

# THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

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Kev Reynolds is a prolific author of guidebooks whose first title for Cicerone Press (*Walks and Climbs in the Pyrenees*) was published in 1978 and has remained in print ever since. Although most of his books are devoted to mountain regions such as the Alps, Pyrenees and Himalaya, he considers the more gentle landscapes of the English countryside to be no second best, and says that every day spent among them is a gift to cherish. As a member of the Alpine Club, Austrian Alpine Club and an Honorary Life Member of the Outdoor Writers' and Photographers' Guild, his passion for mountains in particular and the countryside in general remains undiminished after a lifetime's activity, and he regularly travels throughout Britain to share that passion through his lectures. Check him out at [www.kevreynolds.co.uk](http://www.kevreynolds.co.uk).

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<i>The South Downs Way</i>	<i>Walks in the South Downs</i>
<i>Map Booklet</i>	<i>National Park</i>
<i>The Swiss Alps</i>	

**THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY**  
**WINCHESTER TO EASTBOURNE, DESCRIBED IN**  
**BOTH DIRECTIONS**  
**by Kev Reynolds**

**CICERONE**

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*This book is for Charlie Moon*

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*Front cover:* Typical South Downs Way signpost above Exton

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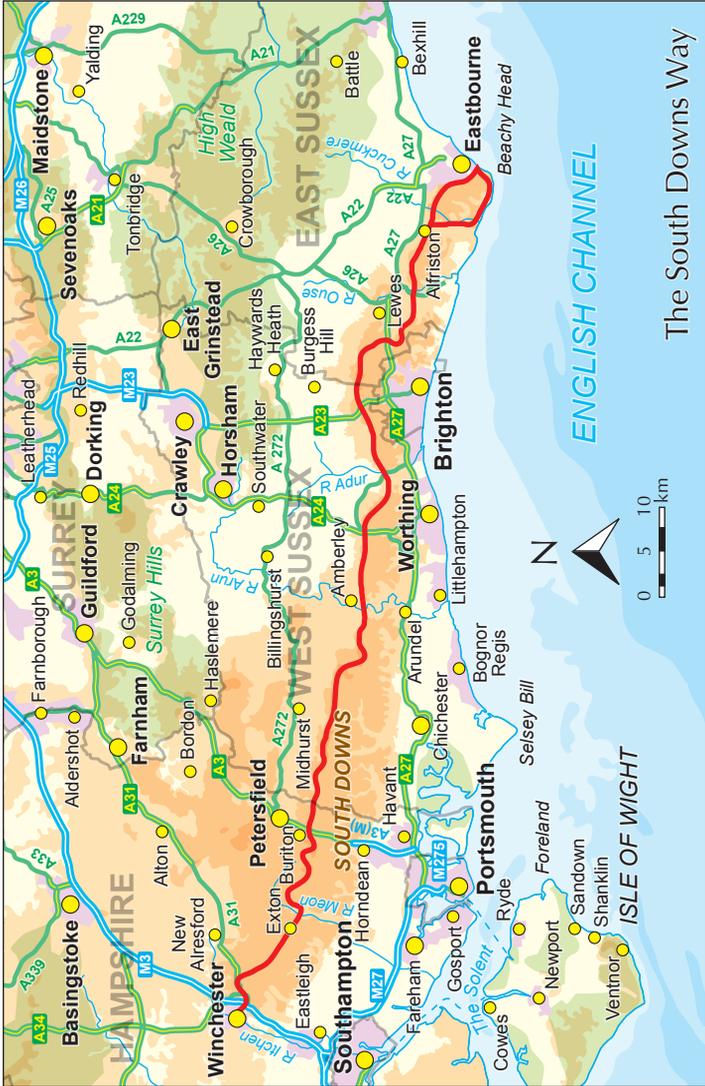
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The South Downs Way

# The South Downs Way Trek Planner



## Key to Trek Planner

**Note:** all facilities listed here are subject to change.  
Check [www.nationaltrail.co.uk/south-downs-way](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/south-downs-way) before setting off.

-  accommodation
-  refreshments
-  food shop
-  public transport

**Accommodation** = b&b, hotel, guest house, youth hostel.  
Only those on, or within a mile of, the route are listed.  
See Appendix B for contact details of a selection of providers.

**Food shop** = shop or supermarket selling food or drink.

**Public transport** = On or near a bus or train route.  
Some services may be weekday only.

### Route symbols on OS map extracts

(for OS legend see printed OS maps)

-  route
-  alternative route
-  starting point for route east to west
-  starting point for route west to east
-  route direction

### Features on the overview map

-  County/Unitary boundary
-  Urban area
-  National Park  
eg **SOUTH DOWNS**
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, eg **Surrey Hills**
-  200m
-  75m
-  0m

See 1:25,000 map booklet for the key to the 1:25,000 maps

**THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY**

**ROUTE SUMMARY TABLE**

<b>The South Downs Way – westbound</b>				
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Start/Finish</b>	<b>Distance (miles/km)</b>	<b>Approx. time</b>	<b>Page</b>
1	Eastbourne to Alfriston via Seven Sisters	10½ (17)	4–5hr	27
1a	Eastbourne to Alfriston (bridleway)	8 (12.5)	3½–4hr	36
2	Alfriston to Southease	7 (11)	3–3½hr	44
3	Southease to Housedean (A27)	6 (9.5)	2½–3hr	50
4	Housedean (A27) to Pyecombe	8½ (13.5)	3½–4hr	55
5	Pyecombe to Botolphs	7½ (12)	3–3½hr	62
6	Botolphs to Washington	7 (11)	3–3½hr	67
7	Washington to Amberley	6 (9.5)	2½–3hr	73
8	Amberley to Cocking	12 (19)	6–7hr	80
9	Cocking to South Harting	7½ (12)	3–3½hr	89
10	South Harting to Buriton (Queen Elizabeth Forest)	3½ (5.5)	1½–2hr	96
11	Buriton to Exton	12 (19)	6–7hr	99
12	Exton to Winchester	12 (19)	6–7hr	109
<b>Total: 99½ miles (158km) or 97 miles (153.5km)</b>				

<b>The South Downs Way – eastbound</b>				
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Start/Finish</b>	<b>Distance (miles/km)</b>	<b>Approx time</b>	<b>Page</b>
1	Winchester to Exton	12 (19)	6–7hr	118
2	Exton to Buriton	12 (19)	6–7hr	124
3	Buriton to South Harting	3½ (5.5)	1½–2hr	132
4	South Harting to Cocking	7½ (12)	3–3½hr	136
5	Cocking to Amberley	12/19	6–7hr	140
6	Amberley to Washington	6 (9.5)	2½–3hr	147
7	Washington to Botolphs	7 (11)	3–3½hr	151
8	Botolphs to Pyecombe	7½ (12)	3–3½hr	155
9	Pyecombe to Housedean (A2)	8½ (13.5)	3½–4hr	159
10	Housedean to Southease	6 (9.5)	2½–3hr	163
11	Southease to Alfriston	7 (11)	3–3½hr	167
12	Alfriston to Eastbourne via Seven Sisters	10½ (17)	4–5hr	171
12a	Alfriston to Eastbourne (bridleway)	8 (12.5)	3½–4hr	179
<b>Total: 99½ miles (158km) or 97miles (153.5km)</b>				

## INTRODUCTION

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The start to a bright spring day... striding through a gentle downland valley with the delightful name of Cricketing Bottom, settling into that easy comfortable rhythm so essential to the full enjoyment of a long walk. The early sun warm overhead, my first cuckoo of the year calling from the hillside, the smoky haze of bluebells lining scrub-crowded slopes where the blackthorn produces haloes of flower. Only the pheasants complain. Larks rise singing, and all around swell the Downs. Within less than an hour I'll be on their crest. Within that hour I'll be wandering alone save for the peewits and skylarks and hares, save for the cowslips at

my feet and the orchids in the spinneys. Alone with the faintest of breezes and huge views that have the sea gleaming in one direction, and the vast tartan plain of the Weald in the other. Hour upon hour wandering through history, past burial mounds and hill forts left by the first wanderers of this Way, on land that once was covered by sea but is now serenaded day by day by minute specks of birds whose land this really is, on grasslands grazed by slow-moving fluffs of sheep, the close-cropped hillsides darkened now and then by the sweeping shadows of clouds. Cloud-shadows – the only impatience on the South Downs Way.



*Jevington, midway between  
Eastbourne and Alfriston*

## *THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY*

More than two decades have passed since I first walked the South Downs Way, but I have been back several times, drawn by the visual delights to be won from the crest of this southern backbone of land with its overwhelming sense of space and peace, whose trails seem to wind on for ever – towards a dim, blue, never-to-be-reached, horizon. And each time I tread that smooth baize of turf and look north across the empty Weald, I find it hard to believe that this is the ‘overcrowded’ South of England.

This South is a surprisingly secret land, though its secrets are there to be unravelling if one only cares to look. It is misjudged and often maligned, and walking through and across it is the only way properly to discover its truths, for by wandering these ancient footpaths one absorbs its

essence through the soles of the feet. The cyclist and horse rider will also develop an affinity with the land, but without the direct physical contact known by the walker, a unique part of the experience will be missing.

Along the South Downs Way your field of vision expands with the miles to a greater knowledge of the land. The traveller begins to appreciate that it is not so populous as is generally thought, that its countryside is infinitely more varied than might previously have been considered possible of the lowlands, and when you gain the scarp edge it is the panoramic expanse which throws into disarray any preconceived notion that mountains have a monopoly of landscape grandeur. Here the perspective fits. Scale is adjusted and beauty comes from order. In a world of constant



*Celandines bank the trails with gold in April and May*



*The view from Firls Beacon*

change there is something reassuring in a vast acreage of countryside that somehow survives without too many scars – another eye-opener for the Rambler in the South.

There are other surprises too, but these must be left for the wanderer, cyclist and horse rider to discover for him or herself, for along the South Downs Way any journey is bound to be full of rewards. Journeys of delight, journeys of discovery.

None but the walker can possibly understand the full extent of that statement, for it is only by the slowing of pace that one finds the ability to become part of the landscape itself. This is not something that may be achieved from the seat of a motor vehicle, for motoring divorces you from the land, and at a speed which blurs and distorts. Along country

footpaths, however, there is so much to experience – from the succession of soil types beneath your feet to the nuance of every breeze that plays sculptor to the passing clouds. One breathes the fragrance of wayside plants, discovers the life of hedgerow and woodland shaw, and drifts through an unfolding series of panoramas. With senses finely tuned to the world about you, a footpath becomes a highway of constant discovery, of constant delight.

### THE DOWNS

In the distant mists of time, during what is known as the Cretaceous period – that is, from about 100 million to 70 million years ago – the land we now know as the Weald lay beneath the waters of a warm,

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shallow sea whose bed was covered by a sandwich of sedimentary deposits. Minuscule shell-bearing organisms settled on this bed, the pure calcium carbonate of their shells powdering to a chalk dust that built with staggering patience to a depth of just one foot every 30,000 years or so. (Consider the time-scale required to produce the chalk cliffs of Beachy Head – over 500 feet/150m deep!) Yet this layer of soft crumbling chalk, composed of all these tiny shells, stretched from the Thames Valley to the Pas de Calais, and reached a depth of around 1000feet/300m, while into this white cheese-like rock there also settled the skeletons of sea sponges to form hard seams of flint.

Then, about 20 million years ago during the Tertiary period, came the continental collision which built the Alps. Italy was thrust into Europe and Spain was pressured from the south. Mountains were slowly buckled and,

as with a stone tossed into a pond, ripples spread in all directions. The chalk of southern England was raised into a huge dome rising from the sea and stretching for about 125 miles (200km), end to end. Weathering followed – a process that continues to this day. Rain, ice, frost, all combined to nibble away at this dome, aided and abetted by rivers and streams that found a weakness when the chalk cracked as it buckled. The outer edges of the dome were the last to crumble, the central core being carried away in watercourses that flowed through it. The centre of that lost dome is now the Weald, the outer edges the North and South Downs.

Rivers and streams continue to drain the Weald, breaching the Downs in valleys far broader than they now require, while dry knuckle coombs within the heart of this downland tell of streams that no longer exist.

Rambling along the smoothly rounded South Downs today we may

## THE DOWNS

wonder at this triumph of geological history. Gazing from the clifftop at Beachy Head we see the body of the land exposed, carved through as though with a gigantic scalpel. We gaze into the heart of unfathomable time, at the crushed, bleached remnants of creatures whose sacrifice is our gain.

East of the coastline, as the route of the South Downs Way leads away from the sea, that sacrifice is forgotten as we amble across grasslands rich in wild flowers. Yet beneath our boots the chalk lies deep, waiting only for the plough to expose its weaknesses to the wind. Where the path leads through arable land we see polished flints littering the fields, the chalk cushion around them turning to dust under the influence of sun and wind, ready to be brushed away. The heights of the Downs shrink in

the summer breeze – one more act of sacrifice by creatures that long ago gave their shells to the southern landscape.

The common perception of the South Downs is one of rolling, flower-dazzled grasslands trimmed by sheep. This is partly due to the influence of our neolithic ancestors who crossed from continental Europe some 5000 years ago and settled here, raising animals, clearing trees and growing crops. Until their arrival the hills would have been forested, but they, and the Iron Age settlers who arrived more than 2500 years later, cleared the forests for both agricultural purposes and for fuel, creating the open spaces that are such a feature of the eastern and central Downs today. The Romans too farmed the downland for corn, and grazed their animals on the rich meadows, but following the arrival of



*Drifts of wood anemones  
carpet both woodland and shaw*

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

the Normans there was a growth in the population of villages and towns snuggling at the foot of the hills, and the number and size of flocks of downland sheep grew as a consequence. From the 14th century on the area was very heavily grazed, reaching a peak 500 years later when the eastern Sussex Downs alone supported more than 200,000 ewes and lambs.

With the Second World War the nature of downland began to change once more, and in the aftermath of hostilities vast acreages were turned by the plough for the production of grain. Today the wanderer will experience a mixture of pasture, arable and woodland, a contrast that consists of meadows dancing with cowslips and the sharp golden dazzle of oil-seed rape, of yellow-headed wheat in summer and the lush foliage of beech and birchwood, of blackthorn scrub and blotches of gorse. Yet from a distance, from the low-lying Weald, the view is as Margaret Fairless Dawson (writing under the pseudonym of Michael Fairless) described it in *The Roadmender*: 'lean grey downs, keeping watch and ward between the country and the sea'.

### THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

Remaining within the South Downs National Park for almost its entire length, the official South Downs Way leads for 100 miles (160km) between Eastbourne and Winchester, following

the northern escarpment for much of the way and rarely descending to habitation except where river valleys interrupt the regular course of the Downs. Opened in 1972, the South Downs Way originally finished in Buriton, near the Sussex–Hampshire border, but by the end of 1987 proposals for an extension to Winchester had been approved by the Secretary of State for the Environment.

The South Downs Way was the first National Trail to be developed as a bridleway throughout its entire length. In a few places the bridleway and footpath routes diverge but, apart from the initial (eastern) stage between Eastbourne and Alfriston, these are temporary alternatives only, and by far the majority of the Way is shared by ramblers, horse riders and cyclists.

For the greater part of its length the Way follows the northern crest of the South Downs escarpment, with broad views overlooking low Wealden farmlands as well as the rolling Downs. Nestling between downland hills to the south are the clefts of dry valleys, called 'bottoms', or 'deans'. Beyond them in the eastern sector sparkles the English Channel, but further west the nature of the landscape changes and there is less a sense of height and space, and the sea is all but a memory.

Five rivers (in Sussex these are the Cuckmere, Ouse, Adur and Arun, with the lovely Meon in Hampshire) have cut valleys through the chalk,



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were engineered across the South Downs, and so advanced were their methods of construction that some of these have been adopted as modern rights of way. In places the long-distance walker uses tracks that were laid in the first century BC, and west of Bignor Hill the South Downs Way comes to a large wooden signpost bearing directions to Noviomagus (Chichester) and Londinium (London) on the line of the Roman Stane Street built around AD 70. (Half an hour's walk away are the remains of Bignor Roman Villa, while nearer to the Way are the earthworks of a Stone Age causewayed camp.)

In valley settlements Saxon and Norman churches make a brief visit worthwhile. Along the airy crestline the trail passes numerous dew ponds created one or two hundred years ago

as watering holes for the huge flocks of sheep that helped give the Downs their unique character so admired today. History, then, is all around you when you journey along the South Downs Way.

Which way to walk? West to east, or east to west? There are plenty of good reasons for arguing both directions, so for this edition, the route is first described from east to west with Winchester the goal as though on a pilgrimage, then the second half of the book gives the walk in the opposite direction, starting at Winchester and ending in Eastbourne.

The westbound route begins near Beachy Head on Eastbourne's western fringe. There is an initial divergence of ways, for the bridleway heads inland via Jevington while the main

footpath route goes along the clifftop of the Seven Sisters as far as Cuckmere Haven, then north on the east bank of the river valley via Westdean and Litlington to Alfriston, where it joins the bridleway.

From Alfriston the South Downs Way climbs to Bostal Hill where paragliders sail the summer skies, then continues on to Firlie Beacon, Beddingham Hill and Iford Hill before descending from the escarpment to cross a valley cut by the River Ouse at Southease. On then to Mill Hill and Swanborough Hill, across the A27 west of Lewes, then up to Balmer Down where broad views are gained across the Weald. Ditchling Beacon is invariably busy with day trippers, the twin Clayton windmills are landmarks of genuine appeal, but beyond them there's a dip to Pyecombe on the way to the Devil's Dyke. The Way continues, keeping high to cross a series of hills and, after passing the last of these (Truleigh Hill, with its youth hostel conveniently set beside the trail), the route loses much height in order to cross the River Adur at Botolphs below Steyning.

West of the Adur, Chanctonbury Ring is the major landmark, an historic circle of beech trees on an Iron Age site. Many of the trees were badly damaged by the storm which hit southern England on 16 October 1987. To the south, off the route but in view, is Cissbury Ring – one of the largest of all Iron Age hill fort sites. Washington lies below, alongside the busy A24, but

heading west the peace of the Downs is quickly regained over Kithurst Hill, Springhead Hill and Rackham Hill, from the last of which the windings of the River Arun can be seen draining the country beyond Amberley.

A new route has been created near Amberley and, where it crosses the A29 by Coombe Wood, the South Downs Way meets its midway point, marked by a signpost. The Downs now become more heavily treed and a long stretch of broad-leaved woodland accompanies the Way over Cocking Down. Pen Hill, Beacon Hill and Harting Down restore more open views, then a short woodland stretch opens along the trackway of Forty Acre Lane between South Harting and Buriton where Sussex eases into Hampshire.

Once Buriton marked the end of the walk, but it now lies a little north of the route, while the South Downs Way passes through the expanse of Queen Elizabeth Forest, where there is a possibility of sighting deer. Immediately after leaving this you climb to Butser Hill for an easy section with a far-reaching aspect.

More downland tracks lead to historic Old Winchester Hill, now a National Nature Reserve on the site of an Iron Age hill fort, where the cyclist's and horserider's bridleway diverts from the walker's route on the way to Exton. Beacon Hill is next, from where farm tracks and bridlepaths carry the Way on its final stage across Gander Down, Cheesefoot

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*Beacon Hill can be seen across the valley from the slopes of Old Winchester Hill*



Head and Telegraph Hill, then into the small village of Chilcomb which is just one long field away from Winchester.

### ACCOMMODATION

Although it is feasible to walk the South Downs Way in dislocated day-stages with the aid of private and/or public transport, this guide has been written primarily with the needs of the long-distance walker in mind. Accommodation along the way is therefore a prime concern.

Numerous options exist along or close to the route, including hotels, B&Bs, guest houses, youth hostels, camping barns and campsites, up-to-date details of which are available via the SDW website – [www.nationaltrail.co.uk/south-downs-way](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/south-downs-way). Booking in advance is essential because of the popularity of the

region in general and the SDW in particular, and as prices vary considerably, do check when making your reservation.

At the time of writing, there are three youth hostels conveniently sited near the South Downs Way ([www.yha.org.uk](http://www.yha.org.uk)). These are at Eastbourne, Itford Farm near Southease and Truleigh Hill. In addition the National Trust has a camping barn known as Gumber Bothy near Bignor Hill, which offers dormitory accommodation and camping, and there's an independent hostel, Wetherdown Lodge, which is part of a Sustainability Centre located on the Way near East Meon ([www.sustainability-centre.org](http://www.sustainability-centre.org)).

A few campsites will be found close to, or within a mile or two of, the route, and these are listed on the national trail website mentioned above. Wild camping along the South Downs Way is not really an option.

**PRACTICAL ADVICE**

One of the benefits to the walker of the South Downs Way being end-to-end bridleway is that for the vast majority of the route there are no stiles to contend with. It is only where the walker's route diverts from the bridleway that this traditionally English countryside obstacle has to be faced. Elsewhere, easy-to-open bridle gates make no demands on weary legs towards the end of a long day's walking. (If I ever make a fortune I'll replace every stile in southern England with a kissing gate!)

For the most part waymarking is exemplary (waymarks bear the white acorn symbol which indicates a National Trail), there are one or two places where these are rather sparse but close attention to guidebook descriptions and/or reasonable map-reading skills, will prevent you from getting lost.

The route passes through one of the driest and warmest parts of the country, and for the most part bridlepaths will be firm underfoot, but following rain the bare chalk tracks soon become very slippery, which can cause problems on steep descents. Under 'normal' summer conditions there will be little mud, while exposed flints will prove uncomfortable unless you are well shod. For long periods the traveller along the South Downs Way will be fully exposed to the elements with neither shelter nor shade for several miles. This can create problems in summer as in winter – bright sunshine can be as debilitating on a long walk as cold winds and rain. Be prepared for all eventualities.

If this is your first visit to the South Downs you will be surprised at the scarcity of villages or towns along the route – this is one of the delights, but it can also be seen as a problem.



*Eastbourne Youth Hostel is conveniently situated a short distance from the SDW bridleway route*

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There are occasional country pubs for refreshment, but remarkably few shops. Fortunately the Society of Sussex Downsmen, in conjunction with the Countryside Agency and local authorities, has been instrumental in providing a number of drinking-water taps for walkers and riders along the Way. But all who tackle the route, whether on foot, bike or horse, are advised to fill their drinking bottles at the start of each day, and to carry food.

### WALKING COMPANIES AND BAGGAGE TRANSFERS

Several companies organise guided and/or self-guided holidays on the South Downs Way, or simply book accommodation on your behalf and



transfer your baggage stage by stage along the route. The following list is merely a sample, and is not comprehensive, nor should the inclusion of any company be considered an endorsement of their services.

- Contours Walking Holidays ([www.contours.co.uk](http://www.contours.co.uk)): self-guided; accommodation and baggage transfer; 6–10 walking days; eastbound
- Footprints of Sussex ([www.footprintsofsussex.co.uk](http://www.footprintsofsussex.co.uk)): self-guided; accommodation and baggage transfer; 7–10 nights; westbound and eastbound
- HF Holidays ([www.hfholidays.co.uk](http://www.hfholidays.co.uk)): 10 walking days and 1 rest day; guided; accommodation and baggage transfer; eastbound
- Let's Go Walking ([www.southdownswaywalking.com](http://www.southdownswaywalking.com)): 8 walking days; self-guided; accommodation and baggage transfer; eastbound
- Macs Adventure ([www.macsadventure.com](http://www.macsadventure.com)): 6–8 walking days; self-guided; accommodation and baggage transfer; eastbound
- Ramblers Holidays/Load Off Your Back ([www.ramblersholidays.co.uk](http://www.ramblersholidays.co.uk)): 4, 5, 8 or 10 days; self-guided; accommodation; baggage transfer; eastbound
- Sherpa Expeditions ([www.sherpaexpeditions.com](http://www.sherpaexpeditions.com)): 6 or 10 days; self-guided; accommodation and baggage transfer; westbound



*Crossing Hyden Hill the route follows an easy tree-lined track*

#### GETTING THERE – AND BACK

Eastbourne and Winchester have good rail connections with London. Eastbourne services come from London Victoria, while those for Winchester use Waterloo. Elsewhere the South Downs Way is accessible by train with stations at Polegate, Glynde, Lewes, Hassocks and Southease. Amberley also has a station close to the route on the line to Arundel, while Petersfield, north of Buriton, has a line from London's Waterloo. Telephone numbers for railway timetable information are given in Appendix A.

For bus services and operators, download the South Downs Public Transport Guide from the website [www.southdowns.gov.uk](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk) or contact Traveline on 0871 200 2233.

#### USING THE GUIDE

For the majority of the route waymarks and signposts are sufficient to make detailed guidebook descriptions superfluous. But in case doubts arise, or in the event of an occasional sign being vandalised or missing, the route is described as found on my most recent walking of it. That said, improvements are occasionally made to the Way which entail rerouting, and in such cases where waymarking differs from the description in this guide, you are advised to follow the way-marked alternative.

Notification of any major changes along the Way will be borne in mind for future editions of this book. A postcard detailing these, sent to me via the publisher, will be gratefully received and will be added to the

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

Updates tab for this book on the Cicerone website.

Maps used in this guide are taken from the Ordnance Survey Landranger series at a scale of 1:50,000 (1¼ inches to 1 mile). While they show the route of each stage of the South Downs Way, walkers are recommended to consult the sheets from which they are taken to gain a wider picture of the landscape, and to locate overnight accommodation which may not appear on the limited map samples published here. Four Landranger maps cover the length of the SDW, but for greater detail the six sheets of the Explorer series at 1:25,000 (2½ inches to 1 mile) may be preferred. Details of specific map sheets are given at the heading to each stage of the walk described.

Perhaps the most convenient mapping of the South Downs Way is the doubled-sided single sheet published by Harvey at a scale of 1:40,000 (a little over 1½ inches to 1 mile). Printed on waterproof paper, the route is depicted on seven strip sections, each of which is contained within convenient folds. Additional information (in English, French and German) is provided in separate panels. The only limitation to such a map is the restricted amount of country shown beyond the SDW 'corridor'. However, Harvey's South Downs Way walker's route map is still well worth carrying.

Throughout the guide additional points of information about

particularly interesting places and features seen along the Way are highlighted in bold. You'll find a box or side panel close by which expands on the subject. Where the route passes near a source of accommodation or refreshment, this is mentioned.

Stage timings are given in the route summary table at the beginning of the book but these will vary from person to person. For a walk of this length an allowance of 2½ miles for each hour will probably be maintained by most regular walkers. When calculating how long any given stage is likely to take, do not forget to include rests, halts for photography, or time taken to consult the map or guidebook, all of which add substantially





to the day's activity. In hot, wet or windy weather, your pace is likely to be slower than normal, so take these conditions into account too.

There is a tendency by some to rush through the countryside with one eye on the hands of the watch, and no time given for contemplation of the intricacies of the landscape, no time to absorb at leisure nature's many gifts – the pleasures that are there for all to enjoy. Walking through the countryside presents so many opportunities it would be a shame to ignore them, for there is more to walking a long-distance path than burning the miles hour after hour. If you open your eyes, heart and mind to the splendours of the world about you, you'll grow richer by the mile. So, as an antidote to the single-minded attitude of getting from

A to B as quickly as possible, I've specifically written this guide with a more relaxed outlook in mind, and attempted to bring out the flavour of the walk by including a few anecdotal snippets.

The southern counties do not lend themselves to major epics, but minute by minute along the South Downs Way I experience the wonders of the countryside. In that countryside is revealed the remarkable nature of the ordinary common scenes and pleasures that all may witness when out wandering the footpaths. Noting these little snippets that add much to the eventual sum of life's package of pleasures, it is my hope that those who follow this route will absorb as much of the landscape and the creatures that people it, as possible, and gain as much happiness as I have, each time I've walked it.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

As you journey along the South Downs Way, remember it needs your care and respect.

### The Country Code

- |   |   |    |   |
|---|---|----|---|
| 1 | Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work.    | 7  | Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone. |
| 2 | Guard against all risk of fire.                         | 8  | Take litter home.                           |
| 3 | Fasten all gates.                                       | 9  | Help to keep all water clean.               |
| 4 | Keep dogs under close control.                          | 10 | Protect wildlife, plants and trees.         |
| 5 | Keep to public paths across farmland.                   | 11 | Take special care on country roads.         |
| 6 | Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls. | 12 | Make no unnecessary noise.                  |

The Country Code follows in the wake of principles set by Octavia Hill, a champion of the countryside and a co-founder of the National Trust, who wrote in the early days of the 20th century:

*Let the grass growing for hay be respected, let the primrose roots be left in their loveliness in the hedges, the birds unmolested and the gates shut. If those who frequented country places would consider those who live there, they would better deserve, and more often retain, the rights and privileges they enjoy.*



*The Cuckmere's estuary at Cuckmere Haven, with Seaford Head on the far side*

## STAGE 1

### *Eastbourne to Alfriston (Footpath route via the Seven Sisters)*

<b>Distance</b>	10½ miles (17km)
<b>Time</b>	4–5hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 199 Eastbourne & Hastings 1:50,000; OS Explorer 123 South Downs Way, Newhaven to Eastbourne 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Eastbourne, Beachy Head, Litlington and Alfriston
<b>Refreshments</b>	Eastbourne, Beachy Head, Birling Gap, Exceat, Litlington, Alfriston

Of the two primary stages leading to Alfriston, this route across Beachy Head and the Seven Sisters is not a dedicated bridleway, but is the official walkers' route – the bridleway alternative goes inland via Jevington, and is described as Stage 1(a) below. It is difficult to say which is the finer option for both have much to commend them. So good are the two options, in fact, that it is tempting to walk each one in due course. The clifftop region of Heritage Coast above Eastbourne is scenically dramatic, for the surf froths far below and, as you wander across Beachy Head, you have a lovely view ahead to the Seven Sisters, with Seaford Head beyond the estuary of Cuckmere Haven. The inland route, on the other hand, makes a splendid introduction to the Downs with wide open vistas almost every step of the way, while the little community of Jevington visited mid-journey is a typical flint-walled village with an attractive church in gentle surroundings.

The official route begins on the south-western edge of Eastbourne at Holywell. It then mounts steep, scrub-covered slopes to Beachy Head, continues across to Birling Gap and then tackles the rise and fall of the Seven Sisters. After leaving Haven Brow, the last of the 'Sisters', the route descends gently to the east bank of the Cuckmere, before cutting off and

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

rising once more, this time over sheep-grazed downland to the site of the former Exceat church, then down to the A259 near the Seven Sisters Visitor Centre. A steep hillside leads to Friston Forest where a fine view shows the lazy windings of the Cuckmere below. Westdean is briefly visited, then it's back to forest again. But once the trees have been left behind high farmland takes the route down to Litlington and the banks of the Cuckmere, which makes a gentle companion for the final approach to Alfriston.

**Intro 1:** To reach the start of the South Downs Way from **Eastbourne** railway station, walk along Grove Road passing the Town Hall, and follow Meads Road through the Meads area of town. At the junction of Beachy Head Road take Meads Street which leads past shops and eventually brings you to King Edward's Parade. The walk begins where Dukes Drive makes a sharp right-hand bend. There's a small café at the foot of a steep slope, and a South Downs Way notice-board depicting the route (grid ref: 600972).

**Intro 2:** To reach the start of the South Downs Way from the promenade, head south away from Eastbourne pier with the sea to your left, walking



Westbound: map  
continues on  
page 31

## WESTBOUND – EASTBOURNE TO ALFRISTON VIA THE SEVEN SISTERS

**Eastbourne** is one of those South Coast resorts that has retained an air of gentility. It's a town of flower beds and bowling greens, a town where Victorian imagery lingers on. The original settlement of East Bourne had a church before the Norman invasion. There were neighbouring hamlets called South Bourne and Sea Houses, the latter a collection of fishermen's cottages, but the three were amalgamated in the mid 19th century, and in 1910 Eastbourne was created a borough. Development as a resort was due largely to the seventh Duke of Devonshire, and it has somehow managed to avoid the tackiness of so many of its coastal neighbours, and discreetly shuns vulgarity. Along the front, north of the pier, stands The Redoubt, a sturdy, circular building – mostly of brick – constructed in the early 1800s as part of the coastal defences against Napoleon. The Wish Tower (see below) also formed part of that defence system.

towards the stumpy **martello tower** ▶ known as the Wish Tower. Beyond it there are neat lawns and flower beds. The promenade continues towards the cliffs and, as the path rises and brings you to a large landscaped mound with seats, bear right to King Edward's Parade. Turn left to Holywell and, when Dukes Drive bends sharply to the right, you see the start of the South Downs Way directly ahead (grid ref: 600972).

The **martello tower**, known as the Wish Tower, is the sole survivor of four such towers originally built along Eastbourne's seafront in 1806–7 to keep Napoleon at bay. During the Napoleonic Wars a whole series of these stocky circular towers were erected along the coastline of Kent and Sussex, and named after the Torre del Martello in Napoleon's homeland of Corsica.



## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

**Beachy Head** is one of the best-known features of the Sussex coast. The clifftop is 536 feet (163m) above the waves, and the red and white ringed lighthouse at its base was built in 1902, the builders and the stone being lowered from the clifftop by cableway. At the start of 1999 a massive rockfall destroyed a section of cliff-face at Beachy Head – a not-so-subtle warning to avoid straying too near the edge. In the severe weather of the early weeks of 2014, more sections of cliff fell into the sea. Britain is shrinking.

*Looking east from Haven Brow, the most westerly of the Seven Sisters*

**Start:** At first the Way climbs a steep slope of grass and scrub to a junction of paths. Take the left-hand option among more scrub and gorse, coming out to an open downland above the rim of Whitebread Hole and its playing field. The continuing path winds among bushes



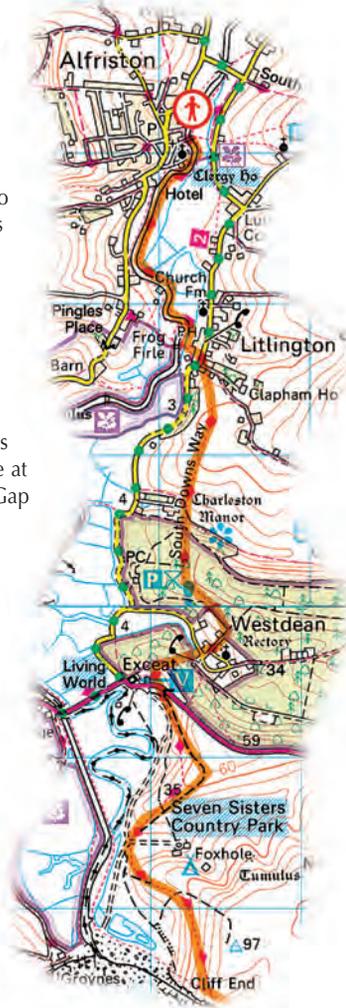
Belle Tout **lighthouse** predates that of Beachy Head. Built in 1832 of Aberdeen granite by 'Mad Jack' Fuller, the eccentric squire of Brightling, it served as the lighthouse for this stretch of coast until 1902, but was replaced because the light would often be lost in fog. It has now been converted to a private luxury B&B ([www.belletoute.co.uk](http://www.belletoute.co.uk)) with tremendous views in all directions. Following the Beachy Head cliff-fall in 1999, Belle Tout was physically moved a short distance inland.

## WESTBOUND – EASTBOURNE TO ALFRISTON VIA THE SEVEN SISTERS

of blackthorn, gorse and elder and then, climbing steadily on an old coast-guard's path and with splendid views over the sea, approaches **Beachy Head**. Refreshments can be found at the nearby Beachy Head Inn.

