



Pulborough Circular walk

Long but easy walk which explores the water meadows of the River Arun, with the South Downs as a dramatic backdrop.

Length	<p>Main Walk: 21 km (13.0 miles). Five hours walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 10 hours.</p> <p>Short Walk, starting in Amberley: 16 km (9.9 miles). Three hours 45 minutes walking time.</p> <p>Short Walk, finishing in Amberley: 12¼ km (7.6 miles). Two hours 45 minutes walking time.</p>
OS Map	Explorer OL10 (previously 121). Pulborough, map reference TQ043186, is in West Sussex, 18 km SW of Horsham.
Toughness	4 out of 10 (less for the Short Walks).
Features	<p>The Main Walk climbs gently at first to give a panoramic view of the South Downs from the low hills above Pulborough. It joins the Wey-South Path to go past two medieval bridges across the canalised River Arun, which was part of an important transport link between London and the South Coast in the early 19thC. The walk then goes across the extensive water meadows of Amberley Wild Brooks, an important area for bird-life and wetland plants, to the picturesque village of Amberley.</p> <p>After lunch the walk heads eastwards through the landscaped grounds of Parham Park, with its large herd of dark-coated fallow deer and views of Parham House. The many “Private – No Access” notices do not encourage walkers to detour off the public footpath to visit this fine Elizabethan manor house and gardens, but for the record it is open Wed–Fri, Sun & BH from April to mid-October; admission (2018) is £11.</p>

In the next section you have the chance of seeing gliders taking off and landing at close quarters as you go along the edge of **Parham Airfield**. Towards the end of the walk you have the opportunity to spend some time bird-watching in the **RSPB Pulborough Brooks** Nature Reserve at Wiggonholt, which has a tearoom in its Visitor Centre, before a final stretch across the water meadows and alongside the River Arun back to Pulborough.

The water meadows are deliberately flooded in winter and can be boggy at any time of the year after heavy rain. This walk should therefore only be attempted in relatively dry conditions.

Walk Options

In the afternoon you can save 3½ km by heading directly to Pulborough Brooks along a quiet country lane, although this omits the interesting features of Parham Park and Parham Airfield.

Directions are included (in both directions) for a route between Amberley village and its station, allowing you to do a **Short Walk** by either starting or finishing at this station. This link route is essentially the same as the end of the [Arundel to Amberley walk](#) (1–32).

At Cootham you could switch to the end of either the [Billingshurst to Amberley walk](#) (#8) or the [Amberley Circular walk](#) (#11), which take different routes up to the South Downs ridge on their way to Amberley station.

At the end of the Short Walk to Amberley you could continue to Arundel, either over the downs on the [Amberley to Arundel walk](#) (2–22) or on one of the valley routes in the second half of the [Arundel Circular walk](#) (#100.2).

For these additional options you will need to bring the appropriate book or print the directions from the relevant walk document.

Transport

There is a half-hourly service from Victoria to Pulborough (hourly on Sundays), taking 1 hour 15 minutes. Amberley is the next station down the line but not all trains stop there; its service is always hourly.

If you want to take a bus from Cootham or Pulborough Brooks to Pulborough station, Compass 100 runs hourly up to around 5.40pm (Mon–Sat). At Pulborough Brooks the bus stop is on the A283 by the entrance to the Nature Reserve.

If driving, the station car park at Pulborough costs £5.75 Mon–Sat, £2.15 Sun & BH (2018).

Suggested Train

Take the train nearest to **09:40** from **Victoria to Pulborough**.

Lunch

On the **Main Walk** there are two good pubs in Amberley, after 8½–9 km. In the village the **Black Horse** (01798-831183) re-opened at the end of 2018 after being closed for six years; it has been fully renovated and looks well worth trying. On the lane out of the village, the **Sportsman** (01798-831787) has fine views over the water meadows from its terrace.

These pubs are also possible early lunch stops on the **Short Walk** from Amberley station, but the **Crown Inn** (01903-742625) in Cootham is more suitably placed, after about 9 km.

If you start late from Pulborough and are doing one of the shorter variations you could stop for an early lunch at the **White Hart** (01798-874903) at Stopham Bridge.

Tea

The **RSPB Visitor Centre** (01798-875851) at Pulborough Brooks is

conveniently situated for tea and (like the Sportsman) has fine views over the water meadows. Its tearoom stays open until about 4.30pm.

