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

Marley Common

Distance: 13 km=8 miles or 8 km=5 miles — easy walking

Region: West Sussex — Date written: 9-apr-2010

Author: Hautboy — Date revised: 18-apr-2022

Refreshments: Haslemere after the walk — Last update: 10-jul-2026

Map: Explorer 133 (Haslemere)

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

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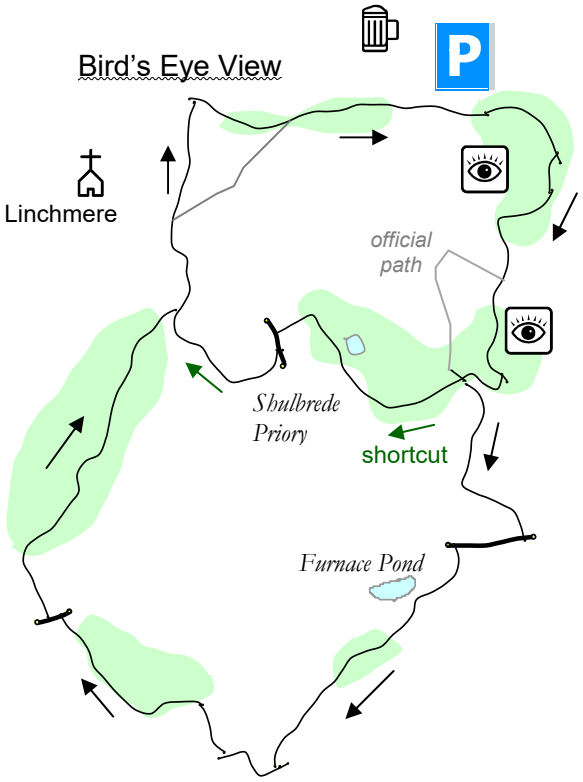
Woodland, hills, heath, views, history

In Brief

This is a peaceful circular walk through the gentle hilly countryside of West Sussex, to the south and west of Haslemere, Surrey. Despite the hilly terrain, the going is easy. There are no towns or even villages directly en route, so you need to take a picnic or eat afterwards in one of the many nearby facilities in Haslemere.

In spring time this walk is thronged by bluebells. The route uses several unusual rider's paths over the heights and through the woods and you may need to avert your eyes occasionally from the magnificant views so as to pay close attention to this guide, and thus find your way around.

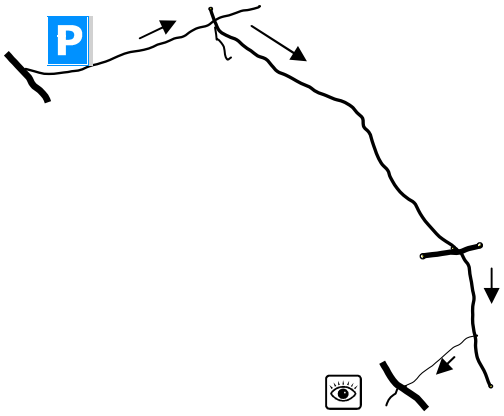
There are some nettles so bare legs are not advisable. During the dry season this walk is mud-free for the most part but in winter you will need boots to protect from mud. This walk is one of the best for your dog with only a few small stretches where he has to be on a lead.



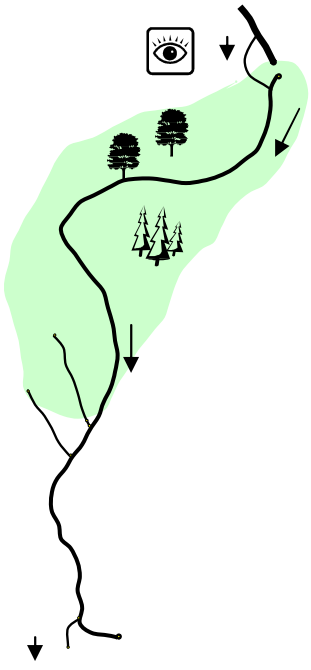
The walk begins at the **Marley Common Car Park** near Haslemere, Surrey, w3w:brambles.deeper.revisit, nearest **postcode GU27 3RG**. See **Getting There** → at the end of this text for directions.

