

Main walk last checked	Longer river ending last checked		
18 May 2024	18 May 2024		
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Pulborough to Amberley

Length: **Main walk:** 16.6km (10.3 miles)
With longer river ending 19.5km (12.1 miles)

Toughness: 5 out of 10: generally flat, but one big climb near the end.

Maps: Landranger map 197, Explorer map OL10 (formerly 121)

Features

This walk passes through the quaint historic centre of Pulborough, tucked away on the edge of the modern village, and then climbs into a delightful area of gentle hills, which afford magnificent views of the downs to the south and the plains to the north. After lunch in Nutbourne or Marehill, the route takes you along the edge of Pulborough Brooks, an unspoilt marshland area which is now an RSPB nature reserve, and whose visitor centre provides a possible tea stop. There is then a three kilometre section on a quiet road that at first passes through woodland, and then the hamlet of Rackham. By now the South Downs loom magnificently ahead, and you climb up onto them by a steep path for a grand ridge finish with magnificent views of the Arun valley.

Walk options

An optional **longer river ending** to this walk takes down to the Amberley Village Tea Room, a possible tea stop, and through the picturesque heart of the village and out across watermeadows (which can be waterlogged in winter, or after heavy rain) to the banks of the River Arun. A scenic walk along the river then brings you to Amberley station. This adds 2.9km (1.8 miles) to the walk, making the whole walk **19.5km (12.1 miles)**.

There is a sister walk to this one on this website – **Billingshurst to Amberley** - which shares the same lunch stop and a small centre section, and has the same finish over the downs to Amberley. It is thus possible to do the morning of one and the afternoon of the other. The morning of the Billingshurst to Amberley walk is **9.3km (5.8 miles)** versus 5.4km (3.4 miles) for this walk, and its afternoon is **13.5km (8.4 miles)** versus 11.2km (6.9 miles) for this walk, taking in 2km more of the South Downs ridge than this walk.

You could also switch at the RSPB Pulborough Brooks Reserve Visitor Centre (paragraph 68 of this walk) to the **Pulborough Circular** walk on this website. Sections M and N of that walk describe a 4km (2.5 mile) walk back to Pulborough across the marshland of the Wild Brooks, making a total circular walk of **13.3km (8.3 miles)**.

Transport

Pulborough and Amberley are both on the Horsham-Littlehampton line, served by trains out of Victoria. Catch the nearest train to **10.10am** from Victoria. Buy a **day return to Amberley**. Note that the last train back from Amberley is at around 9.20pm, though after this there are options via Arundel.

Lunch and tea

Rising Sun, Nutbourne (01798 812191), 5.4km (3.4 miles) into the walk, is the recommended lunchtime pub. It serves food daily from 12pm to 2pm Monday to Thursday, to 2.30pm Saturday, and to 4pm Sunday, and has an interesting menu with generally good portion sizes. It has both a cosy interior and a charming garden.

The White Horse, Marehill, (01798 872189), is a possible alternative lunch stop 1.4km (0.9 miles) beyond the Rising Sun. It is open and serves food to 12pm to 2.30pm Monday to Friday, to 3pm Saturday, and to 4pm Sundays. The inside dining room has a fine view of the South Downs and the pub also has a patio area and a pleasant garden.

RSPB Visitors Centre, Pulborough Brooks, 9.3km (5.8 miles) into the walk, has a self-service tea room, with both inside seating and outside tables with a fine view over the flatlands of the Wild Brooks. It is open 10am to 4pm daily and also does light lunches from 12pm to 2.30pm. This is a possible late lunch or early tea stop.

The two tea rooms at the end of the walk unfortunately close rather early. The **Riverside Tea Rooms** at Houghton Bridge (near Amberley Station) close at 4.30pm daily, while the charming **Amberley Village Tea Room** (on the longer river ending, but also accessible from the main walk route with a small diversion) now closes at 4pm Thursday to Tuesday (ie closed Wednesday)

Fortunately there is a very friendly and atmospheric pub by Amberley Station, the **Bridge Inn** (01798 831 619). It serves tea and coffee until at least 10.30pm, and meals from 6pm, and has a very pleasant garden.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Pulborough station to Nutbourne (5.4km/3.4 miles)

