



Plaistow

Distance: 8 km=5 miles

easy walking

Region: West Sussex

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Refreshments: Plaistow

Map: Explorer 133 & 134 *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Village, pastures, woodland, views, historic farms, chain of green meadows

In Brief

This gentle walk begins in the quietest of Sussex villages and leads, along an easy scenic farm track, to reach the most remarkable target of this walk: a sequence of quite exquisite green meadows, which we'll call the *Twelve Meadows*, bisected in one place by deep woodland.

There is a quaint inn in the village (to enquire at the *Sun Inn*, ring 01403 871313). But don't expect a great gastro experience – this is a pub for locals and you'll need to pretend to be one of the villagers.



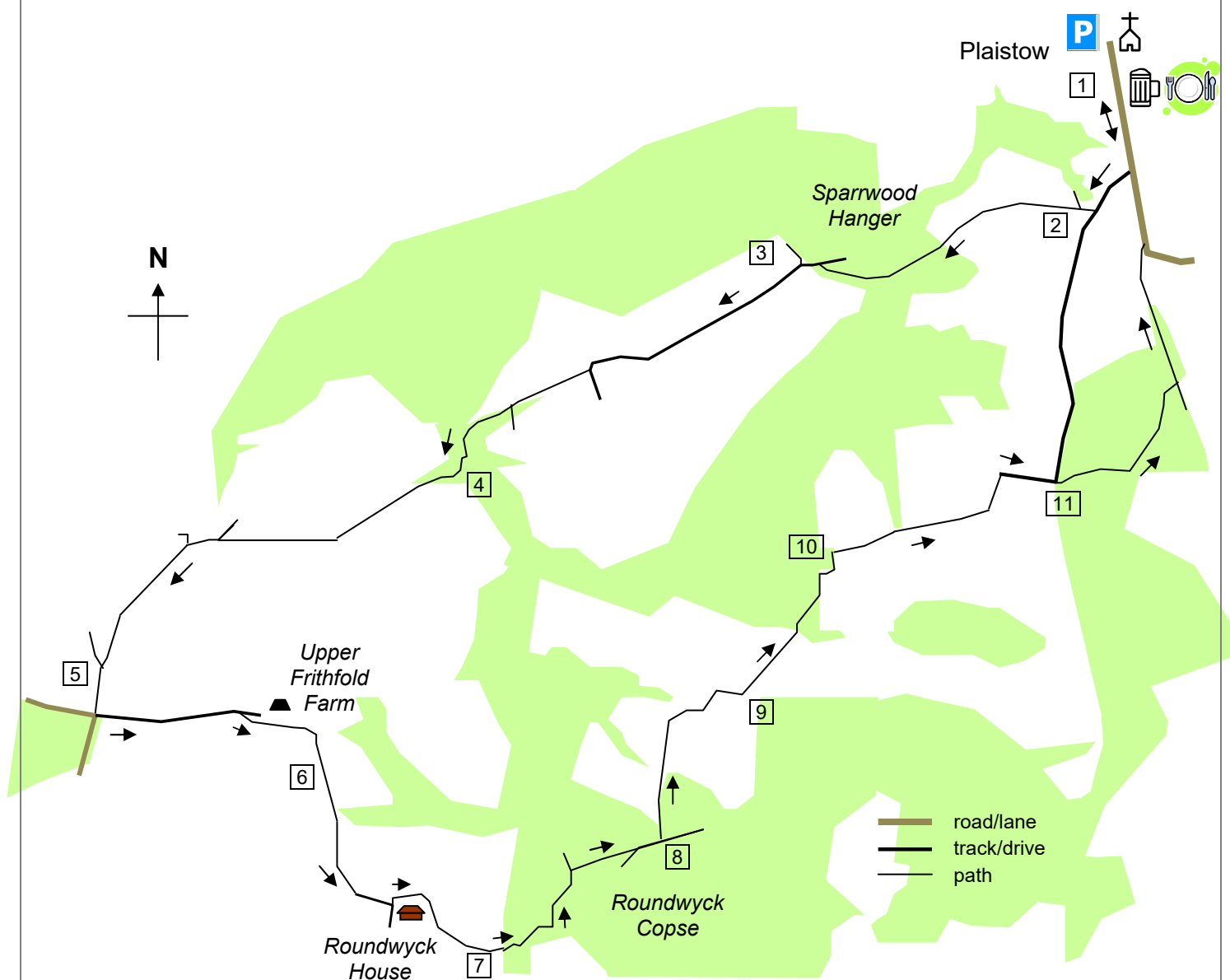
The terrain of this walk is chiefly farm tracks with a good surface, and then quite heavenly green grass. None of the grass was grazed by livestock at the time of writing, and even in late autumn it kept its pristine mud-free surface. The paths in the woods are also generally broad and well-made. Nevertheless, boots are a good idea, except when the weather has been dry, because of one very short squishy section. There are no nettles or undergrowth worth a mention, so shorts are not a problem. Your dog is welcome.

