

Main walk morning last checked	Main walk afternoon last checked	Option a) last checked	Folkestone Circular last checked
29 September 2016	3 December 2016	3 December 2016	29 February 2016
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SWC Walk 13: Folkestone to Dover

Length:	Folkestone to Dover:	14.5km (9 miles)
	a) Alternative route via The Warren:	14.5km (9 miles) or 15.5km (9.6 miles)
	b) Folkestone Circular:	12.1km (7.5 miles) or 13.2km (8.2 miles)

Toughness:	- One steep hill climb on all walks: 7 out of 10
	- Rest of Folkestone to Dover: some gentle hills towards end: 4 out of 10
	- Rest of Folkestone Circular walk nearly flat – 2 out of 10.

Maps: OS Landranger 179, Explorer 138

Features

This is a highly scenic coastal walk with fine sea views throughout. It introduces you to some of the quainter sides of Folkestone, a town which like many south coast seaside towns is undergoing something of a renaissance. You then climb up past two Martello Towers (Napoleonic-era fortifications) onto a high clifftop, following the North Downs Way. This path is easy to follow, has fine Channel views, and passes the **Battle of Britain Memorial** and then a fascinating series of **World War II installations**, including a rare **sound mirror** (an early form of aircraft detection that was superseded by radar), and some large gun emplacements.

The only downside on this latter section of the route is noise from the A20 dual carriageway just inland, though this is muted when the wind is blowing from the sea (ie, from the south or south west). In compensation there is a dramatic approach to Dover – a narrow (but not difficult) ridge between an inland valley and the sea. The walk finishes by crossing the town's **Western Heights**, passing deserted 19th century forts and with wonderful views of the town and port.

Walk Options

a) Alternative route via the Warren. This option, starting in paragraph 19 of the main walk directions on page 4, takes you into an area of wild coastline to the east of Folkestone, and passes along a concrete seafront esplanade with fine views of the cliffs. It then climbs one of two hidden paths that climb perfectly safely and easily up the cliffs to rejoin the North Downs Way on the clifftop. Depending on which path you take up the cliff this is the **same length** or **1km (0.6**

miles) longer than the standard route. The longer option here is the one that accesses the lunch options of the Clifftop Cafe and Lighthouse Inn, though if you are having sandwiches or if you are sure that the Royal Oak is open, the same length option is more attractive: see paragraph 9 of the **option a) alternative route** directions on page 8 for details.

b) Folkestone Circular walk. This uses the alternative route via the Warren and then follows the cliff top back to Folkestone, reversing the start of the main walk, with magnificent views and passing both the **Clifftop tea room** and the **Battle of Britain Memorial**. There is a choice of paths up the cliff (see paragraph 9 on page 8) making a walk of either **12.1km (7.5 miles)** or **13.2km (8.2 miles)**.

Transport

Folkestone Central is now served by high speed trains out of St Pancras, journey time just under one hour. There is a small supplement for this train, which you can avoid by taking the hourly train out of Charing Cross and London Bridge, which takes 1hr 45 minutes. Aim to arrive in Folkestone by 11.00 am if you want to get to one of the pubs in time for lunch.

Dover is served by the same trains as Folkestone, and so also has high speed trains to St Pancras taking just over one hour, or trains to Charing Cross or Victoria taking 1hr 50 to 2hrs.

Swimming

In summer this walk also offers good swimming opportunities mainly at the start or finish in Folkestone. The most popular place with locals is the **Sunny Sands** beach near the harbour which despite its location was one of the few on the south coast to be awarded the highest possible cleanliness rating by the Marine Conservation Council in 2009. However, the **new beaches below the Leas cliff top esplanade** at the start/end of the walk are a more scenic place for a dip.

The Warren also has beaches, and in the Edwardian era was a popular seaside spot. But the problem here is scattered underwater rocks and the metal stumps of old groynes (breakwaters) which would be concealed by most states of the tide. One or two sections of the beach near the start (as approached on this walk) are almost clear of obstructions, but you would really need to have visited this beach at low tide to identify these.