The Walk

Leg 1: Marley Common to the Heights 2½ km=1½ miles

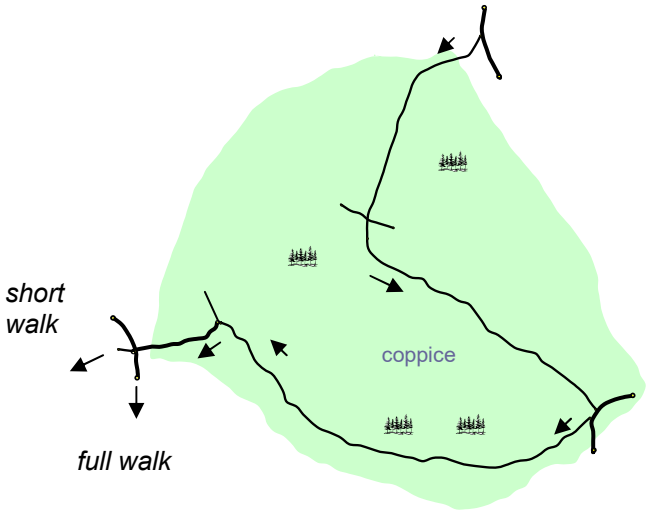


1 Walking away from the entrance, go past the noticeboard and through the gate straight ahead (*not* the one on the left). In less that 100m, you reach a 4-way fingerpost. Turn squarely **right** here, immediately avoiding a path that forks right. You are on part of the Sussex Border Path. Soon you go over a crossing path and reach a fork with a small wooden gate at each end. Go through the one on the **left**, cross a tarmac lane coming from a house on your left, and continue ahead on a woodland path. In 50m you meet a marker post. Ignoring the direction arrow, turn **right** on a narrow path through trees, leading out to a tarmac lane. Cross the lane to reach a small parking area with a really *stunning* view southwards to the terrain you will be covering. Go down the **left**-hand side of the grass strip.



2 In 30m, turn **left** passing a bench seat from where you can admire the view. Follow a narrow path along the contour, soon going on a hilarious tight course around trees, with a wide sunken path down on your left. Sooner or later your path joins the sunken path. In about 50m you meet a 3-way finger-post [Jul 2026: missing two arms, thanks to a fallen tree]: keep straight ahead on the wide level path. Suddenly you are out of the woods, with terrific views ahead, in an open area of coppice (an ancient sustainable way of harvesting trees by cutting them close to the root). Most of this walk is through coppiced woodland and you will see such trees in various stages of growth. *(In 2022 the scene looked like a war zone with great swathes of trees (mainly chestnut) pitilessly cut down as far as the eye can see. But don't worry! Vast areas here are part of the Cowdray Estate. The Cowdrays (Michael and Marina) are continuing the tradition of coppice management. In 5 years the trees will have re-grown.)* 100m further, your wide path wheels left and runs straight, slightly downhill. 200m beyond, avoid a minor forester's path by keeping **right** on the main path, as directed by a yellow arrow on a marker post. 100m after, at a 3-way fingerpost, ignore a wide path sharp right. In another 50m there is another junction with a 3-way fingerpost. The official footpath turns right here and follows the long contour with a left hairpin return stretch. But the route taken in this guide uses a shorter route on permissive horse paths and forestry tracks over the heights where walkers are also allowed, so…. Keep **straight on** at the fingerpost. In about 200m, at the top of an uphill stretch, you come to a new post with a yellow arrow. Turn **right** here uphill on a wide path with recently coppiced trees on both sides, thus leaving the official footpath.

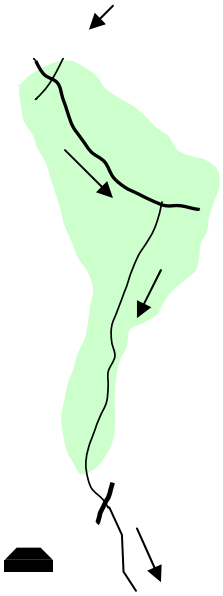
3 At a 4-way junction at the top, go straight ahead on a good but narrower path. The path goes steeply down initially but then veers left uphill again. *On your right is another view to Black Down and beyond to the Hampshire Hangers, truly dreamy and majestic.* You reach a T-junction. Veer **right** and, in 15m, turn **right** again on a leaf-strewn path downhill through the coppice. In 200m, you reach a junction where a forestry path goes uphill ahead. **Leave** the path here by wheeling sharp **left** downhill steeply onto a wide foresters' path. In 80m, at the bottom, you come to a marker-post at a 4-way junction. Left and right is the official footpath. Straight ahead is a narrow path into woods.