There are a couple of tearooms in Pulborough itself, but at the time of writing they both close at 4pm or even earlier. The [Oddfellows Arms](#) (01798-874888) pub is just off the walk route as you enter the town, about 1½ km from the station. The **Chequers Hotel** on the A29 is closer, but doesn't go out of its way to attract walkers. There are only some fast food shops near the station itself, although the taxi office has been known to sell hot drinks and cakes.

If you are finishing at Amberley and want to stop for tea in the village, the [Amberley Village Tea Room](#) (01798-839196) is recommended (but is closed in winter, from November to February). At Houghton Bridge, near the station, you can choose between the [Riverside Café & Restaurant](#) (01798-831066) and the nearby [Bridge Inn](#) (01798-831619).

Help Us!

After the walk, we would love to get your [feedback](#)

You can upload photos to the [SWC Group on Flickr](#), and [videos to Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:



By Car

Start RH20 1AH

Help

National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

Version

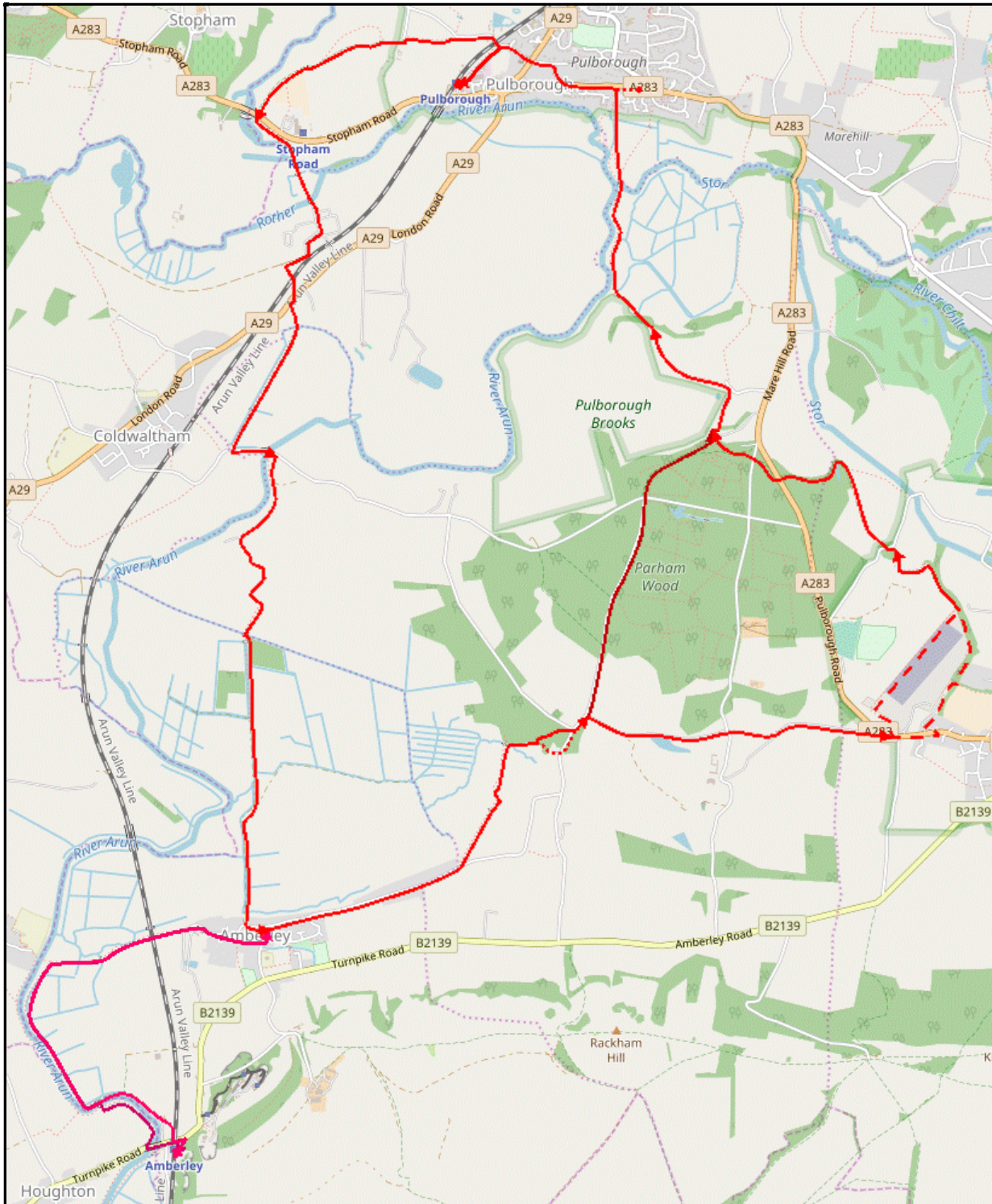
Dec-18

Copyright

© [Saturday Walkers Club](#). All Rights Reserved. No commercial use. No copying. No derivatives. Free with attribution for one time non-commercial use only. www.walkingclub.org.uk/site/license.shtml

Walk Directions

Walk Map



All maps © OpenStreetMap contributors

Walk Options (Main | Short)

- M. Main Walk (21 km)
 - i. Main Walk, omitting Parham Park (17½ km)
- a. Short Walk, starting in Amberley (16 km)
- ai. Short Walk, omitting Parham Park (12½ km)
- b. Short Walk, finishing in Amberley (12¼ km)

Walk Directions

If you are doing the Short Walk from Amberley station, start at §5.

1. Pulborough Station to Stopham Bridge (2¼ km)

After leaving the station building, do not go down to the main road but instead **turn left**. Head briefly towards the main car park but almost immediately **veer right** by a small bicycle shelter to get onto a public footpath on the other side of a chain-link fence, with the car park on your left and a service road to an industrial estate on your right.

In 300m this footpath comes out onto a minor road by a railway bridge. Turn left, crossing over the railway, and follow the road as it curves round to the left. Where the road bends to the right after 300m, **bear left** onto a public footpath which climbs gently through a field, heading **W**. There are soon fine views of the South Downs and Pulborough Brooks on your left.

