Fancy Free Walks

point your feet on a new path

Billingshurst

Distance: 7¾ km=4¾ miles — easy walking

Region: West Sussex — Date written: 23-may-2019

Author: Sackboot — Last update: 16-jun-2026

Refreshments: Billingshurst

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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Country town, woodland, bluebells, birdsong, green pastures

In Brief

This walk takes you through the quiet woods and green meadows which lie to the east of this West Sussex town. Your adventure begins with a lazy loop around a large wood, well-known for its seasonal hues and birdsong. The long section is a succession of delightful oak glades and grass meadows. In 2020, a bridge along the route which had been closed is now open. The final section into the town, at the time of writing, was an interesting experience in seeing a new "village" springing up, literally from the bare earth.

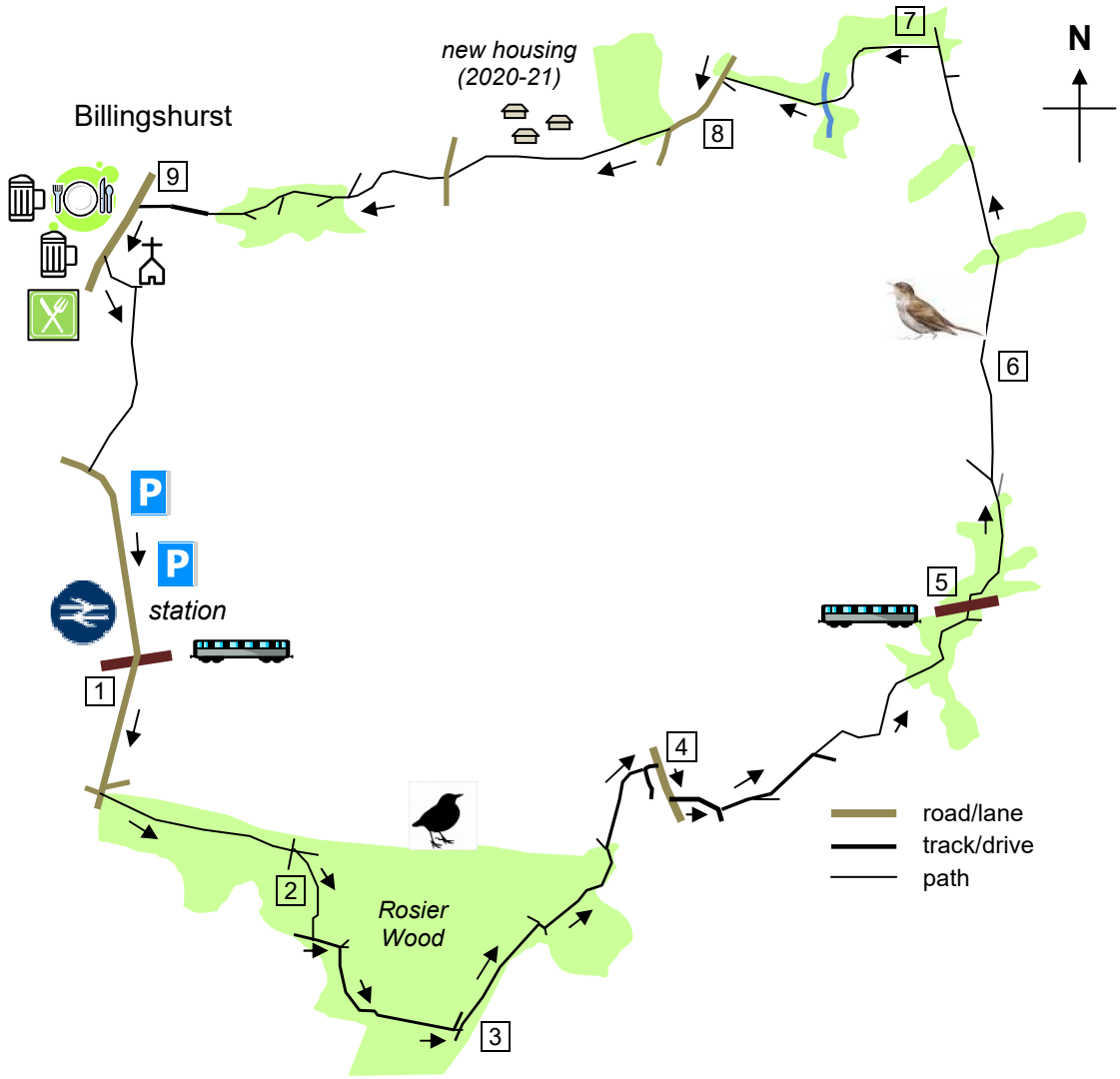
The town itself offers much by way of refreshment, with two pubs (to enquire at the *Six Bells*, ring 01403-782124). The historic church, on its high point above the town, leaves a final memory as you head back to the station or the parking spot.

