



Warninglid and the Furnace Pond

Distance: 7 km=4½ miles

moderate walking

Region: West Sussex

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Author: Sackboot

Refreshments: Warninglid

Map: Explorer 134 (Horsham) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Village, views, lakes, dramatic wooded valleys, forest trails

In Brief

This scenic walk begins as a deceptively gentle stroll and ends as a stirring adventure which will leave you breathless - mainly from the drama of the landscape rather than the gradients which are perfectly manageable. The route after the Furnace Pond was deliberately chosen to reward you with the best views at the cost of a few puffs. (There is a kinder alternative.)

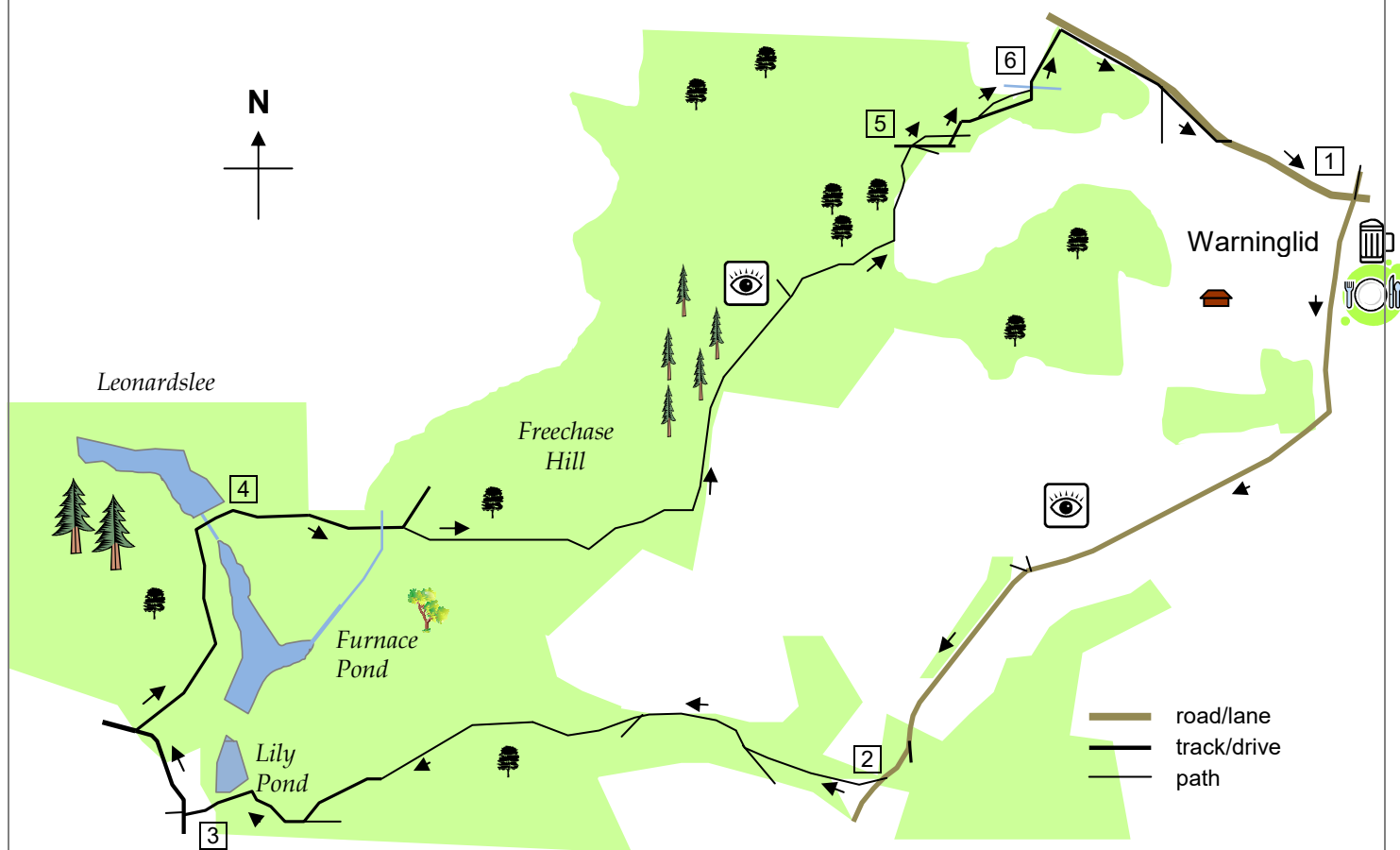
A celebrated pub greets you at the start and finish, offering all you could wish for from a country pub. (To enquire at the *Half Moon*, ring 01444-461227.)



