

Walk 4 - Jevington, Lullington Heath

This is an abbreviated itinerary from Patrick Coulcher's book "Wildlife Walks around the Cuckmere Valley". For the full listing of the flowers and wildlife on this walk together with many illustrations, please [buy the book online](#) or from bookshops across Sussex.

Distance: 8 Kilometres

Route: Jevington westwards along South Downs Way to just before Holt Brow then to Oldkiln Bottom - Winchester's Pond then south to Pollution Monitoring Station and then east to Clay Bottom back to Holt Brow and then dog-leg south and north-east back to car park in Jevington.

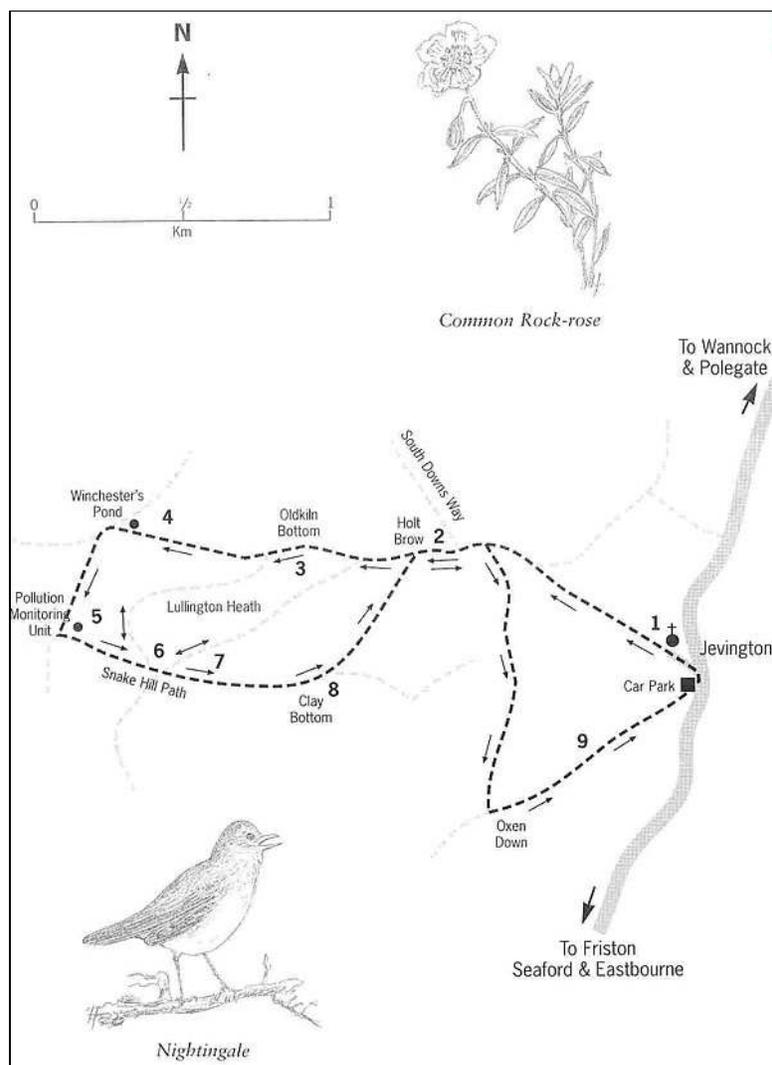
Map: OS Explorer 123: South Downs Way – Newhaven to Eastbourne.

Start/Parking: Park in small car park just to the west of Jevington Road on the southern part of Jevington Village at TQ 562013.

Transport: Very limited.

Conditions: Undulating downland on excellent paths which can be very muddy after heavy rain or in winter.

Refreshments: The Eight Bells, Jevington



Waypoints

1. From the small car park follow the main road north 120 metres and then turn left up the narrow sunken lane that leads up to the **Church**. The old flint walls beside the lane are covered with moss, and you will come to the late Saxon Church of St Andrew, which is surrounded by tall Lime trees which were commonly grown in the nineteenth century to bring grace and elegance to country estates. The churchyard itself in spring is splashed with colour from its flowers and trees.
2. Follow the track (The **South Downs Way**) up past the **Church** with fields of grazing racehorses on either side. The path curves left and steeply up through tall trees. As the path emerges from the wood near the top of the bill, keep straight on and do not follow the main South Downs Way which veers off to the right. At the top of the hill, the views are extensive and glorious. Ahead of you and to the south are the ever-changing colours of **Lullington Heath** and Friston Forest; beyond - some six kilometres away - is the sparkling blue sea of the English Channel. Far off to the west over fields of corn rippling in the wind is Firle Beacon, one of the tallest hills on the South Downs.
3. Follow the path westwards and down the steep bill to **Oldkiln Bottom**. This ancient track then climbs up from Oldkiln Bottom.
4. At the top of the bill and tucked away among the scrub on your right is the ancient dew pond called **Winchester's Pond**, which was the traditional water supply for downland sheep flocks, and is now part of the Lullington Heath Nature Reserve. Where the four paths meet just west of Winchester's Pond there are again glorious views of Firle Beacon and the Cuckmere Valley. Take the grassy path to the left that leads south.
5. About 400 metres along the path on the left you will see a set of black railings. Inside is a large concrete cap which covers a deep shaft descending to supply pipe which takes water to Friston. Beside the cap is a black box which is an **air pollution monitoring unit**. Surprisingly, its records reveal that this area of Britain is one of the poorest for air quality - the reason remains a mystery. Outside the railings, the excavated soil from the shaft and underground shaft has formed a large platform from which you can view most of the Reserve. From this vantage point, you will see the ponies, sheep and goats which graze the patchwork of grass and scrub.
6. Just beyond the railings, take the track that leads eastwards and downhill. This ancient Neolithic trackway is, for good reason called **Snake Hill Path**. There are many on **Lullington Heath**, but Adders will only bite if trodden upon or picked up and, although very painful, their venom is unlikely to be fatal; but treat them with respect if you encounter them.
7. To the north of **Snake Hill Path** look for signposts that point to the direction of **Lullington Heath** itself. Take a detour at either or both of these points and view one of the largest areas of chalk heath remaining in Britain, which in 1955 was established as a National Nature Reserve. The wild plants on the heath attract many butterflies, and in spring and early summer also conceal nesting birds.
8. Return from your forays on the Heath and make your way back to **Snake Hill Path**, and then on to **Clay Bottom**.
9. Enclosed by the beech trees of Friston Forest to the south and by tall scrub in the north, **Clay Bottom** is a good place to come just before sunrise early in May to hear the dawn chorus. Take the path that leads up from Clay Bottom through the gate back to **Holt Brow**

and the **South Downs Way**.

10. When you reach point 2 of the **South Downs Way**, take the path that forks off right, and about 60 metres further on forks right again. This leads you through the woods and back onto the downs above Jevington. The views are extensive from Combe Hill to the east and the changing colours of Friston Forest to the west. Enjoy it all, the vista of hills and trees a expanse of sky above; contrasting puffy-white cumulus clouds of summer with the low, dark, leaden stratus clouds of winter.
11. At a gap in the fence to the left traverse down the side of the downs through cultivated fields of wheat towards **Jevington**, and see how many wild flowers you can count alongside the track. As you reach the car park, you contemplate the next walk starting some 7 kilometres away by road, at Folkington, just to the west of Polegate.