



Ebernoe, Pugs Bottom, Lurgashall

Distance: 19 km=12 miles easy but lengthy walking
or two walks of 12 km=7½ miles and 16½ km=10½ miles

Region: West Sussex

Date written: 16-apr-2010

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Refreshments: Lurgashall, Northchapel

Last update: 23-dec-2019

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere) *but the maps in this guide should be sufficient*

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Quiet villages, woodland, hills, views

In Brief

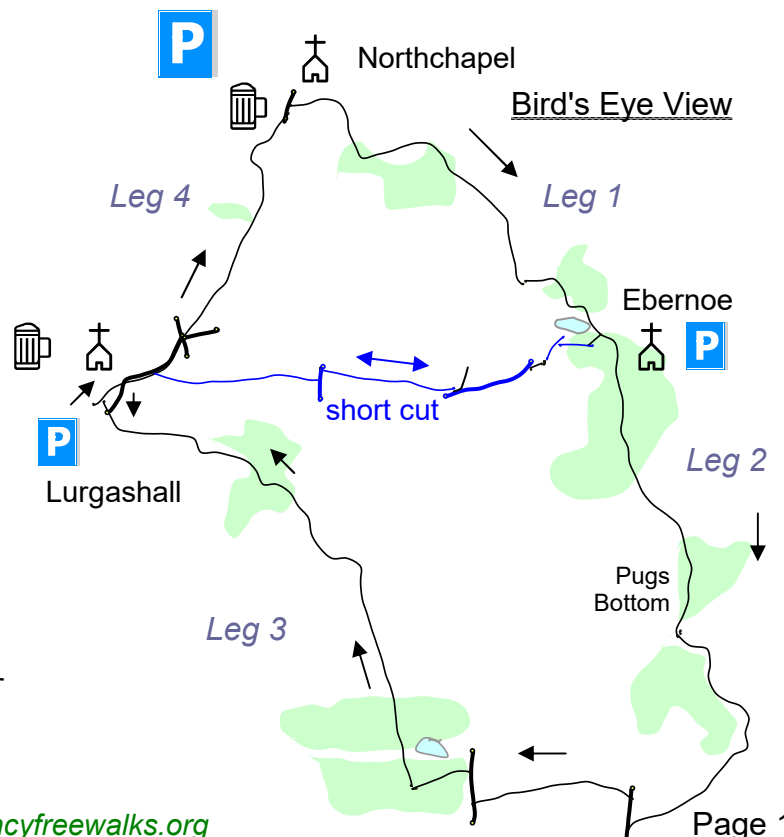
This walk is a fine day out in the gentle hills and forests of West Sussex. The main option is long but easy and well marked with fingerposts, but requiring alertness. There is a much shorter, but less beguiling, option using a short cut from Ebernoe to Lurgashall. If you wish to start in Lurgashall, omitting Northchapel, you can make use of this same short cut in the other direction.

There is an excellent place for a refreshment stop in Lurgashall, which has become very popular after press articles (to enquire at the *Noah's Ark*, ring 01428-707346).

The walk starts in **Northchapel** on the A283, **postcode GU28 9JA**. If coming by car from the north, turn left at the start of the village, into Piper's Lane and park on the roadside.

Other possible starting points are Ebernoe (by the church), Lurgashall and even Petworth Park (check closing times).

The going underfoot is easy with a good surface and no nettles (but some heavy undergrowth on the short cut). However, after rain you will find a fair amount of mud on this walk. The stile count is moderate. The walk seems fine for a dog provided that a lead is to hand because of cattle on Leg 3.

