



Woolbeding Common: Teashop (Picnic) Walk

Distance: 3½ km=2¼ miles

easy-to-moderate walking

Region: West Sussex

Date written: 12-sep-2012

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Last Update: 1-jul-2018

Refreshments: Redford

Map: 133 (Haslemere) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

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

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Pristine natural common, woodland, heath, great views

In Brief

This is the most perfect and delightful short walk in a little-known part of West Sussex. At first you take narrow paths across the pristine natural eco garden of Stedham Marsh (but on dry paths). Then you climb very gently for a ridge walk around Woolbeding Common, using some rarely-used paths with stunning distant views into Hampshire and beyond.

The Redford Coffee Lounge is sadly closed but we have kept the title *Teashop Walk*, with the extra word *Picnic* added. If you haven't brought a picnic, you can get refreshments at the *Rising Sun* in Milland or in *Daisys Tearoom* in the centre of Liphook.



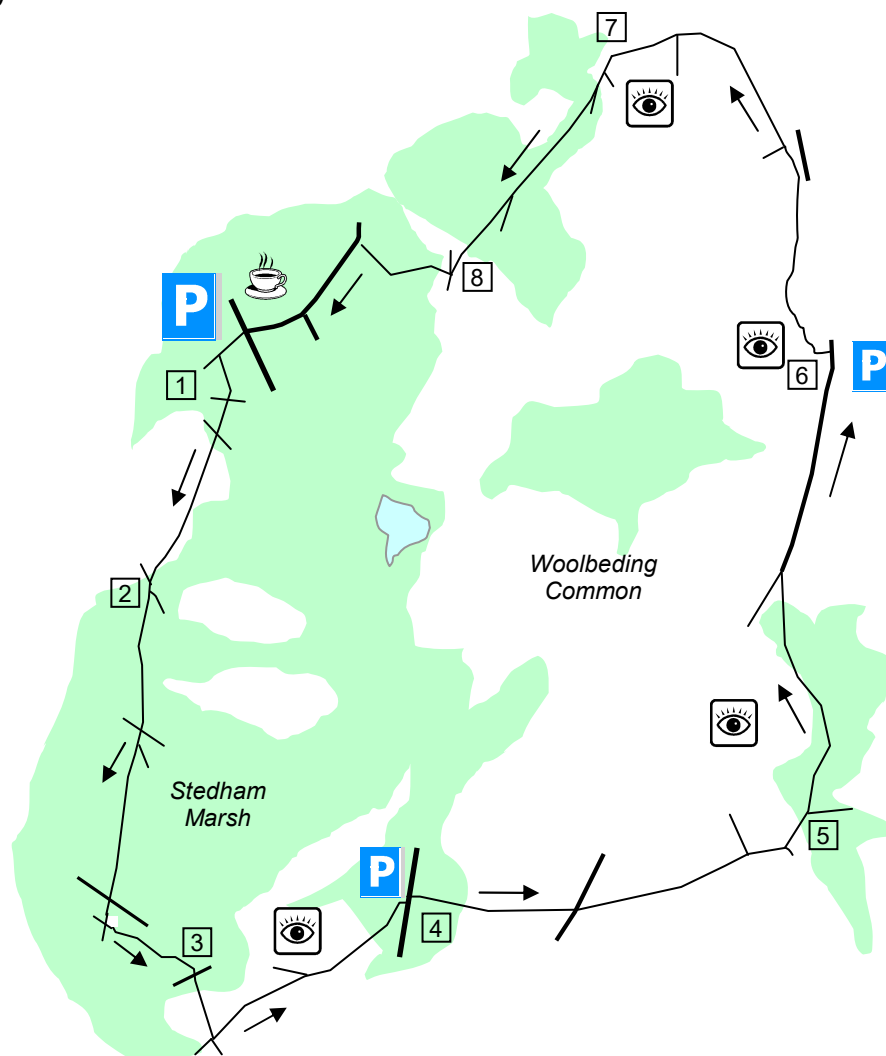
We found no nettles on this walk but there is a certain amount of undergrowth in the first section. The paths are reasonably dry so any kind of stout shoes should be fine. Your dog is also very welcome on this walk.



The walk begins in the village of Redford, **postcode GU29 0QF**, near the old garage, opposite a redbrick building and a red phonebox. There is plenty of off-road parking. An alternative start is the NT car park beside the main road about 750m=½ mile south on the right. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

- 1 Starting from the village centre, walk **south** on the main road (i.e. with the Redford Garage on your *right*) for just 20m to a fingerpost. Turn **right** here to enter the Common. *Note that you are on the Serpent Trail, a sinuous long-distance path running from Haslemere to Petersfield.* In 50m, just after a marker post, turn **left** on a beautiful winding narrow grassy path, soon across open ground. At a 4-way fingerpost (often hidden in bracken), continue straight ahead. You have woodland on your left and an open space with bracken on your right. A bridge with a railing takes you over a marshy spot. Immediately after the bridge, at a fingerpost, keep ahead on the path that veers right, avoiding the rather overgrown path that forks away on your left.



- 2 Keep to this path that winds its way through a serene woodland of oak and birch, soon avoiding a minor path on your right. You need to step over several fallen logs and branches, a symptom of an untouched forest. Soon you have an earth bank on your right and your path zigzags right-left to cross to the other side. Shortly after, you meet a post with a yellow arrow to reassure you that you are on the correct path. At the same time, the path becomes a little clearer. You reach another 4-way fingerpost followed immediately by a fork in the path. Take the **right**-hand path, once again avoiding a rather overgrown path that forks left.
- 3 Shortly, your path reaches a wide unmarked grassy path. Cross this path and continue over on a narrow path. You quickly reach another 4-way

fingerpost just before some rhododendrons. Turn **left** here on a path that goes gently uphill between brambles and bracken. [Jun 2018: a walker reports this path is very overgrown with bracken and there is a much clearer path, (just before? the path described here), which leads up to the same fingerpost.]