Decision Point

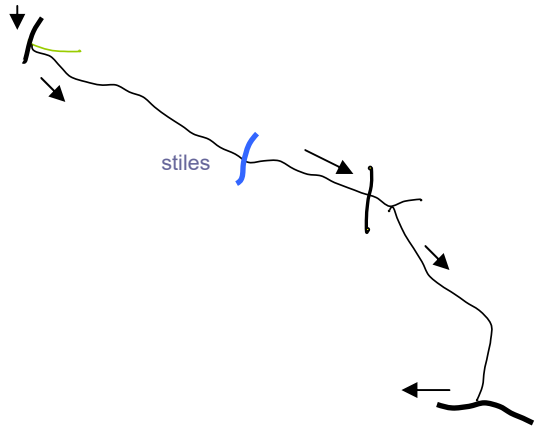
If you would like to do the **shorter** version of this walk, refer to the end of this text, do the *Shulbrede Shortcut* and rejoin the walk further down. The **full walk** continues with the next Leg.

Leg 2: The Heights to Furnace Pond 2½ km=1½ miles

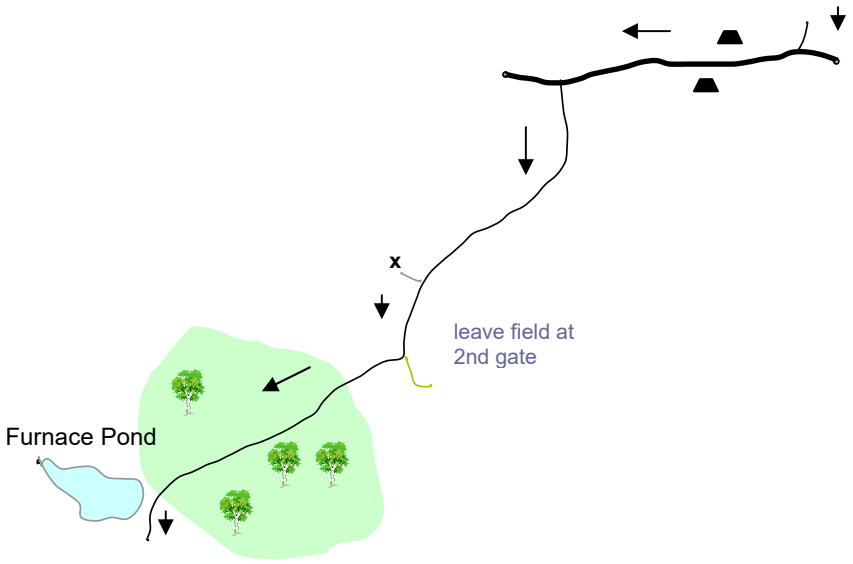


4 Turn **left** on the marked footpath. In under 200m, at a 3-way fingerpost, turn **right** downhill. The path runs beside a meadow on the left with Bexleyheath aerial visible in the distance. It crosses a path obliquely, with a forester's work and storage yard to your right. Soon your path runs close to a hill on your right, adorned with tall pines. At a fork with a track, turn **left** downhill. Your path descends to finally come out of the wood to cross an old 3-plank bridge and meet a wide stony crossing track. Cross straight over the track on a narrow path along the grass with a wire fence on your left. *There are fantastic views ahead, including Greenhill House with its garden and clock turret, visible on your right.*

5 This new footpath takes you over a plank bridge-with-rails, down five steps and through a wooden swing gate. The path now crosses the next meadow diagonally, down to the far corner under a large oak where another footpath joins from the right at a fingerpost. Cross a stream here via two stiles. Traverse a meadow, a wooden swing gate, a driveway, then a gap opposite (beside a large metal gate) and into another meadow. Fork **right** immediately at a 3-way fingerpost and aim for the far corner where the driveway from the nearby house meets the road, where there is a hidden (rather tight) kissing gate. Exit to the road and turn sharp **right** on it.



