



Iron Hill, Milland, Older Hill

Distance: 16 km=10 miles

easy-to-moderate walking

Region: West Sussex

Date written: 17-feb-2014

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Refreshments: Milland, Liphook

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

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Woodland, hills, green meadows, heath, views

In Brief

This is a wonderful, rather energetic, walk in a hilly region on the Sussex-Hampshire border, combining the steep Maysleith Hanger and another long string of hills in this lesser-known part of Sussex.

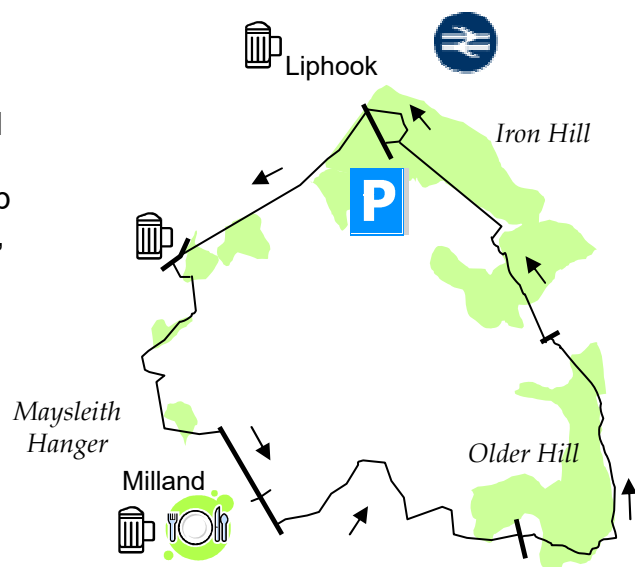


There were no nettles or brambles when this walk was done in February but in high summer you will find the paths more overgrown and the views more obscured by foliage. Because of the hilly terrain and the well-surfaced paths in the valley, this walk is mainly dry underfoot, although this can change significantly in the wetter seasons when boots are recommended. Your dog can come with you since the pubs and the stiles are dog-friendly.

The walk begins at the **Iron Hill** car park, just outside Liphook, Hants (although this walk is entirely in West Sussex), grid ref SU848303, nearest postcode **GU30 7LP**, www.w3w.co/infinite.sunbeam.vent.

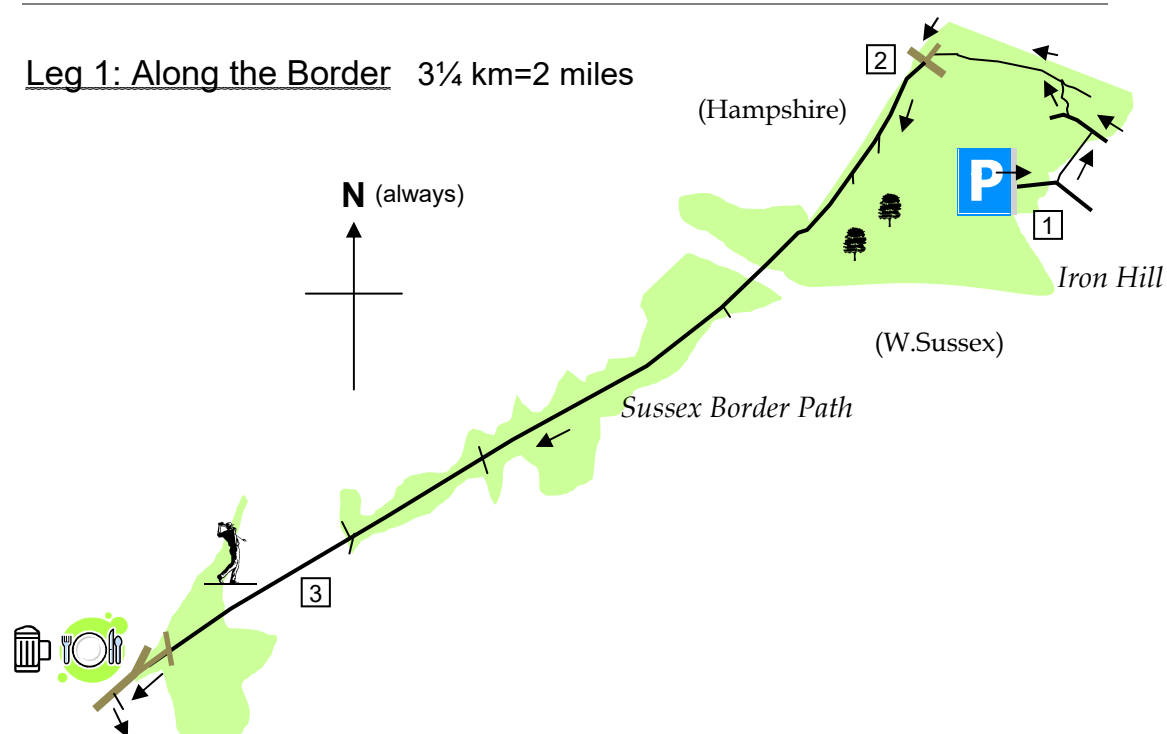
Another good starting place is **Milland**, postcode **GU30 7NA**, if you want to end the walk at lunch time. This walk can also be reached by **rail**, with a short hop at the start and finish. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