In 350m the path passes a WWI pillbox and heads into some trees, where it turns left and then right to meet the driveway to Park Farm. Cross over the driveway and head uphill on a broad path with wooden railings on the right. You are now on the **Wey-South Path**¹, which you will follow all the way to Amberley.

At the top of the rise turn left at the bridleway sign just inside the wood, with **Park Mound**² up on your right. Follow this attractive path gently downhill near the edge of the wood for just under 1 km, ignoring ways off, until it descends to meet the A283. Cross over this main road carefully, take the footpath opposite and turn left on a lane to go past the **White Hart** pub (with a fine view of the medieval **Stopham Bridge**³ on your right).

2. Stopham Bridge to Greatham Bridge (2¾ km)

Continue on the lane as it climbs gently uphill and curves left to go parallel to the A283. Where the lane swings left to join the main road opposite a garden centre⁴, bear right and go through a kissing gate to take the public footpath heading **SE**. This goes past a bend of the River Arun and then crosses the river on a substantial footbridge. On the other side, bear left to head **SE** across a potentially muddy field, leaving it via a kissing gate. Go up some steps, over a bridge across the River Rother and past a pumping station.

Immediately after going through a new wooden gate, **turn right** at a public footpath sign along a concrete track. Turn left in front of an industrial building onto a path with a hedge on your right. Go through a metal fieldgate and turn right onto a broad track⁵. In 150m **turn left** at a public footpath sign and head for a bridge across the railway. Go over this and down to the A29.

Cross this busy road with great care and turn right along the pavement for 25m. Just past Priory Cottage, go over a stile on the left and follow the public footpath across a small field. On the far side go through a wooden kissing gate and down a slope into a long narrow strip of woodland, which follows the course of an abandoned stretch of canal. In just under 1 km this rather overgrown path comes out onto a lane, where you turn left to reach the other medieval bridge on this walk, **Greatham Bridge**.

3. Greatham Bridge to Amberley (village) (3½ km)

After crossing the River Arun, go over a stile on the right and up to a path heading **S** along the riverbank. In 200m the path leaves the river and reaches a farm track, where you turn right. In 125m bear right at the top of the rise. In a further 200m follow the track round to the left by the entrance to Quell Farm House.