Lunch

This is a good walk to bring a **picnic** (see early in the walk for a Tesco where you can buy a picnic if you have not brought one with you). There are numerous places on the clifftop to stop and eat it, and if you are doing options **a)** or **b)**, then the Warren seafront is also an option. In winter or during the week, a picnic may be your only option: see below

The **Clifftop Cafe** (01303 255 588), Capel-le-Ferme, 6km (3.7 miles) into the main walk, 6.7km (4.2 miles) or 7.8km (4.8 miles) into the Folkestone Circular walk (depending on which path you take up the cliffs), is exactly what it sounds like: a cafe with a cliff edge situation and with panoramic views from its terrace of the Warren, Folkestone and the sea. It is open at weekends in the winter, and daily from March, but all of this is "weather permitting": ie if it is pouring with rain, it may not be open.

The **Lighthouse Inn** (01303 254080) is 250 metres on from the Clifftop Cafe (or before it if on the longer Circular route). It serves food ("pub classics") from 12-2.30pm Thursday to Saturday, 12-4pm on Sunday. Note that there is no lunch service Monday to Wednesday. The pub also does food in the evenings from 6pm Wednesday to Saturday. The pub is open for drinks all afternoon Thursday to Sunday but only from 5pm Tuesday and Wednesday: it is closed entirely on Monday. The pub has a garden and a deck with a view of the sea.

The **Royal Oak** (01303 244 787), is a possible later lunch stop 7.1km (4.4 miles) into the main walk, or an earlier lunch stop 6.7km (3.7 miles) into the longer circular walk (it is *not* on the shorter circular walk). It is a somewhat basic pub serving a caravan park but walkers have received a warm welcome there. When last checked (December 2016) it was serving food daily.

Tea

Dover has some cafes - eg the **Dickens Corner** in the main square - but these tend to close early (4.30pm in the case of Dickens Corner). Later tea choices include a **Costa Coffee**, open till 7pm Monday to Saturday and 5pm on Sunday, and a **Weatherspoons** pub: see the walk directions for this option for details. There is also a **station buffet** at **Dover station** open till 6pm Monday to Saturday but only 3pm Sunday

On the **Folkestone Circular** walk, the **Clifftop Cafe** (see **Lunch** above) is a good tea choice if you are not already using it for lunch, and the **Battle of Britain Memorial**, half a kilometre further on has a visitor's centre with a cafe that is open 11.00am to 5pm daily from 1 April to 30 September

Folkestone itself plenty of tea options. There is a seasonal cafe on the **harbour beach**, and several cafes in the Old High Street: these come and go but one that seems to be reasonably well established is the **Steep Street Coffee House**, open to 6pm Monday to Saturday and 5pm on Sundays. A bit further on, in the main shopping street in Folkestone, there is a **Costa Coffee** (see directions for location) which is open until 6pm Monday to Saturday and 5pm on Sunday

If you go back to the station via the Leas clifftop esplanade, there is also a cafe in the glass-sided atrium to the **Leas Cliff Hall**, which is situated in the middle of the esplanade just before you turn inland to go to the station.

Lastly, at **Folkestone Central** station the buffet on the platform is open till 6pm Monday to Saturday (not sure about Sundays).

WALK DIRECTIONS

1. Leave the platform of Folkestone station by the exit ramp, and exit the station. Turn right down the station approach road.
2. In 70 metres, at a main road, turn right under the railway bridge, following a sign to Town Centre. Beyond the bridge, follow the road around to the right, passing a church on the left.
3. In 120 metres, at a roundabout, take the second road left, Castle Hill Avenue, a broad road with a tree-lined green strip down its centre. (The easiest way to get to this is to cross the road just beyond the roundabout).
4. In 300 metres go straight across another roundabout (there is a **Tesco** convenience store to the left if you want to buy a picnic). In another 120 metres go straight across another roundabout and keep straight on down the left hand side of the road (now Clifton Gardens)
5. In a further 100 metres, cross a road and turn left along the clifftop esplanade – **The Leas**. In 10 metres you pass a viewing platform on your right, with fine views of the beach below, and the glass-sided atrium of the **Leas Cliff Hall**, which has a cafe, to your left.
6. Keep straight on along the esplanade, with intermittent sea views to the right.
7. In 400 metres you pass under a huge metal arch commemorating the soldiers who passed through here in the First World War and come to the end of the esplanade. Ignore a road going steeply downhill, but instead go left across it to take the tarmac path parallel to it on the far side, with a black metal fence to the right and Albion Villas, a private road, to the left.
8. In 50 metres you pass a house to the left where Charles Dickens wrote part of Little Dorrit. 70 metres beyond this, turn left into a graveyard, passing three black iron posts.
9. In 90 metres, just past the church door, go right at a path T-junction. In 10 metres, ignore a path to the left opposite the church entrance, and in 30 metres ignore paths right and left.
10. In another 30 metres, leave the churchyard on a path blocked by six metal posts. Keep straight on down the road beyond – The Bayle – passing the **British Lion** pub in 40 metres and veering left with the road towards **The Guildhall** pub, which you pass in another 100 metres.
11. Beyond this, ignore Bayle Street left and The Parade right and go straight on, to the right of house number 72, down the easily missed Bail Steps (spelled thus).

