



Wolstonbury Hill, Pyecombe,
Near Brighton, West Sussex

TRAIL
Walking

GRADE
Moderate

DISTANCE
3.7 miles (5.9km)

TIME
2 hours to 2 hours 30 minutes

OS MAP
Explorer 122

Contact

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Facilities

Refreshments and toilets
(patrons only, not NT) at Jack
and Jill pub, Clayton

**National
Trust**

nationaltrust.org.uk/walks

Wolstonbury Hill: explore nature walk

Wolstonbury Hill has been an important landmark for thousands of years. Iron Age farmers grazed animals on its summit and the Romans left pottery remains on its slopes.

In wartime Britain Winston Churchill and members of the war cabinet met at nearby Danny House and would allegedly visit the slopes of Wolstonbury for inspiration.

These ancient slopes are a designated Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) for their chalk grassland habitat that supports a rich diversity of flowers. This walk takes you through beech woodland at the base of the hill and across open grassland to the top of the hill. Upon reaching the summit, you'll be rewarded with breathtaking panoramic views of the weald, the sea and the downs, including Newtimber Hill and Devil's Dyke. This walk is best in spring when the bluebells and wild garlic can be found in the woodlands.



Terrain

Terrain is steep in some places. Bridleways and paths can be extremely wet and muddy in winter or after periods of heavy rain. Dogs are welcome but please keep them on leads, as livestock are in surrounding fields. There are no dog bins so please take your dog litter home.

Things to see



Beech trees

Beech is now a prominent tree species in the woodland at the base of Wolstonbury Hill (you'll see beech trees during direction 2 of the walk). Some have fallen, revealing their enormous roots. This area was once open



Dew pond

Dew ponds are an historic feature on the downs, possibly dating back thousands of years. They would have served as drinking sites for sheep. Given the porous nature of chalk, the ponds had to be clay-lined to hold water. There



Wild garlic

Walking through the woodland in spring you might smell the pungent scent of wild garlic, or ramsons. The leaves of wild garlic are used for salads or can be used in a pesto. You can tell which plants are edible by rubbing

downland, but beech was planted by nearby Danny Estate. Many of the beech trees are around 200 years old, and gradually has grown around them. After passing the Wolstonbury Hill signpost there's a large beech tree on the right. The black fungus Ganoderma, a heart rot fungus, on its bark shows that it will soon die and rot down to give a habitat for invertebrates.

is one dew pond on Wolstonbury (direction 3), which provides a wonderful wildlife haven for newts, dragonflies and beetles.

the leaves which should give off their characteristic scent.



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Near Brighton, West Sussex

Start/end

Start: Jack and Jill pub,
Clayton, West Sussex, BN6
9PD

End: Jack and Jill pub, Clayton,
West Sussex, BN6 9PD

How to get there

By foot: Pedestrian access from
Hassocks and A273

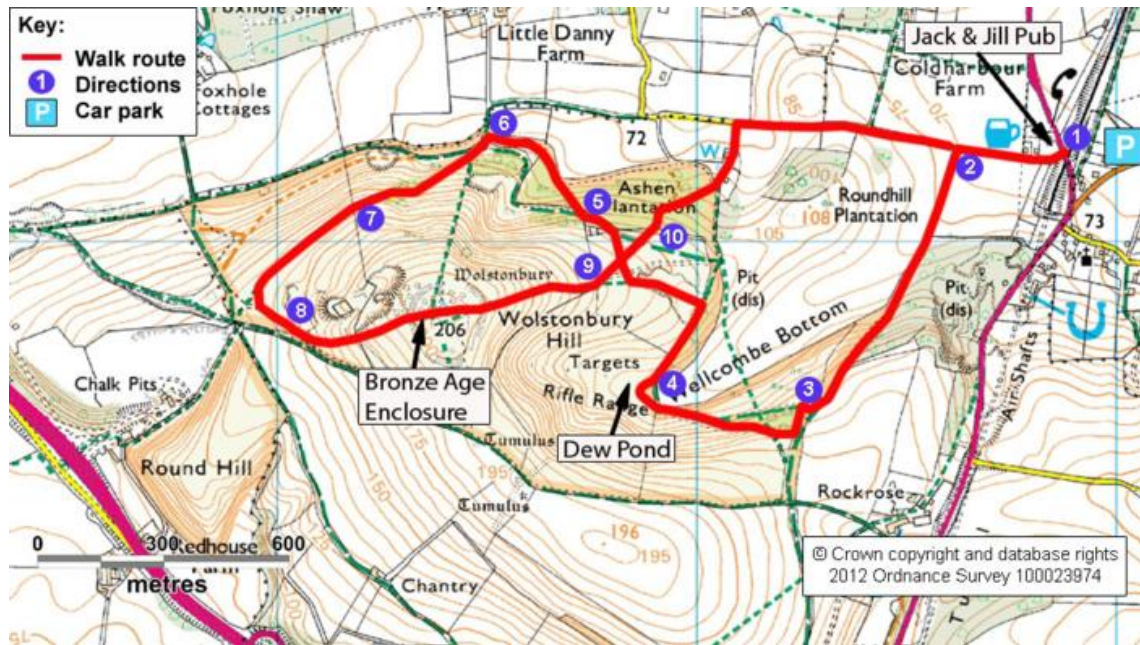
By bus: 40 Brighton to
Haywards Heath, 40X Brighton
to Burgess Hill, 273 Brighton to
Crawley