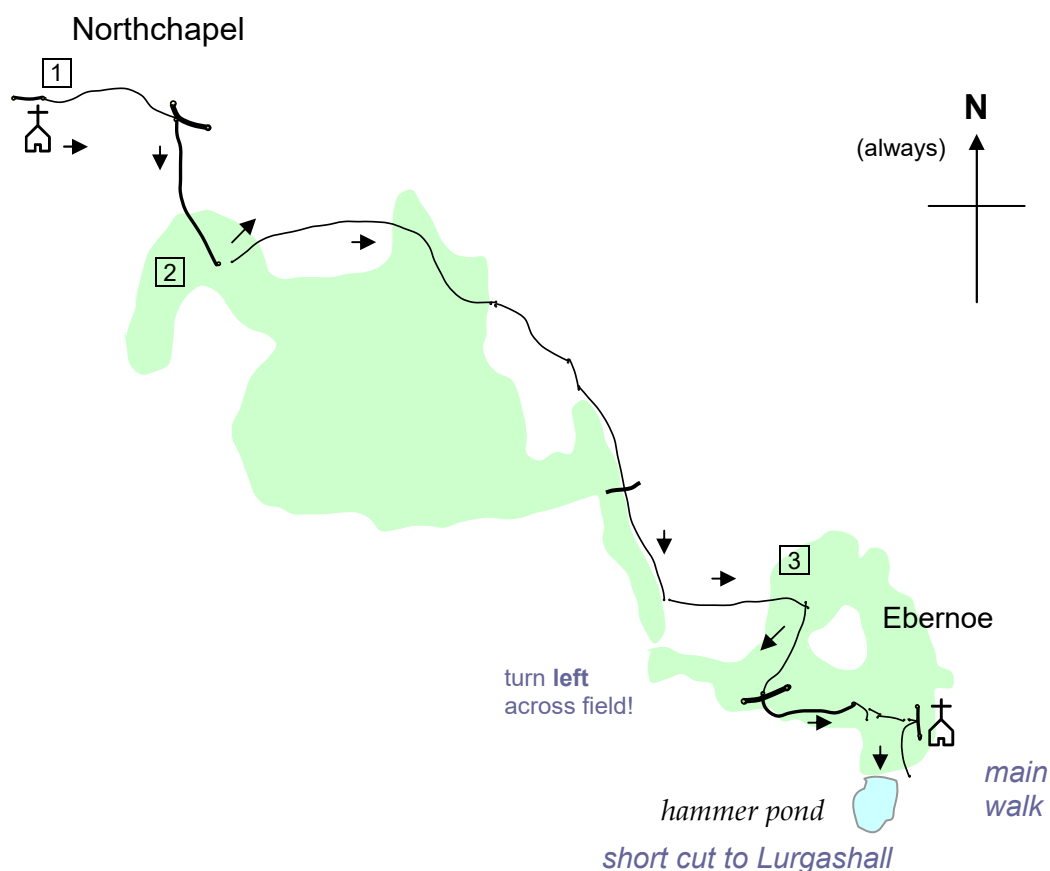


The Walk



The **Chiddingfold Super Monster** resumes here.

Leg 1: Northchapel to Ebernoe 4 km=2½ miles



- 1** Return to the main road and turn **left**, passing some delightful historic cottages. Shortly, opposite the *Half Moon Inn*, turn **left** on a marked foot-path. Pass to the right of the small St Michael's church. Exit the churchyard through a metal kissing gate. Walk down the bank past a redundant stile and follow the path along the left-hand side of some fields, ignoring the steps on your left. Follow the path along the left-hand side of some fields (possibly glancing back to enjoy the view of the church, the village and Black Down), crossing the centre of the last field and going over an avoidable stile to a bend in a road. Turn **right** on a wide rough track, going past a farmyard. When you reach a signposted junction in 200m, veer **left** on the main track into woods. In 200m, at a 3-way fingerpost, turn **left** onto a narrower footpath.
- 2** When you reach a crop field, continue ahead along its **left** side next to a hedge. After nearly 400m, you re-enter woodland. Just into the wood, at a 4-way fingerpost, keep straight ahead. Follow the wide path descending through pinewoods. In 200m, just after oak trees begin to dominate, you meet a much narrower diagonal crossing path by a 2-way fingerpost. [2019: the post was loose and hard to spot, propped up against a flimsy branch.] You cannot miss this turn because there is a sign ahead saying: "Private, no public right of way". Turn **left**, then bear **right** on the narrow path to come out, after about 50m, past a fingerpost, out into a meadow. Follow the ditch on your

right for only 20m and turn **right** over the ditch into the adjoining meadow. [2018: there used to be a fingerpost at this crucial turn but it has disappeared.] Turn **left** and follow first the **ditch**, then a **hedge** on your left, curving round the left-hand edge of the meadow. *Up on your left on a hillock, the object that looks like a lampshade is in fact an air traffic beacon.* You pass a marker post and, at the corner, you meet a large metal gate. Go over a stile here (or through the gate if not locked) and continue along the right-hand side of the next meadow. The path runs beside a wood on your right where a pond can be seen. Cross a stile and a farm drive by a 4-way fingerpost and continue along the right-hand side of the next large field. Go over a stile by a fingerpost [Dec 2019: the finger is missing]. After 100m look out for a newly-repaired fingerpost, which is sometimes hidden in an invasive hollybush. Turn **left** here on a faint path across the centre of the field.