Continue along the clifftop, but do not stray too close to the edge as the cliffs are crumbling. The Way slopes down almost to road level below the former **lighthouse** of Belle Tout, then rises to pass round the inland side of the enclosing wall. Maintain direction across the cliffs, which were acquired by the National Trust in 1967 and form a designated Heritage Coast, and from which the Seven Sisters can be seen ahead. Before long you arrive at the few buildings and car park at Birling Gap (refreshments) (grid ref: 554960).

*I was glad then to have chosen to walk westwards, for although the sky was bright and clear, a cold easterly wind was blowing, and I'd rather have that in my back than in my face all day long. On the clifftop walk tiny cowslips were coming into bloom, but few other flowers as yet. Later, and further inland, there would be plenty of colour around my boots, but up here I was well content with views over the sea, with the bleached roller-coaster of the Seven Sisters ahead with their thatch of downland grass, trim and neatly cropped, and recalled previous clifftop wanderings at the end of a variety of long walks. The pleasure to be gained whilst wandering across the Seven Sisters never palls. There's the cry of gulls, the sight, scent and sound of the sea, and broad vistas of the Downs stretching far away*



Eastbound: map continues on page 28

*inland. I had the wind in my hair and a hundred miles to cover at my own pace. It was good to be back.*

A flint track heads past a small toilet block, and soon forks. The way ahead leads to East Dean, but we veer left and through a gate rejoin the clifftop path. The route now wanders over the Seven Sisters on a switch-back course with the sea glistening below to the left and the green baize of the Downs spreading far off to the right – the Crowlink Estate owned by the National Trust. On the first of the ‘Sisters’ an obelisk records the dedication of land to the Trust in memory of two brothers killed in the First World War. Next is Baily’s Hill, followed by Flat Hill, Flagstaff Brow (another dedication stone), Rough Brow, Short Brow and Haven Brow. Between the ‘Sisters’ steep, dry valleys, or ‘bottoms’ can be testing for legs and knees, and the red faces of other walkers betray the effort of each ascent.

From Haven Brow a clear view shows **Cuckmere Haven** below, with Seaford Head on the far side. The Way slopes down and curves to the right and, on reaching the valley bed, goes through a gate and onto a chalk path, the Cuckmere River just to the left. Immediately after crossing a concrete farm road go through a kissing gate and walk up the slope ahead in a north-easterly direction.

**Cuckmere Haven** is the estuary of the Cuckmere River, a shingle bank guarded by Haven Brow and Seaford Head. In the 15th century it was more open than it is today, for in 1460 raiders from France sailed up the river to Exceat and attacked the village. (Exceat barely exists as a village today.) During the 18th century the Haven was a notorious landing place for smugglers, when contraband goods would be brought upstream to Exceat and Alfriston. As recently as 1923 smugglers were caught there with a haul of expensive brandy. A little inland from the Haven itself an artificial lagoon attracts assorted waders, while the snaking Cuckmere between Exceat and the Haven is busy with swans, tufted ducks, dabchicks, cormorants and herons.

*WESTBOUND – EASTBOURNE TO ALFRISTON VIA THE SEVEN SISTERS*



There is little visible sign of a path, but low waymark posts direct the way to another gate on what is almost the highest point. Through this you approach a stone marking the site of the 11th-century church of Exceat, although there's nothing of the building to be seen. The Way now veers a little leftwards, heading north-west where a clear path will be found cutting round the hillside above the Cuckmere's windings, then angles gently down to a gate opposite the **Seven Sisters Visitor Centre** (refreshments) (grid ref: 519995).

*The Cuckmere  
writhes through its  
valley on the way to  
Cuckmere Haven*

The **Seven Sisters Country Park** spreads east of the Cuckmere River and covers an area of 690 acres. Established in 1971 by East Sussex County Council, but managed by the Sussex Downs Conservation Board, the visitor centre is housed in a converted 18th-century barn at Exceat. The centre has an interesting wildlife and local history exhibition, a shop and toilets. Next door is a convenient restaurant.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

**Westdean** is a historic little place. It is said that Alfred the Great built a palace here in AD 850, although no trace of it has been found. But there is a charming flint-built rectory dating from the 13th century, and a part-Norman church. Although very small, and with an air of seclusion, Westdean is worth exploring at leisure.

**Friston Forest** covers almost 2000 acres of mainly broad-leaved woodlands. It is owned by South East Water, but managed by the Forestry Commission, and there are several paths and rides through it.

**Charleston Manor**, on the edge of Friston Forest, is named in the Domesday Book as being owned by William the Conqueror's cup-bearer, Cerlestone. In the grounds the restored tithe barn is all of 177 feet (54m) long, with an enormous tiled roof and a medieval circular dovecote. The gardens are open to the public on set days during the summer.

Cross the A259 with care and wander between a cycle hire building and a cottage, then through a kissing gate and up a steep grass slope, at the top of which a stone stile leads through a wall to the edge of **Friston Forest**. ◀ There's a very fine view from here, out to the Cuckmere's valley easing towards Cuckmere Haven. Take the path ahead among trees, and soon descend more than 200 steps to the hamlet of **Westdean** which is reached beside an attractive duck pond. Continue ahead along a narrow road which becomes a track, and re-enter Friston Forest. Waymarks direct the South Downs Way to the left, but on coming to a junction of tracks, turn right, and when this bears sharp right near the forest edge, the Way goes ahead and descends more steps among trees behind **Charleston Manor**. ◀

The South Downs Way continues along a beech-lined track, then you veer right to cross a stile and follow a hedge. On the downland slopes to the west, a white horse can be seen cut in the chalk above the Cuckmere Valley, on the hill known as High and Over. Eventually come down to the flint-walled village of **Litlington** (refreshments, accommodation). Turn right in the village street as far as The Plough and Harrow pub. Just beyond this turn left along a narrow footpath leading to a bridge over the Cuckmere.

The continuing South Downs Way turns right and follows the Cuckmere upstream, passing opposite the Clergy House and Alfriston parish church, to a bridge with white railings where the footpath route joins the bridleway (grid ref: 523031). Cross the bridge and walk ahead up an alleyway which brings you directly into Alfriston High

Street (refreshments, accommodation) where you turn right to The Star Inn.

Alfriston is something of a show-piece village, and is one of the busiest in Sussex with day-visitors. It boasts many interesting and picturesque buildings, a number of which have typical downland flint walls. The George Inn (built 1397) is said to have been a smuggler's haunt, while The Star Inn, which dates from the 15th century, bears the figurehead of a Dutch ship that foundered in Cuckmere Haven. The 14th-century church of St Andrew, standing between the greensward of The Tye and the Cuckmere River, is often referred to as 'the Cathedral of the Downs'. Nearby the thatched, half-timbered Clergy House is of similar age to the church, and was the first building bought (in 1896) by the National Trust – for just £10! Alfriston has several shops, restaurants, pubs and tearooms, and a choice of accommodation.

**Litlington** is tucked under the Downs on the east bank of the Cuckmere, its small Norman church wearing a white weatherboarded bell-tower and a shingled cap. Next door Church Farm is also very old, and has Caen stone in its walls, which leads some to suggest it may have been a priest's house. The name of the village is derived from 'Lytela's farmstead' and is pronounced Lillington.

**STAGE 1(a)**

*Eastbourne to Alfriston  
(Bridleway route inland via Jevington)*

<b>Distance</b>	8 miles (12.5km)
<b>Time</b>	3½–4hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 199 Eastbourne & Hastings 1:50,000; OS Explorer 123 South Downs Way, Newhaven to Eastbourne 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Eastbourne, Jevington, Alfriston
<b>Refreshments</b>	Eastbourne, Jevington, Alfriston

The bridleway alternative to the Seven Sisters route is a delightful stage among rolling downland which affords wide views and with plenty of interest throughout. In many respects it is as rewarding as the official footpath stage described above, albeit of a completely different nature, and is highly recommended. It begins on the edge of Eastbourne where the Seven Sisters route begins, but immediately heads inland (soon rising onto the Downs), briefly crosses a golf course overlooking Eastbourne and the distant Pevensey Levels, and heads north before descending a clear track among gorse bushes and banks of wild flowers, into a narrow valley with Jevington neatly spaced within its confines. A tree-shaded climb leads onto the Downs again and, at Windover Hill, the route journeys across the unseen head of England's largest chalk figure, the Long Man of Wilmington. More expansive views entice across the Cuckmere's gap towards Bostal Hill and Firle Beacon, and northward into the flat open spaces of the Weald. A winding chalk track snakes down to the Cuckmere's valley, then the bridleway edges water meadows before joining the footpath route for a crossing of the Cuckmere into Alfriston.

**Start:** The SDW bridleway begins at Eastbourne's south-western end, where Duke's Drive, the B2103, makes a sharp bend at the foot of a prominent slope of downland (grid ref: 600972). A small café ('The Kiosk') is conveniently situated here. For directions on how to reach it from the town, see Stage 1.

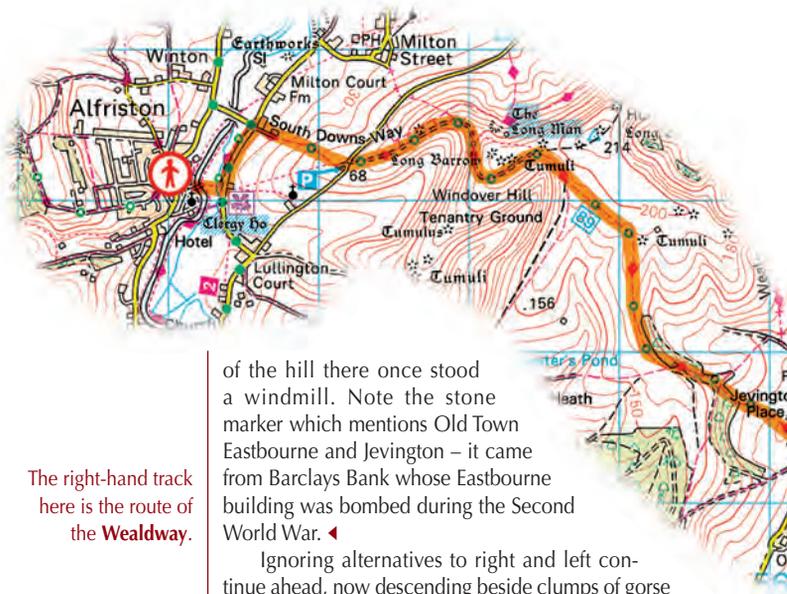
While the footpath route to Alfriston via Beachy Head and the Seven Sisters strikes directly up the slope, the bridleway route heads to the right, rising gently just above the road and keeping to the foot of the slope, before swinging left to rise through a grassy gully. Above the 'gully' the way continues between island-like groups of trees, making for the head of the slope where there's a 4-way crossing of grass trails. Turn sharp right and contour along the open Downs with a view overlooking Eastbourne and the coastline which curves in the distance towards Bexhill and Hastings.

In another ½ mile cross the B2103 (**caution!**) near its junction with a road heading for Beachy Head and Birling Gap. Over the road bear left and continue heading north alongside trees until these curve to the right. Now go up the slope ahead to briefly join a stony track leading past a dew pond and a trig point. Pass these to your right and shortly after come to a junction with another bridleway. Keep ahead, and before long you'll reach the A259 at grid ref: 585985.

**Accommodation:** Eastbourne Youth Hostel is situated about a third of a mile downhill to the right.

Cross the road with care and take the broad track opposite, through a golf course. The track is easy to follow and it leads for a little over 2½ miles to Jevington. There are fine views almost all the way. At first these extend across the low-lying Pevensey Levels to the right, while to the left East Dean sprawls in its hollow, with Friston water tower projecting thumb-like above it. The Way passes **a dew pond** ▶ and ¾ mile later comes to crossing tracks at Bourne Hill (grid ref: 577009). Just above to the right is a trig point, and on the mound which marks the crown

**Dew Ponds** are seen in many parts of the South Downs. Because of the permeable nature of chalk, there is practically no natural surface water, so saucer-shaped scoops have been dug out and in many places given a concrete base (clay was originally used) to trap and contain rainwater for grazing animals. Traditionally these dew ponds were known as 'cloud ponds', 'mist ponds' or, more prosaically, 'sheep ponds'.



The right-hand track here is the route of the **Wealdway**.

of the hill there once stood a windmill. Note the stone marker which mentions Old Town Eastbourne and Jevington – it came from Barclays Bank whose Eastbourne building was bombed during the Second World War. ◀

Ignoring alternatives to right and left continue ahead, now descending beside clumps of gorse on what becomes a delightful sunken track with a preview of Jevington snug in its valley below. The banks are lavish with flowers in springtime – cowslips, bugle, and wild raspberry canes straggling by the fence. Cowslips are symbolic of the Downs, and these lovely yellow-headed plants will be seen in abundance throughout the walk in late springtime. The name originates from the belief that the flower would appear wherever there was a cowpat! For centuries it was used as an ingredient in the making of vinegar, mead, wine and even cheese.

*A luxurious fold of downland spread in gentle curves on all sides. Pausing to take it all in I recognised the shape of Combe Hill to the north where I had crossed one glorious*

The **Wealdway** is a long-distance recreational route which travels 82 miles (132km) from the bank of the River Thames at Gravesend in Kent, to the clifftop at Beachy Head. On the way it crosses the North Downs, several High Weald ridges, Ashdown Forest, the expanse of the Weald and, finally, the South Downs.

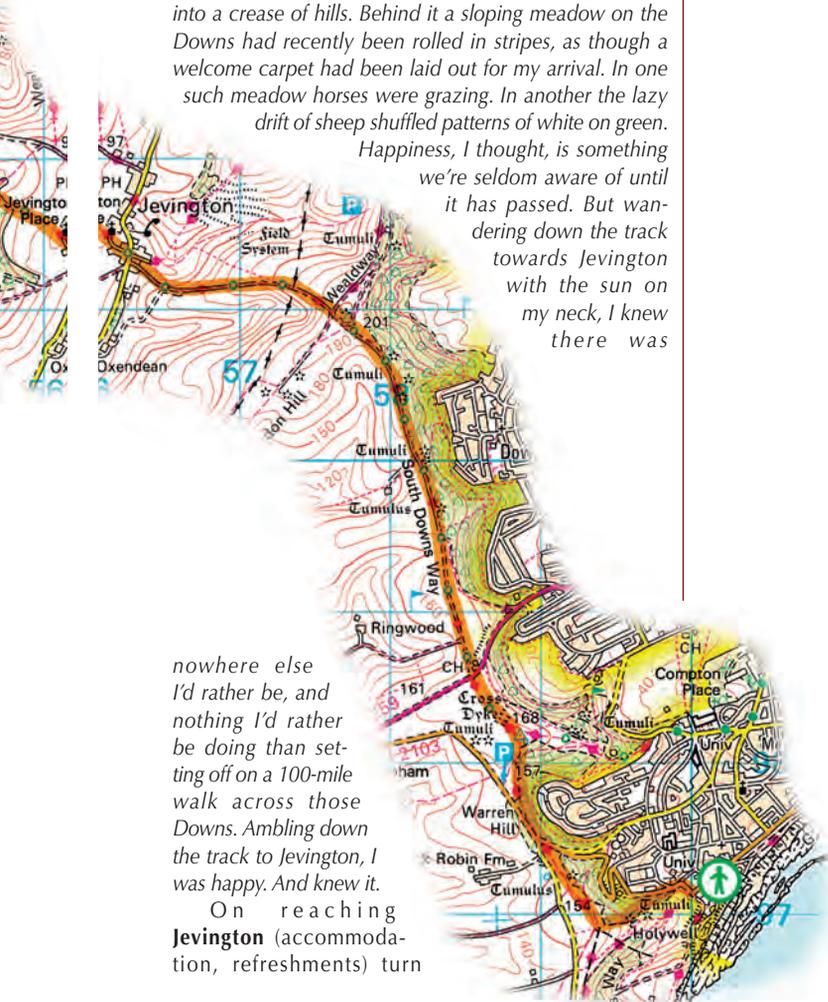
## WESTBOUND – EASTBOURNE TO ALFRISTON VIA JEVINGTON

late-spring afternoon a couple of years ago when walking the Wealdway. I remembered it well: the peace, the views, the sunshine. Now I had the peace of a spring morning, more fine views and sunshine too. Ahead, Jevington sank into a crease of hills. Behind it a sloping meadow on the Downs had recently been rolled in stripes, as though a welcome carpet had been laid out for my arrival. In one such meadow horses were grazing. In another the lazy drift of sheep shuffled patterns of white on green.

Happiness, I thought, is something we're seldom aware of until it has passed. But wandering down the track towards Jevington with the sun on my neck, I knew there was

nowhere else I'd rather be, and nothing I'd rather be doing than setting off on a 100-mile walk across those Downs. Ambling down the track to Jevington, I was happy. And knew it.

On reaching **Jevington** (accommodation, refreshments) turn



## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

**Jevington** is a quiet, back-country downland village that was once a smugglers' haunt. The flint-walled church of St Andrew has an impressive Saxon tower 1000 years old, in which there is a bell said to have been brought ashore from a shipwreck. The remainder of the building dates from the 13th century, but there are Roman bricks in its construction.

*St Andrew's Church  
in Jevington has  
a fine Saxon tower*

right along the road and about 50 yards later bear left on the approach to the church. Continue beyond the Saxon church of St Andrew along a narrowing enclosed bridleway where a signpost indicates 'Alfriston 3 miles'. Soon the Way rises among horse chestnut, elm, ash and elder, crosses another track and shortly joins a more prominent path which continues up the slope – beside which wild garlic and bluebells mass in spring. At Holt Brow emerge from trees to a crossing path. Turn right and



within a few yards go through a bridle gate. Maintain direction along the edge of a field, and through a second gate come to a large open grassland.

There is a sudden awareness of space as you emerge onto the bare crest of the Downs. There are far views to the sea but, much closer, downland folds into the green coomb of Deep Dean. The ruined walls of Hill Barn give rise to speculation as to their origin.

Several low waymark posts guide the route across this downland plateau before a clear chalk path leads along the top edge of Deep Dean to another gate (grid ref: 544034). Passing through, veer left. The lip of the escarpment is now to your right, and should you venture to it you notice **Wilmington** far below, Arlington Reservoir beyond that and the immense levels of the Weald spreading to a distant blue line of Ashdown Forest.

Although you will not see it from this point, you are virtually standing on the head of the Long Man of Wilmington. The Cuckmere River snakes out of the Weald, and to the west you gaze across the broad valley it has cut through the Downs, to the rise of Bostal Hill and Firle Beacon where the South Downs Way passes on Stage 2.

**Wilmington** is famous for the Long Man, said to be England's largest chalk figure, which stands 226 feet (69m) long and, with a stave in each hand, overlooks the ruins of a Benedictine priory founded in 1100. No-one knows quite how old the Long Man is although it has been suggested that he dates from the Bronze Age, about 4000 years ago. Both he and the priory ruins are now in the care of the Sussex Archaeological Trust. The parish church next door to the priory has a weatherboarded bell-tower topped with a shingle spire, and is as old as the priory, while an enormous yew tree in the churchyard is thought to be 1600 years old. The pendulous branches are supported by wooden props and chains.

Now heading south-west the grassy trail passes along the left-hand side of various earthworks on Windover Hill

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



*Unseen from the SDW, the route crosses above the Long Man of Wilmington*

(two or three burial barrows and ditches, and mounds that indicate refuse pits from Stone Age flint mines). Beyond the summit of Windover Hill the route winds to the right and then left, descending a sunken track, formerly a coach road, round the head of another dry valley (Ewe Dean).

The track takes you past an underground reservoir and eventually spills onto a country lane. Cross straight over and continue down a narrow, sunken track among blackthorn and a line of elms, until coming to a road junction.

Cross slightly left ahead and enter a meadow, then turn left and, remaining parallel with the road, keep along the edge of the meadow with Alfriston church seen ahead, the Cuckmere off to the right, hidden below a grass embankment. At the end of the meadow go through

*WESTBOUND – EASTBOURNE TO ALFRISTON VIA JEVINGTON*

a gate and turn right along a metalled path. As you come to a white-railed footbridge you join the footpath route from the Seven Sisters. On the Alfriston side of the bridge the bridleway bears right in front of cottages, then left between flint walls to reach the Market Cross in the High Street (accommodation, refreshments) (grid ref: 520032). Now head to the left along the street as far as the The Star Inn. For more information about Alfriston, please refer to the end of Stage 1, footpath route.

STAGE 2

Alfriston to Southease

<b>Distance</b>	7 miles (11km)
<b>Time</b>	3–3½hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 199 Eastbourne & Hastings 1:50,000; OS Explorer 123 South Downs Way, Newhaven to Eastbourne and 122 South Downs Way, Steyning to Newhaven 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Firle (+1 mile), Southease
<b>Refreshments</b>	Café at South Downs YHA, Southease

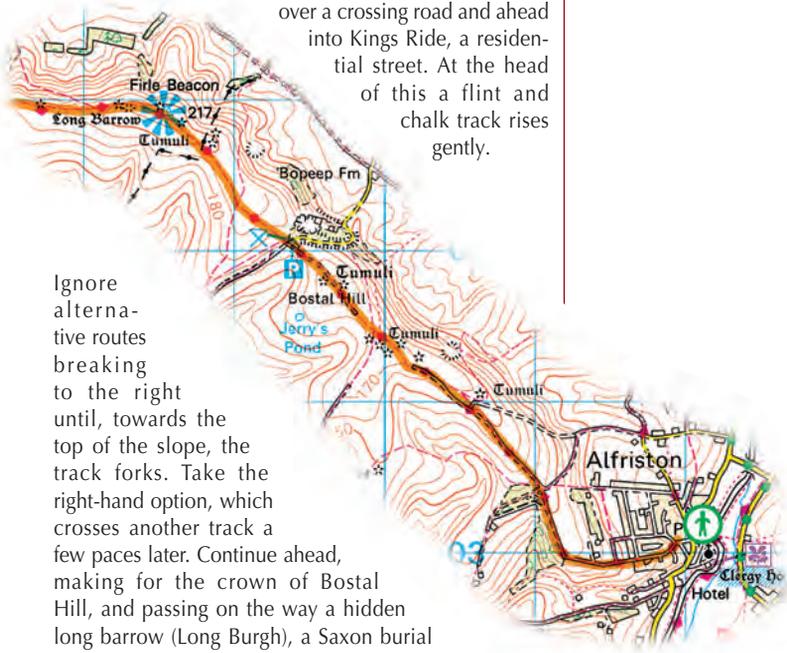
This stage mounts the northern crest of the Downs for a lovely walk on smooth grass speckled with flowers, among sites of ancient history where long barrows roughen the turf, and where a remote Saxon cemetery holds the secrets of a past age remote from the technology of the 21st century. From Alfriston's busy heart the route climbs to Bostal Hill where the summer skies are bright with multi-coloured paragliders. Then on to Firle Beacon, 713 feet (217m) above the sea, whose crown has been cropped by generations of Southdown sheep. The Downs then curve westward, and the trail crosses Beddingham Hill beside a pair of lofty radio masts to reach Itford Hill overlooking the River Ouse. A winding descent comes to Itford Farm and the Newhaven road, and once across the river you enter the tiny village of Southease.

As there is no availability of refreshment on this stage until you cross the A26 shortly before reaching Southease, it is advisable to carry supplies from Alfriston.

The South Downs Way goes along the narrow street beside The Star Inn, over a crossing road and ahead into Kings Ride, a residential street. At the head of this a flint and chalk track rises gently.

Ignore alternative routes breaking to the right until, towards the top of the slope, the track forks. Take the right-hand option, which crosses another track a few paces later. Continue ahead, making for the crown of Bostal Hill, and passing on the way a hidden long barrow (Long Burgh), a Saxon burial ground, and several other tumuli. Once atop the Downs a huge vista includes the sea far out to the left, but behind, looking back on the previous stage of the route, the Long Man of Wilmington is hidden from view, but the rolling downland wall is clearly seen above both Wilmington and Alfriston, stretching southward to Cuckmere Haven. The Weald is a low-lying contrast with Berwick (a neat corner worth searching out on another occasion), huddled in an expanse of green.

*Striding towards Bostal Hill my attention was caught by what appeared to be a mass of giant butterflies drifting in the breeze, but on drawing closer revealed themselves to be paragliders, each brightly coloured arc of silk supporting a speck of man or woman competing with the*



Westbound: map continues on page 47

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



*A spur of land by Bostal Hill makes a splendid vantage point from which to study the Weald*

*larks for a privileged overview of the Downs and the Weald. I counted 17 in all, spiralling, drifting, soaring – hanging in the sky and connected with the earth only by their shadows.*

Across Bostal Hill the trail comes to a small car park, and beyond this maintains direction for  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to Firle Beacon, which is marked by a trig point from which there's another immense panorama to enjoy (grid ref: 485059).

**Accommodation:** Just beyond the trig point an alternative path descends to West Firle (or Firle as it is known), and is the one to take if you plan to find accommodation there.



The Way now curves westward aiming towards lofty radio masts on Beddingham Hill nearly 2 miles away – as the route passes below them they form a convenient marker. Between Firle Beacon and the radio masts the Way goes through another small car park, this one giving road access to **Firle** seen at the foot of the Downs.

**Firle**, shown as West Firle on OS maps, is a compact village nestling below the Downs. The elegant Firle Place, which stands near the church with woodland behind, was originally built in 1557, but then rebuilt nearly 200 years later – the Georgian outer retaining the Tudor core. To the east of Firle Place stands the round folly of Firle Tower, which is clearly seen from the Downs near Firle Beacon. Charleston Farmhouse, further east again, became a centre for the Bloomsbury Group of writers and artists after being discovered in 1916 by Virginia and Leonard Woolf. The house now contains work by Virginia's sister, Vanessa Bell, and Duncan Grant who died in 1978.

*Around us now are more prehistoric sites – round barrows and ancient settlements. There was an Iron Age village near Firle Beacon, a Bronze Age collection of huts and workshops west of Beddingham Hill. North of the escarpment, and on the outskirts of Glynde, there was an Iron Age hill fort on Mount Caburn. For more than 300 years it was occupied and active, until the Romans came. Roman trackways crossed the Downs above Firle as part of an important trade route. Grain would have been carted*

**Eastbound:**  
map continues  
on page 45



## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

**YHA South Downs** was opened in 2013 on the site of Itford Farm, which dates back to the 13th century. Open throughout the year, the hostel has 66 beds in twin/double rooms and dormitories, a self-contained cottage and camping facilities (Tel: 0845 371 9574; southdowns@yha.org.uk).

*along these tracks bound for the coast where Seaford and Newhaven stand today. On these Downs, 'broad and bare to the skies'; only a handful of modern cars, a few model aircraft and the twin radio masts ahead represent a world so very different to that experienced by the first settlers of these green sweeping crests. Yet with imagination it is possible to stir the spirits of our windblown ancestors, and share with them the empty miles.*

Pass along the right-hand side of the masts. The track then veers a little to the right and goes through a gate by a narrow metalled road. Cross through another gate directly ahead and wander parallel with the left-hand fence towards Itford Hill, eventually passing a trig point and a dried-up dew pond known as Red Lion Pond on your right (grid ref: 446055).

From here to the valley of the Ouse the downland is rich in wild flowers, with views stretching from Newhaven out to the left where the Ouse spills into the sea, to Lewes and Mount Caburn off to the right. On reaching the lip of the Downs, Itford Farm is seen below to the west, beside the A26. The slope plunges steeply, but the Way swings left and descends to a footbridge spanning the busy road. Over this curve right towards Itford Farm. You have now reached the South Downs Youth Hostel and its Courtyard Café. Even if you do not plan to stay at the hostel, the café is open to the general public daily between 10.00 and 16.00. ◀

The farm lane crosses the railway line at the halt of Southease Station, then a short distance beyond comes to the River Ouse. This is contained between sturdy banks and is crossed by road bridge. The reedy ditches beyond form a lively habitat for frogs and toads, and heron are sometimes seen stalking for a meal.

**Alternative route:** The main South Downs Way continues along the lane into Southease, but an optional alternative, which misses the hamlet, visits Rodmell instead (although there is a shorter and more direct road route to Rodmell mentioned in Stage 3 below). Take the riverside path on the

right, immediately after crossing the bridge, and walk downstream for about a mile. On coming to a track (bridleway) turn left and follow this into **Rodmell**. ▶ To rejoin the South Downs Way walk along Mill Lane, which starts from the main road near the Abergavenny Arms, initially between cottages. The lane narrows and becomes a private road (but public bridleway) with fields on the left folding down into Cricketing Bottom. Near the crest of the hill, by the entrance to Mill Hill (grid ref: 413054), turn right on an enclosed bridleway running parallel with the garden boundary. This is the route of the South Downs Way.

**Main walk continued:** Keep on the lane and, about 400 yards beyond the bridge, you enter the hamlet of Southease near the village green.

Southease consists of a few 17th-century cottages, a village green and an attractive church with a rare circular tower built in the 12th century (there are only three such towers in Sussex, all of which are in the Ouse Valley), and some faded, medieval wall paintings. Southease was first recorded in a charter of AD 966 granting the church and manor – and that of nearby Telscombe – to Hyde Abbey in Winchester. Southease was then ‘Sueise’ and the charter, made by the Anglo-Saxon King Edgar (Eadgar), included 28 hides of land. In the Domesday Book of 1086 the village rated 27 hides and ‘the villeins are assessed for 38,500 herrings and at £4 for porpoises.’ This reference to herrings and porpoises gives an indication of the importance of Southease as a fishery. At the time the Ouse was a major tidal river, and it is thought possible that the lake in the grounds of Southease Place may have once been a harbour.

**Rodmell** is best known for Monks House, the home of Virginia and Leonard Woolf (see Firle), which is now in the ownership of the National Trust. They came here in 1919, but in 1941 Virginia, suffering mental illness, walked down to the River Ouse and committed suicide. Rodmell has a Norman church and some attractive cottages. South-west of the village, on the route of the South Downs Way, there used to stand a windmill, and the Abergavenny Arms pub beside the main road is named after the Marquess of Abergavenny who, until just after the First World War, was the principal landowner.

### STAGE 3

#### *Southeast to Housedean (A27)*

<b>Distance</b>	6 miles (9.5km)
<b>Time</b>	2½–3hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 198 Brighton & Lewes 1:50,000; OS Explorer 122 South Downs Way, Steyning to Newhaven 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Kingston (+½ mile), Lewes (+1½–2 miles)
<b>Refreshments</b>	None on the route

On this stage the route journeys over another broad, exposed downland ridge heading north-west over Mill Hill, Front Hill, Iford Hill (not to be confused with Iford Hill of the last stage), then along the scarp edge of Swanborough Hill overlooking neat villages tucked against the foot of the Downs. There are more dew ponds, the site of a one-time windmill, and a stretch along Juggs Road, a track formerly used by fish traders travelling from Brighton to Lewes. Brighton is kept at bay well to the west as the South Downs Way curves round the head of Cold Coombes then descends alongside Newmarket Plantation to the A27. Once across this busy road, walkers seeking accommodation could catch a bus into Lewes.

On a calm and sunny day this makes a gorgeous walk. Larks rise from the fields to trill overhead. There will, no doubt, be pheasants and hares sharing the track; there are badger sets along Swanborough Hill, foxes in Newmarket Plantation, and wild flowers set in the downland turf. There are no refreshment facilities at all along the way, and no habitation between Mill Hill and the A27. But views there are in plenty.

Passing Southease church on your left, walk up the tree-lined lane to a road junction where you turn right. After a few paces another lane cuts left, signposted to Telscombe. At the entrance to this lane you will find a gate on the northern side leading into a meadow.

Once in the meadow go briefly down the slope, then bear right through a little area of trees and continue down to a farm track. Bear left and wander through the dry valley known as Cricketing Bottom for a little over ½ mile. About 100 yards before the track reaches a group of farm buildings the Way turns sharply to the right.

After turning away from the track near the farm buildings, the Way hugs the foot of the slope, goes through a gate, then climbs Mill Hill to gain views of Seaford Head to the south-east. At the crown of the hill come onto a drive at the entrance to a house (Mill Hill) and cross directly ahead, joining the alternative route from Rodmell described in Stage 2 (grid ref: 413054). The bridleway follows the garden boundary fence, then continues ahead with another wide view which includes Lewes off to the right.

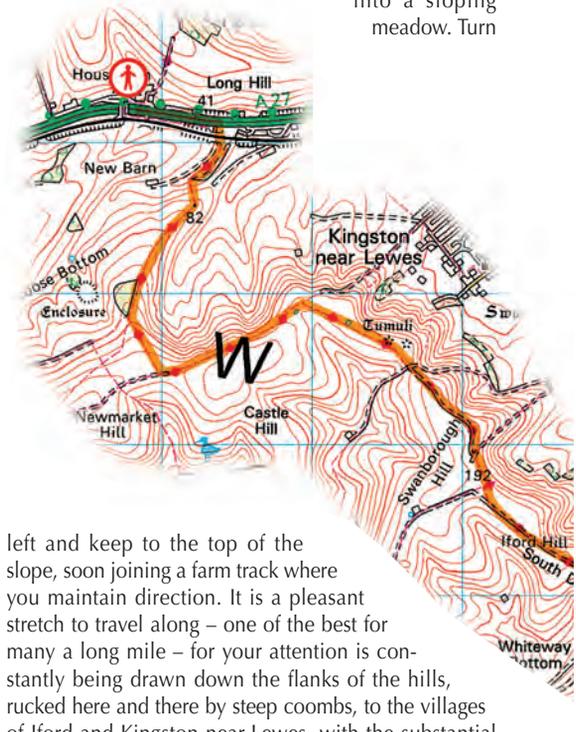
For a little over 1½ miles the route makes a steady course over the typical farmed downland of Front Hill and Iford Hill. It is wide open country up here – open to the breezes, open to the sun, with neither shade nor shelter. Passing through occasional gates the Way then follows a concrete farm road cutting through prairie-like fields.

*Mid-morning April sun beamed down and washed my shadow into the young spring corn. Out of that flint-cluttered field rose one lark after another, thrashing the air with their wings they sang as they soared higher and higher, intent on distracting my attention from their nests. What gifts their songs were for a solitary walker! Then over the brow of the hill ahead came three tracksuited athletes chatting as they ran. (Lord knows where they found the breath to talk.) Within a matter of moments they were past me and pounding the concrete on the downhill slope to Mill Hill. I was relieved when they disappeared from sight, for this was a landscape that needed*

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

*no human interruption. These Downs belonged to the birds and animals. Alone, I could absorb their strengths and their frailties, their past and present, their own personal songs and scents. Alone, one could share their secrets and be glad for the day. I was well content to be on my own.*

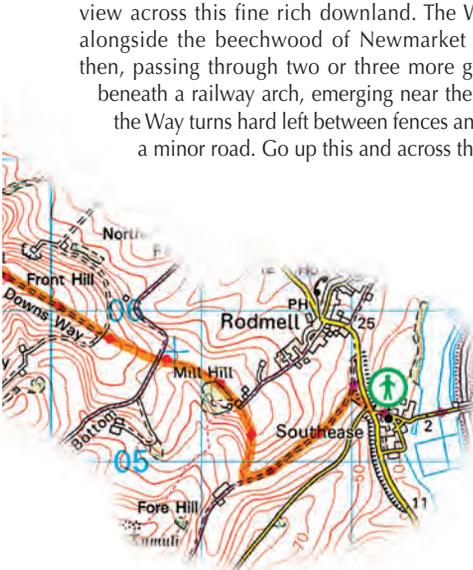
After a long stretch of concrete the farm road veers hard left towards a large barn. Leave the road at this point and head off to the right for about 60 yards, then go through a gate into a sloping meadow. Turn



left and keep to the top of the slope, soon joining a farm track where you maintain direction. It is a pleasant stretch to travel along – one of the best for many a long mile – for your attention is constantly being drawn down the flanks of the hills, rucked here and there by steep coombs, to the villages of Iford and Kingston-near-Lewes, with the substantial buildings of Swanborough Manor (dating from the 12th century) in between.

