

Rudgwick Walks 6

Round Rudgwick Ramble

The King's Head to Swaynes and Lynwick

Access *Parking at the Kings Head car park.*

Alternatively, park at the shops in Rudgwick and start the walk from there. Walk down Station Road to the Medical Centre, then go down the steps to join the Downs Link, turning right (see 2 below). Pub info @ 01403 822200.

Length and suitability *4 miles (6 ½ km), about 1 hour 50 mins.*

This walk is a circular walk around the village, yet for much of its length is not close to houses. Much of the walk is on pavements in the village, other surfaced roads, and green lanes, sometimes across fields on paths. Reaching the busy A281 on Bowcroft Lane, the walker does not go on the road at all. Children should be kept close, and dogs should be kept on a lead. You are never far from the village so this walk is particularly suited to all seasons, and has opportunities to make it shorter at several access points.



1. From the **The Kings Head** car park (pictured left), turn left towards **Cox Green**, crossing the road before the junction with **Lynwick St** to stay on a pavement, i.e. in front of **Dukes Farm**.

Continue ahead through Cox Green for one third mile until you see a footpath sign just before a bend.

For information on the church, The Kings Head and the houses down the hill from the pub, see also Walk 5, pages 33, 35 and 40.

First, take in the historic ridge-top scene, which is 85m (280 ft) above sea level. This area is a designated **Conservation Area**. To the left of the pub car park is C14th **Woes**, an open hall house, among the oldest houses in the parish, a weaver's house in an 1812 will, and recently the post office. Opposite are the wonderful varied rooflines of **The Old Bakehouse** (c1600 smoke bay) and **Church Gate** (jettied C15th, now reverted to its original use for the church). Both were part of **Humphries Stores** until it closed in 1979, the Bakehouse having been a shop from at least 1634. Under the late Mr Humphries it had been a general stores, baker, draper, and post office.

On the corner of **Lynwick Street**, **Church Cottage**, c1500, a much altered open hall, is seen first, with its sculpted yew tree on the corner of the plot. Across Lynwick Street is **Cousens**, once two cottages both with smoke bays, one late C16th and one early C17th. A smithy stood north of Cousens.

Opposite the junction on the right is **Dukes Farm**, until 1993 in Surrey as was the rest of Cox Green. Dukes Farm is an elegantly fronted brick C18th house, which has a curious roof built around a central well so that its tiled roof is seen from all sides. To complete a special corner, Dukes, once a substantial farm holding, has the only farmyard in the village street. The large building next to Dukes is sited on the former stack yard of the farm. Called **Hawkridge**, after Hawks Hill opposite, it is a home from home for elderly but independent Rudgwick folk, opened 1977, which the village is very lucky to have, thanks to the generosity of Edith Briggs, the inspiration of Kathleen Watts and the hard work of many helpers and trustees.

The B2128 road through Rudgwick and Cox Green, whilst likely to have existed for centuries, became a turnpike to Cranleigh and Gaston Gate (originally intended to reach Bramley) in 1818 and so improvements were made to what must have been an often-impassable road. It still has bends!

The modern ribbon development through Cox Green was built on land from the Lynwick Estate (west side) after its sale in 1922, and Dukes Farm (east side). The Victorian house **Oakfield** opposite the footpath was built when John Aungier bought the estate in the 1870s. Whereas Cousens with 6 acres occupied by the blacksmith fetched £800 in 1922 (on the break up of the estate), Oakfield with full plumbing services fetched £1400.

Sailtops is an older house along with its neighbour **Jasmine House**, both shown on the 1842 Ewhurst Tithe Map. One explanation of its name is that the sails of the windmill (demolished c1825) on the hill above the modern brickworks could be seen from here at one time, and someone who knew of that named the house in later years. The gravel track by the path across the field is an access road for the Steam Fair held here annually in August.

2. Turn right onto the path between **Pilgrims Rest** and **Sailtops**. Continue ahead across two fields, following a gravel track in the second. At its junction with **Godley's Lane**, turn right onto the tarmac lane. Go ahead.

On reaching woodland on the approach to **Godley's Cottage**, the bridleway is to the left of the house - turn left where the lane becomes a private drive, and then immediately right in **Godley's Copse**, passing between the garden and the tennis court.

3. Continue ahead, at the crossroads of paths, onto the green lane, **Bowcroft Lane**. Continue ahead, passing **Gravatt's** on your right, then **Swaynes** on your left.

