Fancy Free Walks

point your feet on a new path

Petworth Park, Lodsworth, Bexleyhill
Parkland, Priory and Pinewoods

Distance: 26 km=16 miles (23 km=14 miles without the Park)
or 2 walks of 14½ km=9 miles easy-to-moderate walking
and 16 km=10 miles (13 km=8 miles without the Park)

Region: West Sussex Date written: 4-apr-2010

Author: Hautboy Last update: 24-jul-2026

Refreshments: Easebourne, Henley, Petworth car park (?)

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere)

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

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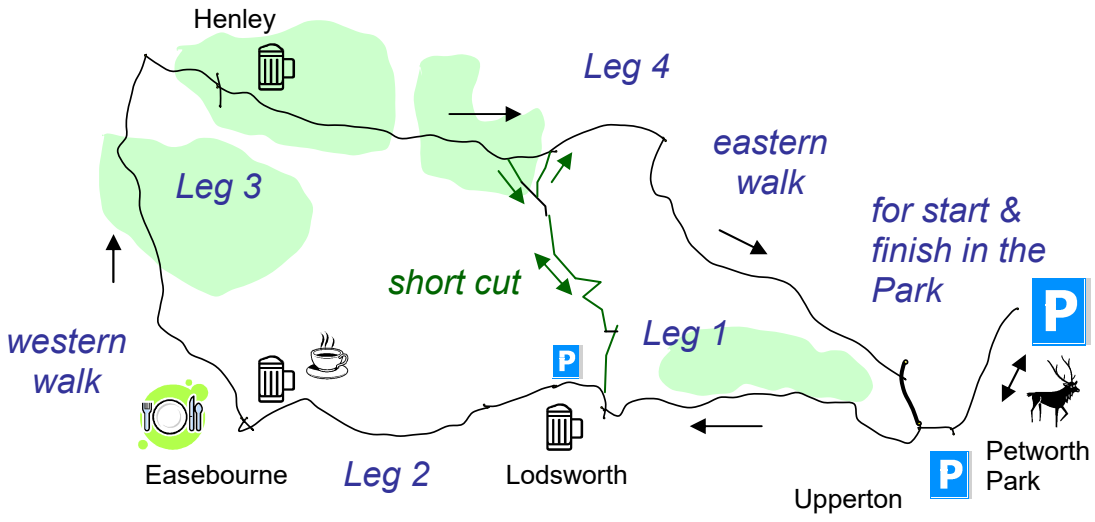
Parkland, villages, woodland, hills

In Brief

This circular walk in West Sussex is a full day's excursion. It is mostly a level walk but its length makes it fairly strenuous, although the beauty of the landscape will lighten your feet. There are fine views all the way, to the South Downs on the way out and to Black Down and the Greensand hills on the way back.

The walk can be divided into two shorter walks of 10 (or 8) and 9 miles.

There was some mud when this walk was researched, especially north of Lodsworth, but that was after weeks of heavy winter rain. Because of this, some concealed stones and the length, comfortable boots are recommended. There are few nettles and the walk should be fine for an athletic dog too.



The **main walk** and the **Eastern Walk** begin at the **north** car park in **Petworth Park** off the A283, nearest **postcode GU28 9LS**, grid ref SU 965 239, w3w:unlucky.fussy.hypnotist. The car park opens at 8 am and closes at dusk: re-check these times on the noticeboard. The cost to non-NT members is £3 (2019). So if there is any risk of not returning till it's pitch dark, an alternative start is **Upperton Village**, postcode **GU28 9BG**, though this misses a sublime start and finish. Another good starting point is Lodsworth where the village hall has a sizeable car park (see the start of Leg 2).