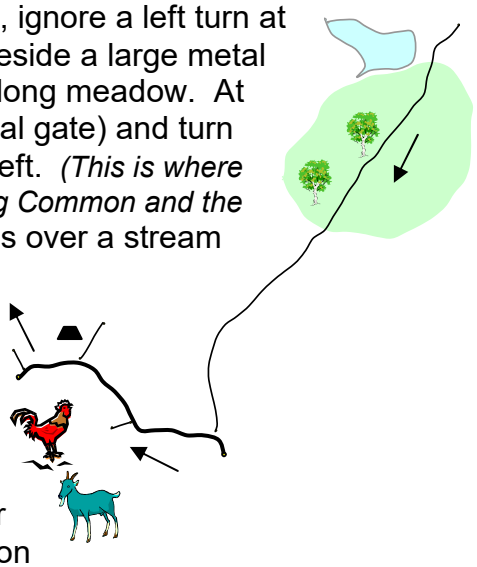
6 Go past a duckpond by a fine stone wall and *Highbuilding Farm* which houses a centre where church organs are manufactured. After about 200m of road walking, just after the last semi-detached house, turn **left** opposite a fingerpost and through a metal gate into a large meadow. Keep to the right-hand edge and pass through two more (usually open) metal gates. Follow the edge all the way to the first corner where there is a large metal gate with a yellow arrow. Go straight ahead through this gate on a wide path through woodland. This path goes over a stream and, after 250m goes over a crossing path. Finally you reach Furnace Pond



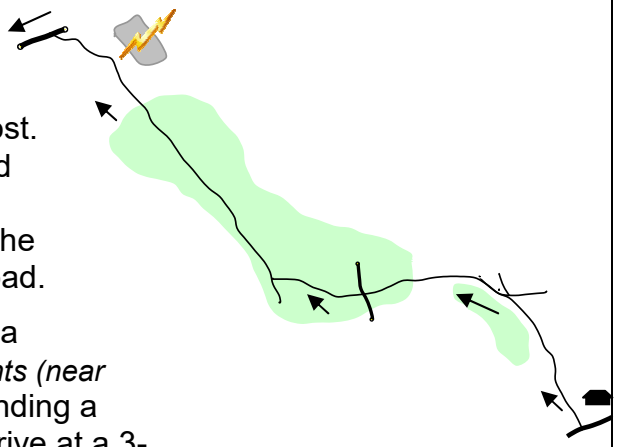
On this side of the pond are the remains of Fernhurst Furnace, some of the best preserved in the Sussex Weald. The iron industry flourished here in the 1600s and 1700s using local ore, charcoal and water power, before the use of coal moved the iron industry up North. The furnace site was recorded and excavated by a local unit in 1989, and it is the subject of a vigorous preservation campaign to rescue it from erosion. The site holds open days and historical events. The paths beside the pond were re-opened in 2022 after a reconstruction project.

Leg 3: Furnace Pond to Newlands Cottage 4¾ km=3 miles

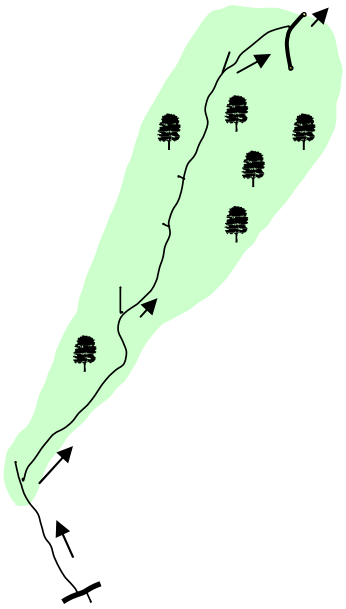
7 Bear **left** with the pond on your right. Just after the pond, ignore a left turn at a fingerpost. After 200m, go through a wooden barrier beside a large metal gate and continue along the left-hand side of a beautiful long meadow. At the far end, go over a stile (or through an open large metal gate) and turn **right** on a tarmac driveway. In 100m, ignore a footpath left. *(This is where another walk in this series briefly intersects – see "Woolbeding Common and the Temple of the Winds".)* At the bottom, where the drive goes over a stream keep straight ahead uphill with a house (*Ingleby*) on your right. *Upper North Farm on the left has goats and free-range chickens.* Just before a gate into the farm, by a pond, turn **right** along a fenced path by the edge of the lawn of the house you just passed.



8 Your path soon enters woodland. In under 100m you come to a crossing track near a fingerpost visible on your right. Ignoring the fingerpost, turn immediately **left** here on the wide forestry track. In 250m, the track meets a crossing path under wires. Cross straight over on a lovely, much narrower, grassy course in a botanically rich area. You reach a T-junction with another path by a fingerpost. Turn **right** here. The path follows a fine woodland course beside a bank on your left, over a 2-plank bridge, passes a huge electricity relay station on the right and comes out to a road. Turn **left** on the road.