***Diversion:** At the woodland path, north of Godley's, before turning right, go a few yards further to find a 150 year old Wild Service tree, located a short way along the path, on the left, just before a stile. Return, but then turn left to take the path past the tennis court (see Walk 5 for details and leaf identification).*

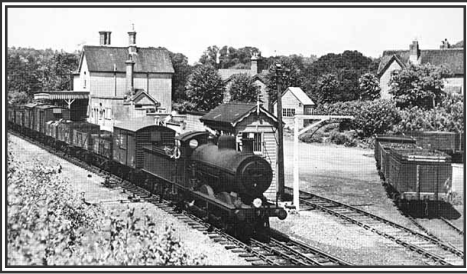
Godley's Copse is an ancient woodland Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). The cottage is a survivor of a holding that was swallowed up in the growth of Hermongers estate.

Gravatt's became part of the Swaynes estate, and the house was demolished in the 1860s, but it remained a farm for a while, whereas Godley's was described as a cottage in 1880 when both were accessed from Bowcroft Lane according to the OS map of that date. **Gravatt's Barn** (adjacent to the path), incorporates an old barn and is recent. **Bowcroft Lane** was an old road from Bucks Green towards Rowhook, joining one from the village near Godley's, continuing eastwards to the north of Hyes. The Guildford Road, A281, only came into being after 1809 as a turnpike from Guildford to Horsham.

Swaynes, now approached from the A281, had its former entrance from Bowcroft Lane. The spelling used to be 'Swains', and in documents of the C17th and C18th it was 'Nyes alias Swains'. There is confusion today, as there are two other properties with the name Swains in Tisman's Common! The house, not seen from its best angle on this path, is partly late C17th. Altogether there are four properties at Swaynes today. The name also occurs in properties all over Horsham District from Rudgwick to Henfield. Like many farms, including its neighbour Gravatt's, it is associated with someone of that name in the medieval period.

*You are approaching the junction with the **A281**, so take care with children and dogs.*

When the lane reaches the main road turn back to the right at a sharp angle to take the **Downs Link Path**, which also meets the A281 here.



4. Now go ahead on the Downs Link through the village in a cutting, passing Rudgwick Primary School, under the **Church Street bridge**, soon passing the **Medical Centre** on your right.

Left - Rudgwick Station, now the Medical Centre. Below left – platform ticket



There is access to/from the shops and car parking in the village at the Medical Centre, and it is an alternative starting point for the walk.

The **Downs Link Path** is of course on the former railway routes to Guildford and to Shoreham, which both branched off the main line near Christ's Hospital. Mysteriously, the path actually starts near Guildford at St Martha's Hill, where no train has ever been! The Guildford to Horsham railway was open for exactly a century 1865-1965, closed by the infamous 'Beeching axe', having served its local communities, including farmers, before modern motor transport. The area served by Rudgwick extended to Loxwood.

The section you walk from the A281 to Church Street was too steep down to the river bridge at the opening of the line so the Inspector insisted it be raised to a new higher bridge-on-a-bridge. The embankment at the start of this section is over the stream in **Gravatt's Hanger**, becoming a cutting as you pass through the village.

Rudgwick station was where the **Medical Centre** now stands. The Countryside Rangers who have placed a notice board here do much useful work managing vegetation, surfaces and drainage along the route for wildlife and users alike, including cyclists and horse riders. We share the line with wildlife for which it is an excellent corridor. Some railway houses in the background of the photo (above), remain today, but not the station buildings.

Continue on the Downs Link into woodland on an embankment over the stream in **Greathouse Hanger**. Soon after this, there is a path veering off **left**, at first parallel with the Downs Link. Follow the path across a field to Lynwick Street, and cross the street (do not cross the bridge).



North of the bridge there is a house called **Yatton**, which stands high, overlooking the railway cutting and bridge. This was a large house for the **Lynwick Estate** bailiff, with the head gardener next door and a coach house. **Lynwick Street** is an ancient lane connecting a number of old cottages and farms west of Greathouse Hanger. It joins the main roads at each end, is frequented today by large brick lorries, and has a number of newer houses at the northern end. From the brickworks (not on your route) there is a rare view of the church tower.