In 150m the track swerves right and left past the last of some farm buildings, then comes to the corner of a small wood. **Turn right** as indicated onto a path going gently downhill beside the wood, then past Hayles Barn. At the bottom of the slope turn left along a broad grassy track. Finally, go through a metal fieldgate into **Amberley Wild Brooks** and **turn right** as indicated.

You will be heading **S** through these water meadows for the next 2 km. Initially the path is quite faint and overgrown in places, with plank bridges and boardwalks over some boggy stretches, then widens into a broad grassy path between ditches. Later it turns

half-right and joins a potentially waterlogged chalky farm track, before curving back to the left to head **S** again.

Eventually you go through a side gate and climb a short slope into the picturesque village of Amberley. Pass between between thatched cottages and turn left onto Hog Lane to reach a junction with High Street in 125m, with the renovated **Black Horse** pub ahead on your right.

The Main Walk continues ahead along East Street (coming to the alternative lunch pub in a further 800m); the Short Walk turns right into High Street (with the Village Tea Room 125m down this road).

To continue the Main Walk, go to §6 (or follow the Short Walk directions below as far as you like to explore the village and then return the same way).

4. Amberley (village) to Amberley Station (3¾ km)

Amberley station is 1¼ km away and you could reach it directly by simply heading south and turning right onto the B2139. The recommended route is essentially the same as that in Walk 1–32.

For the **Short Walk** head **S** down High Street, passing the Village Stores. With the **Amberley Village Tea Room** ahead on your left, **turn right** into Church Street and follow this lane **W** through the village. Towards the far end you pass **St Michael's** church⁶ and continue down a short slope. This takes you onto a path going below the walls of **Amberley Castle**⁷ and then to the railway line.

Cross the tracks carefully and continue on a grassy path between hedges. In 250m you go over a stile into the water meadows and turn half-left as indicated. You cross several more stiles and ditches as you make your way across these meadows (you may have to detour around some boggy areas). Eventually you climb onto an embankment and turn left along it, with the River Arun on your right.

Continue along the riverbank for just over 1 km to the substantial footbridge carrying the South Downs Way and **turn right** onto it. On the other side turn left and follow the riverside path to reach the B2139 at Houghton Bridge.

Turn left onto the road, **taking great care as there is no pavement and the road is quite busy**. On the other side of the bridge the **Riverside Café** is on your left and the **Bridge Inn** on your right. For the station, continue along the B2139 under the railway bridge and turn right up the station approach road. Cross the footbridge to Platform 1 for trains to London.

5. Amberley Station to Amberley (village) (3½ km)

Leave the station at the London end of the platform, coming out opposite a small building with toilets and an exhibition about the **Amberley Museum and Heritage Centre**, which is worth a look. Go down the station approach road and turn left briefly onto the B2139, passing under the railway bridge.

On the other side immediately **turn right** onto a gravel track, signposted as a footpath. Go over a stile and follow the path round to the left behind a caravan park. 200m from the road you reach an embankment and climb onto it to continue alongside the River Arun, heading **NW**. You now follow this riverside path for 1½ km, keeping the river on your left and passing the substantial footbridge carrying the South Downs Way.

Opposite Bury church on the other side of the river, **turn right** at a yellow footpath marker on a post to head **E** across the water meadows (you may have to make your way around some boggy areas). You cross several stiles and ditches, turning half-left after the second stile. A third stile takes you onto a grassy path between hedges which leads to the railway line.

Cross the tracks carefully and continue on the path, soon going below the walls of **Amberley Castle**⁷ and then up a short slope onto a lane going past **St Michael's** church⁶. Continue along Church Street through the picturesque village of Amberley,

ignoring side streets. At a T-junction in front of the **Amberley Village Tea Room**, turn left. Unless stopping here for an early lunch, go past the **Black Horse** pub and turn right into East Street.

6. Amberley to West Lodges (2¾ km)

Head **E** out of the village along East Street. In 800m you come to the **Sportsman** pub on your left, another possible lunch stop. In a further 500m, after the last of the houses and just before a 'national speed limit' sign, **turn left** off the road onto a public footpath. This goes half-right downhill across a large field, heading **NE**.

At the field boundary go through a hedge and across a ditch on a plank bridge. Keep ahead across a smaller field and go over a stile in the corner onto a path through a copse. This comes out in front of the derelict **Rackham Mill**, with a house up on the right. After veering left between these buildings the path heads **N** towards a wood, with views across the water meadows on your left.