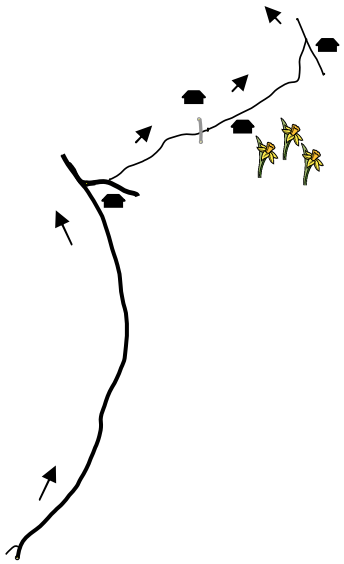


9 In just 30m, turn **right** on a wide drive marked as a bridleway. *There are fine views right to Marley Heights (near the outward leg) and Blackdown beyond.* After ascending a gentle slope for 400m you enter woodland and arrive at a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **right** here on a footpath, over a ditch. This wide path goes through a cut down coppice, straight over a crossing path by a marker-post. It enters plantations of birch and pines, and runs uphill. Always keep to the main level path, which curves left, passes a marker-post and curves right through more pines. The path takes you through memorable sections of woodland called *Bird Piece* and *Leithe*. After more than 1km on this path, where you come to a marshy area, you will find a little bank on the right (with a very rickety 3-plank bridge) or a well-defined high path on the left to escape it. (Do not try to go through the marsh: it is deceptively deep and gooey!) Just after this, at a 3-way fingerpost (Jul 2026: propped up against a tree) go straight ahead. Your path goes right around a ditch and passes a magnificent beech tree, keeping right at a marker post. In a further 100m, a fingerpost directs you on a compulsory **right** fork *(don't miss!)*. The path now runs through a rather chaotic area with a heavily cut coppice on your left. After a short distance in woodland you reach *Newlands Cottage*. Keep **left** on the driveway, ignoring a fingerposted junction on your right. The drive curves left, goes over a stream and curves round to the right.

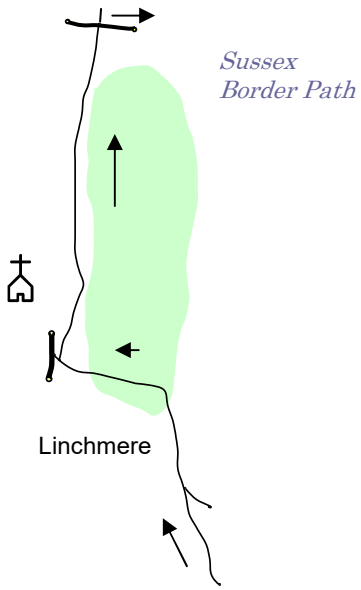


Leg 4: Newlands Cottage to Marley Common 3¼ km=2 miles

The Shulbrede Shortcut rejoins the walk here.

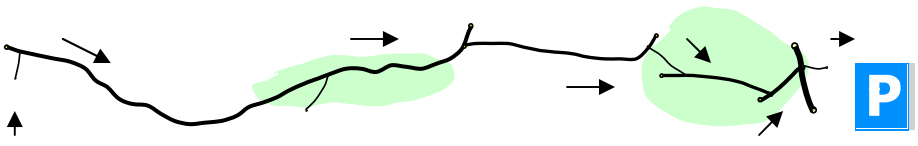


10 Finally the driveway comes to a cottage aptly named *Corner Cottage* by the road into Linchmere. The route however is **right** on the road. In just 40m, turn **left** on a signed footpath leading to some of the fine houses of Linchmere. At a driveway, continue straight ahead (although you may first want to sneak a peek at the delectable *Waterhouse Cottage* on the left). The driveway leads into the grounds of *Lynchmere Cottage* (yes, this is correct!) and runs close beside the house into a gravel yard close to the back garden where it immediately forks **left** just before a shed. *The path here is fringed by primroses in early spring.* The path leads up to a house and continues alongside its large converted garage.