1. Leave the station building and in 20 metres turn left along the right-hand edge of the car park, following a line of trees to your right.
2. In 20 metres, just past a bicycle shed on the right, veer right up a signposted footpath on the far side of a link fence, with a road parallel to your right.
3. In 100 metres, where the road veers right to an industrial estate, keep straight on up this path, now with vegetation to your right and the railway line to your left.
4. In 100 metres there is a field to your right. In another 150 metres you come to a road, with a railway bridge to your left: here turn right into the old village centre of Pulborough.
5. In 250 metres, just after you pass the church to your right, cross the busy main road, the A29, and go straight ahead up Old Rectory Lane, passing the Chequers Hotel and Restaurant on your left.
6. In 40 metres, you get the first of many fine views of the South Downs to your right: later the walk will finish along the ridge you can see. Ignore a "PRIVATE ROAD" sign at this point, and keep straight on along the tarmac lane: this is a right of way.
7. In another 80 metres, ignore a signposted public footpath sign to the right, but note an interesting panel here about the history of Pulborough.
8. In a further 80 metres, where the road ends by a house called Dormers, keep straight on up a gravel pathway.
9. In 70 metres a tarmac drive from a house joins from the right. 20 metres further on, **turn left up a tarmac path**, with a fenced garden to the right and Pulborough Bowling Club to the left.
10. In 70 metres you come out onto a sports ground, with a clubhouse and car park to your left. Veer right

diagonally across the sports ground, heading for its far right-hand corner, and passing just to the left of some cricket nets, your direction 60 degrees.

- 11.** In 200 metres, as you approach the far corner, you will see that there is a school just beyond it: aim to the right of this (ie about 50 metres to the right of the corner): here cross the road running along the far edge of the sports ground and go up a side road, Link Lane.
- 12.** In 170 metres, just as a green space ends to your right, and with a road called Spinney North to your right, turn left up a tarmac lane between houses.
- 13.** In 70 metres the lane ends at a fieldgate. The onward route is to pass around the fieldgate and carry on up a path between trees/bushes: but in summer this can be overgrown with nettles. At such times you can keep to the tarmac path that runs just to the right of the bushes, with houses to the right. But in 120 metres, where this tarmac path turns hard right alongside a wire fence, veer left to return to the path between bushes, now a bridleway under trees, heading gently uphill.
- 14.** In 220 metres (if you followed the path from the gate) or 100 metres (if you veered onto the bridleway from the tarmac path) pass through a gate and keep straight on, ignoring a signposted bridleway to the left.
- 15.** In another 70 metres merge with two gravel tracks and keep on uphill, with plant nurseries to your right.
- 16.** In 60 metres more, just past the last of the nurseries, turn right at a track T-junction marked by a three-armed footpath sign.
- 17.** In 200 metres, where the track curves left, keep straight on up an earth path between fences, with more plant nurseries to your right and a field to your left.
- 18.** In 150 metres pass through a gap and keep straight on, still between fences, with fields left and right. There is an improving view of the South Downs to the right as you climb up this section.
- 19.** In 200 metres you come to a road: cross this and carry on up a car-wide bridleway.
- 20.** In 300 metres you come to a tarmac drive in front of a house: turn left onto this and follow the metal fence as it curves round to the right and then to the left. The tarmac drive becomes concrete and goes slightly downhill.
- 21.** In 60 metres more go through a metal gate to the right of the cattle grid.
- 22.** Curve right along the field edge and in 30 metres cross a stile to the right of a metal fieldgate. Carry on along the field edge (as best you can: this area is a bit cluttered with nettles in summer).
- 23.** In 150 metres, at the top of the field, go right across a stile (there are good views both south and north from this stile) and then veer left across a field corner to pass through a metal fieldgate in 15 metres. Keep on up the left-hand edge of this field.
- 24.** In 200 metres, where an intermittent line of bushes ends, turn left through a metal fieldgate, and then go diagonally across the next field, aiming for a point about 100 metres to the left of a telecoms mast you see on the hill ahead, your direction 40 degrees.
- 25.** In 150 metres, as you come over the crest of the hill, you can see a footpath sign ahead, 20 metres to the right of a tree hidden in the fold of the hill.
- 26.** It is not until you come right up to this sign, 80 metres later, that you see the stile next to it. Cross this and follow a fence up across the next field.
- 27.** In 200 metres, in the far corner of the field, cross a stile to the right of double metal fieldgates and descend the bank to a tarmac road.
- 28.** Cross the road and go straight on through a gate to the right of a fieldgate up the driveway of Redfold Farm, a public footpath.
- 29.** In 160 metres veer right off the driveway to cross a stile to the right of a wooden fieldgate and carry on downhill on a car-wide shelf. Your ultimate destination is a gate 200 metres away at the bottom right-hand edge of this field, which is hidden by trees bushes initially, but which is marked by a footpath sign.
- 30.** Pass through this gate, cross a stile 10 metres beyond it, and keep straight on uphill, heading for the top right-hand corner of the field.
- 31.** In 100 metres, at the top of the hill, cross another stile. Cross a concrete farm road and keep to the right of a

