

Midhurst to Haslemere (The Midhurst Way)		
1 st walk check	2 nd walk check	3 rd walk check
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Midhurst to Haslemere (The Midhurst Way)

Start: Midhurst Bus Station

Finish: Haslemere Station

Midhurst, map reference SU 887 218, is 11 km south of Haslemere, 25m above sea level and in **West Sussex**. Haslemere Station, map reference SU 897 329, is 62 km south west of Charing Cross, 139m above sea level and in **Surrey**.

Length: 15.6 km (9.7 mi), of which 5.4 km (3.4 mi) on tarmac or concrete. For a shorter or longer walk, see below Walk Options. **Cumulative ascent/descent:** 414/296m.

Toughness: 5 out of 10

Time: 4 hours walking time.

For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 7 ½ hours.

Transport: Midhurst Bus Station has services connecting to Haslemere, Petersfield, Pulborough and Chichester stations. Line 70 from Haslemere runs about hourly Mon-Sat and every two hours on Sundays. The fare in 11/21 fare was £5.40. Haslemere station is on the Portsmouth Direct Line from London Waterloo to Portsmouth Harbour, with up to four trains an hour Mon-Sat (two on Sundays). Journey time is from 48 minutes Mon-Sat (56 mins on Sundays).

Saturday Walkers' Club: Take the train closest to 09.30 if planning to lunch in Fernhurst, or the one closest to 10.30 if planning to lunch in Henley.

OS Landranger Map: 186 (Aldershot & Guildford) and 197 (Chichester & the South Downs)

OS Explorer Map: OL33 (Haslemere & Petersfield)

Walk Notes:

The route of this walk leads out of Midhurst in a northerly direction past the ruined Cowdray Castle by the River Rother and via Cowdray Park with its polo fields, then passes Easebourne priory and village for an ascent through fields and woods to Verdleyhill, from which you have stunning views out across the further route and to Black Down. Descend steeply through the scenic village of Henley with its recommended pub and across the valley to Fernhurst and another lunch option. The route continues north through a fine mix of quiet forests with frequent far views back to the South Downs or out to Black Down, while ascending to Marley Common, a mixture of mature woodland and open heathland. A steep descent into Camelsdale is followed by another range and the final descent into Haslemere.

This walk is the northerly section of the unmarked Midhurst Way, which has been created by John Trueman, local to the area and a passionate advocate of outdoor pursuits. It runs between Haslemere and Arundel. The southerly section Midhurst to Arundel is available as a separate SWC Walk. Both walks have been written up in either direction (in separate pdf's) to enable a through-walk of the whole 47.5 km/29.5 mi Midhurst Way with an overnight stay along the route in Sutton, Coultershaw Bridge, Tillington or Midhurst.

Walk Options:

For a shortcut, the Midhurst to Haslemere bus line 70 also stops along the route in: Easebourne (350m off-route on the A286), Henley (above the village on the A-road) and Fernhurst.

For an Extension, choose a longer route through the peaceful woods west of Marley Heights. This adds 2.3 km and 57m ascent/descent.

Lunch (details last updated 21/06/2023)

The Duke of Cumberland Arms Henley Village, *Henley near Fernhurst, Midhurst, Surrey GU27 3HQ* (01428 652 280, <http://dukeofcumberland.com/>). The Duke of Cumberland is located 5.7 km (3.5 mi) into the walk. Open all day every day. Food served 12.00-14.30 daily and 19.00-21.00 Tue-Sat.

The Fern at the Pavilion The Pavilion, *Fernhurst, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 3HY* (01428 253 768, <https://thefern.southdownscoffee.co.uk/>). The Fern is located 9.3km (5.8 mi) into the walk. Open 08.00-16.00 Tue-Fri, 09.00-15.00 Sat and 11.00-15.00 Sun.

The Red Lion The Green, *Fernhurst, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 3HY* (01428 643 112, <http://www.red-lion-fernurst.co.uk/>). The Red Lion is located 9.3 km (5.8 mi) into the walk. Open 12.00-15.00 (not Mon) and 17.00-22.00 Mon-Thu, 12.00-22.30 Fri-Sat and 12.00-21.00 Sun. Food served 12.00-14.00 (not Mon) and 18.00-20.00 (Mon-Thu), 12.00-14.30 and 18.00-20.00 Fri-Sat and 12.00-15.00 Sun.