The walk begins in Plaistow village, West Sussex, postcode **RH14 0PU**. You can park on the road, e.g. just before the centre of the village in Dunsfold Road (www.w3w.co/rolled.revamped.novel) where there is a long parking strip. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

This village (it's usually pronounced "Plasto" by the way) was described as "on the road to nowhere" and generally the quietest place you could possibly find, with over thirty Grade II listed buildings. There are three stand-out features here (1) Holy Trinity church; a faithful Victorian rebuild of what stood here in the Middle Ages; rather helpfully, it has a loo which is twinned with DR Congo under a toilet twinning arrangement; (2) the Sun Inn, a quaint collection of tumbledown buildings, well over 200 years old, with a winsome garden, serving lunch Tue & Sat only (note!); (3) a tree (yes!) the Nell Ball Tree is legendary; it stood on a mound of that name and is said to have been planted by Nell Gwynn, or by a local suicide called Ellen Ball (both anecdotally, the truth is more prosaic).

Plaistow is near the site of a massive environmental scandal (see below), which this walk completely avoids.



- 1 Walk along the road with the *Sun Inn* on your left, out of the village, passing the *Old Chapel House* on your right and several other red-tiled cottages. On your right soon is a large square of grass known as *Todhurst Meadow*, belonging to the National Trust. Ignore the “public way” sharp right at the start of the grass, but turn **right** immediately after the grass, on a byway, passing *Golden Cross Cottage*. Opposite the second house, at a 3-way fingerpost, turn **right** on a track, but immediately go **left** over a stile into a grassy paddock used for horse grazing. *If horses are present you may need to lift a hook on the right to avoid a string across the gap; be sure to replace it!*
- 2 Keep to the right-hand side of the paddocks, avoiding a stile on your right. *If horses are grazing, you may need to lift two hooks on the right.* Keep ahead over a stile (or through a large metal gate, if open) and follow a diagonal path across the grass, passing under two sets of wires. At the other side, go over a sturdy stile in a wooden fence into the ancient coppiced woodland of *Sparrow Hanger*. Follow a wide path down and over a bridge-with-rail. Immediately after the bridge, **ignore** a bridge and a waymarker visible on your left. (Incidentally, that is the official footpath, now disused due to a fallen tree: the much better route described here is used by everyone now.) Follow the path uphill. There may be some thick mud here, but the walk will soon be quite dry. The path ends at a wide crossing bridleway. Turn **left** here to reach a junction of farm tracks in 50m.
- 3 Keep ahead, veering a fraction left, on a wide track with a horse pasture on your right. *You have great views ahead, weather permitting, across a swathe of sheep pastures, to Black Down.* In 400m, ignore a signed footpath on the left. Shortly after, leave the wide track as it bends left and keep ahead, as indicated, on a good but lesser track. Where this track also bends left through a metal gate, keep ahead on a wide grass path. Your path goes deep down under oaks into a woodland clearing and bears left at a fingerpost. Your route is through an open wooden gate and **right** over a bridge-with-rails across the River Kird*. (*Maybe only a tributary, but they all join to form the river, which empties into the River Arun.*)
- 4 After the bridge, your path goes left and gradually rises, curving right beside a bank, passing a pond on your right. A narrow path between low hedges with broad green meadows either side finally leads down under more oaks. *The house over on your right is Birchfield.* After a fringe of silver birch, your path joins the drive coming from the house. At a junction, keep **left** on the drive and follow it for over 300m, joining a byway coming from the right at a 3-way fingerpost. Continue on the drive to meet a tarmac road at a bend by a large semi, *Pipers Cottage*. (*The adjoining walk in this series, “Northchapel”, meets here.*)
- 5 Do not join the tarmac road but instead turn **left** at a fingerpost on a tarmac drive marked as a footpath, by a sign for *Upper Frithfold Farm*. Just before a large wooden gate across the drive, go **right** over a stile by a partly hidden fingerpost, into a sheep pasture. Stay near the left-hand edge but veer right before the corner to go through a wooden swing-gate about 20m from the corner. Keep ahead past barns to go through another wooden swing-gate (or a large wooden gate, if open). Turn **right** over a 4-plank bridge and through a third wooden swing-gate into a meadow. *This is the first of the Twelve Meadows.*
- 6 Keep straight ahead along the right-hand edge of the meadow. At the end, go through a small wooden gate and a narrow belt of overgrown hawthorns*