When the track cuts sharply to the left (where the bridleway of Breach Road crosses), continue ahead and go through a bridle gate onto a broad grassland hill-top. There is little sign of a track here, but you maintain direction and pass to the left of Kingston Hill dew pond (grid ref: 383078), surrounded by gorse. Before long come to a second dew pond, also marked by gorse bushes, but this one lies just left of the Way. It was here that Ashcombe Windmill used to spin its six sweeps (or sails) to the wind. You are now on the line of **Juggs Road**, although there's little to show for it on the ground. (For accommodation in Kingston, turn right.)

Pass through the gate and head south-westward keeping parallel with the right-hand fence, beyond which the scarp slope dips towards the busy A27 a mile and a world away. Contrast that with the cowslips at your feet and the song of larks high above! Near the end of this long meadow veer leftwards to find another bridle gate. Through this turn half-right and follow another fence. The South Downs Way now slopes downhill on the western side of Cold Coombes, soon gaining a clear view across this fine rich downland. The Way passes alongside the beechwood of Newmarket Plantation then, passing through two or three more gates, leads beneath a railway arch, emerging near the A27. Now the Way turns hard left between fences and comes to a minor road. Go up this and across the A27 on a



## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



*The Way follows a clear track along the flank of Swanborough Hill*

bridge, then bear right to pass alongside the grey, square building of Housedean Farm (grid ref: 369092).

**Accommodation:** Should you be in need of accommodation, continue beyond the farm alongside the road to where a bus stop has a frequent service to Lewes.

**Juggs Road** is a one-time trading route across the South Downs used by fisher-folk from Brighton. 'Juggs' was the name given to these traders by the people of Lewes, supposedly from the earthenware jugs, or pots, in which the fish were salted and kept fresh. These traders regularly carted their fish by donkey along this route to market in the county town.

## STAGE 4

### *Housedean (A27) to Pyecombe*

<b>Distance</b>	8½ miles (13.5km)
<b>Time</b>	3½–4hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 198 Brighton & Lewes 1:50,000; OS Explorer 122 South Downs Way, Steyning to Newhaven 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Westmeston, Ditchling (+1¾ miles), Clayton, Pyecombe
<b>Refreshments</b>	None on the route until Pyecombe

Between the heavy traffic of the A27 outside Lewes and the A23 at Pyecombe, the South Downs provide an oasis of calm, and reward with birdsong and the bleating of sheep. Much of this stretch of the Downs has been put to the plough, arable replacing pasture, but around Ditchling Beacon the downland is protected as a nature reserve and it remains much as it would have been for centuries. Wide views become commonplace, but earlier, in a 'back-country' of folded hills blocked by woodland crowns, you lose all sense of height and spaciousness as the route leads between large fields with no plunging scarp slope to draw perspective.

It is an historic area with a number of ancient sites along the way. During the first part, beyond Balmer Down, the track passes west of flower-rich Mount Harry where, in 1264, Simon de Montfort took arms against Henry III in the Battle of Lewes, the outcome of which led to our present parliamentary system. On Plumpton Plain is the site of a Bronze Age settlement. In Ditchling village, below the Downs, the Romans had a fortified camp. (Stretches of Roman road may still be detected traversing west-east at the foot of the Downs.)

The initial part of the route from Housedean Farm and the A27 replaces the former trail which led through Ashcombe Plantation. Now the Way climbs Long Hill, goes through Bunkershill Plantation and rejoins

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

*Ditchling Beacon is a protected nature reserve*



the 'old' route in the arable fields of Balmer Down. The Downs of sheep-grazed grassland are to be found on Plumpton Plain with the trail heading west to Ditchling Beacon, where the South Downs Way reaches its highest point in Sussex, but where solitude is rare. Less than 2 miles later a pair of windmills rise out of the fields ahead – Jack and Jill, the well-known Clayton Windmills. Skirting these to the south, a track slopes downhill beside a golf course and comes to the main road a short distance from Pyecombe.

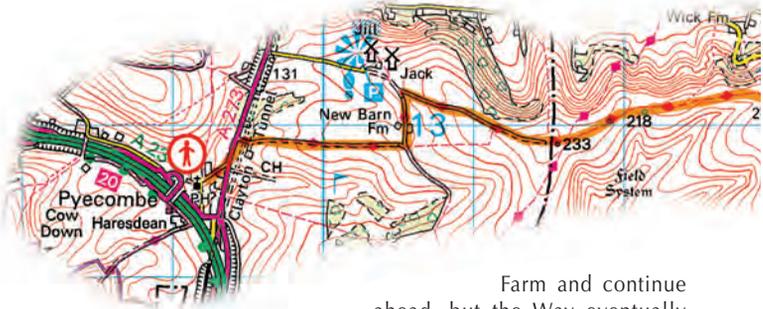
Heading east alongside the flint wall which surrounds Housedean Farm, turn left when the wall ends, ascend some steps and, going through a gate, continue up a sloping field to Long Hill. The head of the slope coincides with the top of the field, and in the left-hand corner another gate gives access to the woodland shown on the map as Bunkershill Plantation. The bridleway soon begins to descend quite steeply, and on emerging from the woods, it swings to the right between fences. At the end of this fence-enclosed section come to a crossing path and turn left.

There follows a lengthy stretch as you rise gently along the arable slopes of Balmer Down for a mile or so, passing a dew pond on the right and, later, going beneath a line of power cables you come to a crossing track and bear right. This bridlepath leads away from arable land, takes you between hedges and alongside a small woodland before coming to a farm track where you turn left (grid ref: 370125). To the right of this turning is the National Trust downland of Blackcap.

Very soon you come to the scarp edge along Plumpton Plain, with a Wealden panorama to enjoy stretching far to the north. The village of Plumpton is clearly seen below with the extensive buildings of its agricultural college, the glimmer of a lake at 16th-century Plumpton Place and, further north, the outline of Plumpton racecourse.

A short distance beyond the Plumpton track mentioned above, cross a narrow road leading to Streathill

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



Farm and continue ahead, but the Way eventually curves a little to the left over Western Brow, then veers right along Home Brow towards another narrow road and car park at **Ditchling Beacon**. As you come to this road there is a dew pond on the left (grid ref: 334129).

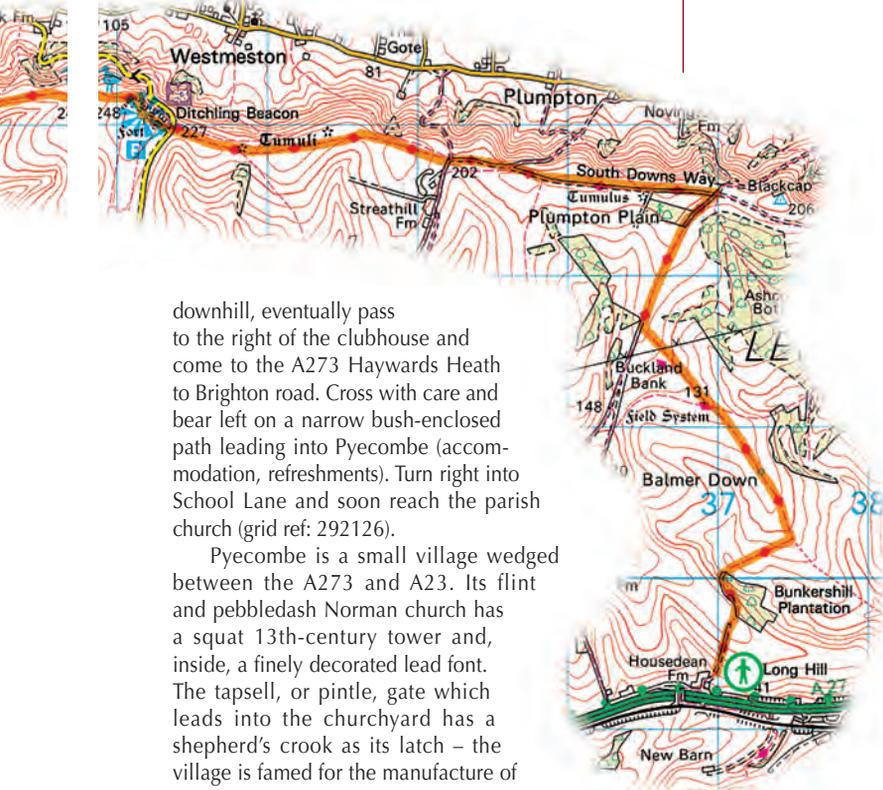
Go through the car park (there is usually an ice cream van here in summer) and keep ahead, passing a little to the right of the trig point (813feet/248m). The Way leads through a nature reserve, passes another dew pond and, little more than a mile from Ditchling Beacon, edges past a tall wooden signpost known as the Keymer Post which marks the boundary between East and West Sussex.

Just beyond this the first sighting of the **Clayton Windmills** is made, rising out of the fields ahead. Shortly before the windmills you come to a crossing track and turn left.

**Accommodation:** To find accommodation in Clayton do not turn left, but go ahead on the track, then take a path on the right which leads round the side of the first windmill (Jack). This continues past the second mill (Jill) and descends to Underhill Lane, Clayton.

The track leads between buildings at New Barn Farm and, 100 yards later, at crossing tracks, you turn right on an enclosed bridleway alongside a golf course. Sloping

## WESTBOUND – HOUSEDEAN TO PYECOMBE



downhill, eventually pass to the right of the clubhouse and come to the A273 Haywards Heath to Brighton road. Cross with care and bear left on a narrow bush-enclosed path leading into Pyecombe (accommodation, refreshments). Turn right into School Lane and soon reach the parish church (grid ref: 292126).

Pyecombe is a small village wedged between the A273 and A23. Its flint and pebbledash Norman church has a squat 13th-century tower and, inside, a finely decorated lead font. The tapsell, or pintle, gate which leads into the churchyard has a shepherd's crook as its latch – the village is famed for the manufacture of these crooks which were used by shepherds throughout the South Downs. In 1603 the original village was hit by plague.

**Ditchling Beacon**, the highest of the South Downs in Sussex, is owned by the National Trust, with a nature reserve in the care of the Sussex Wildlife Trust. The summit is surrounded by the rectangular outline of an Iron Age hill fort.

*THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY*



The **Clayton Windmills** (Jack and Jill) are a much-loved feature of the South Downs. Jack, the upper, black-painted smock mill built in 1866, has been converted to a private residence and was once the home of Henry Longhurst, the golfer, but Jill, the gleaming white post mill, is in the care of a preservation society and is open to the public most Sundays 14.00–17.00 between May and September, with a tearoom providing refreshments. Built in 1821, Jill originally stood in Patcham, Brighton, but was towed by oxen to her present site, where she worked until 1906. For further information see [www.jillwindmill.org.uk](http://www.jillwindmill.org.uk).

## STAGE 5

### *Pyecombe to Botolphs (Adur Valley)*

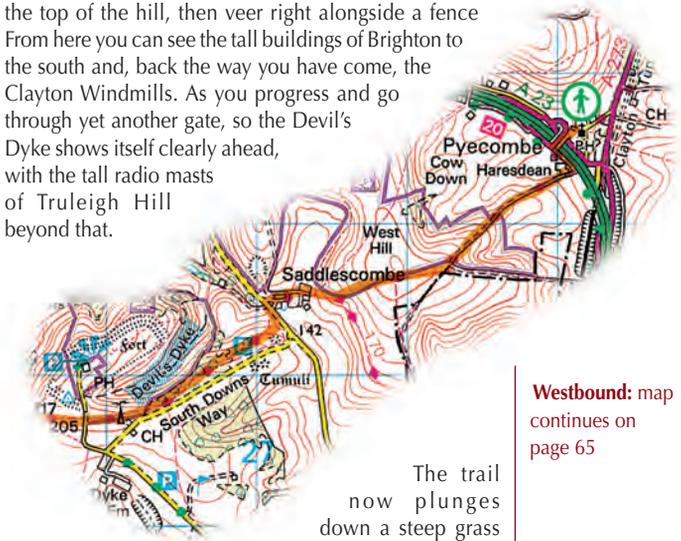
<b>Distance</b>	7½ miles (12km)
<b>Time</b>	3–3½hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 198 Brighton & Lewes 1:50,000; OS Explorer 122 South Downs Way, Steyping to Newhaven 1:50,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Upper Beeding, Truleigh Hill Youth Hostel, Bramber (+1½ miles), Steyping (+½–1½ miles)
<b>Refreshments</b>	Saddlescombe, Devil's Dyke

This part of the route is broken into two distinct stages. The first short leg climbs out of Pyecombe to cross West Hill, then descends to a farm and cottages at Saddlescombe which is, in true geographical terms, set at a saddle, or pass, in a coombe. Ahead rises the scrub- and tree-covered Devil's Dyke, where the second stage of the route returns to the back of the Downs once more. West of Devil's Dyke the Way leads across the Fulking escarpment on a regular rise and fall of hills, often with distant views blinkered by higher ground to the north. Over the cluttered summit of Truleigh Hill the track carries the South Downs Way down to the Shoreham road, then over the River Adur to meet the end of the Downs Link path near St Botolph's Church.

From Pyecombe church walk ahead along Church Hill (not Church Lane), soon sloping downhill to a slip road where you bear left to cross the A23 by the road bridge. Turn left and, almost opposite The Plough Inn, bear right. Just beyond Hobbs Cottage go uphill on a chalk track, passing through a bridle gate. Halfway up the slope go through another gate where a sign announces Newtimber Hill, owned by the National Trust. Maintain direction to

## WESTBOUND – PYECOMBE TO BOTOLPHS

the top of the hill, then veer right alongside a fence. From here you can see the tall buildings of Brighton to the south and, back the way you have come, the Clayton Windmills. As you progress and go through yet another gate, so the Devil's Dyke shows itself clearly ahead, with the tall radio masts of Truleigh Hill beyond that.



Westbound: map continues on page 65

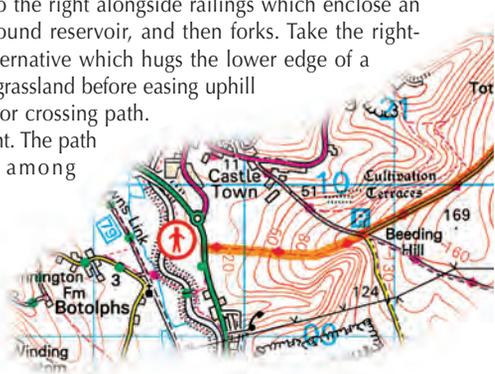
The trail now plunges down a steep grass slope, at the foot of which you go through a bridle gate and continue down an enclosed track, sunken in places, among hedges and trees. This comes to a large farm and a row of cottages at **Saddlescombe** (refreshments) (grid ref: 273115). There is a drinking-water tap outside a building on the left. Go ahead beyond the cottages, then veer left beyond the farm and, passing more cottages, come to a minor road.

**Saddlescombe**, near the Devil's Dyke, has been farmed since before the 13th century, when it came into the ownership of the Knights Templar. In 1995 Saddlescombe Farm was acquired by the National Trust. In addition to 500 acres of agricultural land, it has several unspoiled Sussex farm buildings which include a blacksmith's forge complete with furnace and bellows. There is also a campsite and the The WildFlour café, which provides welcome refreshments. For more information visit [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/saddlescombe-farm-and-newtimber-hill](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/saddlescombe-farm-and-newtimber-hill).

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

Cross to a broad track and go through a gate at the foot of the slope to enter Summer Down. The Way climbs well to the left of the dry valley of **Devil's Dyke**, curves to the right alongside railings which enclose an underground reservoir, and then forks. Take the right-hand alternative which hugs the lower edge of a sloping grassland before easing uphill to a major crossing path.

Turn right. The path winds among



trees and bushes, nearly always with the red-brick Devil's Dyke pub (refreshments) in view. Eventually come onto the narrow lane which leads to the pub. Cross to a gate providing access onto a broad, open downland, and head

The **Devil's Dyke** covers 183 acres of downland, but the name refers to the steep dry valley – the largest single coombe of chalk karst in Britain – cut into it. According to local legend the Devil attempted to carve a dyke through the Downs to enable the sea to flood the churches of the Weald. Working at night he shovelled the earth into great mounds, but was disturbed by an old lady carrying a candle, which he mistook for the dawn. The earth mounds are the tumuli and massive Iron Age hill fort on the summit, and the whole area is now in the care of the National Trust. Since 1987 the Trust has been running a South Downs Appeal which has seen the purchase of a number of important sites. Here in the Devil's Dyke the chalk grassland, dotted with scrub, provides a habitat for the nationally uncommon Scarce Forester moth and the Adonis Blue butterfly, while the native flora includes several orchids (among them Bee, Fragrant, Twayblade and Common Spotted), as well as wild thyme, horseshoe vetch and birdsfoot trefoil.



## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

*Trleigh Hill Youth Hostel stands beside the SDW on the crest of the Downs above the Adur's valley*



The **Downs Link**, as its name suggests, is a 34-mile (55km) recreational route between the North and South Downs, which follows for much of its length the bed of a dismantled railway. It begins on St Martha's Hill near Guildford, and ends at Botolphs.

Bear left along the road for nearly 150 yards, then cross with care to a lay-by and an enclosed path. In a few paces come to a water tap, trough, a few seats and a sign indicating 7 miles to Washington. The Way now crosses a footbridge over the River Adur, then bears right alongside the river. About 150 yards further on it swings left beside a ditch, and crosses the line of a former railway along which the **Downs Link** ◀ has been routed. Continue ahead and come to a minor road (grid ref: 194093) which leads to Botolphs. St Botolph's Church stands a short distance to the left.

Botolphs is a peaceful little hamlet with neither pub nor shop, the nearest accommodation for South Downs Way walkers being either in Bramber or Steyning. The Saxon church here glows orange towards sunset, but apart from that there is just a farm or two and a few cottages, although the village was once considerably larger and had a salt industry and fishing. But the sea withdrew from the valley of the Adur and left Botolphs literally high and dry. In the Middle Ages its fortunes drifted out with the tide, and the odd hummocks seen in some of the meadows are all that remain of one-time village houses.

## STAGE 6

### *Botolphs to Washington*

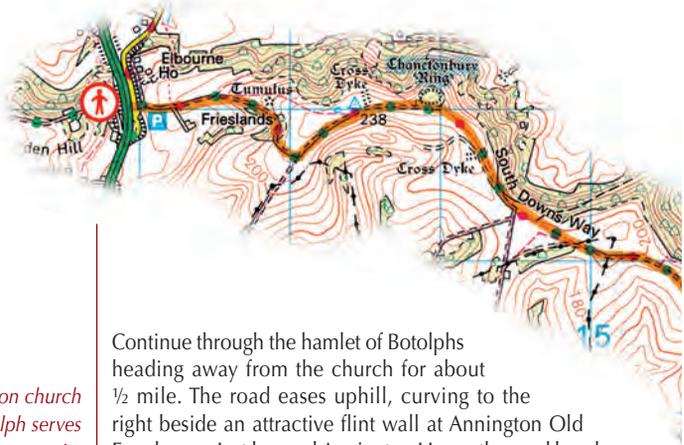
<b>Distance</b>	7 miles (11km)
<b>Time</b>	3–3½hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 198 Brighton & Lewes 1:50,000; OS Explorer 122 South Downs Way, Steyning to Newhaven and 121 Arundel & Pulborough 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Wiston (+1½ miles), Washington
<b>Refreshments</b>	Pub in Washington

Climbing out of the valley of the Adur the South Downs Way soon leads onto the Downs again with lovely intimate vistas of knuckled coombs and mounded brows. A narrow country lane is crossed near the head of Steyning Bowl, then the continuing bridleway enters a broad, inner countryside of wood-lined fields over Steyning Round Hill, where a number of Bronze Age cremation urns were discovered in 1949. Chanctonbury Ring is visited next. This crown of beech and sycamore, seen from so many different points along the Downs – and from the Weald below – that it has almost become a symbol of the South Downs, was badly hit by the storm of October 1987, and it will take decades before the recovery is complete.

When the South Downs Way was first opened, and it went no further west than Buriton, Chanctonbury Ring marked the halfway point. The remaining trees mark the site of an Iron Age hill fort and Roman temple, while a couple of miles or so to the south, Cissbury Ring is noted as being the largest and most impressive of the earthworks on the South Downs, where remains of 200-odd neolithic flint mines have been found. Cissbury, however, is not on the line of the South Downs Way – although it would be worth visiting on a future occasion. (It is in the heart of excellent walking country.)

Once again there are no refreshments available on this stage, but for those in need of a drink or a meal when Washington is reached, a pub is found in the village.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



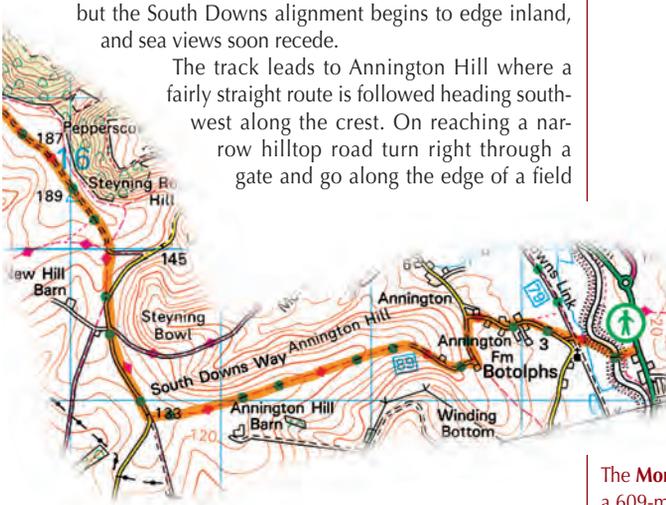
*The Saxon church of St Botolph serves a tiny community on the west bank of the Adur*

Continue through the hamlet of Botolphs heading away from the church for about ½ mile. The road eases uphill, curving to the right beside an attractive flint wall at Annington Old Farmhouse. Just beyond Annington House the road bends sharply to the right. Now cut off to the left along a tree-lined track, which serves as the drive to a cottage. Just



before reaching it the track forks. Bear right and climb on to gain the back of the Downs. As you gain height there is a tendency to keep peering off to the left where folding hills tuck themselves into Winding Bottom, a most attractive little vale with Coombe Head protecting it to the south. The sea lies not much more than 3 miles away, but the South Downs alignment begins to edge inland, and sea views soon recede.

The track leads to Annington Hill where a fairly straight route is followed heading south-west along the crest. On reaching a narrow hilltop road turn right through a gate and go along the edge of a field



keeping parallel with the road. At the end of the field section exit through another gate, continue beside the road for about 200 yards, then cross left to a farm track striking through a large arable field. On coming to crossing tracks note the memorial on the left, dedicated to the memory of a Sussex farmer whose ashes, along with those of his wife, were laid to rest here 'on his cherished Downs'. The left-hand track goes to Cissbury Ring and is followed by the **Monarch's Way**. ▶ The South Downs Way continues ahead.

The Way is clearly marked at all junctions, and maintains a north-westerly course among largely arable land. As you progress, so the crown of Chanctonbury Ring grows in stature ahead.

The **Monarch's Way** is a 609-mile (980km) long-distance path based on the journey taken by Charles II following defeat in the Battle of Worcester in 1651. Starting in Worcester it makes a long circuitous route and ends in Shoreham. There is a three-volume route guide written by Trevor Antill (Meridian Books).

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



*The River Adur  
at Botolphs*

**Accommodation:** About half a mile before reaching Chanctonbury Ring, a way cuts off to the right, and descends through Chalkpit Wood by way of a track. At the foot of the Downs the track joins the narrow Chanctonbury Ring Road which leads to Wiston, for those who've arranged accommodation there.

The Way continues, and rises across a green meadowland from which splendid views are to be had off to the right if you stray a little from the path. Wiston House is seen below, and a vast patchwork of fields, woodlands and meadows of the Weald stretching to the north, east and west. You may be able to detect the white-painted Shipley windmill (owned for many years by Hilaire Belloc), about 6½ miles away to the north. So come to **Chanctonbury Ring** (grid ref: 139120).

*On my first walk along the South Downs Way I had looked forward to greeting the hilltop grove of beeches for some time, but feared what I might find after the ravages of the Great Storm. From afar Chanctonbury appeared to have survived. I had looked up from the depths of the*

**Chanctonbury Ring** was planted in 1760 by Charles Goring of Wiston House, seen below to the north-east. The grove of beech and sycamore trees was especially set to please the eye. It is said that during the first few months after planting, Goring made regular visits to his young trees, carrying water up the steep slope to ensure they ‘took’. An Iron Age fort of about 4 acres forms the base of the Ring, and following the storm of 1987 the site was properly excavated before replanting took place. The Romans had built a temple in the heart of the site during the third or fourth century AD. Chanctonbury Ring is said to be haunted, and a first-hand account of this appears in Robert Macfarlane’s wonderful *The Old Ways* (Hamish Hamilton/Penguin, 2012), when he recounts an experience he had when sleeping out one night in the midst of the Ring. Spooky stuff!

*Weald, and gazed at it from prominent positions along the eastern Downs and all had seemed well. But as I walked across the meadow towards it, the grey light of an overcast day shone on forlorn, leaning trunks, huge upturned discs of earth, and on the exposed and ruptured root systems. And my heart fell. For 200 years these trees had impressed themselves on the Sussex landscape,*

*Chanctonbury Ring, storm-battered, but still a major landmark on the Sussex Downs*



*but the winds that tore across southern England in the early hours of 16 October 1987 had effectively altered the landscape. I returned several times over the ensuing years, and noted how many of the fallen trees had been removed and young trees planted in their place. Maturity will not return overnight, but nature is incredibly patient, and no doubt our children's grandchildren will be able to enjoy what we once knew as the beech crown of Chanctonbury Ring standing proud once more. Until the next major storm, that is.*

The Way skirts the Ring along its southern edge and continues heading west, but shortly after passing below a trig point, veer leftwards through a gate by a cattle grid (there is a restored dew pond on the right) and remain on the track until coming to a major junction where you turn right. Now descend a chalk and flint track, which leads to a car park a little south of Washington.

As you leave the car park bear right along a track which passes above the former main road. When it curves to the right, go ahead on what is a private drive but public footpath. Passing a few houses come to a multi-junction of tracks and cut back to the left to descend round a wooded bend and join the road. Walk along the road, then take the second turning on the left, The Street, at grid ref: 122127. (For refreshments ignore this turning and keep ahead a short distance to find the village pub beside the road. There's a campsite on the north side of the A283.)

Bypassed by the busy A24 and A283, Washington is a neat, compact village dating from Saxon times, with several attractive flint- and brick-built cottages, and a parish church with 13th-century columns and arches and a solid-looking 15th-century tower – all that remain of the previous church which was pulled down in 1866.

## STAGE 7

### *Washington to Amberley*

<b>Distance</b>	6 miles (9.5km)
<b>Time</b>	2½–3hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 198 Brighton & Lewes and 197 Chichester & The South Downs 1:50,000; OS Explorer 121 Arundel & Pulborough 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Storrington (+1¼ miles), Amberley
<b>Refreshments</b>	None on the route, but there is a café and pub in Amberley

Between the cut made through the Downs by the valley which now carries the A24, and the twisting river valley of the Arun, the South Downs present a broad-topped escarpment of fields sown with wheat, barley or oil-seed rape, tufted here and there with trees. In places the long-distance walker or rider is rewarded with views into the depths of the Weald; sometimes over lonely farms and later, out to the glint and glimmer of the River Arun drawing itself through the low country of the north. Down there too, best seen from Rackham Banks, are the water meadows of Amberley Wild Brooks – marshlands drained by dykes and ditches, a criss-cross of watercourses picked out by the sun. Beyond the marshes and Arun's valley, the wall of the Downs slopes onward in an enticing arc.

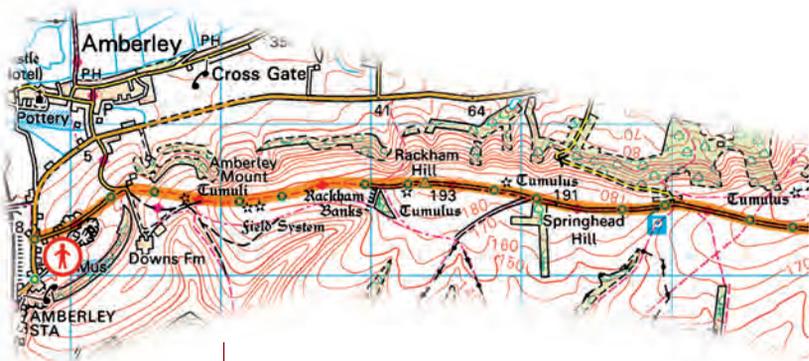
It is another stage without habitation, although there are one or two isolated barns, and at Chantry Hill and Springhead Hill narrow lanes come onto the lip of the Downs from Storrington, whose village houses are tucked against the northern slopes. Cattle graze in large open meadows. There are hares and peewits and big skies conjuring Turner canvases on wild-weather days.

Please note, the Alternative route (formerly the Main route) makes a dangerous crossing of the A24 and cannot be recommended, but is given merely for completeness. It should only be taken on the rare occasion that there is little traffic.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

Walk along The Street, and just beyond the Parish Church a road bridge crosses the A24. When the road forks soon after, branch right on a stony track/drive which leads to Rowdell House. Immediately before it bends to the right by the house, turn left on a bridleway among trees, then out to a surfaced drive passing a couple of houses, now rising as a sunken lane through woodland. Keep alert for a sign indicating the SDW breaking to the right among bushes and trees, then emerge to a sloping meadow. The Way rises across this meadow, curving left and climbing onto Barnsfarm Hill where it heads south to a crossing track used by the Alternative route (see below) at grid ref: 104119. Turn right.

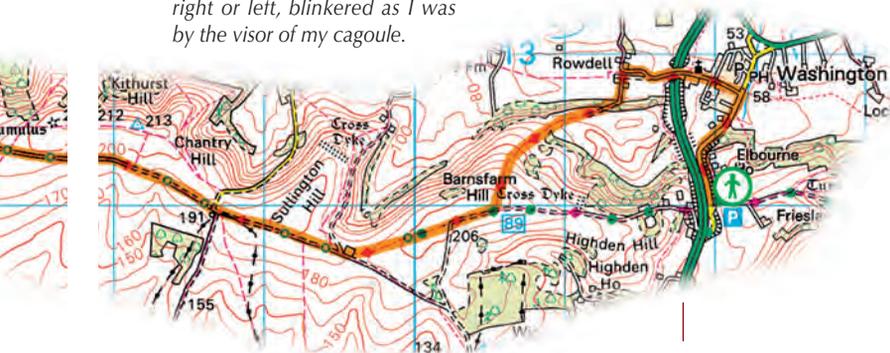
**Alternative route:** From Washington car park bear left. Cross the A24 dual carriageway – **with great care** – and follow Glaseby Lane which winds uphill. About 200 yards from the A24 note a drinking-water supply on the left. The lane ends in woodland, and continues as a flint track rising up the slopes of Highden Hill, on the western side of which it is joined by the main route of the South Downs Way coming from the right at grid ref: 104119.



**Main walk continued:** The Way continues towards a Dutch barn and, following a fence line across the grassland of Sullington Hill, comes at last to a small car parking area at the head of a narrow lane on Chantry Hill overlooking Storrington. This is a noted local viewpoint and a place where horses are often brought to exercise. Standing just to the right of the SDW track is the Chantry Post, similar to the Keymer Post seen near Ditchling Beacon on Stage 4.

**Accommodation:** If you intend to seek accommodation in Storrington leave the Way here and travel down the lane which leads directly to the village.

*I had already been walking for several hours when I arrived at the Chantry Post, so sat with my back against it to eat my sandwiches. Almost immediately the heavy clouds that had been overhanging Storrington swung away to the south-west, rose up the hillside and perched sullenly on Springhead Hill to block my advance. The air turned cool, a breeze huffed across the Downs and suddenly lightning streaked the sky. Thunder roared and the ground shook. There was nowhere to hide, no shelter from the rain that came racing in great rods from the west, so I put my sandwiches away, pulled on water-proofs and headed into the eye of the storm. A magical pathway then led between shafts of lightning (fenceposts of fire), though I saw little of the countryside to the right or left, blinkered as I was by the visor of my cagoule.*



## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

*The Chantry Post  
is found midway  
between Washington  
and Amberley*



*Twenty minutes later the worst was over and I resumed my lunch among the puddles of a dripping spinney.*

With the Chantry Post to your right continue straight ahead along a clear flint track that gently crosses a line of minor hills in a north-westerly direction. In places (so I have found since that first storm-bound journey) a view opens to the left to show the sea and the outline of the Isle of Wight far off. On meeting the head of another narrow lane on Springhead Hill, where there is also a car park, the route veers slightly left. There are hedges and clumps of trees and much arable farmland as you approach Rackham Hill.

All around Rackham Hill there are tumuli. To the south, a mile or so away and reached by a track known as the Lepers Way, is the site of a Bronze Age barrow (The Burgh), while ahead, alongside the route over Amberley

Mount, there are lynchets which an archaeological survey revealed as a system of 20 fields, some of which had been terraced 2500 years ago.

Along the track by Rackham Banks you gain those splendid open views into the Weald where Parham House sprawls in its deer park backed by extensive woodland. Ahead (west) across the Arun's gap, the wooded slopes of the South Downs curve far into the distance luring you on. It is a lovely stretch to walk and, presumably, also to ride. Easy underfoot, easy on the eye; a peaceful, generous landscape. Eventually the Way leads down to a gate with the large conglomeration of barns and outbuildings of Downs Farm seen below. Go through the gate and descend the slope to pass well to the right of the farm. An enclosed bridlepath then leads to a road where you bear right for about 80 yards. On coming to a junction where you gain a sneak view of **Amberley** turn left into High Titten (grid ref: 034125).

*Amberley is one of the most attractive villages in Sussex*



## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

**Amberley** is one of the most attractive of all Sussex villages, and is well worth a visit. It has many charming thatched cottages, and others whose gardens cascade over their walls. Next to the Norman church stand the ruins of a 14th-century castle built for the Bishops of Chichester around a former manor house. North of the village stretch Amberley Wild Brooks ('Wild' is a derivation of 'Weald'), an area of some 30 acres of grazing marshes and water meadows spreading out from the Arun.

*Mill Lane, the lane  
which runs between  
High Titten and  
Amberley village*

**Accommodation:** For those needing accommodation in Amberley do not turn left here but continue ahead down the lane known as Mill Lane. This meets the B2139 at minor crossroads. Cross directly ahead into the village where there is a village store, post office, tea room and B&B.

High Titten slopes downhill between deep chalk quarries, although that on the right is mostly hidden by bushes and



trees. That on the left contains **Amberley Museum** which can be seen between the trees, while sometimes you can hear the whistle of a steam engine deep below. On reaching the B2139 turn right onto a raised path running alongside the road towards Amberley. (Refreshments available at both pub and café 500 yards down the road to the left.)

