



Lurgashall and Lickfold

Distance: 9 km=5½ miles

easy walking

Region: West Sussex

Date written: 18-mar-2016

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Last update: 16-mar-2020

Refreshments: Lickfold, Lurgashall

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere) *but the map in this guide should suffice*

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Village, water, woodland, green meadows, easy field paths, fine food

In Brief

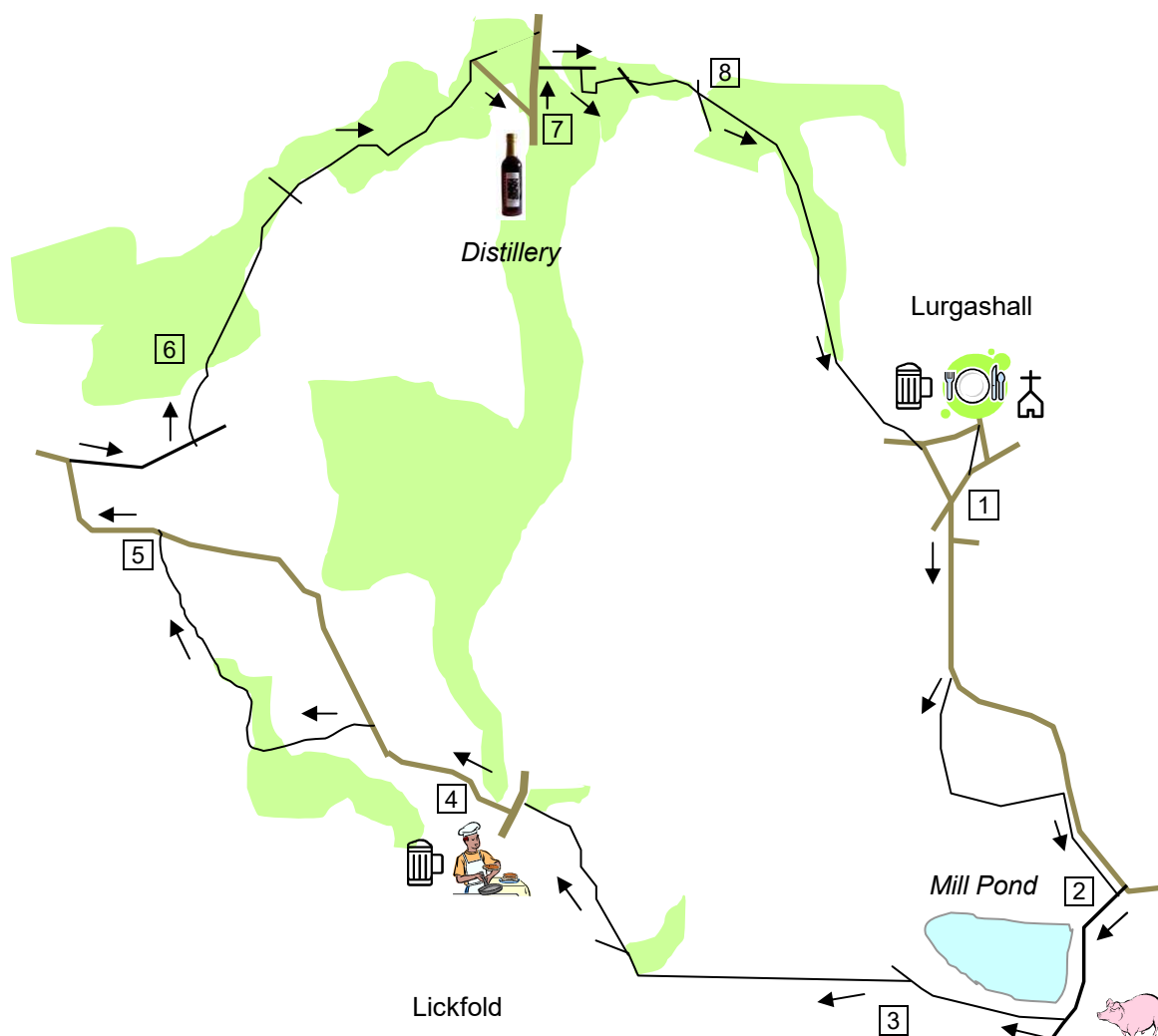
This is a gentle walk through the open pastures and woodland of this lesser-known part West Sussex. It takes you through areas already visited by other walks in this series but on completely new paths, or in a different direction. The centre point of this walk is one of the best gastropubs in West Sussex which charges Mayfair prices but will be happy to pull you a pint when you relax on their comfortable sofas. At the start and finish is a typical village pub by a cricket green. (To enquire at the *Lickfold Inn*, ring 01789-532-535, for the *Noah's Ark*, ring 01428-707346.)