3



On the other side, go over a stile and down a couple of steps into woodland. Follow this enchanting route, across a bridge over a stream and on a path uphill through bracken, and, in spring, a glorious show of bluebells. (There are two official paths to Ebernoe church. The one given here is slightly the longer but gives a wider view of the village.) At the top of a slope, by a 3-way fingerpost, turn **right**. The path runs between holly banks, crossing the left-hand side of a grassy area, with a cricket pitch on your right, to a lane. Cross the lane and go about 20m across the grass on the other side. *Note the mysterious gate in the old wall – its purpose forever veiled in history.* Now turn **left** on a woodland path. Continue over a farm track past a barn on your right and go straight ahead on a grassy path past *Barn Cottage*. In just 15m, turn **left** on a narrow signed woodland path, soon veering **left** at a T-junction. At once, you reach Ebernoe Church. Your route is **right** on a shingle path by a low wall just before the corner of the church. First, you will want to have a break and visit the church, after which you can go out through a little metal gate onto the shingle path.

Ebernoe is a much larger village than it appears because it includes so many scattered farmsteads. Its name means something like “tree by a stream” and its history goes back far into the past. Local folklore speaks of its short-bodied children who were stunted further by being fed on knotweed and sent to the royal court in service as dwarves. The church was built in 1865 from different coloured local stone. The supposed reason for building it was simply that the groom of Ebernoe House was tired of the Sunday journey to Kirdford church and wanted one day off in the week. Cricket is a local obsession and each summer at the Ebernoe Horn Fair the highest scoring batsman is presented with the horns of the roasted sheep. Ebernoe Common is a nature reserve and Site of Special Scientific Interest run by the Sussex Wildlife Trust. It is home to a host of species, notably of several rare bats.

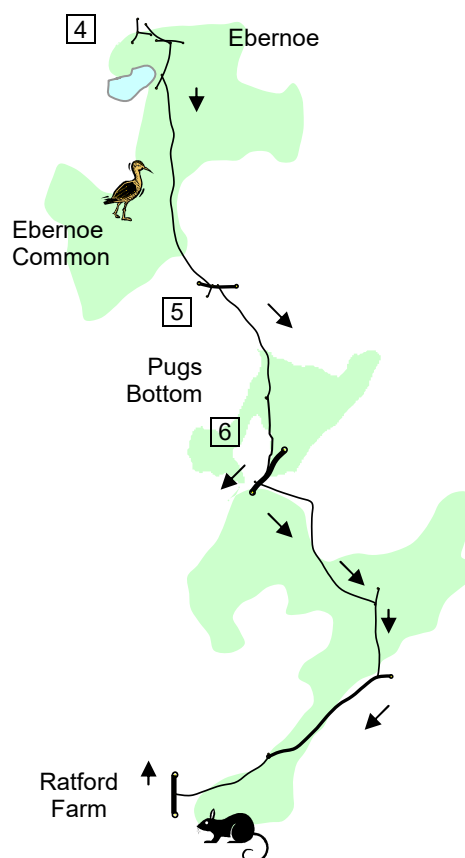
After turning **right** on the shingle path (or **left**, if coming out of the back of churchyard), continue down a long series of steps to the Furnace Pond. Keep the pond on your right until you meet a junction with a prominent path on your left. This is about 20m before the pond-side path turns right round a corner of the pond to go over a wooden bridge.

Decision Point. If you would like to proceed to Lurgashall by the shortest route, skip to the end of this text and follow **Short Cut: Ebernoe to Lurgashall**.

Turn **left** on the path leading away from the pond.

