



Newtimber Hill butterfly walk

Poynings, West Sussex Downs

TRAIL
Walking

GRADE
Moderate

DISTANCE
3 miles (4.8km)

TIME
3 hours to 4 hours

OS MAP
Explorer 122

Contact

01273 857712

devilsdyke@nationaltrust.org.uk

Facilities

Hiker's Rest tea-rooms at Saddlescombe Farm

Toilets at Hiker's Rest tea-rooms

**National
Trust**

nationaltrust.org.uk/walks

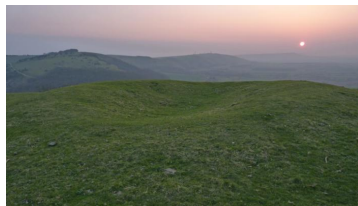
Long circular route up, along and down the crest of the South Downs, and back along a winding valley behind the escarpment. One of the best downs for butterflies and flowers on the South Downs, with Adonis and chalkhill blues, dark-green fritillary and silver-spotted skipper. Also good for orchids, including many frog orchids, red star thistle, round-headed rampion, drifts of devil's bit scabious and much autumn gentian.



Terrain

Chalk escarpment, avoiding steepest slopes. One modest ascent, no steep descents. Largely dry ground but some muddy patches when wet. No made up paths. Much of route is over short turf or along cattle tracks. Dogs are welcome but must be kept on leads, as livestock in surrounding fields. No dog bins so please take dog litter home.

Things to see



Butterflies and flowers

A major area for Adonis blue and silver-spotted skipper in August. Also many dark-green fritillaries and marbled white in July, Adonis and common blues in June, and dingy skippers in May. Look out for frog orchids in high summer.

Butterflies

A good area for chalkhill blue and common blue, with some Adonis and many of the common downland butterflies. You may see a clouded yellow here too.

Butterflies and flowers

In late summer, butterflies feast on abundant devil's bit scabious flowers. It is also a good area for chalkhill blue and common blue. Look out for red star thistle in poached ground just above the cattle trough.



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Start/end

Start: Lay-by off C road (old A road, now bypassed), grid ref: TQ268119

End: Lay-by off C road, grid ref: TQ268119

How to get there

By foot: Footpaths from Brighton (5 miles / 8km), Fulking and Poynings (both 1 mile / 1.6km) or South Downs Way. Option to link into The Telegraph Devil's Dyke walk

By bike: Cycle path from Hove off National Cycle Network Route 20, plus others including South Downs Way

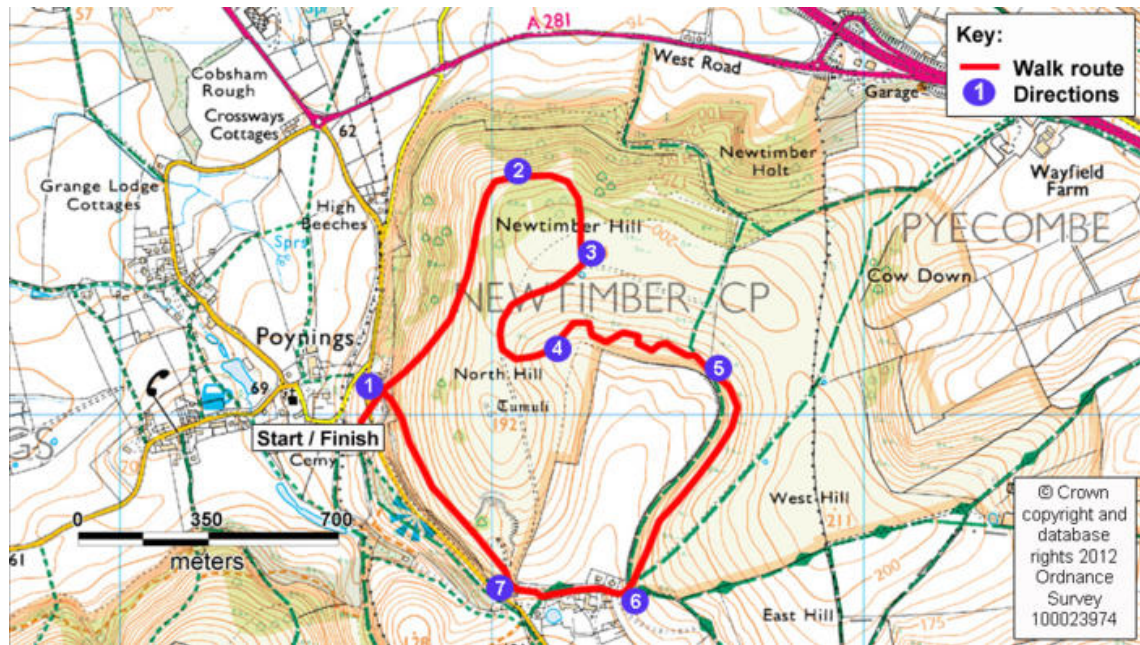
By bus: Service 77 from Brighton, weekends and bank holidays, daily in high summer. Alight Devil's Dyke and walk down to Saddlescombe Farm

By train: Brighton, 7 miles (11km) from Devil's Dyke, then take 77 bus (see above)

By car: Signposted 2 miles (3.2km) north of A27 Brighton ring road and 1 mile (1.6km) south of A281. Nearest postcode BN45 7DE. Parking lay-by opposite Saddlescombe Farm

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1. From lay-by on east side of road, climb up the bank using the minor chalk track that leads to a stile. Climb over and head diagonally and gradually upslope and left, aiming to the left of a prominent clump of ash trees on the summit. Pick up the main cattle track that skirts below this clump. Use this cattle track to head above the field terraces down the slope, through an area of myriad ant hills, towards the far upper slope. This track will lead you into a corridor through woodland, by an old post. (On windy days, from the stile, hug the lower path that runs along the slope bottom, through two belts of trees, eventually reaching the top of some steps on your left. You then need to ascend a very steep slope to join the cattle track mentioned above).

2. Follow the main cattle track into the ash woodland, into a large open glade. There you'll find a dark brick building base (a milking stand). Here, after admiring the view, turn right and uphill, through a narrow path across a belt of scrub and out on to open short turf. Cross this turf, aiming straight ahead towards the old dew ponds.

3. Turn right down a vehicle track by the main dew pond. This runs through hawthorn scrub out on to open downland in the saddle between two hills. Here, bear left and down along the scrub edge, turning near a lone ash tree on your right. This isn't especially good for butterflies as it's over-grazed by rabbits, but you may see small heath, meadow brown and common blue.

4. Head down and slightly left, past old field terraces. Then cut left and up to meander along the lower slope of the south-facing combe, continuing until you see a fence line in front of you. Then aim for the gate in the bottom right corner of the fence.

5. After the gate, walk along cattle tracks running along the lower slopes. Avoid the slope bottom track as that runs through rather flowerless and butterfly-free terrain. Eventually come down to the track, to leave the slope by a field gate.

6. After the gate, turn right on to the farm lane, through another gate and follow the track through the farm. You can visit the old donkey wheel and some of the old farm buildings. The tea shack is in the furthest of the small farmyards, just off the main track.

7. Carry on along the lane, continuing straight on and going through a field gate back on to the down. Aim to the left and downslope of the old chalk quarry, before aiming right upslope a bit, keeping the ash tree belt on your left. Follow a cattle track along the lower downland slope back to the stile by the lay-by.