11 Stay on the track, gently rising. (There is a short cut via a turning sharp right, but it has a steep section and cuts out a fine stretch of landscape.) At a 3-way fingerpost, join a track coming from the right. *To the left of the fingerpost is a project where they are renovating an ancient pond. On your right is a fabulous sloping natural lawn of silver birch.* Soon you are close to the village of Linchmere and reach a 2-arm fingerpost, just before a metal barrier, near the road. If you would like to visit this fascinating village (some walkers say *don't miss!*), you can make a small diversion by continuing to the road and turning **right**. The churchyard reveals among other things the grave of Richard Dimbleby. Afterwards, pick up the Sussex Border Path, just off the next road to the **right**. Otherwise … Turn **right** at the sign, following another path that soon runs along the backs of gardens, straight on beside a meadow on your right, through an old kissing gate. Eventually, you come to a 4-way junction. Turn **right** on the crossing bridleway.

12 You are now on the Sussex Border Path (SBP). *There is a quite lovely meadow in a valley to your left.* Follow the SBP through woodland, avoiding all branch paths and all turnings off. After nearly 1 km, your path joins a tarmac drive by *Harboury*. Shortly after, at *Manor Croft*, turn **right** at a 3-way fingerpost, onto a dusty track, thus leaving the tarmac that forks off left. The track passes various stud farms and fine houses. Just past *Marley House*, the track, now more of a lane, bends left. Leave the lane here by going straight ahead on a signed path into woodland by a new fingerpost. In 250m, at the next intersection, turn **left** on a tarmac driveway back to the road and the car park where the walk began.

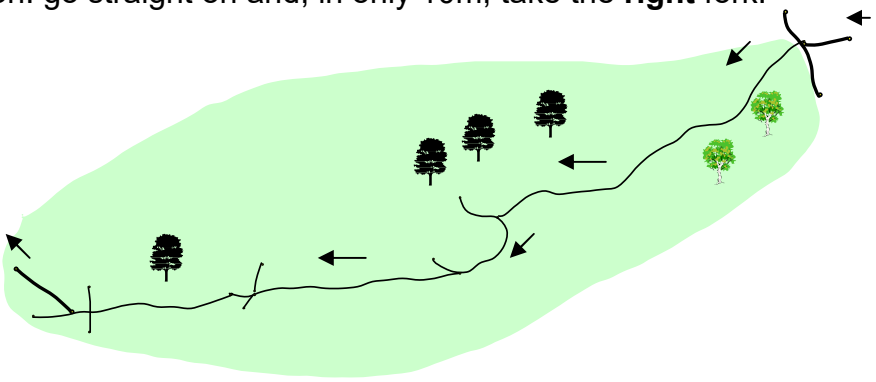


For final refreshments, you have the nearby hostelries of the *Prince of Wales* in Hammer Vale (postcode **GU27 1QH**) and *The Mill* in Shottermill (postcode **GU27 3QE**) which you passed on the way to the car park.

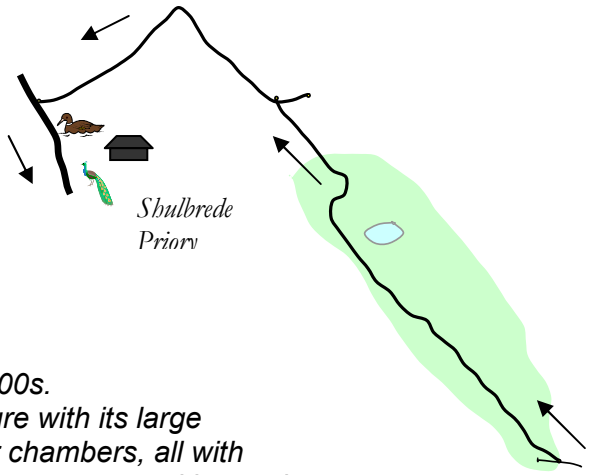
The Shulbrede Shortcut 2¼ km=1½ miles

Take this shortcut if you are doing the shorter version of the walk.

13 Go straight on at the junction on the narrow path ahead through attractive woodland. In 200m the path ends at a T-junction with a wide path at a bend. Keep **left**, thus in effect going straight ahead. The path goes over a stream and curves right. Ignore a right fork immediately after and, at another minor junction 100m later, keep straight ahead. In a further 80m, you pass a junction: go straight on and, in only 10m, take the **right** fork.