Bird's Eye View



The Walk

Leg 1: Along the Border 3¼ km=2 miles



- 1 From the back of the Iron Hill car park, take the main path through an open 1-bar barrier uphill. In 100m, at the top of the slope, leave the main path which curves away right, and instead fork **left** on a narrower path. (a) In 15m, ignore two minor paths on your right and on your left. Your path curves left and comes down to a wide crossing path. Turn **left** on the crossing path. In 60m, just after a bend, turn **right** on a path into the pines. Keep to the main path downhill. In 50m, it zigzags left-right past an earth bank, descending into a valley. Immediately wheel **left** to join a waymarked path running along the bottom of the valley. Turn **left**, quickly reaching a white-on-blue marker post at a fork with a farm track. Fork **right** as directed and follow this woodland path, with a ditch and a fence on your right, for 300m or so. Finally you come out to a tarmac lane. Turn **left** to a road junction.
- 2 Cross straight over the major road, with *Hampshire* and *Liphook* signs on your right, to a wide path opposite, marked as a byway. *You are on part of the Sussex Border Path (SBP) although it is unsigned at this point. The SBP runs around the borders of both Sussexes. This path is also the start of the New Lipchis Way which runs from here to Chichester and also part of the Serpent Trail, a wonderful snaking route from Haslemere to Petersfield.* Your path joins a wide track coming from the left. Ignore two private left forks to North Lodge Farm soon afterwards, staying on the main path at all times, crossing under power lines. You pass a metal barrier on your left, and more fields and gates, some wrought iron and whelp-topped gateposts, indicating that you are passing the Wheatsheaf Inclosure [sic], an exclusive housing district. At a 4-way signposted junction, keep straight on.
- 3 On your left soon is the Forestry Commission's *Hatch Firs* plantation and you pass on your right the Liphook Golf Club's car park. Ignore a bridleway that forks left at a fingerpost and keep straight ahead across a golf green, going uphill through gorse and birch and crossing another green. Keep straight ahead at another fingerpost. More woodland takes you quickly to a road junction. Cross the road and follow the short tarmac to the main



B2070 road and cross the road to the *Black Fox Inn*. If you started late, this is an excellent place for lunch, serving a good, if pricey, menu (remember, this is Liphook!) washed down with Bass, the ubiquitous Doom Bar and the sublime Bowman's Swift One. The pub also boasts a skittle alley.

Leg 2: Over the Hanger 3¼ km=2 miles

- 1 After a possible pause, cross the main road again and take a signed narrow footpath immediately opposite the pub. The footpath runs between plantations and through hollies. At a T-junction with a 3-way fingerpost, turn **left** and continue until you meet a road beside a stone cottage. Turn **right** on the road and ignore a bridleway on your left to pass between two ball-crested stone gate posts and reach the entrance to *Milland House*.

Milland House was originally Elizabethan. It was home to one of Charles II's mistresses (they say the feisty Louise, though that's just one of countless fanciful tales, along with smugglers, monks and goodness knows what else). It was rebuilt in Victorian Tyrolean Gothic style at the beginning of the 1900s after a fire.

