

The Brooks Walk

This is a round walk of 5.6-8.0 km (3.5-5 miles) over Pulborough's historic Brooks, now a Nature Reserve and part of the South Downs National Park, and alongside the river Arun with magnificent views of the South Downs. The walk features buildings, wildlife, land use and places that have been part of history since Roman times. The walk is on public footpaths or roads. Allow 1.5-3.5 hours. Most of the stiles are 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



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

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.



St Mary's Church



Roman coins

Kingfisher

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



Pulborough Brooks

The Viewpoints

Viewpoint 2 – Pulborough Brooks

Looking downhill are the water-meadows, known as "the Brooks", and beyond, the South Downs, now all part of the South Downs National Park; to the right is the River Arun which is crossed up-stream by the Roman Road, Stane Street, linking Chichester to London via Pulborough.

Viewpoint 3 – Gate by Swift Cottage

The cottage was built in the 1600's as a timber framed barn – the lane was then Fowl Mead Lane leading to the field "Fowl Mead". The barn was converted to a home over 200 years ago; in the 1850's the house was changed to be two or three dwellings. The cottage is again one house, but with two front doors!

Up by the alarm bell, is a "fire mark" – this shows it had insurance and fire fighters would be paid for putting out any fire!

Until the 1930's some locals had 'Lammastide' rights on the field. Lammastide is an old Saxon Christian festival mentioned in King Alfred's Chronicles. Rights holders could cut hay on strips of land until Lammas day, 1st August; then anybody could graze their cattle on it – until it flooded in the winter!

When the embankments were built in the 1960's, to prevent flooding, five Anglo Saxon dugout canoes were found in the river mud.

Viewpoint 4 – bridge over the River Stor, known locally as "the Sailing Ditch"

The main river, the Arun, flows from St Leonard's Forest, near Horsham, to the sea at Littlehampton. The Arun is tidal here and three miles upstream – with spring tides and heavy rain the river sometimes floods over the embankments.

In the 19th century Pulborough was a centre for eel fishing – they were a principle delicacy of Sussex.

In spring look for yellow Kingcups on the river bank and in summer yellow Iris and purple Loosestrife.

At any time you may see riverside birds such as swans, herons, kingfishers and egrets.

In the River Stor a large lead Roman cistern was found during dredging in 1943 – it can now be seen in the long gallery of Parham House.

Viewpoint 5 – Roman Causeway and RSPB wetlands

With your back to the river, see a slightly raised strip of land – this is a Roman causeway across, what was a marsh, to a Roman bath house on the far side.

Where you are standing a Roman pot was found.

In addition to hundreds of Roman finds at the bathhouse, over 1500 Roman coins in a silver Roman strainer were found close by.

The causeway runs through the RSPB Pulborough Nature Reserve which is managed using traditional farming techniques with some rare breeds including British White and Highland cattle.

The Reserve is home to thousands of wintering and breeding birds.

You may also see black fallow deer which were originally bred nearby at Parham Park for their dark form – you will often spot their tracks.

Viewpoint 6 – Brook Field, known locally as "the Rabbit Field"

The field shows a major contrast in the plants, trees, birds and wildlife that it supports with hedges at its margins – not ditches. The RSPB manages it without artificial fertilisers or pesticides to maximise the diversity of grasses, wild flowers such as Campion and wildlife.

Ahead of you, about 100 metres into the field, is a large rabbit warren – when you make a noise you may see rabbits run into it.

Viewpoint 7 – Wiggonholt Shepherds Church

This little church, which has no patron saint, was built after the Norman Conquest for the use of yeomen, tenant farmers, shepherds and herdsman on the brooks.

The original walls are 12th or 13th century and the Sussex marble font is late Norman.

While the church has no electricity – only oil lamps – it is regularly used for worship.

In the spring the churchyard is covered with primroses.

Viewpoint 8 – RSPB Visitor Centre and café

In the visitor centre you have free use of telescopes to view the Reserve and can learn about the plants, wildlife and birds.