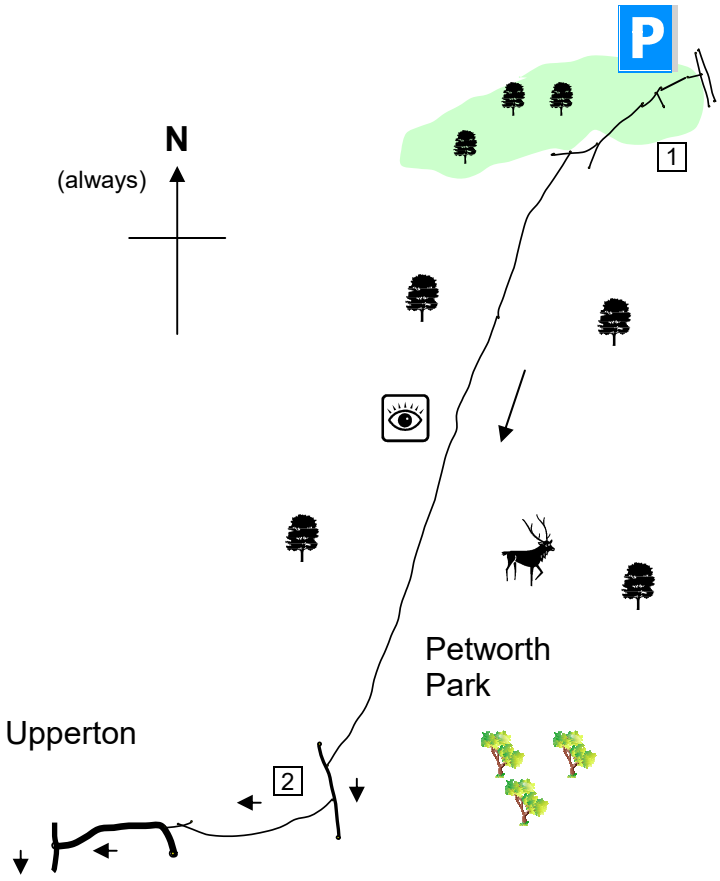
If you are only doing the shorter **Western Walk**, the starting point is the village of **Easebourne**, postcode **GU29 0AJ**. Park in the car park near the farm shop and café, or in a side street. Take Easebourne Street, opposite the church, going past the *White Horse*, and begin the walk at **Leg 3**.

The Walk

The **Chiddingfold Super Monster** resumes here.

Prelude: Escape from the Park 1½ km=1 mile

Petworth's 700-acre=283 ha park was designed by Capability Brown from 1751 to 1764. He moved thousands of tons of soil and replanted whole clumps of trees to produce the deceptively natural look of parkland receding into countryside for which English gardens are so renowned. The Park inspired several landscapes by JMW Turner. It also contains the oldest and largest herd of fallow deer in England. Petworth House, also National Trust, which is only just visible a mile away, houses a stunning collection of paintings by Van Dyke, Reynolds, Claude Lorrain, Bosch and others.

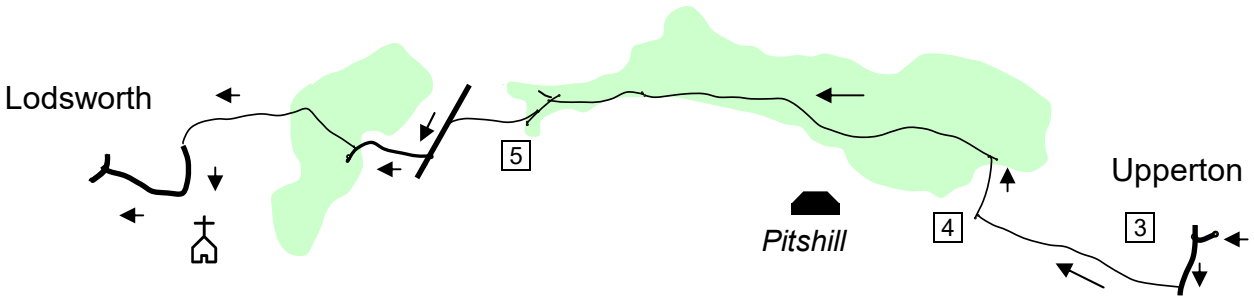


1 From the top left-hand side of the Petworth Park car park, walk to the notice-board (which shows a map of the park) and take a path *behind* the notice-board (with a doggy bin on your right). This path leads diagonally **left**, up through trees and out into the open. Keep the same direction over a crossing path onto a grass path which leads away from the trees into the open parkland. As you go, you can see your path stretching ahead into the distance, with a left-hand kink. In 100m, a path joins from the right and, in another 50m, your path goes down a dip and over a (possibly dry) stream. 200m further, you go over two crossing paths. You now enjoy a long stretch across the parkland, heading for the wooded ridge in the distance. On your right soon, you can see the Folly Tower. More than 500m from the last junction, you go over a crossing path and, 100m later, come to a T-junction with a wide stony track. Turn **left** on this track.

2 In only 60m, look to your right to see two tall pines and the roof of a house. Turn **right** here on a grass path, heading into the corner where there is a fold in the boundary wall. The gate is not visible for a while: just aim towards the house, joining another path from your left. The gate is a tall flimsy affair. Immediately after, go **right** through a tall wooden gate and **left** up shallow steps to the road. Turn **right** on the road into Upperton village.

