



Rusper: Hills and Forest

Distance: 6 km=3¾ miles

easy walking

Region: West Sussex

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Author: Moussehaine

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Refreshments: Rusper

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Map: Explorer 134 (Crawley, Horsham) or use accurate sketch map below

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

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Village, woodland, meadows, views

In Brief

The quiet village of Rusper, hidden away from all the main Sussex high-ways, has two unusual honours, geographically speaking. It is the *highest* village in the traditional county of Sussex (that means East or West).

Secondly, don't think of bringing your lilo or bucket and spade because, of all Sussex villages, Rusper is the *furthest from the sea*. [This walk was previously designed as a pub walk to the Royal Oak which is no more.](#)



As well as a delightful cluster of period houses and cottages, Rusper boasts two excellent pubs: the *Plough and Attic Rooms* and the *Star Inn*, dating from 1486 which boasts a priest hole, where Catholic priests used to hide during the reign of good Queen Bess. The *Star* also has a large inglenook fireplace and a wishing well. It specializes in authentic native Greek food, with stiffado, slow roasted lamb shoulder and moussaka. To enquire at the *Star Inn*, ring 01293-871264.

[This walk is still affected by closure of the Sussex Border Path, as used in Section \[5\]\(#\). First reported in 2023, it now seems \(2026\) the landslip is bypassed, the path clear, and the only hindrance is the Council notice.](#)



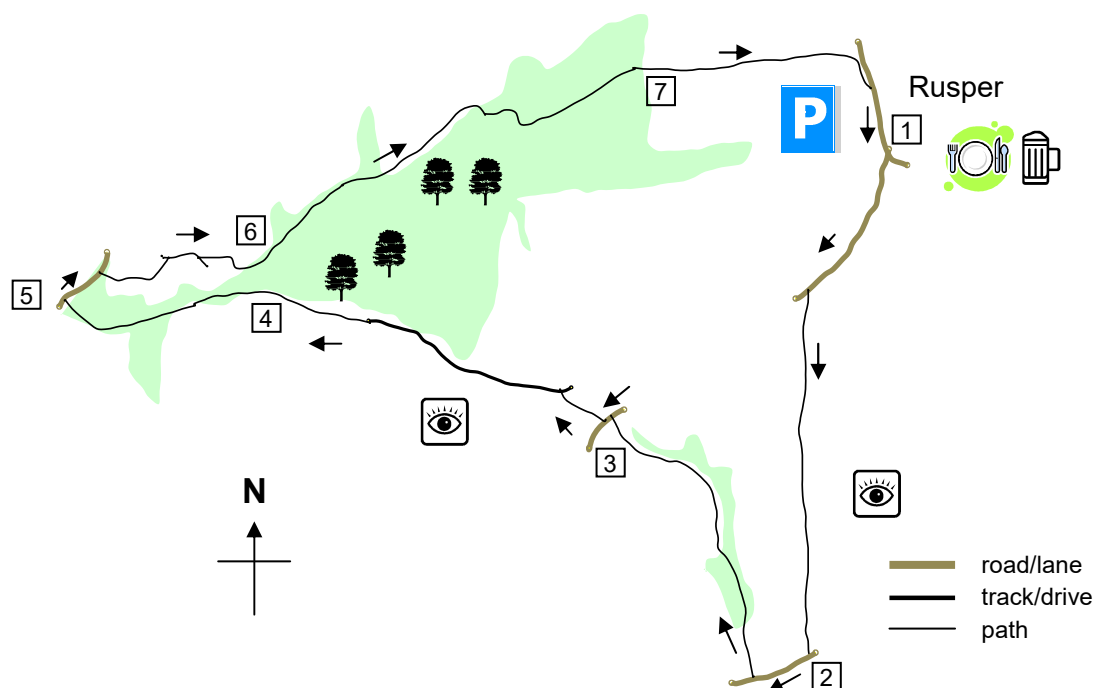
There is a tiny patch of nettles that might catch you with legs uncovered. A short section through horse pastures can get very muddy if there has been any rain recently, making boots necessary. The going underfoot is quite easy, except for a few crumbly stiles where you need to take care. Most stiles have a gap (or hole) or gate, but one stile is very dog-unfriendly so he must not be too large to heave over.

The walk begins in **Rusper village** (postcode **RH12 4PX**): park on the road-side or in the car park near the church, w3w:rare.oaks.excavated. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The area around Rusper was settled by farmers around 700 AD migrating from the coast to summer pastures. The name is originally "ruh spaer" or "rough enclosures". In the 1100s a small Benedictine convent, known as Rusper Priory was founded for no more than 10 nuns. It was closed down by – guess who – Henry VIII. The gates to the nunnery, all that is left, can be seen from

the Horsham road. The convent's cemetery was found there by chance by workmen in 1840 and amongst the 40 or so female skeletons were various treasures, including a unique 12th-century Limoges enamelled chalice which can be seen today in the British Museum.