12. In 60 metres, at the bottom of the steps, turn right onto Old High Street, which is now being revived as a "creative quarter" courtesy of money provided by the founder of Saga Holidays, which was until recently based in Folkestone.
13. In 120 metres, at the bottom of the hill, go straight across Tontine Street and then turn right, with a car park to your left. Veer left with the pavement to cross another road, The Tram Road, and go left under a brick railway arch in 40 metres and into a narrow cobbled street. (This now defunct railway used to carry boat trains to connect with cross-Channel ferries from Folkestone harbour).
14. 40 metres beyond the railway bridge, opposite a fish and chip shop, turn right for 30 metres to get to the edge of Folkestone's old inner **harbour**. Turn left along this.
15. In 60 metres, you pass the **Ship Inn** on your left, and in 140 metres more, where the inner harbour ends at a small beach, follow the sea wall to the left and then in 40 metres to the right. Continue on along the sea wall past a larger beach, your direction 50 degrees. In 40 metres, you pass a seasonal **seafront cafe** (up the steps to the left).
16. 300 metres further on, at the end of the esplanade, go left up some very sturdily built zigzag stone steps (there is no other route).

(Note the sign saying Danger 270,000 Volts over the door at the bottom of the steps: this is the English end of a cable connection that enables us to trade electricity with France.)
17. At the top of the steps curve right up a grassy shelf, to pass in 150 metres to the right of a gable-roofed building, once a restaurant. Beyond the building keep straight on uphill on a tarmac track. On the hill to the left you can see a white **Martello Tower**.
18. In 120 metres you pass a derelict concrete structure, just beyond this (and before a concrete shelter also on the left) veer left uphill on the grass, and carry on uphill on the seaward edge of the green space, aiming to the right of the Martello Tower.
19. In 100 metres you pass a coastguard hut and start to descend the other side of the hill, still keeping to the sea edge of the green.
 - For option **a) Alternative route via the Warren** or option **b) Folkestone Circular walk**, switch here to the directions on page 7.
20. Keep to the right of some tennis courts in 100 metres and in another 80 metres, where the tennis courts end, keep along this seaward edge of a park.
21. In 150 metres pass into another section of the park and go diagonally across it, diverging from its seaward edge towards its top left-hand corner.
22. In 250 metres, when you get to this top corner, follow a tarmac lane that diverges from the residential to your left. The lane leads uphill, towards a Martello Tower being converted into a house.
23. In 150 metres, where the road swings right just beyond the Martello Tower, carry straight on up a path. In 100 metres cross a high footbridge over a road and keep on uphill on the path.
24. Ignore any apparent minor side paths as you climb the hill: these lead nowhere. In 350 metres, more or less at the top of the hill, you come to a clear three-way footpath junction marked by a footpath sign. Here turn right, following the North Downs Way.
25. In 30 metres you come out onto the flat clifftop. Here veer left with the path along a chainlink fence, ignoring paths off to the right.
26. You should now be on a footpath following the edge of the clifftop, with the chainlink fence to your left. In 400 metres the path emerges onto the mown grass of the **Battle of Britain Memorial** (which has a seasonal cafe: see **Lunch and Tea** places).
27. Keep to the seaward edge of the memorial for 250 metres, picking up a path through rougher grass near the clifftop edge when it ends. In 80 metres or so this starts to descend steps into a gully.
28. After descending for 60 metres and climbing for another 40 metres or so, you come out onto the driveway of a house. Turn left on this.
29. In 30 metres turn right up a footpath, the North Downs Way.
30. This path follows the edge of gardens along the cliff edge for 300 metres, before emerging into a grassy space. Follow paths along the edge of this, and

through various rougher areas, to come in 400 metres to the **Clifftop Cafe**.