In 250m the path crosses a brook on a footbridge. On the other side **turn right** at a three-armed footpath sign to go along a path just inside the wood. In 150m you pass an isolated house on the right and come to a waymarked footpath junction, with a path on the left going uphill into the wood.

*This woodland path is now the suggested route, but you could carry on along the main path (the original walk route). If you do this it comes out into a small open area with sandstone rocks off to the left, **Rackham Old School** on the right and a lane ahead (Rackham Street); turn left onto the lane to rejoin the main route at a road junction at the top of the slope.*

On the suggested route the woodland path curves right and climbs through the trees for 250m, heading roughly **NE**. On the far side of the wood bear right onto a lane and then immediately fork left at a road junction, signposted to Wiggonholt and rejoining the original walk route. In 150m you come to a pair of lodges on your right, with an information panel about **Parham Park**.

If you are taking the direct route to Pulborough Brooks (omitting Parham Park), go to §10.

7. Through Parham Park (2 km)

Turn right through a side gate into Parham Park and go along its tree-lined driveway, heading **E**. In 500m there is a lake on the right (with a distant view of **Parham House**⁸ beyond), then a high stone garden wall.

The driveway comes to a T-junction, with private roads off to both sides. Keep ahead (slightly to the right) on a grassy path, the continuation of the footpath. In 250m the path curves left to merge with the main driveway to the house, which is now behind you on your right. Leave Parham Park at Douglas's Lodge and continue along the driveway⁹ to a junction with the A283.

8. Parham Park to Hurston Lane (2 km)

There is a choice of routes. The more interesting route goes across Parham Airfield where you may get to see gliders taking off and landing, but if you want to visit the Crown Inn you will need to take the alternative route via Cootham in §8b.

On both routes, take care in the vicinity of the airfield and stay on the signposted public footpaths. Gliders are quiet and can only take limited avoiding action if you stray into their path when landing.

a. Route across airfield

Head **E** briefly along the A283. In 50m cross the main road carefully and go up the signposted footpath. Follow this enclosed path for about 200m, going over a stile and round to the left along the edge of Parham Airfield.

At the end turn right onto the grass, aiming for the right-hand edge of a field of crops up ahead. Head **NE** for 800m along the edge of the airfield. Eventually the other route joins from the right at a three-way footpath signpost in front of some trees, where you **turn left** onto an enclosed path.

b. Route via Cootham

Head **E** along the A283. In 350m cross the main road carefully to the **Crown Inn** on the outskirts of Cootham.

After visiting the pub, briefly retrace your steps along the A283 but almost immediately **turn right** into Dukes Row, signposted as a footpath. Go up to a row of houses and turn left, parallel to the main road and heading **W**. At the end of the houses follow the lane round to the right into Cootham Mobile Home Park.

At the end of these well-kept homes, bear left to take a potentially muddy footpath leading into a strip of woodland. Ignore any unofficial paths on the left going up to the airfield and stay on the main path, which soon veers right and comes to a three-way footpath signpost.

Turn left at this path junction and follow the woodland path for 150m, with long stretches on a boardwalk over the muddy ground alongside a brook. Eventually the path emerges onto Parham Airfield and you continue around its edge. In 350m the other route joins from across the airfield at a three-way footpath signpost, where you continue on an enclosed path.

Follow this narrow fenced path around the perimeter of a large field for 600m, with a few sharp turns along the way. Eventually the path veers up to the right into a lightly wooded area. Ignore a footpath off to the left and go through a wooden gate. Follow a short woodland path out to a minor road (Hurston Lane) at a bend.

9. Hurston Lane to Pulborough Brooks (1¾ km)

Turn left onto the lane and then immediately **bear right** onto a long driveway, signposted as a public bridleway and heading **NW**. In 600m ignore a footpath on the right and bear left with the path, with a large garden containing a long narrow pond coming into view on your left. At the end of the garden the path crosses a stream and turns sharply left to go back along its other side.