The walk may begin and end at Upperton, omitting Petworth Park. In this case, begin here with **Leg 1**.

Leg 1: Upperton to Lodsworth 4 km=2½ miles



3 At a T-junction in the village, leave the road by turning **left** opposite Home Farm House onto a minor lane. In about 100m, turn **right** by a signpost at Woodgers. The path leads down an avenue of orchard trees to a finger-post. *There are magnificent views left to the South Downs.* Turn **right** and **left** through a gate to walk along the top of a wonderful south-facing sloping vineyard. At the corner, cross a lane via two gates and continue to a T-junction. You now have a fine view ahead of Pitshill House.

Pitshill was built on this beautiful site by William Mitford of Petworth in 1760 and was completed by his son in 1794. It houses a rare copy of the Threnodia Carolina, Sir Thomas Herbert's account of the last years of Charles I. The Pitshill estate and house have been beautifully restored (for an article, do a websearch for "Country Life Pitshill").

4 Turn **right** at the T-junction, passing on the left the buildings of the Pitshill Stud with their little tower and weather-vane. The path bends left where you are joined by a path from the right. Bear left on the track, hugging the fence of the Pitshill House estate on your left, ignoring any paths leading off. You

are now walking with woodlands falling away to your right with extensive views. In late spring the landscape here (indeed for much of this walk) is carpeted with bluebells. After some distance on this high path you eventually go down 3 steps and are met, at a 4-way fingerpost, by a track coming in from the right. Turn **left** on this track. In just 50m, by a metal gate and a fingerpost, avoid the gate and go **right**, through a swing-gate in a wooden fence, into a meadow. Cross the meadow diagonally to the far left-hand corner. You have fabulous views here north west to the Greensand hills.

5 On the other side, the path goes through a wooden swing-gate, along an enclosed path and down some awkward steps (careful!) to a lane. Turn **left** on the lane. Shortly, just before *Goldneys*, turn **right** on a bridleway. The bridleway bends sharply **left** and after this you should turn **right**, as directed by a 3-way fingerpost, with the main bridleway, avoiding a path going straight on. 200m later, at a junction of paths, keep going straight ahead, avoiding paths to the right and left. After a further 150m or so, follow the path as it turns **left** to cross Eel Bridge over the River Lod, a tributary of the River Rother. Continue on the bridleway towards the houses of Lodsworth, avoiding a footpath right. At a T-junction at the top, go through a gate by a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **left** to meet a lane and turn **left** on it, passing an immaculate house at St Peter's Well, to St Peter's Church.

The spring at St Peter's Well was a place of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages, supposedly a cure for eye diseases. The church of St Peter with its fine old tower is unfortunately usually locked but the setting is memorable.

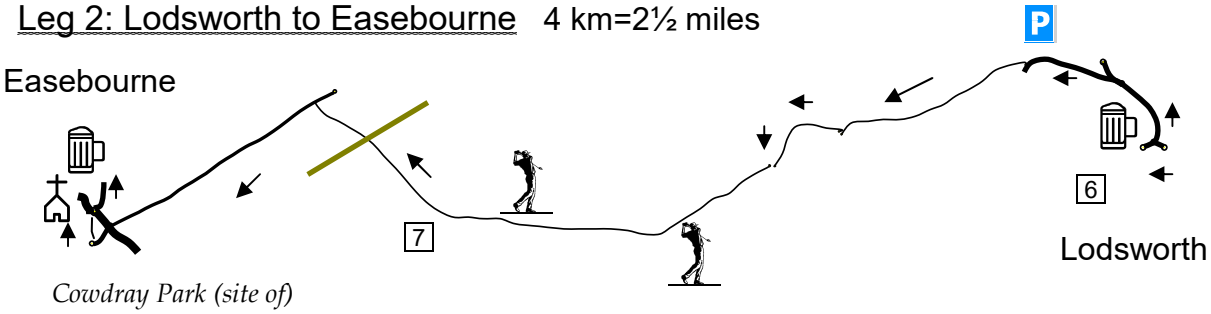
Continue along the lane to a T-junction opposite some fine regency houses. *At the corner is the past residence of E.H. Shepard, the illustrator of Winnie-the-Pooh. The adventurer Ranulph Fiennes and Barbara Ward, economist and author of "Only One Earth", are also present and past residents of Lodsworth.*

Turn **right** on the main road to reach a little green by the *Hollist Arms*, a fairly standard pub *(open Wed & Thur from 6, Fri & Sat from noon, Sun till 8pm)*. There is also a local community shop, *the Lodsworth Larder*, a little further along the road. It is open 7 days till 5pm, 12.30 on Sundays. *The friendly people serving have ready-made sandwiches and drinks including wines and beers; bring your own bottle opener or corkscrew. There are benches on the green outside the closed pub.*

Decision point. If you are doing the shorter **Eastern Walk**, skip to near the end of this text and do the **Lodsworth-Lickfold Axis (North)** shortcut. Otherwise ...