Leg 2: Ebernoe to Ratford Farm 5 km=3 miles

- 4 The next two sections need some extra concentration to avoid going astray. You soon go over a bridge. At a T-junction, turn **right** on a wide track. The track leads through a gate by a cattle grid with a slanting information tablet giving information on Ebernoe Common. In 20m, at a fingerpost, turn **right** on the main path, signed as a footpath. In 150m, at a 3-way fingerpost, fork **left** between two wooden posts. You are now in a fine woodland path of Ebernoe Common and the path follows the left-hand side of an open area with oak trees. *There is some mud here but it is generally skippable.* The path leads through a small wooden gate by a house between two (possibly dry) ponds, then over two two-plank bridges. Follow the fingerpost to merge with a stony track coming from your left. In 100m the track veers left with a farm gate on your right.
- 5 Ignore a signposted junction on your right and continue on the track to a large controlled wooden gate. Turn **right** just before this gate on a narrow path into the woods. The path takes you through rather dense bracken under mature oaks and over a crossing path. You then have a nice clear path through woodland, over a 2-plank bridge and through a swing gate. After nearly ½ km more of woodland walking, at a 2-way fingerpost, your path turns **left** via another 2-plank bridge. Welcome to the greenwoods and marshes of Pugs Bottom! After another two little bridges you are on a wide beechwood path. *The first big beech here is notable for the initials and monograms carved in it, some quite high up, some imaginative, some less so.* The path rises, runs parallel to a road, crosses a farm track, and meets the road. Turn **right** on the road.
- 6 Over 100m along the road, turn **left** on a signed bridleway. Soon there are pinewoods on the right (now harvested) and the path bends right. For 250m, the path runs beside birchwoods on your right before it enters dense woodland. Just after entering the wood, turn **left** as indicated by a fingerpost. For 300m on this straight sometimes marshy path, go straight over a crossing track and, shortly after, veer **right** as indicated. The path goes under power lines and continues through the wood [2015: over a fallen spruce or two]. At a junction, with a field visible ahead, turn **right** on a cinder track. *The meadow on your left is enigmatically called "Stedmans Journey".* Follow the path, avoiding several tracks, to emerge along the left-hand side of a meadow. At the other side, turn **right** on a cinder track up to a road by Ratford Farm. Turn **right** on the road.



your route; they all have a gate or stile on one side or the other. The tarmac drive now leads gently uphill, gaining fine views across the open country on all sides. Next come another grid, a group of farm buildings and another grid. *Cosily huddled in the valley on the left is Stagpark Farm with its dovecote. Ahead is a fine profile of Black Down, the highest hill in Sussex.* At the next junction, the route is straight ahead, over a grid. This pasture sometimes contains a fine herd of pedigree cattle. If you are nervous of cattle, you can sneak along the other side of the hedge, using two metal gates.

- 9 The drive curves left over a grid, then right, and comes to a Y-junction. Take the **left** fork, as indicated by the sign. Cross yet another grid (or go through a metal gate) and enter a long stretch of woodland. The drive bends **right** at a junction and then **left**. Just stay on the metalled drive at all times. The final stretch takes you past cottages belonging to the estate and out through a metal gate in the wall to a lane. Turn **right** on the lane.
- 10 After 60m, turn **left** through a gap in the hedge and cross a field on a clear path. Go by a redundant stile into woods and then out again into more fields. Go straight ahead keeping the hedge on your left. At the other side, go past an unneeded stile and descend into woodland. The path takes you across a bridge over a stream, up beside a horse meadow, by a playing field and out to a lane in the village of Lurgashall.

Lurgashall is a perfect village surrounding a village green, with brightly coloured houses dripping with wisteria in early summer. On the south side is a tiny village store where you can stock up for the journey. On the east side is the church of St Laurence with its large yew trees. On the north side is the Noah's Ark pub, a perfect place in a perfect location for dining and taking refreshment. It is open 11-11 (12-8.30 on Sundays). For a much more detailed description and history of Lurgashall, see another walk in this series: [Woolbeding Common & the Temple of the Winds](#).



Leg 4: Lurgashall to Northchapel 3½ km=2 miles

- 11 **See map overleaf.** Keep ahead alongside the village green heading for the *Noah's Ark*. In the far corner, turn **right** through a wooden gate into the churchyard, over-swept by age-old yew trees. Pass the unusual covered porch of St Laurence' church on your left. (See "*History of Lurgashall and its Church*" by A.C. Sharman, available from the rector.) Go down a fenced path and over a wooden bridge, emerging at a lane beside *The Chines*. Turn **left** on the lane, a notoriously narrow one for traffic. After 250m, opposite *Leigh Barton*, there is a gap and a fingerpost on your right.

