



Hassocks to Brighton walk

Over the South Downs to Brighton, the liveliest city on the South Coast

Length **Main Walk, ending in Brighton:** 22.5 km (14 miles). 5.5 to 6.5 hours walking time. For the whole excursion including meals and trains, allow 8 to 10 hours.

Short Walk, ending in Falmer: 12 km (7.5 miles). 3 to 4 hrs walking time.

OS Maps OS Explorer OL11, Landranger 198.

Toughness 7 out of 10 (6 out of 10 for the Short Walk).

Features Different from walking the South Downs ridge, this route traverses north to south exploring hidden valleys, woods, open access and park land. The goal is the lively town of Brighton and the sea but first you will pass through the pretty village of Ditchling, walk over Ditchling Beacon, through Stanmer Park, passing Stanmer House, a possible lunch stop, then through the University of Sussex campus to Falmer, the pub stop on the walk. There is a natural breaking off point at Falmer but those who persevere walking towards Brighton will be rewarded with a lovely view of the sea from Kemp Town Racecourse and an easy path into Brighton. The boardwalk, pier, seafront bars, Mediterranean cuisine, fish and chips or oysters and champagne and The Lanes (eclectic shops) await you.

Shortening the Walk You can shorten the walk by

1. a little under 1.0 km by taking the path due south from Hassocks Stn via Jack and Jill Windmills familiar from Book 1 Walk 29 and rejoining the main walk on top of the Downs. Directions are given at the end of the main Directions. You may prefer to take this alternative start to the walk in wet winter conditions when the Ditchling route is subject to mud, or if you want to enjoy an extended ridge walk along the South Downs Way on a fine day.
2. Curtailing the walk at Falmer and catching the train direct to Brighton. This will save approx 10 kms and 2.5 to 3 hrs. (There is also a bus that stops at various places around both university campuses)

Transport Take the train nearest to **09-30 hrs** from **London Bridge** to Hassocks. Currently (2019) there is also a twice an hour direct service (weekdays and weekends) from **Victoria** to Hassocks (Brighton service).

For those concluding their walk at Falmer, the railway station is 750 mtrs from the Swan Inn; Falmer Station is on the south side of the A27 but can be accessed by pedestrians from both sides. Either through an underpass at the entrance to University of Sussex, or by footpath through the grounds of the Univ. of Brighton on the south side. Trains to Brighton run every 15 minutes on weekdays and every half hour on Sundays.

Buses to Brighton : Bus 25 every 10 mins (15 mins Sun) from Falmer Village South (Univ of Brighton side)

Trains from Brighton to London

Run twice an hour to Victoria (Southern) or London Bridge (Thameslink), changing if necessary at Clapham Junction. Do not take the Gatwick Express service unless you have purchased a ticket for its use.

If driving, then there is a large car park at Hassocks Station.

Lunch For picnic provisions: by Hassocks Station is the **Downsview Delicatessen** (open from 6:30 everyday except Sunday). There is also a cafe and deli in Ditchling Village for picnic provisions.

The suggested lunch stop on this walk for the discerning walker is **Stanmer Country House** (tel [01273-680400](tel:01273-680400)), some 10 kms into the walk, serving lunch from 12 noon to 5 pm weekdays, and from 12 noon to 6 pm at weekends. The menu is varied and changes daily, with individual courses and sharing platters, all reasonably priced. Food is served in an informal bar-dining area and in two restaurant areas, and when weather permits, in an extensive, attractive garden, part covered. The bar serves draught beer, such as Harvey's Sussex, and has a good wine list.

For walkers who prefer classic pub grub and good draught beer or draught German lager, without a hint of pretension, their suggested lunch stop - some 12 kms into the walk - is **The Swan Inn** at Falmer North (Tel: [01273 681 842](tel:01273681842)), serving food from 12 noon to 2-30 pm weekdays, and until 4 pm on Sundays.