Fork **left** before the pub on a lane signposted *Village Hall*.

Leg 2: Lodsworth to Easebourne 4 km=2½ miles



6 P Follow the lane, passing the Village Hall (alternative start) ignoring turnings off, until it bends left at *Heath End Farm*. Leave the lane here by keeping ahead on a bridleway. In 250m, where the bridleway curves left, you come to a set of 3-way fingerposts with blue markings. *Ignore* them, turn **left** at the next junction, and go a little further to meet a *second* set of fingerposts. Turn **right** here on a footpath to regain your direction across the green space of Cowdray Park. At the end of the field, turn **left** around it and shortly, at a fingerpost, fork **right** through a new swing gate and go diagonally on a clear path across the parkland. The path skirts a pond on your right and goes through a swing gate. Continue in the same direction, slightly uphill, ignoring a path left and a path right that runs beside the fence. Copious mistletoe is evident in the treetops here.

7 As you near the top, ignore a path forking left at a fingerpost. Whilst watching out for golf balls, pass another fingerpost at the top of the green by links. Pass another fingerpost and follow the path down into trees. Go by another fingerpost and leave the golfers' path by escaping across the grass where indicated by yet another fingerpost. The path goes near a bell on the left which should *not* be touched, through a gate and across a field. At the bottom you come to a crossing path in a line of trees. This path is known as *The Race*. Turn **left** here ignoring the gate ahead. Eventually you come to the main road just outside the village of Easebourne.

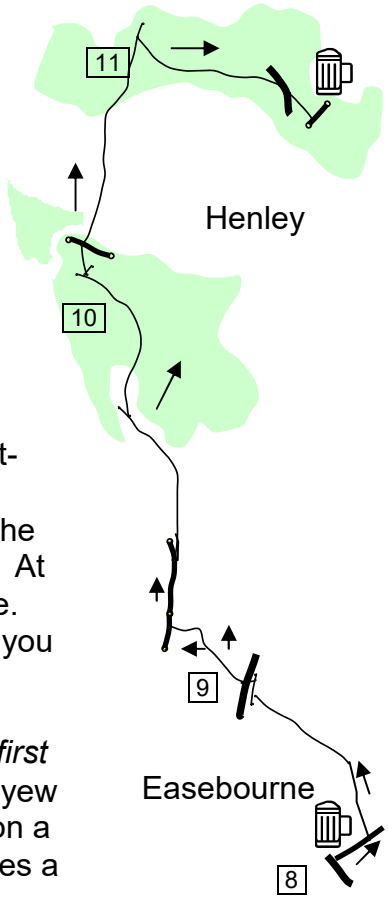
Easebourne, pronounced "Ezborn" or "Ezbun", is a modest village and parish dominated by the great Priory and the remains of Cowdray House. Famous residents include Billie Piper and Laurence Fox. It is well-known locally for its fine golf course and its polo ground (in common with its larger neighbour Midhurst). The Augustinian Priory was founded in the 1200s by the local de Bohun family. The Tudor Cowdray House was built in the early 1500s but was devastated by fire in 1793 and has not been occupied since then.

Cross the road and walk into the grounds of the Priory where a small diversion a little further along leads to the *Cowdray Farm Shop & Café*, open 9-5. (Or you can skip the tea room and churchyard by turning **right** on the road). Turn **right** before the Priory building into the churchyard of St Mary.

The church was well restored in Victorian times. It is notable for the fine carved memorials in the south east corner. One group is of the recumbent Sir Anthony Browne, died 1592, alongside his two noble wives Jane Ratcliffe and Magdalen Dacre. Another group is of the grieving William and Elizabeth Poyntz. Their two sons William and Courtnay were boating in 1815 off Bognor with their father. Elizabeth reputedly had a superstitious dread of water and had stayed at home and was watching from the window with her three daughters when a sudden squall capsized the boat and the two boys drowned.

Exit via the lichgate and cross the road again. *The village store is at hand but is closed weekends from Saturday lunchtime.* Go up Easebourne Street, passing a snug little pub, the *White Horse* (Greene King), which offers 'quality home-cooked food'.