The Hub 2 Crossfield, *Fernhurst, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 3JL* (01428 641 931, <https://www.fernursthub.org.uk/>). The Hub is located 9.7 km (6.0 mi) into the walk. Open 10.00-16.00 Mon-Fri (-13.00 Wed) and 10.00-12.00 Sat.

Tea (details last updated 08/11/2021)

Harper's Steakhouse Lower Street, *Haslemere, Surrey GU27 2PD* (01428 776 560, <https://harpers-haslemere.co.uk/>). Open all day every day. Food served all day.

Plus plenty of further options in Haslemere's town centre.

Notes:

Midhurst

Midhurst is a medieval market town nestled in the South Downs National Park, with some remains of a Norman motte-and-double bailey castle built in 1102 (along with Pulborough, Chichester and Bramber castles) to safeguard the Norman stronghold in Sussex after the Conquest in 1066. Also surviving are the town stocks and pillory, last used in 1859. Like Pulborough castle, near the confluence of the River Rother and the Arun, Midhurst Castle was built on a high point (St. Ann's Hill) along the River Rother, an important transportation link in the Middle Ages due to poor roads in the area. Midhurst Castle led to the growth of Midhurst as a thriving town but was abandoned in 1317 and ultimately replaced with Cowdray House, built just across the river. The name Midhurst was first recorded in 1186 as *Middeherst*, meaning "Middle wooded hill", or "(place) among the wooded hills".

The Rother River

The River Rother flows from Empshott in Hampshire to Stopham in West Sussex, where it joins the River Arun. The upper river, from its source to Midhurst, has been used to power watermills, with the earliest recorded use being in 1086. Many of the buildings which housed the mills still exist, and in some cases, still retain their milling machinery. This section is also noted for the number of early bridges, which have survived since the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries. The lower Rother has been used for navigation in the past. The river is a designated Site of Nature Conservation Importance, in recognition of its value for wildlife.

Cowdray Estate/House

The evocative ruins of Cowdray House – the former home of the Montague family and immortalized by JMW Turner – form the central focus of the 16,500 acres Cowdray Estate. It was a fortified Tudor manor house built in the 1520s on the site of an original manor house called Coudreye (the Norman word for the nearby hazel woods) built across the River Rother from Midhurst castle between 1273 and 1284. The structure was badly damaged by a fire in 1793 during a restoration project and left to decay. In its heyday, Cowdray House saw many influential visitors including Henry VIII, Edward VI, Elizabeth I and Guy Fawkes. The last surviving member of the House of Plantagenet was imprisoned in the house before being taken to the Tower of London for execution. The estate includes world class polo fields and a Farm Shop and Café with wine tasting room. The window frames of many of the Estates cottages are painted in unusual yellow paint.

Easebourne Priory

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary was built as an Augustinian nunnery for a prioress and ten nuns. It was founded before 1238 by the de Bohun family of St. Ann's Hill in nearby Midhurst, probably by John de Bohun. It may have been re-founded in the 15th century and became Benedictine. In 1536, following the Dissolution of the Monasteries, Easebourne Priory was granted to William FitzWilliam, 1st Earl of Southampton, along with other properties. Claustal remains are now incorporated into a Grade I listed house built on the south side of St Mary's church. The restored refectory is now in parochial use.

Sussex Border Path

The Sussex Border Path is a 222 km (138 mi) waymarked Long-Distance Path approximating the Sussex border with Hampshire, Surrey and Kent, first making a 15 km circuit around Thorney Island and then crossing the South Downs before heading to Gospel Green, Rudgwick, Gatwick and East Grinstead.

Serpent Trail

The Serpent Trail is a 103 km (64 mi) waymarked Long-Distance Path through some of the finest heathland and woodland landscapes in the South East and follows a rough "S" shape along the hills of the Sussex Greensand - snaking between Haslemere, Petworth, Midhurst and Petersfield in a habitat of snakes.