There is the **Stanmer Tea Rooms** in Stanmer Village after 9.5 kms with a limited menu in the style of baked potatoes, fry up's, sandwiches, cakes and scones. In Falmer Village South is **The Falmer Cafe** open 9 am to 4 pm, serving cooked breakfasts, baked potatoes and sandwiches in an industrial barn, with inside and outside seating areas.

There is the **Park Farm Shop** , open 9 am to 5 pm daily (until 12-30 pm on Sundays) just after Falmer Village South where you can purchase farm produce for a healthy, late picnic.

Tea Brighton offers a multitude of choices. The park in the middle of Old Steine makes a nice change from the beach for a picnic, but many people like the beach and the boardwalk along the seafront on the west side of the pier where you can have your fortune told, buy original paintings and eat candy floss and seafood. There are bars here some with live music. Most people make their way to The Lanes for an evening meal.

N.B. Brighton and Hove council has adopted an alcohol-free zone throughout the borough. The police exercise discretion, but in general anyone caught drinking in the streets will have the alcohol confiscated. A spokesman said that drinking would be allowed in open-air cafés spilling on to the streets, but otherwise officers would stop drinkers in parks, squares and streets. Not sure whether this applies to the beach.

Author Original 'map led walk' © 2008 by AJ Kennedy. Expanded, and completely re-written since. This version: May 2017.

Help Us! After the walk, we would love to get your [feedback](#)

You can upload photos to the [SWC Group on Flickr](#), and [videos to Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:



By Car **Start** BN6 8JD **Finish** BN1 3XP

Help National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

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Walk Directions

Hassocks to Falmer

- For a shorter, more direct route to the South Downs, see the 'via Jack and Jill' option below.
- Exiting Hassocks station, proceed in an easterly direction down the slip road, passing the Hassocks pub on your left-hand side and then head down the High Street. You pass Hassocks Infants School on your left-hand side, then the United Reformed Church, and after 375 metres along the High Street *turn left* into Grand Avenue, a tree-lined residential road.
- Ignore ways off as the road swings steadily to the right and in 900 metres you come to a road T-junction, with the Thatched Inn pub on your right-hand side. Cross the road, go through a wooden kissing gate and take the path *half-right* across a field, in a south-

easterly direction. In 260 metres go over planks either side of a wooden kissing gate and keep ahead along the left-hand edge of the next field, your direction 130°.

