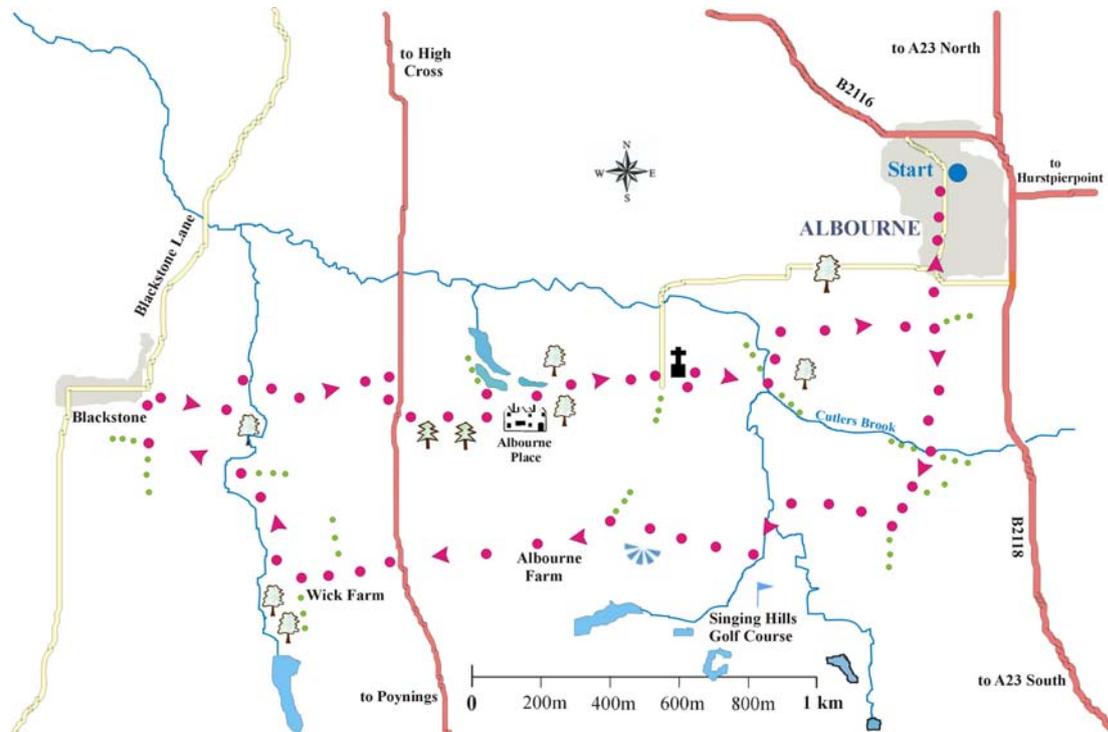


# ALBOURNE

- Start & Finish:** Albourne Village Hall car park in 'The Street', by kind permission.  
Grid Ref: TQ 264.168
- Distance:** 4 ½ miles (7 km). Allow 2 ¾ hours.
- Terrain:** Rolling farmland with several pretty streams. Typical, muddy, 'Low Weald' countryside with nice views of the downs.
- Stile count:** 12
- Toilets:** Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint or see below.
- Refreshments:** The Duke of York in Sayers Common.



From the village hall car park return to the road and turn left, heading south through the village and walking on the raised pavement to your right.

**Albourne simply means 'the stream by the alder trees' and we shall see exactly what prompted the name during our walk. As the walk begins, admire the fine Blue Cedar Tree to your left on the green in front of Barley Croft.**

Walk ahead past The Twitten and the medieval 'Gallops' to the junction with Church Lane on your right. Just a few metres further ahead, when the road swings left, look for a public footpath sign continuing ahead southwards beneath several large yew trees. This covered path leads quickly past grape vines to an open field.

**The house on the right is the aptly named 'Yew Tree Farmhouse', home of Sidney Hole, one of the most respected farmers in the south of England. Sidney won first prize for 'Best Managed Dairy Farm' on four consecutive occasions.**

Continue ahead following the tree line on the left. After a crossing path and a barn conversion our path drops downhill to meet Cutlers Brook for the first time.

Cross the concrete bridge and walk uphill, following the sunken track to the right of the farm buildings ahead. Join the tarmac drive to the farm and, just after passing the house, reach a small stone barn on the right. Turn right in front of this and follow the marked path as it curves left and drops gently downhill. Nearing the bottom of the hill, cross two stiles to reach a second stream. Follow the hedgerow on your left back uphill with Singing Hills Golf Course briefly visible on your left. The path swings sharp right and at the brow of the hill there are splendid views to north & south. Here join a crossing footpath and turn half left through a metal gate towards Albourne Farm.