Your path curves left, then right, and climbs under a massive oak tree to reach a wide crossing track by another 4-way fingerpost. Go straight over the track, still uphill. This path leads to yet another 4-way fingerpost. Turn **left** here on a path that runs under a wire. You pass a 3-way fingerpost where suddenly there are great views on your left. Continue onwards to reach a small car park and the main road (an alternative start).



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Cross the road to a signposted footpath opposite by a NT sign for Woolbeding Common. Your path leads gradually uphill through bracken. After 200m, you meet a narrow tarmac lane. Cross straight over the lane on a signposted footpath. You soon reach a track with a farm gate on your right. Go straight ahead, keep to the right-hand side of the open area, going past a house. Your track veers right to skirt round a gate that leads into a meadow. Where your track bends right to another house, keep straight ahead between posts and through a barrier. At a post on your right, ignore the yellow arrow pointing right and keep straight on, thus leaving the official footpath.

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Shortly, your narrow path goes by a vertical post and passes a meadow on your left. This is an exquisite section of the walk as you continue with views left, through a woodland of mature birch and oak trees, on a path which is gentle and easy. Your path finally comes down to the same tarmac lane. Turn **right** on the lane to continue your direction. In 250m, you reach, on the right, the Woolbeding Common car park. Opposite the car park, turn **left** into a grassy space. There is a bench affording great views and a brief rest.

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15m before the bench, turn **right** on a narrow path between bracken. (If the undergrowth is very damp or scratchy, you can stay on the lane.) *You have great views left into Hampshire.* Your path takes you through bracken and gorse and may seem too overgrown at first – but persist! Suddenly you emerge by a seat near the lane again. Avoid the downhill footpath left and the lane and instead keep straight ahead on a wide sandy path. This path leads round the bowl-shaped ridge of the Common with more stunning views. At a clump of bushes, keep right or left, always staying on the high path. Avoid any paths leading down until finally you reach a fine rustic bench with great views.



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After a possible breather, continue onwards, keeping **left** past the bench onto a very narrow path. In 20m, keep **right** avoiding a very narrow path going downhill. After 10m more, your path makes a steep descent over tree roots and levels again for another 10m. Now leave the straight descending path ahead and instead turn **right** on a wider path into trees. This is a perfectly clear path, although it is quite steep at first. After nearly 200m, you come to a distinct fork in the path. Take the **right**-hand fork. Your path goes over a bank with several large stones, under oak trees, then yews. You reach a 4-way fingerpost near *Barnetts Cottage*.

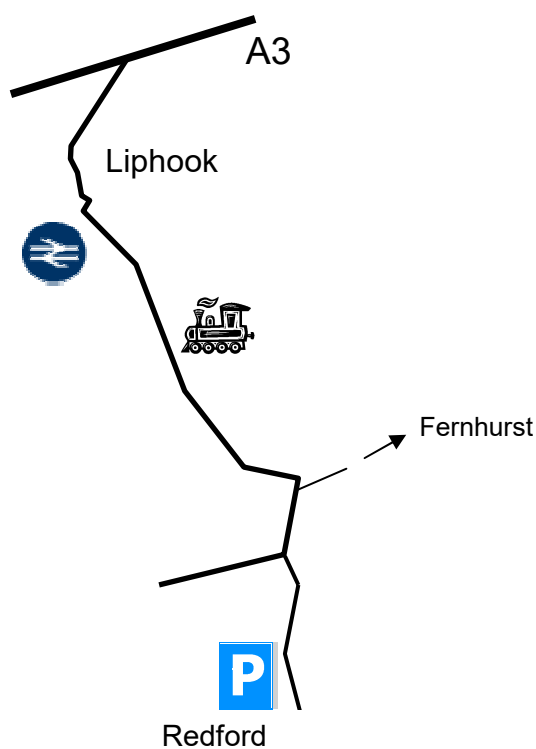
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Avoid the path very sharp right and take the **second** path on the **right**, which is like a normal right turn, also incidentally another part of the Serpent Trail. You come down to a tarmac drive. Turn **left** on the drive, keeping **right** at a junction, quickly arriving at the road in Redford, next to the redbrick building and red phonebox where the walk began.

Getting there

By car: To get to Redford from the London area, take the A3 and turn off through **Liphook**. (From London, this is through the Hindhead tunnel.) At a tortuous series of mini-roundabouts and larger ones, keep following signs for **Liphook Station** and/or the **Hollycombe Steam Collection** (with a brown tourist sign showing a merry-go-round). This will take you onto the **Midhurst Road** out of the town. The road goes over a railway bridge past Iron Hill and the Steam Collection, and under an arch. About 3 miles from Liphook, ignore a left turn for Fernhurst. After 0.4 miles, turn **left** on a lane signposted *Redford* and/or *Linch Church*. The road goes past this interesting little church and after a mile it goes through Redford, as indicated by the welcome sign. Park on the right near the old garage, opposite a redbrick building and a red phonebox.

You can instead go through Haslemere on the A286 and turn off west at Fernhurst. Note that in 2013 this road was **closed**.



By bus: bus 93 runs between Midhurst and Milland, Tuesdays and Fridays. Check the timetables.

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