31. Pass to the landward edge of the cafe, ignoring a path slanting downhill on its seaward side, and follow the clifftop path.
32. In 250 metres the **Lighthouse Inn** is on your left. Beyond it, keep to the clifftop path.
33. In 650 metres the path runs between a caravan park left and the cliff edge right.
34. In another 150 metres, at the end of the caravan park a path from the Warren joins from the right (signposted, though this junction is easy to miss). 10 metres further on a path to the left leads the short distance to the main road, on the other side of which is the **Royal Oak** pub, but your onward route is to **remain on the clifftop path**.
35. In 70 metres the path goes into thorn bushes. In another 80 metres it forks. The North Downs Way and Saxon Shore Way is the left fork but a more attractive route is the right fork, marked with a yellow arrow, which skirts just below the cliff top
36. In 70 metres a tube metal fence starts to the right (welcome, as the path is vertiginous at this point).
37. In 250 metres, where the fence ends, you are on a headland which is a fabulous **viewpoint** back along the Warren
38. Keep to the right of the green open space on the headland, with the cliff to your right. In 50 metres, pass through wooden posts, onto a faint path on the edge of the cliff (*but be careful of the drop*: the slopes may be grassy, but just as deadly if you fall down them: go further inland if in doubt)
39. In 70 metres you pass to the left of a concrete World War Two gun emplacement and veer left onto a wide tarmac path (the North Downs Way), your direction 80 degrees.
40. In 170 metres you pass a rare concrete **sound mirror** (a concave concrete dish to focus sound – an early form of aircraft detection that was superseded when radar was developed early in World War Two)
41. In 300 metres, at the top of the hill, the tarmac path goes through a gate, but ignore this and instead go right for 20 metres and then left through a kissing gate, following a North Downs Way sign. (You can even stay on the seaward side of the fence on a clear path, but if you do this, take care of the cliff edge and use your own judgement).
42. In 250 metres you pass around the end of a steep bank of earth and a round brick structure, and keep on with the fence to your right or left (depending on which side of it you are on).
43. 200 metres or so beyond this point there is a kissing gate in the fence. Pass through this onto the seaward side of the fence (unless you are on that side already).
44. The path now carries on about 30 metres inland from the cliff edge for some way. There are better views to be had nearer the edge, and some minor paths here, but the ground is rough and you should beware of hidden obstructions or holes in it that you might trip over or fall into. Official advice is to keep at least five metres away from chalk cliff edges, which erode fast and can collapse suddenly. If you do go to nearer the edge, you can see a broad platform at the bottom of the cliff, which was the construction site for the Channel Tunnel in the late 1980s
45. Eventually, after several hundred metres, the main path comes closer to the edge, and you can see the Channel Tunnel construction platform more easily. At the eastern end of it, note the ventilation fans for the tunnel and a monument that marks the point where the tunnel heads out to sea. The circular areas, one of them now a car park, were the construction shafts for the tunnel (they dug downwards, then both inland and out to sea from this point)
46. The path goes into a section of thorn and gorse scrub, and at the far end there is **a particularly good World War II gun emplacement**, with a red brick entrance peeping up over the grass, that you can actually go inside (*at your own risk!!*) and get an idea of what it must have been like to stand guard on this coast at that time
47. After more gun emplacements, most of them now buried in the ground, you emerge onto a fine section of the cliff path, which follows an undulating ridge between valley and sea down towards Dover
48. After 400 metres or so, at the top of a rise, go through a kissing gate. In

another 80 metres turn **right** through another kissing gate, and carry on downhill, with a fence now to your left.

49. After this, the path – still on the crest of the cliffs – descends into a large dip and up the other side. Ignore a path to a footbridge over the main road visible at the bottom of this dip.

(The brick chimneys you can see on the next section are old ventilation shafts built to let the steam out on from the tunnel on the Folkestone to Dover railway below.)

