



Rusper: The Plough (pub walk)

Distance: 4¼ km=2¾ miles

easy walking

Region: West Sussex

Date written: 8-may-2011

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Date revised: 12-may-2016

Refreshments: Rusper

Last update: 10-jun-2025

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, woodland, meadows, bluebells, pub

In Brief

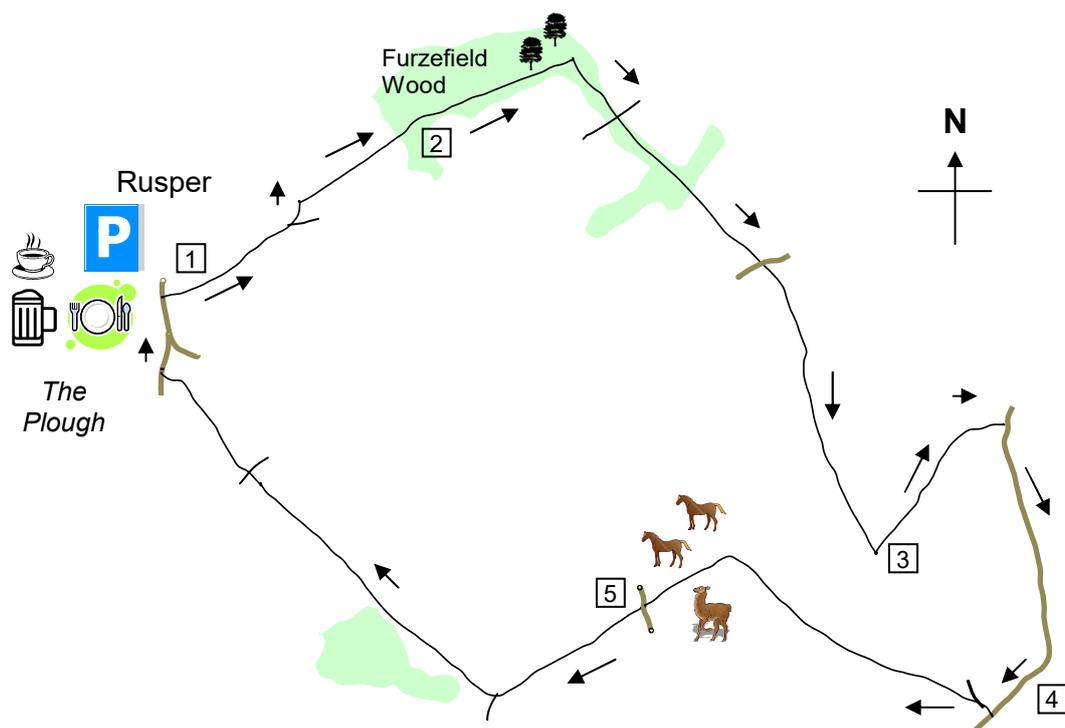
This unusual circular walk is a real charmer and the village where it starts and ends could not be cosier. Previously, this walk took you to a distant country pub, but now that it has closed you have to wait another hour for your refreshments back at the *Plough and Attic Rooms* in Rusper. This old oak-beamed pub really oozes character and the ales and menu look perfect for an end to the day's stroll. It serves "a very decent pint and has a large garden at the rear". Apart from that, we depend on your feedback so that the author can write a little more about this village pub.



This is a nettle-free walk, easy underfoot, and he can come too.

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

The Walk



- 1 Almost opposite the church, take a wide shingle track running next to some new houses, marked as the Sussex Border Path (SBP), and through the smaller of two wooden gates. Keep to the **left**-hand wide grassy path. In just over 100m, the brambles on the left end and you come to some tall oaks. Turn **left** here past an unneeded wooden swing-gate into a meadow, thus leaving the SBP. Go diagonally across the centre of the grassy meadow aiming for the far corner, following a faint path made by many feet. You reach the edge of Furze Field Wood and here pass through a gap in an old rusty fence that leads you into the wood. (This path and the wood are local secrets, much used by local people, although they are not statutory footpaths and are not marked on the map.) Follow the path into the wood. It is joined by a small path coming from the left and veers right over a ditch. Continue straight ahead, staying close to the field on your right. The path soon expands into a wide straight path through magnificent woodland of tall beeches.
- 2 At the end of the field on the right, with a deep gully down on your left, the path turns right at a 2-way fingerpost and here you are joined by another section of the Sussex Border Path. The path now runs in a fine woodland strip between fields. It zigzags out of the woodland to a crossing of paths by a 4-way fingerpost. Go straight over along the right-hand side of the field, with the wood on your right. The path goes over a stream and follows a hedgerow on your right. At the end, by a large metal gate, cross a road and take a footpath opposite, as directed by a fingerpost. Go through a wooden swing-gate by a large metal gate and along the right-hand side of a meadow. The path goes over a stile and runs between wire fences in a magnificent line of tall trees. The pasture on your left is lined with oak trees and in late spring bluebells are on show. At the end of the fence, where you can see several ponds, and perhaps water fowl, on the right, turn **left** at a fingerpost.



- 3 The footpath zigzags left-right by a metal gate and then does the same again. It passes an open area, wheels right and, by a metal gate, filters right into a narrow path which ends over a stone bridge over the River Mole, out to a road, Lambs Green Road. Turn **right** on the road and, in nearly 400m, reach the hamlet of Lambs Green.
- 4 The return to the village is a bit shorter but just as charming. Carry on along the road for 100m. Just after the driveway to *Canonbury Villas* (the sign hidden in bushes), turn **right** at a signpost and shortly go through a modern kissing gate and diagonally across a meadow. In the far corner, go over a new long bridge across the infant River Mole and continue straight ahead along the right-hand side of another meadow. At the corner, go **left** round the corner of the meadow to the next corner and go through a swing-gate. You are now on an enclosed path. The pasture on the right belongs to a stud and there are often foals running free whilst on the left the owners of *Applegarth* breed alpacas. The path leads out, over a stile, to a road, Faygate Lane.
- 5 Cross over the road to a footpath opposite, go over a stile and keep straight on across the left-hand side of a meadow next to the driveway by *Rusper Court Cottages*. Go over a stile in the corner and along the left-hand side of the next meadow. In the far corner, ignore a stile on your left and bear **right** into a long grassy meadow. This becomes a long wide grassy path between pastures going very gently uphill. At the end, cross an untidy builder's yard and go straight ahead over a (bypassable) stile onto an enclosed path that runs past garden fences on your left. Keep ahead into the car park of the *Star Inn* and turn **left** between posts to the main road opposite the delectable *Sweet Briar*. Turn **right** on the road past the equally tasty half-timbered *Averys* and hence back to the centre of the village. The village shop is now open every day and has a seating area for drinks and snacks. The *Plough and Attic Rooms Inn* in the village re-opened recently after the Lockdown and has been extensively upgraded.



A short historical note on Rusper. The area was settled by farmers around the year 700 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.

Rusper is the highest village in Sussex, it is also the furthest village in Sussex from the sea.

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.

By train/bus: bus 52 from Horsham or Faygate station, Mondays & Thursdays.