Diversion: *stay on the Downs Link to the **Lynwick Street bridge**, and take the steep steps out of the cutting to emerge on Lynwick Street at a house called **Yatton** and turn right to cross to the south side of the bridge.*

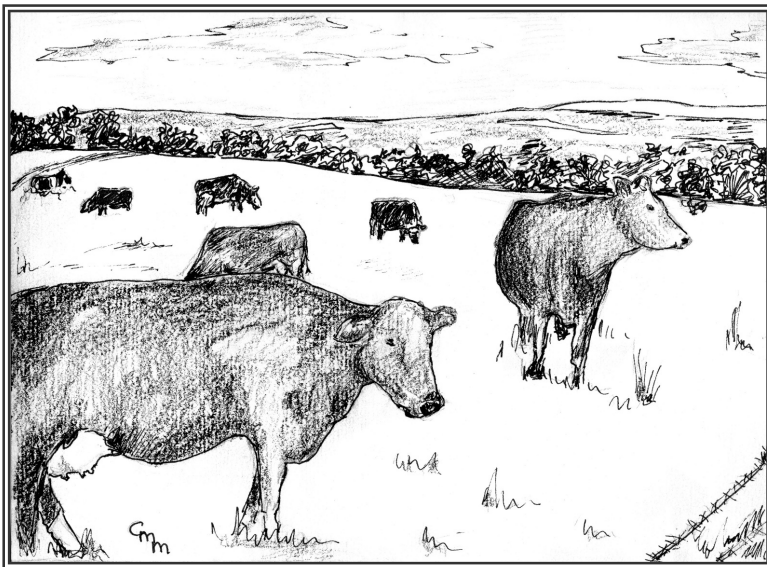
5. Do not remain on the Downs Link past the bridge (unless you wish to take a short cut to the tunnel). Do not take the entrance to **Woodsomes Farm** (well signed); instead, take the lane at right angles to the street, opposite the footpath just described. Go ahead on the lane past a large shed, through woodland and then on a concrete road past fields. Ignore two turnings left, the second being the turning leading to **Lynwick**. Continue ahead staying on the concrete road uphill.

The track you are following had a military encampment nearby in the War. Some of the buildings may still be spotted.

Woodsomes Farm away to your right is one of the farms run by the Harrison family (others being Pallinghurst and Dedisham). You may well encounter their black and white Holstein dairy herd on these hilly fields (picture next page). Given the loss of dairy farms all over the region it is good to see this essential enterprise flourishing on a large scale here in Rudgwick. Although not seen closely Woodsomes has a range of sturdy C19th buildings, still in use, built for John Aungier of **Lynwick** (this house is out of sight on your left). It is a pity that the walker also cannot see Woodsomes farmhouse as it is an imposing mid-C17th building with part-Horsham stone roof, similar in age and construction to Swaynes.

Lynwick, originally a C16th hall house, possibly moated, occupied by the wealthy (and money-lending) Butcher family for two centuries, had always been an important property. Then from late Victorian times it was built up into a thousand acre estate by John Aungier, only to be sold and broken up into lots on his death in 1922. During these years it was a very grand house with all mod cons, and some more! Almost all the rest of the walk is across this estate. Mr Aungier is supposed not to have liked walkers! Your route from Lynwick Street is one of the original main entrances to the property, whose gates are long gone; the other and currently the one most used, is from Cook's Hill.

6. At the top of the hill, where there is a crossroads of bridleways (see view below), turn right into the field on the **Sussex Border Path**. Go ahead still uphill towards the mobile phone mast, now on your left. Continue ahead over a stile into **South Wood**, passing the site of a medieval **motte** on your left (see box below). Continue ahead, ignoring paths to left and right.



The high fencing on your left at the hilltop is for a deer farm. The Sussex Border Path heads for Hillhouse Lane and Rikkyo School in that direction and back to Rudgwick church the direction you will take. For about 1 mile this walk is on the border, following the strategic ridge top that influenced the Saxons to create this border here well over 1000 years ago. The views are wonderful here on a clear day (above, SE towards the distant Downs, with some of the dairy herd at Woodsomes Farm).

Look due south across **The Low Weald** to the distant **South Downs** (**Kithurst Hill** above Storrington is due south). Look south east for the tower at **Christ's Hospital**. Look south west at the greensand ridge of **Bedham** beyond Wisborough Green. Turning around, to the north, is **Winterfold** near Cranleigh, on the northern limb of the greensand ridge, which swings round the western Weald from Bedham in an arc.