Marley Common

Marley Common has been acquired by the National Trust in 1911 and is a 60-hectares mixed broadleaf woodland and open heathland. It was used as an army training ground during WWII, and during the 1950s and 1960s it suffered devastating fires which swept across the open heath.

The River Wey

The River Wey is very unusual in that it has several sources feeding two separate rivers that share the same name. The northern branch rises near Alton in Hampshire, while the south branch has two sources: one rises just over the West Sussex border on the western flank of Blackdown near Haslemere, the other at Inval, below Gibbet Hill, Hindhead. Both arms of the river join south of Farnham at Tilford in Surrey. From there the Wey as a single river flows east to Godalming and then northwards towards the Thames. The name 'Wey' may be derived from the Old English word *Éa* meaning "river". The main sub-tributary is the Tilling Bourne flowing from the slopes of Leith Hill.

Haslemere

Haslemere is a town first mentioned in 1221 (as a Godalming tithing) and named after Hazel trees standing beside a mere (lake) which no longer exists. The most southerly town in Surrey, it sits at the tripoint with West Sussex and Hampshire. The south branch of the River Wey rises just to the south, on Black Down.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Alighting from the bus at the **Midhurst bus terminus**, turn to the left away from the main road and walk past some public conveniences on the right and across a car park access road towards a wooden kissing gate. Go through the gate and continue through a meadow for 300m towards the **River Rother** and the distant **Cowdray House** ruins along a wide track. At the river, go through some gates either side of the bridge across the river and – in front of Cowdray House's gate (a fortified Tudor courtier's house) – *turn left* along a tarmac lane. In 120m you *veer right* along the right forking car wide gravel track by a three-way footpath signpost on the right and in 100m, just after another track has joined from the left, curve slightly right to pass to the left of a double wooden field gate and continue along a car wide track to the left of a wooden fence. There are some polo fields on the right and in 200m, at the corner of the fence, carry on in the same direction along the car wide track, with some more polo fields on the right.

In 280m the track continues as tarmac and in another 40m you go through or around a double wooden gate to continue in the same direction (another track has joined from the right). In 40m ignore a signposted footpath turning right across the grass and in 60m you pass **Cowdray Farm Shop & Café** on your left and in 40m **Easebourne Priory**, also on your left-hand side. In 50m cross the **A272 Easebourne Lane** carefully to a three-way signpost on the far side and follow a Permissive Path through a wooden gate into a grassy area (the ex-village playground). In 75m (10m before a metal field gate with a wooden gate on its left), **[!]** *turn left* through some growth along an unsigned narrow path and in 10m walk through a wooden gate to continue in the same direction along a tarmac drive. In 60m cross **Easebourne Street** veering a little to the right to continue along **Glaziers Lane** (signed 'Birthday House').

In 110m, by a footpath signpost on the right, continue along a gravel track to the right of a small cemetery. In 75m ignore a left turning path as well as a gap in the growth on the right, but in 40m **[!]** *turn right* with a footpath marker post through a hedge gap into a large arable field. *Turn left* along the field boundary and in 30m *turn right* with a marker post (can be overgrown) along a grassy track running between a couple of large arable fields. In 150m ignore a left turning signposted footpath, and in another 280m, at the end of the fields, continue in the same direction along a car wide track. In 60m continue in the same direction at a four-way junction of car wide tracks along a signposted 'Public Way'. You gently ascend along **Wick Lane**, soon between high earthen banks, and in 350m by a four-way signpost, just after the lane has turned left, *turn right* with a public footpath along a car wide track which soon curves left.

In 50m continue along the right-hand field boundaries of a couple of fields in the previous direction (30°) towards a distant wood. In 280m the trees on the right discontinue and you walk between arable fields. In 40m go under an HV pylon line and in 70m enter an adjacent field on the left. In 30m follow a usually well-cleared path through a large field (still 30°) and in 200m at the opposite field boundary (and with excellent **South Downs back views**), enter a wood to *bear left* with a two-way signpost along a clear path. In 20m *turn left* with a footpath marker post along a broad forest track and in 60m *turn right* with the signposted track (the post can be overgrown), uphill through the wood. In 200m cross another forest track veering a little to the right at a signposted junction and in 110m **[!]** *fork left* with a footpath marker post along a wide grassy path (315°) to enter **Scotland Knob** plantation.