**Amberley Museum** was created from a large chalk quarry on the east bank of the Arun, which at one time employed more than 100 men. The 36-acre site has a variety of industrial machinery on display, as well as a narrow gauge railway, blacksmith's shop, clay-pipemaker's and woodturner's shops and a printing works. The museum is open to the public between May and October, Wednesday–Sunday, and daily during the school summer holidays.

STAGE 8

Amberley to Cocking

<b>Distance</b>	12 miles (19km)
<b>Time</b>	6–7hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 197 Chichester & The South Downs 1:50,000; OS Explorer 121 Arundel & Pulborough and 120 Chichester 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Houghton (+½ mile), Bury (+1 mile), Bignor Bothy and camping (+1 mile), Graffham (+1 mile), Cocking (+¾ mile)
<b>Refreshments</b>	None on the route, except water tap on the outskirts of Cocking, but pub in Houghton, 400 yards off-route near the start

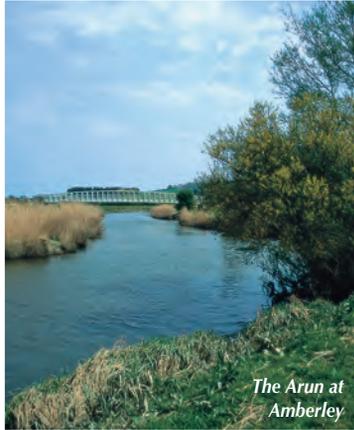
Westbound: map continues on page 87



Given private transport arrangements this lengthy stage could be broken either at Bignor Hill, or after about 6 miles at the crossing of the A285 south of

Petworth. The way to Bignor Hill conjures up visions of the Roman era, for the South Downs Way briefly shares the route of the Roman Stane Street. Burton Down gives way to more arable farmland, but west of the A285 there is much woodland and for several miles views are severely restricted. Strips of farmland break up the extensive woods, but once Manorfarm Down is reached, vistas open once more above the little village of Cocking – a village with an attractive heart and welcome prospects of refreshment and lodging.

When the path beside the B2139 runs out, cross the road with care and continue on a path now on the left of the road, behind a hedge. This brings you to a concrete farm drive where you turn left, soon to cross the railway line. Beyond a water treatment plant maintain direction on a track which twists around fields and brings you to the **River Arun**. Bear right to a brideway bridge, provided in 1994 by the Sussex Downs Conservation Board as part of a safer alternative to the original South Downs Way route, which previously followed the busy road into Houghton.



## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

The **River Arun** is the longest in Sussex, rising in St Leonard's Forest near Crawley and discharging into the sea at Littlehampton. It is a popular river with anglers, for whom chub, pike, perch and roach are tempted. There is a very pleasant riverside walk between Amberley and Arundel, while the bankside path continues all the way to the estuary at Littlehampton. During the Napoleonic Wars a canal was built to join the Arun with the Thames via the River Wey. A wharf stood on the river then, near Houghton bridge, and chalk barges traded along the navigation. The canal was closed in 1868.

**Bury** is a neighbour both to Houghton and Amberley, an attractive riverside village (there used to be a ferry allowing easy access to Amberley) with a secluded air about it. Novelist John Galsworthy lived in the mock-Tudor Bury House from 1926 until his death in 1933.

**Accommodation:** For accommodation in Bury, cross the bridge and turn right to follow the riverside path all the way to the village.

Cross the bridleway bridge over the Arun and bear right along the west bank. When the river curves to the right, leave the embankment to cut left on a bridleway alongside a drainage ditch. On the far side of the field turn right and soon go through a gate on the left. Continue to the Houghton–Bury road. (Accommodation and refreshments in **Houghton** 400 yards to the left.) Cross this minor road and maintain direction on a track sloping gently uphill. It snakes round to the right above a lovely little valley and, still rising, offers views of the twisting Arun below, and the village of **Bury** ◀ beside it. Now the track curves left and at the top of the slope brings you alongside Coombe Wood to reach the A29 (grid ref: 004118). Bear right for 100 yards, then follow a chalk track on the left towards Houghton Forest. From this track look back to enjoy a wonderful panoramic

**Houghton** stands a little above the River Arun, and the South Downs Way used to go through it until a diversion took the route away from the busy road. The village has several interesting buildings, one of which is the George and Dragon, where the young Charles II supposedly stopped for refreshment in October 1651 during his flight to France following defeat in the Battle of Worcester.



view which includes the Weald, Amberley Wild Brooks, distant downland ridges, and the Arun sidling through the valley. Beside the forest the Way bears right, soon leaving the edge of the trees to cut through open fields on Bury Hill. ('To this green hill a something dreamlike clings...' said Galsworthy in his poem *Bury Hill*.)

The track becomes enclosed by fences and bordered by cowslips among the banks of Westburton Hill. Sloping downhill the Way brings you to some barns in a sunken hollow, and just beyond these there's a junction of tracks. Bear left, then immediately turn right to climb uphill alongside hedges, over crossing tracks and ahead beside a fence marking the way to Bignor Hill. To the north, at the foot of the Downs, lie the ruins of Bignor Roman Villa.

Shortly before gaining the summit of Bignor Hill, the Way passes a mounting block known as Toby's Stone – a memorial to one-time secretary of the Cowdray Hounds, Toby Wentworth-Fitzwilliam.

*Once the home of novelist John Galsworthy, Bury lies across the River Arun from Amberley*

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



*The sign on Bignor Hill which shows the Roman name for Chichester (Noviomagus)*

Over Bignor Hill is a car park close to the line of the Roman **Stane Street** and an interesting finger post bearing Latin names: Noviomagus (Chichester) and Londinium (London). Passing this post to your left continue ahead towards a pair of aerials. About 200 yards from the post bear left along the agger (or embankment) of Stane Street, then right at the first junction (grid ref: 970128).

**Stane Street** is a Saxon name for the Roman road built in AD 70 for both military and economic purposes to link Chichester (Noviomagus) with London (Londinium). It was metalled and had a camber, and was 20–25 feet (6–7.5m) wide. This remarkable piece of engineering had to cross not only the South and North Downs, but also the greensand range of hills and the almost impenetrable Wealden forest. It achieved the 56 mile (90km) route in three straight lines, including a passage through the 2000-acre estate attached to the Roman villa at Bignor. This is found below the Downs a short distance away from the point at which the South Downs Way crosses. Bignor Roman Villa is open to the public throughout the year, with the exception of Mondays between October and March.

**Accommodation:** If you plan to spend the night at the National Trust's Gumber Bothy (a camping barn with 25 dormitory beds plus camping, with kitchen, showers and pay phone: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/slindon-estate](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/slindon-estate)) do not turn right here, but continue ahead along Stane Street for  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile, then veer left at a signed junction. The bothy is just 1 mile from the South Downs Way – not  $1\frac{3}{4}$  miles as the Bignor Hill signpost suggests.

Having turned right, away from the route of Stane Street, in a few paces go through a gate into a field below the aerial masts, and maintain direction alongside a fence. On the far side of the field exit through another bridle gate and continue over crossing tracks. Passing a few yew trees on Burton Down the Way heads north-west across arable land (the woods on the right descend the scarp slope into the delightfully named Scotcher's Bottom), and then descends through woods on a clear track which brings you to the A285 Petworth–Chichester road at Littleton Farm (grid ref: 951144).

*Coming down the track in the mid-afternoon, birds were mostly silent, but there were numerous wild flowers clustered at the base of the trees and along wayside banks to brighten the walk. Small flies danced as though riding gossamer yo-yos in misted beams of sunlight that chequered the track around me. I wandered down on stepping stones of shadow.*

Cross the road and take the track opposite which passes to the right of the farm between grassy banks and trees. On coming to crossing tracks go into the field ahead (to the right of a rising track) and cross uphill through the field, veering slightly to the right in order to find another bridle gate in a mid-field fence, then continue to the upper edge of the top field.

*My heart went into my mouth as a partridge leapt out of the young corn beside me, and when I recovered from the shock and looked around, I saw the pleading eyes of the hen bird gazing pitifully from her maternal egg-protecting squat. The cock had raced away to distract my*

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

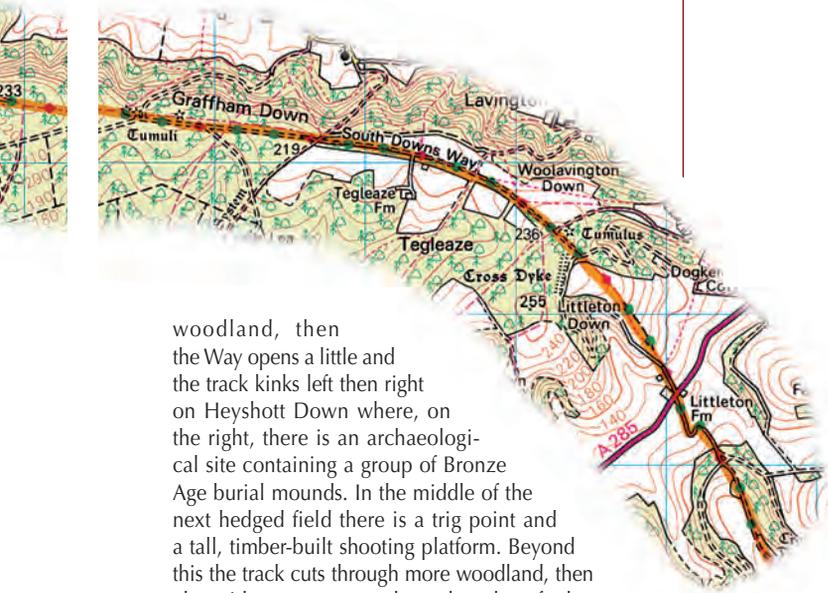


attention, leaving the hen bravely sitting out the danger. 'Bloody daft place to lay your eggs!' I scolded, 'the path'll be crawling with ramblers 'ere long.' Leaving her in peace, I almost detected her sigh of relief.

At the head of the field a broad track leads into woodland above Stickingspit Bottom near the high point of Crown Tegleaze (830ft/253m). This is the start of a long section with no buildings in sight for more than 3 miles, much of the way devoid of views. It goes through and alongside woods over Woolavington Down and Graffham Down, the dense woodlands hiding deer, the seemingly endless rectangular fields between the woods haunted by pheasants. There are several alternative paths and tracks cutting from it, but the route of the South Downs Way is obvious, if not waymarked at every junction.

**Accommodation:** At the end of a long field section, where the Way becomes pinched by woods once more on Graffham Down, a junction of tracks marked by an oak signpost offers one of two ways by which to divert to Graffham – below the Downs to the north (right) for overnight accommodation.

On the way through the woods on Graffham Down, note two open sites (one on the right, the other to the left of the track) where patches of downland are managed by the Graffham Down Trust to protect the chalk-loving plants and butterflies. For some time you remain enclosed by



woodland, then the Way opens a little and the track kinks left then right on Heyshott Down where, on the right, there is an archaeological site containing a group of Bronze Age burial mounds. In the middle of the next hedged field there is a trig point and a tall, timber-built shooting platform. Beyond this the track cuts through more woodland, then alongside yet more woods on the edge of a large open field.

*It was late in the day and I'd seen no-one for several hours, but I'd not been alone as there was plenty of wildlife for company. Now I spied a dog fox padding with exaggerated stealth across the field before me, head forward, back low, tail extended. The field was being picked over by innumerable pheasants, and the fox had one unsuspecting bird in its sights. Dinner was less than a minute away when, for some unknown reason, the fox glanced in my direction. He froze – as did I. Then in-built fear spun him around and, forsaking his meal (or at least, postponing it) he raced for the cover of the woods. I sensed, rather than heard, his curses. But there were no thanks from the pheasants, which continued their scrabbling undisturbed.*

**Eastbound:** map continues on page 80

The flint track then descends through more open countryside as Manorfarm Down spreads itself fanshape to the west. And at last you come to the buildings of Hill Barn Farm about 250 yards before the A286 on Cocking Hill. There is a drinking-water tap on the left of the track by the entrance to a sawmill.

**Accommodation:** To reach Cocking for accommodation, refreshments, or to stock up with supplies from the village store, bear right through the farm on a track leading down to the village, which you reach below the charming little church. Take the lane left of the church and this will bring you to the heart of Cocking by the village store, close to the Blue Bell Inn.

The Way continues beyond Hill Barn Farm and soon reaches the Midhurst–Chichester road (grid ref: 875166). There is a bus stop nearby which is useful if you plan to divert from the route to visit either Midhurst to the north, or Chichester to the south. Cocking lies  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile down the road to the right.

Cocking is a small village astride the A286, but away from the road it remains remarkably unspoiled. Several of the houses in and around the village belong to the Cowdray Estate, their window frames painted custard yellow. There was a settlement here before the Norman conquest, and the Domesday Book records ‘...a church, 6 serfs and 5 mills yielding 37 shillings and sixpence.’ The church stands on the eastern end of the village with fields around it, and is worth visiting. Manor Farm shares the churchyard wall, and below it runs a clear stream in a peaceful setting. About  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the south at Singleton, the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum is a fascinating collection of traditional buildings in a rural setting – well worth a visit on a future occasion.

## STAGE 9

### *Cocking to South Harting*

<b>Distance</b>	7½ miles (12km)
<b>Time</b>	3–3½hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 197 Chichester & The South Downs 1:50,000; OS Explorer 120 Chichester 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Elsted (+1 mile), East Harting (+1 mile) South Harting (+¾ mile)
<b>Refreshments</b>	None on the route

This stage of the South Downs Way makes a very fine journey, full of variety and interest. There are sections where the views are extensive, and others in which woodland draws a secluded landscape. There are isolated farms tucked away from the world just off the trail, with practically no other habitation and no villages of any size for many a long mile. Once again the route hugs the northern edge of the escarpment, but gazing south it is possible to catch a glimpse of Chichester's cathedral spire framed within a tree-crowded panorama. In the woods encroaching on the trail you may catch sight of deer. Certainly there will be numerous birds to serenade the day, and wild flowers in plenty.

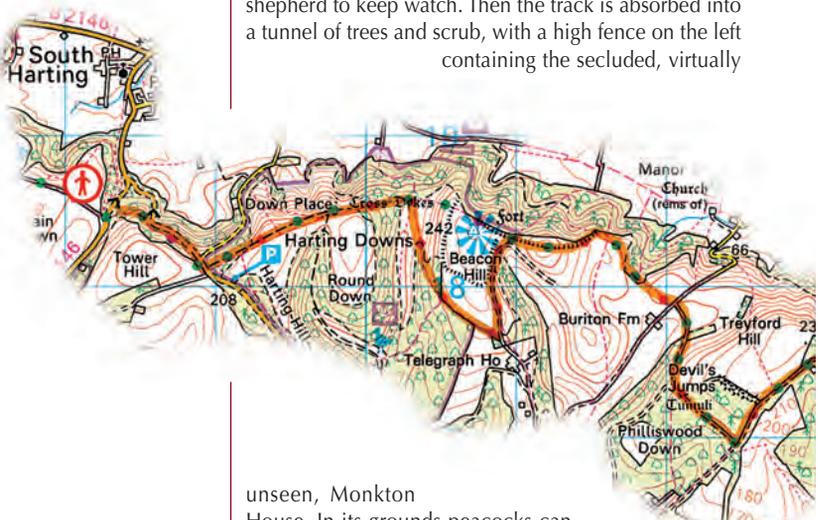
An easy track leads onto Cocking Down, then to Linch Down, broad and open. Monkton Down leads to Philliswood and, emerging from the light glades of these woodlands, a delightful countryside is revealed. On the approach to Beacon Hill one rejoices in the landscape, and over Harting Down the northern slopes plunge to tiny communities snug in the shadow of the Downs. Rarely will you travel this last downland brow alone, for there is a car park nearby and a road that leads from Petersfield. Across this the SDW bridleway continues to a second road, the B2146, which has a path running adjacent to it down to South Harting, while the main route avoids the village and aims towards Hampshire. But this is reserved for Stage 10.

Yet again this stage is entirely without refreshment (except by diversion from the route), so set out for the day suitably provisioned.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

From the A286 south of Cocking village the South Downs Way heads north-west along Middlefield Lane, passing a farm and rising towards Cocking Down. The white chalk track is enclosed by hedges at first, but on gaining the crest of the Downs bare fences replace them. Off to the left stretches an extensive area of woodland, inhabited by deer, some of which emerge at night in small herds to sleep in the wheatfields, thus flattening the crops and causing problems at harvest time.

For 3 miles the track maintains a steady north-west-erly direction across Cocking Down, Linch Down (with the trig point of Linch Ball in the middle of a field to the right), and Didling Hill. On the proverbial clear day, not only Chichester Cathedral may be seen across the intervening woods, but also the Solent and the Isle of Wight beyond that. This crown of hills has mostly been turned to arable farmland, but there is grassland on Didling Hill white with sheep, grazing fenced meadows that need no shepherd to keep watch. Then the track is absorbed into a tunnel of trees and scrub, with a high fence on the left containing the secluded, virtually



unseen, Monkton House. In its grounds peacocks can be heard screeching.

## WESTBOUND – COCKING TO SOUTH HARTING

*One peacock had somehow escaped the lofty barrier and ran ahead of me along the muddy track, its exotic feathers dragging behind, reminding me of a bride opting for extravagant fashion in place of traditional white. Now and then it stopped to check if I was still following, then took off once more. Stupid bird, I feared I might chase it all the way to Winchester.*

The track swings to the left with open meadows on the right, and by a stile a small memorial stone bears the simple inscription: 'Mark liked it here. 23.7.60–20.4.98.' Just ahead, on the edge of Philliswood, a series of curious mounds can be seen – the tumuli, or burial mounds, known as the Devil's Jumps, which date from the Bronze Age – about 3500 years ago. Philliswood Down is clothed in lovely mature beech, oak and birch trees, and the Way takes you through the woodland into a delight of birdsong in the morning, among multi-shades of green in the leaves, on the trunks and in the ground cover of sunlit glades.

Come to a crossing track and break away sharply to the right. As the Way slopes downhill it joins a broader track, eventually leaving the woods behind to gain views ahead which include the little communities of Treyford and Elstead in the distance. Across to the left the shape of **Telegraph House** can sometimes be seen above the trees on the southern slope of Beacon Hill.



## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

**Telegraph House** is partially hidden at the end of a long drive on the south slope of Beacon Hill, and was built by Earl Russell on the site of one of the Admiralty's Portsmouth to London telegraph stations established during the Napoleonic Wars. Earl Russell's brother, the philosopher Bertrand Russell, later turned the house into a (short-lived) school.

*From Pen Hill, two tracks can be seen on neighbouring Beacon Hill. The SDW is the left-hand option which angles below the summit*

Coming to a narrow farm track (grid ref: 821178), with Buriton Farm huddled in a dip of folding hills to the left, bear left for a few paces, then turn right (there are no waymarks) through a bridle gate onto an enclosed track heading north-west once more. The Way skirts the edge of a spinney, then along the bottom edge of a field to a crossing track (grid ref: 816184).



**Accommodation:** If you have planned to spend the night at Elsted, bear right here. The village is about 1 mile away to the north.

Cross straight ahead, then veer left to climb the slope along a scrub-and-thorn margin between fields. This is Pen Hill, and from the crest there is a splendid panorama to enjoy.

*On my most recent journey along this route rain cascaded down and created a fine mist through which no views could be seen at all. But I recalled my first wandering here, which offered a total contrast: I'd stripped off my shirt in the spring warmth, and lay for a while in the grass gazing into a hazy blue vault where half a dozen skylarks trilled with an enthusiasm impossible to check. Turning to the east my eye caught the sweeping Downs brunched with spring colours in the trees and shrubs of the northern slopes. To the west Beacon Hill, site of an Iron Age hill fort of 40 acres, was scarred with two distinct white tracks across which shadowy four-legged figures loped to and fro. Far views were distorted, but that did not matter. Nearer to hand there were flowers in the field margins and blossom among the blackthorn. I saw a rabbit break cover and nervously make a stuttering run across the bay below. Ants pioneered a new route up the face of an upturned slice of flint. A pheasant cackled, a cuckoo called, while sheep in valley meadows sent messages in the breeze. Unused to such busy peace, city folk might call it silence. It was not. In the calm hush of morning were countless sounds of life – but nothing at all with an engine. All was just as it should have been. There was undisturbed perfection in the slow revolving minutes, as I lay there and absorbed it all in solitude.*

Before leaving Pen Hill, study Beacon Hill to the west and note that it is the left-hand chalk track that should be taken (although the right-hand option makes a short cut over the summit of the hill and rejoins the South Downs Way proper at Bramshott Bottom, thus saving about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile). Descend steeply into the saddle between Pen Hill and Beacon Hill, then fork left to

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



*South Harting lies  
in the valley below  
Harting Down*

traverse round the east slope above the coomb known as Millpond Bottom. The Way takes you along the edge of a large field and comes to trees, scrub and gorse bushes near the entrance to Telegraph House. At a crossing track by the entrance, head sharply to the right along a scrub-lined track with a rich variety of plants growing beside it. This leads along the neat vale of Bramshott Bottom, and comes to crossing tracks in an open grassy saddle marked by a prominent wooden post set on a stone base (grid ref: 803186). Turn left to gain Harting Down – a nature reserve owned by the National Trust, which is a popular excursion for motorists who park on the western side.

Do not stray to the actual summit of Harting Down, but keep along the right-hand slope where views from the springy turf are considerable. A number of small villages may be seen below, pre-eminent being South Harting with a green copper broach spire to its church.

To the west of Harting Down you come to a car park and, just beyond this, cross the B2141 and continue along

a track which parallels the road among some fine mature beech, oak and chestnut trees. This pleasant stretch is known as The Bosom, and it cuts round the flank of Tower Hill to meet the B2146 above South Harting (grid ref: 783185 – accommodation, refreshments). The village is off to the right, while to the left the road leads to Uppark and, eventually, to the coast.

**Accommodation:** If it is your intention to stay overnight in South Harting – or you need refreshment at the White Hart – do not use the road, but cross on the continuing Way, then turn right on a footpath that descends through woods and enters the village just south of the church, a distance of a little over ½ mile.

South Harting is a compact little village with a 14th-century church dedicated to St Mary and St Gabriel. Shortly before he died, the Victorian novelist Anthony Trollope lived here. The village is perhaps best known for the dignified mansion of Uppark which stands on Tower Hill to the south, at which the mother of H. G. Wells was house-keeper in the late 19th century. Uppark is in the care of the National Trust; it suffered a disastrous fire in 1989, but has since been rebuilt at great expense.

## STAGE 10

### *South Harting to Buriton (Queen Elizabeth Forest)*

<b>Distance</b>	3½ miles (5.5km)
<b>Time</b>	1½–2hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 197 Chichester & The South Downs 1:50,000; OS Explorer 120 Chichester 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Buriton (+½ mile)
<b>Refreshments</b>	None on the route

This short stage which leads to the outskirts of Buriton takes the route out of Sussex and into Hampshire, and marks the original completion of the South Downs Way before the extension to Winchester was approved in 1989. It is a stage in which there is a change in landscape, for gone – albeit temporarily – are the rolling Downs, and in their place a typically southern countryside of low farmland with woods and hedgerows and winding lanes. But it is no less interesting for that. There are plenty of spring and summer flowers in the hedgerows and field margins, and no shortage of wildlife. There will be jackdaws, no doubt, circling above the woods, and rabbits nose-twitching along the track. Peewits swoop over low-lying fields, and kestrels hover, head down, in search of an unsuspecting meal.

From the point where the previous stage paused above South Harting, a 2-mile hedge-lined track strikes across farmland with long views into the Weald, and reaches a farm on the Sussex–Hampshire border. A quiet country lane then takes over, before returning to a trackway at Coulters Dean Farm. At the western end of this another lane continues the route among woods on the way to Queen Elizabeth Forest, which is reached just above Buriton. Although there are no refreshment facilities along the route, Buriton (½ mile distant) has a pub which serves food.

From the B2146 above South Harting follow the clear hedge-lined track north-westward with views into the



Weald to the right. The track is known as Forty Acre Lane and it leads for nearly a mile alongside gentle farmland to a narrow metalled road, which it crosses. Maintain direction on the second half of Forty Acre Lane, near the end of which, just before reaching Sunwood Farm, you leave West Sussex behind and enter Hampshire. At Sunwood Farm come onto a quiet country road and turn left. In a few paces the road swings to the right and eases up a gentle slope beside a row of copper beech trees.

On coming to a minor junction branch right. The road then winds through Cockshott Wood, losing height among the trees. Do not be tempted by a track marked to Buriton, but remain on the road, passing **Coulters Dean Nature Reserve** ▶ on the left shortly before reaching Coulters Dean Farm, which shelters in a lonely hollow. The surfaced lane ends here, but the Way continues beyond the farm, now rising uphill and passing beneath overhead power cables to gain more Wealden views to the north, before coming down to Dean Barn and a pair of cottages. After these follow the metalled lane through Appleton's Copse and on to a

T-junction (grid ref: 734198) opposite a parking area with Queen Elizabeth Forest stretching ahead.

**Coulters Dean Nature Reserve**

is owned by the Hampshire Wildlife Trust and is a noted habitat for 11 types of orchid. Deer and badger feed there, and a number of butterflies gather on bright summer days, among them the Adonis Blue, Chalk Hill and Holly Blue.



## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



*Dean Barn  
near Buriton*

**Accommodation:** For those in need of accommodation or refreshment in Buriton, do not walk down the road, but take the bridleway which cuts off to the right just before reaching the T-junction.

Buriton (accommodation, refreshments) is an unspoilt village with a large duckpond, a huddle of cottages and an Elizabethan manor house behind the parish church where the historian, Edward Gibbon (1737–94) spent his early years. The village is on a bus route to Petersfield, about 3 miles to the north.

## STAGE 11

### *Buriton to Exton*

<b>Distance</b>	12 miles (19km)
<b>Time</b>	6–7hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 197 Chichester & The South Downs and 185 Winchester & Basingstoke Area 1:50,000; OS Explorer 132 Winchester, New Alresford & East Meon 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	East Meon (+1¼ miles), Wetherdown Lodge, West Meon (+1½ miles), Warnford, Exton
<b>Refreshments</b>	Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Butser Hill, Meon Springs (Whitewool Farm) , Warnford, Exton

On this stage of the South Downs Way there are grassy paths, broad tracks and country lanes to follow. There are stretches of dark forest with the

**Westbound:**  
map continues  
on page 101



## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

chance of sighting deer, open hilltops with memorable, far-reaching views, tree-and-scrub-lined trackways, big fields and rolling meadows. There is fast-moving traffic on the A3 (avoided by a subway), and an ancient site to wander through on Old Winchester Hill (walkers only here – the bridleyway takes an alternative route). Butser Hill is the highest point, not just of Hampshire but of all the South Downs, and this is crossed in the early stages after ducking beneath the A3. After crossing Old Winchester Hill, the Way follows a delightful and rare chalk stream to the banks of the River Meon.

For those with private transport, it would be possible to arrange to break the route at the road junction of Hyden Cross.



Go through the car park and into Queen Elizabeth Forest – part of the **Queen Elizabeth Country Park** – on a broad

**Queen Elizabeth Country Park** ([www.hants.gov.uk/countryside/qecp](http://www.hants.gov.uk/countryside/qecp)) consists of 1400 acres of forest and downland which includes Butser Hill. Several waymarked walks explore the woods and Downs of the park, including the 12-mile (19km) Staunton Way, a linear path, which begins here, then heads south across the Downs to Staunton Country Park, and continues alongside the Hermitage Stream to Broadmarsh on Langstone Harbour. The Hangers Way is another linear route which heads north from the park on a 21-mile (34km) journey to Alton, passing through Buriton and Selborne along the way.

track, which curves left as it rises along the east flank of hillside where one or two simple seats enjoy views down to Buriton. Over the brow of the hill ignore the first track cutting back to the right and proceed ahead until the main track forks. Take the left-hand track and follow the signs which will take you through the forest, gradually



**Eastbound:**  
map continues  
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## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



*The visitor centre  
in Queen Elizabeth  
Country Park*

**Note:** There is a drinking-water tap by the path. The visitor centre and café are open daily from March to October (09.00–17.30), and November to February (09.00–16.30).

heading down towards the visitor centre. The trail crosses the main tarmac track and skirts around above the visitor centre (on the eastern side) until you reach the main entrance junction into the park where the trail then passes under the A3 bridge.

On the way through the forest keep alert for possible sightings of deer. The footpath route passes a picnic and barbecue area in Gravelhill Bottom, and eventually comes to a small car park at Benhams Bushes.

*All was peaceful along the forest track, and as it was midweek it seemed that I had the forest to myself. Few birds sang, except far off, and my boots made little sound, and as I walked my eyes and ears were alert for wildlife. Suddenly I became aware of eyes upon me, and turning to the right-hand slope, saw a pair of deer gazing in my direction. No body markings could be seen, only heads to one side of a tree, rumps to the other. They watched me and I watched them, but their interest was less intense than mine – once they'd established I offered no threat – and growing bored with the view they vanished soundlessly into the deep security of the forest.*

At Benhams Bushes come onto a narrow metalled road where you turn left to leave the forest (there is a path running parallel with the road on its left). As you exit the forest there are various small grassy areas and a number of

laid-out paths. There is also a confusing super-abundance of waymarks and signs for a variety of walks and rides, which makes it necessary to study the way well. Veer right towards the park visitor centre (refreshments, public toilets). The bridleway avoids the centre itself by remaining just within the forest, but the walker's route goes right to it.

Continue beyond the visitor centre on a path above and to the right of the car park. This leads under the A3 by

**Note:** For refreshments bear right through the car park to a café/toilets/information centre in a building shaped like an Iron Age roundhouse.

**Butser Hill** is the highest point on the South Downs, the site of ancient trackways, Bronze Age burial mounds, Celtic fields and defensive dykes. There is also evidence of Romano-British occupation. On the summit of the hill stands a beacon that would have been lit in times of danger or of celebration, but this is dwarfed by the unsightly telecommunications mast. From Butser Hill a justifiably renowned panorama attracts crowds of visitors on bright summer days.



a subway, on the west side of which you follow blue bridleway posts bearing the SDW white acorn symbol, leading across another car park/picnic area, then through a bridle gate into an extensive grassland. Ahead rises 888ft (271m) **Butser Hill** topped by a huge telecommunications mast. Mount the steep slope of flower-starred downland, making more or less towards the mast (there is a vague path). Near

*From the crown of Butser Hill views extend towards Hayling Island*

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

the head of the slope pause for a moment to enjoy a huge panoramic view, then go through a gate and veer left to another bridle gate near the entrance to a car park.

Bear left to Limekiln Lane which has a bridleway on its right-hand side, but which soon crosses to the left. When this eventually gives out, continue along the lane with exceptional views to enjoy, including the sea far off to the south, and the great expanse of Queen Elizabeth Forest with its straight lines of firebreaks to the west. When the lane makes a left-hand bend at a multi-way junction, take the right-hand option. Passing Homelands Farm the surfaced lane becomes a track (a true green lane), goes beneath a line of power cables and continues on an almost straight and level course across Tegdown Hill and Hyden Hill, alongside the oaks and beeches of Hyden Wood – a lovely section of ridge crest from which East Meon church can be seen off to the north-west where meadows fold neatly into a shallow valley.

*Soft green shadows dappled the path. Newly unfurled beech leaves were silken to the touch and, with the afternoon light shining through them, it was possible to detect the outline fuzz of minute hairs and the rich tracery of veins within. Softly they danced up and down in the two o'clock gasp of air so that the route ahead was seen as*

*The rolling Downs  
below Hyden Cross  
near the source of  
the River Meon*



through an ever-opening and closing Venetian blind of shadow. The next time I wandered this track I took advantage of a stile for use as a seat, and spent 20 minutes day-dreaming across a meadow clotted with ewes and their lambs. Within moments they all came marching towards me from three different directions, their massed bleating announcing their expectation of something I hadn't got. It didn't take them long to realise I was no shepherd, and they turned away with barely a glance behind them. If they were disappointed they didn't show it, but resumed their grazing and left me in peace.

The track leads to a junction of minor roads at Hyden Cross (grid ref: 683189). The road north goes to **East Meon**, south to Clanfield and Hordean, while we maintain direction and soon come to a second junction. Go ahead up a bridleway which soon parallels a small housing development. Coming to a road, keep ahead, then take a minor road to the right towards the radio masts on Wether Down. Note that just before turning into this minor road, you pass Wetherdown Lodge on your left – an independent hostel run by the Sustainability Centre. ▶ The road becomes a track. This takes you directly past the radio masts and, on Salt Hill, the site of a long barrow in the left-hand field.

It is good to be away from buildings and on the Downs once more. Views open to the north and, although the track is confined by a fence and hedges, there is the welcome return to a sense of space. But then as you begin to slope downhill the Way becomes a sunken track on the approach to Coombe Cross. This is little more than

**Wetherdown Lodge** is run by the award-winning Sustainability Centre ([www.sustainability-centre.org](http://www.sustainability-centre.org)), which, as its name suggests, is an eco-friendly organisation with a holistic approach to education through a programme of courses for adults and children. The Lodge was formerly used as accommodation for Royal Navy trainees. It has 14 rooms with 2–3 beds, and the Centre also provides overnights in teepees and yurts.

**East Meon** is a pretty village with the River Meon, which rises nearby, running alongside the main street. Izaak Walton, who wrote *The Compleat Angler*, stayed here to fish the local river, and one of the two village pubs is named after him. The Norman church of All Saints overlooks the village from the foot of Park Hill, its green broach spire seen from far away. The Court House is said to be of the 15th century, and there are several attractive cottages in a subtle mix of colours, some of which date from the 18th century.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

a couple of cottages and a Georgian house on a quiet country lane (grid ref: 666210).

**Accommodation:** For accommodation and refreshments in East Meon, turn right and walk down the lane for about 1¼ miles.

The South Downs Way crosses the lane and continues straight ahead towards the rise of Henwood Down, but about ½ mile from the road, at a crossing bridleway, turn left on a track which leads along the right-hand side of a large field and eventually comes onto a concrete farm road which you follow to its end at a minor road.

A big open country spreads before you. Fields are gold with oil-seed rape, green or yellow with corn, soft with meadows grazed by black and white Friesian cows. The Downs are rolled out as if for inspection. Henwood Down stands again to the north, the wooded rise of Old Winchester Hill is off to the west, and knowing our route leads across it, it seems odd that you now head away to the north. But those who would walk from A to B

by the shortest route should have been with Caesar's troops and forget all about modern long-distance footpaths!

Turn right, passing Hall Cottages, then break away to the left at the entrance to Whitewool Farm. Note that refreshments and overnight camping are available here at the Meon Springs fishing lakes ([www.meonsprings.com](http://www.meonsprings.com)). Go down the farm drive between small lakes and skirt the handsome half-thatched outbuildings, then bear right on another concrete farm road that soon deteriorates to a rutted track. At a junction of tracks veer right and ascend the slopes of Whitewool Hanger, at the top of

*The National Nature Reserve of Old Winchester Hill covers an area of 150 acres on the site of several Bronze Age burial barrows and an Iron Age hill fort*



which you take a fence-enclosed bridleway heading left, parallel with a road.