Decision Point. If you are taking the option to omit Northchapel by going direct to Ebernow, skip to the end of this text and follow the **Short Cut: Lurgashall to Ebernow**.

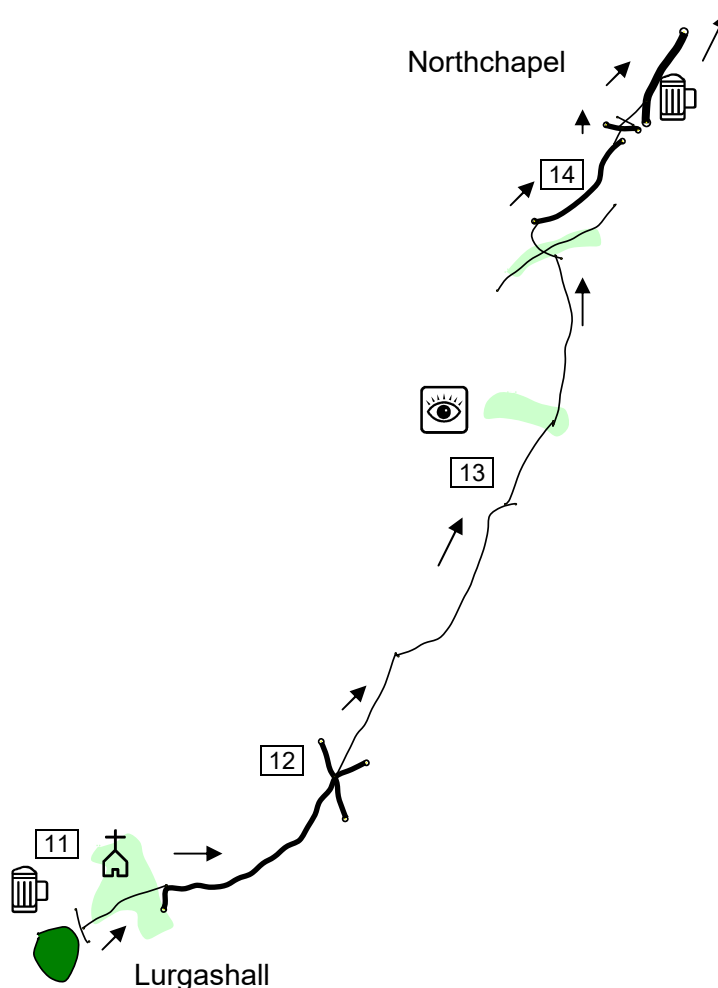
Continue another 250m on the lane, to reach a crossroads by the delectable *Crossways*.

- 12 Go over a stile in the opposite left-hand hedge. Cross the large meadow on a path that cuts it diagonally. Go over a stile on the other side and through a large (usually open) metal gate on the **right**. Go down the length of this narrow meadow, over a new stile beside a large (usually open?) metal gate and straight ahead over a ditch into a large meadow. Cross the meadow

up the steepest part, veering slightly left and aiming for a jutting corner visible up ahead. On reaching the corner, continue along the right-hand edge of the meadow and, in the far corner, go over a stile. Keep ahead for 30m to a 4-way fingerpost and keep straight on down the centre of the next meadow.