50. The path now climbs gently up onto **Shakespeare Cliff** (so named because it is mentioned in *King Lear*) with a fence to your left.
51. In 300 metres you are directed left through a kissing gate in the fence because the cliff path ahead is now closed due to erosion. Turn immediately right after the gate to resume your former direction, climbing gently with the fence now to your right.
52. In 600 metres you start to descend quite steeply. There used to be a good view of **Dover Harbour** ahead on the initial alignment of this path, but the new route goes through scrub for 100 metres or so, before emerging for a slightly less dramatic view.
53. In another 100 metres pass through a kissing gate in a field corner and keep on downhill beyond it, in the same direction as before.
54. In 200 metres you come to a metal fence overlooking a beach and the railway line. Turn left here down a concrete path.
55. In 200 metres the path curves right, parallel to a dual carriageway
56. In another 100 metres turn left down concrete steps into an underpass under the main road, following the North Downs Way sign.
57. At the far end of the underpass go right up steps and carry straight on down a road.
58. In 60 metres turn left up King Lear's Way, following a North Downs Way sign. In 30 metres go right on Kings Ropewalk
59. In 100 metres follow this road as it curves left to come to a dead end. Here go left up a tarmac path beyond the last house on the left.

60. Follow this path as it climbs uphill behind the houses and then in 80 metres turns right up steps. Ignore a kissing gate to the right half way up, but at the top of the steps go right through a kissing gate onto a path that slants up across the hillside

61. In 200 metres you pass a kissing gate to the right of a wooden gate and carry straight on. In 200 metres more a car-wide path joins from the left and you carry on up this, with a fence covered with shrubs to your right, following a line of mini pylons

62. In 300 metres, you come to a road: merge with this and carry straight on. In 70 metres merge with a second road and carry on, now slightly downhill

63. In 100 metres you come to a road T-junction, where you go left.

(If you wish you can follow this road all the way to the bottom of the hill, to a point in 550 metres where the road turns sharp right. Here there are steps to the left leading down to Folkestone Road at a point near to Dover station. But the route described below is both scenic and interesting and worth following unless you are very pressed for time)

64. After 150 metres on the road ignore a road to the right signposted "Drop Redoubt Fort and Grand Shaft" (though this area is worth exploring if you have time).

65. In another 130 metres, where the road emerges from between banks, go right through a kissing gate and up steps that climb up the open hillside, signposted North Downs Way.

66. At the top of the first set of steps, ignore a path to the right, and curve left up a stepped path, keeping to the left of the wire fence, onto what is in fact the rampart of a **Napoleonic era fort**, though initially it is somewhat hidden by earthworks.

67. In 50 metres go through a kissing gate. In another 100 metres there is a fine view of Dover, which includes Dover station in the valley to your left, and **Dover Castle** on the hill ahead.

68. In 50 metres more you can see the massive nineteenth century military fort below you to the right: continue on the path along the rampart to the left of these.

69. Where the fortifications curve to the right, curve right with them, keeping to the path along the ramparts, and ignoring paths that descend down the hillside. You now have a fine view of the port of Dover and Dover Castle. In front of the church to the right of the castle, you can even see the remains of the **Roman lighthouse**.
70. In 80 metres the path starts to descend more steeply. [!] In 10 metres more, there are two arrows on a fence post. Just after this slant left, following the yellow Saxon Shore Way arrow, downhill towards a narrow bench (which looks like a wooden hurdle from this angle) 40 metres away to the left of some scrub.
71. 30 metres after the bench, by a kissing gate to the right, turn left down the steep hill on wood and earth steps
72. Half way down the hill you pass through a kissing gate and carry on down steps that are now stone (and slippery in the wet). At the bottom of the steps carry on down a track.
73. In 100 metres, at a T-junction with a tarmac path, go right, following the North Downs Way sign. In 30 metres merge with a road and curve left downhill on it. This brings you down to the main road – a dual carriageway, where you go left.
74. You can keep straight on along this road until you come to a large roundabout, where you go left up Folkestone Road to the station, but **for tea in Dover high street** cross the road at the traffic lights in 60 metres and carry straight on down the side road on the far side.
75. In 80 metres the road curves left into a shopping street. *Going right here and down into the underpass takes you in 300 metres to the seafront, but the onward route* is to go left. In 80 metres a plaza opens out to the left. The **Dickens House** cafe is straight ahead on the far side of this, but your onward route is to veer left across the plaza and carry on up Dover's pedestrianised high street.
76. In 80 metres you pass the **Eight Bells**, a Weatherspoons pub and possible tea stop, on the left.
77. In another 120 metres or so, just after a car road crosses from the right and ends the pedestrian section, **Costa Coffee** is on the right.