There are some short sections of nettles and brambles on this walk, especially dense in high summer, so bare legs and arms could be a problem. At the time this walk was researched (end-May 2019), paths were generally dry but, after the rainy winter of 2020 and during the rainy summer of 2021, some sections were very squishy, so that boots are now recommended. With no major roads (apart from in the town), and just a little livestock, this walk should be ok for your dog too.

The walk begins at **Billingshurst railway station** (postcode **RH14 9UU**), or in a side road near **Station Road**, Billingshurst, e.g. near postcode **RH14 9RB**, or in Myrtle Lane (w3w:mural.both.vets, postcode **RH14 9SG**) where there are car parks. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

Billingshurst ("wooded hill of Billa's people") has a town crest showing a Roman legionnaire. (It really is a small town – not a village.) This refers to Stane Street, the Roman road which links London and Chichester and bisects the parish. (See the "Slinfold" and "Bignor" walks on this site, amongst many others.) Over twenty timber-framed buildings survive in the town and many more in the parish: one of them, now a chemist, has been a shop since the 1600s. Property was well distributed amongst yeoman farmers, brewers, millers, blacksmiths and wheelwrights of the town, with no big landowner to dominate. However, the "King" is honoured in two out of the three pub names, a prompt reinstatement after the Restoration. There were two windmills in the 1800s, one in Mill Lane which mysteriously burnt down on Guy Fawkes night in 1852 and Hammonds Mill which suffered fatal gale damage in 1906.



1 Beginning at Billingshurst railway station, follow the main road out of town, passing Tesco on your right. In nearly 300m you reach a road junction. Opposite a little triangular green and a traditional signpost, turn **left** through an old metal gate onto a signed footpath. Your path runs between wire fences and over a thick 2-plank bridge. After 400m or so on this path, you reach a crossing with a 4-way fingerpost [Jun 2026: grounded, leaning against a tree]. Go straight over the crossing but, *immediately* after, turn **right** on an unmarked path through Rosier Wood.

2 This section is attractive at all times, but especially in late spring when the blue-bells form a dense carpet; these woods are also notable for birdsong. After

200m you approach a T-junction the edge of the wood with a meadow visible ahead. Turn **left** here for just 70m to reach a junction of paths. Avoid two minor paths that lead off to your left and instead turn **right** staying on the main path. The path gradually curls round leftwards, passing two murky ponds on your right. After 350m, you reach the edge of the wood again where your path suddenly bends left. **Leave** the path here, walk straight ahead over an earth bank and turn **left** on a clear peripheral woodland path. You are once again on an official footpath.

3 After 300m, passing another shadowy pond, you reach a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **right** here and, 15m later, turn **left** at a second fingerpost, thus regaining your original direction. Continue ahead for another 150m, avoiding a narrow path on your right, until you meet a large wooden gate revealing a lawn and a tennis court. Avoid a narrow path that branches off left into a clearing and turn **right**, thus staying on the main track between hedges. Follow the track as it curves right and slip past a large metal gate to reach a driveway leading to the main A272 road.

4 Turn **right** on the road using the grass verge and, in 50m, turn **left** on a lane signed to *Fewhurst Farm*. Just before a house, keep **left** on a drive-way, ignoring a footpath that forks right shortly after. As the drive bends right, keep straight on over the grass, as directed, and through a wooden gate – a perfect spot to slow the pace to take in the picturesque scene. Turn **right** at another signpost on a grass path beside a ranch fence revealing the ancient buildings of the farm. Veer **left**, as directed, on a path under trees. The path runs through a woodland clearing and across a stream, curving first left, then right at successive signposts. At the next fingerpost, keep **left** to go under the railway.

