

ARDINGLY VIA FOREST FARM

This five mile circular walk can easily be linked with next months four mile circular walk, "Balcombe via Forest Farm", making a nine mile circular walk with a convenient pub, the Half Moon Inn in Balcombe village. This walk covers a varied and a lovely area north of the village of Ardingly. It includes a section of the High Weald Landscape Circular Route, going through part of the grounds of Wakehurst Place passing the new Kew Seed Bank and crosses an inlet of the Ardingly Reservoir.

Distance: 5 miles (8 kilometres) Map reference: O.S. Explorer 135, 344304

Opposite the main entrance to the Ardingly Showground and just south on the B2028 of the Gardener's Arms pub, there is a convenient lay-by for the [parking](#) of cars.

From the car park walk southwards to the end of the lay-by and turn left by a cottage with a footpath marker. In a few yards turn left again onto well marked bridleway. In half a mile join the High Weald Landscape Trail which joins your bridleway from the right. Bear left and continue through shrubbery for another half mile. Pass a small gate on your right until you reach another larger gate on your right into a private garden and view of a lake. Here turn off left and ascend a steepish bank. As you near the top turn off right at fingerpost into a much narrower path. This brings you to the B2028.

Cross over and go to the left looking for a narrow path which runs parallel with main road. This leads to Gate 3, a side entrance to Wakehurst (see small marker "High Weald Circular Route"). You will not be required to be a member of the National Trust when using this footpath but later in the walk you are advised not to leave the footpath when passing through. As you follow the drive you walk over the course of an old Roman road and pass by car parks to the left and on the right the newly built Royal Botanic Gardens Millennium Seed Bank. Keeping to the right continue ahead and where the path forks to the right look out for a tall iron kissing gate slightly to the left.

Go through kissing gate and continue along enclosed high wire fenced path with deer parks on either side. Pass through three more iron gates, good views to the right.

At the end you enter the National Trust area and you must not stray off the right of way. Cross the stile, bear right downhill, cross over a drive and on to a metal kissing gate. You are now in Horsebridge Wood.

Follow the footpath through the wood crossing footbridges over Ardingly Brook and gradually climbing up out of the wood through a wooden gate and left through iron kissing gate into a field. Keep to the left and eventually bear right slightly uphill until you come to a stile onto a narrow road opposite Forest Farm entrance (see * on map).

This is the point where the Balcombe walk can be incorporated into this walk. To do so, turn to the right and walk down this quiet road and pick up the remaining directions from the "Balcombe via Forest Farm" walk.

To continue the Ardingly/Wakehurst route, turn left and follow this narrow road (which is also the parish boundary between West Hoathly and Balcombe) for half a mile. Watch out for a fingerpost and footpath into Tilgate Wood on the left. Follow it down as it winds to a long wooden bridge across a long "arm" of Ardingly Reservoir.

The path is now clear as it goes off to the left, over a stile and follows the boundary fence of Wakehurst on your left. It continues uphill with views of the reservoir to the right. Go straight ahead to Tillinghurst Farm.

At the farm keep to the left of the buildings and the duck pond and continue along lane until there is a turning on the right which you take.

You are now entering Ardingly Showground and as you approach Great Racks Wood on the right, follow the boundary to the end of the wood, then turn off left to reach a small car park, this is often occupied with horse vehicles.

There is a small gate in the far right hand corner leading onto the B2028. Cross over carefully and turn right for the lay-by and your car.