4. In 180 metres go over slats then through a squeeze stile and go over a plank bridge to continue ahead on a wide path between wire fences (muddy in winter), your direction east. In 700 metres exit the path over a stepped stile and *turn right* onto a minor tarmac road (Lodge Hill Lane), which soon bends to the left, then right, in 150 metres passing a pond on your left-hand side, to join a main road, with a war memorial on your right-hand side.
5. *Turn left* on this road (West Street) and walk through **Ditchling Village**, passing **St Margaret's Church** on your left (worth a visit) and the White Horse pub on your right. You may find the **Ditchling Tea Rooms** open for morning coffee or elevenses.
6. At the crossroads, cross straight over, passing the **Larder Delicatessen** on your right (for picnic provisions). Keep ahead, to pass on your right-hand side Ditchling Village Hall and Council offices (where there are public conveniences), then a Health Centre. In a further 50 metres [!] *turn right* down a drive, following a sign on your right on a brick wall "To the Downs".
7. In 90 metres the drive swings to the left and you continue down between hedges. In 75 metres go over a stile and bear *slightly left* over a field. In a further 70 metres go over planks and a stile and bear *half-left* across the next field, your direction 150°. In 120 metres go over planks either side of stile, go through a squeeze stile and over more planks and go into the next field, on a clear path.
8. In 165 metres, in the top left-hand corner of the field, go over a stile and head along a rough path, in 50 metres passing a redundant stile, to come out onto a track. *Turn right* on this track, now in woodland. In 40 metres another track joins from your right, and you keep ahead, your direction now 70°.
9. In 55 metres at a path junction, take the *right-hand path* with the edge of the wood on your right-hand side. Keep ahead, ignoring all ways off, as you head towards the South Downs. In 700 metres you come to a T-junction with Underhill Lane, a narrow tarmac road, where you *turn left*.
10. In 60 metres *turn right* onto a signposted footpath. You now follow this path, initially steadily uphill, and just after you pass a sign for Ditchling Beacon Nature Reserve on your right-hand side, you take the *left path* at a path junction. The path soon becomes much steeper as you proceed uphill, with fine views below on your left. Towards the top of your steep ascent you have a road below and parallel to you on your right-hand side. At the top of the path, at a four-armed footpath sign, cross the road on your right, go up steps and pass through a circular car park, following signs **South Downs Way**. Pass through a wooden swing gate by a National Trust sign for **Ditchling Beacon**.
11. Keep ahead, now in the **Ditchling Beacon Nature Reserve**, gently uphill. In 125 metres you pass Ditchling Beacon **Trig Station** some 50 metres over to your left. Your path now starts to descend as you follow a fenceline on your left-hand side.
12. In 150 metres [!] with a tall direction post on your left, with markings for Keymer Post ahead, *turn left* through a wooden kissing gate marked Access land, to follow a fenceline on your right-hand side, your initial direction 200°. [**The alternative Jack and Jill start from Hassocks joins here at this post**].
13. Keep ahead over the brow of a hill on a grassy way, and you soon have views of the sea ahead of you. In 200 metres pass through a field boundary with a metal fieldgate at right-angles to your right, and keep ahead, now gently downhill, between fences. In 100 metres go through a metal swing gate to the right of a metal fieldgate, to follow a fenceline on your left, with vast open fields in a valley over to your right. In a further 150 metres go through a field boundary and keep ahead, now between fences again, and head up and over the next brow.
14. In 200 metres ignore a metal swing gate and footpath on your left and pass through a wooden swing gate (or go through the usually open metal fieldgate to its right), and head downhill, still between fences. In a further 170 metres at the bottom of the slope pass through propped open metal gates in a field boundary, with a three-armed footpath sign on your right, and *swing left* to follow a clear path which soon swings right to follow the contours of the next field, with a grassy valley down below to your right.
15. In 550 metres at the top end of this field *turn left* through a metal swing gate and follow the the edge of the next field, uphill. In 60 metres go through another metal swing gate to cross Ditchling Road *slightly to your left* and by a two-armed footpath sign enter **Highpark Wood**. Keep ahead on the footpath (yellow arrow) and not the bridleway (blue arrow) to its left. In 45 metres at a multiple path crossing [!] *keep ahead* passing between two concrete posts onto a path, downhill, your direction 145°. In season you have a sea of **bluebells** over to your left. At the top of this path ignore the metal kissing gate on your right and keep close to the edge of the wood on your right as you head down this winding, undulating path.
16. In 400 metres you come down to a wooden swing gate on your right-hand side. Go through and follow the fenceline on your left, downhill, and in 40 metres go through another wooden swing gate to head down through a woodland strip, with an open field over to your right. In a further 400 metres, at the end of the woodland to your left, go through a wooden swing gate (usually propped open) and follow a narrow, winding path through a strip of woodland between open fields.
17. In 500 metres exit the wood through a wooden swing gate and *turn left* to follow a rough farm track, gently downhill, into Stanmer Village, along the left-hand edge of a large field which slopes uphill to your right. In 400 metres pass through a metal swing gate, 5 metres to the right of a metal fieldgate, and in 80 metres at a track T-junction, *turn right*.