78. **To get to the station**, take the next road left after Costa Coffee, Priory Street At the end of this, you come to a large roundabout and turn right. In 70 metres turn left to cross the road at traffic lights, and on the far side turn left.

79. Carry on past the roundabout and on to the right up Folkestone Road. In 100 metres ignore Effingham Road to the right after a petrol station, but in another 120 metres or so, fork right down the approach road to **Dover station**.

Options a) Alternative route via the Warren and b) Folkestone Circular

1. Descending from the coastguard hut in paragraph 19 of the main walk on page 4, in 100 metres you pass to the right of some tennis courts and join a broad track running from the right. [!] Almost immediately fork right off the track onto a path slanting downhill, signposted to the Warren.
2. In 70 metres keep straight ahead, following an arrow on a footpath post, ignoring paths downhill to the right.

(These paths to the right lead downhill to the beach, and this was the former route of the walk, which is at time of writing still perfectly viable if the tide is not too high. But the suggested route below follows a new path that can be used at any state of the tide.)

3. Follow this path as it twists and turns, occasionally descending (or even climbing) steps. In 250 metres or so it comes out alongside the beach, and in another 80 metres emerges onto the seafront concrete esplanade.
4. You now stay on this concrete esplanade for a considerable distance (but follow the directions in the next two paragraphs carefully to identify the exit point). **The esplanade is somewhat cracked in places, so watch where you are putting your feet.** Note a number of metal doors set into the cliff on this section – see the panel on the next page for the explanation of these.

If the esplanade is impassable due to high waves or erosion, escaping up any path to the left will take you to a road, later a track, alongside the railway track. Follow this until it descends to the concrete esplanade: and as it does so, look out for a signposted footpath up

steps to the left, which climbs back up to the railway line. Resume the directions in the second sentence of paragraph 8 below.

5. In 500 metres the esplanade widens into a **broad concrete platform** about 70 metres wide (wide enough to land a helicopter on), and in another 200 metres it narrows again with **chalk cliffs** to the left (watch out for rock falls here).

These concrete platforms date from 1950-55, when they were created to stop landslips in the **Warren**, the wild hilly area uphill to your left. Drainage tunnels were also dug - presumably these are what lie behind the metal doors noted in paragraph 4.

The worst of the landslips was in 1915 when the Folkestone to Dover railway was buried under 65 feet of earth which also flowed 230 metres out to sea. The line did not reopen until 1919.

The concrete platforms spoiled what was an extensive - and apparently sandy - beach in late Victorian and Edwardian times. The area (less scrub-filled than it is now) was also a popular picnic spot.

There was even a station - **Warren Halt** - which had a tea kiosk and a footbridge over the line. It first opened in 1886, closed in 1888 after protests by the landowner, then re-opened for the summer months only from 1908 to 1915 and 1924 to 1939. After the war it was used as a staff halt serving a works depot until some time in the 1950s.

A zigzag path led down to the halt, which may be the one that now goes up to the Clifftop Cafe (see paragraph 9). The current footbridge is **not** the site of the former station, however: it was about a kilometre to the east. There is still a Network Rail storage area on the site, but nothing remains of the halt.

6. In 150 metres more ignore a track slanting up to the left and keep to the seafront. In 350 metres more descend a ramp onto **another broad concrete platform**, now with lower green banks to the left.
7. In 250 metres, 80 metres before the end of this platform, ignore a path uphill to the left (*this **does** go to the footbridge in paragraph 9 but it is rather steep and eroded in its early sections*), **but turn sharp left** (ie back on

yourself) up a car wide gravel track signposted Four Seasons Nature Trail.

8. **[!]** In 50 metres leave the track to go right, steeply uphill on wooden steps. In 80 metres, at the top of the steps and the hill, walk on the level for 20 metres, and then veer right along the railway line.
9. In 120 metres cross the railway line using the footbridge and beyond it turn left on a footpath. **Here you have a choice:**

- The **recommended route** is to **turn right** after the footbridge. This is an interesting and sometimes exhilarating path up the cliffs, with magnificent views. It was seriously overgrown in 2016 but in September of that year was given the strimmer treatment by the local council and so hopefully is now passable. **To do this option switch to the directions in paragraph 16 below.**

For **Folkestone Circular** walkers this route is slightly longer than the option outlined below, making a walk of **13.2km (8.2 miles)**.

