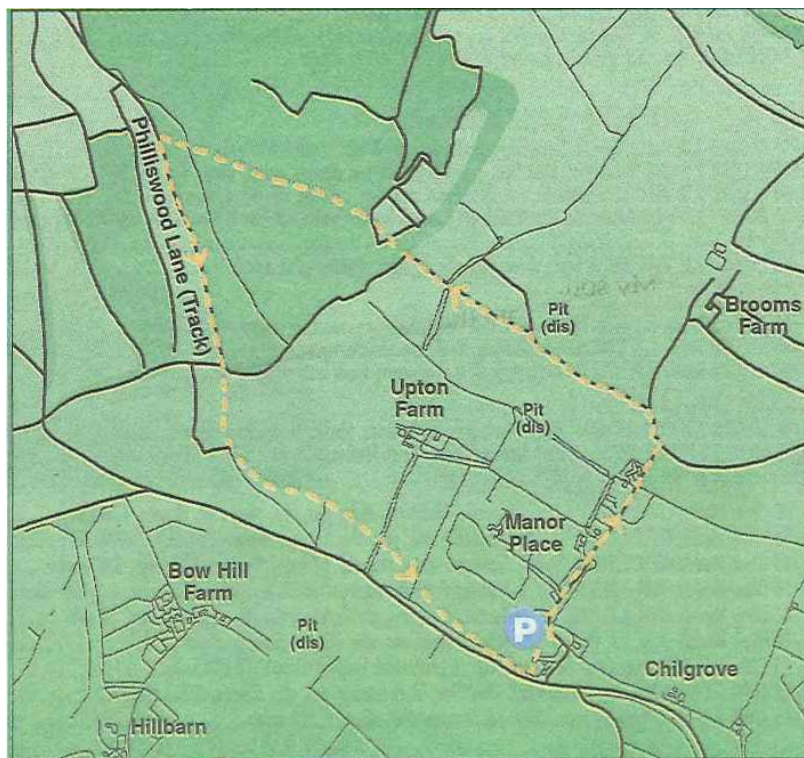


Upton Farm, Chilgrove



This is a fine little stroll of 2 miles (4kms) with a fine little pint at beginning and end, or a tasty lunch at the White Horse Inn on Chilgrove green. The going is pretty well on the flat by you may need strong shoes.

At the car park just off the B2141 halfway between Chichester and South Harting, set off north up the minor road past Forge Cottage.

The road goes uphill through a cool gully and wood mellick grass on the verges, rooks cawing, jackdaws chattering and woodpeckers yaffling. This road is for reason called the High Street and it is also where nice people do nice things for wildlife such as breeding barn owls and letting their lawns go wild with flowers.

Turn left at top for Brooms Farm but, in 100 yards, dive left into a hole in the hedge for a lovely long rue with hazel, field maple, badgers and a 150-year-old holly tree. Down hill to a stile into an old meadow of cocksfoot grass and a glimpse of ancient Sussex. You expect to see here a horse with a haywain.

Over stile and into Stubbs Copse, the name means anciently stumps of trees. There are wide rides with dewberry bramble plants with their wine-coloured stems: rough hawkbit, eyebright, marjoram and St John's wort growing. In summer, nightjars and hobby falcons may nest here. But soon you will plunge into the shade of a well-managed beech plantation by crossing straight over a crossride. Under their shade in summer, look for the orchids birdsnest, butterfly and fly.

Over another crossride, following yellow arrow and at the bottom sharp left on a blue arrow. This is Philliswood Lane. This is kite and buzzard country, and notice how deeper soil of this valley has improved the oak, ash, and beech trees, many of which are as good as anything you will see on the Wealden sand. But one old beech on right of path has suffered a broken limb and now its dotage looks like the one in Beatrix Potter's Squirrel Nutkin which hid owl which bit off his tail.

Soon after passing under the power cables, look for a stile into a meadow with cattle. The footpath goes along the left edge of this pasture. Then you cross two stiles at a driveway. Look for the droppings of little owls which perch on the posts.

Over another stile which takes you along an old Roman causeway and finally into the main road for the last 100 yards back to the White Horse. This road is very dangerous for the final 100 yards. Even Morris Minors may travel it at speed. Keep well on the grass verge despite some nettles.

Don't forget there is free entry to the West Dean Gardens shop, WC's and restaurant, which serves hot meals and snacks from 12pm until 2pm and afternoon tea and cakes throughout the day.

Open daily: November – February 10.30am until 4.00pm & March – October 10.30am until 5.00pm (Closed January 2011).

Written by Richard Williamson