There are no nettles on this walk because it does not go through farmland - only along tarmac and through deep forest. But there is some scratchy undergrowth, making shorts inadvisable. There are some muddy patches, even in summer, but only in a handful of places, and fairly easy to hop around. Nevertheless, boots are recommended, except in very dry conditions. With no stiles, this walk should be fine for your dog.

The walk begins in the village of Warninglid, West Sussex, postcode **RH17 5TR**, www.w3w.co/yummy.mainframe.already. Park considerately in The Street (the main road through the village), not too near the pub. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk



The name "Warningslid" is Anglo-Saxon, possibly derived from the word "lád" meaning "a course or way" preceded by the tribal derivative of the name "Werna" or "Warna", in other words, "the way to the settlement of Werna's people". Since it has no church, perhaps the village should be considered as just a large hamlet. But the pub is one of the best in the area. The "Half Moon" is a well-restored 18th-century freehouse with a vaulted timbered bar that keeps its rustic flavour with broad wooden tables and an open fire in winter. There is a lunch menu to please everyone, including partridge, calves liver, venison and the Halfmoon Burger. At least three local brews are pulled. The pub is **closed Monday**, otherwise open from 12, closed Tue-Sat afternoons, closed Sun after 5 pm.

- 1 With the pub on your left, in the direction *Wineham, Henfield*, walk up The Street in the centre of Warningslid. (The hump-back bridge and locked ornamental gates on your right lead to the *Lydhurst Estate*, a farmstead and Nordic-style country retreat.) Follow the lane downhill and, by a white cottage, ignore two footpaths and turn **right** with the lane. This deceptively relaxing, uneventful saunter along a quiet lane has the compensations of fringes of wild flowers, the white doves at *Barlands Farm* and its delectable timbered farmhouse. At weekends you meet swarms of cyclists but few cars. On your right, a view of Freechase Hill gives you a foretaste of the very different terrain you will shortly be tackling. 250m after the farm, the lane elbows left. In a further 350m, slightly uphill, as the lane, now called *Spronkett's Lane*, starts to curve, **ignore** a bridleway track on your left (known locally as *Earwig Lane*). In only another 50m or so, about 20m after

the entrance to *April Cottage*, look for a hidden fingerpost in the hedge on your right (don't miss!).

- 2 Turn **right** here through an old wooden gate onto a good woodland path (actually a bridleway) which widens and runs beside a long paling fence. Soon there is a green meadow on your right and your path is joined from the left by another bridleway at a 3-way fingerpost. In another 200m or so, you meet another 3-way fingerpost where the bridleway curves off to the left. **Leave** the bridleway here by keeping straight on uphill on the signed footpath. Your path runs beside a steep pine wood. You come out into the open with great views left as your path passes under HT lines. Once again you are in dark woods and soon the path curves left slightly downhill in a rich ferny area. At the bottom you meet the bridleway again. Veer **right** on it, keeping left shortly to avoid a churned up muddy patch. The sound of running water is closely followed by a charming surprise: the Furnace Lily Pond. It is possible to walk *partially* round this pond, but shortly there is a bench seat (where Jock and Jim used to sit) which gives you a good view of the pond and the chance to rest.
- 3 Go through a large wooden gate up into a sloping grassy meadow. Your path curves round to take you through another large wooden gate to a junction. Avoid the small metal gate straight ahead and instead turn **right** uphill on a wide track, passing the historic *Gorsedene*. In 150m the track becomes tarmac. Turn immediately sharp **right** here, at a fingerpost, past a large metal gate, onto a rough track. Avoid an open space on your right with a track and a metal gate, keeping straight ahead, and shortly ignore a track on your left. The trees gradually give way to a view of the Furnace Pond down on your right. Finally your path ends at a fence, on the other side of which are the lake and gardens of *Leonardslee*. You can visit *Leonardslee* after the walk or on another day via the main entrance off the main A281 road.