18. In 200 metres you pass barns on your right-hand side and in a further 30 metres go through a wooden swing gate to the right of a pair of wooden fieldgates into the **Village of Stanmer** . Walk through the Village, in 160 metres passing **Stanmer Tea Rooms** on your left-hand side, an early lunch stop.
19. A tourist bus number 78 runs from Stanmer Village to Brighton during the summer months and is an early opt out.
20. After the Tea Rooms, continue due south down the road, in 20 metres passing Brighton Permaculture Trust centre on your right. You now pass a large barn on your left and in 60 metres you come to a fork in the road, with **Stanmer Church** directly ahead of you.
21. You now have a choice of route: the left fork (the exit road) allows you to enter sloping access land to your left at various points as you head towards the University campus. The right (entrance) fork gives access to Stanmer House and allows you to walk along a pleasant grassy way to the right of the road towards the campus.
22. If taking the right hand fork, in 40 metres you pass the entrance to the church on your left-hand side (usually locked), and in a further 60 metres you *turn left* to pass in front of **Stanmer House** , a suggested lunch stop.
23. Stanmer House was built in 1720 for the first Earl of Chichester, Thomas Pelham by the architect Nicholas Dubois. Built in a restrained classical style, and set in 5,000 acres of parkland. The house incorporates an earlier house from 1594 part of the estate of the previous owners, the Michelborne family, who were connected with the manor then called Audwick. The new house is built in the restrained Classical style popular for English country houses, with little adornment. A later extension to the right wing may be said to have spoiled the symmetry.
24. Walk to the end of the green in front of the house and then follow the main treelined driveway on a grassy way some 20 metres to its right for 800 mtrs to the very end of the fencing on the left, at the end of the car parking bays either side of the road.
25. You now have 2 choices
26. **A) Via Sussex University, Falmer Village and towards the pub**
27. *Turn left* through two low wooden posts to head uphill on a path, your direction 35°, following a fenceline on your left and with a sports field over to your right. In 175 metres the fence on your left ends at a cross paths and you keep ahead, half left, on a grassy way, uphill. In 90 metres at the top of the slope you enter a patch of woodland, go through and *bear half right* through some trees to head down towards University buildings, aiming for a prominent "No Entry " sign. Exit the woodland by dropping down a grassy bank past this sign and keep straight ahead, passing Silverstone block on your left, then Arts C block on your left and Arts B block on your right. Now on Arts Road, you pass under a bridge with a building over and you follow Exit signs, soon steadily uphill.
28. Continue along this road which soon becomes steeper (Boiler House Hill) passing campus buildings to left and right. You pass the entrance to Falmer Sports Centre on your left and some 50 metres before you reach a slip road to the A27, *turn left* into Mill Street. A short distance down this road, *turn right* into Park Street. In 80 metres you come to the **Swan pub** on your left, your suggested lunch stop.
29. Falmer Village to Falmer Station, the bus or Brighton : Coming out of the pub, *turn left* onto Middle Street. In 30 metres cross the A27 road on a footbridge and continue over to its far side (do not take the ramp down on your right to the bus bay). Turn right then left into Park Street, Falmer South, soon passing a pond on your left-hand side. If you wish you can turn left at the end of the footbridge to come out onto East Street then **St Laurence Church** (usually locked). The **Falmer Cafe** is a little further down the road, with the pond to your right. Otherwise, once past the pond, the road swings to the right and in 50 metres you pass **The Park Farm Shop** on your right, where you can purchase provisions for a late picnic.
30. Cross over the crossroads and in 80 metres go past the main entrance to the **Amex Stadium** , home to **Brighton and Hove Albion** football club, on your right-hand side. In a further 125 metres, just before a mini-roundabout and the entrance to **University of Brighton Falmer Campus** , by a footpath sign, *turn left* over a stile onto a narrow path (overgrown in summer), your direction south, with a fence and field on your left and a woodland strip to your right. **Note** The short walk ends at the entrance to the University of Brighton entrance: those wishing to catch the train to Brighton can walk through the campus to find the pedestrian access to Falmer station, or catch the 25 bus to Brighton which leaves from here.
31. **B) Direct Option**
32. Go Straight on to reach Falmer Station by the most direct route, continue down the main driveway for another 300 metres and where the road swings right, turn left along a footpath which runs parallel to the busy A27. Find the pedestrian underpass under the A27 which takes you directly to the station.