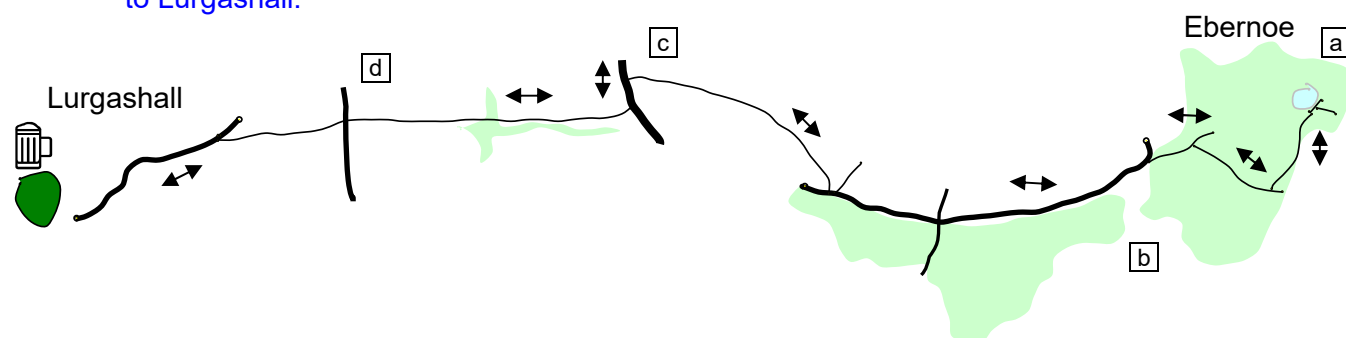
- 13 Cross the meadow veering to the right and aiming for a tree-line visible on the other side. As you come over the brow of the hill, look for a new timber swing gate visible in the fencing not far from the right-hand end of the tree-line ahead. After the gate, go through a belt of trees. Go over a stile on the other side and cross an untidy meadow keeping to the right-hand edge beside a large chicken coop, with the village of Northchapel now clearly visible in the valley below. In the far hedge, negotiate two stiles [2015: the second broken and unnecessary]. Follow a path **left** and **right** round a fenced paddock. In the bottom left corner, go **left** past a stile into woodland and turn sharp **left** over a bridge. Follow this little woodland path over another bridge, turn **right** just before a lane and finally join the lane.

- 14 Pass *Grove End* to reach a triangle of urban woodland. Veer **left** on a narrow path along the left-hand side of the woodland. On reaching a lane, cross straight over on a gravel drive, signed as a footpath. The path goes over a drive by a house, crosses a stream using a wooden bridge and goes up steps to the main road in the village. Turn **left** on the road, reaching the *Half Moon* and passing some charming cottages, soon reaching Piper's Lane and the point where the walk began.



Short Cut: Ebernoe to Lurgashall

Take this short cut if you want to shorten the walk and go directly from Ebernoe to Lurgashall.



- a** Stay on the pondside and go over the narrow wooden bridge. You are in a nature reserve looked after, as is much of the woodland here, by the Sussex Wildlife Trust (www.sussexwt.org.uk). Follow the narrow path into the wood, under wires and along a straight stretch. At the corner of a meadow, veer **right** to stay in the woods. For the next 250m, your path descends to the floor of the forest and you will notice a marshy section (or the remnant of a stream) on your right. Go **right** and **left** over this to come almost immediately to a plank bridge. Turn **right** over the bridge and follow the path steeply up a bank. Keep ahead all the time through an area of tall pines, beeches and oaks, passing two 2-way fingerposts. You come to a marker post at a junction: turn **left** here as indicated by the fingerpost. This path takes you past a large metal gate to a road at a bend. Keep straight ahead along the road. You will be following it for 1 km.
- b** You pass Colhook Farm and brideways left and right and, 500m later, reach the metal gatepost of a cottage and farm workshops. Ignore the footpath just before the gatepost but turn **right** over a (broken) stile on a footpath just after it. The path follows the right-hand side of a triangular meadow on a pleasant grassy path, passing a vineyard on your right and, on your left, a small meadow that sometimes holds shetland ponies. Go over a stile and into a rough meadow. Walk diagonally **left**, on a rather unclear path, to the top far corner where you can see a gap. Go through the gap and along the left-hand side of a meadow which is used for clay pigeon shooting. You have a fine view of Black Down. Go through a modern kissing gate, over an awkward stile in the next corner and along the left-hand side of a roped-off small pasture. Finally your path leads through the smaller of two metal gates to the main road.
- c** Cross the main road and turn **left** for 80m. Turn **right** over a plank bridge on a signed footpath. Turn **left** in the field and shortly **right** in the corner. [2015: when this route was researched in August, the whole field was planted with maize, covering the path. However, you can still make your way between the first and second lines of maize, even when the crop is above head height! Just persist: the path is narrow and the crop may seem impenetrable, but it definitely works.] Follow the left-hand edge to the far corner. Go over a stile, through a belt of trees, over another (broken and redundant) stile and continue along the left-hand side of the next field. At the far side, go through a metal barrier 15m to the right of the corner. Go diagonally across the next meadow towards a wooden pylon. Go through a metal barrier on the other side and across the centre of the next field. Next come a stile and plank bridge taking you to a lane.

d Cross the lane and go over a similar bridge and stile. Go along the left-hand side of the next field, continuing after the corner along the centre on a faint path. After a gap in the trees, barely 5m into the next field, turn **right** through a gap by a fingerpost onto a lane. Turn **left** on the lane into Lurgashall. The village is signalled by a sight of St Lawrence church and the first cottage. Follow the lane as it bends left here and soon reaches the Green at Lurgashall.

