

## Walk 5 - Folkington, Windover Hill, Deep Dean, Folkington

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:** 9 kilometres.

**Route:** Folkington Church, Wilmington Hill, Windover Hill, Deep Dean, Wilmington Hill, Folkington Hill, Wealdway, Folkington.

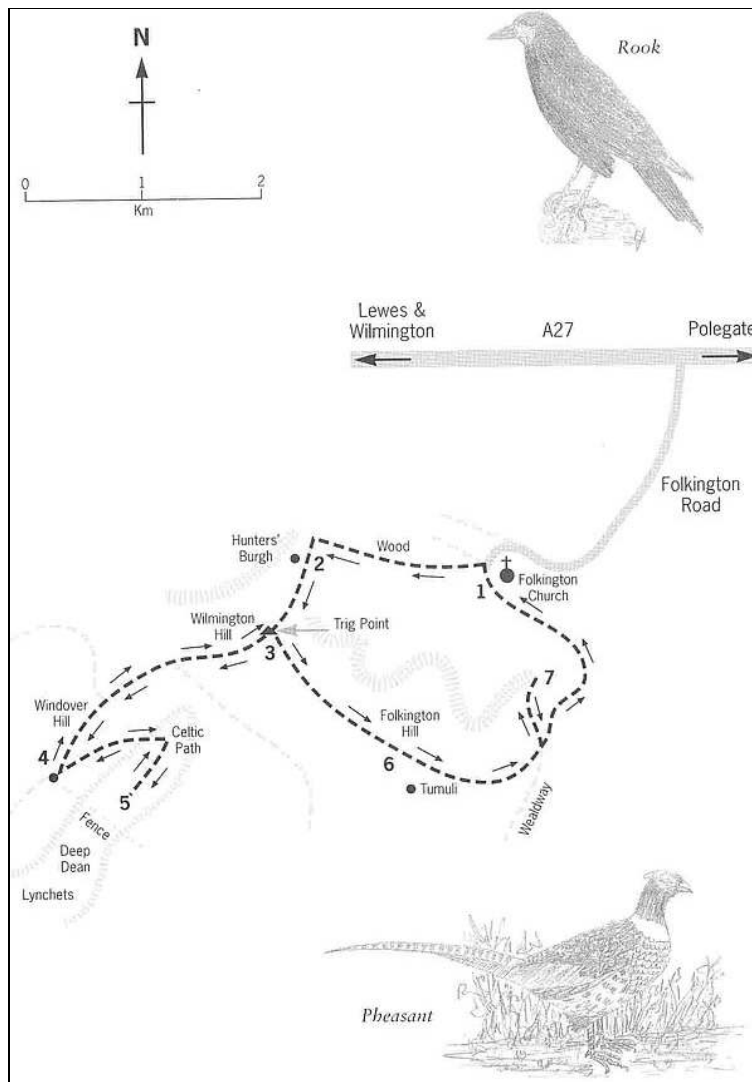
**Map:** OS Explorer 123: South Downs Way – Newhaven to Eastbourne.

**Start/Parking:** Top of Folkington Road next to Folkington Church at TQ 558037.

**Transport:** Nil.

**Conditions:** The first 90 per cent of walk is on firm downland with some steep climbs and descents. The final portion on the Wealdway can be muddy after prolonged rain and in the winter.

**Refreshments:** Wishing Well Tea Rooms, Wilmington; Giant's Rest Public House, Wilmington



## Waypoints

1. As you drive up the narrow lane named on the map as **Folkington Road** and round the first bend you will see a huge panorama of rolling downland open up before you. This is one of the most beautiful stretches of chalk grassland on the South Downs. Just beyond the **church** and at the end of the lane is **Folkington Wood**. Take the path just to the south of the wood that leads gently uphill in a westerly direction.
2. After passing over a stile, look on the grassy bank beside the wood. Wild flowers abound. At the end of the wood, you pass over another stile and then walk up an open steep slope of the Downland proper. This is a delightful place to be, particularly in the months of summer. Near to the top of the bill you rejoin the ridgeway path, which at this point is sunken into the underlying chalk from rain and human traffic over thousands of years. On your right as you climb the bill in a south-westerly direction, you will see the oblong-shaped mound called **Hunter's Burgh** which is the most easterly of the Sussex Long Barrows where Neolithic Man buried his dead.
3. Soon after passing through a gate you come across the Triangulatic Pillar (**Trig Point**), marking the summit of Wilmington Hill and at 214 metres the highest point in the surrounding area. The views of the distant blue hills of the Weald are a magnificent expanse, and the wide expanse of sky above combine to give a great sense of freedom and solitude. As you traverse this wide ridge above that mysterious carving in the chalk of a man, the **Long Man of Wilmington**, notice the blue waters of Arlington Reservoir some three kilometres to the north, the subject of another delightful walk.

Directly above the Long Man and on the highest point of **Windover Hill** are more burial mounds of ancient man and on the north crest of the hill are the remains of flint mines, constructed some 4000 years ago for the extraction of flints which were used for the manufacture of tools and weapons.

4. Make your way to the south-west of Windover Hill until you come to a steep deeply-cut path of Celtic origin that leads north-east down into the valley of Deep Dean. Pause awhile before descending.

Deep Dean; as well as being an important site for wildlife is also interesting historically. Ancient people once lived here, and one can see the shape of circular buildings that stood there long before the Romans came. In Saxon times, the villagers living in Alfriston, Litlington and Wilmington would have sought shelter in this wooded combe valley whenever raids from the continent or from the Vikings threatened. They would have used this old Celtic path as an escape route to the ridge highway (now the South Downs Way) at the top. Explore this plateau of grassland interspersed with scrub, and then return to the Celtic path and on your descent into the valley of Deep Dean itself look across to the scrub and trees on the opposite side. As you reach the bottom at the head of the valley, so the isolation and remoteness of this wonderful place becomes apparent.

5. As you follow the bottom of the valley south-westward, look up at the steep bare hillside on your right. About halfway down the valley your way is blocked by a **fence**. Beyond, it is strictly private, the land being owned by South-East Water plc.

On the north facing slopes at the southern end of Deep Dean can be seen the raised banks or terraces which are the result of primitive ploughing by the Celts some 2400 years ago. To get some depth of soil for their crops, they made these terraces known as "Lynchets," derived from a Saxon word meaning "little hill". It is time to depart from this remarkable valley with its lovely setting, deep history and abundant wildlife. Climb back up the steep **Celtic path**.

6. Make your way back to the Triangulation Point (**Trig Point**) and just beyond the gate turn right along the broad ridgeway path that takes you atop the broad sweeps of bills so typical of this great Down Country above Folkington. This path provides beautiful views across to the Weald, to Pevensy Levels and to the English Channel beyond Eastbourne.
7. About halfway along the track, look for a round barrow, a burial mound (**Tumuli**) just beyond the fence on your right. This mound is now deeply excavated by those seeking artefacts of the Bronze Age people who originally buried chieftains in it. Beyond it are the stark ruins of Hill Barn, an old downland farmstead where there is clear evidence of a walled garden, fruit trees and a place for storing water collected from the roof.
8. The path descends in a north-easterly direction. On your descent, explore the steep hillsides to the north-west of this plateau by following a track which traverses northwards down the hill. You will then discover some of the real gems of this part of the South Downs. Having explored this part of the Downs make your way back across the plateau and go over a stile on the eastern edge to join the deep sunken track of the Wealdway, the old smugglers route between Jevington and This path is often very muddy after heavy rain, but in high summer it gives shade and coolness to the walker.
9. The Wealdway gently curves its way back to **Folkington Church** where this walk started.