By train: Hassocks 1.2 miles
(2km); 22-minute walk or 8-
minute bus journey (40/40X)

By car: Jack and Jill pub just
off the A23 on the A273 to
Hassocks. Parking at the pub
for patrons only. Alternative
parking opposite pub at Clayton
recreation ground (not NT),
entrance on Underhill Lane (off
Clayton Hill)

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1. Begin at the Jack and Jill pub. From the pub entrance turn right onto the main road (Brighton Road). Walk for approximately 20m and turn right onto New Way Lane and walk for 250m.

2. Turn left onto the public bridleway (please note this can be muddy in winter). Walk straight on and continue up the slope. You'll pass the National Trust Wolstonbury Hill signpost on your right (in spring the banks either side of the signpost are covered in bluebells). Continue walking up the slope for 3 mins (120m).

3. Go through the gate on your right (look out for nesting buzzards) and follow the left, sunken track down the hill (if it's boggy, take the higher track and walk up the steps to your left to the gully). After approx 20m, turn left off the sunken track up the slope and follow the informal path at the top of the bank. Walk past the steps and continue following this track through a small gully in an open cleared area until you reach three wooden posts ahead of you. Bear left at these posts and turn right through onto a public bridleway. Follow the bridleway and go through the gate ahead of you.

4. Continue along the bridleway for 6 mins (270m). Cross the stile on your left and walk straight ahead along the bottom of the chalk quarry for approx 100m (this sheltered spot is a good picnic spot for windy days). Follow the chalky path up to the top of the quarry edge. Walk straight ahead towards the trees (woodland) in front of you. As you get closer you'll see a gate at the left corner of the woodland.

5. Go through the gate and take the path right of the large beech tree. Follow the path winding through the woods and continue walking down the slope. Walk to the left of the large root plate of a fallen 200 year old beech tree; go down the steps the path will bear left. At this corner is an example of box hedging planted as game cover over a century ago by the Danny Estate. In front of you on the right is a fallen yew growing into a hedge. Continue until you reach the bottom of the steep hill. (Wild garlic highlight) At the bottom of the sloped path steps carry straight on keeping on the lowest main path. You will pass a large fallen rotten tree on your right and further on a fork in the path. Take the left fork up the hill and join the main bridleway. Turn left onto the main bridleway, immediately look up the slope to the right and you will see a stile, head towards it.

6. Cross the stile and continue straight ahead up the slope. When you reach the open grassland, turn right, following the edge of the woodland. You will then reach a fork: go left uphill past a large sycamore tree. Continue walking uphill through the open woodland until you reach a stile.

7. Cross the stile and follow the path. (In May look out for thousands of cowslips on this slope. Also look out to your right and see Elizabethan Danny House, one of the largest houses in Sussex.) Continue to the yellow way-marker post and bear left. When you reach scrubby bushes turn left, heading towards the chalky mounds of the old Victorian chalk quarry, keeping them to your left. You'll then come to a ditch, keep on the left side of the fence and cross the ditch. Head uphill and bearing left. Walk up the chalky steps leading to a stile at the top of the hill.

8. Cross the stile and walk straight uphill, keeping the chalk quarry to your left (from March listen out for skylarks). After 3 mins (600m) you'll enter the Bronze Age enclosure represented by a ditch

and bank running around the top of the hill. Head towards the concrete trig point in the distance. When you reach the trig point, look ahead of you and you'll see the Jack and Jill windmills. Take in the breathtaking 360° panoramic view of the downs, the sea and weald. Head in the direction of the windmills, following the path downhill. Going downhill you should be able to see your trail route starting from the Jack and Jill pub in front of you.

9. Cross over the stile that is left of the gate and walk for 4 minutes (170m) and bear left, heading towards the woodland. Walk with the woodland on your left until you reach a stile on the left in the woods.

10. Cross the stile and follow the path through the wood for 3 mins (130 metres) (look out for wild garlic and bluebells in Spring). At the fork turn right (look out for the large beech tree on your right) and walk down the steps across the bridleway straight on the path until you reach a National Trust Wolstonbury Hill signpost on your right. Turn left at the signpost walking downhill and go through the gate following the gravel road. At the bottom of the road turn right onto New Way Lane and continue walking for 10 minutes (780 metres), at the bottom of the lane is your starting position at the Jack and Jill pub.