If on the **Folkestone to Dover** walk, this route is the **same length** as the main walk route and so **shorter** than the other option outlined below. But note it route bypasses all but one of the lunch options (the exception being the Royal Oak, if it is still open: see **Lunch** on page 2 for details). So Dover walkers wanting lunch would be better advised to do the option outlined immediately below.

- The **alternative route** is to turn **left** after the footbridge. This path goes through woods on its climb up the cliff and so has less good views - though at the top it climbs a thrilling (but not vertiginous) zigzag grove up through vertical chalk cliffs. It is also a much wider and more distinct path and so less likely to get overgrown. It leads directly to the Clifftop Cafe. **To do this option follow the directions in paragraph 10 below.**

For **Folkestone Circular** walkers this route is the shorter **12.1km (7.5 mile)** option.

For **Folkestone to Dover** walkers this route **adds 1km (0.6 miles)** and is slightly less scenic, but it takes you to the lunch options, the **Clifftop Cafe** and **Lighthouse Inn**.

10. Having turned **left** after the footbridge in paragraph 9, follow this path as it initially parallels the railway line climbing up and down
11. In 250 metres the path turns away from the railway into a wood and starts to climb the hill, occasionally on wooden steps.
12. In 200 metres more, at a clear fork in the path, fork right uphill (where the other path is level, then downhill)
13. The path now zigzags up a steep wooded slope, occasionally aided by wooden steps, and later with some (rather rickety) wooden railings.
14. After 500 metres or so it is climbing among cliff faces, at first in the wood and then gradually with more open views.
15. In another 400 metres you emerge onto the clifftop by the **Clifftop Cafe**
 - **To walk to Dover**, go past the Clifftop Cafe and then turn sharp right beyond it, to join the clifftop path heading east (with the sea to your right). Resume the main walk directions at paragraph 32 on page 5.
 - **For the Folkestone Circular walk**, head west along the clifftop path (with the sea to your left) and continue with the directions in paragraph 21 below - unless you want to have lunch at the **Lighthouse Inn**, in which case go the other way along the clifftop path for 250 metres to find it on your left.
16. Having turned **right** after the footbridge in paragraph 9, follow a narrow path with the fence of the railway line to your right. Encroaching vegetation makes the path tricky at times, and it can also be treacherously slippery in the wet, but persist as the path now rises, now falls alongside the railway line. (At this point it still seems impossible that there is any way up the cliff to your left, but do not worry: there is.)
17. In 400 metres, after a section where the path rises above the railway line, the path suddenly turns sharply away from the railway line down wooden steps, your direction 20 degrees. After a plank bridge, the path curves right, and starts to climb more wooden steps.
18. **Follow these steps right the way to the top of the cliffs** – a steep climb, but not a vertiginous one, initially through scrub, but emerging at the top

by some fine grassy platforms which are ideal **picnic** spots (though beware of the possibly crumbly cliff edge). On a clear day you can easily see France from here on a bearing of 140 degrees, and Dungeness nuclear power station on a bearing of 220 degrees.

19. At the very top of the path, you find yourself facing a caravan park. You can see the **Royal Oak** pub on the far side of the road just beyond the caravan park. If you are planning to eat there, there is a path to the road ten metres to the right of where you are standing, marked by a yellow arrow.

Otherwise, at the top of the path up the cliffs, **you have a choice:**

- **To walk to Dover**, *turn right* and refer to the paragraph 35 of the main walk directions on page 5. (**Folkestone Circular walkers** might like to note that there is also a nice **viewpoint** early in this route - in paragraph 37 - which you might like to visit, retracing your steps to this point continue your walk.)
- **To continue with the Folkestone Circular walk**, *turn left*, with the caravan park to the right and the cliff edge to your left and continue with the directions in the next paragraph.

