Fancy Free Walks *point your feet on a new path*

# Colgate: The Dragon (Pub Walk)

Distance: 4 km=2½ miles — easy walking

Region: West Sussex — Date written: 17-feb-2012

Author: Moussehaine — Last update: 27-mar-2022

Refreshments: Colgate

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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*Pub, woodland, lakes, stream, meadows, views*

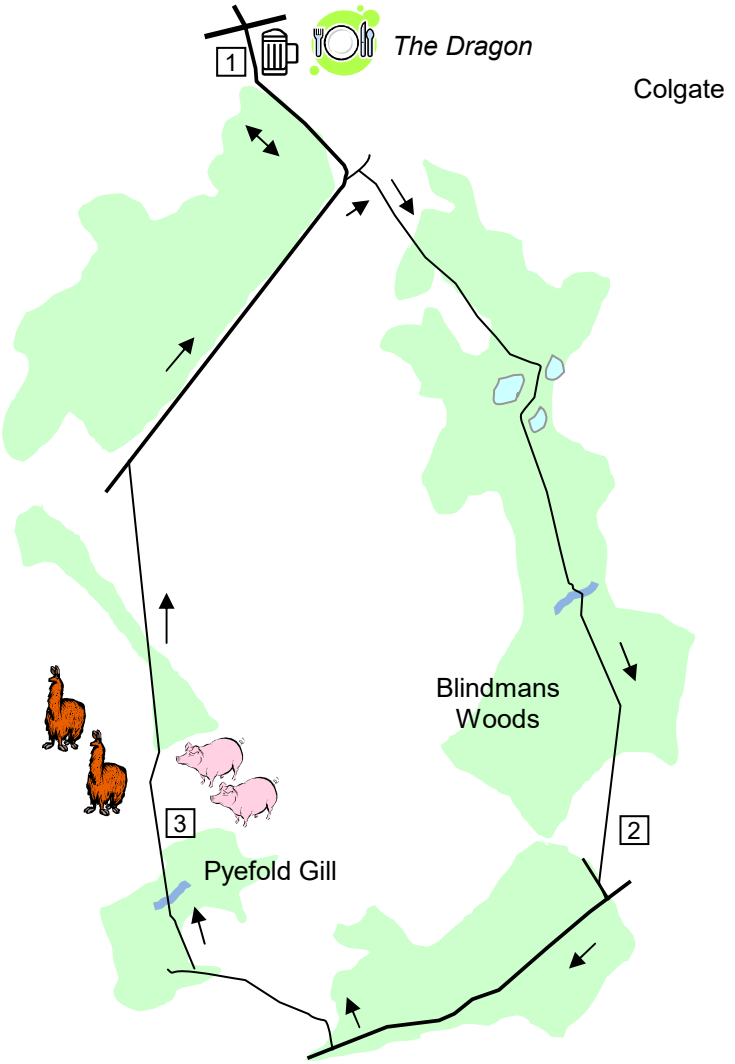
## In Brief

The sign over the *Dragon* at Colgate shows a rather paunchy dragon supping the local K&B brew, now H&W, so it might be Badger or Sussex or a guest ale, since all are available. They like to promote the pub as the one in St Leonard's Forest, and that's nearly true, judging by the number of cyclists and ramblers that make a very small diversion to call in. Indeed, a short distance west along the main road takes you smack into the middle of the forest. True to the benign-looking dragon, they run a friendly house and are especially welcoming to walkers, boots and all. The author didn't try the food but the local clientele and the on-line reviewers were happy. The pub re-opened on *23 April 2021* for al fresco dining – it is normally open all day at the weekends but closes Sunday evenings.

This walk goes deep down into the stream valley, through woodland and back across green meadows.

Generally speaking, any footwear and clothing are fine but this depends very much on the weather and in a wet season boots are a definite advantage. Your dog is welcome too.

The walk begins at the car park outside the ***Dragon* in Colgate**, postcode **RH12 4SY**, www.w3w.co/chiefs.junior.bogus. If you use the car park, you must make use of the pub facilities, either before or, more likely, after the walk. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).




## The Walk

1 From the pub, continue down the narrow private tarmac lane beside the car park. In over 250m the lane suddenly bends right. Leave the lane here by going **left** at a fingerpost and immediately **right** at another onto a narrow footpath which runs downhill between woodland and meadows and then descends by some railings between two ponds. The one on right is nearly hidden by rhododendrons. There's a boardwalk to keep your feet dry. You pass another pond on the left. The path veers right along another board-walk and left at a fingerpost through Blindmans Woods. Keep to the path through woods and over a 2-plank bridge with a railing, across a stream, Pyefold Gill, with a good show of ferns. The path runs straight for a bit and then bends right, over a stile [Apr 2021: broken – take care!] in a fence at a marker post and up onto an open heath.

2 At the other side of the heath, go through a new metal kissing-gate, **left** on a track and immediately **right** at a T-junction on a tarmac drive. Follow this quiet wood-fringed lane for about 500m where you meet the entrance to Spring Farm. Turn **right** here on the drive which is marked as a footpath. Where the drive curves right into the property, keep straight ahead on a narrower path. Where the meadow on your right ends, you meet another fingerpost. Turn **right** here onto a narrow path running beside the meadow on your right. Cross the stream again by another bridge with a handrail.

The path takes you uphill to the corner of a large grassy meadow. Keep ahead by a fence with the meadow on your left.

3 Soon you are walking between two pastures on a path which may be overgrown in summer. (There used to be alpacas on the left and pigs on the right here, maybe to return in the future.) Go over a stile [Mar 2022: care! broken] in the corner and keep straight on through gorse bushes beside a meadow on your left, ignoring a similar path straight ahead. Continue upwards and over a stile taking you into a field. Follow the well-trodden path, soon joining a wire fence on your right. Continue along the left-hand side of the next meadow. At the far end, go over two stiles and turn **right** on a tarmac lane. The lane runs past a farm and several large residences until you reach a sudden left-hand bend. This is the point where you left the lane on the outward leg. Keep **left** on the lane, soon arriving back at the *Dragon* where the walk began.

## Getting there

By car: Colgate is easily reached from the **M23 north** or the **A23 south**. Come off at exit 11 **Pease Pottage services**. Keep following signs for the Services but keep straight ahead past them following signs for Pease Pottage. At a roundabout, turn **right** over the M23 and stay on the major road following signs to Colgate which is another 2 miles.

If coming from Horsham, follow Crawley Road and Forest Road eastwards for about 2½ miles. The *Dragon* is on the right at a junction.

By bus/train: Metrobus 24 from Horsham or Crawley. Check the timetables.

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