



Henley (W.Sussex): The Duke of Cumberland Pub Walk

Distance: 3¼ km=2 miles

easy walking

Region: West Sussex

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Author: Hautboy

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Refreshments: Henley (W.Sussex)

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

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

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Historic village, woodland, pub

In Brief

The *Duke of Cumberland*, hardly changed from two hundred years ago, draws people from afar who appreciate its unusual rural setting. The *Duke* - as it is affectionately called - has several acres of woodland gardens with ponds, streams, rushets, sinks and troughs - with trout swimming in them - and a cobbled path which leads to the front door. There is still gas lighting in the pub and long wooden tables surround a small bar. The pub is tiny and full of character with old framed deeds on the walls and other icons from a line of tenant publicans with fishing and other country interests. The quality of its food and drink justified its appearance as Pub of the Year 2019 (*The Times' 25 Best Country Pubs*), in the *Michelin Guide 2020* and in the *Waitrose Good Food Guide 2020*.



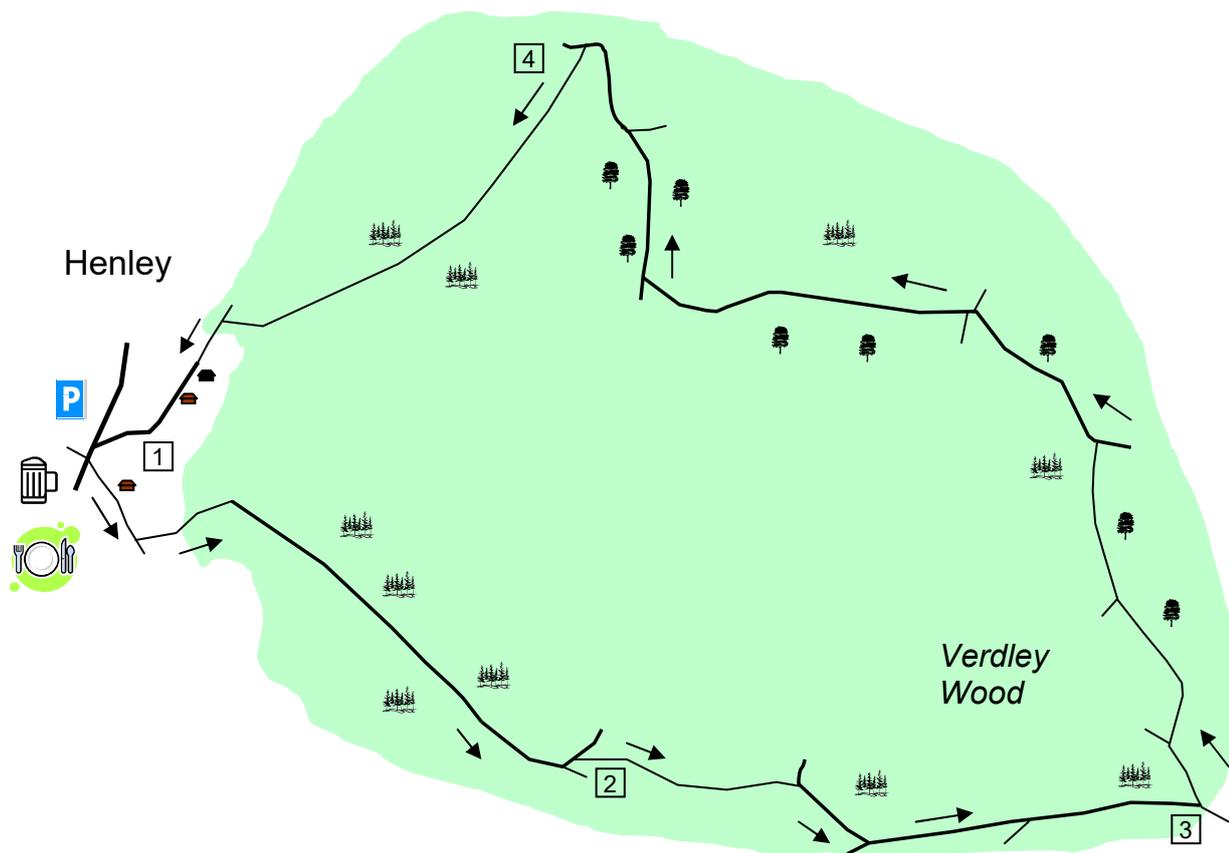
This is a charming woodland circular walk from an absolutely delightful hamlet hidden in the woods. There are no nettles on this walk but you need stout sensible shoes or boots. Your dog will love this walk too.

