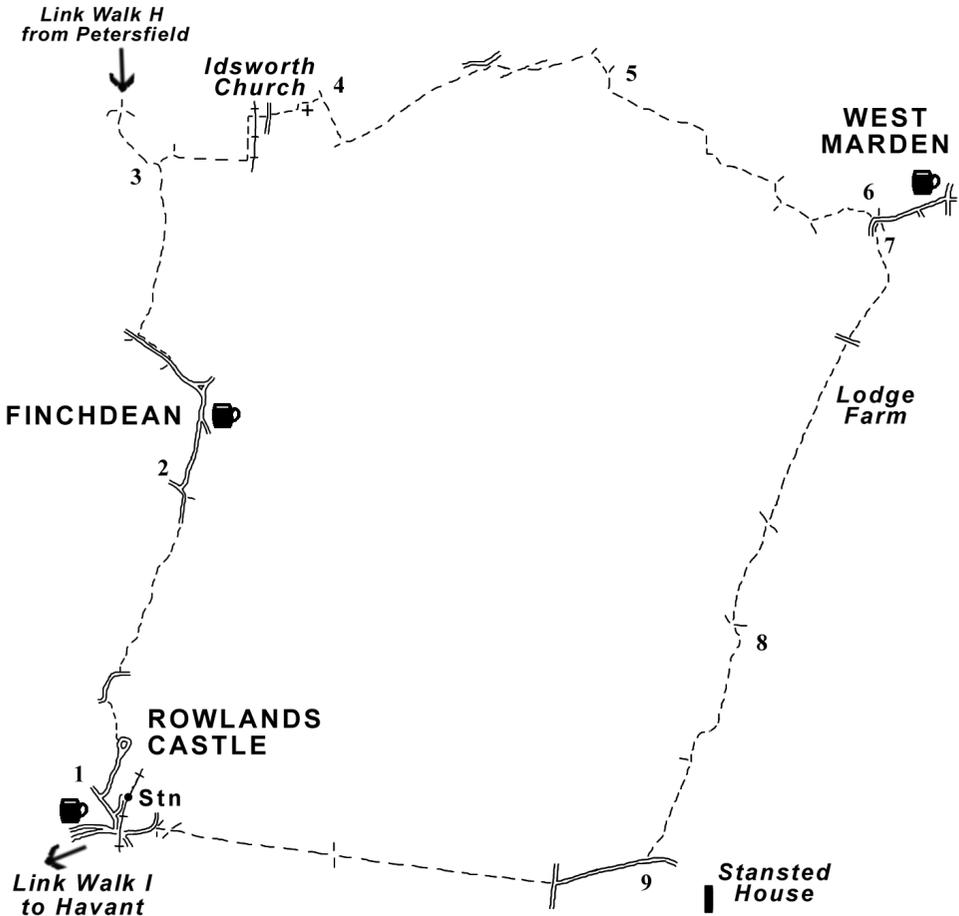


Circular Walk 13 – Rowlands Castle & West Marden

Visiting: Finchdean, Idsworth Church, West Marden, Stansted Park

Distance approximately 8¾ miles/14km

**The walk starts and ends at Rowlands Castle Station;
refreshment at the *Victoria Inn*, West Marden**



- 1 Turn left out of the station and walk down the approach road. Turn right along the road at the bottom, and shortly right again along Uplands Road. Towards the end of this road, where it loops round a grassed area, take a footpath between houses on the left. Follow this as it becomes a track and meets a lane (Wellsworth Lane). Turn right along the lane, passing a house on the left before following the Sussex Border Path sign to the left at a junction. Once an old hedged track, this is now an open path across a large hedgeless field, regaining its original form only just before joining a road.

Walk 13

- 2 Turn right down the road and into the village of Finchdean. Turn left in the centre of the village, along the road opposite *The George Inn*. Where Ashcroft Lane comes in on the right, look for a gap in the hedge on the right. Go through the gap and follow the waymarked Sussex Border Path along the bottom edge of the field and then up its left hand side. There are good views to the right and bluebell woods in season to the left as the path climbs the hill.

- 3 At the top of the hill, just after passing through a narrow band of trees, take a track to the right which drops in a straight line to the valley below. There is a good ‘aerial’ view of Idsworth church from here. You will be there soon.

At the bottom, turn left for a few yards, then right under the railway to meet a road. *Note: after wet weather the passage under the railway can be flooded.* Turn left along the road, then almost immediately right along a path leading up through a field to the church.



*‘Aerial’ view of Idsworth church
viewed from the opposite hill*

St Hubert’s Church, Idsworth, also called “The Little Church in a Field” for obvious reasons, contains wall paintings said to be “the oldest in Christendom,” dated c.1330. It is usually open, and well worth a visit.

- 4 Passing the left side of the church, go across the field to a stile, turn right along a hedge, and bear left at the bottom of the field. Continue along the field edge, crossing another stile before taking a footpath to the right diagonally up the side of a hill. The path enters woodland through a kissing gate and rises up a short flight of steps to join a larger track. Turn left, still going uphill. In about fifty yards take a public footpath leading up another flight of steps to the right – follow the path uphill through woodland to a T-junction with a bridleway.
- 5 Turn right and proceed along a farm track which winds between hedges. Keep right at the first junction, and after about three-quarters of a mile in total take a footpath which drops to the left. Towards the bottom it has been diverted in a series of landscaped bends to avoid the grounds of West Marden Hall. After this it meets a road.
- 6 Turn left towards the village of West Marden. Almost immediately, our path home goes off to the right – but if you are in need of sustenance, carry on a short way down the road to find the *Victoria Inn* on the left, returning here afterwards.



The Victoria Inn at West Marden

- 7 Take the right-most of the two footpaths over the stile opposite West Marden Hall. Go up the hill across the field and over the stile at the top. Turn left and follow the narrow path between fence and woodland uphill, eventually coming out onto an open field. Looking behind you, you can see Uppark House in the distance across a valley. Continue across the field beside a hedge, over a lane and through a farm, then across another open field and into woodland. Follow the bridleway through the woods (it can be muddy) to emerge at the edge of a field with a distant view of the sea.
- 8 Continue down the bridleway through the edge of a wood to meet a surfaced drive at a wooden gate.



Stansted House from The Avenue

- 9 Turn right along the drive and through the exit gates of Stansted Park. Cross straight over a road and through a small metal gate opposite onto The Avenue – an impressively wide grassy ‘ride’ over a mile long from Stansted House to Rowlands Castle. At the end, a path leads through trees and down to a road. Turn left here and go under a railway bridge, then right to return to the station.