There are nettles along some sections of this walk, so wearing shorts is inadvisable. The course is fairly dry and the terrain easy. As always, boots are a comfort if the weather has been damp, since this is a Wealden walk. Your dog will be happy on this walk if he is not too big to manage the stiles; both pubs allow dogs.

The walk begins in the car park at **Lurgashall**, West Sussex, postcode **GU28 9ET**, between the pub and the church, or anywhere on the roadside. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



The name 'Lurgashall' is Saxon meaning "Hall of Leotegar" who settled here in around year 495. For a much longer account of this fascinating village see the other walk in this series 'Woolbeding Common and the Temple of the Winds'.

- 1 Starting in Lurgashall, go to the south side of the green where there is a red phone box and the village shop. Pass them on your left to reach a four-way junction by the aptly named *Signpost Cottage*. Fork **left** here in the direction of *Village Hall, Mill Farm*. 250m after passing the last house, as the lane curves left under great oaks, go **right** at a fingerpost, up steps and **left** along the left-hand side of a field, on a generous grassy verge. *The are fine views right to Bexleyhill and its aerial*. Your path goes under wires and then through a large gap/tractor path in the hedge. Continue round the left-hand side of several fields, using the large gaps/tractor paths, always keeping the bank on your immediate left. After the last field, go over a stile (which can be squeezed past) to a tarmac lane near a road junction.
- 2 Turn **right** on the lane to reach, on your right, the Mill Pond in 150m. The lane is a causeway across the side of the pond, going over a sluice, running between the buildings of Mill Farm. *The farm specialises in rare pig breeds and you may see free-range piglets along the way*. Continue ahead to a large metal gate by a 3-way fingerpost. Do *not* go through the metal gate but, immediately before it, turn **right** on a footpath and follow a wide sandy track

across the field. The stone-lined surface suggests that you are on an old road-way.

- 3 When you reach the end of the field, bear **right** on a wide farmer's path, avoiding a path beside the field on your left but, in just 20m, go **left** through a gap into a large field (care! some walkers go wrong here as ploughing may obscure the paths) and take a diagonal path across it, in roughly the same direction as the previous field crossing. In the far corner, go through a gap and take a diagonal path across the next field (possibly a fainter path following a vehicle track). In the far corner, go down the grass and through a large metal gate, past a new 4-way sign, into a luscious green space. Immediately turn **right** on a path through bushes, winding across an open area where springs erupt and where the best blackberries are to be found. Go up and through a gate, and along the right-hand side of an attractive meadow, crossing under wires. Continue through a gap in the corner and similarly beside the next meadow, passing a tile-hung cottage on your right. Your path takes you over a stile, on a narrow path between fences and down steps to a road. Turn **left** on the road, immediately reaching the *Lickfold Inn*.



The half timbered Lickfold Inn was a roadside local until it was adapted by a top chef as a fine-dining restaurant which got it placed in the Sunday Times' Top "100 Restaurants in the UK". After a downturn, it was taken over by Jane Devonshire, winner of BBC Masterchef in 2016. The Lickfold makes use of local sources (possibly the cattle you met on the way here) for its inventive English fare. The Lickfold Inn is closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