The Long Walk Option (further 10 kms from Falmer to Brighton)

33. Continue along the footpath heading south at the entrance to the University of Brighton campus. In 370 metres you come out into a field and *turn right* in a westerly direction to follow the right-hand edge of a large open field down into a dip and up the other side, with

woodland to your right. In 450 metres at the end of the field do not go through the metal swing gate in the boundary ahead of you but instead *turn left* in a southerly direction once again, keeping the fence on your right.

34. In 400 metres at the bottom of a dip at the end of the field ignore a faint path to your left and *keep ahead*, now steeply uphill, between blackberry bushes. In 100 metres a track joins from your left. In a further 120 metres, at the top of the slope, by a four-armed footpath post, *turn right*, once again heading west, on a public bridleway, an earth and grassy track, between fences.
35. In 450 metres you come out into the open with a panoramic view of Brighton and the sea ahead of you. Pass through a new wooden swing gate some 2.5 metres to the left of a pair of wooden fieldgates and take the grassy path slightly to your left, steadily downhill, following the fenceline on your left. Ignore all ways off and numerous gates on your left as you descend to the village of Bevenden. Your target is the radio mast on top of the hill opposite.
36. In 700 metres you pass through a wooden fieldgate and continue downhill as the path swings to the left, now an uneven chalky track. In a further 150 metres pass through a metal kissing gate to the right of a metal car blocking barrier (or climb over the low barrier) to exit onto a road in the village of **Bevenden**. Here *turn right* down the road and in 100 metres cross a pedestrian crossing and *head up* Auckland Drive. On your left is a recreation ground with school beyond.
37. In 60 metres, with a School Passing sign on your right, *turn right* on a footpath, up a flight of steps. Head up this path, go up more steps and cross a concrete road to go up Fitch Drive ahead of you. In 50 metres you come to Dartmouth Crescent on your left-hand side. Go along this road and in 80 metres, at its cul-de-sac end, *turn right* up a footpath, due south, rising steeply uphill towards the radio mast and alongside rather scruffy horse paddocks.
38. In 475 metres at the top of this path, cross the fork in the main road and then the road itself to enter onto **Kemp Town Racecourse**. Cross the racecourse through gates in fences either side and then cross over a cinder track to enter open access land, to the side of the racecourse. *Turn right* and follow the contours round, on a grassy way, in a south-westerly direction, keeping the racecourse on your right-hand side. You are now aiming for the big TV mast in the distance.
39. In 850 metres cross a road to walk over rough ground towards the TV mast. Some 20 metres before you reach the mast, and with barriers marking the end of the racetrack on your right **[!]** *turn right* over rough ground and in 30 metres keep ahead. In 15 metres *turn left* through a wooden swing gate and take the path, downhill, passing the end of houses to your right. In a further 60 metres go down earth steps to a cross paths, with a cul-de-sac end to a road over to your right. *Turn left* at this path junction, and proceed down this woodland path, ignoring all ways off.
40. In 500 metres the path comes down to join a tarmac drive, with a fenced and gated entrance to a school on your right-hand side. Continue down this drive and in 90 metres go past a gate to come out onto Walpole Road. *Turn right* and in 60 metres the road swings left to pass the gated entrance to **Brighton College** playing fields on your right.
41. Head down to cross over Eastern Road, and head down College Place. At the junction with St Georges Road *turn right* along Bristol Road and come to Upper St James's Street. Proceed along this street which turns into St James's Street, with its multitude of cafes, bars and antique and curiosity shops. For your sea front fix now turn left down any street to Marine Parade.
42. **For Brighton's Cafes and Brighton Railway Station** Head along Marine Parade. At a main road junction, with the entrance to Brighton Pier on your left, keep ahead, then cross the road and head down one of the minor streets on your right. Soon you are in Brighton's **Lanes**. To get to the railway station you need to head northwards to North Street, where you *turn left*, uphill, until you reach Queen's Road at the Clock Tower. Here *turn right* and walk up Queen's Road all the way until you reach **Brighton Railway Station** directly ahead of you.