Beyond the Centre is Wiggonholt Common. This is being restored for birds such as the nightjar and woodlark. Here you will also find many reptiles including the Adder and Smooth Snake.

Viewpoint 9 – Banks Cottage

Banks Cottage is a three bay, timber framed long hall house built in 1370. The chimney was added in Tudor times – the original smoke outlet was a hole in the roof! The southern side was built of wattle and daub in the 15th century and probably thatched.

Viewpoint 10 – White Horse pub and the old Chapel

The pub was probably formerly a butchers shop and beside it a former Unitarian chapel which was known as Providence Chapel.

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



The Brooks Walk



- 5.6-8.0 kilometres (3.5-5 miles)
- 1.5-3.5 hours
- Terrain: easy
- Can be slippery when wet
- Seven stiles and one kissing gate
- Unsuitable for a pushchair/wheelchair
- Uses OS map 197
- Parking: Pulborough Station and Lower Street

The Brooks Walk

This is a round walk of 5.6-8.0 km (3.5-5 miles) over Pulborough's historic Brooks, now a Nature Reserve and part of the South Downs National Park, and alongside the river Arun with magnificent views of the South Downs. The walk features buildings, wildlife, land use and places that have been part of history since Roman times. The walk is on public footpaths or roads. Allow 1.5-3.5 hours. Most of the stiles are dog friendly, but please keep to the paths and keep dogs on the lead. In winter, parts of the walk may be very wet or even flooded.

The Brooks Walk

has been possible with the assistance from the following organisations:



Published by Pulborough Community Partnership

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 Right out of the station, down the hill to the main road, turn left, walk to the mini roundabouts then straight on to the Oddfellows public house, turn right into the car park. Behind the information boards there is a paved viewing area – this is **viewpoint 2**.

b. Having parked, go back to the car park entrance. Just behind the information boards there is a paved viewing area – **this is viewpoint 2**.
- Now walk across the car park to the opposite corner and go down the steps, turn left down the track-way now known as Barn House Lane to the kissing gate at the bottom by Swift Cottage – this is **viewpoint 3**.
- Now walk across the field following the footpath to the footbridge across the River Stor which joins the River Arun at this point – this is **viewpoint 4**.