The Walk



- 1 Go along the main road to the *Star Inn* and fork **right** on the road, sign-posted *Roffey, Horsham*. Go past the primary school and in around 150m, just after *Pucks Croft* and a dirt drive, fork **left** on a signposted footpath. *Initial winter mud, quickly clears*. The footpath runs through a woodland of oaks, horse chestnuts and beeches. Keep straight on, avoiding paths on the right, to go by an avoidable stile into an open heath with young oaks and good views ahead. *The River Mole runs in the valley to your right*. Go through a large metal kissing gate and onto an enclosed path which runs down the centre of a beautiful horse pasture dotted with large trees. Go through another gate and down a ragged meadow. Cross a farm track via two small metal gates. After a patch of woodland you reach the bottom. Go through a kissing-gate to a drive. *On your left is Baldhorns Park Farm with its "Garden of Reflections" created singlehandedly by Paris-born New York-raised designer/sculptress Allison Armour*. Turn **right** on the drive.
- 2 The drive goes over a bridge across the River Mole and runs beside an old mill pond on your right. Immediately after the pond, at a 3-way fingerpost, turn right through a large wooden gate, going past a tennis court with the gardens of *Baldhorns Park* visible on your right. Go down steps into a wood which in springtime is thick with bluebells. Go over a two-plank bridge, up a small mound (aided by a wooden handrail), and into a field. Turn **right** along the edge of the field and, at the corner, turn **left**. After another 500m, go through a metal kissing gate, down two steps and, at a 1-arm fingerpost, turn **left** on a road.
- 3 In just 15m, go **right** at a signpost onto a narrow path. The footpath runs by industrial units on the right and, soon after, reaches a farm track. Turn **left** on the track and follow it between fields, heading for the left-hand



corner of woodland about 250m distant that stretches to your right. *You have fine views ahead in the distance to the Greensand Hills and the long outline of Blackdown just to their left.* On reaching a corner of a wood at a fingerpost, keep straight ahead with the wood on your right. In the next field, keep ahead on a grassy path keeping the young hawthorn hedge on your left. Where this hedge bears away to the left, continue ahead, on the enclosed path. Gaps in the hedge on the left-hand side give you views of a magnificent large meadow dotted with oak trees. The path goes down a dip and up again. Keep ahead at a 2-way fingerpost, exiting the meadow in the direction of some woodland, to the right of another 2-arm fingerpost, and passing under wires.

- 4 Go through a small wooden gate into woodland and then onto an enclosed grassy path. Go downhill and over a little bridge across a stream. Keep ahead, exiting onto to a tarmac lane. Turn **right** on the lane, passing newish housing on your right.

You may see a "footpath closed" notice at the start of the next section. Walkers report that they could bypass to the left of the stile where the notice is. They said that the path no longer passes the landslip (the original reason for the closure). The text in the following section has been retained as a record. These sections were thoroughly revised in 2026 and walkers encountered no difficulty. But please refer to "Hazards" / "Closed paths" in the FFW website.

- 5 Continue along the lane, going past the fine half-timbered *Howells Gill*. Just after a driveway, turn **right** over a ditch at signpost onto a path marked as the Sussex Border Path (SBP), and over a stile. *The SBP is a long-distance footpath that follow the entire inland borders of both Sussexes.* Go along the right-hand side of a small rather clumpy meadow and over a stile into a grassy horse pasture. Cross the pasture keeping near the fence on the left. Go over a stile, or through a gate and turn **right** on a track. The footpath soon runs by a fence to the left of an outhouse, over a stile or through a large metal gate, then along the right-hand side of a meadow which in early summer shimmers with buttercups. About halfway along the side, at a marker-post, turn **right** over a stile, then turn **left** to go over a stile on the far side beside a large wooden gate. Veer **left** into Horsegills Wood.

- 6 Stay on the main path through this spectacular wood (*with a fallen tree at the start, easily bypassed*), beside a stream on the right. After 400m, the path rises towards a large metal gate. Turn right just before the gate. Go downhill for only 20m and just before a wooden 4-plank bridge turn left through a wooden kissing-gate. Go along the right-hand side of a field with a wire fence to your right. In about 350m, go over a (dog-unfriendly) stile. In around a further 50m turn **right** at a fingerpost to go through a small wooden gate and in only 20m turn **left** at a second fingerpost. The narrow path winds through the wood, down steps with handrails, to cross a stream by means of a metal footbridge. It then goes up steps, turns left at a marker post and becomes much wider and straighter. At the end of the wood, go through a large wooden gate (easier than the partly collapsed stile).

- 7 Continue ahead along the right-hand side of a large meadow with a wire fence to your right and soon a wooden fence to your left. At the top, go through a large wooden gate then a wooden swing gate. Continue ahead beside a playing field and tennis court. Just before the road, turn **right** on a footpath made of paving slabs. This takes you to the car park, the church of St Mary Magdalene and the centre of the village where the walk began. As well as the *Star Inn*, the village also has a village store.



Getting there

By car: If coming from the **London area**, take the A24 through Dorking, following signs to *Worthing*; stay on the A24 at the Beare Green roundabout; at the next big roundabout, ignore a sharp left to Capel and take the next left signposted *Rusper*. Follow the winding road to the village. If coming from **Horsham**, take the Rusper Road from the centre, go straight on over two big roundabouts and keep following signs to Rusper. If coming from **Crawley**, find the Rusper Road in Ifield Green and follow road signs to the village.

Rusper is poorly served by bus. There are local minicab firms or Uber offering a reasonable deal.

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