To finish the walk, continue from the **start** of **Leg 4** above, ... **or**

Decision Point. If you wish to miss delightful Lurgashall with its Noah's Ark pub and church and return directly to Northchapel, turn **right** on the lane and continue from the **end** of Leg 4 Section **11**.

Short Cut: Lurgashall to Ebernoe

Take this short cut if you want to shorten the walk and go directly from Lurgashall to Ebernoe.

Turn **right** over the stile into a field and turn immediately **left** through a gap. Take a diagonal path across the centre of the next field and, at the corner, continue along the right-hand side. In the far corner, go up a bank, over a (broken) stile and over a 2-plank bridge. Cross a tarmac lane and go over another 2-plank bridge and stile. Go straight across the field, heading for a wooden pylon. When you reach the far side, go through a metal barrier into the next meadow. Cross the meadow keeping almost the same direction as the overhead wires but crossing under them to a post visible just to the left of a pylon on the other side. Your path continues between two metal gates acting as a barrier. Turn **right** and **left** in the next field to resume along the right-hand edge. In the far corner continue over a stile, through a strip of woodland, over another stile, across a stream and up into a crop field. Follow the right-hand edge. [2015: when this route was researched in August, the whole field was planted with maize, covering the path. However, you can still make your way between the first and second lines of maize, even when the crop is above head height! Just persist: the path is narrow and the crop may seem impenetrable, but it definitely works.] At the far corner, turn **left**. Ignore a large metal gate on the right and, 15m after it, go right over a 2-plank bridge and up to the main road. Turn **left** on the road, using the grass verge on the right.

In 80m, under some wires, go right over a (broken) stile and along the roped-off right-hand side of a small pasture. In the next corner, go over an awkward stile (careful ! keep right to land on a concrete platform and avoid a hole). In the next corner, go through a modern kissing gate and, in the next corner, go through a gap into a rough sloping meadow. Start walking down the left-hand side but divert to the **right** down the centre of the meadow, heading for a dark house and vineyard visible at the bottom. Here, go between two low-tension pylons, over a stile and along a pleasant grassy path between the vineyard and a paddock. In the corner, go over a (broken) stile to a tarmac lane. Turn **left** on the lane, immediately ignoring a footpath on the left.

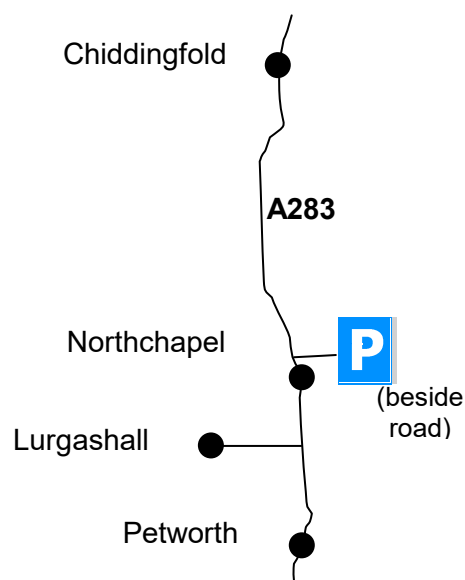
You will be following this lane for 1 km. In 500m you pass Colhook Farm and bridleways left and right. In another 500m, the lane bends left. **Leave** the lane here to go straight ahead at a fingerpost into the wood, in the direction of the finger, ignoring a path right. In 100m or so, you come to a

marker post. Keep **right** here, staying on the official footpath. In 100m you pass a 2-way fingerpost, followed by another in another 100m. Your path now descends to meet a stream. Turn **left** and then **right** over a wooden bridge. Keep **left** now and keep left, staying near the stream. Your path shortly veers right uphill above the stream through some majestic woodland and runs past the corner of a field on your right. After a short snaking course, the path runs under wires and descends to the pond side. You cross a bridge with railings close to the pond. 20m after the bridge, turn **right** away from the pond.

Now continue the walk from **Leg 2** above.

Getting there

By car: **Northchapel** is on the A283 between Chiddingfold and Petworth. **Lurgashall** is signposted off the A283 between Northchapel and Petworth.



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