



West Grinstead and River Adur

Distance: 6½ km=4¼ miles or 3¾ km=2½ miles

easy walking

Region: West Sussex

Date written: 21-sep-2020

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Refreshments: picnic or local inns after the walk

Maps: Explorer 134, 120, 121 *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Church, easy field tracks, meadows, woodland, river

In Brief

This walk takes you from an isolated medieval country church through a network of footpaths, as far as the outskirts of the village of Partridge Green where a narrow winding path takes you to the banks of the River Adur. The paths from the church criss-cross various farm tracks in a haphazard way but the directions in this guide will see you safely to the *Gatehouse Lodge* where you pass underneath the house to reach the lane that leads over the river. Several “official” paths were ploughed up at the time of writing but there are easy farm tracks that skirt around them and it seems, from observing local people, that this has become accepted practice. The river path just after the bridge at the far end of the walk is private for 300m and the local people rely on the wide field edge just before the farm as a bridge to the fascinating footpath that winds its way through the undergrowth to the banks of the river, from where your homeward route is assured.

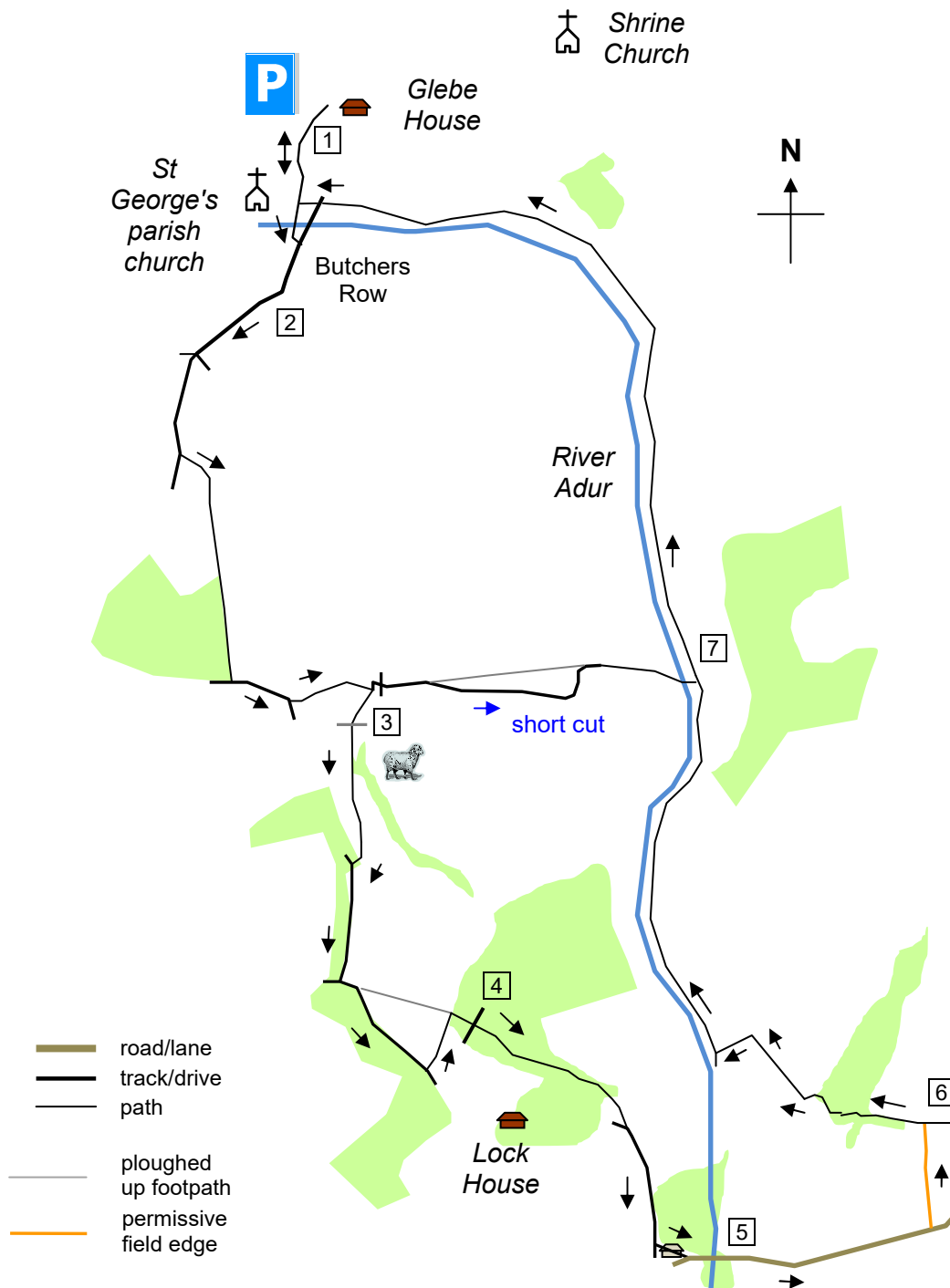


There is some undergrowth on the narrow footpaths, making shorts inadvisable. Most walkers wear trainers or sensible shoes but in the winter boots would be de rigueur. There are a number of stiles on this walk, presenting a problem for a large dog, and also for solo ramblers of a certain age who might miss the tall post that walkers need to hang on to.