- 4 After a possible break, take the lane beside the pub, signposted *Fernhurst*, passing the old barns of *Gentils Farm*. *The broad crest of Blackdown is in full view on your right*. The road curves right and passes *Lickfold House* on your left. Just after the house, at a small fingerpost, go **left** on a wide grassy path running beside a lush meadow on your right. *There is a small herd of noisy cattle corralled here in one of the fields but sometimes they may be in the field on this route, as when the author arrived, walking past them without any problems. But if you believe this might be a snag, simply stay on the lane, re-joining the walk after 750m at Hoewyck Farm.* As you enter woodland, at a fingerpost, keep straight ahead, ignoring a left turn. The path crosses a deep stream and approaches a large old wooden gate. Go over a stile beside the gate and follow the right-hand side of a pasture. The edge curves left and reaches a large metal gate. Go through this gate (releasing a clasp on the chain) and continue similarly in the next pasture. Near the top right-hand corner, go **right** over a stile and go diagonally up the grass and through a large wooden gate, out to the lane.
- 5 Turn **left** on the lane, passing the old barn of *Hoewyck Farm*. Stay on the road as it bends right, ignoring a footpath on your left. Where the road bends left, **leave** it by turning **right** on a signposted bridleway. Continue through a (usually open) metal gate and follow the sandy path, gradually rising under hollies. After 300m on this path, go through a small wooden gate and, in 10m, go **left** through a large wooden gate into a sloping sheep pasture. (This tactic avoids the stile.) Go up the left-hand side of the pasture and veer **right** to cut the top left-hand corner. As you approach woodland, avoid a large wooden gate and go **left** over a stile just 10m after it.

- 6 Follow a clear path through Gentles Copse. The path goes over a 2-plank bridge and a stile into a large grassy meadow. Follow the left-hand edge and, after 300m, at a 4-way fingerpost, keep straight on, staying in the meadow. Shortly, go over a stile in the corner onto a woodland path. The path soon executes a right-left double bend and takes you over a 2-plank bridge with a rail. It meets a stony track with the gatehouse to the Black Down Park Estate on your left. Turn **right** on this track. The track comes out to a road. Your route is **left** on the road but first, just on your right, is a rather eccentric building.



The Blackdown Distillery is an award-winning producer of craft spirits, mead and vermouth, including gins, fruit liqueurs and Silver Birch Vodka (which uses birch sap). The Distillery has a shop and café and provides wood-fired pizzas. For enquiries, ring 01428-707654.

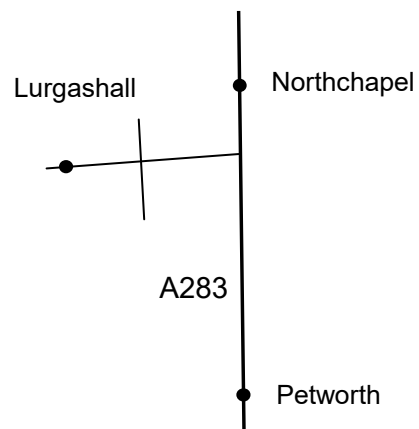


- 7 Having turned left on the road, in 100m turn **right** on a rough tarmac lane. In 100m, opposite *Guardian Cottage*, turn **right** at a fingerpost into woodland. *Don't miss this turn! – the path is difficult to make out and the post may be hidden in bracken.* Follow the path, aiming to the left in the bracken, to reach a marker post where your path bends **left**. At a 3-way fingerpost, turn **left**. Your path emerges from the wood, across grass to a tarmac drive. Turn **right** on the drive and immediately **left** at a fingerpost on a woodland path and quickly bear **left** at another fingerpost. You meet the corner of a field by a bank, next to a stile, an old gate and a fence. Avoid the wide path straight ahead and instead go **left** over the bank and veer **right** on another good path.

- 8 Follow this woodland path for nearly 800m. On your left, the wood falls away quite steeply in places. Finally, you come through a swing-gate into an open meadow. Keep to the right-hand side of the first small meadow, leading to a small gate into another meadow. *The spire of St Laurence Church is visible ahead.* A swing-gate takes you into an orchard, followed by another swing-gate where you path veers a fraction left. **You cannot help but notice, if you have a backpack, how tight these gates are!** Two more swing-gates, with an orchard in between, lead out to a tarmac lane. Turn **left**, leading immediately back to the village green where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Lurgashall is signposted off the Guildford-Petworth Road. If coming from the London area, take the A3, turn off at Milford onto the A283 and go through Chiddingfold and Northchapel. Look for a signpost pointing **right**, 1 mile south of Northchapel.



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