St Leonards Forest was one of the great royal forests. The Leonardslee estate was bought in 1852 by William Egerton Hubbard who built the mansion and developed the gardens. The gardens were closed in 2010 and sold in 2017 to the present owners who re-opened them in 2019 boasting "The Finest Woodland Gardens in England". They have become a huge attraction, offering lakes with dazzling spring colours, a rock garden, a great playpark, wallabies, a vineyard, a huge dolls' house (more like a dolls' palace and village) and a collection of Victorian automobiles.

- 4 Your path turns right and runs uphill on a wooded sunken course. A large barley field comes into view on your left and your path descends along a line of beeches to go over a wide fenced bridge marking the other arm of the Furnace Pond. On the other side of the bridge is a 3-way fingerpost. Walkers heading for Warninglid now have a choice of *two* routes.

Turning *left* at the post would take you on a fairly straightforward bridleway, shared with cyclists and horses, through the spectacular forest; it is used in the big sister walk on this site: *St Leonards Forest*. The footpath straight ahead is more stimulating and more eye-opening with some dramatic views. This is the route used in this walk.

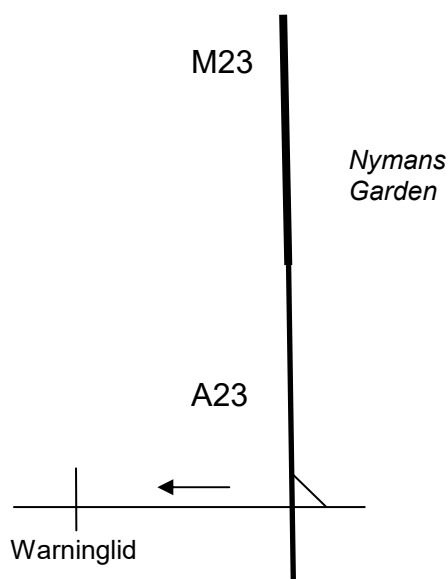
Keep straight on at the fingerpost uphill, passing under HT lines and up through magnificent overhanging woodland. After 350m the path elbows left. In a further 200m or so, suddenly you are confronted by the locked gates of Free Chase Farm. Here the footpath turns abruptly **left** and runs

beside a fenced pasture on your right. It leads up over the crest of a wooded hill, then goes steeply down through a space of such natural beauty that you might think you are in an arboreal park rather than a wild wood. You reach a 3-way fingerpost in the valley an old iron gate on your right: keep straight on, steeply uphill. You are walking through pinewoods on a path which ends at the top by a meadow and a T-junction. Take an obligatory **left** turn here, as directed. The path runs through mature woodland with the meadow visible on your right. In 200m you reach an old redundant kissing-gate.

- 5 Turn **right** here, back on the original bridleway. Ignore two tracks on the right (one unmarked, one a muddy horse path) and follow a narrow footpath which shortly curves right to meet a crossing path. Turn **left** here, as indicated by a white arrow, back on the bridleway. In 50m you meet a 3-way fingerpost. Fork **left** here on a footpath, thus leaving the bridleway. (Some prefer to stay on the bridleway, the main hazard being a rather tight slippery turn onto the bridge.) The path takes you down four steps, over a 2-plank bridge-with-rail and over a mudproof flooring of logs. Turn **left** over a wide bridge across the stream gully. Turn **right**, following a white arrow, on a bridleway.
- 6 The bridleway runs uphill through more woods. It passes a brick hut and becomes an open path, eventually ending at the main B2115 road. Turn **right** on a path which runs parallel to the road. It crosses a driveway for *Lydhurst* with ornamental gates and runs high above the road. Finally it comes down to join the road. Cross over to use a strip on the other side and walk a further 250m beside the road to reach the crossroads in Warninglid, opposite the *Half Moon*, where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Warninglid is signed off the M23/A23 trunk road ...



By bus/train: bus 89 from Horsham or Haywards Heath. Mon-Fri. Check the timetables.

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