Leg 3: Easebourne to Henley 5 km=3 miles



8 Soon after the *White Horse*, turn **left** on a narrow lane signed *Birthday House* and follow it past new houses and then on a track beside a cemetery. After about 100m, don't miss a marker-post where the path zigzags right-left into a field and, in only 50m, turns **right**. At a fingerpost before overhead wires, turn **left**. The path leads to a by passable stile and down steps to a wide track. Turn **right** on the track for just a few paces. Just before the first cottage (No. 68), turn sharp **left** and scramble* up a bank to the main road, the A286. (*Or, easier, turn **right** on the track and walk the short distance down to the main road.)

9 Cross the road very carefully to a lane opposite, marked as a foot-path. By the entrance to Whittlers Farm, go over a stile into a meadow and immediately ascend the grassy slope on the **left**. The path runs parallel to the drive and past the buildings of the Farm. At the far side, go down steps to a farm lane. Turn **right** on the lane. You pass some cottages and, about 100m after the last of them, you come to a waymarker post. Fork **right** here and follow a grassy track. There are two waymarkers now which you must not miss, since it is easy to get distracted by the beauty all around. At the *first* marker post take the **left** fork. In around 200m, just after a large yew tree on your right, there is the *second* marker post directing you on a **right** fork. This path leads up through coppices and finally reaches a junction at a 4-way fingerpost, with a gate on the right. *(The next stage coincides with another walk in this series – see the Titty Hill, Rother Valley, Henley walk.)*

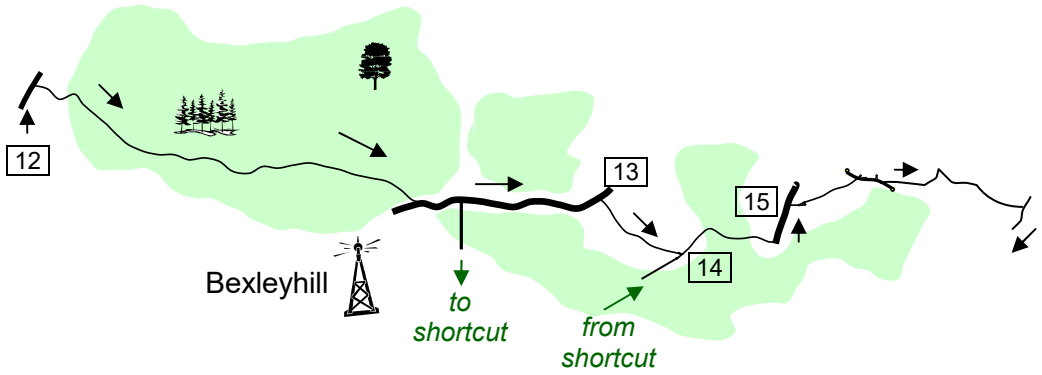
10 Ignore a track on your right and take a much narrower path leading uphill towards the left side of the house ahead. This leads up to a road. Cross the road and take a footpath opposite. Soon, cross a farm track via two stiles. *Bluebells are abundant here in late spring.* The path gradually sinks to a ravine with tall beeches and finally reaches the hamlet of Verdley Edge at a fingerpost. Go straight ahead over the grass, passing the fingerpost, down the track, half way through the hamlet.

This part of the **Chiddingfold Super Monster** ends here by keeping straight on at the next fingerpost instead of turning sharp right.

11 In around 75m turn sharp **right** at a second fingerpost. *The sign tells you that you are now on the Serpent Trail, a long-distance path.* Go up the shingle drive, passing to the left of a timber garage, then through a wooden barrier. After some distance uphill through woodland, at a fingerpost, fork **left**, thus leaving the Serpent Trail. Follow the track, skirting a natural "bowl" on your left, soon with a marker-post that lead you down gradually to the main road. Cross the road carefully and go down a tarmac track opposite, to the right of a bus stop, into the picturesque hamlet of Henley. When you meet the road at the bottom, turn **left**, reaching the *Duke of Cumberland*.

There is a fuller description of Henley and its pub in another walk in this series "Woolbeding Common & Temple of the Winds". Note that the Duke of Cumberland, being so popular, is often fully booked for lunch and it is advisable to make a telephone reservation on 01428 652280.