concrete area by a shed, to pick up your former direction (190 degrees) on a path with a hedge to the right and a fenced-off field to the left.

32. In 100 metres the field fence ends and you carry on through a partly shrubby area, contouring the hill.
33. In 200 metres you pass a two-armed footpath sign and keep on into a more thickly wooded/scrubby area.
34. In another 60 metres, at a three-armed footpath sign, ignore a path downhill to the left, to skirt in 10 metres round to the right of a plantation of new trees. Keep on along its right-hand edge on a broad path, with a wire fence to the left.
35. In 200 metres cross a stile and keep straight on downhill on a broad fenced strip to the left-hand edge of a field.
36. In another 250 metres cross a stile and keep on down the right-hand side of the next field.
37. In 100 metres follow the path as it descends into a shallow gully, and in 40 metres pass through a kissing gate to the left of a wooden fieldgate and curve left downhill on a sunken track.
38. In 150 metres merge with a tarmac driveway, and in another 40 metres, at a T-junction go right. You are now in the village of **Nutbourne**.
39. In 40 metres you come to another T-junction
 - **For the Rising Sun, the recommended lunch pub**, *turn left* downhill at the T-junction to find the pub in 100 metres on the right.
 - **To continue the walk without stopping at the pub**, *turn right* at the T-junction. In 20 metres turn left up a driveway, a signposted footpath, and continue with paragraph 42 opposite.

Nutbourne to Marehill **(1.5km/0.9 miles)**

40. Coming out of the pub, turn left, retracing your steps up the road.
41. In 100 metres ignore a road to the right (the one you came into the village on), but 20 metres beyond it, turn left up a driveway, a signposted footpath.
42. The driveway is initially tarmac but in 10 metres becomes gravel. In 100 metres, where it ends at a garden hedge, veer right past a "Private Property: No Parking" sign, up a path with a vineyard to its right.
43. In 40 metres pass through a high gate into the vineyard and keep to the left-hand edge of the field beyond.
44. In 100 metres turn left at a field corner, following a footpath sign, still on the edge of the vineyard.
45. At the next corner in 120 metres turn right, and in 130 metres go left and then in 20 metres right, all the time with the vineyard to your right.
46. In 100 metres, in the top corner of the field, go left through a high kissing gate to leave the vineyard. Immediately cross a stile and carry on up a shady path between fields.
47. In 100 metres climb a short grassy slope and go straight on diagonally across a field, heading for a stile in its far corner, which you reach in 90 metres.
48. Cross this stile and veer right along the right-hand edge of the next field to cross a stile to the right in 50 metres. Ignore the path to the right and gate to the left and follow the path into a wood.
49. This curves left in 25 metres and passes a dark wooden building to the left. In another 50 metres keep straight on with the unfenced garden of a house to your left.
50. In 100 metres you find yourself at the entrance to the house's square-cobbled driveway. Turn right on this and then almost immediately turn left down a tarmac road.
51. Follow this road all the way downhill, ignoring ways off, until you come to the main road, the A283. **The White Horse** pub is on the right, a possible lunchstop.