5 The path, which is bedecked with ramsons in early summer, takes you through a large metal gate (this and next closed with a loop of rope) and onwards under more great mature trees. As the path leads over a stone bridge, keep ahead, staying under trees to avoid paths branching off. You reach an unsymmetrical 4-way fingerpost by a large metal gate. Go through the gate and keep **left**. (Because the first path is rather overgrown, it may be best to fork **right** and turn immediately **left**. The idea is to avoid the large cattle pasture on your right. The cattle rarely stray into the narrower meadow which runs parallel to it – this is your route.) Keep to the right-hand edge of this long narrow field-of-grass, paying no attention to a fingerpost over to your left which leads to a footbridge.

6 You come through a large metal gate into a field of tall grass where in the nearby trees nightingales can be heard. After a majestic oak, your path runs along the right-hand side of a larger meadow, passing another signpost and power lines. If you meet cattle here, you should be able to use the adjoining field, because they generally stay in one group. A wooden gate and a strip of woodland lead you over a bridge with rails. Immediately after the bridge, keep **left** to walk along a wide grass strip. After another wooden gate and a woodland strip, you are walking beside a field of shrubbery on your left. At a 3-way fingerpost, ignore a footpath on your right and continue 25m to reach a fingerpost on your left by a small metal gate.

7 Turn **left** through the small metal gate. Your path runs along the right-hand side of a shrubby meadow, passing through a fringe of the woodland on your right. At the far right-hand corner, turn sharp left along the bottom of the meadow. (The path splits but you can take either branch.) The path goes through bushes and curves right to a sturdy bridge across a stream. After the bridge, your path runs beside a meadow on your left and finally comes out to a tarmac lane beside the entrance to *Duckmoor Farmhouse*. Turn **left** on the lane.

8 Stay on the lane as it bends right. Just after it bends left, go **right** at a sign-post [Jun 2026: damaged], past a large rusty gate, on a narrow path under trees. Your path crosses under power lines and runs beside a ranch fence and a wild meadow. Soon on both sides and straight ahead is a new land-scaped development of executive homes, built by *J Devine Homes*. Your excellent and easy-to-follow path crosses straight over a wide residential road via a Pelican crossing linking the "village" with a similar development straight ahead. Where the path reaches a T-junction, turn **left**. In around 75m turn **right** through a wooden barrier to reach a fingerpost in trees. Continue on the gravel path, ignoring all turnings off, to reach a residential lane. Keep straight ahead to a T-junction and cross over to a wide tarmac footpath, leading to the main road in Billingshurst.

9 Turn **left** on the main road through this small town. At a major junction with the A272 road, your route is a **left** fork, up a ragged flagstone path leading to the church. However it is worth continuing a short distance further to the town's best-known and prettiest pub, the *Six Bells*, a timbered building offset away from the road in a garden, deemed "excellent" by walkers.

This Grade II-listed pub dates from the 1500s but it was originally a farmhouse, called "Taintland" and was only made into a pub in Victorian times. The Six Bells is the only house in the parish with a continuous overhang. The pub is open – for the various H&B brews at least – virtually all day every day.

The adjacent building was another historic inn, now closed, the "King's Arms", built in the 1600s and much appreciated by no lesser figure than William Cobbett (1763–1835) of "Rural Rides" who had a good meal there and thought it "a very pretty place".

At the top of the flagstone path, turn **left** to reach the historic church.

St Mary's church was built in the 1100s. The Victorian clock is modelled on Big Ben, but the church's best-known feature is the "wagon roof" (a half-cylinder shape) dating from the 1400s.

Go round the church on the right and turn **right** on a solid path through the churchyard. The path runs beside a pleasant green strip which provides safe adventure for children. Keep ahead as the strip widens and take a path beside a brick wall on your left. Follow this path all the way to Station Road. Turn **left** on the road, using the footway, to reach the station where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: Billingshurst lies on the A29 (Dorking to Bognor road). When you reach large roundabout just before the town, leave the A29 by simply keeping straight on into the town.

By bus/train: start the walk at Billingshurst railway station (regular service from London (Victoria), Horsham etc.