

## The History Walk

This is a round walk of 4.8-6.5 km (3-4 miles) through more than 2000 years of local history with some of the area's most magnificent scenic views of the River Arun and the South Downs, featuring Pulborough's Roman, Norman, Medieval, WWII and commercial history. All the walk is on public footpaths or roads. Allow 2.5-3.5 hours. The route is dog friendly, but please keep to the paths and keep dogs on the lead.

When walking always follow the countryside code as below  
[www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk)

## About Pulborough

The landscape of the River Arun, the water meadows and the greensand ridge along which the 'linear village' of Pulborough runs, have dominated the history and development of the area.

Today its magnificent views, local produce, friendly people and easy access make Pulborough the natural heart of rural West Sussex.

Historic Pulborough stretches back to the stone, bronze and iron ages with finds still being made today.

In Roman times the Pulborough area was a major industrial and trading centre on the River Arun and on the military road, Stane Street. Pulborough has some important known Roman buildings including a bath house, temple, mausoleum and a villa with undoubtedly many more waiting to be discovered – Pulborough was the most important Roman town in Sussex after Chichester.

Following the Norman conquest in 1066 a castle was built on Park Mound and the Domesday Book records significant dwellings here. Pulborough today has over one hundred listed buildings of historic or architectural interest dating from the 12th to the 19th century – they demonstrate the historic importance of the area.

Its road and river communications were enhanced by the Wey and Arun canal in the late 1700's linking it to London and Portsmouth and later in the 1800's the railway replaced the canal.

These communications supported its position as the centre of local industry, such as glass and brick making, and commerce with a cattle market at the station.

Today Pulborough is the natural heart of rural West Sussex with its specialist and everyday food shopping, local produce, vineyards, traditional pubs and other restaurants, the RSPB Nature Reserve plus scenic, riverside and other walks.

Pulborough is the ideal centre from which to visit the historic, scenic and visitor attractions of rural West Sussex and the South Downs National Park.

**For lots more information on this walk and the Pulborough area visit [www.visitpulborough.com](http://www.visitpulborough.com)**

## The Viewpoints

### Viewpoint 2 – Pulborough Brooks

Below you is the river Arun and beyond the South Downs, all part of the South Downs National Park.

In Roman times the river was an important waterway for the flat bottomed boats that traded from the coast to Pulborough and beyond.

To the right the road runs close to the course of the Roman road, Stane Street, which joined Chichester to London.

To the left are ancient water-meadows now flooded by the RSPB to attract migrating water birds like Bewick swans from Siberia.

On your way to the next viewpoint see the plaque by the kissing gate and the magnificent former Rectory.

### Viewpoint 3 – St Mary's lych gate

You have just crossed the Roman Road, Stane Street; on the other side is an early timber framed house which, when built, was on level ground –the cutting of the road in the 1750's left it perched on the rocky bank!

The war memorial remembers the 68 men who died in the first world war – a significant number of the young men of Pulborough.

St Mary's Church was built in the 12th century and extended in the 15th century. Inside you can see the 11th century font and 15th century commemorative brasses.

### Viewpoint 4 – Watermill and Old Place Manor House

The mill pond is fed by springs that also used to feed the fish ponds in the old rectory grounds.

On the far side the imposing house, Old Place Manor, built around 1450, used the mill pond as a source of fresh fish.

Beside the track-way is the mill – now converted to a house. The short flight of stone steps up to the front is where the corn would have been off loaded and fed into the mill wheel immediately below.

### Viewpoint 5 – WWII Gun Emplacement

This concrete gun emplacement was erected in 1942 as part of the anti-invasion defences. A plaque on the gun emplacement gives you lots more information about its purpose and Pulborough's contribution to the war effort. The gun emplacement would have housed a Hotchkiss anti-tank gun defending the river crossing and railway to stop German tanks approaching London.

This defensive viewpoint is a great place to see the river valley and Chanctonbury Ring – a ring of trees on the top of the Downs to your left. The trees mark the site of an iron-age fort and later a Roman temple; the Ring has a reputation for witchcraft, UFO's, ghosts and strange forces!

### Viewpoint 6 – Pulborough Castle (Park Mound)

Pulborough castle is an early Norman, motte and bailey castle built about 1100AD on the highest point of the ridge – today covered in pine trees. It overlooks the River Arun on the far side and the land towards the South Downs for at least 20 miles to the east and west.

Here are also sweet chestnut trees – these were brought here by the Romans who used the chestnuts to make a "porridge" called polenta.

### Viewpoint 7 – Old Stopham Bridge

This medieval bridge was built in 1309 to provide a secure crossing of the river for the road from Winchester to Canterbury.

The central arch was raised for the Wey and Arun Canal, linking Portsmouth to London, which was built in the late 1700's, as the river here formed part of the canal.

A plaque beside the bridge will tell you much more.

Just downstream the canal route turns off into the River Rother and a tunnel to rejoin the Arun downstream – this avoided the flooding on the Brooks which was often impassable for the horse towed barges.

Across the river is Stopham House originally built in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I and almost completely reconstructed in 1787. During World War II it housed young children evacuated from London.

### Viewpoint 8 – Memorial to shot Rector

The memorial commemorates the death of the Rector of Stopham and Hardham, Reverend Masefield, who was out cycling here on the 4th October 1940 when he was shot at and killed by a marauding German fighter pilot.

### Viewpoint 9 – St Botolph's Church, Hardham

The church was mainly built around 1050AD but is Saxon in origin; St Botolph is a Saxon Saint.

The Church is unique in having the earliest nearly complete series of wall paintings in the whole country. These stylised Byzantine paintings date from shortly after 1100AD.