Leg 4: Henley to Upperton 8½ km=5½ miles



12 Opposite the *Duke of Cumberland*, by a 'phone box, turn **right** on a footpath, marked as the Serpent Trail. Just past *Yew Tree Cottage*, turn **left** as indicated by a fingerpost. The footpath takes you over a stream via a two-plank bridge and across a boardwalk, whereupon a forestry tracks joins from the left. (Careful! Some walkers go wrong here. Remember the general principle "*straight on* unless a sign indicates otherwise".) From here you need to keep an eye open for those yellow arrows and/or purple Serpent Trail signs, always going in the same (easterly) direction. About 800m (½ mile) from Henley, the path turns **right** at a T-junction (confusing as the sign is hidden behind a tree). Nearly 2 km from Henley, the marked path goes past a green metal barrier and meets a lane. Turn **left** on the lane through Bexleyhill. *The big relay mast, so visible from afar, is up on your right, unseeable through the trees.* At *Nightingale House*, ignore a footpath right. 40m later on your right is the entrance drive for *Tanglewood*.

Decision point. If you are doing the shorter **Western Walk**, skip to near the end of this text and do the **Lodsworth-Lickfold Axis (South)** shortcut. Otherwise ...

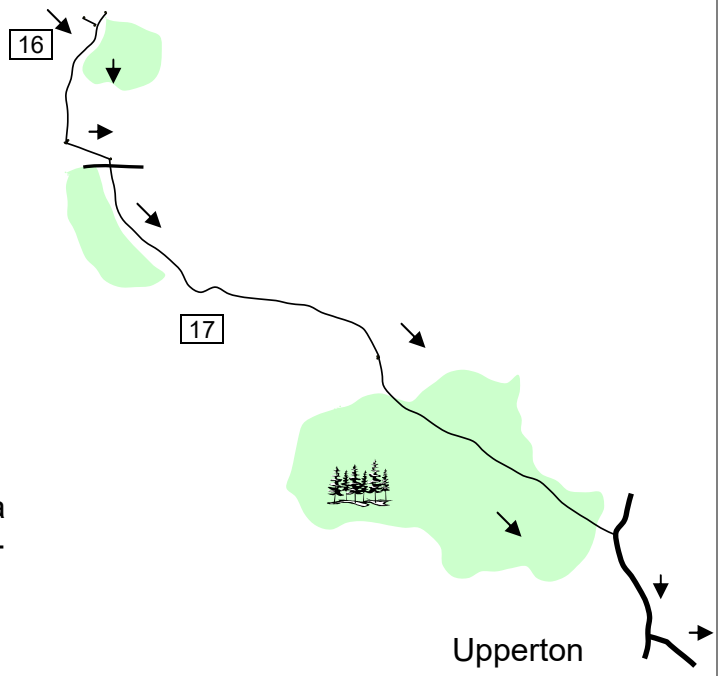
13 Continue along the road for another 350m. Shortly after a left bend, there is a more open area on your right and you see a small fingerpost, slightly set back from the road on your left. Turn **right** here on a footpath. This pleasant grassy path runs between birch and bracken and, in 400m, reaches a T-junction and a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **left** at the T-junction.

The **Lodsworth-Lickfold Axis (North)** shortcut joins the main walk here.

14 After nearly 200m, turn **right** at a marker-post. Very soon after, veer **right** towards a house, ignoring a footpath left. At the house, turn **left** and follow the drive to a road. Turn **left** on the road. In 100m, at a fingerpost, turn **right** through a wooden kissing gate.

15 Go along the **right**-hand side of a meadow and through a wooden gate. At a fingerpost, ignore a right fork and continue across the centre of the meadow. Continue straight ahead, going through three more similar wooden gates. The path finally goes over a tiny/dry stream and turns right. It then goes left and right around field corners and over a plank bridge with a rail. Now, turn **right** to go through a gap in the trees. Immediately turn **left** after the gap and go along the **left**-hand side of a field. At the end, next to a 3-way fingerpost, go sharp **right** on a track next to woodland called *Dirty Bridge Field*.

16 Follow the track for about 200m, turning **left** at a 3-arm fingerpost and immediately **right** into a field. Continue along the **right**-hand side of the field, as directed by a marker-post. The footpath goes left at the field corner, then right at a marker-post onto a stony path over a stream. Turn **left** on a farm drive and, in 40m, cross over a tarmac drive. Turn **left** and, in only 5m, turn **right** at a partially hidden, old, grey gatepost, and along the right-hand side of a field. Continue along the **right**-hand side of the next field, passing a 4-way fingerpost on a crossing path. Continue ahead along the **right**-hand side of the next field, finally coming out to a track at a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **left** on the track and **right** across a bridge, over a very ample stream.