In 110m cross a restricted byway and in 20m a recently felled area of the plantation. In 100m leave this part of the plantation to enter a coppiced section. In 90m another path joins from the left and in 100m you emerge from the plantation onto a tarmac lane by a footpath signpost. *Turn left* along the lane, in 60m ignore a left turning forest track, but in another 40m at a triangular green *turn right* along a farm's drive (there is a footpath

signpost a little further along). In 200m go through a usually open double wooden field gate and continue past **Verdley Farm** on its right-hand side. In 60m you *turn left* and continue to the right of some stables and in 35m go through a wooden gate into a small pasture. Head for the far-right corner, en route enjoying far views from **Verdleyhill** out across a valley containing the prominent **Verdley Place** (passed later) to **Black Down** on the right, and in 180m leave the field over a stile to the right of a metal field gate (or via a squeeze kissing gate in the very corner) into a wooded strip. You continue along an earthen path and in 240m ignore a faint left forking path up and continue downhill along the right fork with a marker post. In 100m there is a break in the trees on the right, revealing more views along the continuation of the route to **Fernhurst**.

The path continues to descend (more and more steeply) and in about 200m you walk through a gap in a wooden fence by a signpost at a bend in a tarmac lane and continue in the same direction downhill into **Henley** village. In 180m pass the early lunch stop **The Duke of Cumberland Arms**. Continue in the same direction past the pub, and in 50m *turn right* along a tarmac lane with a restricted byway signpost, steeply downhill. In 75m continue along a grassy path which in 40m enters a wood. In 50m by a marker post on the left ignore a footpath turning right into **Verdley Wood** and continue in the same direction with the wood on your right (for most of this stretch behind some picturesquely overgrown wall remnants) and some fields on the left. In 400m continue in the same direction at a crosspaths (bridleway to the right, footpath to the left) and in 80m *fork left* with a marker post off the car wide drive and continue along the restricted byway. In 150m you reach a three-way signpost on the left.

Here you...

- **either** follow the always rutted and mud-prone continuation of the restricted byway ahead for 560m to a crossing of a concrete lane (leading to **Courts Farm** on your right);
- **or** *turn right* up some railed wooden steps and in 30m cross a stream on a railed plank bridge. In a further 30m leave the wood over a stile to enter a pasture and continue along its left-hand side. You continue in the same direction for 500m, going over a few stiles and across a few fields and through a wooded strip along the way to eventually follow a car wide gravel track, with views to **Black Down**, and – eventually – on the right behind to **Bexleyhill** with its transmission mast. Cross a concrete lane (leading to **Courts Farm** on your right) and *veer a little to the left* to rejoin the restricted byway.

In 150m, where a footpath joins from the left, *turn right* along a stream. In 60m *turn left* along a tarmac lane and immediately cross the stream on a bridge. In 50m *turn left* along a tarmac lane and in 90m *turn left* along another tarmac lane, where a footpath joins from the right. You pass **Verdley Place** on the right, a Victorian Grade II-listed building in Vernacular Revival style. In about 250m you cross a stream on the lane and in 180m continue in the same direction along a road at a bend. In 110m, where a signposted footpath joins from the left over a stile, you curve sharply right with the lane. In another 60m (about 15m before a lane junction), *turn left* off the lane through a metal field gate into **Bridgeland Copse** and follow an unmarked path through it (a **presumed permissive path** on basis of its evident use and the gate never having been seen locked). Ignore a left turn along the way to follow the path (which can be overgrown in summer) as it curves to the right and in 250m emerge from the wood and *turn left* along a tarmac lane that has been running parallel for a while. In 210m *turn right* down **Ropes Lane** cul-de-sac and in 70m cross a footpath on the lane.