### Viewpoint 10 – Old Swan Bridge

Swan Bridge is named after the Swan Hotel and Public House that stood opposite for hundreds of years.

This stone bridge was built in 1785 to replace a wooden bridge that was a little further downstream.

We hope you enjoy your walk and will, on a future occasion, do another of the fascinating walks around Pulborough's beautiful countryside.



# The History Walk



WWII Armaments factory



- 4.8-6.5 kilometres (3-4 miles)
- 2.5-3.5 hours
- Terrain: easy
- Can be slippery when wet
- No stiles
- Unsuitable for a pushchair/wheelchair
- Uses OS map 197
- Parking: Pulborough Station and Lower Street



## The Countryside Code

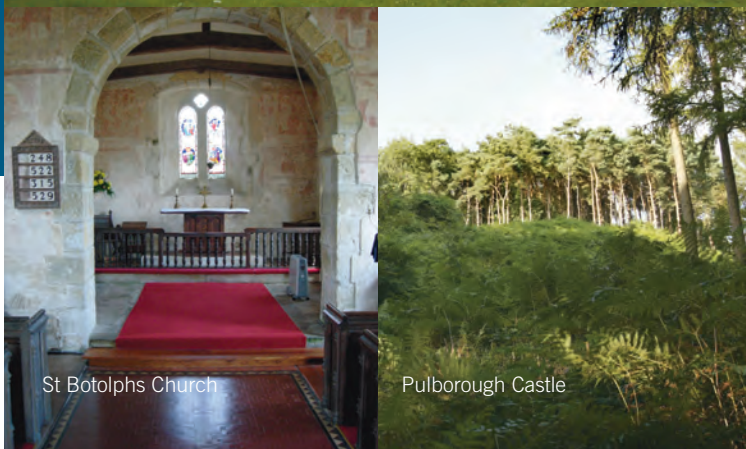
- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people



[www.visitpulborough.com](http://www.visitpulborough.com)



St Mary's Church



St Botolphs Church

Pulborough Castle



Pulborough Brooks



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## The History Walk

has been possible with the assistance from the following organisations:



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## Your Route

The viewpoint numbers on your route are the points on the map and the viewpoints which are described on the reverse of this leaflet.

- You may start from a. Pulborough Station or b. Lower Street car park to get to the **first viewpoint**.

a. Turn left out of the station and take the footpath between the car park and the industrial estate to the road at the top, turn right and follow the road to the main road, cross and continue straight on to a kissing gate on your right, go through this and down the path to a viewpoint seat – this is **viewpoint 2**.

b. From the car park return to the A283 main road, turn left, walk on the right 320 metres to a ramp leading up to a sloping pathway across a field; follow this up to the viewpoint seat – this is **viewpoint 2**.
- Now walk up the hill to the kissing gate where there is a plaque which tells you more about the area. Turn left and cross the main road by the Chequers Hotel and walk up the steps up to the Church lych gate – this is **viewpoint 3**.
- From the church join the lane (Church Place) that runs alongside it; turn left and walk between the buildings that were part of the old commercial centre of Pulborough, past the Catholic Church, cross the railway bridge and take the track-way to your right, walk down this for 70 metres to the lake – this is **viewpoint 4**.
- Return to the lane that you left, then turn right and walk about 170 metres past an example of “hedge laying” on your right, until you come to a footpath

sign on your left; take this footpath along the edge of the field to the top of the hill where there is a gun emplacement – this is **viewpoint 5**.

- Leaving the gun emplacement we continue up the hill, across a track-way, up the hill with a bungalow to our right, through a gate at the top and into the woods. Here turn left and follow the path for about 150 metres to the tree covered mound on your right – this is **viewpoint 6**.
- Continue your walk following the sandy path down the hill. Where the path turns right look over the field on your left to see the view of the South Downs as it stretches east to Eastbourne. Continue along the path until you reach the main road – the A283 – cross and walk down a narrow pathway to the right of the pub opposite; you are now on the old road and the medieval Stopham Bridge – this is **viewpoint 7**.



- Continue your walk on the old road walking away from the bridge past the pub to the main road, cross, turn right, walking on the verge towards Pulborough, in front of the garden centre, to where a small loop of old road now acts as a poorly maintained lay-by – about half way round this loop of road is a memorial in the bank – this is **viewpoint 8**.

- The main route (which is only possible if the ground is dry) crosses back over the main road to the old road; here, to your left, is a kissing gate, go through and follow the path to the bridge and over the river. Continue nearly straight ahead to the water works and the weir, where again there is another kissing gate. At the weir on your left is a camera used to count the sea trout coming up the weir to spawn in

the River Rother. Cross the bridge and follow the road past the waterworks, over the level crossing up to the main road (the A29). Here, turn left and follow the pavement to a loop road opposite with a sign to the church; cross to the church – this is **viewpoint 9**.

The alternative “dryer route”, missing **viewpoint 9**, is alongside through the garden centre following the footpath signs, close to the entrance, and rejoin the path you came down from Pulborough Castle. Here retrace your route past **viewpoints 6, 5 and 3**. Then turn right by the war memorial, down the hill to the mini roundabouts, cross the road and down to the river to the old bridge in front of the Corn Stores – this is **viewpoint 10**, the last viewpoint.

- After the church (**viewpoint 9**) cross the main road and turn right and follow the footpath. When you reach the river cross the road to the old bridge – this is **viewpoint 10**, the last viewpoint.

To return to your starting point continue up to the mini-roundabout and either take a left for the station (300 metres) or right to continue to the Lower Street car park (1.2km).