Cross the road with care. On the other side turn left on another path that runs parallel with the road, and which eventually (after a further 500 yards or so) comes to a crossing flint track that carries the official South Downs Way from a lay-by for disabled people (the so-called ‘Easygoing Trail’ car park). The flint track is the Easygoing Trail, a level path created to give access for the less able-bodied to **Old Winchester Hill fort**. ▶ Turn right along this trail and follow it to the hill fort entrance. (At this point the SDW bridleway diverges from the walker’s route. Cyclists and horseriders should follow Route A below.) Go through the gate and veer left, then take the path which cuts through the centre of this impressive Iron Age site. There are big views to enjoy too, with a distant sighting of Chichester Harbour, and the Isle of Wight out to the south-west.

**Bridleway (Route A):** Do not go through the field gate but take a fence-enclosed bridleway around the outer edge of the hill fort. The way then makes a sharp turn to the left and descends a steep slope. At the foot of this turn right along the top edge of a large field. It continues in the same direction until you face another large open field and a signed junction. Bear right round the field boundary, then left alongside a tree-lined hedgerow to rejoin the walker’s route which you follow as far as the embankment of a disused railway now used by the Meon Valley Trail (see Route B).

**Main walk continued:** On coming to the earth ramparts on the western side of the fort go down the steep slope half-left (yellow with cowslips in spring) to leave the fort area, then along a fence-enclosed path beside a wood. Beyond the wood the Way is guided by a line of trees/hedgerow, then forks. Keep ahead with lovely views to Beacon Hill across the Meon Valley. A bridleway now traces the outline of large sloping fields, at the bottom of which you’re led into a woodland shaw which often

**Old Winchester Hill** was the site of Bronze Age burial barrows, and an Iron Age hill fort. The outline of the fort is clearly evident and covers an area of about 14 acres. Much of the hilltop and the nearby coomb is National Nature Reserve, covering 150 acres in all, and is rich with downland flora and butterflies.

has a stream flowing through it. Turn left and come to the embankment of a dismantled railway which you cross and continue ahead.

**Bridleway (Route B):** Cyclists and horseriders should remain on the route of the dismantled railway (now adopted by the Meon Valley Trail), and head left along it for a little over ½ mile. The way slopes down to a minor road, where you turn right for a few yards, then fork left into Shavards Lane. This leads to the A32 at Meonstoke (grid ref: 614206). Cross the road with care and keep ahead into Exton. Continue straight on and follow the lane around, bearing left. Turn left at the junction and follow the lane for 240 yards. Then turn right and then right again opposite Exton Farm. Follow The White Way lane up the hill until you reach a fingerpost (at SU 6021 2217) where the two routes join and head towards the summit of Beacon Hill.

**Accommodation:** If you plan to stay overnight in West Meon, turn right along the embankment and follow the one-time railway north-east for about 2 miles.

**Main walk continued:** When at last you leave the tree-lined, streamside path and come to a farm track, veer right, soon crossing a footbridge over the lovely River Meon. A few more paces brings you to the A32 on the outskirts of Exton (grid ref: 618213). Cross over with care and take the minor road opposite into the village, bearing right to pass the church. To the left the lane leads to the village pub, The Shoe.

Exton (accommodation, refreshments) is a pleasant village happily spared traffic from the A32 by standing a little to one side of the road. Its name suggests it was a farmstead of the East Saxons. The flint-walled parish church dates from the 13th century, and has a wooden belfry. The village pub lies just to the south among a second group of cottages.

## STAGE 12

### *Exton to Winchester*

<b>Distance</b>	12 miles (19km)
<b>Time</b>	6–7hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 185 Winchester & Basingstoke 1:50,000; OS Explorer 132 Winchester, New Alresford & East Meon 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Kilmeston (+1½ miles), The Milburys (nr Beauworth), Cheriton (+1½ miles), Chilcomb and Winchester
<b>Refreshments</b>	The Milburys (nr Beauworth) and Winchester

This final stage of the journey from Eastbourne provides an assortment of scenic pleasures. The landscape changes pattern by the hour as you travel through it, whilst the Way itself varies between footpath, bridleway, track and quiet country lane. Winchester remains hidden from view virtually until the very last field path, but the heart of this historic city makes a worthy finish to the South Downs Way.

On departing from Exton the route heads roughly north-westward climbing sharply to the nature reserve on Beacon Hill – yet another ancient site. From there you pass the (unseen) site of a lost village, cross the route of the Wayfarer’s Walk and take to a series of near-empty country roads and green lanes before coming to Gander Down. This is a big open countryside, a spacious land of mellow hills and gentle valleys, but from it another green lane takes you into and alongside woodlands as far as Cheesefoot Head. The end of the journey is near, but there is one last stretch of downland to cover before descending from the escarpment through a sunken lane leading to tiny Chilcomb, and from there across one final field and the M3, into the streets of Winchester.

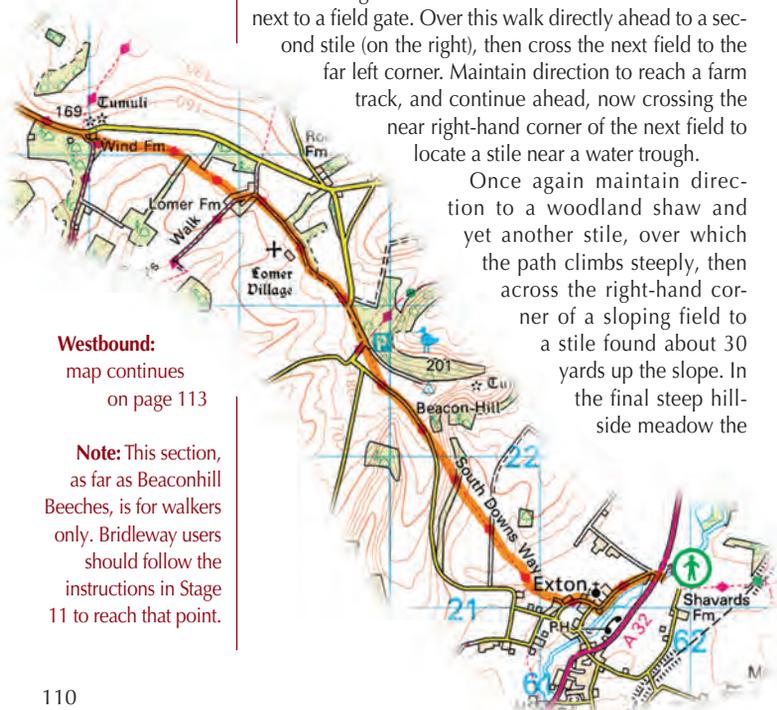
## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

*The Way between Exton and Beacon Hill, a faint grass path in a green landscape*



With Exton parish church on your right walk along the lane, which curves leftwards, then break away to the right along a track opposite a flint wall. The track cuts between Glebe Cottage and Bramcote House and leads to a stile next to a field gate. Over this walk directly ahead to a second stile (on the right), then cross the next field to the far left corner. Maintain direction to reach a farm track, and continue ahead, now crossing the near right-hand corner of the next field to locate a stile near a water trough.

Once again maintain direction to a woodland shaw and yet another stile, over which the path climbs steeply, then across the right-hand corner of a sloping field to a stile found about 30 yards up the slope. In the final steep hillside meadow the



**Westbound:**  
map continues  
on page 113

**Note:** This section, as far as Beaconhill Beeches, is for walkers only. Bridleway users should follow the instructions in Stage 11 to reach that point.

path is sometimes rather vague on the ground, in which case the direction to make for is the top right-hand corner where a footpath signpost stands beside a stile leading to a country lane (grid ref: 603221).

Turn right along the lane for about 500 yards then, a little west of **Beacon Hill**, ► cross a stile in the right-hand hedge and take a path striking half-left to the far corner of the field. There you come to a parking area at Beaconhill Beeches where the bridleway and footpath routes rejoin (grid ref: 598227).

On leaving the car park area go ahead along the lane for almost 300 yards, with woodland to your right, then as the lane curves right, continue ahead along a farm track. A short distance beyond Lomer Cottage a few grassy mounds may be detected off to the left – all that remains of the village of Lomer which, though mentioned in the Domesday Book, died out in the Middle Ages. This is one of 90 such ‘lost villages’ of Hampshire. A little over ½ mile from the lane you come to Lomer Farm. Bear left by some barns, then turn right immediately after passing farm cottages. The Way bears left along another track which leads through arable farmland for more than ½ mile to Wind Farm, and is shared by the route of the

**Beacon Hill** is yet another Iron Age hill fort site with hut circles and signs of agricultural workings. There is also a causewayed ditch considered even older than the hill fort – neolithic, perhaps? The summit of Beacon Hill is a National Nature Reserve with no less than 13 species of wild orchid growing there.

*The SDW passes several attractive cottages in Exton*



## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

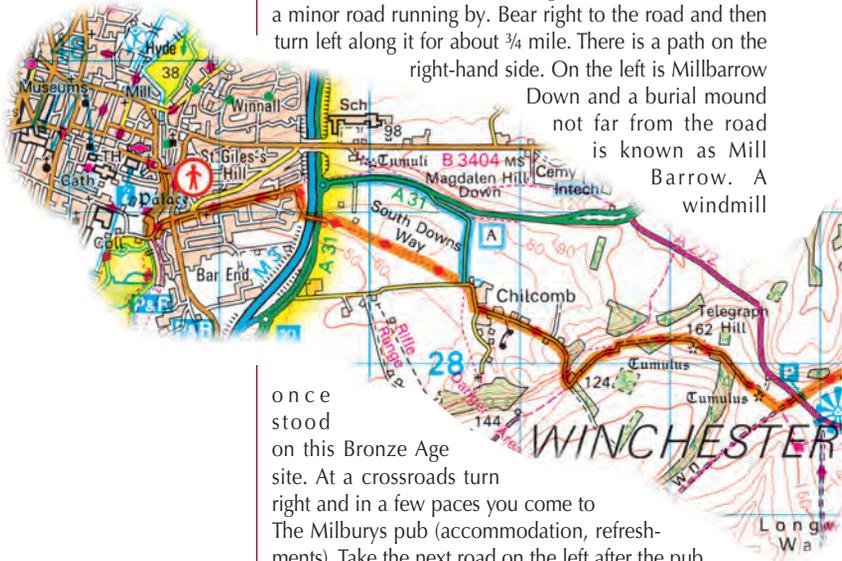
**Wayfarer's Walk.** The track can be very muddy following wet weather.

Wind Farm stands on the edge of woodlands and with a minor road running by. Bear right to the road and then turn left along it for about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile. There is a path on the right-hand side. On the left is Millbarrow

Down and a burial mound not far from the road

is known as Mill Barrow. A

windmill



once stood on this Bronze Age site. At a crossroads turn

right and in a few paces you come to

The Milburys pub (accommodation, refresh-

ments). Take the next road on the left after the pub, signposted to High Stoke, a peaceful Hampshire lane

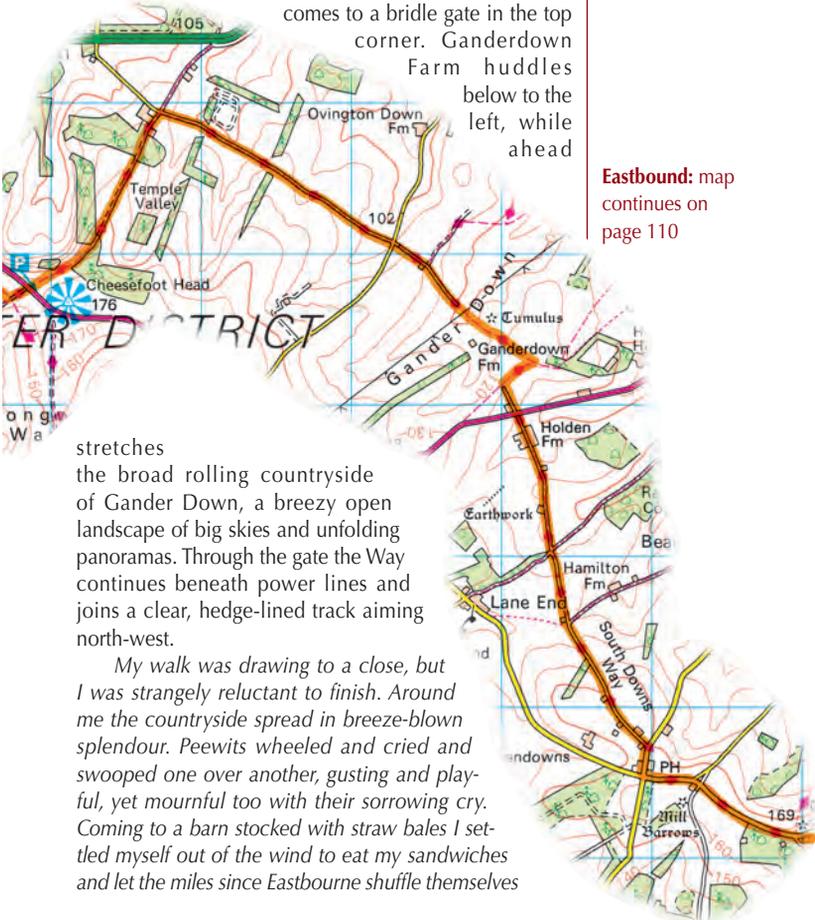
ideal for cyclists. When it makes a right-hand bend near a Dutch barn, leave the road and continue straight ahead on a farm track known as Holden Lane – another true green lane, which leads for almost a mile through pleasant

The **Wayfarer's Walk** is a 70-mile (113km) long-distance walk developed in 1981 by Hampshire County Council. It begins at Emsworth Marina and finishes at Inkpen Beacon on the Hampshire–Berkshire border, crossing on the way Walbury Camp, at 974ft (297m) the highest chalk hill in southern Britain. The South Downs Way is crossed between Lomer Farm and Wind Farm.

countryside, passes Holden Farm and comes to the A272 Petersfield to Winchester road (grid ref: 561269).

Cross the road with care and continue ahead on a short, tree-lined track which brings you to a field gate. Through this the bridleway bears right to follow the boundary hedge. In the first corner the bridleway route turns left with the hedge, and eventually comes to a bridle gate in the top corner. Ganderdown Farm huddles below to the left, while ahead

**Eastbound:** map continues on page 110



stretches the broad rolling countryside of Gander Down, a breezy open landscape of big skies and unfolding panoramas. Through the gate the Way continues beneath power lines and joins a clear, hedge-lined track aiming north-west.

*My walk was drawing to a close, but I was strangely reluctant to finish. Around me the countryside spread in breeze-blown splendour. Peewits wheeled and cried and swooped one over another, gusting and playful, yet mournful too with their sorrowing cry. Coming to a barn stocked with straw bales I settled myself out of the wind to eat my sandwiches and let the miles since Eastbourne shuffle themselves*

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



Typical SDW marker post in Hampshire

**Cheesefoot Head** east of Winchester makes a natural amphitheatre and is where General Eisenhower addressed the Allied troops in 1944 before the D-Day landings.

in my mind. It had been a grand walk – it still was – and my love for the ever-varied landscapes of Britain had grown stronger with each succeeding day. Now I stretched out in comfort and watched a puff of raincloud sweep my way. ‘Precipitation in sight’, as they say on the shipping forecast. It came, dampened the track, rattled on the barn roof, and was gone again. Sunshine took over. A hare loped along the track and confronted a cock pheasant only a few feet from where I sat. They stared at each other, then carried on with their own business, totally unaware that I was watching. The cock bird then caught sight of something of interest and strutted away, head projecting like a Victorian spinster scurrying off to Mattins. Five minutes later a hen pheasant emerged from the adjacent field through an open gateway, and stood looking for her mate, squinting up and down. I was tempted to tell her where he’d gone, but decided to remain incognito and let the natural world continue around me, undisturbed by my presence. After all, who was I to interfere?

The track crosses Rodfield Lane and maintains direction for a further 1¼ miles until reaching crossing tracks at a group of farm buildings. Bear left to pass the flint-walled Keeper’s Cottage (barns on the right), and continue through woods on a clear trail. Beyond the woods follow a hedge-line, then through a bridle gate to an enclosed path along a splendid avenue of beech trees with Great Clump Woods to the left. Eventually arrive beside the A272 at **Cheesefoot Head**. ◀

Across the road another bridleway leads through a field for about 100 yards to a path junction. Turn right among trees and scrub to an enclosed continuing track. Approaching Telegraph Hill’s tumulus the Way leads between a plantation on the left and a field on the right, beyond which it curves leftward and reaches a crossing

track (grid ref: 517281). Turn left and follow this to Little Golders and a narrow metalled lane where you turn right to slope downhill between high banks. The lane leads to the hamlet of Chilcomb, the last habitation before Winchester. As you enter Chilcomb (accommodation) note the black-timbered grain store on staddle stones seen across a hedge on the right.

At a road junction bear right beside a flint wall. (The rather fine Saxon church of Chilcomb stands at the end of the left-hand lane.) A few yards later come to a Y-shaped road junction with a few steps leading to a gap in a hedgerow directly opposite.

**Bridleway (Route A):** The way ahead is for walkers only. The bridleway turns right here along Kings Lane, then left on the A31. After passing under a bridge turn left up a rising bridleway which brings you onto the bridge to rejoin the footpath route. This is another ‘temporary’ route – watch for notices.

**Main walk continued:** Go through the hedgerow gap and walk alongside the very last field, with Winchester now in view ahead. On the far side of the field bear left through scrub to cross the M3 by footbridge, then swing right on the tarmac path along the outer edge of town. At an obvious T-junction of paths turn left alongside trees to reach Petersfield Road. Walk straight ahead, eventually passing All Saints Church on the left, and slope downhill, where Petersfield Road becomes East Hill and shortly after comes to a crossroads. Cross directly ahead onto Wharf Hill which soon curves left. Turn right into College Walk. When this comes to College Street, turn right alongside the castle wall which surrounds Wolvesey Palace and Castle. The path soon runs beside the River Itchen. On reaching Bridge Street, the Old City Mill and the official end of the South Downs Way, is on the far side.

If you wish to carry on to Winchester Cathedral, turn left towards the town’s bus station and an impressive statue of King Alfred the Great, and from here it’s just a short stroll.

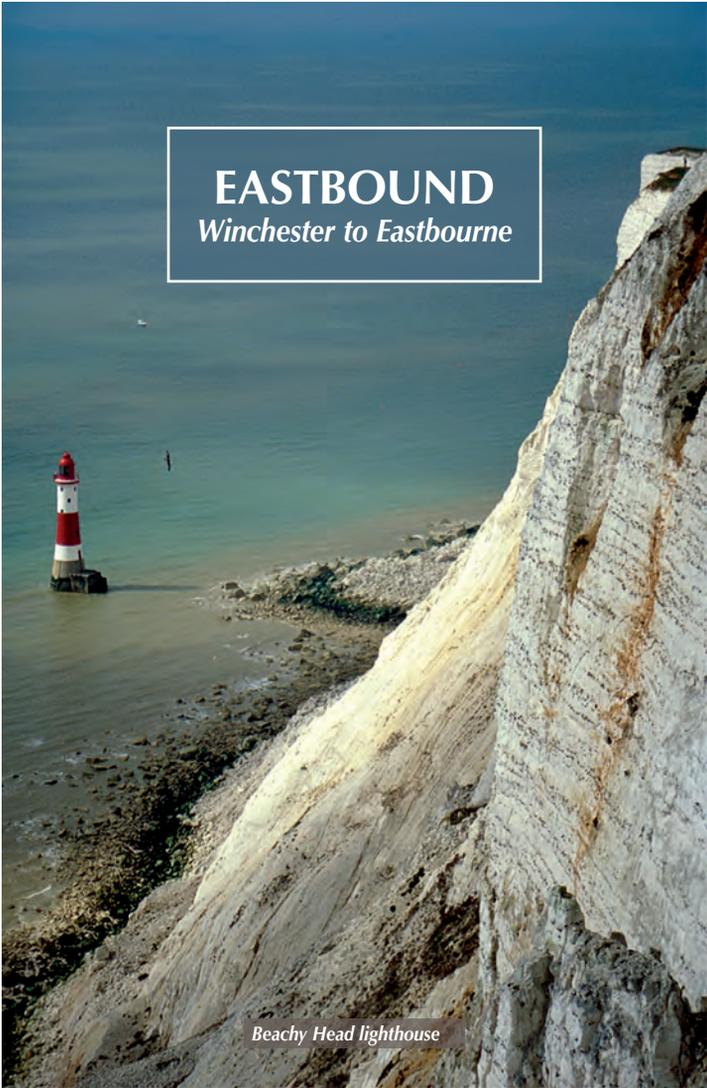
## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



*Winchester Cathedral,  
near the end of the  
South Downs Way*

Winchester (accommodation, refreshments) was the Saxon capital of England, but is now very much a small city wrestling to find harmony between the old and the new. There is much of interest – historically, architecturally, spiritually. There is the famous College, founded in 1382; the Pilgrims Hall where pilgrims stayed on their way to Canterbury; the fine old City Mill (built 1774, owned by the National Trust); the lovely houses, archways, castle ruins, the Hospital of the Holy Cross. But the cathedral is the most obvious, for this is the very heart and soul of Winchester. Graceful, and at the same time, a little severe on the outside, the interior is astonishingly beautiful.

Sit there at the end of the long walk and absorb the calm whispering glory that hangs in the air. The building was started in 1079 on the site of an earlier Saxon church built by King Alfred, but it was not completed until 1404, and clearly belongs to many different periods of history. Each era added something inimitable. Today Winchester is one of Europe's longest cathedrals at 556 feet (170m). But it is more than that. Enter its peaceful sanctuary and be thankful for all the days of your journey along the South Downs.



# EASTBOUND

*Winchester to Eastbourne*

*Beachy Head lighthouse*

## STAGE 1

### *Winchester to Exton*

<b>Distance</b>	12 miles (19km)
<b>Time</b>	6–7hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 185 Winchester & Basingstoke 1:50,000; OS Explorer 132 Winchester, New Alresford & East Meon 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Winchester, Chilcomb, Cheriton (+1½ miles), The Milburys (nr Beauworth), Kilmeston (+1½ miles) and Exton
<b>Refreshments</b>	Winchester, The Milburys (nr Beauworth) and Exton

See map  
on page 112

Although the long walk begins in the heart of Winchester, it does not take long to escape this small historic city in order to explore the open spaces for which the Downs are noted. Immediately after leaving Chilcomb the Way climbs onto the Downs, then follows a series of farm tracks across a rolling landscape with a surprisingly remote feel to it. Although several country roads are crossed, Exton is the only true village – and that only a small one – on this stage of the walk. However, even Exton is by-passed by cyclists and horseriders following the bridleway alternative which, in this instance, skirts Beacon Hill, loops round to Warnford (north of Exton, on the way to West Meon) and continues along a country lane heading south-east before being reunited with the walker's route near Old Winchester Hill.

On a practical level, this first stage is fairly undemanding. It's well-signed and waymarked, and the views are especially rewarding near Beacon Hill and Old Winchester Hill.

The official start of the South Downs Way is at the Old City Mill on Bridge Street, at the Eastern end of the High

The history of **Winchester** dates back to 450 BC when Celtic tribes settled on the east bank of the River Itchen on what is now known as St Catherine's Hill. Five hundred years later (in AD 70) the Romans arrived and began to create a walled city, naming it Venta Belgarum, then with the crowning of King Alfred in AD 871, Winchester became the capital of Saxon England. (Alfred's burial site was discovered at Hyde Abbey in 1999.) Following the Norman invasion of 1066, the town surrendered to William the Conqueror who built himself both a palace and a castle, and 20 years later the Domesday Book was compiled here.

Street, known as Broadway. ▶ Make your way eastwards to the bridge over the River Itchen. Do not cross the bridge, but turn right onto a riverside path. This soon goes alongside the wall surrounding Wolvesey Palace and Castle. On coming to College Street turn sharp left along College Walk which feeds into Wharf Hill. When you come to crossroads at the B3330, cross directly ahead into East Hill, which forks after about 100 yards. Take the right branch along Petersfield Road, and keep on to its far end, then continue on a tarmac path along an avenue of trees. The path forks by the first South Downs Way sign. Bear right, and very soon you'll cross a bridge over the M3, on the far side of which the way forks once more.

**Bridleway (Route A):** At this point the bridleway route briefly leaves that of the walker. Cyclists and horseriders should turn right and descend to the A31 which parallels the M3. Go north for a short distance (the M3 to your left) to a roundabout, then turn right, and right again down King's Lane to rejoin the walker's footpath route in Chilcomb.

**Main walk continued:** Walkers turn left immediately after crossing the M3 bridge, and a few paces later enter a large field. The Way leads down the left-hand edge, with views of the wood-crowned Downs running in a long line ahead. At the far side of the field go through a gap in the hedgerow onto a junction of lanes on the edge of

There you will find the town's bus station, tourist information (in the Guildhall), and an impressive statue of King Alfred the Great.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



*This old barn, perched on staddle stones, stands in a garden beside the SDW in Chilcomb*

Chilcomb (accommodation, public telephone), a small but attractive village of farms and pleasant houses. Here walkers are reunited with the bridleway route.

Go ahead on the lane signed to St Andrew's Church, soon passing a fine thatched barn at the entrance to Manor Farm. When the lane forks by a flint wall, bear left (the right branch goes to the Saxon church of St Andrew), and after passing a few houses note the black timber barn standing on staddle stones in the garden of one of the last buildings on the left.

The narrow lane rises between tree-lined banks and ends at the start of a track by a house named Little Golders. Turn left along the track until it kinks on an open crown of a hill at a junction, from where you gain a last view of Winchester, and turn right along a grass track between a fence and a hedge. Keep along the right-hand field boundary as it skirts just below the wooded top of Telegraph Hill, and on reaching a four-way crossing, bear left across a field to the A272 at **Cheesefoot Head** (there's a car park to the right). ◀

**Cheesefoot Head** is where General Eisenhower addressed the Allied troops in the early summer of 1944 before the D-Day landings.

Cross the road directly ahead onto a narrow fenced path. This leads along the edge of Great Clump beechwood, with the slope plunging steeply to the left. Beyond the woods continue on a farm track that eventually takes

you past the flint-walled Keeper's Cottage. About 100 yards beyond the cottage, turn right on another track (King's Way) which now leads for 1¼ miles between fields to Rodfield Lane.

Maintain direction on the continuing track across Gander Down. There's a junction of tracks by a Dutch barn where you keep ahead with rolling country spread all around. The Way takes you into a meadow where you pass well to the left of the black barns of Ganderdown Farm. Follow the left-hand boundary of a second meadow and, shortly before reaching its top left corner, cut across to the boundary half-right ahead and turn right. Having made a dog-leg turn, keep the hedge on your left (Holden Farm is seen below) and soon come to a field gate and a stile on your left. Through the gate walk down a farm track to the A272 Petersfield to Winchester road (grid ref: 561269).

Cross the road with care and, passing Holden Farm on your left, continue ahead on the track known as Holden Lane through pleasant countryside for almost a mile, before joining a very narrow metalled lane (Westfield Drove) by another Dutch barn. Keep ahead, passing a few houses, and come to a T-junction by Windmill Cottage. Turn right, and a short way along the road pass The Milburys pub (accommodation, refreshments). At the crossroads a few paces later, turn left (sign to West Meon).

A short distance along the road you gain a fine view to the north. On the right there's a Bronze Age burial mound shown as Mill Barrows on the map. When the road forks continue ahead, now with a bridleway running along its left-hand side. This eventually regains the road opposite a track near the entrance to Wind Farm. Follow the track/stony drive towards the farm, then continue alongside a little woodland, then on the left-hand edge of a large field on a path shared by the **Wayfarer's Walk**.

On coming to the first buildings of Lomer Farm, turn right then left and, immediately past a barn complex, turn right again onto a stony track. This takes you past the site of one-time Lomer village which died out in the Middle

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

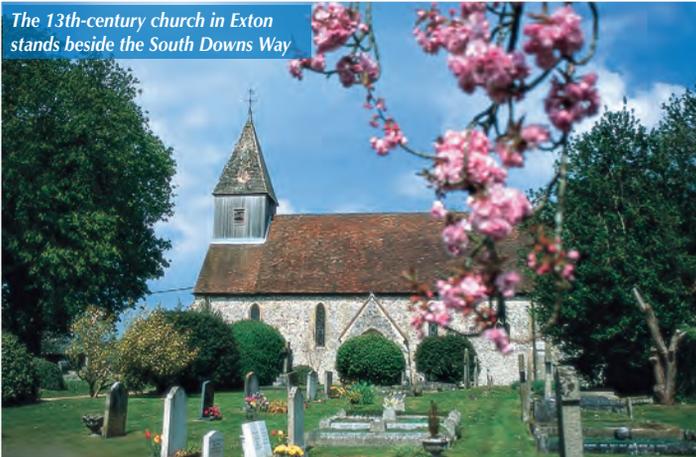
The **Wayfarer's Walk** was developed by Hampshire County Council and opened in 1981. It stretches for about 70 miles (113km) between Emsworth Marina and Inkpen Beacon on the Hampshire–Berkshire border, and is waymarked. See *Along and Around the Wayfarer's Walk* by Linda Herbst (Hampshire County Council).

**Beacon Hill** is a National Nature Reserve on an Iron Age hill fort site, on which there are said to be more than 13 varieties of orchid growing.

Agnes (one of numerous 'lost villages' of Hampshire). Lomer Pond is half-hidden among trees on the left and, shortly after passing this you come onto a country lane along which you walk ahead to where it bends sharply to the right at Beaconhill Beeches, where there's a car park (grid ref: 598227). Cyclists and horse riders leave the main SDW here and follow the lane down to Exton.

The walker's footpath route takes the right-hand of two field gates ahead, then scores through the centre of a field with **Beacon Hill** ◀ on the left. A stile in the opposite boundary delivers you onto a narrow metalled lane where you turn left, soon gaining splendid views into a deep coombe on the right. About 500 yards down

*The 13th-century church in Exton stands beside the South Downs Way*





*Head-high cow parsley flanks the path on Beacon Hill above Exton, where views stretch to the Isle of Wight*

the lane cross a stile on the left into a steeply sloping meadow overlooking the Meon Valley. Descend into the valley by stiles linking a series of fields, with occasional yellow disc markers to direct the way.

Eventually enter Exton (accommodation, refreshments, public telephone) and turn left along a narrow road passing attractive houses and the church of St Peter and St Paul. At a junction just beyond the church, note that the village pub, The Shoe, is on the right-hand road, Shoe Lane. Exton is a charming small village with the little River Meon sidling through. The name suggests it originated as a farmstead of the East Saxons; the church is 13th-century.

## STAGE 2

### Exton to Buriton

<b>Distance</b>	12 miles (19km)
<b>Time</b>	6–7hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 185 Winchester & Basingstoke and 197 Chichester & The South Downs 1:50,000; OS Explorer 119 Meon Valley and 120 Chichester 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Warnford, East Meon (+1¼ miles), Wetherdown Lodge (nr East Meon), West Meon, Buriton (+¼ mile)
<b>Refreshments</b>	Meon Springs (Whitewool Farm), Butser Hill, Queen Elizabeth Country Park, and Buriton

See map  
on page 100

Several high points on this stage make it a particularly memorable one. The National Nature Reserve of Old Winchester Hill is one – an elevated Bronze Age site with far-reaching views, visited soon after leaving Exton. Salt Hill near Mercury Park to the south of East Meon is another, as is the lovely trackway across Highden and Tegdown Hills on the way to Butser Hill. Butser Hill is the highest point on the South Downs Way with a panoramic view to catch your breath. Then, a little above Buriton, there's the Queen Elizabeth Forest in which there's a possibility of sighting deer. Although Buriton lies just off the route of the South Downs Way, it is well worth a diversion – whether you plan to spend the night there or not.

**River Meon** This delightful chalk stream is the main river of south-east Hampshire, and its source is a series of springs in a coombe below where the SDW crosses Hyden Hill. It gives character to a number of quintessential Hampshire villages (East Meon is the first and loveliest), and gained fame for its trout fishing thanks to Izaak Walton's classic book *The Compleat Angler*.



Leaving Exton, curve left alongside a flint wall and come to the A32. Cross it with care aiming half-left to a small track which leads to a footbridge over the **River Meon**. A path now curves towards Shavards Farm, then decides better of it, crosses a track and goes along the left-hand edge of a field before plunging along a narrow woodland shaw. During, or following wet weather, a stream runs through this shaw.

Coming to a brick bridge on a dismantled railway, either go beneath the arch or, if the stream is flowing, cross the embankment and descend the other side on steps. You then cross to the right-hand side of the shaw where waymarks direct you out of the trees and back alongside a wire fence.

Following fences the route, a bridleway, curves round the edge of fields and climbs a slope towards Old Winchester Hill. Pause during the ascent to enjoy good views back to Beacon Hill across the valley. Just below the upper west slope of Old Winchester Hill the route divides. The footpath route goes along the left-hand side of a line of trees/hedgerow, while a bridleway keeps to the right-hand side.

*The River Meon, a lovely chalk stream, at Exton*

**Note:** This first section is for walkers only. Horseriders and cyclists should follow the directions given on the next page.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



*Whitewool Farm in its valley below Old Winchester Hill*

**Old Winchester Hill** is a National Nature Reserve covering 150 acres in all, with earthworks of an Iron Age hill fort and Bronze Age burial barrows.

Coming to the nature reserve of **Old Winchester Hill** ◀ the footpath ascends a scrub-covered slope, then through a gate up the right-hand side of the hilltop crown among masses of **cowslips** in springtime. A trig point marks the top of the hill, and from it you can enjoy a spectacular 360-degree panorama. In this view the Isle of Wight can be seen to the south.

Over the summit bear left on a crossing path which leads to a seat and an information board. Go through a gate to the right of these, and walk ahead – there are two parallel routes, both of which lead to a gate and a road. Do not go onto the road, but turn left along the SDW bridleway running parallel with it. Maintain direction until a signpost directs you across the road, through a gap in a hedge, and along a fence-enclosed bridleway at the top edge of a meadow. This brings you to a point close to a road junction.

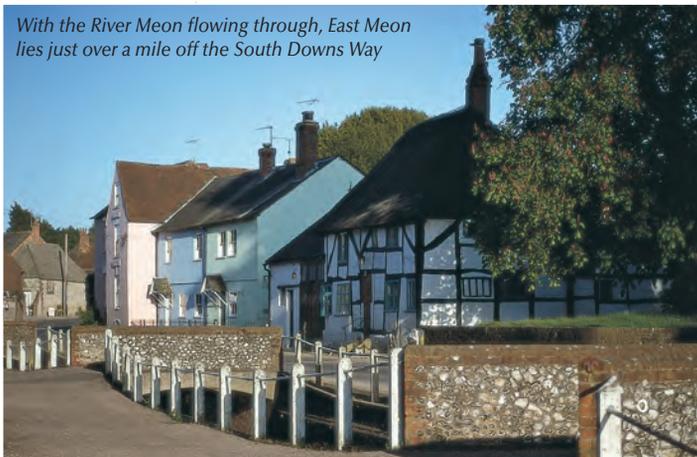
**Cowslips** are symbolic of the Downs, and these lovely yellow-headed plants will be seen in abundance along the route in April and May. The name originates from the belief that the flower would appear wherever there was a cowpat! For centuries it was used as an ingredient in the manufacture of vinegar, mead, wine and even cheese.