The walk begins near the little church of St George, West Grinstead, nearest postcode **RH13 8LR**, **what3words: ///anchovies.fancy.teaching**. There is a large car park near the church, which is available to the public. However, on Sundays worshippers must be given priority. Each month, services are usually held on the first and third Sunday at 11am and every fourth Sunday at 4pm. So, do not arrive just before these times. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

West Grinstead is a tiny village, but a much larger parish, which has no connection whatever with East Grinstead. St George's church is a precious survivor from the 1000s and even its windows date from the 1400s. The church was once the centre of a larger community. Glebe House used to be the Rectory in the 1600s before it was enlarged. The house between the car park and the church was once a shop. The River Adur was navigable as far as here and a canal was constructed in the 1800s to bring river traffic further upstream. West Grinstead was for long a centre of Catholic worship. The Shrine Church of Our Lady of Consolation and St Francis is a huge gothic revival church and a restful garden showing the Stations of the Cross, built in 1871, highly recommended for a visit before you go home.



- 1 Beginning in the car park near the church, turn **right** to the church and, after a possible visit, pass to the left of the church. following a flagstone path, through a small open wooden gate. Follow the flagstone path straight ahead, ignoring a stile on your left, crossing the River Adur by a long wooden bridge (your first of many encounters) and a small wooden gate. At a fingerpost before a private gate, turn **left** on a shingle path which takes you through a small wooden gate onto a concrete drive. Turn **right** on the drive, passing several small houses in the hamlet of Butchers Row.
- 2 In 100m, at a fingerpost, keep **right** on the main tarmac drive. In 200m you arrive at a 5-way junction where the tarmac curves away right. Keep straight on here, on a gravel drive (a public footpath despite the sign *Private No Through Road*). In 200m under tall oaks, as you come out into the open at a slight right bend, you meet a stile and a fingerpost. Go **left** over the stile into a meadow. Keep **right** in the meadow and veer a fraction right after crossing a ditch, following a line of oak trees. Go through a large metal gate onto a wide path along the edge of a wood. You come out in 200m onto a gravel drive. Turn **left** on the drive which quickly elbows right. In just over 100m, where the drive elbows right again, go **left** over a 2-plank bridge and a stile into a green meadow. Go straight ahead, following a line of oaks, heading for some large metal gates on the other side, where you meet a 4-way fingerpost.

Decision point. If you are doing the shorter $3\frac{3}{4}$ km= $2\frac{1}{2}$ walk, skip to the end of this guide and do the section called **Adur Direct**. Otherwise ...

- 3 Ignore the gates and stay in the meadow, turning sharp **right**. Go over stiles either side of a farm track and walk the length of this sheep pasture. In the distant right-hand corner, 250m away, before the meadow curves away left, you see a large metal gate. Go through the smaller gate beside it and keep ahead on a gravel track. In 200m or so, at a T-junction with a fingerpost, turn **left** on a track along the edge of the field. Where the track rounds the corner, leave it* by taking a path straight ahead across the field. At the far side, go over a sturdy 3-plank bridge, onto a narrow woodland path. (*At the time of writing, the field was ploughed up and not navigable; the author rounded the corner, staying on the track next to the woodland, and turned **left** in the next corner on a wide grass path, turning **right** In 120m at a fingerpost over the bridge mentioned above.)
- 4 In 100m, ascending through trees, you meet a gravel crossing track. Cross straight over onto a very narrow path, continuing through woodland. Soon a field is visible on your left and, 300m after the crossing track, you come out to a pebbly drive, coming from the right through a gateway belonging to Lock House. *Lock House is a huge art deco mansion, once a convent, recently a home to singer Adele.* Keep **left** on the drive. In 200m, you approach a large house on your left, *Gatehouse Lodge*. At a fingerpost, go **left** here over a stile. Go straight through the arch beneath the house, and follow their tarmac drive, through a large wooden gate, keeping ahead on a tarmac lane.
- 5 Soon the lane crosses the River Adur at a picturesque spot where it is especially wide, a popular place or anglers. Continue along the lane for more than 300m with a large hay field on your left. As you approach the end of the field you will see some houses just ahead in the hamlet of Lloyds Farm. To save you a whole mile of walking around Partridge Green, a local secret comes into use: the path beside the field is not a public footpath but it is

used regularly by the villagers' families, couples, children and dog walkers. At the start of some ranch fencing, instead of entering the hamlet, turn **left** on a wide sandy track that runs along the right-hand edge of the field. In 200m you reach a T-junction in front of an even larger field. Turn **left** here, thus joining the official footpath.

