



South Harting

Distance: 6½ km=4 miles

easy walking with one moderate gradient

Region: West Sussex

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Refreshments: South Harting

Map: Explorer 120 (Chichester) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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Village, church, easy field path, woodland, views, hills

In Brief

This is a rewarding scenic walk around one of West Sussex's most charming villages. You approach the hills on two sides across the open fields, then up through imposing woodland to the top of the South Downs.

This walk makes an excellent appetiser for lunch at the village inn (see the text for contact info).



There are no nettles to speak of on this walk. Many walkers will wear boots because of the hills and especially in a wet winter. But walking shoes or trainers will be fine if the weather is not too damp. This walk should be fine for your dog too.

The walk begins **South Harting**, West Sussex. You can park discreetly anywhere in the village, but this guide has found a quiet road near the school where there is plenty of parking (except during the school run?). This is Tipper Lane, postcode **GU31 5QT**. This starting point has the advantage that it *avoids a hazardous section of the main road* just below the church where there is *no footway*. A nearby alternative, provided there is no event taking place, is the village hall, postcode **GU31 5LB**: to get there go a little further along Tipper Lane and turn into Pease Croft; you can access the route through a wooden gate at the back of the car park. Another possible start is the small Recreation Ground car park, just off the main road on the right as you come down the narrow section of the road from the church. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).



- 1 If you are parked in or near Tipper Lane, near the Primary School, do the following: Take a footpath, just on the right of the school entrance (look for the red-circle “no cycling” sign), past cottages. At a T-junction by a 3-way fingerpost, turn **left**. Your path curves right and soon there is a stream on your left. Follow the tarmac path round several bends to reach the main road in South Harting. Turn **left** on the road, towards the church, passing the *White Hart*.

There are at least three Hartings (called “Hertinges” in the Domesday Book). South Harting is best known because of its wonderful setting below the South Downs and its copper-spire church which is visible from afar. Visitors come through South Harting on the way to Uppark, the NT house which suffered a fire in 1989. Famous sons of South Harting include the Victorian novelist Anthony Trollope. The church of St Mary and St Gabriel is usually open and is a must-see. It dates from the 1300s, with many later additions. Inside, there are medieval reclining figures, a copy of Raphael’s “Madonna & Child & St John the Baptist” and a more recent sculpture of the Madonna and Child. Note the flying Archangel Gabriel sculpture by Philip Jackson. In the churchyard is the tall South Harting War Memorial Cross designed as a World War I memorial by the controversial sculptor Eric Gill.

The “White Hart” country inn in the centre of the village is open every day. It offers a reasonably-priced set lunch. The pub has been spruced up and, once inside, the food, service and ambience are said to be very agreeable. For enquiries or bookings, ring 01730-825124.



- 2 Turn **right** on a tarmac track which runs beside the church. *Note the stocks.* At the end, turn **right** on a bendy path and turn **right** on a tarmac track leading down to the main road. Cross straight over the main road onto a wide grassy path between fields. At the end (700m), you emerge on a minor road. Turn **left** on the road. Ignore a footpath on your right and continue on the road to a junction. Turn **left** here on a quiet lane, sign-posted *Petersfield*. [Note that you are on part of the Sussex Border Path \(SBP\) – the westward section which goes down to the sea at Emsworth.](#) *Up on your left is Torberry Hill, a hillfort. Ahead to your right is Butser Hill (with the antenna).* At a road junction, keep **left** and **left** again.
- 3 In 20m, fork **left** at a fingerpost on a narrow path which rises through woodland above the lane. In late spring, the ground is covered in ramson flowers (wild garlic). After 800m through fine woodland, your path curves left and comes down to the main road. Cross straight over the main road carefully to a tarmac drive opposite, still on the SBP. The drive runs gently uphill for about 700m when it comes out of the trees and levels out. You come to a 4-way fingerpost. Turn sharp **left** here on a wide dusty track. [You have left the SBP but joined another long-distance path, the South Downs Way \(SDW\).](#) *On the hill ahead, you can see the Vandalian Tower, a folly built in the 1700s to commemorate a proposed British colony in America which was still-born.* At the end of a large field on your left, your path rises through trees. Ignore a footpath on your right here. After an upward gradient, your path runs level again. Ignore a footpath on your left shortly after. [You now have a view to your left of the village, with the Weald of Sussex, Black Down and the North Downs as a backdrop.](#) The path finally enters dark woods and immediately you arrive at a fingerpost.
-  4 Turn **left** at the fingerpost, thus leaving the SDW, going through a new fence via a small wooden gate. In 50m, at a fingerpost, ignore the right fork (although you can choose it as it re-joins the route later). [\[Mar 2024: a Footpath Closed sign is showing due to Ash Dieback; an alternative temporary route back to the pond and play area in the village is clearly signposted.\]](#) This lovely path leads gradually down through woodland. [You may have noticed newly planted trees lining the paths: there is project under way to plant 2000 new trees.](#) In 400m, your path goes through another small wooden gate in a fence, just before a path comes down steps on your left to join you. In another 100m, a path joins from the right (the same path you avoided at the fork). Shortly after, you see a pond on your left next to a recreation area. Your path leads past a large gate and passes a small parking area, leading to the main road. If you parked in the village centre, you have a rather hazardous walk up to the church on a main road with no footway. Otherwise ...
-  5 If you parked near the school, do as follows: Turn **right** across the road and take the tarmac footpath which passes to the right of a small electric substation. The path leads to a colourful bungalow neighbourhood. Follow the road **left** and **right**, ending at Tipper Lane where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: The easiest way to South Harting is via the A3. Turn off the A3 onto the A272, signposted *Midhurst*. Now follow the brown tourist signs for *Uppark* (with the oak leaves symbol). Your route goes round the outskirts of Petersfield, eventually leading you through the village of South Harting. To park in Tipper Road, continue through the village past the church, down the hill (careful – pedestrians !) and take the first side road on the left.

By bus/train: buses 54, 91, 92, 93 all run between Petersfield station and South Harting. Check the timetables.

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