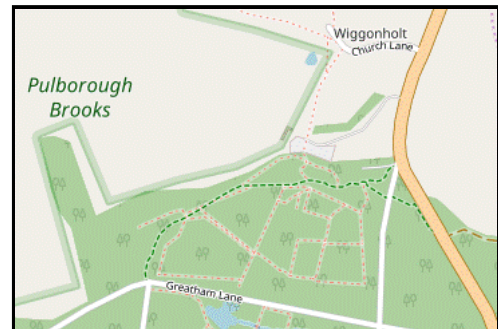
In 125m follow the path round to the right, joining the driveway to a house. This climbs gently and in 400m comes out onto the A283. Cross the main road carefully and take the bridleway opposite (slightly to the right) onto the edge of Wiggonholt Common.

The RSPB has bought part of this wooded common and is restoring its original heathland habitat. There are gates leading onto new permissive paths through it which you could take. After crossing a lane onto the main part of the common make your way round to the Visitor Centre, on the north side of the common.

For the direct route follow the bridleway signposts, initially bearing right to run parallel to the main road. It then turns left and you go straight across a minor road into more woodland. The bridleway is less clearly defined here but you soon pass a brushwood fence on your right, enclosing a play area. At the end of this **veer right** towards the Nature Reserve's overflow car park, leaving the bridleway which goes down a gully.

After continuing along the edge of the wood for a short distance **turn right** at an RSPB sign for the Visitor Centre into the main car park. The **Visitor Centre** is ahead on your left, with a side entrance to the tearoom on the left of the building.

To continue the Main Walk, go to §11.

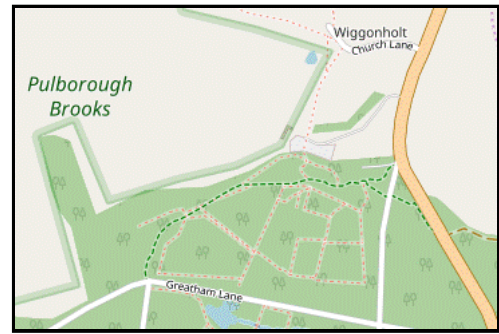


10. West Lodges to Pulborough Brooks direct (2¼ km)

Continue on this quiet road for nearly 1½ km, heading **N**. Halfway along there is an unusual round house behind the hedge on your right, where the road bends slightly right. Eventually you come to a T-junction where you **go straight across** Greatham Lane onto a bridleway into Wiggonholt Common.

The RSPB has bought part of this wooded common and is restoring its original heathland habitat. An information panel just inside the wood has a map showing new permissive paths on both sides of the public bridleway and you could detour onto these if you wish.

For the direct route stay on the bridleway as it curves gently round to the right. 400m from the road, **fork left** at a three-armed footpath sign to climb a slope. At the top **turn left** at an RSPB sign for the Visitor Centre into the main car park for the Nature Reserve. The **Visitor Centre** is ahead on your left, with a side entrance to the tearoom on the left of the building.



11. Through Pulborough Brooks (1 km)

If you are an RSPB member (or are prepared to pay the entrance fee) you can visit the reserve and its bird hides. If you do this, you can complete the directions at §12 by making your way towards Little Hanger hide, where the public footpath which runs through the reserve crosses the perimeter path and leaves it on a wide chalky track.

To continue the walk on the right of way, leave the Visitor Centre and briefly take the access road leading out of the main car park. Almost immediately, **turn left** onto a public footpath signposted to the Church, heading **N** between hedges. The path dips through a more open area and then climbs back up to the hamlet of Wiggonholt. At the top **turn left** onto a broad grassy strip in front of the tiny **Wiggonholt church**¹⁰.

Follow the grassy path past its lychgate and downhill. In 250m **keep ahead** across the perimeter path around the RSPB reserve, going through a wooden kissing gate into a field. Continue alongside a low wire fence to the far side, then turn half-right as indicated to go through another gate and across the next field on a broad grassy path. In the far corner go through another gate and back across the perimeter path onto the signposted footpath opposite, a wide chalky track going down a slope.

12. Pulborough Brooks to Pulborough Station (3 km)

Follow the track downhill and round to the right at the bottom, going through a kissing gate beside a fieldgate into the water meadows¹¹. Continue along a broad and slightly elevated path across these (sometimes flooded) meadows, heading **NW**. At the far end veer right onto a path climbing an embankment.