- 6 In the corner of the field, keep ahead, weaving left-right, going past a metal gate and straight ahead, avoiding private paths left and right, on a very narrow path. Your path winds its way through the thick shrubbery and rough grass. After you come over a stile ([careful! broken and wobbly](#)) ignore a large metal gate on your right and follow a 150m course beneath a line of mature oak trees. After a stile, your path turns left. In 70m you reach a T-junction. Turn **right** on the riverside path. The first 250m are along a green meadow, veering a fraction right to go through a gap into the next meadow. A route along the right-hand side leads through a gap into the next rough meadow, curving right and left. After a total of 750m along the river side, you reach a bridge over the river, the Hatterell Bridge, beside a 4-way fingerpost. Keep straight on.

[The shorter 3¾ km=2½ walk re-joins the main walk here.](#)

The River Adur is a major Sussex river with its outlet to the sea near Brighton. Like the Blue and the White Nile, it is two separate rivers until near Henfield where they join. The Western Adur, which you are following, began as a trickle near Slinfold (see the "Triangle of Villages" walk). The Eastern Adur starts in Ditchling Common near Burgess Hill (see that walk in the East Sussex section). The combined river flows through the "Adur Valley" (not on this walk!), a gap in the South Downs near Steyning (which was once a major port) and thence out to the sea via Shoreham Harbour, giving you along the way great views of Bramber Castle, Lancing College chapel and Shoreham Airport. The river had other names until it was named "Adur" in the early 1600s out of the mistaken belief that the Roman fort of Adurni was on the outflow (it's actually near Portsmouth).

- 7 Your path crosses a ditch into another large meadow and another similarly. After a total of 2/3 km after the bridge, the edge of the meadow begins to curve right. Leave the field here by going **left** on a wide chalky section into the adjoining field. Take a path straight ahead across the grass, heading for a gap between trees at the other side. Here, go over a 2-plank bridge-with-rail and a stile into a pasture. Veer a fraction left across the grass, meeting the river again on your left. In the left-hand corner, squeeze past a large metal gate into a horse pasture, staying beside the river. The next stile is a little way round the corner at the end. Walk the length of the next pasture and go over a stile at the end, avoiding the easy private gate just to the right even if the stile is high and awkward. Cross straight over the next small meadow, via two more stiles, and turn **right** on a flagstone path, familiar from your outward journey. It leads past the church and back to the car park where the walk began.

[To visit the Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation, as described at the start, turn **right** on the B2135 and **left** on Park Lane. There is a generous car park.](#)

Adur Direct

This shortcut takes you direct to the final section of the riverside path, making a shorter walk.

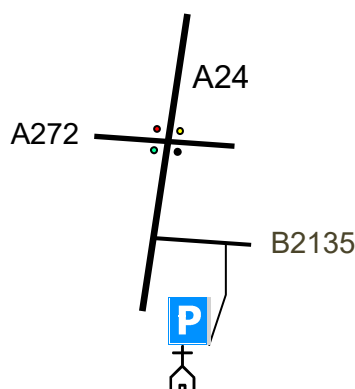


Keep ahead to the corner of the meadow, go **left** over a new stile and **right** through a large metal gate. Go straight over a crossing track to a track opposite, going under a line of large oak trees, with a view of the South Downs on your right. At the bottom, follow the track as it bends **left** and then **right** to go through a large metal gate. (Strictly, the footpath goes through the crops but the field was ploughed up and difficult to walk on.) Go through a smaller metal gate and continue beside a ditch on your right. Finally, go through a large metal gate and over a bridge across the River Adur. Turn left on the riverside path.

Now re-join the main walk from section [7](#).

Getting there

By car: West Grinstead lies just east of the A24 (Worthing) trunk road. If coming from the London or M25 area, take the A24, passing Horsham and Southwater, until you reach traffic lights where the A272 crosses (*Billingshurst, Petersfield* on the right, *Brighton, Haywards Heath, Cowfold* on the left). Continue straight over for nearly another mile and turn **left** onto the **B2135**, signed to *West Grinstead*. In ½ mile, opposite a sign *Parish Church*, by a little whiteboard cottage, turn **right** on a drive. Take the **right** fork shortly and again by the entrance to *Glebe House* and, in another 100 yds, turn **right** into the car park.



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