- 2 Opposite the entrance, turn **right** on a track by a concealed fingerpost. Do not take the footpath straight ahead over a stile but turn immediately **left**, initially parallel to the road, on a path that runs along the field boundary. In 150m, the path goes by the remains of a stile and has woods on each side. 200m or so further on, the terrain opens out thanks to electricity wires and there is a spectacular view left across the steep Maysleith Hanger as you pass a marker post. 150m further on, you come to a 4-way fingerpost at a crossing track. Turn **left** here. As a diversion, by turning **right**, you can visit the late-Victorian *Milland Church of St Luke and the Tuxlith Chapel*. This is also seen on the other walk in this series, "Durford Heath and Milland Mill". You need to retrace your steps afterwards.

- 3 Your path descends the hanger very steeply down a flight of stone steps with a handrail and you should exercise extreme care. At the bottom, cross straight over another path by a fingerpost. You now have great views ahead, where the foliage permits, as you go steeply downhill under beeches. As you come to a high bank, turn **left** as indicated. A few more steps take you alongside *Maysleith* house and farm buildings. Follow their driveway, leading away from the farm, for only 30m to a 4-way fingerposted junction. Ignore the wide bridleway (blue arrow) which forks left and instead fork right (yellow arrow) on a level grass path. In a further 30m, at a 3-way fingerpost in front of a large metal gate, ignore the path ahead to the left of the gate and instead turn **right** beside a small cow pasture. In 80m, you reach a metal gate. Glancing back from here, the stone farm house and barn make an attractive picture.



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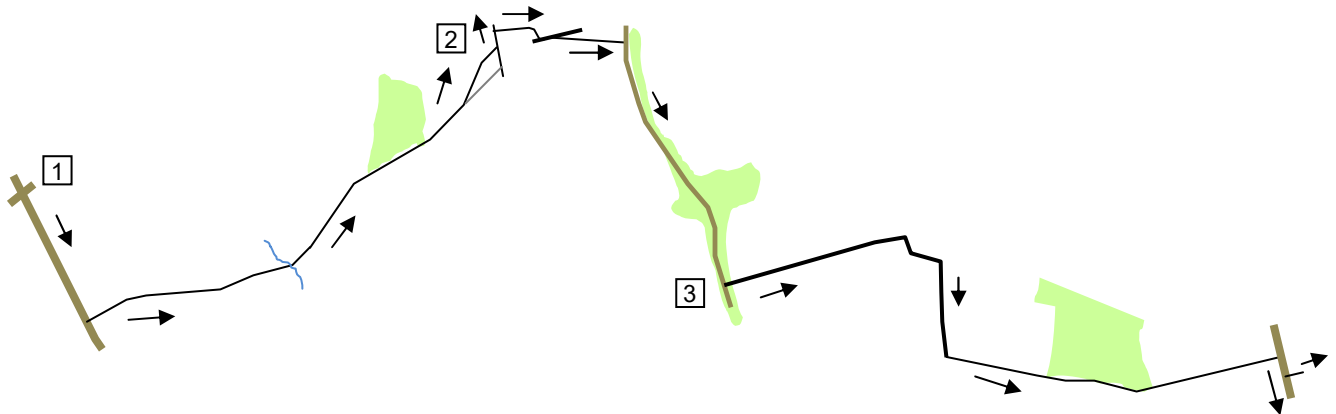
Go through the gate into a sheep pasture with good views ahead. [The sheep in 2019 were very approachable and eager to be petted.](#) Keep to the left-hand side, go through a metal gate and continue down the left of a larger meadow, between a hedge and a wire fence on your right. Where the outer path bends left, leave it to follow a signpost through a small wooden gate (the chain has a clasp) and straight across the meadow. [\(Local people tend to ignore these two awkward gates by instead turning left, staying on the original path, going right-left round the perimeter of the meadow.\)](#) At the other side, go through another small wooden gate and over a 2-plank bridge to a wide path. Turn **left** on this path, ignoring a marker post that directs you into the trees. [\(The marked footpaths do a pointless little loop, dating from the good old days when the field was divided up with hedges.\)](#) Keep straight ahead on the wide path, avoiding junctions. When you see farm buildings ahead, at the start of a large horse pasture, go **right** through a large gate and follow the electricity posts across the length of the pasture to a stile at the far end leading to a road. Turn **right** on this Roman road, ignoring two footpaths on the left, soon passing the first houses of Milland and, after 600m or so on the road, reaching the crossroads in the centre of Milland where you will find the *Rising Sun* inn and, just after that, the *Milland Stores and Café* who serve excellent sausage rolls (when not all snapped up!) and brownies.