The walk begins at the car park beside the *Duke of Cumberland* pub in **Henley W.Sussex**, off the A286 between Haslemere and Midhurst, **postcode GU27 3HQ**. The car park is not marked "*patrons only*" but we suggest that you must eat and/or drink in the pub before or, more likely, after the walk. This small pub, and hence the car park, get extremely busy especially at weekends, so a start before opening hours is advisable. To make a reservation, ring 01428 652280. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

Henley is a hamlet with just sixteen houses, one of which is the pub and another a converted mission hall. Over half the buildings are Grade 2 listed and date back to 1575 or before, which makes the hamlet a heritage site. Levadas and watercourses run through it, sourced from a prolific local spring which never dries up even in the driest summer. Up to the early 1950s the whole lane was made up of huge, pillow-shaped cobbles the origin of which is still believed to be Roman, though there is no evidence of the road pre-dating 1550.

The Walk

- 1 Opposite the entrance to the car park, take the track signposted as a foot-path by a red letterbox and 'phone box. Just past a bend and *Yew Tree Cottage*, at a fingerpost, turn **left** on a narrow path between hedges. Suddenly, you're in deep woodland as your path zigzags over a 2-plank bridge to cross a stream. Keep straight on along this straight woodland path, passing a fingerpost as you cross some forestry tracks. Your path is now wider with vehicle tracks. $\frac{1}{2}$ km from the start, you come out into a more open area. Immediately ignore a narrow path which forks right uphill but, only 5m further, fork **right** at a fingerpost, thus leaving the main track which curves downhill.



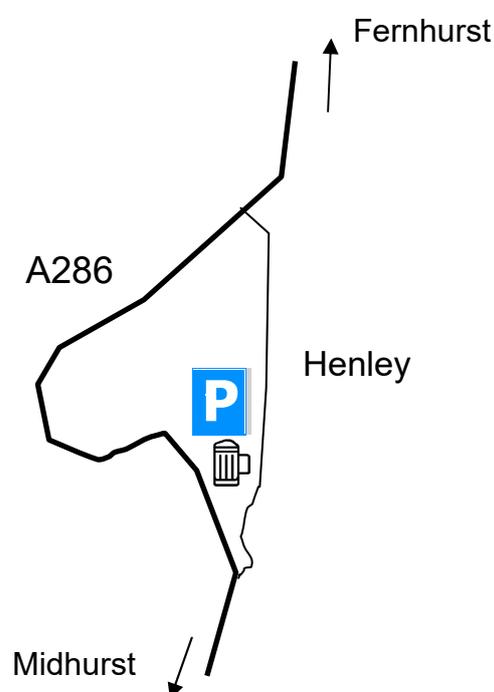
- 2 This narrow path runs gently uphill through heather, ferns and birch, giving you views left over the trees as you gradually ascend. At a junction and post with a faded arrow, keep straight ahead. *Note that you are on part of the Serpent Trail, a 108-km sinewy path from Petersfield to Haslemere.* (There may be a few muddy sections along this path, all fairly easy to hop over.) In 250m, where your path enters trees and meets a stony path, keep **right** uphill, in the direction of the yellow arrow. In a further 80m, at a junction with a track coming down from the right, go straight ahead, now downhill. You are on a wide straight forestry path. At the top of a slope, a path joins you from the right and your path descends into the valley. You finally reach a junction with a 3-way fingerpost. Turn sharp **left** on a valley bridleway through Verdley Wood.
- 3 Keep to the main path, avoiding grassy paths leading off, veering **left** at a fingerpost. You come to a T-junction with a wide track. Turn **left**, still following the sign for the bridleway. The path zigzags right-left in a forestry area and enters a more open space. Ignore junctions on both sides and stay on the wide sandy track ahead. In 350m, you come to a T-junction,

probably with more forestry operations in evidence. Turn **right** here as indicated by the fingerpost. Shortly, you meet a footpath coming from the right and another fingerpost: keep straight ahead here on the main path. In another 100m, your path suddenly bends left and on your immediately left is a post with arrows.

- 4 **Leave** the wide track here by turning **left** on a wide grassy path in the direction of a faded yellow arrow. The path soon gets rather churned up but other walkers have carved an easy route around the worst of it. When you reach a bank and a fence, keep straight ahead and quickly, at a T-junction, turn **left** on a path that runs under hollies with small fields on each side. You emerge on a lawn opposite the exquisite *White Cottage*. Continue up the drive past a timbered Tudor cottage which seems to be snuggling up against the small extension on its side. Finally you reach the lane in the centre of Henley. Turn left back to the pub where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Henley is signposted east off the A286 between Haslemere / Fernhurst and Midhurst. If coming from the north (Guildford - Haslemere - Fernhurst), the turn off for Henley is on the left at a bend just after Marco Pierre White's *King's Arms*. If coming from the south (Chichester - Midhurst), the turn off for Henley is a narrow lane on the **right**, *completely unmarked*. It is in a sunken section, just over a slight crest, before a left bend ahead. It is next to the entrance to *Verdley Hill House*, with the name on a round pillar. (If you miss this turning, there is another *very tight* right turn in 300m. Or you can take the next *signposted* turning right much further on, as for the northern approach.)



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