In 50m **[!]** *turn left* along a tarmac path just before **Jacketts Hollow** (house) and cross a stream on a railed bridge to *turn right* with the path on the other side. In 65m *turn right* with the path to re-cross the stream and *turn left* again immediately. You cross the stream again and continue along the tarmac path. In about 100m, the path ascends

gently and in 40m you ignore a left turn to the road. In 120m you reach the village green in **Fernhurst**. The late lunch/early tea stops **The Fern at the Pavilion** and **The Red Lion** are 70m and 130m respectively away along the right-hand side of the green. If not going to either, *fork left* along the left-hand side of the green and follow the lane as it curves to the right around the green (ignore a left turning lane in 70m) and in 40m *turn hard left* off the green along a footpath with a brick wall on the right (or if coming from the café or pub: with the pub behind, *veer left* along a tarmac lane to the right of the green and in 90m *turn right* onto a footpath with a brick wall on its right). In 50m the path continues to the left of **St. Margaret's, Fernhurst** and then converges with **Church Road**. In 230m cross the **A286 Haslemere Road/Midhurst Road** (there is a village store about 30m along on the left and a **bus stop for services to Midhurst and Haslemere** a further 70m along) to continue in the same direction along the pavement of the busy **Vann Road** through **Fernhurst** village.

In 40m you pass **The Hub** away on the left in a row of shops and then ignore all ways off and in 450m the pavement discontinues. In another 40m cross a stream on the road and immediately *turn right* into a wood with a public footpath signpost. In 110m emerge from the wood and cross a driveway to continue in the same direction towards a tarmac lane and in 40m *veer right* by a marker post along a tarmac path through the grassy verge to the right of the lane. In 50m a footpath joins away on the left out of **Vanlands Farm** by a three-way signpost and in 80m the tarmac path joins the lane. In 60m you *bend left* with the lane, where a footpath joins from the right out of trees. In 75m, the lane starts to ascend more steeply up through **Van Common**, and in 400m by a last house on the right (**Updown Cottage**), the tarmac discontinues and you continue along an earthen restricted byway. Ignore a signposted footpath forking left by a Public Right of Way-signpost and continue uphill through a wood. In 60m you reach a three-way track junction by a three-way footpath/restricted byway signpost on the left.

Here you have a choice:

For an Extension, *turn left* along the public footpath, and pick up the directions at the end of this text under **Extension**.

For the Main Walk, *veer right* with the restricted byway and in 90m continue ahead where a footpath joins from the right at a signposted junction. In 50m you may be able to spot a large house above (**High Marley** on the OS map) on the left through the trees and in about 150m you cross a lane (a signposted bridleway) by a four-way signpost to continue steeply uphill along the restricted byway with a hanging wood on the right (**Kingsley Copse**). In 70m the path turns left and in 15m it turns right to continue in the previous direction, and in another 50m the path levels out by an overgrown restricted byway marker post on the right, as you continue along a gravel drive past a couple of houses on the right (**The Old Orchard** and **Kilnhanger**). In 140m a (tarmac) bridleway joins from the left by a three-way signpost as you continue with the (gravel then earth) restricted byway and in 230m you *curve right* with the path and in 50m *turn left* with it to continue in the previous direction. In 230m *bear left* along **Marley Lane** and in 50m ignore a signposted footpath turning right into the wood. In 70m ignore a signposted footpath forking right into the wood along an earthen path and in 60m a signposted footpath joins from the left out of the wood. This is the Extension.

***)** In 20m *turn left* into the signed National Trust **Marley Common** car park (which looks more like a large layby). You have splendid far views out to the **South Downs near Petersfield** (Queen Elizabeth Country Park and Butser Hill, with its transmission mast, on 235°). Turn back to the tarmac lane and cross it to continue along a narrow path into the wood (50°) and in 60m at a T-junction with a clear forest path by a marker post, *turn left* along a public footpath. In 50m cross a tarmac lane leading to a house on the right (**Rosemary Park** on the OS map) and go through a wooden gate in

10m to enter the grazed part of **Marley Common**. In 65m continue in the same direction at a crosspaths with a marker post and in 230m you come to a six-way path junction where the **Serpent Trail** and the **Sussex Border Path** cross.