Approaching the trees, the phone mast makes good use of its position, but perhaps of more interest, just inside the woods on the left, can be found a circular feature, in a bracken clearing, thought to be a **motte** of early Norman age, a defensive structure on the boundary of Arundel Rape, controlled by the powerful baron, Roger of Montgomery. Just in Surrey, Cranleigh website claims it as '**Cranleigh Castle**'!

Diversion: the Downs Link path and cycle route over **Baynards Tunnel** cross here. Take the right turn just before leaving the wood (**Hobbs Copse**) and descend steeply, then turn back to the tunnel entrance to observe the blocked up tunnel. Return the way you came, to the top of the tunnel.

The only option for the railway engineers in the 1860s was to cut **Baynards Tunnel** through the summit. Having skirted high ground east of The Haven from Slinfold, the line crosses the river to Rudgwick, and then to Baynards where it had to veer round the park and Vachery Pond to Cranleigh. Any further east it would have had to gain more height (or a longer tunnel); any further west it would have ‘missed’ Baynards, whose owner Rev Thomas Thurlow (aged 72, ‘clerk without cure of souls’ in 1861 census) expected and got a grand station for his estate as he had sold land cheaply for the line. The engineer was held to account for the change of line, and said he had forgotten he had been told the route!

Today, the tunnel’s Rudgwick entrance, a Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), is better known for its bats, which may be spotted at night.

Go into a field, which you cross, continuing ahead into the next field, above **Baggeridge Bricks’ clay pit** (right). Keep close to the right hand side of this, and two further fields on **Little Hawks Hill** to enter woodland again. The path continues ahead, winding down and then up through the trees, at first with a smallholding with free range chicken on the left, and then with a view down to the back of gardens on Lynwick Street on the right. Go ahead across a small wild flower meadow, to a small gate.

Another fine view opens out from above the brickworks, and it is possible to look down into the pit too. The brickworks is owned by West Midlands based **Baggeridge Brick PLC**, which has been cleared for acquisition by Wienerberger AG. As well as winning clay here for the gas-fired kilns, which fire in turn to provide continuous production, a growing number of stock bricks are stored here for distribution. Formerly, Rudgwick Brickworks was a small local company run from 1947 by the Fawke family. In making the pit just one property was destroyed, Hobbs Barn.

Just by the walk route on the hill is the site of a windmill and cottage shown on maps in 1761 and 1825, but not thereafter. Presumably it served the north of Rudgwick, Cox Green, and Ellens Green.

Diversion: a short cut (turn right) back to the road along the narrow (but muddy) path between gardens to emerge between **Gingerburys** and **Delmore**, where you cross the road and turn right on the main road back to **The King’s Head**.

The Lynwick estate (see above) extended to the Cox Green road. All the properties you pass (including those you noticed in the wood at Hawks Hill, just passed at the top end of Lynwick Street), and the fields you cross now, were included in the sale held in 1922. This released land for development, contributing greatly to the present morphology of Rudgwick as a settlement.

The individual houses you pass, all different, have generous plots reflecting the former field boundaries – one, **Gingerburys** is named after a field – and the lovely oaks still stand where once there were shaws between the fields. The undulating ground towards the end of this section was a delve (shallow pit) for brick clay as there was once a brickyard here.

On rejoining the road, the most northern house in Rudgwick (since 1993), **Crouchers**, may once have been ‘Crouchams’ as several fields had that name on the 1842 Ewhurst Tithe Map. Crouchers was originally a smoke bay house of c1580. Today it is a delightful feature of **Cox Green**. The low walled area where the path crosses a brick ‘stile’ is the site of a second cottage, demolished early last century. The ‘crossroads’ here is created by a road from Baynards (by Crouchers), the road from Hermongers (out of sight) and the old turnpike from Rudgwick to Cranleigh, the bends of which clearly line up with the minor roads, suggesting that this is a junction of some antiquity. The fifth lane directly north is also an old road, the entrance to **Maybanks**, a large and notable house, owned for many years by the Churchman’s then the Braby’s, both prominent Rudgwick families, and worth passing on another walk. Opposite Crouchers are two pretty cottages, once part of Dukes Farm.

7. Turn left into the field to cross diagonally right following a path along the back of houses in **Cox Green**. At an angle to the gardens, the path goes ahead across the field, gradually bending right to emerge onto the road to the right of **Crouchers**, a house with a walled garden.

On joining the road, turn right along the pavement to return to **The King’s Head**. You may wish to follow the churchyard path from the front of Dukes, emerging by the pub (photo, right, in 1910).

