paths. Turn **right** here at a fingerpost on a level path, going under wires. Where the grassy path starts to ascend, take the **right** fork slightly downhill. This path begins parallel to the overhead wires. In 250m the path makes a complete **left** turn and soon you can see Droke Lane on your right. The path, which can be a little muddy at times, comes quite close to the lane, then seems to diverge away uphill until finally you reach the Droke Lane car park where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: The Droke car park is on Droke Lane, a narrow lane just off the A285 road, 3 miles south of Duncton. If coming from the north, turn off the A3 at Milford and take the A285 through Petworth, following signs for Chichester. After Duncton the road goes round some tight turns. Just after the tiny hamlet of Upwaltham, look out on your right and take a turn-off marked *East Dean, Charlton, Singleton*. The car park is well signed, just over 1 mile on the left, $\frac{1}{3}$ mile after a double bend.

By bus/train: bus 99 from Chichester to Halnaker, 99A on Sundays. Check the timetables.



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