17 Follow the tarmac track uphill for 25m. Just before a large metal gate, go through a wooden swing gate on the **right** and veer **left** alongside the hedge, continuing across the centre of the meadow. The path then goes through an open metal gate at a 2-arm fingerpost and curves round the right-hand side of the narrow meadow, exiting in the far corner, via a wooden kissing-gate by a 3-arm fingerpost. Turn **right** on the track. The track becomes a drive and comes out to a rough lane. Turn **left** on the lane and, in just 30m, turn **right** opposite the driveway to *The Little House*. Go past a marker-post onto a footpath. This path leads through fine woodland, over streams, becoming very steep as it proceeds. Finally it emerges to the perimeter road of Petworth Park immediately opposite the tower Folly near the wall. Turn **right** on the road and follow it into Upperton. (There is no entrance gate nearby.)

Postlude: Return through the Park 1½ km = 1 mile

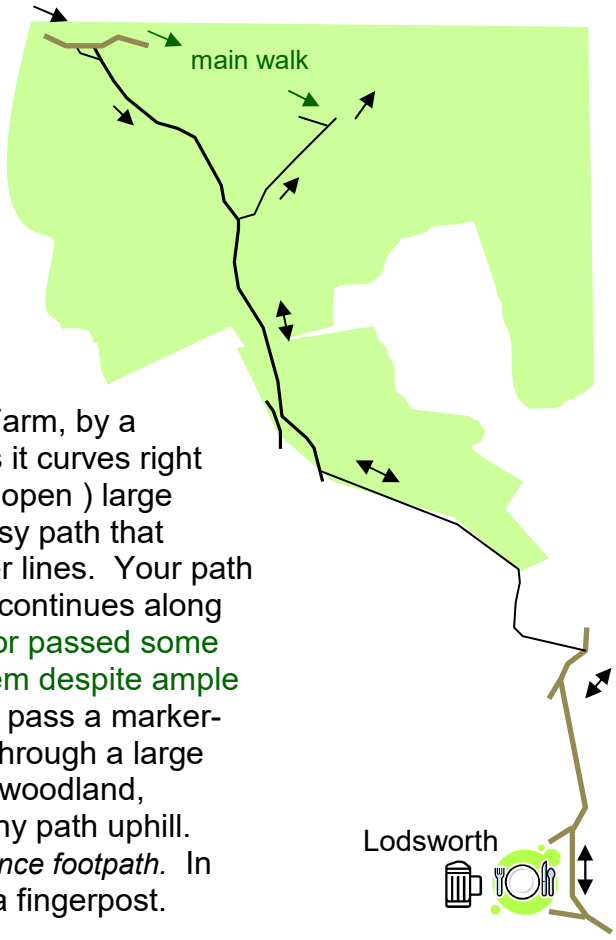
Refer to the first mini-map, reversing the arrows. Go through the village and turn **left** after *Park House*, down shallow steps, **right** through a tall gate and through a tall fimsy gate (the catch is on the other side), into the open parkland. Keep right along a dirt path and, in 100m, fork **left** on a grass path to arrive at a T-junction with a wide stony track. Turn **left** on the track and, in 60m, fork **right** onto a grassy path which runs across the centre of the park. In 100m your path goes over a wide crossing path and continues, heading for trees in the distance where the car park is concealed. In 500m, you go over two crossing paths, soon followed by a dip. 50m after the dip, take the **right** fork. Your path quickly leads through trees and into the car park where the walk began.

For final refreshments, there is now (2019) a little coffee van at the car park, complete with snacks, chairs and tables – whether year-round is not certain.

Lodsworth-Lickfold Axis (North) 3 km = 2 miles

Take this shortcut if you are doing the shorter **Eastern Walk**.

a



Continue along the main road in Lodsworth, passing the *Lodsworth Larder*, passing Shepherds Lane on your left. [2019: a walker took the footpath on the **left** that runs adjacent to the lane, as a safer option, turning **left** at the end by a small parking area, **right** to join School Lane and **left** to join the main road.] Continue another 400m, where you pass School Lane on your left at the end of the village. Go another 100m and turn **left** on a drive for Redlands Farm, by a fingerpost. Follow the drive and stay on it as it curves right through the farm going through four (usually open) large metal gates. The drive becomes a wide grassy path that curves left round a meadow and under power lines. Your path follows a galvanised fence to your right as it continues along the right-hand edge of a pasture. (The author passed some docile cattle and felt no need to go round them despite ample room to do so.) Just before the very top you pass a marker-post and a 2-arm fingerpost. At the top, go through a large metal gate and keep straight ahead through woodland, possibly with signs of forestry work, on a stony path uphill. *Note that you are on the Serpent Trail long-distance footpath.* In 150m or so, you approach a T-junction and a fingerpost.