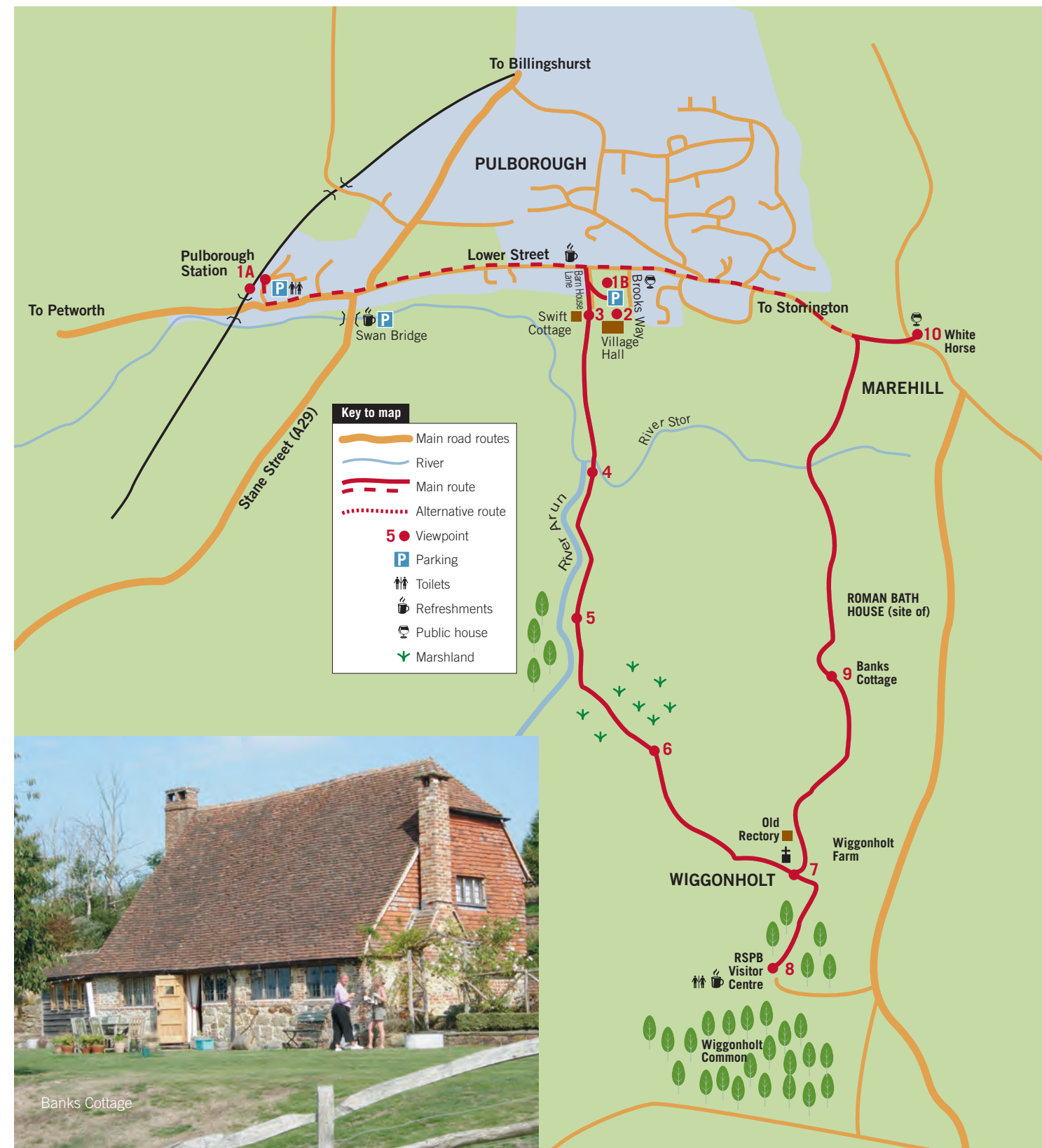


Swift Cottage

- Now cross the bridge and continue along the path, either by the river or on top of the bank, until you reach a stile – **this is viewpoint 5**.
- Continue over the stile, along the embankment to the fence where the path turns left across the wetland to a gate on the far side. Go through this gate or the adjacent stile, up the slope to the stile at the top; this slope is known as the “Pig Run” from the days when pigs were herded on the Brooks. The top is **viewpoint 6**. (The side gates are only accessible from the RSPB Visitor Centre).
- Cross the stile into Brook Field and follow the path to the gate on the far side then turn half left to the gate and stile across this field. Cross the stile past the pond which contains newts, then cross the next stile and follow the track-way to the little church at the top – this is **viewpoint 7**.
- From here you can take the longer route and visit the RSPB Visitor Centre (**viewpoint 8**) and its tea room, then rejoin the route at this point.

For the longer route, take the narrow fenced path opposite the entrance to the church; follow this down the slope and up through the woods until you reach a building on your right – this is the RSPB Visitor Centre and **viewpoint 8**.
- After seeing the Visitor Centre return to the church (**viewpoint 7**) along the route you took to get to there.

From the church, continue up the slope in front of the church across the road to The Old Rectory and at the corner of the wall of the Old Rectory is a stile; cross this. Follow the path across a field alongside



Banks Cottage



Shepherds Church

- Leave Banks Cottage, over a stile to your left, across a marshy field through the gate or stile on the other side. The path continues alongside a ditch on the left to another gate; go through this or climb the stile, ahead is the River Stor embankment. From the top of the embankment you will see a bridge, cross this and follow the embankment to the right to a stile on the far side of the field. Climb this stile and follow the pathway to the main road. Turn right, walk until you are opposite the White Horse public house, this is **viewpoint 10**, the last viewpoint.

To return to your starting point, proceed back along the road to Lower Street car park (1.2km) or the station (2.4km).