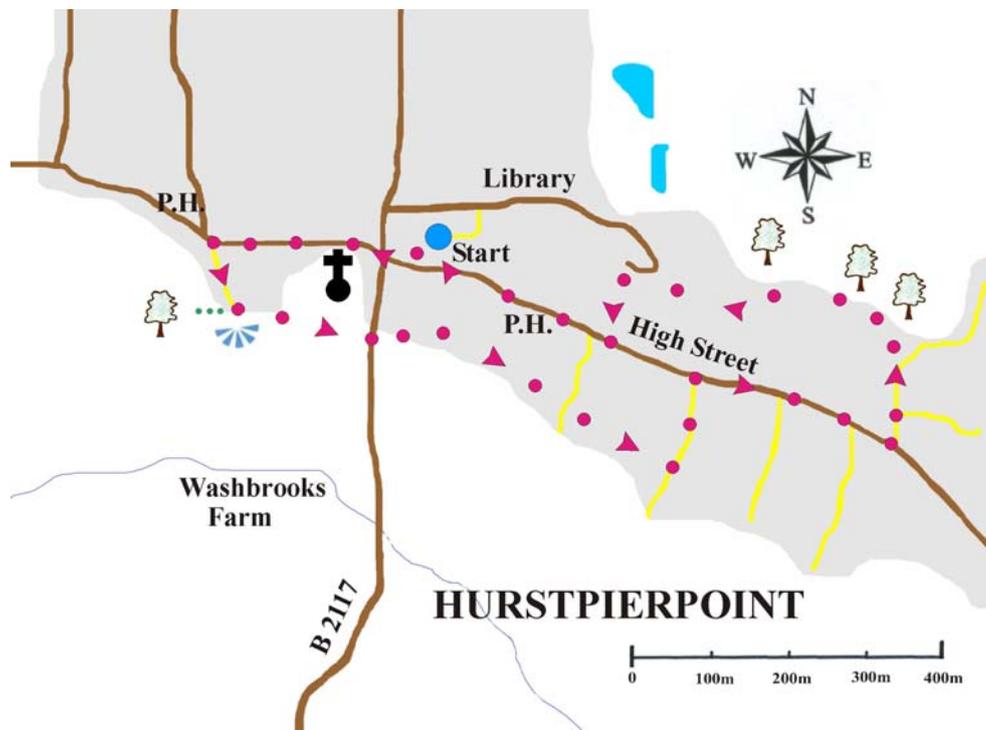


HURSTPIERPOINT VILLAGE

Hurstpierpoint is often best known for its delightful name – a combination of Saxon and Norman French words – ‘Herst’ meaning wooded hill and ‘Pierre Pont’ (stone bridge) the family name of the Norman baron given these lands after the conquest in 1066. His image now adorns the village sign.

Distance: 1 ½ miles. Allow 1 ¼ hours.

Starting Point: Our stroll starts in the car park off Trinity Road, just opposite the Village Centre & Library. Leave the car park by the southwest corner in the direction of the church spire. Walk past the Community Charity Shop – once a stable block for the large house to your left – and on reaching the High Street turn right towards the crossroads.



There have been shops in this High Street since the early 1700's. Originally it would simply have been someone working from the front room of a cottage. However by 1850 there was a proliferation of trades with at least six grocers offering everything from oatmeal to cocoa.

Cross carefully over Cuckfield Road and continue towards the church. Holy Trinity is normally open during the day and is well worth a visit.

In 1841 the church of St Lawrence was declared 'unsound' and incapable of enlargement and was dismantled. The new church we see now was built on the same site and consecrated as Holy Trinity Church on 28th May 1845. It was designed by Charles Barry, better known as the architect of the new Houses of Parliament. One or two reminders of the original church remain, most notably the Norman font

On leaving the church cross back over the road and continue heading westwards away from the crossroads. As this road begins to sweep right cross over again and turn left down Policeman's Lane besides Treeps House – once the home of William Mitten, a famous 19th century botanist. Walk past 'Cowdrays' as the path narrows and at the junction of paths turn left.

'Cowdrays' is a delight but was originally a much humbler building dating back to about 1600. It was the home of the Cowdry family until the mid 18th century. There is a fine view from the path junction of Jack & Jill windmills, Wolstonbury Hill and the rest of those "blunt, bow-headed whale back downs".

On reaching the B2117 main road, cross carefully over to follow the path directly opposite heading slightly uphill. At the next tarmac road turn half right. Although this is clearly a private road there is also a public footpath which we may follow. In a short distance we shall see the unusual Tower House Folly.

It was built of flint in the 19th Century and with the adjoining crenellated wall gave the impression from the south that the village was fortified – such was the obsession with Bonaparte's impending invasion !

Continue ahead past the tower as the path narrows to emerge very shortly onto the delightful Recreation Ground. Walk along the right hand side of the green with the tennis courts and bowling club to your right. Don't miss the weather vane on top of the clubhouse! At the public road ahead turn left up to the High Street. On reaching the High Street cross carefully and turn right to walk along to St George's House.

The house was the home of Col. Charles Hannington who, in 1852, had a serious 'disagreement' with the Rector of Hurstpierpoint, supposedly telling him "not to come the High Priest over me !" The colonel duly built his own 'Little Park Chapel' in the grounds of the house. Although originally used by Baptist Pastors it was made over to the Diocese of Chichester in 1892 and became known as St. George's Church.

In a further 200m turn left up St George's Lane and at the top of the lane enter the churchyard through the iron gates. Turn immediately sharp right to pass through a gap in the wall and then left to follow the outside of the church wall. This leads into the St George's Millennium Garden

This was originally part of the grounds of Col Hannington's house. In 2000 a trust was set up to save this part of the garden from development and retain it as a wildlife refuge.

As we walk through this 'wild' garden there are glimpses away to the north of Hurstpierpoint College and beyond that to Burgess Hill, which from this viewpoint sits squarely atop its hill.

On leaving the garden we join a tarmac road and turn right to exit modern Trinity Court through two tall pillars. As we head in the direction of the church spire we pass the splendid Scouts H.Q. with its Fleur-de-Lis sign and interesting weather vane, and then cross the road to pass just to the left of a large oak tree. Now turn left to follow the blue sign indicating a pedestrian route to the High Street. Follow this uphill past the Health Centre and at the wall ahead turn left where a twitten leads onto the High Street.

Turn right here and, in a 100m or so, notice two buildings in particular on the south side.

The New Inn, with its Georgian façade, hides a remarkable timber-framed building of the early 1500's, which is apparent if you look down the western side of the building. It was once much larger than it is now, with stables and guest rooms and the weekly corn market was held within the inn. Today it houses a very nice pub and restaurant.

A few doors along the Mansion House has even earlier origins dating back over 600 years. In January 1850 the boys of St. John's College were housed here pending the completion of buildings north of the village – now better known as the magnificent Hurstpierpoint College. As you walk past note the false 'window' in the front elevation.

Continue along the High street to the village green where a right turn will lead back into 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

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