Milland was a spread-out parish without a village centre until they built council houses here in 1948. An ancient Roman road runs north-south through the village and there is still evidence of a Roman posting station here. The whole area around the central crossroads was known as Milland Marsh (like a lot of other areas around here, including Trotton Marsh, Stedham Marsh etc.). And for good reason: the heavy local clay! The clay came in handy as raw material when Jane Hawkins built Milland Pottery (by hand) in 1947 (now succeeded by Angela Carter) and also for what used to be Milland's "industrial" area, just west of the village, where for many years there was a thriving brickworks (hence "Brickyard Cottages", built from the local bricks). Milland's bricks were shipped by rail all over the country until brickmaking finally ended in 1937.

The "Rising Sun" you see here today was built on the site of an older pub in the late 1930s because they thought that the London-Portsmouth road would be diverted through the valley, and so the pub was built in what you might call "roadhouse" style to attract the anticipated motorist trade. Luckily for Milland, the plan was fought off and the new road pushed well north of Liphook. Political surreal cartoonist Gerald Scarfe and his wife actress/novelist/lifestylist Jane Asher live in Milland and you may glimpse them at lunch time.

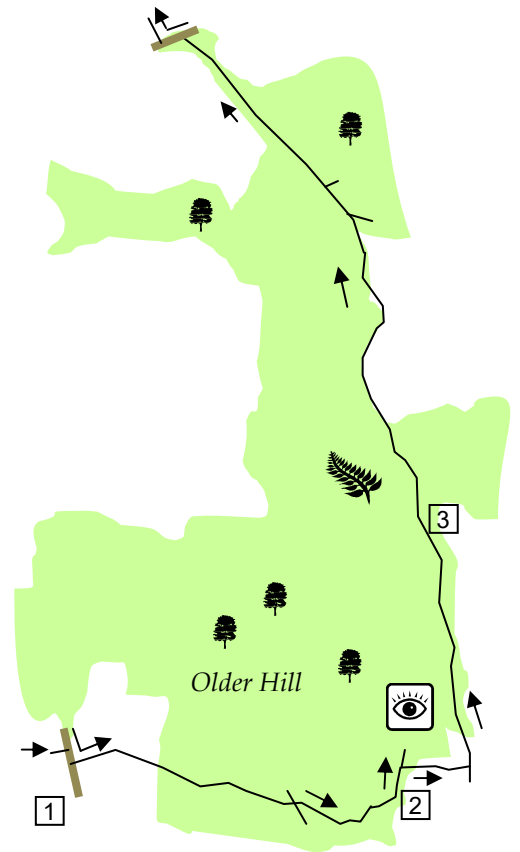
Leg 3: Valley Crossing 3½ km=2¼ miles



- 1 After a possible break for refreshment, continue along the Roman road, in the same direction. In 300m, at a fingerpost, go **left** on a shingle track and immediately over a stile into a horse pasture. Keep near the left-hand edge but veer away from it aiming for the right-hand side of a stone cottage ahead. *As you go, Titty Hill and Older Hill loom up on your right.* Go over two stiles, with a 2-plank bridge in between, and along a long thin meadow. A stile followed by a stone bridge take you over the Hammer Stream. Go over another stile, straight across a narrow meadow, over a stile-and-bridge combination and across the centre of a crop field. After another stile, go along the left-hand side of a perfect green meadow. At the other side, go over a stile, or through a large metal gate, and onto a grassy path towards the farm ahead. Go immediately **left** through a modern kissing-gate to cross the small meadow, diverging slightly from the grassy path, ending at a new small wooden gate on the left of a small paddock. *(At the original time of writing, the gate was awash and it was a simple matter to continue on the grassy path and turn left in front of a wooden gate.)* Go through a second similar small wooden gate on the left of a barn and turn **left** on a shingle driveway leading away from the farm.
- 2 In only 20m, at a fingerpost, turn **right** on a path between a field fence and a sapling hedge, soon bending right. Turn **left** on a semi-tarmac path. In 30m, go over a stile on your **right** and follow a faint path which runs parallel to the path you were on, turning right in the corner. Cross a stile here and turn **right** on a tarmac lane, Lambourne Lane. You will be following this tranquil cul-de-sac lane for 500m. It crosses a stream and rises again and ends at a 3-way junction by a fingerpost. Turn **left** here on a wide track, marked as a footpath, running between cereal fields.
- 3 The track bends right and left through Slathurst Farm. It then bends **right** in front of a farm cottage. In 150m, as you come out into a large field, your path turns **left** and runs along its left-hand side. Continue into the next field and a third field, always keeping to the left side. Exit finally beside a metal gate to a road, Linch Road. Turn **right** on the road, just outside the village of Redford *(see several other walks in this series based on Woolbeding Common)*.

