

WALKS TO DO BEFORE YOU DIE No.4

WHERE: DEVIL'S DYKE, WEST SUSSEX
IN A NUTSHELL: A GREAT CHASM IN THE
SOUTH DOWNS SHROUDED IN MYSTERY

It's hard to believe that this magnificent drama is just a short hop from the boutiques and juice bars of downtown Brighton, but it is. Geologists regard the Devil's Dyke as Britain's finest example of a dry chalk valley. The Victorians saw it as a playground, ripe for exploitation. We just see it as gorgeous. And where did it come from? Legend has it that the Devil was attempting to drown the parishioners of the Sussex Weald by gouging out a channel to the sea. Halfway through his sinister task, an old lady lit a candle and the Devil, mistaking the flame for the rising sun, did a runner, leaving his work unfinished. The truth is more prosaic – the Dyke was carved through ridges of rolling rock by meltwater during the last ice age. In the 1890s the Victorians made a glorious mess of it, capitalising on the new fixation with landscape tourism by installing a cable car, fairground, bandstands, a funicular railway and an observatory. In 1897, a staggering one million people travelled up on the funicular, but it passed out of fashion and now all that remains are the concrete foundations. That leaves it clear for you to enjoy mesmerising views of the South Downs, the Weald and, on a clear day, the Isle of Wight.

Walk here: Download 'Devil's Dyke' from
www.lfto.com/countrywalking





● **Distance** 12km/7¼ miles ● **Time** 3½hrs ● **Grade** Moderate

DAVID HANCOCK



The spectacular Devil's Dyke was cut by glacial meltwaters.

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This glorious walk of contrasts begins by climbing the flanks and then descends through the Devil's Dyke, a spectacular, steep-sided downland combe or cleft 91m deep and 800m long, which was cut by glacial meltwaters during the Ice Age. Head across fields to the pretty village of Fulking and the perfectly positioned Shepherd & Dog pub, both tucked away at the foot of the Downs, before a steep haul leads you back to the top of the South Downs escarpment and the South Downs Way. You then walk to the motte and bailey earthwork at the top of Edburton Hill for stunning views across the Weald and south across rolling downland landscape to Brighton and the sea, before heading back along the South Downs Way back to the Devil's Dyke Estate (NT).

By David Hancock.

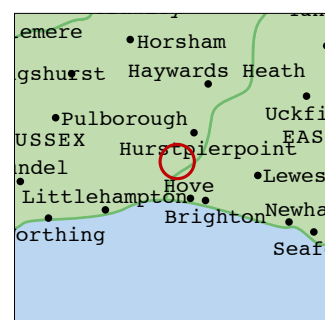
1 START

From car park go through gate and bear R along South Downs Way (SDW), passing reservoir before descending steeply to gate and road. Bear L for few paces, then turn L through gate. Bear slightly L and follow defined path across field to stile. With Devil's Dyke ahead, keep ahead and soon merge with wide path. Head uphill and keep R at junctions above valley to reach head of dry valley. Take path that steeply descends down the valley, bearing L at fork at bottom to climb stile.

2 3.2km/2 miles

Ascend steps into woodland, path soon levelling and curving L through trees to bridleway. Turn R down sunken path and R again at junction by garden. Follow path into Poyning's. Turn L along road, then R at bend along brick drive and go through gate. Head across field and ➤

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Terrain Rolling chalk downland, field paths, Tarmac lane; one long and gradual climb; one steep descent and ascent

Stiles 8

Suitable for All

START/PARKING

National Trust Summer Down car park, Devil's Dyke Estate, grid ref TQ269111

Nearest town Brighton

Refreshments Royal Oak, Poyning's; Shepherd & Dog, Fulking; Devil's Dyke pub

Public toilets At main Devil's Dyke car park

Public transport Bus 77 from Brighton Pier, weekends and Bank Holidays, daily in July and August