You continue [!] by *veering right* from the previous direction with a footpath signpost along the right of two paths on the other side of the junction (340°). In 40m, by a bench a little on the right, you have views on the right to **Hindhead Common and Gibbet Hill** (on a bearing of 20°). In 110m another path joins from the left and in 130m you enter trees to leave the open area past a marker post and in 30m continue in the same direction where another path joins from the left. In 40m *bear right* with the marked footpath where another path joins from the left and in 10m [!] *bear left* with a marker post along a narrow path (340°), ignoring the continuation of the track. In 90m you walk through a wooden gate to leave the fenced part of the wood and in 30m ignore another left turning path by a three-way footpath marker post. In 180m you start to descend out of **Marley Combe** in the same direction, as you ignore a left turn leading to a first house on the left by another three-way marker post and in a further 15m ignore a right turning path, leading to a parallel running gravel track.

In 300m you emerge on the **B2131 Camelsdale Road** by a footpath signpost with a National Trust marker, cross the road and *turn right* along the opposite pavement. You pass a bus stop on the right in 30m and ignore Marley Combe Road turning right in another 30m and after 40m more *turn left* along **Moorfield** (leading to Sturt Avenue). In 100m *bear right* with the road by a school on the left and in 130m cross a stream (the infant south branch of the **River Wey**) and continue up along a tarmac path. In 30m you go through some metal railings and cross the **A287 Sturt Road** veering a little to the right to walk up a gravel driveway and in 60m continue to the right of a building site for a new housing estate in this former pasture. Continue uphill to the right of the new houses and in 450m go through a gap to the left of a metal field gate and continue in the same direction through trees between barbed wire fences.

In 50m *turn left* along **Hedgehog Lane**, by a footpath signpost on the left. In 25m continue in the same direction at a bend in a road where **Courts Hill Road** joins from the right and continue along **Longdene Road**. In 30m ignore a left turning public footpath and *turn right* with the road to descend into **Haslemere**. In 380m cross **Lower Street** (there is a set of lights to the left), with **Harper's Steakhouse** on your right-hand side, and continue down the station approach to reach **Haslemere Station** in 60m. London bound trains depart from the far platforms.

Further tea options are to the right along Lower Street in the town centre.

Extension

In 30m cross a signposted public footpath (overgrown in both directions) and go over a stile to the left of a metal field gate and continue along a level path along the flank of a wooded hill. You have some views on the left through and above a regrowing part of **Crab Copse** towards **Fernhurst** village below and to **Bexleyhill Wood** beyond it (the transmission mast comes into view about 125m along) and with **Black Down** towering above and behind. In about 200m you enter mature trees and in 270m continue in the same direction with a marker post at a three-way junction, along a descending path (due W). In 180m continue in the same direction at a signposted three-way footpath junction and *bear right* with the path and then curve further to the right with it. In 210m cross another forest path by a marker post (325°).

You are now in **Greenhill Wood** and in 210m pass a marker post on the left (ignore a right fork). **[!]** In 30m by a two-way footpath signpost on the right, you *turn left* downhill (on a 225° bearing after 10m), ignoring the continuation ahead [**note:** the marked right-of-way here is different from what the OS map shows]. In 50m the path turns to the right and continues on the level, with a drop on the left. In 170m *curve to the left* with the path by a two-way signpost (280°). In 320m, lately descending, you reach a marked three-way footpath junction and *turn up to the right*. In 80m the terrain levels out briefly and you soon go through a recently-felled area. In 100m re-enter trees and in 200m at a gravel track T-junction, at the far end of a **forestry yard** with various tools, machines and piles of timber, you *turn right* with a signpost on the right. Go through a left and a right turn and in 330m from the yard *fork left* at a small triangular wooded area, in 10m passing a two-way signpost on the right.

In 350m *turn left* at a signposted three-way footpath junction and in 60m *fork right* at another signposted three-way footpath junction. The track gently ascends through the wood and in 100m another track joins from the right behind and you *bear to the left*. Continue uphill along the wooded flank, with some fine occasional views to the hill behind that the route looped around, as well as down the wooded valley to the left. In 200m, with some houses visible ahead across a wooded valley, *turn right* with the track and in 180m enter a dense mature wood. In 170m a footpath joins from the left below at a three-way signpost and you continue gently uphill and in 180m you emerge on **Marley Lane** by a footpath signpost backwards. The Main Walk joins from the right.

Turn left and pick up the directions in the main text at the asterisk *).