**Bridleway route:** Down from Beacon Hill the Way splits. The Riders' routes follows 'The White Way', a long country lane that descends into Exton village. At the bottom of the lane, opposite Exton Farm (fingerpost at junction), bear left at the junction and then left again along Allens Farm Lane. The lane bears right onto Beacon Hill Lane and passes through the village, following a long flint wall on the left-hand side. Follow the lane until you reach the junction opposite the Old Post Office; the Shoe pub will be on your left. Turn right and follow Beacon Hill Lane until you reach the A32. Cross the A32 with care and continue along Stock's Lane opposite. Follow Stock's Lane for about ¼ mile, you will then reach a fork in the road where you will need to bear right towards the railway bridge. At the railway bridge, on the left, there is a SDW fingerpost that points you up the embankment onto the disused railway (the Meon Valley Trail). Follow the path for ½ miles until you reach a SDW fingerpost directing you to the right.

Turn right, leaving the disused railway (the walkers' and riders' routes merge again at this point). Follow the path over a small bridge that crosses the winterbourne stream. The Way enters a large field and follows the edge of the field to the right and make its way up the hill, climbing steadily towards Old Winchester Hill. Further up the path you will notice that a public footpath (Monarch's Way) meets the South Downs Way and then runs parallel to it. The South Downs Way runs along the right-hand side of the hedge and then turns right following the fence line. A SDW fingerpost directs you to turn left following the fence line at the foot of Old Winchester Hill where you will pass through two more fields. You will then come across a SDW fingerpost that will point you to turn a sharp left up a slope. The path runs up the hill in between fences with a vineyard on your right and Old Winchester Hill National Nature Reserve on your left. At the head of the slope the way turns right along the outer edge of the hill fort.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

*With the River Meon flowing through, East Meon lies just over a mile off the South Downs Way*



**East Meon** is a pretty village with the River Meon flowing through it. The Norman church of All Saints overlooks the village from the foot of Park Hill (splendid view from the hill), it has a green broach spire and, inside, a black marble font brought from Belgium in the 12th century. The Court House nearby dates from the 15th century and is where the Bishops of Winchester used to hold court. East Meon, and the neighbouring hamlet of Frogmore, contains many attractive cottages in a subtle mix of colours, although a number were lost when a fire raged through the village in 1910. Among those destroyed were two low thatched cottages that served as the local workhouse.

Go through a bridle gate on the right and cut back in a dog-leg to angle downhill through a sloping meadow with Whitewool Farm seen in the valley below. At first the Way is faint, but it soon becomes a more profound track which eventually cuts left and takes you directly to Whitewool Farm.

Pass round the left-hand side of the farm, then over a charming stream (part of the Meon Springs Fly Fishery; refreshments, camping – [www.meonsprings.com](http://www.meonsprings.com)) to a T-junction of narrow roads. Turn right along a peaceful

valley scene, with radio masts directly ahead on distant Wether Down. About 150 yards beyond Hall Cottages turn left up a concrete farm road between fields, rising across the slope of Henwood Down. Continue ahead when the concrete ends. The spire of East Meon church can be seen, but as you descend into a dip, it disappears completely. At a crossing path turn right – unless, that is, you have arranged accommodation in **East Meon**.

**Accommodation:** For accommodation and/or refreshment, keep ahead along the track which leads to a country lane where you bear left and soon enter East Meon. This is one of the loveliest of villages near the route of the South Downs Way. It has two pubs, a B&B, shop, post office, public telephone and bus services to Southampton, Winchester and Petersfield.

The continuing South Downs Way goes between hedges and trees and spills out to a country road at Coombe Cross. Maintain direction on a bridleway that rises between trees and low banks over which there are fine views to be had. A long steady ascent leads onto Salt Hill (more big views) and Wether Down with its tall radio masts. Keep ahead on a stony track which goes alongside the boundary fence of the former HMS *Mercury*, now known as Mercury Park. Note that on your right you pass Wetherdown Lodge, an independent hostel run by the Sustainability Centre. ▶

Turn left at a crossing road and follow the bridleway that runs parallel with it on the right-hand side. This eventually brings you down to a junction of roads. Keep ahead to a second road junction at Hyden Cross (grid ref: 683189), and maintain direction, now on a track beside Hyden Wood and across Hyden Hill and Tegdown Hill. When the woodland ends, note there's a path on the left (not part of the SDW) which descends to the source of the River Meon and, about 2 miles from here, to East Meon.

The continuing track becomes a surfaced drive which leads to a three-way junction of narrow roads. Bear left towards a large radio mast on Butser Hill. Before long

**Wetherdown Lodge** is run by the Sustainability Centre ([www.sustainability-centre.org](http://www.sustainability-centre.org)), an eco-friendly organisation that runs a programme of courses for adults and children. Formerly used as accommodation for Royal Navy trainees, the Lodge has 14 rooms with 2–3 beds, and the Centre also provides overnights in tepees and yurts. An on-site café is open daily (10.00–16.00).

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



The Queen Elizabeth Country Park sign on Butser Hill

**Note:** For refreshments, continue ahead through the country park car park to a kiosk housed in a replica Iron Age roundhouse (also toilets, information, picnic tables and a panoramic view). The refreshment kiosk is open 10–5.30 – weather depending – at weekends and in school holidays.

you'll find an enclosed bridleway running along the right-hand side of the road. It then crosses to the left-hand side for about 100 yards, to the entrance to **Queen Elizabeth Country Park** on Butser Hill (refreshments). ◀

The SDW crosses the lane near to the entrance of Butser Hill car park and passes through a short scrubby section. You will reach a bridle gate that opens into exposed downland. A SDW fingerpost directs you down the hill where you will come to a second bridle gate. Pass through the gate and continue down the hill until you reach the bottom of the field. You will then pass through a bridle gate and head up a slope.

Follow the SDW signs until you reach the underpass road. Cross the road and follow the gravel path around under the A32 bridge. As you continue on the path you will see the entrance of Queen Elizabeth Country Park with the Petersfield cycle path on your left. The path slopes upwards to meet the cycle path. At this point the SDW turns left and enters the forest. The Way continues through the forest and skirts round above the visitor centre (which is on your right). There is a café, toilets and a water tap at the visitor centre. The SDW crosses a tarmac

**Queen Elizabeth Country Park** is jointly managed by Hampshire County Council and Forest Enterprise. Covering some 1400 acres (564 hectares), it is dominated by the open dome of Butser Hill, and on the east side of the A3, by the wooded Holt Down and War Down which are covered by the Queen Elizabeth Forest. A large section of the country park is designated as a National Nature Reserve, boasting 38 species of butterfly and 12 species of wild orchid. (For more information visit [www.hants.gov.uk/countryside/qecp](http://www.hants.gov.uk/countryside/qecp).)

track with chicanes on either side. The Way continues along a well-defined gravel path up a gentle slope. Near to the top of the slope a SDW fingerpost directs you left, leaving the gravel path.

You have now entered into a dense forest and the Way winds its way up the slope passing a mixture of coniferous and deciduous plantations. After you have climbed the wooded hill the Way runs down a sunken forest path and joins a main ride. Turn left and follow this wide track northward through the rest of the park until you reach Halls Hill car park above Buriton village.

**Accommodation:** If you're in need of refreshment or accommodation in Buriton, do not walk down the road (signed to the north) but take the bridleway which heads into woods just across the road junction. This makes a delightful approach to the village.

Buriton (accommodation, refreshments) is an attractive, unspoilt village with a large duckpond near the church. The 18th-century historian, Edward Gibbon, spent his early years in the Georgian manor house which stands nearby. Until 1989 Buriton marked the western end of the South Downs Way. It has a pub, B&B, post office/village store next to The Five Bells, public telephone and buses to Petersfield.

### STAGE 3

#### *Buriton to South Harting*

See map  
on page 97

<b>Distance</b>	3½ miles (5.5km)
<b>Time</b>	1½–2hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 197 Chichester & The South Downs 1:50,000; OS Explorer 120 Chichester 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	South Harting (+½ mile)
<b>Refreshments</b>	None on the route

On this short stage the route makes a transition from rolling downland to an agricultural landscape typical of the southern counties, with hedge-lined fields and meadows dotted with farms. There are still distant views to enjoy, and the Downs are never far away, but this low-lying countryside has a different quality to that through which the walk has journeyed thus far. Despite this difference, the route remains full of variety and natural beauty.

After a short spell along a quiet country lane above Buriton, the Way then follows an undulating trackway as far as Coulters Dean Farm where another lane – banked with wild flowers in springtime – curls below the hills. This leads to a large farm and a long hedge-lined track that takes the South Downs Way out of Hampshire and into West Sussex. At the end of this track, known as Forty Acre Lane, the Downs are regained once more above the village of South Harting.

At the road junction above Buriton take the narrow lane signed to Dean Barn. This ends after about ½ mile at a pair of cottages where a trackway continues, soon affording a view north to Petersfield. Shortly after passing beneath power lines you come to Coulters Dean Farm and the start of another country lane.



*Buriton lies just below the SDW. When the route first opened, the village marked the western extent of the Way*

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



*The trackway known as Forty Acre Lane near South Harting*

**Coulters Dean Nature Reserve** has been owned by the Hampshire Wildlife Trust since 1996. It is the habitat of deer, badger and various species of butterfly. As many as 11 types of orchid are also found there.

On the right stretches the woodland of **Coulters Dean Nature Reserve**, ◀ and the lane winds below it, the wayside banks bright with wood anemone, violet, wild garlic and primrose in spring. For about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile keep to the lane as far as Sunwood Farm. Here you curve sharply to the left, then leave the lane and take a stony hedge-lined track on the right, rising between fields. When it forks take the left branch sloping downhill a little to cross the unmarked boundary between Hampshire and West Sussex at a point known as Hundred Acres. The countryside spreads out to the north where the Weald provides contrast to the wooded Downs that rise a short distance to the south.

After almost a mile the track comes to a very narrow lane by a house named Downlands, from which you can see directly ahead to a ruined tower (a folly) on Tower Hill above South Harting. Keep ahead, now on the track known as Forty Acre Lane, which leads to the B2146. On the approach to this road South Harting

comes into view below, the green copper spire of the church directing your attention. Just before you come to the road a footpath breaks away to the left as a direct route to South Harting, for those in need of accommodation or refreshment.

South Harting (accommodation, refreshments) lies just ½ mile off the route of the South Downs Way. It has B&B, a shop, post office, pub and public telephone, and buses to Chichester and Petersfield. It's a compact village with a 14th-century church whose unusual dedication is to St Mary and St Gabriel. Shortly before he died, the Victorian novelist Anthony Trollope lived here, but perhaps South Harting is best-known for the dignified mansion of Uppark which stands on the upper slopes of Tower Hill to the south. Built in the late 17th century, the house became home for a while to the young Emma Hart who was brought here by Sir Harry Fetherstonhaugh – before she became the second Lady Hamilton and Nelson's mistress. A century later the housekeeper at Uppark was Mrs Wells, mother of H. G. Wells who described life below stairs in his *Experiment in Autobiography*. The great house passed into the hands of the National Trust, who largely rebuilt it after a disastrous fire in 1989. It is open to the public.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

### STAGE 4

#### South Harting to Cocking

<b>Distance</b>	7½ miles (12km)
<b>Time</b>	3–3½hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 197 Chichester & The South Downs 1:50,000; OS Explorer 120 Chichester 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	East Harting (+1 mile), Elsted (+1 mile), Cocking (+½ mile)
<b>Refreshments</b>	None on the route

See map  
on page 90

The Downs are regained above South Harting, and once again large panoramic views reward much of the way, especially from Harting Downs and Pen Hill. Woodland crowds the route in places, but open spaces are the norm on this stage where the South Downs Way tends to hug the northern edge of the escarpment.



Marker post  
between Beacon Hill  
and Harting Downs

Cross the B2146 at grid ref: 783185, and take a pleasant woodland path which curves above a second road (the B2141) among mature beech, oak and chestnut trees on the slopes of Tower Hill. When the path comes to the B2141 cross with care and enter the National Trust-owned Harting Downs Nature Reserve.

Passing through a belt of trees you then cross a slope of open downland below a car park, with extensive views over the Weald. A clear chalk path crosses the Downs just below the head of the slope, with a wonderful panorama spreading far to the north, east and west. When the path briefly fades, marker posts conveniently guide the way until an obvious chalk track appears, sloping downhill between scrub hedges into a grassy 'saddle' that effectively separates Harting Downs and **Beacon Hill**. ▶

**Accommodation:** If you've arranged accommodation in East Harting bear left here and descend directly to the village.

Ignoring a path which climbs the steep slope of Beacon Hill, a cairn-like marker directs the Way to the right, angling gently across the flank of the hill above the dry valley of Bramshott Bottom.

At the head of the slope go through a bridle gate and soon after turn sharp left in a wooded corner near **Telegraph House**. Heading north along the east slope of Beacon Hill above Millpond Bottom, views open once more, with conifer-fringed Pen Hill seen as the next obstacle to be crossed by the SDW.

Turning east away from Beacon Hill the Way descends to the head of Millpond Bottom and a junction

**Beacon Hill** was developed as an Iron Age fort around 300–200 BC. Although the SDW skirts below its summit, paths lead onto the crown at 794ft (242m), which makes a splendid vantage point.

**Telegraph House** is partially hidden at the end of a long drive on the south slope of Beacon Hill. It was built by Earl Russell on the site of one of the Admiralty's Portsmouth to London telegraph stations established during the Napoleonic Wars, and was later briefly turned into a school by Earl Russell's brother, the philosopher Bertrand Russell.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

### *Cowslips on Pen Hill*



of paths. Go ahead up the slope and pass over Pen Hill where the view now extends beyond Treyford Hill to the long wall of the Downs fading blue with distance. The remains of Buriton Farm can be seen in the valley below to the south-east as the Way goes down the slope to a woodland corner and another path junction.

**Accommodation:** For Elsted turn left on a path which descends the slope and heads across fields to the village.

Turn right along the lower edge of a long sloping field, and continue ahead at the next junction, eventually leaving the field edge to twist among trees, then ahead along a fence-enclosed path.

On coming to a narrow track that leads to Buriton Farm, turn left for a few paces, then right on another track which soon angles up the south-west flank of Treyford Hill. When the track forks take the left branch. Shortly after the Way curves left and passes through woodland on Philliswood Down. On coming to a four-way junction of tracks turn left. At first the Way is flanked by scrub, then it enters woodland once more.

When the woods on the left of the track end, note the prominent grassy mounds of the Devil's Jumps (Bronze

Age burial mounds, or tumuli) in the meadow, and shortly after there's a stile and a small memorial stone inscribed 'Mark liked it here'.

The track is drawn through a tunnel of trees with the boundary of Monkton House on the right. Peacocks roam in the grounds and their tuneless cry grates by contrast with the songs of woodland birds. Then you emerge to open sheep-grazed meadows where the Way is led by wire fences across Didling Hill, Linch Ball and Cocking Down, with long views extending both north and south. When conditions are favourable Chichester, the Solent and even the Isle of Wight may be seen.

After Cocking Down and a four-way junction, the track slopes downhill and joins the very narrow Middlefield Lane, which is hemmed in by steep banks. Then pass a large dairy farm, whose houses have the custard yellow window frames of the Cowdray Estate. Beyond the farm you reach the A286 Midhurst to Chichester road at grid ref: 875166. There's a small car park on the right and bus stops nearby. It's possible to catch a bus here for Midhurst (north) or Chichester (south). Cocking lies a little over ½ mile down the road to the left, but should you need either accommodation or refreshment there, it would be safer and more pleasant to approach by a bridleway which leaves the South Downs Way by Hill Barn – see Stage 5 for details.

Cocking (accommodation, refreshments) stands astride the A286. It's a small village with B&B, a pub, tearooms, shop, public telephone and buses to Midhurst and Chichester. Before the Norman conquest there was a settlement here and the Domesday Book records: '...a church, 6 serfs and 5 mills yielding 37 shillings and sixpence.' Below and to the east of the main road, the 11th-century church is worth visiting. It stands above reedy ponds fed by Costers Brook, while Manor Farm shares the churchyard wall in a pleasant rural setting. About 3½ miles to the south at Singleton, the Weald and Downland Open Air Museum is a fascinating collection of traditional buildings and is recommended for a future visit.

STAGE 5

Cocking to Amberley

<b>Distance</b>	12 miles (19km)
<b>Time</b>	6–7hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 197 Chichester & The South Downs 1:50,000; OS Explorer 120 Chichester, and 121 Arundel & Pulborough 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Graffham (+1 mile), Gumber Bothy and camping (+1 mile), Bignor (+1 mile), Bury (+1 mile), Houghton (+½ mile), Houghton Bridge (+½ mile), Amberley
<b>Refreshments</b>	None on the route, but water tap near start at Cocking, and café in Amberley

See map on page 86

The early stages of this stage are dominated by woodland and views are restricted, but after crossing the A285 below Littleton Down, more open countryside draws you on across Sutton Down and Burton Down. Approaching Bignor Hill the South Downs Way briefly follows the Roman road of Stane Street, and from the crown of Bignor Hill a vast panorama opens out, with the waters of Amberley Wild Brooks and the River Arun gleaming below the blue-stretched line of the continuing Downs.

Above Cocking cross the A286 with caution and progress along Hillbarn Lane to Hill Barn Farm where you'll find a drinking-water supply on the right.

**Accommodation:** If you plan to visit Cocking for accommodation, refreshment or supplies from the village shop, turn left here and follow a clear track down to Cocking church. Bear left on the lane

below the church; this brings you into the heart of the village by the post office/shop, and almost opposite the Blue Bell Inn.

The Way continues beyond Hill Barn as a partly-metalled farm road, which soon gives way to a track leading between fields onto Manorfarm Down. The fields are either given over to grazing dairy herds, or to raising cereal crops. The track forks on the edge of a conifer plantation. Ignore the right branch and maintain direction, now losing views as woodland begins to crowd the way. Conifers give way to coppiced woodland at the start of Charlton Forest, and although there are several crossing tracks, the South Downs Way keeps ahead and is clearly signed. One or two redundant timber-built shooting towers are passed – apparently these were constructed by the Cowdray Estate to enable paying guests to shoot deer.

The track makes a kink left and right along the edge of a strip of meadow on Heyshott Down, where you'll see a number of Bronze Age burial mounds dating from about 1500 BC. The Way is then blinkered by woodland, and although views are concealed, the walking is easy except after prolonged rain when the track becomes very muddy.

On Graffham Down several small enclosed meadows have been set aside as part of a conservation project managed by the Graffham Down Trust to protect chalk-loving plants and butterflies.

Immediately after major crossing tracks, the woodland cuts back on the left as you come to a long three-sided field, and views are hinted once more into the Weald. Other fields stretch ahead as the Way keeps to the right-hand edge. Eventually reach another major crossing track at Crown Tegleaze, with fine views and a large fingerpost indicating East Dean to the right (south-west), and Duncton to the left. The SDW continues ahead through a brief woodland interlude, then emerges to a large open field through which you descend, passing through a second field, then down a tree-lined track to Littleton Farm and the A285 Petworth–Chichester road (grid ref: 951144).

**Note:** At a major junction of tracks marked by an oak signpost, the left-hand bridleway descends to Graffham in 1 mile.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

On the other side of the road a farm track winds up the slope towards Sutton Down. On the edge of woodland the track forks and you take the right branch, which takes you alongside, then through, a patch of woodland before coming onto the crown of Sutton Down. From here the best views are to the north-west, with the SDW clearly defined through the fields above Littleton Farm.

Drawing level with the trig point on Sutton Down the way forks again. Once more take the right branch ahead, and before long you reach a four-way junction on the edge of the Slindon Estate, which is owned by the National Trust.

**Accommodation:** Gumber Bothy Camping Barn, run by the National Trust, is about 1 mile to the south-west, and may be reached by turning right at this junction. It is open from March to October (Tel: 01243 814484).

*From the Downs above Littleton Farm, Sutton Down can be clearly seen to the east*

A bridle gate gives access to a meadow where you continue ahead alongside a wire fence, with big views





across woodland to the coast. Leave the meadow at its far side and come onto a flint track which is part of the old Roman road of **Stane Street**, used on this stage by the **Monarch's Way**, one of the longest of all long distance walks. (Gumber Bothy is easily reached by turning right here.) Veer left when the track forks, and at a T-junction turn right to reach the Bignor Hill car park. A large wooden signpost shows the way to Noviomagus (Chichester) and Bignor.

*On Sutton Down  
the South Downs  
Way slices between  
large arable fields*

**Stane Street** is the name given by the Saxons to the great Roman road which ran from Chichester (Noviomagus) to London (Londinium). Building this road must have been a considerable task, for it not only had to climb over the South Downs, it then had to contend with the notoriously sticky clay of the Weald, and the dual obstacles of the greensand hills and North Downs. The 56-mile route was achieved in three straight sections, and completed in about AD70.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

The **Monarch's Way** is an epic route of 609 miles (980km), based on the journey made by Charles II in 1651 following his escape from the Battle of Worcester. Beginning in Worcester it visits Stratford-upon-Avon, the Cotswolds and Mendips, and is met on the South Downs Way as it heads towards Shoreham-by-Sea in East Sussex. A three volume guide to the route has been written by Trevor Antill and is published by Meridian Books.

Cross the car park's approach road and take the clear track which scores through large open fields to gain the summit of **Bignor Hill**, a marvellous vantage point from which to examine the continuing line of the South Downs, as well as the snaking River Arun and the water courses of Amberley Wild Brooks. Just beyond the summit of the hill the SDW passes Toby's Stone – a memorial to Toby Wentworth-Fitzwilliam, one-time secretary of the Cowdray Hounds.

**Bignor Hill** overlooks the Weald with the small village of Bignor directly below to the north. This whole area resonates with Roman history, for apart from construction of Stane Street to convey goods and personnel between Chichester and London, the Romans had a large villa, presumably built for a wealthy and important official, sited a little east of where Bignor village stands today. Dating from the fourth century AD, the villa was at the heart of a large farm of about 1900 acres, it had under-floor heating and some of the finest mosaics yet discovered in England.

The descending track curves right and forks. The SDW curves left round a hairpin bend and descends past a large barn below Westburton Hill. The Way now angles up the slope among banks smothered with cowslips in springtime, and continues across large open fields to reach the A29 on Bury Hill (grid ref: 004119).

Turn right for about 100 yards, then cross the road with care onto a descending track alongside Coombe Wood, with a fine view to Houghton and the low-lying fields and meadows at the foot of the Downs. When the

wood ends, the Way cuts through a large field to a narrow lane at grid ref: 017118.

**Houghton** stands astride the B2139 above the River Arun, and until 1994 when the bridleway bridge over the Arun was erected, it used to be on the route of the SDW. The village has several interesting buildings, including the George and Dragon in which it is said the young Charles II stopped for refreshment in October 1651, during his flight to France following his defeat at the Battle of Worcester.

**Accommodation:** For accommodation and/or refreshments in **Houghton**, turn right for about 400 yards. For **Bury** ▶ (accommodation, refreshments) turn left for a little under a mile.

Across the lane go ahead to a drainage channel forming a field boundary, then turn right and left along the next field boundary to gain a raised embankment above the **River Arun**. Follow this round to a bridleway bridge, cross to the left bank and turn right for about 150 yards.

**Bury** stands on the west bank of the River Arun opposite Amberley, with whom it used to share a ferry. This is another small and attractive village and one-time home of novelist John Galsworthy, who lived in Bury House from 1926 until his death in 1933.

The **River Arun** is the longest in Sussex, and tidal where the South Downs Way briefly meets it. During the Middle Ages the river was navigable as far as Amberley, and the castle was built during the Hundred Years' War to defend it. During the Napoleonic Wars a canal was built to link the Arun with the Thames via the River Wey as part of a scheme to connect London with the English Channel, but this was short-lived and the canal closed in 1868. Today both banks near Amberley have footpath access, while it's possible to follow the right bank path all the way to the coast at Littlehampton.

**Accommodation:** For accommodation and/or refreshments at Houghton Bridge continue along the riverside path.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



### *Drainage channel on the SDW near Amberley*

The continuing South Downs Way turns left away from the river at a signpost onto an enclosed track that winds past farm buildings and a water treatment plant, crosses the railway line and provides a view north to Amberley Castle, before coming to the B2139 New Barn Road on the outskirts of Amberley (grid ref: 028124). For accommodation and refreshments, turn left.

Amberley (accommodation, refreshments) is one of the most attractive of Sussex villages with many charming thatched cottages, and others whose gardens cascade over their walls. Overlooking the marshlands and water meadows of Amberley Wild Brooks ('Wild' being a derivation of 'Weald') are the Norman church and ruins of a castle built for the Bishops of Chichester in 1380. The walls enclose a manor house that is now a hotel ([www.amberleycastle.co.uk](http://www.amberleycastle.co.uk)).

## STAGE 6

### *Amberley to Washington*

<b>Distance</b>	6 miles (9.5km)
<b>Time</b>	2½–3hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 197 Chichester & The South Downs, and 198 Brighton & Lewes 1:50,000; OS Explorer 121 Arundel & Pulborough 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Storrington (+1¼ miles), Washington
<b>Refreshments</b>	Pub in Washington

See map  
on page 74

Once Amberley has been left behind there's no habitation on this stage, for the route climbs onto the Downs and remains there until forced to descend to Washington in its 'dry valley'. Throughout, the South Downs present a broad-backed escarpment, fringed here and there with trees, but often with open sheep- (or cattle-) grazed grassland, or vast fields sown with cereal crops or oil-seed rape. In two places the crest of the Downs is reached by narrow roads that end in car parks (at Springhead Hill and the Chantry Post by Sullington Hill), and at weekends and holiday periods one should expect company – which comes as a shock after experiencing so many otherwise 'empty' miles along the South Downs Way. For the remainder of this stage of the route, company is more likely to be in the form of skylarks, peewits and the occasional hare. Apart from sheep and cows, that is.

Turn right on a hedge-enclosed bridleway alongside the B2139, but before long you're directed across the road where you continue on a raised path behind another hedge as far as a minor road named High Titten, where a sign indicates the midway point between Winchester and Eastbourne. (Previously the halfway point was advertised on Bury Hill west of Amberley!)

**Note:** There's a trough and water supply outside a café near Amberley railway station, a short distance further along the B2139.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

**Amberley Museum** has been developed within a large disused chalk quarry that once employed more than 100 men. The 36-acre site has various items of industrial machinery on display, as well as a narrow gauge railway, blacksmith's shop and a printing works.

Turn left up High Titten and, as you ascend the slope, note views to the right into the chalk pits **museum**. ◀ Approaching the head of the slope another road cuts left to Amberley, while we turn right to pass the entrance to a large house (Highdown), and shortly after leave the road for a bridleway that rises through a belt of trees on the left. The Way then continues beside a wire fence that leads onto Amberley Mount from where you gain a splendid panoramic view that can be enjoyed all the way to Rackham Hill. Between Amberley Mount and Rackham Hill you cross an old earthwork known as Rackham Banks.

Between Rackham Hill and Springhead Hill you briefly pass through a small woodland, then gain a view of the Channel to the south.

**Accommodation:** From the car park on Springhead Hill there's a path onto Kithurst Hill, with another that breaks away to descend to Storrington where there's B&B, pubs, shops – including cycle spares – post office, and public telephone.

The SDW passes to the right of the car park to cross a shoulder of Kithurst Hill, passes the first **dew pond** seen along the way, and then comes to a second car park by the Chantry Post (grid ref: 087119).

Walk through the car park and continue across Sullington Hill, which is part downland, part arable, but with a great sense of space and a trilling of larks. On reaching a solitary barn, the Way curves slightly left, and on Barnsfarm Hill you come to a finger post to be faced with two options.

**Dew Ponds** are found alongside the route in many parts of the Sussex Downs. By virtue of the permeable nature of chalk, there is practically no surface water on the Downs, so saucer-shaped scoops were traditionally dug out and lined with clay to trap and store rainwater for grazing animals. A number of these were later given a concrete base. Originally these ponds were known as 'cloud ponds', 'mist ponds' or, more prosaically, 'sheep ponds'.

**Main route avoiding A24:** One mile ahead the original SDW crossed the busy A24. Though hazardous, this option is still available (see Alternative route below), while a better and safer diversion has been created. For this turn left at the finger post and head north across Barnsfarm Hill. On the far side descend the grass slope and curve right at the bottom of a meadow, then branch left into some trees to join a narrow surfaced track. This becomes a sunken lane descending through woodland, out of which you pass a couple of houses, walk ahead among more trees, then turn right on a crossing track by Rowdell House. This track becomes a lane which crosses a bridge over the A24 and enters Washington (accommodation, refreshments). Passing the church walk down The Street to a T-junction where you turn right (left for the pub). Shortly before the road reaches the A24, turn left into a car park at the foot of the Downs at grid ref: 120120.

**Alternative route:** Be warned: this alternative section crosses the busy dual carriageway of the A24.

*The parish church in Washington*



## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

**Note:** A path cuts left here, which eventually leads to the A24 bridge.

Continue ahead from the finger post junction, with the woodland crown of Chanctonbury Hill seen a little over 2 miles to the east, and the sea at Worthing to the south. Crossing Highden Hill the way is guided between wire fences and a small woodland as you descend to the head of a narrow metalled road.

As you descend the road note the drinking-water tap on the right, opposite a bungalow. Soon after you come to the A24, which you cross with great care. On the east side turn left then right along a feeder road, and into a car park at grid ref: 120120. Washington (accommodation, refreshments) lies about ½ mile to the north, along the feeder road.

Washington is a compact village with a number of attractive flint, timber and brick-built cottages, and a parish church with a 15th-century tower, and 13th-century arches and columns that remain after substantial rebuilding took place in the 19th century. Washington grew from a Saxon settlement named for the sons of Wassa, it has a pub, B&B, bus links with Worthing, and a campsite a little to the north.

## STAGE 7

### *Washington to Botolphs (Adur Valley)*

<b>Distance</b>	7 miles (11km)
<b>Time</b>	3–3½hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 198 Brighton & Lewes 1:50,000; OS Explorer 121 Arundel & Pulborough and 122 South Downs Way, Steyning to Newhaven 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Wiston (+1½ miles), Steyning (+½–1½ miles), Bramber (+1½ miles)
<b>Refreshments</b>	None on the route, but a water supply at the end of this stage

See map  
on page 68

Climbing out of Washington's 'dry valley' the crest of the South Downs is regained at Chanctonbury Hill, with the acclaimed beechwood crown of Chanctonbury Ring nearby. Seen from the Weald far to the north, as well as from many vantage points along the SDW, Chanctonbury Ring was badly damaged by the great storm of October 1987, and it will take several decades before the programme of replanting restores it to its former glory. However, the trees mark the site of a Roman temple and an Iron Age fort, while a couple of miles or so to the south, Cissbury Ring is the largest and most impressive earthworks to be found on the South Downs. Later, the route takes you near Steyning Round Hill where a number of Bronze Age cremation urns were discovered in 1949 – proof indeed, that history is all around you on the South Downs Way.

From Washington car park south of the village, go up the track which climbs the slope between banks, winding steadily uphill to a T-junction of tracks where you turn left. The Way passes a dew pond (above and to the left of the track) on Chanctonbury Hill from where there's a

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

**Chanctonbury Ring** was planted in 1760 by Charles Goring of Wiston House, an Elizabethan mansion at the foot of the Downs. The original grove of beech and sycamore trees was, and still is, a major landmark on the South Downs escarpment, and during the first few months after planting, it is said that Goring made regular visits to his young trees, carrying water up the steep slope along Wiston Bostal to ensure they 'took'. The grove is planted within the mounds of a 4-acre Iron Age earthwork that was properly excavated following the great storm of October 1987, when it was discovered that the Romans had built a temple there during the fourth or fifth centuries AD.

magnificent 360-degree panoramic view. You then continue alongside **Chanctonbury Ring** before making a long arc to the right. At a four-way crossing track, the right branch goes to **Cissbury Ring**, while the left-hand option descends through woodland to Wiston (accommodation) about 1½ miles from here.

**Cissbury Ring** is the largest and most impressive of all the earthworks on the South Downs. Covering no less than 65 acres, the Iron Age hill fort that dates from about 300 to 59 BC has two clearly defined ramparts whose construction led to some 60,000 tons of chalk being removed from the intervening ditch. Long before the hill fort was begun, Cissbury had been mined for flint, with shafts up to 40 feet (12m) deep, making it one of the major sites of flint mining in southern England.

The Way continues ahead, scoring across the wide open crest of the Downs and, after another 1½ miles, comes to a second major four-way crossing at grid ref: 162100. The right-hand option also leads to Cissbury Ring, and has been adopted by the Monarch's Way, while the left-hand route offers a way down to Steyning (accommodation, refreshments, shop, bank and bus services) in about 1½ miles. Far ahead a high-rise building can be seen in Brighton, while on the right of the track note the memorial to a Sussex farmer whose ashes, along with those of his wife, were 'laid to rest on his cherished Downs.'



The SDW maintains direction and soon joins a minor road where you walk along its left-hand side as far as the entrance to a very narrow farm road. Keep ahead through a bridle gate and then along the right-hand edge of a field. At the far boundary go through another bridle gate, then turn left down the edge of a large meadow with a view through the coombe of Steyning Bowl. The Way eventually veers away from the fence to gain another gate midway across the far boundary. This takes you down the right-hand edge of the next field, from where you have a clear view of the radio masts on Truleigh Hill to the north-east, the lovely old church of Botolphs in the valley below, with the jarring sight of a cement works chimney nearby, and south to the massive grey chapel of **Lancing College**.

*One of several water supplies beside the Way in Sussex – useful alike for horses, walkers and riders*

**Lancing College** as seen from the South Downs Way is a huge grey ecclesiastical building, a classic of Victorian Gothic architecture. The chapel, for that is what dominates, was designed in the 1840s by R. H. Carpenter, whose father created the adjacent school buildings. Standing high above the town, the college looks out across the Adur's valley and Shoreham harbour towards Brighton, and was founded in 1848 with the aim of creating 'the union of classes by a common system of education' based on Christian principles.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

**Botolphs** is a peaceful little hamlet with neither pub nor shop, but just a few farms and attractive cottages, and a Saxon church, dedicated to St Botolph, whose walls glow orange at sunset. The village was once much larger, with fishing and salt industries, but the sea withdrew from the valley of the Adur, leaving Botolphs literally high and dry. Odd hummocks in some of the meadows are all that remain of one-time village houses.

The **Downs Link** is a recreational route which, as its name suggests, links the South and North Downs Ways between Botolphs and St Martha's Hill near Guildford in Surrey. Established in 1984 it follows for much of its 34-mile (55km) route the course of a dismantled railway.

The final descent to **Botolphs** takes you down a tree-lined track that spills out onto a minor country road. Bear right to pass some very attractive flint-walled houses. Immediately after the entrance to Pear Tree Cottage, take the fence-enclosed bridleway on the left of the road. This leads to a lay-by and a bridleway running away from the road alongside a ditch. Within a few paces this crosses the line of a disused railway, and the start/finish to the **Downs Link**. ◀

Go onto an embankment above the River Adur, cross a bridge to the east bank and, just before coming to the A283 Shoreham Road, you'll find a water tap and trough on the right. An enclosed bridleway now takes you below the road to a lay-by/parking area near a bus stop for Shoreham, at grid ref: 197096.

## STAGE 8

### *Botolphs to Pyecombe*

<b>Distance</b>	7½ miles (12km)
<b>Time</b>	3–3½hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 198 Brighton & Lewes 1:50,000; OS Explorer 122 South Downs Way, Steyning to Newhaven 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Truleigh Hill Youth Hostel, Pyecombe
<b>Refreshments</b>	Devil's Dyke, Saddlescombe and Pyecombe

See map  
on page 64

This stage of the Way falls into two distinct parts. The first climbs out of the valley of the River Adur and keeps to the top of the Downs along the Fulking escarpment, then descends beside the Devil's Dyke to Saddlescombe, which is little more than a farm and a group of buildings set in a saddle (or pass) within a coombe. The second part is much shorter, for it quickly regains the Downs above Saddlescombe, crosses West Hill, then slopes down to the A23 at Pyecombe, a two-part village divided in the 17th century by the plague.