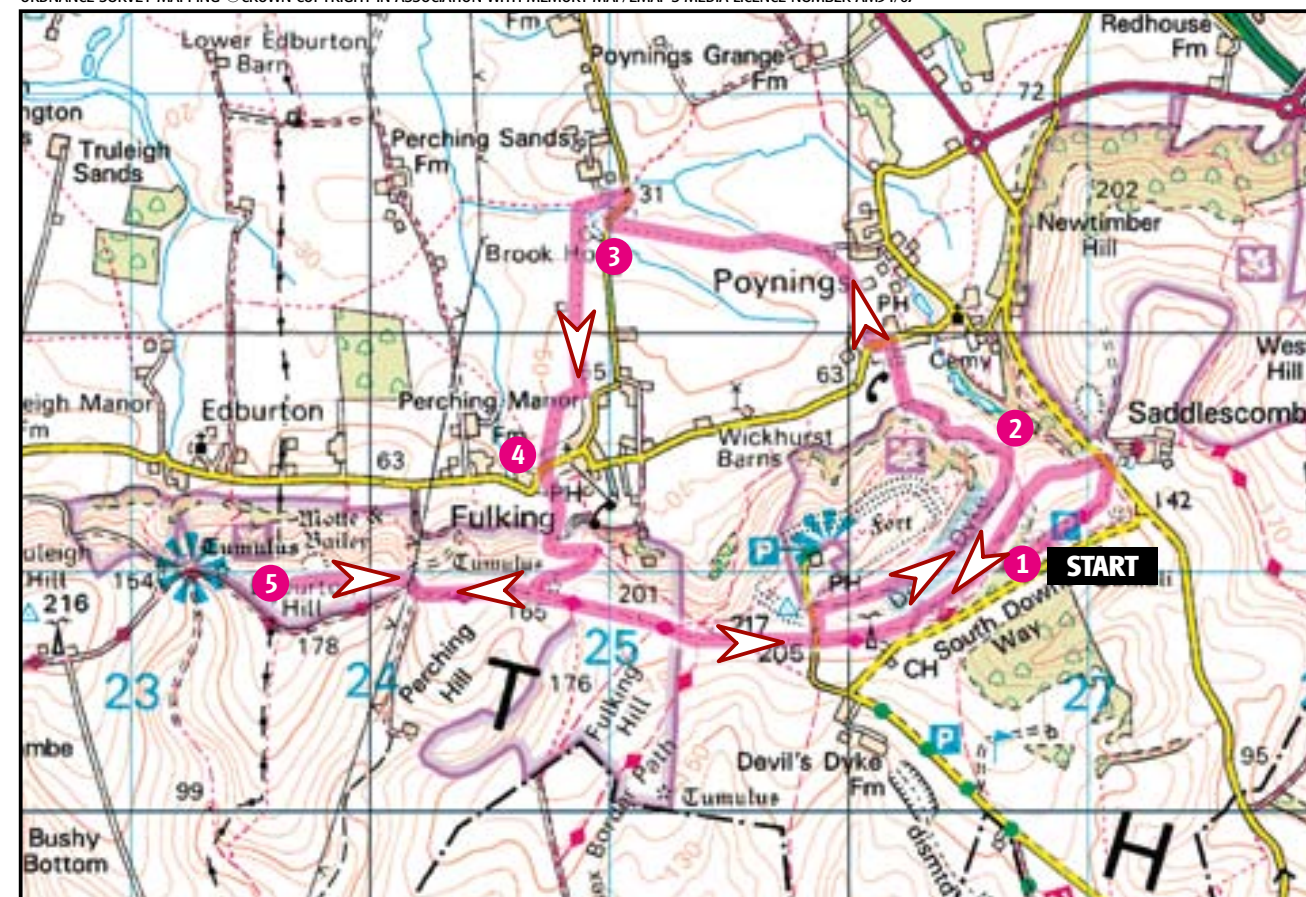
MAPS

Ordnance Survey Explorer 122; Landranger 198

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CUT ALONG HERE

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➤ bear L at track to cross stream. Climb stile on L, follow track to stile and head straight across field to stile and lane.

3 5.2km/3¼ miles

Turn R and soon take footpath L along drive to Brookside. Bear immediately L, following grassy path to junction and turn L over footbridge. Bear L and soon follow marked path along R-hand edge of fields, heading towards Downs. Cross track via stiles and continue towards Fulking, crossing stile on to grassy path. Turn R, then L in few paces to cross centre of

field to kissing-gate. Keep L to kissing-gate and village lane.

4 6.6km/4¼ miles

Turn R to Shepherd & Dog pub. Go through car park to join narrow, fenced path beside garden. Cross stile and steeply climb Fulking escarpment to crossing of paths. Turn sharp R and follow sunken path to join SDW at top of South Downs. Turn R and keep to chalk track down to crossing of paths. Just beyond fence take narrow defined path diagonally R uphill to stile to reach motte and bailey for great all-round views.

5 8.4km/5¼ miles

Retrace steps back along SDW and keep to this track to gate. Unless you want to visit Devil's Dyke pub, ignore path that sweeps L and keep ahead, following SDW to road. Go through gate opposite and follow SDW back through trees to car park.

Route created using
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