**The farmhouse is timber-framed and was built in the late 1600's. Despite many alterations over the years it remains a most attractive building in this beautiful setting.**

Pass through the immaculate farm buildings and follow the concrete track. In a further 350m. pass through a gap to the right of a locked gate to reach the public road. Cross straight over the road following the footpath signs up a broad gravel drive. Continue all the way down to the farm buildings and just before the main house look for a three-armed fingerpost and follow the footpath heading half right down a broad track to the right of the farmhouse.

**Wick Farm was once at the heart of a thriving dairy industry. However the number of dairy farms in Sussex has fallen by more than 60 per cent over the past ten years, with the blame generally being laid at the doors of the large supermarkets. During this same period the price of milk has risen, while the price farmers receive for producing it has dropped by a third. As a result many farmers have either switched their emphasis to sheep and beef, or left the industry altogether.**

75m down the hill, a fingerpost will indicate a path to the right crossing two stiles into a short muddy field. Follow this to a further stile besides a wire fence on a raised embankment. Keep right of the fence and on reaching the trees ahead a stile will lead half left to a brick bridge over yet another stream.

Continue uphill to a stile into a large field with the hedgerow to your right and at the derelict outbuilding ahead turn right along the crossing footpath, between tall hedges, towards the small village of Blackstone.

Just before reaching the public road look for a footpath heading half right to pass besides the garden of two small cottages. Immediately after the cottages turn right and follow the hedge line on your left. Before reaching the tree line there is a sign indicating the path goes half left through an iron gate to pass to the left of a brick barn.

On reaching the small bridge over the hidden stream ahead turn half right, following the fingerpost, to pass beneath the power lines to the far right hand corner of the field. An overgrown stile here takes you through a small gap in the hedge onto a path leading past farm buildings to the public road. Turn right and just past the letterbox, opposite 'Dingley Dell', look for a fingerpost on the left side of the road leading over a plank bridge to a series of steps.

The path passes besides tall trees along the right hand side of the field before turning left at the end. In another 30m a sign indicates a right turn over a stile to reach the banks of a small lake.

**In the 1800's there was just one large, serpentine shaped pond here, which fell into disuse. This has recently been renovated as three well stocked fishing ponds known**

**locally as the 'Tony Barnard Lakes'. It was near here in 1715 that an enormous trout weighing 10 ½ pounds was caught!**

This is a nice place to relax with Albourne Place now just visible, above you to your right.

**Albourne Place is an ancient manor, with the present building dating back to the 1400's. It has had many famous residents, most notably Nigel de Broc – one of the three murderers of Thomas a Becket in 1170 – and William Juxon who, as Bishop of London in 1649, attended King Charles at his execution. Juxon was imprisoned for refusing to disclose what the King had said to him on the scaffold and on his release came to live here in this country house.**

Now walk to the right side of the lake, past a second smaller lake and then head to the right of the Isfield & District A.C. car park. After swinging left and then right, this path follows the left side of a large field to emerge over a substantial stile in front of St. Bartholomew's Church with the grand Rectory on the right.

**The church bell turret houses only one bell – but it is one of Albourne's treasures. The bell was made by Peter the Potter between 1282 and 1307 and is one of the oldest church bells in the county. Several members of the Hole Family, mentioned at the start of our walk, are buried here**

Walk through the churchyard to exit via the iron gate behind the chancel. Follow the footpath ahead over a stile to a substantial wooden bridge crossing Cutlers Brook and immediately after the stream turn left. Walk up the rise and just over the brow, before reaching a ditch turn right following the footpath fingerpost over a stile into a large field with a tree line to the left.

**As you walk along this pleasant path pause to admire the magnificent oak tree on the skyline to your left. Rudyard Kipling, with wonderful understatement, wrote of these: - "Huge oaks and old, the which we hold no more than Sussex weed!"**

At the far end of the field reach a four-armed fingerpost and turn left besides the grape vines and retrace your steps along The Street to the car park.

**This walk was researched and written for Mid Sussex District Council by Footprints of Sussex who lead local guided walks throughout the year. [www.footprintsofsussex.co.uk](http://www.footprintsofsussex.co.uk)**

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