Leg 4: Older Hill 3 km=2 miles

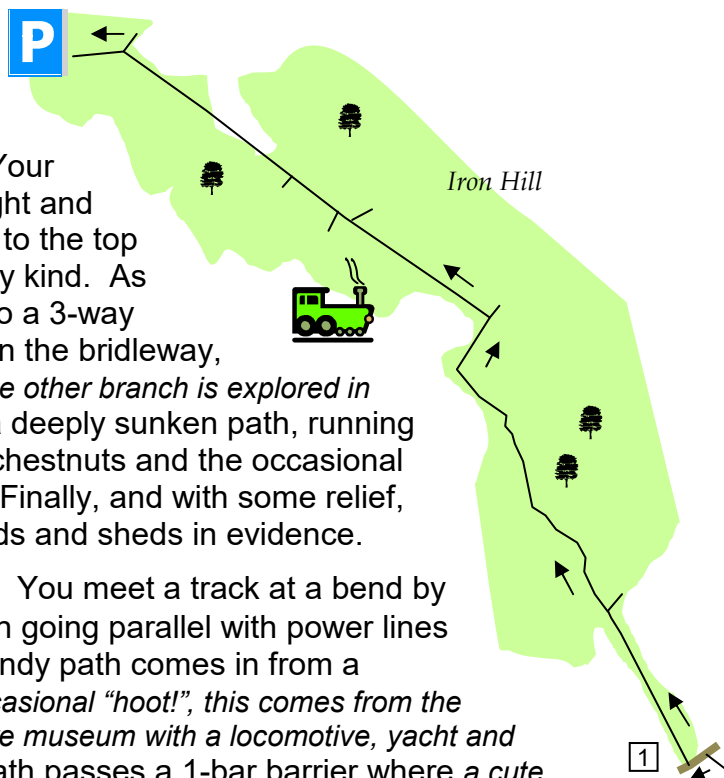
- 1 In only 30m, go **left** over a stile into a large pasture. **One walker skirted round a group of docile cows and their calves.** Go up the right-hand side, rounding the first jutting corner, and head for the woods in the top right, entering them by means of a stile. At once you need to keep a look out for a waymarker and a fingerpost which very clearly direct you a fraction right, then straight uphill, soon with pinewoods on your left and a coppice on your right. You reach a crossing path by a 3-way fingerpost: keep straight ahead on a rather narrow path, ignoring wider paths left and right. A marker post directs you on a winding ascending path. At the top of the path you meet another fingerpost atop a mossy bank. Turn **left** and immediately fork **right** on a slightly rising path. You may need to keep alert for marker posts to reassure you that you are on the official footpath: there is always another one in your line of sight. Your path keeps left to follow the contour and very shortly leads to another marker post. You quickly cross a 2-plank bridge with a rail after which the path turns left and delivers you on the grassy hillside of Older Hill next to a cottage on your right.
- 2 Keep **left** through bracken, as directed by a marker post. In 100m you come to a marker post. Turn squarely **right** here, as directed, on a path through the bracken, passing under a branch of a plane tree. **This path is very overgrown with bracken in high summer but the route has been hacked away as much as possible. It is short and you need to persist as there is no other way. Please assist in keeping it clear (kick, stamp, slash – anything)!** This very twisty path goes to the right of a birch tree, passing under power lines. It comes through a gap in the hedgerow, passing a new marker post. You are now in a grassy clearing with two houses visible up on your right. Keep straight on across the centre to go over a stile into the woods. [Apr 2021: boggy! you need to balance carefully over some thoughtfully-placed logs.] In 20m, at a marker post, your path turns abruptly **left**, running gently downhill. At a marker post, another footpath joins from the right. Your path goes down over a 2-plank bridge with rail, under wires, and continues through a forest of chestnut and birch saplings before ascending a sandy bank. Some mud in the next short section can be avoided by going through trees on your left. You are now on a fairly straight narrow path through more woods, amongst saplings, then under mature oak trees.
- 3 Your path widens to reveal a biologically rich area, with ferns and mosses in abundance. Soon an open meadow (now a seasonal conifer plantation) appears on your right and the path soon comes out into the meadow and runs near the left-hand side of it, through some bracken and tall grass. *The heights of Marley Common are in view ahead to your right.* Keep going for nearly ½ km with woods close by on your left. Finally your path re-enters woodland. You meet a 3-way fingerpost: keep straight on, avoiding the