20. In 800 metres you pass the **Lighthouse Inn**, a possible lunchstop on your right. In 250 metres, you pass the **Clifftop Cafe** on the left.
21. Beyond the cafe, *veer left to the seaward side of a car park*, to pick up a path that runs along the cliff edge
22. After 130 metres keep to the left-hand side of a fenced area on the cliff edge path. In 80 metres this fenced area ends but in 70 metres another starts, and soon there are gardens to your right.
23. In another 200 metres the path turns inland alongside a garden for 60 metres, and then turns left parallel to the coast and descends for 50 metres to a concrete drive.
24. Here go left, downhill, and in another 30 metres, before a house called **Eagle's Nest**, turn right again down steps into a dip and up the other side.
25. Once up on the clifftop again, in 70 metres fork left away from the fence to keep near the cliff edge. In 150 metres there is a monument to your right – the **Battle of Britain Memorial** (which has

a seasonal cafe: see Lunch and Tea Places).

26. Keep to the cliff edge beyond the memorial until in 80 metres your way is blocked by a fence. Pass through a kissing gate at the seaward end of this, and carry on along the cliff edge, with a high metal fence now to your right.
27. In 400 metres, at the end of the fenced compound, *turn right* with the path (ignoring a fork to the left 10 metres earlier) to descend 20 metres to a three-way path junction. Here go **sharp left** downhill, leaving the North Downs Way.
28. In 80 metres this path emerges into the open with a wire fence ahead and Folkestone in clear view below. Keep downhill on the path as it passes in and out of the scrub.
29. In 350 metres you cross a road on a concrete bridge and in 120 metres you come to a **Martello Tower** (not the one you passed this morning, but one further uphill). Pass to the right of this, and carry on down the road.
30. In 130 metres, just before a road junction, veer slightly left across a green space to converge with its seaward edge in 300 metres and pass through a gap in a wooden fence into another green space. Keep to the left of this, and in 100 metres pass to the left of some tennis courts on a track.
31. Beyond the tennis courts leave the track (which is a dead end due to coastal erosion) and fork right up onto the grass to pass to the left of the white **Martello Tower**.
32. Beyond the tower veer right to walk downhill across the grass, heading to the left of a building ahead.
33. Beyond the building veer left onto the grassy shelf to the left of the road, and a tarmac path. In 100 metres ignore steps going downhill just beyond a red brick shelter, but veer left down the grass bank for 30 metres to the top of the stone zigzag steps that lead to the seafront promenade. Descend these.
34. At the bottom of the steps turn right on the promenade and follow it for along the top of the **harbour beach** (which has a seasonal cafe up the steps to the right).
35. In 300 metres you are forced to veer left, but in 30 metres you can turn right again onto the harbourside, Follow this

for 200 metres until you pass under the left hand of two railway arches.

36. Beyond the arches turn right on the main road, and in 60 metres veer left up Old High Street.
37. In 150 metres the **Steep Street Coffee House**, a possible tea stop, is to the left.
38. In another 120 metres, at the top of Old High Street, keep straight on up some steps into George Lane, and in 50 metres curve right with the passage.
39. In 30 metres, you come to a pedestrianised shopping street where you go left uphill.
40. In 30 metres more, at a T-junction, go right up Sandgate Road, and then immediately curve left uphill up another pedestrianised shopping street.
41. In 120 metres, there is a **Costa Coffee** outlet on your right. In another 80 metres, *where the pedestrianised area ends at a major cross roads, you have a choice*
 - **If you are in a hurry to get the train**, the most direct route to the station is to *turn right*. In 60 metres you pass the post office on your left, and veer left with the road. In 100 metres, in front of a large office building go left, and in 25 metres go right, following a sign for A20 to Dover. In 250 metres, at a major road junction, keep straight on. In 200 metres more, go under a railway bridge, and **Folkestone station** entrance is on the left.
 - **If you not in a hurry, a more scenic route** from the crossroads is to *turn left*. In 100 metres you come to a roundabout. Go right here onto the Leas, the clifftop esplanade that you walked along this morning. Follow this for 350 metres until you pass the glass-sided atrium to the **Leas Cliff Hall**, a possible tea stop. 50 metres beyond this, you see Castle Hill Avenue, the broad avenue with the central tree-lined park on your right.

Turn left onto this, and follow it for 500 metres to the main road junction, where you go straight across and curve right with the road to reach the railway bridge in 100 metres. Just beyond this, **Folkestone station** is on your left.