Cross the A283 and turn left. Just beyond a bus stop turn right and ascend the slope of Beeding Hill through the centre of a large field. At the top of the field go through a gate and alongside the boundary fence of a meadow, then onto a narrow road next to a car park. Keep ahead, using a thin bridleway on the left of the road which takes you almost as far as Truleigh Hill Youth Hostel (accommodation, refreshments) at grid ref: 221106. A water supply is found outside the building near its entrance.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



### *The essential Downs above Botolphs*

Remain on the stony track that replaced the metalled road, and pass a few houses and masts to your left before coming to a large radio mast by some barns. The track passes these, then slopes downhill curving left from where the continuing SDW can be seen crossing Edburton Hill to the north-east. The way forks at the start of the National Trust's Fulking escarpment, and those who have arranged accommodation in Edburton should take the left branch. The main track veers right and provides lovely views from the escarpment into the Weald.

Between Edburton Hill and Perching Hill there's a dip into a little saddle beneath a line of power cables. On Perching Hill you're on the edge of the escarpment with a long view to the north-east where downland spurs push into the Weald and Fulking village can be seen below.

Fulking Hill is next, with yet another big view which includes the Devil's Dyke pub half-hidden among trees. Passing through a gate on the eastern edge of National Trust land on Fulking Hill, the path forks and you take the upper, right-hand option and cross a narrow road which serves the Devil's Dyke pub (refreshments).

Coming onto Summer Down, which is part of the Devil's Dyke Estate, keep ahead among islands of scrub, with the hollow of the **Devil's Dyke** to your left. After

The **Devil's Dyke** is Britain's largest single coombe of chalk karst; a steep dry valley which covers 183 acres of downland. Dotted with scrub, the chalk grassland is the habitat of several orchids as well as wild thyme, horseshoe vetch and birdsfoot trefoil. The summit of the Dyke was the site of a massive Iron Age hill fort, and the whole area is now in the care of the National Trust.

crossing a more open section beyond the initial scrub, take the left branch when the path forks, and you'll come to the corner boundary of an underground reservoir, then descend to a road at **Saddlescombe**.

**Saddlescombe** has been farmed for more than 700 years and came into the ownership of the Knights Templar in the 13th century. In 1995 Saddlescombe Farm was acquired by the National Trust. In addition to 500 acres of agricultural land, it has several unspoilt Sussex farm buildings, including a blacksmith's forge complete with furnace and bellows. There is a campsite and the The WildFlour café, which provides welcome refreshments. See [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/saddlescombe-farm-and-newtimber-hill](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/saddlescombe-farm-and-newtimber-hill).



*The view along the Fulking escarpment, near the Devil's Dyke, stretches far into the Sussex Weald*

Cross the road onto the drive leading to Saddlescombe Farm (refreshments), then up a short bridleway which curves right, passes behind a barn and comes onto a farm road near a water supply. Continue past a few houses and barns, then go through a gate to a sunken bridleway which rises through a tunnel of trees, emerging onto the open slopes of West Hill. Crossing the hill you gain a view onto Pyecombe and its valley sliced by the busy A23 London to Brighton road.

Descend to a driveway by a riding school, and bear left alongside the A23 on a minor road which brings you onto a bridge by which you cross the A23. On the far side a finger post directs you along Church Hill in Pyecombe (accommodation, refreshments). Along this lane you soon reach the parish church at grid ref: 292126.

Pyecombe is wedged between the A23 and A273, a small village that was badly hit by the plague in 1603, during which some of the villagers resettled ½ mile to the north-west. The original eastern half has an interesting church and an attractive old forge by its entrance. The Norman church was largely built in 1170, but its tower was added a century later. Inside there's a finely decorated lead font, thought to have been disguised with whitewash during the Civil War of 1645 to prevent the lead being used to make bullets. The tapsel gate leading into the churchyard has a shepherd's crook as a latch. Such crooks were made for around 200 years in the old forge nearby, not only for South Downs shepherds, but more decoratively to be carried by Church of England bishops as a symbolic pastoral staff. The Forge is now a tearoom, open at bank holidays and weekends (or by appointment for walking groups Tel: 01273 842272).

## STAGE 9

### *Pyecombe to Housedean (A27)*

<b>Distance</b>	8½ miles (13.5km)
<b>Time</b>	3½–4hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 198 Brighton & Lewes 1:50,000; OS Explorer 122 South Downs Way, Steyning to Newhaven 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Clayton (+½ mile), Ditchling (+1¾ miles), Lewes (+1½–2 miles)
<b>Refreshments</b>	None on the route

See map  
on page 58

Broad panoramic views are commonplace on this stage of the South Downs Way, for a large part of the route journeys along the scarp edge so you gain the perspective of height and depth as well as one of distance. The agricultural pattern that has become familiar by now, is repeated with a mixture of grazed downland and arable fields, interspersed with patches of woodland. But there's variety in that pattern, and the route is enlivened by a close view of the twin Clayton Windmills not long after setting out. Soon after, the Way crosses Ditchling Beacon. At 813 feet (248m) this is the highest point in Sussex, whose popular downland is protected as a nature reserve. Below the Beacon in Ditchling village the Romans had a fortified camp, and on Plumpton Plain there was the site of a Bronze Age settlement, while the route later skirts Mount Harry above Lewes, where Simon de Montfort took arms against Henry III in 1264. Once again, history is a frequent companion along the South Downs Way.

East of Pyecombe church, Church Hill leads into School Lane and eases down to the A273 where you turn left along a hedge-enclosed bridleway as far as a point opposite the entrance to Pyecombe Golf Club. Cross the road and follow the drive up a slope then, passing the

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

clubhouse to your right, continue up a track that runs alongside the golf course. At the top of the slope you gain a view of the **Clayton Windmills** to the north.

The **Clayton Windmills**, known as Jack and Jill, are a much-loved feature of the South Downs. The upper, black-painted smock mill (Jack), was built in 1866 and has been converted to a private residence, while Jill, the gleaming white post mill, is in the care of a preservation society and is open to the public most Sundays (14.00–17.00) between May and September, with a tearoom providing refreshments. Jill was built in 1821 and originally stood in Patcham, Brighton, but was towed by oxen to her present site where she continued working until 1906. For further information see [www.jillwindmill.org.uk](http://www.jillwindmill.org.uk).

**Ditchling Beacon** is the highest of the South Downs in Sussex and is owned by the National Trust, but its nature reserve, with several varieties of orchid, is in the care of the Sussex Wildlife Trust. Marked by a trig point the summit of the hill is surrounded by the rectangular outline of an Iron Age hill fort.

Eventually go through a gate, and a few paces later turn left at crossing tracks and pass between the buildings of New Barn Farm. Maintain direction along the farm track towards the Clayton Windmills, but on coming to a crossing track, turn right away from them.

**Accommodation:** To reach Clayton village for accommodation and refreshments, turn left, then take the path which leads round the first windmill (Jack), passes the second (Jill), then descends to Underhill Lane in Clayton.

The SDW track now works its way south-east and soon reaches the Keymer Post – a fine oak post set back a little to the left on the boundary between East and West Sussex.

Maintain direction along the scarp edge track, and shortly pass the gorse-fringed Burnt House Pond, with another muddy little hollow just beyond it.

With its car park nearby, **Ditchling Beacon** ◀ will rarely be enjoyed in solitude, but from the trig point on the summit the views are far-reaching. Through the car park (there's often an ice cream van) cross the narrow road with care and pass to the left of another restored dew pond.

**Accommodation:** For accommodation and/or refreshments in Ditchling, turn left on the road for about 50 yards where you'll find a path which soon plunges down the steep slope among trees. Maintain direction at the foot of the slope as far as Underhill Lane. Bear left, then turn right into Nye Lane after 100 yards. When this forks, take the left branch into the village. Ditchling has B&Bs, pub, post office, shop and buses.

The SDW now takes you over Home Brow and Western Brow before descending into a little dip through which a very narrow metalled lane leads to Streathill Farm.

Cross the narrow lane onto Plumpton Plain where you gain views to Plumpton, Plumpton Place, the racecourse, and extensive buildings of an agricultural college below.

A little over a mile from the narrow lane near Streathill Farm, the SDW makes a sharp right turn by a gate near the National Trust downland of Blackcap. The bridleway is now enclosed by thorn hedges, and soon takes you alongside a small woodland, then along

*Home Brow,  
to the east of  
Ditchling Beacon*



## *THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY*

the edge of a large field. After about 100 yards between fences, you come to a track and turn half-left down the right-hand edge of another field, soon passing beneath power cables.

The Way continues through gates and more open fields on Balmer Down, passing another shallow dew pond. Then, at the bottom field boundary, go through a gate on the right to a narrow enclosed bridleway descending to a dip near a small electricity substation, then twisting steeply uphill through the woods of Bunkershill Plantation. Leave the woods by a bridle gate, go ahead, then down a steeply sloping field that drains into a valley cut by the A27 west of Lewes. At the foot of the slope go through another gate and turn right alongside the flint-walled boundary of Housedean Farm (grid ref: 369092).

**Accommodation:** If accommodation is needed in Lewes, turn left along the A27 to a bus stop for a frequent service into town. Lewes has all main services, including rail links with London.

## STAGE 10

### *Housedean (A27) to Southease*

<b>Distance</b>	6 miles (9.5km)
<b>Time</b>	2½–3hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 198 Brighton & Lewes 1:50,000; OS Explorer 122 South Downs Way, Steyning to Newhaven 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Kingston (+½ mile), Southease
<b>Refreshments</b>	Southease

See map  
on page 52

Between Housedean Farm and Mill Hill near Rodmell there's no habitation on the route, but instead there's a wonderful sense of space with many splendid vantage points from which to contemplate the extent and diversity of the South Downs. This short stage of the route is full of natural beauty as the Way approaches the valley of the River Ouse. The Channel is glimpsed to the south, an inner lining to the Downs to the north, and from the scarp edge there's a series of deep coombes, or dry valleys, to break the escarpment's broad smooth crest.

West of the entrance to Housedean Farm go up a minor road to cross a bridge over the A27, then slope down to the left. When the road swings round to join the A27, go ahead through a gate and along a bridleway below a railway embankment, then through an archway to the south side of the railway. The Way now goes between a field and a wooded bank, before rising through the trees to a long slope that takes you up towards the beechwood of Newmarket Plantation near the head of Cold Coombes, a fine sheep-grazed dry valley. Keeping the beechwood to your right, reach the top of the field, go through a gate and along the edge of Cold Coombes. A second gate leads the Way onto the crest of the Downs where you

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

**Juggs Road** is the name given to a one-time trading route across the South Downs used by fisher-folk from Brighton, who carted their fish by donkey to the market in the county town. The people of Lewes referred to these traders as ‘Juggs’, supposedly from the earthenware jugs, or pots, in which the fish were salted and kept fresh.

swing left and in a few more paces come onto a track known as **Juggs Road**. Veer left and continue alongside a fence. Reaching gorse bushes and a dew pond, which lies near the unmarked site of long-removed Ashcombe Windmill, the Way curves to the right.

**Accommodation:** An alternative path breaks away here to descend north-eastwards to Kingston where there’s B&B accommodation.

Soon after passing the dew pond you pass a second one on Kingston Hill. This is just left of the route and is screened by more gorse bushes. Beyond it you eventually come to an obvious track stretching ahead, with the scarp slope plunging steeply to the small village of Iford, and with Lewes clearly seen to the north-east. Another track (Breach Road) descends to Swanborough Manor, while a steep and narrow coombe falls towards Iford. Keep along

*Dew ponds are common on the Sussex Downs. This one lies beside Juggs Road above Kingston-near-Lewes*



the track as it edges the scarp slope with an ever-evolving series of big views to enjoy.

When the track makes a sudden bend to descend as Dencher Road (not shown as such on the 1:50,000 map), continue straight ahead for about 150 yards, then go through a gate on the right and soon join a concrete farm road on Iford Hill. Turn left and follow this road, which is almost dead straight, for a little over a mile on Front Hill between open fields.

On reaching a T-junction leave the concrete and go ahead through a bridle gate, then along the edge of more fields of cereal crops or oil-seed rape, to an enclosed bridleway that almost becomes a tunnel of trees. This leads to the entrance to Mill Hill, a large house that exploits a splendid view.

At the foot of the Downs, unseen from here, **Rodmell** is an unassuming village known for being the home of writers Leonard and Virginia Woolf of the Bloomsbury Group. In 1919 the Woolfs moved into Monk's House, a brick and flint building near the church, and it was from there that Virginia, suffering a mental illness in 1941, went down to the River Ouse and committed suicide. Monk's House is now owned by the National Trust.

Cross the drive, go through a gate into a rolling meadow and turn left. Over the brow of the hill descend steeply alongside a fence into the valley of Cricketing Bottom. At the foot of the slope turn left, and, in another 100 yards come to a farm road, or track.

Turn left along the farm track for a little over ½ mile. When it curves left, break away to the right on a bridleway alongside a wooden fence. You then climb a short slope and cross a meadow to a road junction. Go half-left ahead and, shortly after, turn left on the road which leads down into Southease. This soon brings you to the village green by the church (grid ref: 424053). For accommodation or refreshments at the South Downs youth hostel, see Stage 11.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

*Southeast church  
has a rare circular  
tower built in the  
12th century*



Southeast consists of a few 17th-century cottages, a village green and an attractive church with a rare circular tower built in the 12th century, and some faded medieval wall paintings. Southeast was first recorded in a charter of AD 966 granting the church and manor – and that of nearby Telscombe – to Hyde Abbey in Winchester. The village was then known as ‘Sueise’ and the charter, made by the Anglo-Saxon King Edgar (Eadgar), included 28 hides of land. In the Domesday Book of 1086 the village rated 27 hides and ‘the villeins are assessed for 38,500 herrings and at £4 for porpoises.’ This reference to herrings and porpoises provides an indication of the importance of the village as a fishery. At the time the River Ouse was a major tidal river, and it is thought possible that the lake in the grounds of Southeast Place may once have been a harbour.

## STAGE 11

### *Southeast to Alfriston*

<b>Distance</b>	7 miles (11km)
<b>Time</b>	3–3½hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 198 Brighton & Lewes and 199 Eastbourne & Hastings 1:50,000; OS Explorer 122 South Downs Way, Steyning to Newhaven and 123 South Downs Way, Newhaven to Eastbourne 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Southeast, Firle (+1¼ miles), Alfriston
<b>Refreshments</b>	Southeast

See map  
on page 46

After crossing the River Ouse the Way climbs onto the back of the Downs at Itford Hill, then proceeds for mile on mile over cropped grass with breezy open spaces and a sense that the end of the journey is drawing near, now that the Downs are curving towards the coast. On Beddingham Hill a pair of tall radio masts intrude upon the open aspect of the way, but thereafter there's little to disturb the views. Ancient burial mounds punctuate the route all along this stage, but on Bostal Hill it's multi-coloured paragliders that capture your attention at weekends and holidays, when conditions allow.

Beyond the village green in Southeast, the road continues across the Ouse Valley, flanked by reedy drainage ditches, with Itford Hill seen rising ahead. Cross the bridge over the River Ouse and continue to Southeast Station and a level crossing (caution!). Approaching Itford Farm bear right and walk alongside a wall to a footbridge which crosses the A26. (This goes behind South Downs YHA hostel (accommodation;

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

refreshments for non-residents in the Courtyard Café.) On the far side the SDW joins a track winding up the slope of Itford Hill, gaining views to Newhaven down the valley. Making a loop over grass slopes adorned with cowslips in spring, you come onto the crown of Itford Hill where Red Lion Pond allows a fine view to Lewes and the gap cut through the inner Downs by the River Ouse.

From here continue north-east to Beddingham Hill. Shortly before reaching the radio masts you join a clear track that takes you along the left-hand side of the masts and on across the Downs, now heading east. When the track makes a sharp curve to the right, leave it and go ahead through a gate and across a large meadow to the head of a narrow road and a car park (grid ref: 468059).

**Accommodation:** By descending along the road, the small village of **Firle** may be reached by those who have booked accommodation there.

**Firle**, or West Firle, as the Ordnance Survey shows it, is a compact village nestling at the foot of the Downs. The elegant Firle Place, which stands in parkland near the church and is backed by woodland, was originally built for the Gage family in 1557, but then rebuilt nearly 200 years later – the Georgian outer retaining the early Tudor core. East of Firle Place stands the round folly of Firle Tower (a private house), which can be seen from the Downs near Firle Beacon, and east again from that is Charleston Farmhouse. For several decades this was home to the somewhat unconventional Bloomsbury Group of writers and painters, after having been discovered by Leonard and Virginia Woolf in 1916. The house, which is open to the public, now contains works by Virginia's sister, Vanessa Bell, and Duncan Grant who died in 1978 at the age of 93.

Through the car park the SDW continues past ancient burial mounds to Firle Beacon, whose trig point stands just to the left of the trail (grid ref: 485059). A very fine panorama is gained from the scarp edge here, including Seaford Head and the start of the Seven Sisters beyond the estuary of Cuckmere Haven. Now the Way



curves south-eastward and, before reaching Bostal Hill, it descends to a saddle at the head of another narrow road.

Pass along the right-hand side of the car park on a flinty track that takes you over Bostal Hill, which claims yet another huge panoramic view, this one taking in Arlington Reservoir to the north-east.

Over the hill the track gives way to a grass trail leading on across the Downs. After a meadow section go through a gate and maintain direction along the side of a large field. As Alfriston comes into view below, Cuckmere Haven can also be seen to the south.

At the bottom of the field there's a multi-junction of tracks at Long Burgh (a long barrow not shown on the 1:50,000 map). Go ahead briefly on a narrow bridleway between scrub, then on a continuing chalk track – a drove road formerly used by shepherds to take their flocks to market. Remain with this track all the way down to King's Ride, a residential street on the edge of Alfriston. On coming to a minor crossroads maintain direction to

*Paragliders, like giant butterflies, are launched from Bostal Hill*

reach Alfriston High Street next to The Star Inn at grid ref: 520031.

Alfriston (accommodation, refreshments) is very much a show-piece village with many interesting and picturesque buildings, several of which have typical downland flint walls. The timber-framed George Inn (built 1397) is said to have been a smuggler's haunt, while The Star Inn opposite, which dates from the 15th century, bears the figurehead of a Dutch ship that foundered in Cuckmere Haven in 1672. The 14th-century church of St Andrew, standing between the greensward of The Tye and the Cuckmere River, is often referred to as 'the Cathedral of the Downs' on account of its size. Nearby the thatched, half-timbered Clergy House is of similar age to the church, and was the first building bought (in 1896) by the National Trust – for just £10! Alfriston has several shops, a post office, restaurants, pubs and tearooms, and a choice of accommodation. There are bus services to Berwick (connecting trains to Lewes/London and Eastbourne), Hailsham, Seaford, and Eastbourne.

## STAGE 12

### *Alfriston to Eastbourne (Footpath route via the Seven Sisters)*

<b>Distance</b>	10½ miles (17km)
<b>Time</b>	4–5hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 199 Eastbourne & Hastings 1:50,000; OS Explorer 123 South Downs Way, Newhaven to Eastbourne 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Litlington, Beachy Head, Eastbourne
<b>Refreshments</b>	Litlington, Exceat, Birling Gap, Beachy Head, Eastbourne

See map  
on page 31

Two options exist for the final stage to Eastbourne. This, the footpath option, is the recommended route for walkers, but the alternative bridleway route via Jevington (described as Stage 12a) also makes a splendid day's walk. Given the opportunity, it would be well worth tackling both!

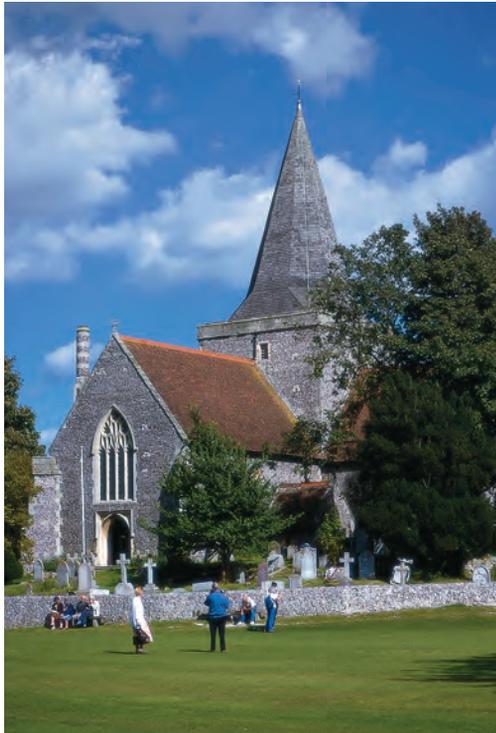
The route via the Seven Sisters is without question the most diverse and scenically spectacular stage since leaving Winchester. It begins alongside the meandering Cuckmere River as far as Litlington, then takes a hilly path away from the river, briefly visits Westdean, then climbs over a forested spur of the Downs before descending to Exceat and the A259. From Exceat the Way enters the Seven Sisters Country Park and heads towards Cuckmere Haven, mostly avoiding a busy riverside path, before climbing to Haven Brow and the roller-coaster clifftop trail along the dramatic Seven Sisters, and over Beachy Head as a prelude to the final steep descent to Eastbourne – a worthy finish to this long walk.

Facing The George Inn turn left along Alfriston High Street as far as the Market Cross where the road forks. Turn right into River Lane (a small side street), at the bottom of which

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

*Alfriston's church  
is known as the  
'Cathedral of  
the Downs'*

**Litlington** is a picturesque village of flint-faced cottages and a small Norman church with a white weatherboarded bell-tower and a shingled cap. Tucked under the Downs on the east bank of the Cuckmere, it is said that smugglers once had an underground passageway leading from the old Rectory to other houses within the village.



you bear right again alongside the Cuckmere River, with the church now ahead. Cross the bridleway bridge with its white railings, and immediately turn right onto a riverside path. The walker's route has now departed from that of the bridleway for the last time.

There now follows a pleasant riverside walk of about a mile as far as **Litlington** ◀ (accommodation, refreshments), where the path forks.

Bear left into the village where you emerge near The Plough and Harrow pub, then right along the road until it bends to the right. Branch left here, then go through a kissing gate and up the slope ahead, from where you

The **Vanguard Way** is a recreational long distance route which journeys from East Croydon railway station to Seaford Head and Newhaven. Devised by The Vanguard's Rambling Club, the original route was 62 miles (100km) long, but a more recent extension to Newhaven has added another 4 miles to it. See [www.vanguardway.org.uk](http://www.vanguardway.org.uk).

have a fine view across the valley to a white horse carved in the slopes of High and Over.

The Way now edges fields and shares the route of the **Vanguard Way** before descending towards Friston Forest in Charleston Bottom. Passing behind **Charleston Manor**, a series of steps then takes you up into the mainly broad-leaved **Friston Forest**. ▶ At the top of the incline you come onto a track which takes you through the forest heading first south, then south-west where you make the descent to the attractive hamlet of **Westdean**.

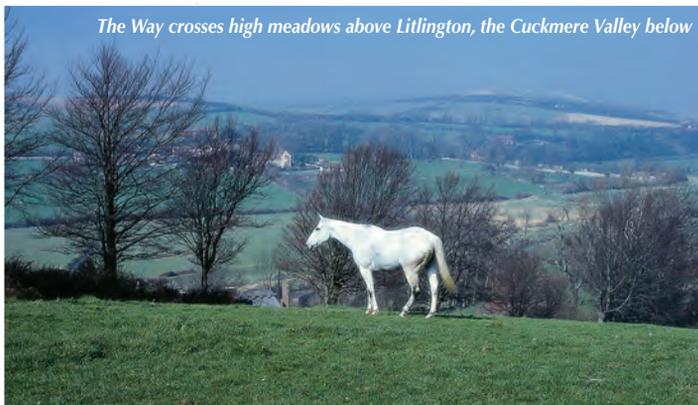
On coming to a road, walk ahead a short distance to a junction opposite a duck pond. Next to the pond a track leads to another flight of steps – more than 200 of them! – that climb once more into Friston Forest. At the top of the steps a footpath continues to a low wall with a built-in stone stile, an information board and a splendid view over the snaking course of the Cuckmere

**Friston Forest** covers almost 2000 acres of mainly broad-leaved woodland. Owned by South East Water, but managed by the Forestry Commission, the forest was planted as a means of protecting underground water sources from pollution.

**Charleston Manor** is an historic building mentioned in the Domesday Book as being owned by William the Conqueror's cup-bearer, Cerlestone. In the grounds the restored tithe barn is 177 feet (54m) long, with a massive tiled roof and a medieval circular dovecote. The gardens are open to the public on set days in the summer.

**Westdean** is a very small village tucked within a fold of the Downs almost encircled by Friston Forest. It is thought that Alfred the Great built a palace here in AD 850, although no trace has been found. However, there is a 13th-century flint-built rectory and a part-Norman church nearby.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



**Exceat** was once a flourishing village, until the Black Death virtually wiped it from the map in the 15th century.

steeply below. This is a charming spot from which to survey the Cuckmere Valley, its water meadows, and the green wave of the Downs beyond, reaching towards the Channel.

You now descend a steep meadow to **Exceat** ◀ (accommodation, refreshments) and the A259 near the **Seven Sisters Country Park Visitor Centre** (grid ref: 519995). There's a bus stop nearby for buses travelling to Eastbourne.

Cross the road with care and go through a gate with a concrete farm drive stretching ahead, but leave it at once to go left, then immediately right where SDW signs direct you across a rising slope of cropped downland. On reaching the highest part of the slope there's a stone marker to indicate the site where Exceat's 11th-century

The **Seven Sisters Country Park** covers an area of 690 acres on the east side of the Cuckmere River south of Exceat. Established in 1971 by East Sussex County Council, but managed by the Sussex Downs Conservation Board, the visitor centre is housed in a converted 18th-century barn at Exceat. It has an interesting wildlife and local history exhibition, a gift shop and toilets, with a convenient restaurant next door.

church once stood. With little evidence of a path on the ground, low waymark posts now lead you down to a kissing gate and a concrete farm road.

Cross the road and walk ahead on a broad path with the Cuckmere River to the right, and moments later veer left to take the SDW trail rising alongside a fence. This takes you onto the clifftop of Haven Brow with lovely views of **Cuckmere Haven** and Seaford Head on the far side. The Way now turns south-east on a switchback route across the Seven Sisters, with the sea stretching away to the right and charming green country rolling into the distance. It's an energetic stretch, with steep descents between the 'Sisters' into dry valleys or 'bottoms', followed by steep ascents that will test your level of fitness after several days of walking.

**Cuckmere Haven** is the estuary of the Cuckmere River, a shingle bank protected by the cliffs of Haven Brow and Seaford Head. In the 15th century it was more open than it is today, for in 1460 French raiders sailed up the river to Exceat and attacked the village. During the 18th century the Haven was a notorious landing place for smugglers, when contraband goods would be brought upstream to Exceat and Alfriston. As recently as 1923 smugglers were caught there with a haul of expensive brandy. A little inland from the Haven itself an artificial lagoon attracts assorted waders, while the snaking Cuckmere between Exceat and the Haven is busy with swans, tufted ducks, dabchicks, cormorants and herons.

Beyond Haven Brow there's Short Brow, then Rough Brow, and Flagstaff Brow with its dedication stone, and Flat Hill, Baily's Hill and, finally, Michel Dean on which an obelisk records the dedication of this land to the National Trust in memory of two brothers killed in the First World War.

You then slope down to Birling Gap (refreshments), a surprisingly drab place in the midst of such beautiful scenery, it consists of a car park, small hotel, café, toilet block, telephone kiosk, coastguard's office, and a few 19th-century cottages (built to house coastguards'

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

**Beachy Head**, some 536 feet (163m) above the waves, is one of the best-known features of the Sussex coast. The famous red and white ringed lighthouse at its base was erected in 1902, with both the builders and the stone from which it was built, being lowered from the clifftop by cableway.

families) precariously situated on the crumbling cliffs. The National Trust purchased Birling Gap as part of its Enterprise Neptune scheme aimed at protecting large sections of coastline, but it is being steadily eroded by the remorseless action of the tides.

Pass to the left of the coastguard's building, then bear half-right up a slope of scrub to reach the former **light-house of Belle Tout**, a stumpy building that has been converted into a private house and luxury B&B with tremendous views in all directions ([www.belletoute.co.uk](http://www.belletoute.co.uk)). Go round the inland side of the boundary wall and down the drive beyond towards a road, then up a short slope before dropping into Shooter's Bottom. The Way then climbs to **Beachy Head**, ◀ virtually the last ascent of the long walk, with dramatic views to enjoy of the lighthouse steeply below. Beware not to stray too close to the edge, for early in 1999 a massive rockfall destroyed a section of the cliff-face, and it's none too stable. For refreshments go down to the road where you'll find the Beachy Head Inn and visitor centre.

**Belle Tout lighthouse** predates that below Beachy Head by 70 years. Built in 1832 of Aberdeen granite by 'Mad Jack' Fuller, the eccentric squire of Brightling, it served as the lighthouse for this stretch of coast until 1902, but was replaced because the light would often be lost in fog. It has now been converted to a private dwelling, and following a major cliff-fall from Beachy Head in 1999, it was physically moved a short distance away from the cliff edge.

The continuing route skirts the cliff edge and becomes a tarmac path leading round to a spur from which you gain a splendid view back to Beachy Head lighthouse. Beyond this vantage point a marker post directs the SDW to veer right along the seaward flank of the slope above Whitebread Hole (a sports field can be seen below) with Eastbourne in view ahead. On the northern side of Whitebread Hole, go up a little to another marker post where you curve right and descend

*EASTBOUND – ALFRISTON TO EASTBOURNE VIA THE SEVEN SISTERS*



*Beachy Head  
lighthouse*

a final steep grass slope to the official end of the walk, marked by a notice board beside a small café on Dukes Drive (grid ref: 600972).

Congratulations on completing this very fine walk. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did.

**Extended Route:** Although Dukes Drive marks the official end of the South Downs Way, you may find that a more satisfactory conclusion would be Eastbourne Pier, another 1½ miles on. To reach

## *THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY*

this simply walk ahead along Dukes Drive to King Edward's Parade. You can follow this to the Grand Parade which leads directly to the pier, or vary the walk by going through the adjacent gardens on the right. Eastbourne Pier is at grid ref: 617989, and the railway station is easily reached from there.

Eastbourne, with its flower beds and bowling greens, has retained an air of gentility and become a perennial favourite with retired folk. The original settlement of East Bourne had a church before the Norman invasion. There were neighbouring hamlets called South Bourne and Sea Houses, the latter a collection of fishermen's cottages, but the three were amalgamated in the mid 19th century and in 1910 Eastbourne was created a borough. Along the front, north of the pier, stands The Redoubt, a sturdy, circular building – mostly of brick – erected in the early 1800s as part of the coastal defence system against feared invasion by Napoleon. The martello tower known as the Wish Tower, south-west of the pier, also formed part of those defences.

## STAGE 12(a)

### *Alfriston to Eastbourne (Bridleway route inland via Jevington)*

<b>Distance</b>	8 miles (12.5km)
<b>Time</b>	3½–4hr
<b>Maps</b>	Harvey South Downs Way 1:40,000; OS Landranger 199 Eastbourne & Hastings 1:50,000; OS Explorer 123 South Downs Way, Newhaven to Eastbourne 1:25,000
<b>Accommodation</b>	Jevington, Eastbourne
<b>Refreshments</b>	Jevington and Eastbourne

See map  
on page 38

This bridleway alternative to the Seven Sisters route is no second best, and walkers as well as cyclists and horse-riders should enjoy the constant variety of the folding Downs and exquisite views that are revealed shortly after setting out. It does not take long to escape Alfriston, with the steady ascent of Windover Hill reaching a point above the unseen head of England's largest chalk figure, the Long Man of Wilmington. Up there one has a tremendous sense of space as you gaze across the Cuckmere's valley to the line of the South Downs, along which the previous stage journeyed. Ahead the Downs are broad-backed and seemingly endless, although it's a relatively short distance to travel before you descend to Jevington in its streamless valley. South-east of this final village on the South Downs Way, a bridleway ascends Bourne Hill and then coincides with the Wealdway across Foxhole Brow and Beachy Brow alongside a golf course with Eastbourne seen below. The route continues south of the A259 and, soon after crossing the B2103, with the coast in sight, it swoops down a grass slope to end alongside the footpath route on the edge of Eastbourne at Duke's Drive.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY



*Wilmington, seen  
from Wilmington  
Hill above the  
Long Man's head*

Emerging in Alfriston beside The Star Inn turn left along the High Street as far as the Market Cross where the road forks. Here you turn right into River Lane (a small side street), and right again alongside the Cuckmere River. Shortly after bear left and cross a bridgeway bridge, on the east side of which you part company with the footpath route which takes the riverside path heading downstream.

Keep ahead on the tarmac path, and immediately after crossing a small side stream bear left through a small patch of woodland, then continue through a water meadow to a bridle gate which gives out to a minor road junction. Cross ahead, then take a bridleway on the right which becomes a delightful sunken track overhung mostly with ash trees.

The track comes onto a very narrow lane by a small car park.

Cross directly ahead where the track, a one-time coach road, winds up onto Windover Hill where various mounds and depressions betray the site of burial barrows and the refuse pits from neolithic flint mines. As you gain height, so the views to the right become more expansive, but an

even better panorama may be gained from the top of the hill when you reach a field gate with a bridle gate next to it. Before going through the bridle gate, stray left for a moment onto the lip of the escarpment, for the view from this point is one of the best of the whole route. Immediately below, on the scarp slope facing north, is the **Long Man of Wilmington**, although he cannot be seen from here.

**The Long Man of Wilmington** is England's largest chalk figure, standing 226 feet (69m) high, with outstretched arms and a stave held in each hand. Although his presence was first recorded in 1779, no-one knows his true origin. One theory suggests that he dates from the Bronze Age, another that the Long Man is an Iron Age fertility symbol, yet another says he represents the Saxon King Harold. We do know that in 1874 the outline of the figure was re-cut, but this was reinforced in 1969 by more than 700 concrete blocks to protect the exposed chalk and make it more visible. The Long Man is in the care of the Sussex Archaeological Trust.

**Wilmington** village is the nearest cluster of buildings to the north, and beyond that, Arlington Reservoir focuses the Wealden view which extends to the distant blue line of Ashdown Forest. To the west, across the Cuckmere's valley, the downland wall should be familiar from your recent travels across Firl Beacon and Bostal Hill.

Go through the bridle gate and take the right-hand track alongside a wire fence above the coombe of Deep Dean. Very soon the Way veers away from the fence and curves uphill a little, guided by marker posts. Then, after

**Wilmington** is an old village going back to Saxon times. Attractively set at the foot of the Downs, the main street is lined with charming cottages and overhung with trees. The flint-walled church has a 12th-century chancel, and next door the remains of a Benedictine priory founded in 1100. There's also a Tudor house by the priory containing a fascinating agricultural museum, and in the churchyard a huge yew tree thought to be up to 1600 years old, its ancient limbs supported by wooden props and chains.

## THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY

a lengthy stretch of open downland, you go through another bridle gate and curve slightly left towards a hedge-line where you'll find yet another gate. The bridleway then goes ahead to a crossing track, where you turn left to slope downhill through woodland.