right turn and joining the New Lipchis Way. The path runs beside a bank on your left with hollies and firs in profusion. A 2-plank bridge leads you alongside a transformer station, finally coming out to a road in a small hamlet called Elmers Marsh. Turn **left** on the road.

Leg 5: Iron Hill 2¾ km=1¾ miles

- 1 In just 40m, turn **right** at a signpost on a wide track marked as a bridgeway, passing a house and its outbuildings. Your path enters trees with a field on your right and you have in prospect a fairly long climb to the top of Iron Hill, although the gradient is fairly kind. As the field on your right ends, you come to a 3-way fingerpost. Keep straight ahead here on the bridgeway, avoiding the footpath on your right. (*The other branch is explored in the walk "Marley Common".*) You are in a deeply sunken path, running beside a mature coppice with a line of chestnuts and the occasional oak. It runs beside steep sides again. Finally, and with some relief, you reach the top, by farmland with fields and sheds in evidence.
- 2 At a marker post, your path turns **right**. You meet a track at a bend by another fingerpost. Turn **left** here, soon going parallel with power lines to your right. In 400m or so, a wider sandy path comes in from a junction on your right. *If you hear an occasional "hoot!", this comes from the Hollycombe Steam Collection, an adventure museum with a locomotive, yacht and fairground, all powered by steam.* Your path passes a 1-bar barrier where a *cute little wooden house* marks the entrance to a timber yard. Stay on this nice easy path, gently descending until it reaches a junction at a point which you will be familiar from your outward journey. (*If you did **not** start at the Iron Hill car park, turn **right** here on a narrower path and skip to point (a) in the first section.*) Keep straight on down the main path leading to the car park where the walk began.

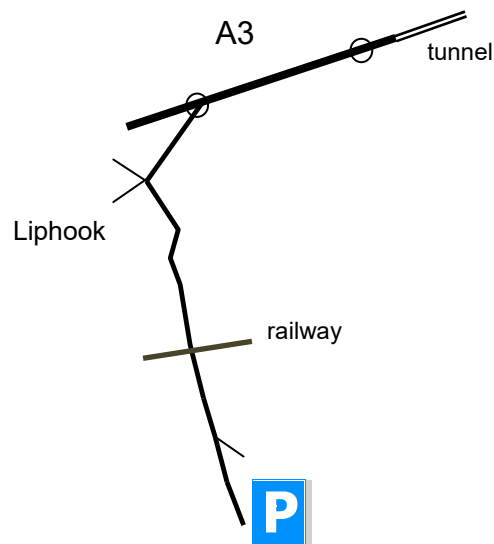


For final refreshments, the "Royal Anchor" in the centre of Liphook is now a kind of family chain diner, good for burgers etc. The posher "Links Tavern" is just outside the village on the Portsmouth Road (direction "Rake"). The iconic "Deers Hut" is only 1 mile west along the Longmoor Road (direction "Greatham").

Thanks to Val Porter of Milland News for the historical information throughout this guide.

Getting there

By car: Take the A3 and turn off through Liphook. (From London, this is the second exit after the Hindhead tunnel.) At a tortuous series of mini-roundabouts and larger ones, keep following signs for Liphook Station and/or the Hollycombe Steam Collection (with a brown tourist sign showing a merry-go-round). After you go over the railway bridge, the Iron Hill car park is 1 km= $\frac{2}{3}$ mile on your left.



By bus/train: Liphook station is only about 800m from the walk. Turn **right** out of the station and **right** again over the railway bridge on the Midhurst Road. There is a pavement or footway all the way. Begin the walk at the 3-way junction just after the *Welcome to West Sussex* sign, starting from section 2.

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