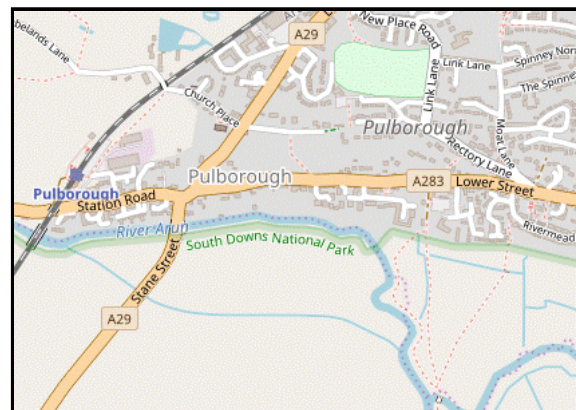
At the top turn right to go along the top of the embankment, with the **River Arun** down to your left. In 750m follow the path off the embankment and across a footbridge over the **River Stor**. On the other side, go over an embankment and take the left-hand of two footpaths across a large meadow, heading **N** towards a row of houses on the outskirts of Pulborough.

After reaching a water channel and going alongside it for about 150m, the path climbs gently. Go through a new wooden gate and continue uphill on a narrow lane to the A283. Unless you want to detour to a pub, turn left onto the main road.

- **Detour to the Oddfellows Arms (+200m)**
Turn right onto the main road. The pub is about 100m along the road, on the right. Return the same way and continue along the A283.

You can reach the station directly by continuing through the town on the A283, but the route given below is more interesting and not much longer.

Cross over the main road at some point. 300m from the lane, just before Allfreys Wharf, **bear right** up a ramp and into a field. Follow the tarmac path up the slope and bear right at the top (with a fine view of the South Downs behind you) to reach a lane.



Turn left onto the lane and go past the **Chequers Hotel** to the A29. **Cross this busy main road with great care** and go straight ahead into Church Place (you can detour through the churchyard, but **St Mary's church**¹² itself is usually locked).

In 250m, just before the lane crosses the railway, **turn left** onto the footpath the Main Walk started out on. In 300m veer right towards Pulborough station and go round the left-hand side of the station building to reach the platforms. Go down steps and through the tunnel to Platform 1 for trains to London.

Walk Notes

1. The 58 km **Wey-South Path** runs from Guildford to Houghton Bridge, following the route of the River Wey, the River Arun and the canal linking them.
2. **Park Mound** on the right of the bridleway is the site of a motte and bailey fortress, built shortly after the Norman Conquest.
3. **Stopham Bridge** was built in 1423, replacing an earlier wooden bridge. The central arch was raised in 1822 to allow barges to pass. The bridge was still being used by traffic until the new A283 road bridge was constructed alongside in 1986.
4. The **South Downs Light Railway Society** operates an extensive 10¼" gauge railway in the grounds of the garden centre on the other side of the A283.
5. This is the trackbed of an old **railway line**, which ran to Midhurst and Petersfield.
6. **St Michael, Amberley** is Norman, with the nave and chancel arch dating from about 1100. There are medieval wall paintings to the right of the arch. The church was enlarged in 1230 and much altered in a Victorian restoration.
7. **Amberley Castle** was built as a palace for the Bishops of Chichester soon after the Norman invasion. It was owned by a prominent Royalist in the Civil War and partly destroyed by Parliamentary forces. It is now a luxury hotel.
8. **Parham House** is a fine example of an Elizabethan manor house, with a large Walled Garden and 18thC Pleasure Grounds. To the south of the house, **St Peter's** church dates from the 12thC and has interesting box pews and Gothic revival features.
9. A Heritage Trail panel beside the driveway tells the history of some of the more eccentric owners of **Parham House**, and its connection with a famous variety of apple.
10. **Wiggonholt church** (which is undedicated) has some original walls dating from around the 12thC.
11. The RSPB has restored the original wetland habitat by carefully controlling the water levels in **Pulborough Brooks**, which had become drier after engineering works to the river in the 1960s.
12. **St Mary, Pulborough** dates from the 12thC, although the nave is 15thC. The church is only open for a few hours each day and is usually locked after 4pm.

» *Last updated: December 13, 2018*

© Saturday Walkers Club. All Rights Reserved. No commercial use. No copying. No derivatives. Free with attribution for one time non-commercial use only.
www.walkingclub.org.uk/site/license.shtml

Saturday Walkers Club • © 2000-2018 All Rights Reserved • saturdaywalkers@walkingclub.org.uk