into another large meadow. (*You may need to stoop: please help keep the path clear!) Keep ahead along the left-hand side with a line of trees on your left. The edge wheels left and becomes a rough track leading towards the buildings of *Roundwyck House* (*grade-II listed, built in 1868*) where it bends right. **Leave** the track at this point and go **left** and **right** at a fingerpost to walk along the right-hand side of another large green meadow. In 80m you reach a corner with a 2-way fingerpost. Turn **right** here to stay next to the edge. In under 100m you reach a jutting fenced-off section, possibly a small gone-wild orchard. Turn **left** now, across the centre of the meadow, between a line of wires on your left and a pair of oaks on your right, to go through a wooden swing-gate into a much smaller meadow. Go over a strong bridge-with-rails ([tread carefully! fragile and may be very slippery](#)) across the River Kird, across a narrow meadow, under wires, and through a wooden swing-gate into *Roundwyck Copse*.

- 7 Go straight ahead into the wood for about 40m and turn **left** at a fingerpost. Keep to the left and take a narrow descending path. Your path immediately curves right, widens and runs level across a wooded slope. In only 80m you reach another fingerpost. Here your path does an abrupt **left** turn over a culvert pipe. Follow the wide path uphill (it was obviously once a byway for forestry gear). In 150m you reach another fingerpost and a false junction: **avoid** the path ahead downhill and instead turn **right** onto the start of a long straight path. In 150m you join a wider path coming up from the right, where a marker post directs you straight ahead. In 50m there is a vital turn. Look over to your left to see a grass field. Opposite where the field ends, you meet a 3-way fingerpost. Turn **left** here. ([The path straight ahead is a dead end – see appended note on *The Monster of the Deep Lagoon*.](#))
- 8 Go over a stile into a meadow and keep ahead along the right-hand side under a line of oaks. In 100m you reach a gap which is a junction of three green grass meadows, fringed with oaks – a place of real beauty, especially if the sun is out. Keep straight ahead through the gap, as signed, and along the right side of the next meadow. In 100m or so, as you pass a fingerpost, the edge curves right. As you pass a fenced-off area on your left, bear **slightly left** to a fingerpost visible ahead, into another meadow. Keep **right** here along the edge for 50m to go through a gap into the next large meadow.
- 9 Take a faint path diagonally across the centre of this meadow, heading for a stile on the far side. (You will not see the stile at first: it's best to head for some large oaks whose trunks are visible against the woodland on the edge.) Go over the stile and a 2-plank bridge, then straight ahead on a path uphill through the wood. In 100m your path is running near the right-hand edge of the wood. In a further 50m your path seems to reach a dead-end. Look to your right for a stile – dilapidated and easily overlooked. Go **right** here into a large field and turn **left** along the edge, probably beside a one-string fence.
- 10 In only 50m, where the edge elbows right, go **left** at a marker post, over a (bypassable) stile and through a gap into the next meadow. Turn **right** along the edge and continue to the end, where there is a wooden gate into the next meadow. The house on your left is *Rumbolds Farm* (*note the large bird on the weather vane*). Your route is diagonally across the grass, heading for the **far side** of the scattered collection of ancient sheds, barns and ponds. Go through the smallest of some wooden gates, on a narrow

grassy path between hedges, and turn **right** on a tarmac drive to meet a junction of paths where the drive bends left at a 4-way fingerpost.

- 11 **Leave** the drive here, ignore paths on your right, and cross directly over onto a path into the woods, marked a footpath, turning **left** just before a galvanised metal gate. The path takes you through an old coppice beside a wire fence. At a fingerpost, the path elbows left. It finally curves right to meet a signed T-junction on the edge of the wood, with a field visible. Turn **left** on this wide path. Ignore a signed footpath on your right shortly. Eventually the path leads out to a road on the outskirts of Plaistow. Turn **left**, quickly arriving back in the village where the walk began.

The Monster of The Deep Lagoon

The Crouchland Biogas Scandal has been in the news since 2017, when Crouchland Farm began an illegal biogas project involving several deep lagoons full of noxious waste. The largest lagoon still remains, covered in tarpaulin, at the crossing of public footpaths. It has been ordered to be completely cleared but it is still there in late 2022. No one has been prosecuted and the farm has changed hands. The rather minimal environmental risk has resulted in a 2-mile diversion for walkers and the “temporary” closure of 3 miles of footpaths. Please note: this walk goes nowhere near Crouchland Farm!

Getting there

By car:

from the east: Plaistow is signposted off the B2131 just south of Loxwood.

from the *north*: take the A281 from Guildford, fork right at Alfold Crossways onto the B2131 and take the turning as “east” above.

from the *north, west or south*: Plaistow is signposted at the Fisherstreet Crossroads on the A283, south of Chiddingfold.

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