b

Do *not* go as far as the wide forestry track ahead but, 5m **before** the track, turn **right** down a narrow path. You path, fairly straight and level, goes through beautiful mixed woodland. In 300m or so, on a muddy path, you pass three houses and gardens. Only 20m after the last of these houses, look for a fingerpost on your right. Turn **right** here on a narrow bridleway downhill through bracken. Care! you need to concentrate over the next section. (The official bridleway forks left through the middle of the bracken; it is now obscured and disused for reasons soon to be clear. 2019: there is now a fairly well worn path through the trees which it very easy to follow.) After emerging from the bracken, go another 15m to an apparent fork in the path. Keep **left** at the fork, going through an area with a bank of tree roots about 10m on your right. The official bridleway runs parallel on your left beside the main wood by a ditch and a low bank. Shift **left** to re-join the bridleway. In only about 50m, there are some large fallen tree branches across the path (the reason why the bridleway is disused). Make a wide arc right and left round this obstacle to re-join the bridleway. In another 200m you reach a 3-way fingerpost. Keep straight on.

Now re-join the main walk at Leg 4 section 14.

Lodsworth-Lickfold Axis (South) 3 km = 2 miles

Take this shortcut if you are doing the shorter **Western Walk**.

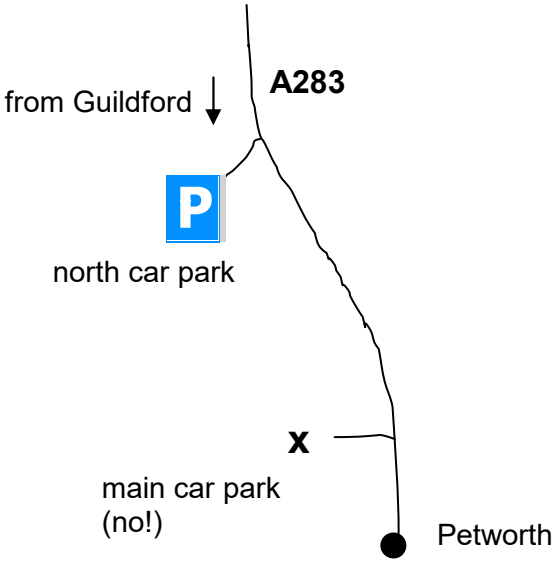
c **Same mini-map as North.** Turn **right** into the drive for *Tanglewood*. (Strictly, you should have followed the left-hand fingerpost at *Nightingales*, but the path is choked by balsam weeds and is boggy in season.) Follow the drive through woodland, soon enriched by tall beeches. The drive rises and twists and approaches a house. Keep ahead, passing two more houses and gardens. Your route is now a pleasant narrow woodland path. 300m or so after the last house, you reach a 4-way junction by a fingerpost. Turn **left** on a bridleway. In 150m or so, you reach an open pasture with good views on your left down to Lodsworth.

d Turn **left** through a large metal gate into the pasture and go down the left-hand side. (The author passed some docile cattle and felt no need to go round them despite ample room to do so.) Just after some power lines, continue ahead on the grassy path. At a fingerpost, ignore a left turn through a small metal gate and instead turn **right** towards farm buildings. Go through two large (usually open) metal gates and continue ahead on a tarmac drive. At a fingerpost, ignore a footpath on your right and stay on the drive. (The footpath also leads into the village but the path between houses is rather overgrown.) Continue to a road and turn **right** into the village of Lodsworth. (Some walkers turn **right** in 100m on School Lane.) In 400m or so, you pass the *Lodsworth Larder* and the *Hollist Arms* pub. Turn sharp **right** after the pub on a lane signposted *Village Hall*.

Now re-join the main walk at the start of Leg 2.

Getting there

By car: If you know Petworth House, the **north** car park in Petworth Park is **not** the car park near the house but the one a good mile north, just off the A283. To get there from the north (Surrey or London) side, take the A283 through Milford and Chiddingfold. About 3 miles (5 km) after Northchapel, you go under high-tension grid lines. The car park is about ½ mile (900m) further, on the right. Alternative car parking is in Lodsworth (opposite St Peters Well) and Easebourne.



If you are doing only the **Western Walk**, the start is in **Easebourne** village, reachable on the A286 from Haslemere.

By bus/train: Stagecoach Worthing–Midhurst (passing Pulborough station) or Compass Horsham–Petworth (passing Horsham station), followed by a different crossing of the Park.

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