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Amberley Wild Brooks Option

Length: as an addition to the main Amberley Circular Walk, making a walk of total length: 21.7 km (13.6miles)

As a flat, Round Walk excluding the South Downs: 14 km (8.8 miles)

Walk Notes: Amberley Wild Brooks is a site of some 324 hectares (800 acres) of grazing marshes of special scientific interest for birdlife and wetland plants, located immediately to the north of the village of Amberley. The Brooks used to flood every winter (see the photographs in the Sportsman pub) and during the 1970s added drainage works dried out these historic wetland marshes resulting in a decline in birdlife. To rectify this mistake, the authorities are trying to raise water levels and allow winter flooding again to encourage the return of various species of birds to a natural habitat.

This walk option should be of interest to bird watchers during bird nesting season, and to walkers interested in wetland plants. However, the route across the Wild Brooks is impassable after periods of heavy rain, and during winter months due care should be exercised if this walk is to be attempted.

This option can be taken as a diversion and an additional leg to the main Circular walk, making a long walk of 21.7 km (13.6 miles) or, for those not wishing to climb up onto the South Downs in the afternoon, it can be taken as a flat, Round Walk in its own right, making a walk of 14 km (8.8 miles). For the long walk, your lunch stop remains the **Crown Inn** at Storrington, although when the **Labouring Man pub** in Coldwaltham re-opens after refurbishment this pub can be an alternative by taking a 1 km diversion, each way there and back from Greatham Bridge. The Labouring Man, Old London Road, Coldwaltham, Pulborough, West Sussex. Tel: 01798-872215.

For the flat, Round walk, your recommended lunch stop is the **Sportsman** pub in Amberley.

WALK DIRECTIONS

If setting out on the flat, Round walk, take the road option from Amberley station into **Amberley village**, as described in the introduction to the walk. Having crossed over the main village street and on up another road, where its curve to the right ends and it begins to straighten out, some 100 metres before the **Black Horse** pub, point [2], take the signed footpath to the left bearing due north, onto a car wide track. [A].

If setting out on the main Amberley Circular walk, planning to walk through the Wild Brooks as an extra leg, either set out on the main walk by the banks of the River Arun as per the main walk directions or take the road option, reducing the walk length by about 1 km.

From point [A], walk down the track – **The Wey South Path** - and in 65 metres go through a wooden swing gate to the right of a metal fieldgate, now on a chalky car wide track. The track bears left, then right and in 300 metres pass a footpath post with a yellow arrow on your right.

Continue ahead on the car wide track as it again swings to the left, then right. In 300 metres ignore a stile to the left.

In 70 metres, with a metal fieldgate ahead, bear left by a two armed footpath sign, your bearing due north. In 60 metres go over a stile to the left of a metal fieldgate and in 100 metres cross a stream.

You are now on a grassy car wide track (still the Wey South Path), on a bearing due north

[!] In 325 metres, where the track bears left by a two armed footpath sign, keep ahead and in 10 metres go through a wooden fieldgate. There is an information notice board on **The Amberley Wild Brooks** on your left. [B]

The Wey South Path is now narrower and in 100 metres it narrows to a footpath width, with water filled ditches to left and right. The route ahead across the grazing marshes is now subject to flooding and duckboards have been laid on several sections of the path ahead to help make it passable.

In 200 metres the path passes through a lightly wooded area.

In 100 metres go over a wooden footbridge with wooden rails to its side.

In 40 metres go over a two plank bridge with a wooden rail on its right hand side and a two armed footpath sign on the far side.

Keep ahead, bearing now 20 degrees, on a less well defined grassy path, gradually converging with a wire fence on your left hand side.

[!] In 200 metres turn left through a metal fieldgate with a footpath post with yellow arrow on your right, bearing 320 degrees onto a grassy farm track.

In 90 metres turn right by a two armed footpath sign and in 5 metres pass through a wooden field gate. In a further 20 metres pass the entrance to a farm house on your right and keep ahead on a gravel farm track with grass down its centre. In 100 metres the track veers left, then in 40 metres right.

In 35 metres at a T junction with a two armed footpath sign on the right, turn left onto a gravel farm track, and in 70 metres go round to the right of and between farm buildings.

In 110 metres at a T junction by a two armed footpath sign, turn right, bearing 60 degrees.

In 25 metres pass the entrance to Lime Kiln bungalow and farmstead on your right. You have good views of the South Downs to your right.

In 100 metres the tracks swings left and by a two armed footpath sign starts to gently descend.

[!] In 150 metres by a two armed footpath sign take the footpath *left* down to the **River Arun**, bearing 350 degrees. In 40 metres cross a stile to go ahead on a grassy embankment with the River Arun below and to your left.

In 150 metres turn right down off the embankment to a stile by a road junction and with **Greatham Bridge** on your left. [C]

[To detour to the early lunchtime pub, **The Labouring Man**, Coldwaltham, turn left here over the bridge. In 250 metres ignore the footpaths to your left and right (the latter being the continuation of the Wey South Path). In a further 40 metres *turn right* over a stile, in 15 metres coming out into field. Keep ahead with a hedge on your right on a grassy path, bearing 335 degrees. In 120 metres head into undergrowth and go over a stile, with a barbed wire fence now on your left, heading towards the railway line.

Cross the railway and keep ahead, now on a fenced in path which dog legs left, then right, to come out at the bottom of a residential cul de sac. Turn right, and where the road bears left keep ahead down another cul de sac, in 50 metres taking the paved and fenced-in footpath on your right, winding between house back gardens. Come out onto Old London Road and turn right down to the **Labouring Man**. After lunch, reverse your route back to point [C].]

To proceed with the main route from Greatham Bridge: do not cross the bridge but *turn right* onto the car road, bearing 130 degrees.

Proceed down this car road for 1.2 kilometres and at a road junction, *turn right* onto a narrow, country car road, signposted to Rackham and Amberley, with hedgerows on either side. [D]

[!] In 900 metres by a footpath sign on your right, turn right through a wooden gate into Rackham Plantation, [E], bearing 230 degrees, on a car wide track, heading down into a dip, then up the other side.

In 130 metres *turn left* by a footpath sign on the right, onto a path along the edge of the wood, along the contours of a bank, with fine views of Amberley Wild Brooks to the right.

Keep ahead along this winding and undulating path and in 350 metres at a path junction, keep to the lower path on your right.

[!] In 110 metres you arrive at the footbridge by the three armed footpath sign in the main Circular Walk (page 2 of the Directions, Col 1, para 5).

For those on the long walk, **Rejoin** the Main Circular Walk at this point, do not cross the bridge but *keep ahead* in 100 metres passing the brown house etc etc.

[!] For those on the flat, Round walk, *cross over the bridge* and reverse the Circular Walk all the way back to the **Sportman pub**, your lunchtime stop.

After lunch, reverse the Circular Walk through Amberley Village and past Amberley Castle to the banks of the **River Arun** and then alongside the river back to the start of the Walk, where you have tea at the **Houghton Bridge Tea Garden**.