When the way forks take the right branch and keep ahead at a crossing track with the first buildings of Jevington coming into view. Arriving by the parish church remain on the driveway which leads to **Jevington's** (accommodation, refreshments) main street. (For refreshments at the Eight Bells pub, turn left.)

**Jevington** was once the haunt of smugglers bringing their bounty inland from Birling Gap below Beachy Head. The parish church of St Andrew has an impressive Saxon tower and a bell said to have been brought ashore from a shipwreck. The main village street has some attractive flint-walled houses and a popular pub, The Eight Bells, that was once owned by smuggler, James Pettit, known as 'Jevington Jigg' who was eventually sentenced to serve 17 years in Botany Bay.

Turn right, then left by Jevington Tea Gardens on a minor lane that soon becomes another track rising up the slopes of Bourne Hill (not shown as such on the 1:50,000 map). At the head of the slope you arrive at a junction of tracks (grid ref: 577009) to be joined briefly by the **Wealdway**. Note the nearby stone marker which mentions Old Town Eastbourne and Jevington. Apparently it was brought here from the old Barclays Bank building in Eastbourne, which was bombed during the Second World War.

The **Wealdway** is a long-distance recreational route of 82 miles (132km), which links the River Thames at Gravesend in Kent, with the English Channel at Beachy Head. On the way it crosses the North Downs, several High Wealden ridges, Ashdown Forest, and finally, the South Downs.



Continue straight ahead and you'll soon gain a first view of Eastbourne. About  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile from the Wealdway junction pass a dew pond on your left, and a little later as you come to a golf course, note a signpost directing a path (used by the Wealdway) to the left, which goes to Eastbourne Youth Hostel. Unless you plan to spend the night there, continue ahead to reach the A259.

Cross with care onto a brief stony section which soon becomes a grass trail striking ahead (aiming southeast). About 50 yards before reaching a trig point there's a bridleway junction. Ignore that which slants off to the left and keep ahead to pass the trig point and a dew pond on your left. The way curves to the right, and shortly after, at another signed junction, you veer slightly left down the slope, then follow along the edge of trees as far as a road junction. Cross the B2103 (**caution!**) to the left of this junction, and continue over more open downland a little below the crestline.

On coming to a signed 4-way crossing, turn sharp left and go down the slope with views ahead of Eastbourne and a long stretch of coastline. The way steepens towards

*Old marker stone  
on Bourne Hill  
above Jevington*

## *THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY*

the foot of the slope where it is funnelled through a grassy gully, then swings to the right just above a road, soon reaching the end of the South Downs Way beside a small café on Duke's Drive.

Congratulations on completing the South Downs Way!

For information about Eastbourne, please refer to details given at the end of the footpath route description under Stage 12 above.

## APPENDIX A

### *Useful addresses*

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#### **The Long Distance Walkers Association**

[www.ldwa.org.uk](http://www.ldwa.org.uk)

#### **The Ramblers**

2nd Floor, Camelford House  
87–90 Albert Embankment  
London  
SE1 7TW  
Tel: 020 7339 8500  
[www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)

#### **Youth Hostels Association**

(England & Wales)  
Trevelyan House  
Dimple Road  
Matlock  
DE4 3YH  
Tel: 01629 592 700  
[www.yha.org.uk](http://www.yha.org.uk)

#### **South Downs Way Officer**

South Downs Way Team  
South Downs National Park Authority  
Stanmer Park Offices  
Stanmer Park  
Lewes Road  
Brighton  
BN1 9SE  
Tel: 01273 625242  
[www.nationaltrail.co.uk/south-downs-way](http://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/south-downs-way)  
[www.southdowns.gov.uk](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk)

#### **The South Downs Society**

2 Swan Court  
Station Road  
Pulborough  
RH20 1RL  
Tel: 01798 875073  
[www.southdownssociety.org.uk](http://www.southdownssociety.org.uk)

#### **The South Downs online**

[www.southdowns.gov.uk](http://www.southdowns.gov.uk)

#### **Tourist Information Centres**

##### **Arundel TIC**

Arundel Museum  
Mill Road  
Arundel  
BN18 9PA  
Tel: 01903 882456  
[www.sussexbythesea.com](http://www.sussexbythesea.com)

##### **Eastbourne TIC**

Cornfield Road  
Eastbourne  
BN21 4QA  
Tel: 0871 663 0031  
[tic@eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tic@eastbourne.gov.uk)

##### **Lewes TIC**

187 High Street  
Lewes  
BN7 2DE  
Tel: 01273 483448  
[lewes.tic@lewes.gov.uk](mailto:lewes.tic@lewes.gov.uk)  
[www.staylewes.org](http://www.staylewes.org)

## ***THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY***

### **Petersfield TIC**

The Library  
27 The Square  
Petersfield  
GU32 3HH  
Tel: 01730 268829  
[www.easthants.gov.uk/  
visit-east-hampshire](http://www.easthants.gov.uk/visit-east-hampshire)

### **Winchester TIC**

The Guildhall  
The Broadway  
Winchester  
SO23 9GH  
Tel: 01962 840500  
[www.visitwinchester.co.uk](http://www.visitwinchester.co.uk)

### **Baggage Transfer Services**

A2B Group Holidays (supported  
group holidays for walkers and  
cyclists)  
Tel: 0844 870 8648  
[www.walkandcycle.co.uk](http://www.walkandcycle.co.uk)

Footprints of Sussex (self-guided  
walking holidays & baggage  
transfers)  
Tel: 01903 813381  
[www.footprintsofsussex.co.uk](http://www.footprintsofsussex.co.uk)

South Downs Discovery  
(self-guided walking holidays  
& baggage transfers)  
Tel: 01925 564475  
[www.southdownsdiscovery.com](http://www.southdownsdiscovery.com)

### **Public Transport Information**

#### **Rail travel**

For information in regard to rail travel,  
timetables and fares, contact

#### **National Rail Enquiries**

Tel: 0845 748 4950  
[www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

Bookings can be made online at  
[www.qjump.co.uk](http://www.qjump.co.uk) or  
[www.thetrainline.com](http://www.thetrainline.com).

#### **Bus travel**

#### **Traveline**

Tel: 0871 200 2233 (10p/min +)  
[www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info)

#### **National Express**

0870 580 8080

## APPENDIX B

### *Accommodation along the route*

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The selection of available accommodation listed below is given in the order it appears to the walker (or rider) travelling westward from Eastbourne to Winchester. Hotels, guest houses, B&Bs and hostels are included. Any changes or additions to the list would be welcome by the author and publisher of this guide, and may be sent to [info@cicerone.co.uk](mailto:info@cicerone.co.uk)

#### **Eastbourne**

Beach Haven (B&B)  
61 Pevensey Road  
Tel 01323 726195

Beach Rise Guest House  
5 Beachy Head Road  
Tel 01323 639171

The Big Sleep Hotel  
1–3 King Edwards Parade  
Tel 01323 722676

Devonshire Park Hotel  
27–29 Carlisle Road  
Tel 01323 728144

The Guesthouse East (B&B)  
13 Hartington Place  
Tel 01323 7722774

Hydro Hotel (81 rooms)  
Mount Road  
Tel 01323 720643  
[sales@hydrohotel.com](mailto:sales@hydrohotel.com)

Langham Hotel  
42–49 Royal Parade  
Tel 01323 731451

New Wilmington Hotel  
25-27 Compton Street  
Tel 01323 721219

Ocklynge Manor (B&B)  
Mill Road  
Tel 01323 734121

The Royal  
8-9 Marine Parade  
Tel 01323 649222

Shore View Hotel  
Marine Parade  
Tel 01323 302200

Southcroft Guest House (6 rooms)  
15 South Cliff Avenue  
Tel 01323 729071  
[mail@southcrofthotel.co.uk](mailto:mail@southcrofthotel.co.uk)

Tudor House (B&B)  
BN22 7AU  
Tel 01323 721796

YHA Eastbourne (30 dorm beds)  
1 East Dean Road  
Tel 0845 371 9316  
[eastbourne@yha.org.uk](mailto:eastbourne@yha.org.uk)

## ***THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY***

### **Beachy Head**

Belle Tout Lighthouse  
(B&B – 6 rooms)  
Tel 01323 423185  
info@belletout.co.uk

### **Jevington**

The Paddocks (B&B)  
Tel 01323 482499

### **Litlington**

Spring Cottage (B&B – 1 room)  
4 The Street  
Tel 01323 831862  
info@springcottagebandb.com

### **Alfriston**

April Cottage (B&B – 4 rooms)  
3 Deans Road  
Tel 01323 870536  
cradcock@hotmail.co.uk

### **Chestnuts Tearooms (B&B)**

8 Chestnut Cottages  
High Street  
Tel 01323 870298

### **Dacres (B&B)**

Seaford Road  
Tel 01323 870447

### **Deans Place Hotel**

Seaford Road  
Tel 01323 870248

### **The George Inn**

High Street  
Tel 01323 870319

### **Highcroft (B&B)**

Seaford Road  
Tel 01323 870553  
julia.streeter1@virgin.net

### **Riverdale House (B&B)**

Seaford Road  
Tel 01323 871038

### **Rose Cottage (B&B)**

North Street  
Tel 01323 871534

### **The Star Inn**

High Street  
Tel 01323 870495

### **Ye Olde Smugglers Inne**

Waterloo Square  
Tel 01323 870241

### **Alciston**

Bo-peep Farmhouse  
Bo-peep Lane  
N26 6UJ  
Tel 01323 871299  
bopeepfarmhouse@gmail.com

### **The Rose Cottage Inn**

BN26 6UW  
01323 870377  
keithmedhurst@outlook.com

### **Firle**

Beanstalk Cottage (B&B)  
Tel 01273 858906

## APPENDIX B – ACCOMMODATION ALONG THE ROUTE

### **Southase**

YHA South Downs  
(66 beds in dorms & rooms)  
Itford Farm  
Tel 0845 371 9574  
southdowns@YHA.org.uk

### **Kingston near Lewes**

The Newmarket Inn  
Ashcombe Lane  
Tel 01273 470021

### **Lewes**

1 Harveys Way (B&B)  
Tel 01273 480865

Ashdene (B&B)  
14 Bradford Road  
Tel 01273 479403

Berkeley House (B&B)  
2 Albion Street  
Tel 01273 476057

Black Horse Inn  
55 Western Road  
Tel 01273 473653

Castle Bank Cottage (B&B)  
Castle Banks  
Tel 01273 476291

Chez Jo (B&B)  
25 Toronto Terrace  
Tel 01273 476840

Dubois Bed & Breakfast  
38 Prince Edwards Road  
Tel 01273 479865

Felix House (B&B)  
22 Gundreda Road  
Tel 01273 473250

Foxwood House (B&B)  
14 Southdowns Ave  
Tel 01273 471768

Orchard House (B&B)  
Tel 0800 783 7997

Pelham House Hotel  
Saint Andrews Lane  
Tel 01273 488600

Skyhouse Sussex (eco luxury B&B)  
Tel 07468691860

The Dorset  
22 Malling Street  
Tel 01273 474823

The Old Coach House (B&B)  
Bull Lane  
Tel 01273 483138

The Prospect (B&B)  
St Martin's Lane  
Tel 01273 472883

The Shelleys Hotel  
135–137 High Street  
Tel 01273 472361

Two Chimneys (B&B)  
25 Gundreda Road  
Tel 01273 476079

## ***THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY***

White Hart Hotel  
High Street  
Tel 01273 476694

### **Westmeston**

Pond Farm (B&B + camping)  
Underhill Lane  
Tel 07810 654480

### **Ditchling**

Derrydene (B&B)  
32 East Gardens  
Tel 01273 844012

Meadow Cottage (B&B)  
1 Underhill Lane  
Tel 0771 282 9918

South Cottage (B&B)  
2 The Drive  
Tel 01273 846636

The Bull Inn  
2 High Street  
Tel 01273 843147

The White Barn (B&B)  
Lodge Hill Lane  
Tel 01273 842920

The White Horse (B&B)  
16 West Street  
Tel 01273 842006

Tovey Lodge (B&B)  
Underhill Lane  
Tel 08456 120544

### **Clayton**

Dower Cottage (B&B)  
Underhill Lane  
Tel 01273 843363

The Jack & Jill Inn  
Tel 01273 843595

### **Pyecombe**

Dolphin Cottage (B&B)  
Church Lane  
Tel 01273 842468

Hobbs Cottage (B&B)  
South Downs Way  
Tel 01273 846150

The White House (B&B)  
Church Lane  
Tel 01273 846563 or 0776 0175 347

Tallai House  
Church Lane  
Tel 01273 845848  
grahamsmudge@talk21.com

### **Truleigh Hill**

YHA Truleigh Hill  
(56 dorm beds + camping)  
Tel 0845 371 9047  
truleigh@yha.org.uk

### **Upper Beeding**

Downs View (B&B)  
Tel 01903 816125

The Rising Sun  
Shoreham Road  
Tel 01903 814424

## APPENDIX B – ACCOMMODATION ALONG THE ROUTE

### **Bramber**

The Castle Inn (B&B)  
The Street  
Tel 01903 812102

The Old Tollgate Restaurant & Hotel  
The Street  
Tel 01903 879494  
info@oldtollgatehotel.com

### **Steyning**

5 Coxham Lane (B&B)  
Tel 01903 812286

Chequer Inn  
41 High Street  
Tel 01903 814437

Springwells Hotel  
9 High Street  
Tel 01903 812446

Uppingham (B&B)  
Kings Barn Villas  
Tel 01903 812099  
info@uppingham-steyning.co.uk

### **Wiston**

Bunton Manor Farm  
(B&B + camping)  
Tel 01903 812736

### **Washington**

Holt House (B&B)  
The Holt  
Tel 01903 893542

Long Island (B&B)  
School Lane  
Tel 01903 892237

South Downs View (B&B)  
Tel 0780 1599602

Whiteacres (B&B)  
Glaseby Lane  
Tel 01903 413974  
whiteacresbnb@gmail.com

### **Storrington**

Ashton House (B&B)  
Greyfriars Lane  
Tel 01903 746661

Muttons Barn (B&B)  
Tel 0794 1018 262

White Horse Hotel  
2 The Square  
Tel 01903 745831

### **Amberley**

11 Crossgate (B&B)  
Tel 01798 831731

Stream Cottage (B&B)  
The Square  
Tel 01798 831266

The Old Bakery (B&B)  
Tel 01273 252272

The Thatched House (B&B)  
Hog Lane  
Tel 01798 831329

Woodybanks Cottage (B&B)  
Rackham Road  
Crossgates  
Tel 01798 831295

## ***THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY***

### **Houghton**

Arun Valley B&B  
Houghton Farm  
Tel 01798 831142

Sustins (B&B)  
Tel 01798 831719

### **Bury**

Harkaway (B&B)  
8 Houghton Lane  
Tel 01798 831843

### **Bignor**

Stane House (B&B)  
Tel 01798 869454  
angie@stanehouse.co.uk

### **Gumber**

Gumber Bothy  
(Camping & Camping Barn)  
Slindon Estate  
Tel 01243 814484

### **Graffham**

Brook Barn (B&B)  
Selham Road  
Tel 01798 867356

Foresters Arms (pub)  
Tel 01798 867202

Willow Barn (B&B)  
Tel 01798 867331

### **Cocking**

Downsfold (B&B)  
Bell Lane  
Tel 01730 814376

Moonlight Cottage  
Tearooms & B&B  
Tel 01730 813336

The Bluebell at Cocking (B&B)  
Bell Lane  
Tel 01730 810200

The Malthouse (B&B)  
Tel 01730 813336

### **Elstead**

Elstead Inn  
Elstead Marsh  
Tel 01730 813662

### **East Harting**

Hollist Farm House (B&B)  
Hollist Lane  
Tel 07789 648326

Rose Barn (B&B)  
Tel 01730 825341

### **South Harting**

Shotgun Cottage (B&B)  
Pays Farm  
North Lane  
Tel 01730 826878

### **Buriton**

The Maple Inn  
1 Petersfield Road

## APPENDIX B – ACCOMMODATION ALONG THE ROUTE

### East Meon

Brooklyn House (B&B)  
High Street  
Tel 01730 823075

The Bed in the Shed (B&B)  
Coombe House

Upper Parsonage Farm  
(B&B + camping)  
Harvesting Lane  
Tel 01730 823490

The Long House (B&B)  
Oxenbourne Lane  
Tel 01730 823239  
mgreenwood@btinternet.com

Wetherdown Lodge  
(B&B/self-catering + camping)  
The Sustainability Centre  
Droxford Road  
Tel 01730 823549  
[www.sustainability-centre.org](http://www.sustainability-centre.org)

### West Meon

Shafts Farm (B&B)  
Tel 01730 829266  
info@shaftsfarm.co.uk  
[www.shaftsfarm.co.uk](http://www.shaftsfarm.co.uk)

### Warnford

George & Falcon (pub)  
Warnford Road  
Tel 01730 829623

### Exton

Manor House (B&B)  
Tel 01489 877529

The Beech Hut (B&B)  
Chapel Road  
Meonstoke  
Tel 07455 929272

The Bucks Head (pub)  
Bucks Hill  
Meonstoke  
Tel 01489 877313

The Farm House (B&B + camping)  
Corhampton Lane Farm  
Tel 01489 878755

### Kilmeston

Marne Cottage (B&B)  
Kilmeston Road  
Tel 01962 771418

### Beauworth

The Millburys (pub)  
Tel 01962 771248

### Cheriton

Old Kennetts Cottage (B&B)  
Tel 01962 771863

The Flowerpots Inn  
(B&B + camping)  
Brandy Mount  
Tel 01962 771318

Holden Farm  
Nr Alresford  
Hampshire  
Tel 07599 557740  
[www.holdenfarm.co.uk/local-area](http://www.holdenfarm.co.uk/local-area)

*THE SOUTH DOWNS WAY*

**Chilcomb**

Complyns Bed & Breakfast  
Tel 01962 861600

**Winchester**

12 Christchurch Road  
Tel 01962 854272

53a Parchment Street (B&B)  
Tel 10962 849962

Giffard House (B&B)  
50 Christchurch Road  
Tel 01962 852628

Harestock Lodge Hotel  
65 Harestock Road  
Tel 01962 881870

Mercure Wessex Hotel  
Paternoster Row  
Tel 01962 861611

The Old Vine  
Tel 01962 854616

The Westgate Hotel  
2 Romsey Road  
Tel 01962 820222

The Winchester Hotel  
Worthy Lane  
Tel 01962 709988

The Wykeham Arms (B&B)  
75 Kingsgate Street  
Tel 01962 853834

Wolvesey View (B&B)  
Tel 01962 852082

## APPENDIX C

### *Recommended reading*

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- Illustrated Guide to Britain* (AA/Drive Publications)
- Armstrong, R. *A History of Sussex* (Phillimore)
- Baker, M. *Sussex Villages* (Robert Hale)
- Brandon, P. *The South Saxons* (Phillimore)
- The Sussex Landscape* (Hodder & Stoughton)
- Sussex* (Making of the English Landscape series, Hodder & Stoughton)
- Darby, B. *South Downs* (Robert Hale)
- View of Sussex* (Robert Hale)
- Dillon, P. *The National Trails* (Cicerone Press)
- Edwards, P. *Mountain Biking on the South Downs* (Cicerone Press)
- Godfrey, J. *Sussex* (New Shell Guides series, Michael Joseph)
- Harrison, D. *Along the South Downs Way* (Cassell)
- Hillier, C. and Mosley, J. *Images of the Downs* (McMillan)
- Hudson, W. H. *Nature in Downland* (London)
- Jebb, M. *A Guide to the South Downs Way* (Constable)
- Jefferies, R. *Nature Near London* (John Clare Books)
- Mason, O. *South-East England* (Bartholomew)
- Millmore, P. *South Downs Way* (Aurum Press)
- Moore, C. *Green Roof of Sussex* (Middleton Press)
- O'Dell, N. *Portrait of Hampshire* (Robert Hale)
- Perkins, B. *South Downs Way for Motorists* (Frederick Warne)
- Pyatt, E. C. *Chalkways of South and South-East England* (David & Charles)
- Reynolds, K. *Walking in Sussex* (Cicerone Press)
- Walks in the South Downs National Park* (Cicerone Press)
- Classic Walks in Southern England* (Oxford Illustrated Press)
- Sankey, J. *Nature Guide to South-East England* (Usborne)
- Scholes, R. *Understanding the Countryside* (Moorland Publishing)
- Spence, K. *The Companion Guide to Kent & Sussex* (Collins)
- White, J. T. *The South-East, Down and Weald* (Eyre-Methuen)
- Woodford, C. *Portrait of Sussex* (Robert Hale)

## NOTES

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## LISTING OF CICERONE GUIDES

### BRITISH ISLES CHALLENGES, COLLECTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

Cycling Land's End to John o' Groat  
The Big Rounds  
The Book of the Bothy  
The C2C Cycle Route  
The End to End Cycle Route  
The Mountains of England and  
Wales: Vol 1 Wales  
The Mountains of England and  
Wales: Vol 2 England  
The National Trails  
Walking The End to End Trail

### SCOTLAND

Backpacker's Britain:  
Northern Scotland  
Ben Nevis and Glen Coe  
Cycle Touring in Northern Scotland  
Cycling in the Hebrides  
Great Mountain Days in Scotland  
Mountain Biking in Southern and  
Central Scotland  
Mountain Biking in West and North  
West Scotland  
Not the West Highland Way  
Scotland  
Scotland's Best Small Mountains  
Scotland's Mountain Ridges  
Skye's Cuillin Ridge Traverse  
The Ayrshire and Arran Coastal Paths  
The Borders Abbeys Way  
The Great Glen Way  
The Great Glen Way Map Booklet  
The Hebridean Way  
The Hebrides  
The Isle of Mull  
The Isle of Skye  
The Skye Trail  
The Southern Upland Way  
The Speyside Way  
The Speyside Way Map Booklet  
The West Highland Way  
The West Highland Way  
Map Booklet  
Walking Highland Perthshire  
Walking in the Cairngorms  
Walking in the Pentland Hills  
Walking in the Scottish Borders  
Walking in the Southern Uplands  
Walking in Torridon  
Walking Loch Lomond and  
the Trossachs  
Walking on Arran  
Walking on Harris and Lewis  
Walking on Jura, Islay and Colonsay  
Walking on Rum and the  
Small Isles  
Walking on the Orkney and  
Shetland Isles

Walking on Uist and Barra  
Walking the Cape Wrath Trail  
Walking the Corbetts  
Vol 1 South of the Great Glen  
Vol 2 North of the Great Glen  
Walking the Galloway Hills  
Walking the Munros  
Vol 1 – Southern, Central and  
Western Highlands  
Vol 2 – Northern Highlands and  
the Cairngorms  
Winter Climbs Ben Nevis and  
Glen Coe  
Winter Climbs in the Cairngorms

### NORTHERN ENGLAND TRAILS

Hadrian's Wall Path  
Hadrian's Wall Path Map Booklet  
The Coast to Coast Walk  
The Coast to Coast Walk  
Map Booklet  
The Dales Way  
The Dales Way Map Booklet  
The Pennine Way  
The Pennine Way Map Booklet  
Walking the Tour of the  
Lake District

### NORTH EAST ENGLAND, YORKSHIRE DALES AND PENNINES

Cycling in the Yorkshire Dales  
Great Mountain Days in  
the Pennines  
Mountain Biking in the  
Yorkshire Dales  
St Oswald's Way and  
St Cuthbert's Way  
The Cleveland Way and the  
Yorkshire Wolds Way  
The Cleveland Way Map Booklet  
The North York Moors  
The Reivers Way  
The Teesdale Way  
Trail and Fell Running in the  
Yorkshire Dales  
Walking in County Durham  
Walking in Northumberland  
Walking in the North Pennines  
Walking in the Yorkshire Dales:  
North and East  
Walking in the Yorkshire Dales:  
South and West

### NORTH WEST ENGLAND THE ISLE OF MAN

Cycling the Pennine Bridleway  
Cycling the Way of the Roses  
Hadrian's Cycleway  
Isle of Man Coastal Path  
The Lancashire Cycleway  
The Lune Valley and Howgills

Walking in Cumbria's Eden Valley  
Walking in Lancashire  
Walking in the Forest of Bowland  
and Pendle  
Walking on the Isle of Man  
Walking on the West  
Pennine Moors  
Walks in Silverdale and Arnside

### LAKE DISTRICT

Cycling in the Lake District  
Great Mountain Days in the  
Lake District  
Lake District Winter Climbs  
Lake District: High Level and  
Fell Walks  
Lake District: Low Level and  
Lake Walks  
Mountain Biking in the  
Lake District  
Outdoor Adventures with Children –  
Lake District  
Scrambles in the Lake District –  
North  
Scrambles in the Lake District –  
South  
The Cumbria Way  
Trail and Fell Running in the  
Lake District  
Walking the Lake District Fells:  
Borrowdale  
Buttermere  
Conistone  
Keswick  
Langdale  
Mardale and the Far East  
Patterdale  
Wasdale

### DERBYSHIRE, PEAK DISTRICT AND MIDLANDS

Cycling in the Peak District  
Dark Peak Walks  
Scrambles in the Dark Peak  
Walking in Derbyshire  
Walking in the Peak District –  
White Peak East

### SOUTHERN ENGLAND

20 Classic Sportive Rides  
in South East England  
20 Classic Sportive Rides  
in South West England  
Cycling in the Cotswolds  
Mountain Biking on the  
North Downs  
Mountain Biking on the  
South Downs  
Suffolk Coast and Heath Walks  
The Cotswold Way  
The Cotswold Way Map Booklet  
The Great Stones Way

The Kennet and Avon Canal  
The Lea Valley Walk  
The North Downs Way  
The North Downs Way  
Map Booklet  
The Peddars Way and Norfolk  
Coast Path  
The Pilgrims' Way  
The Ridgeway Map Booklet  
The Ridgeway National Trail  
The South Downs Way  
The South Downs Way  
Map Booklet  
The Thames Path  
The Thames Path Map Booklet  
The Two Moors Way  
The Two Moors Way  
Map Booklet  
Walking Hampshire's Test Way  
Walking in Cornwall  
Walking in Essex  
Walking in Kent  
Walking in London  
Walking in Norfolk  
Walking in the Chilterns  
Walking in the Cotswolds  
Walking in the Isles of Scilly  
Walking in the New Forest  
Walking in the North  
Wessex Downs  
Walking in the Thames Valley  
Walking on Dartmoor  
Walking on Guernsey  
Walking on Jersey  
Walking on the Isle of Wight  
Walking the Jurassic Coast  
Walking the South West Coast Path  
Walking the South West Coast Path  
Map Booklets:  
Vol 1: Minehead to St Ives  
Vol 2: St Ives to Plymouth  
Vol 3: Plymouth to Poole  
Walks in the South Downs  
National Park

#### **WALES AND WELSH BORDERS**

Cycle Touring in Wales  
Cycling Lon Las Cymru  
Glyndwr's Way  
Great Mountain Days in Snowdonia  
Hillwalking in Shropshire  
Hillwalking in Wales – Vols 1 & 2  
Mountain Walking in Snowdonia  
Offa's Dyke Path  
Offa's Dyke Path Map Booklet  
Ridges of Snowdonia  
Scrambles in Snowdonia  
Snowdonia: 30 Low-level and easy  
walks – North  
Snowdonia: 30 Low-level and easy  
walks – South  
The Cambrian Way

The Ceredigion and Snowdonia  
Coast Paths  
The Pembrokeshire Coast Path  
The Pembrokeshire Coast Path  
Map Booklet  
The Severn Way  
The Snowdonia Way  
The Wales Coast Path  
The Wye Valley Walk  
Walking in Carmarthenshire  
Walking in Pembrokeshire  
Walking in the Forest of Dean  
Walking in the Wye Valley  
Walking on the Brecon Beacons  
Walking on the Gower  
Walking the Shropshire Way

#### **INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES, COLLECTIONS AND ACTIVITIES**

Canyoning in the Alps  
Europe's High Points

#### **AFRICA**

Kilimanjaro  
The High Atlas  
Walking in the Drakensberg  
Walks and Scrambles in the  
Moroccan Anti-Atlas

#### **ALPS CROSS-BORDER ROUTES**

100 Hut Walks in the Alps  
Alpine Ski Mountaineering Vol 1  
– Western Alps  
Alpine Ski Mountaineering Vol 2  
– Central and Eastern Alps  
Chamonix to Zermatt  
The Karnischer Höhenweg  
The Tour of the Bernina  
Tour of Monte Rosa  
Tour of the Matterhorn  
Trail Running – Chamonix and the  
Mont Blanc region  
Trekking in the Alps  
Trekking in the Silvretta and  
Ratikon Alps  
Trekking Munich to Venice  
Trekking the Tour of Mont Blanc  
Walking in the Alps

#### **PYRENEES AND FRANCE/SPAIN**

**CROSS-BORDER ROUTES**  
Shorter Treks in the Pyrenees  
The GR10 Trail  
The GR11 Trail  
The Pyrenean Haute Route  
The Pyrenees  
Walks and Climbs in the Pyrenees

#### **AUSTRIA**

Innsbruck Mountain Adventures  
The Adlerweg  
Trekking in Austria's Hohe Tauern  
Trekking in the Stubai Alps  
Trekking in the Zillertal Alps  
Walking in Austria

Walking in the Salzkammergut:  
the Austrian Lake District

#### **EASTERN EUROPE**

The Danube Cycleway Vol 2  
The High Tatras  
The Mountains of Romania  
Walking in Bulgaria's National Parks  
Walking in Hungary

#### **FRANCE, BELGIUM AND LUXEMBOURG**

Chamonix Mountain Adventures  
Cycle Touring in France  
Cycling London to Paris  
Cycling the Canal de la Garonne  
Cycling the Canal du Midi  
Mont Blanc Walks  
Mountain Adventures in  
the Maurienne  
Short Treks on Corsica  
The GR20 Corsica  
The GR5 Trail  
The GR5 Trail – Benelux and  
Lorraine  
The GR5 Trail – Vosges and Jura  
The Grand Traverse de the  
Massif Central  
The Loire Cycle Route  
The Moselle Cycle Route  
The River Rhone Cycle Route  
The Way of St James – Le Puy to  
the Pyrenees  
Tour of the Queyras  
Trekking the Robert Louis  
Stevenson Trail  
Vanoise Ski Touring  
Via Ferratas of the French Alps  
Walking in Corsica  
Walking in Provence – East  
Walking in Provence – West  
Walking in the Ardennes  
Walking in the Auvergne  
Walking in the Briançonnais  
Walking in the Dordogne  
Walking in the Haute Savoie: North  
Walking in the Haute Savoie: South

#### **GERMANY**

Hiking and Cycling in the  
Black Forest  
The Danube Cycleway Vol 1  
The Rhine Cycle Route  
The Westweg  
Walking in the Bavarian Alps

#### **HIMALAYA**

Annapurna  
Everest: A Trekker's Guide  
The Mount Kailash Trek  
Trekking in Bhutan  
Trekking in Ladakh  
Trekking in the Himalaya

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## IRELAND

The Wild Atlantic Way and  
Western Ireland  
Walking the Wicklow Way

## ITALY

Italy's Sibillini National Park  
Shorter Walks in the Dolomites  
Ski Touring and Snowshoeing in  
the Dolomites  
The Way of St Francis  
Trekking in the Apennines  
Trekking in the Dolomites  
Trekking the Giants' Trail:  
Alta Via 1 through the Italian  
Pennine Alps  
Via Ferratas of the Italian Dolomites  
Vols 1&2  
Walking and Trekking in the  
Gran Paradiso  
Walking in Abruzzo  
Walking in Italy's Cinque Terre  
Walking in Italy's Stelvio  
National Park  
Walking in Sicily  
Walking in the Dolomites  
Walking in Tuscany  
Walking in Umbria  
Walking Lake Como and Maggiore  
Walking Lake Garda and Iseo  
Walking on the Amalfi Coast  
Walking the Via Francigena  
pilgrim route – Parts 2&3  
Walks and Treks in the  
Maritime Alps

## JAPAN, ASIA & AUSTRALIA

Hiking and Trekking in the Japan  
Alps and Mount Fuji  
Hiking the Overland Track  
Japan's Kumano Kodo Pilgrimage  
Trekking in Tajikistan

## MEDITERRANEAN

The High Mountains of Crete  
Trekking in Greece  
Treks and Climbs in Wadi Rum,  
Jordan  
Walking and Trekking in Zagori  
Walking and Trekking on Corfu  
Walking in Cyprus  
Walking on Malta  
Walking on the Greek Islands –  
the Cyclades

## NORTH AMERICA

The John Muir Trail  
The Pacific Crest Trail

## SOUTH AMERICA

Aconcagua and the Southern Andes  
Hiking and Biking Peru's Inca Trail  
Torres del Paine

## SCANDINAVIA, ICELAND AND GREENLAND

Hiking in Norway – South  
Trekking in Greenland – The Arctic  
Circle Trail  
Trekking the Slogsleden  
Walking and Trekking in Iceland

## SLOVENIA, CROATIA, MONTENEGRO AND ALBANIA

Mountain Biking in Slovenia  
The Islands of Croatia  
The Julian Alps of Slovenia  
The Mountains of Montenegro  
The Peaks of the Balkans Trail  
The Slovene Mountain Trail  
Walking in Slovenia:  
The Karavanke  
Walks and Treks in Croatia

## SPAIN & PORTUGAL

Camino de Santiago:  
Camino Frances  
Coastal Walks in Andalucia  
Cycle Touring in Spain  
Cycling the Camino de Santiago  
Mountain Walking in Mallorca  
Mountain Walking in  
Southern Catalunya  
Portugal's Rota Vicentina  
Spain's Sendero Historico: The GR1  
The Andalusian Coast to Coast Walk  
The Camino del Norte and  
Camino Primitivo  
The Camino Ingles and Ruta do Mar  
The Camino Portugues  
The Mountains of Nerja  
The Mountains of Ronda  
and Grazalema  
The Sierras of Extremadura  
Trekking in Mallorca  
Trekking in the Canary Islands  
Trekking the GR7 in Andalucia  
Walking and Trekking in the  
Sierra Nevada  
Walking in Andalucia  
Walking in Menorca  
Walking in Portugal  
Walking in the Algarve  
Walking in the Cordillera Cantabrica  
Walking on Gran Canaria  
Walking on La Gomera and El Hierro  
Walking on La Palma  
Walking on Lanzarote and  
Fuerteventura  
Walking on Madeira  
Walking on Tenerife  
Walking on the Azores  
Walking on the Costa Blanca  
Walking the Camino dos Faros

## SWITZERLAND

Switzerland's Jura Crest Trail

The Swiss Alpine Pass Route –  
Via Alpina Route 1  
The Swiss Alps  
Tour of the Jungfrau Region  
Walking in the Bernese Oberland  
Walking in the Engadine –  
Switzerland  
Walking in the Valais  
Walking in Zermatt and Saas-Fee

## TECHNIQUES

Fastpacking  
Geocaching in the UK  
Map and Compass  
Outdoor Photography  
Polar Exploration  
The Mountain Hut Book

## MINI GUIDES

Alpine Flowers  
Navigation  
Pocket First Aid and Wilderness  
Medicine  
Snow

## MOUNTAIN LITERATURE

8000 metres  
A Walk in the Clouds  
Abode of the Gods  
Fifty Years of Adventure  
The Pennine Way – the Path, the  
People, the Journey  
Unjustifiable Risk?

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