Marehill to the RSPB Visitor Centre (2.4km/1.5 miles)

52. From the White Horse, cross the A283, and turn right along its far side.
53. In 130 metres, opposite a driveway to Holme Manor right, turn left down a tarmac driveway following a footpath sign.
54. In 80 metres, where the driveway curves right to a house, go straight ahead along a signposted footpath.
55. In 150 metres cross a stile, and keep to the left-hand edge of the field beyond. You are now on the marshland RSPB reserve of **Pulborough Brooks**.
56. There is a water channel 80 metres ahead, hidden behind a bank. Converge with this and in 120 metres cross the channel on a footbridge, passing through a kissing gate at either end.
57. Keep to the left-hand edge of the open space beyond. In 100 metres more cross a stile to the right of a wooden fieldgate and keep straight on.
58. In 300 metres pass under trees and in 100 metres more cross a stile to the right of a fieldgate to emerge into the open once more.
59. In another 180 metres pass through a gate to the left of a fieldgate to pass an an isolated house and bungalow to the left. Curve left around the garden fence of these properties.
60. In 100 metres ignore a rough track uphill to the right and go left through a kissing gate onto a path between earth banks, following a footpath sign.
61. In 60 metres go up some steps and at a three-way junction turn right onto a track, following a footpath sign.
62. In 80 metres go left through a kissing gate to the left of a metal fieldgate and turn right along the field edge.
63. In 80 metres more pass through a gate and keep on up the field edge.
64. In 170 metres pass through a kissing gate and veer left along a grassy strip dotted with young oak trees.
65. In 200 metres, at the end of this strip, pass through a kissing gate and veer right to cross a tarmac driveway in 10 metres. On the far side, the wooden gate takes you to **Wigginholt church**, which is worth a visit, but **your**

onward route is across a stile to the left of the gate.

66. Beyond the stile, turn half left between wire fences.
67. In 150 metres, where the fence to the right ends, keep straight on uphill on a broad grassy path. In 100 metres, the path is enclosed by trees once more.
68. In another 120 metres you come to a car park. Go right for 50 metres to the **RSPB Pulborough Brooks Nature Reserve Visitor Centre**, a possible tea stop.

RSPB Visitor Centre to top of the downs (4.4km/2.7 mi)

69. **If not stopping for tea**, 15 metres to the left of the visitor centre entrance you see a track going straight ahead from the end of the car park. Take a footpath forking left at the start of this this.
If coming out of the tea room this path is ahead right, at the edge of the car park.
70. In 15 metres, at a crosspaths, turn right. In 30 metres pass through a gate and carry on downhill.
71. In 150 metres, at a three-armed footpath sign, merge with a track to keep along the valley floor. Keep on this track, ignoring all ways off, for 500 metres, until you come to a road T-junction.
72. Go straight ahead across this junction, up a road signposted to Rackham, a quiet (though not traffic-free) woodland road. This is the start of a **3km road section**, and you basically keep straight on along this road until you reach the main road at the very foot of the South Downs (paragraph 77 overleaf).
73. In more detail: In 600 metres, you pass Sparright Farm to your right, and the Round House (which really is round) to your left.
74. In another 250 metres the stone wall of the Parham House estate is to the left. In 500 metres more you pass the formal entrance to the estate.
75. In 100 metres, ignore a road to the right to Greatham and Coldwaltham. In 170 metres more you pass a chapel-like building to your right (actually an old school).