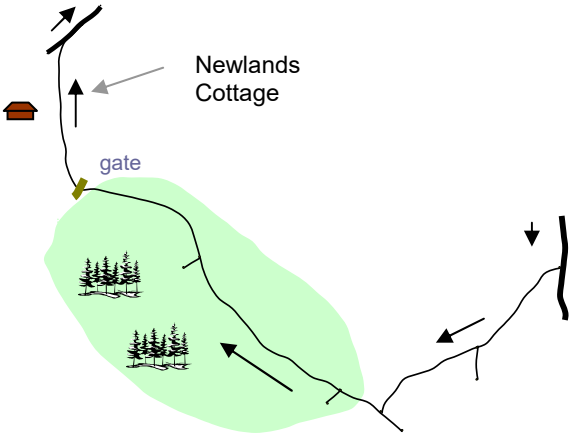


14 In 350m, this path goes through a swing gate and passes a historic pond on your right, interesting for its drowned trees. Beside the pond, the path curves right to a T-junction by a marker post. Turn **left** here on a wide track. In 100m, ignore a junction on the right beside a 3-way fingerpost. Your path bends left and reaches a road by a garden with goats. Turn **left** on the road, passing Shulbrede Priory on your left, and a pond, inhabited by geese.



Shulbrede Augustinian Priory was founded in the 1100s. Excavations have revealed a 4-acre moated enclosure with its large church, cloisters, chapter house, refectory and other chambers, all with thick walls, tiled floors and roof beams. Much has been preserved in good condition and, for the rest, some sturdy walls and many ground-level excavations remain to be seen. The priory was a part of Cowdray estate from the Dissolution until 1902, when it came into the possession of the Ponsonbys. It is now a private house. The Priory is open to visitors some bank holidays, Sunday and Monday, from 2 to 6 pm.

15 30m after the pond, turn **right** on a signposted footpath. Keep straight on for 250m to a T-junction and turn **right**, as indicated. In 50m, ignore a path that branches off left and keep straight ahead on a wide grass path through pinewoods. In around 300m, after passing a marker post, your path suddenly bends left, heading for a cottage which turns out to be *Newlands Cottage*, a landmark for so many walks in Marley Common. Go through two large wooden gates, over a flat bridge known as the *Baldwin Bridge*, up the grass and through a third large wooden gate to meet a shingle drive. Turn **right** on the driveway.



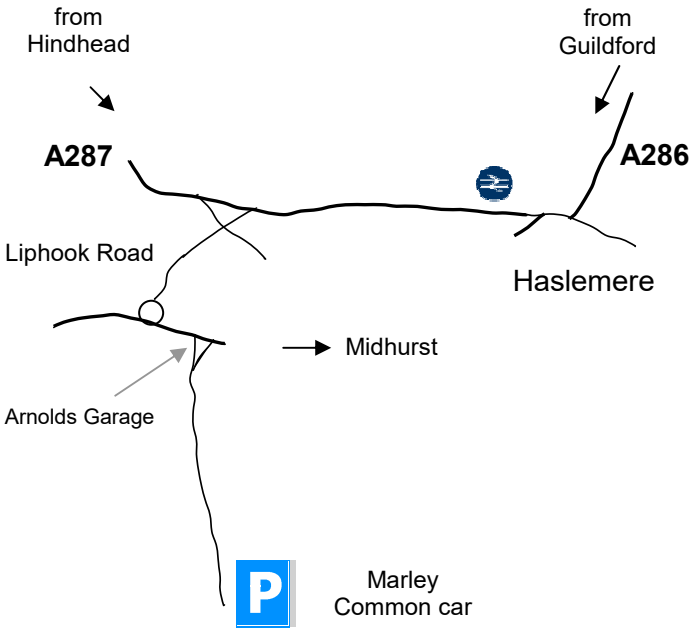
Your walk now resumes from the start of **Leg 4** above.

Getting there

By car: To reach the **Marley Common National Trust Car Park** from the **north**, take the A286 to Haslemere. Turn right in the town, on the A287, following signs for *Hindhead*, going past the station, along a shopping street and past an Esso filling station. Shortly after, when you see a sign for *Liphook*, fork **left** on the B2131 Liphook Road. After going over traffic lights by a church and veering left under a railway bridge, you come to a roundabout. Turn **left** here in the direction of Midhurst but only for a few metres. Just before Arnold's Garage, turn **right** on narrow Marley Lane. Follow the lane for just over 1 km=1200 yards to the car park on the left.

From the **south**, take the A286 from Midhurst, passing through Fernhurst; shortly after the Kingsley Green signpost, look out for a crossroads sign and turn left there - this is Marley Lane; ignore the first small Marley Common National Trust Car Park on your left and carry on; the walk starts from the next and larger Marley Common National Trust Car Park on your right with an access road to houses on your left.

Getting there (from the north)



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