76. In 250 metres ignore Rackham Road to the right signposted to Amberley
- **If you don't fancy the climb up onto the downs** you can take this very pleasant road to the right. It takes you to the village of Amberley in 2.3km, with some fine views of the downs en route: once in the village, turn left just beyond the **Black Horse** pub, passing the **Amberley Tea Rooms** on your left in 120 metres and coming to the main road in another 230 metres. Turn right along the main road for 1.3km to get to Amberley station). Or see the paragraph 92 overleaf for a prettier, longer way to the station from the Amberley Tea Rooms.
77. Otherwise, keep straight on at the junction in the previous paragraph. The road now climbs for 700 metres, after which you come to the summit, with the downs now looming magnificently ahead. Cross a dip in the road for another 180 metres to come to the busy B2139.
78. Turn left along the verge of this road (taking **great care** of the traffic, as the verge is very narrow).
79. In 60 metres **cross the road with care** to go through a wooden gate up a signposted footpath (though the signpost may be hidden by vegetation in summer).
80. For 100 metres you climb through scrub and then for 300 metres through trees to a gate. Beyond this you are on the open hillside, with fine views behind, climbing steeply uphill.
81. In another 200 metres or so the gradient starts to ease and the path curves right. In another 300 metres you come to the the top of the **South Downs**.
- Top of downs to Amberley station (2.9km/1.8 miles)**
82. Your onward route is now to the right, along the line of the ridge. You can go through a gate at the top of the gully and turn right on the South Downs Way, a clear path between fences, **but for better views to the north** (including the whole route of the walk so far), ignore the gate and turn right over a stile to walk along the crest of the downs (an open access area), with the South Downs Way to your left.
83. Either way in 900 metres you come to a gate (a gate on the SDW, if you have taken that route, or a gate at the end of the open access area which lets you back onto the SDW). Beyond these gates keep on the South Downs Way as it descends more steeply.
84. In 350 metres, on a shoulder of the hill where a track joins from the left, keep straight on.
85. In 50 metres more **veer right off the track** onto a path between fences, following the South Downs Way signpost.
86. In 300 metres pass through a gate and in 70 metres more descend to a road, where you go right.
87. Follow the road around to the left and in 80 metres you come to a fork.
- To detour to the **Amberley Village Tea Room** (2.3km from this point, adding 1.1km to the walk) or to do the **longer ending along the River Arun** (4.1km/2.5 miles from this point, adding 2.9km/1.8 miles to the walk), turn right at this fork, on a road going steeply downhill, and refer to paragraph 90 below.
 - Alternatively **to keep on the main walk route** (1.2km from this point) keep straight on at the fork on a road that follows the line of the ridge.
88. In 600 metres this brings you down to a main road, the B2139. Cross it with care and turn left along the pavement.
89. In 250 metres follow the road as it curves right and in 150 metres, just before the railway bridge, you see the entrance to the **Amberley station** on your left. At the station, cross the footbridge for London-bound trains.
- For **tea**, keep on under the railway bridge. 40 metres beyond it the **Bridge Inn** is on your left, and 20 metres further on the **Riverside Tea Rooms** are on your right.
- Diversion to the Amberley Village Tea Room and Longer ending via the River Arun**
90. Having turned right downhill at the fork, descend the hill steeply on the road.
91. In 400 metres cross a main road and carry on up the lane into the village, to

find the **Amberley Village Tea Room** in 200 metres on the right.

- 92.** **After tea** you have a choice:
- **for a direct way to the station**, return to the main road and turn right along it, and follow it for **1.3km** to Amberley station
 - Alternatively to **see more of the village** and the **River Arun watermeadows (3.4km** to the station), continue with the next paragraph.
- 93.** Come out of the tea room, turn right for 10 metres and then left up a road (Church Street, though not named here).
- 94.** Pass the church on your left in 350 metres. In 100 metres more, level with the walls of **Amberley Castle** (now part of a hotel), the road ends: keep straight on here along a path on the left-hand edge of a field.
- 95.** In 200 metres cross a railway line. Beyond, keep straight on along a path along a tree boundary, with watermeadows to your right.
- 96.** In 200 metres the tree boundary ends. Pass through a kissing gate to the left of a fieldgate to emerge into open watermeadows. Veer left across an irregularly-shaped grass field.
- 97.** In 120 metres pass through another gate/field boundary and head out directly across the watermeadows, aiming just to the left of the church spire you can see on the far side.
- 98.** In 150 metres pass through a gate and cross a ditch, and carry straight on across the watermeadows.
- 99.** In 200 metres you come to the river bank. Turn left on this.
- 100.** In 1.2km ignore a footbridge over the river to the right (carrying the South Downs Way).
- 101.** In another 180 metres ignore a signposted footpath to the left (again, the South Downs Way) to stay on the river embankment and pass through a kissing gate in 30 metres.
- 102.** In 200 metres more, just before a bungalow ahead, veer left with the embankment, and in 20 metres veer right to **leave the embankment** and carry on down a track, with some caravans to your right.

- 103.** In 180 metres you come to a road. The **Riverside Tea Rooms** are to your right and the **Bridge Inn** straight ahead (you can get to it through the small wicker gate on the far side of the road).

To get to **Amberley railway station** turn left under the railway bridge to find the station approach immediately beyond it to the right.