Option : The shorter Book 1 'Jack and Jill' start

1. **[1]** Coming off platform 2 at **Hassocks Station**, go down the station approach road. In 35 metres you pass The Hassocks pub on your left and take the tarmac path *to your right*, signposted South Downs, with a brick walk on your left.
2. In 25 metres you come to the B2116 road and *go right* along its pavement towards the railway bridge but before you reach it, in 40 metres, cross over the road and by a bus stop *go left* on a footpath signed South Downs.
3. An alternative, somewhat more straightforward route is to go past this footpath and after 5 metres turn left through brick pillars on an unmarked path that continues with the railway on your right for 250 metres till you rejoin the main route at **[*]**.
4. For the main route, go ahead on the first path, your direction 190°. Ignore ways off and in 150 metres you cross a tarmac road to go on, slightly to the right, following a footpath sign, your direction due south.
5. In 100 metres you come to a T-junction with a three-armed footpath sign where you *go left*, your direction 205° with the railway embankment wall on your right. **[*]**
6. In 10 metres ignore the tarmac path on your left and keep ahead, initially with garden fences on your left and the embankment wall on your right. In 200 metres a pleasant detour (unless muddy underfoot) is to go through a gate to your left into the Woodland Trust's

Butcher's Wood (marked in the OS map) and then to keep on, in the same direction as your previous route. In 250 metres go through a kissing gate to rejoin the previous path. 25 metres after rejoining the route, ignore a squeeze stile and footpath to the left.

7. In 175 metres go over a cross paths and ignore the path on the right which goes over the railway line.
8. **[2]** After 225 metres you leave the wood and can see the Downs ahead with the **Clayton Windmills** to the left. In a further 400 metres you come to the A273 road where *you go left*. (There is an interesting turreted house to your right on the far side of the main road.) In 35 metres cross the B2112 road to Ditchling and go through the wooden kissing gate opposite, heading due south over a sports field towards the **Church of St John the Baptist, Clayton** (worth a visit). Turn left at the hedge and walk past the back of a building on your left for 5 metres to go through a gap in the hedge on your right on to a road, opposite the church.
9. *Go left* on the tarmac road (or if you visit the church come out of the lychgate and *turn right*).
10. In 120 metres, as the road swings left, *turn right* on a signposted bridleway through the entrance to Clayton Court Stables, your direction 185° on a wide track, steadily uphill towards the windmills, with a tree line on both sides.
11. The path becomes steeper and after 150 metres go through a wooden swing gate to come out into the open. Here *turn half-right* and continue on the uphill path, due south. When you reach the top of the ridge continue ahead till you reach the nearest, white **Jill Windmill** Clayton. Its car park is on your right.
12. Go past the wooden kissing gate giving access to the car park and then go through a wooden swing gate onto a signposted fenced-in path along the left-hand side of the windmill gardens, your direction 130°. Veer right with the path beyond the top, black **Jack Windmill** and cross over a farm track to an earth road T-junction by a two-armed sign post. *Turn left*, your direction 115° onto a wide bridleway, **The South Downs Way** .
13. **[3]** In 120 metres *take the left fork*, your direction still 115°. In 15 metres go through a metal fieldgate and head steadily uphill, now on a chalky track.
14. In 650 metres ignore a bridleway to the right, pass metal fieldgates on either side and stay on the South Downs Way, gently uphill. You now have extensive views both to the left and towards the sea over on your right. In 350 metres ignore the bridleway to your right (to Chattri Memorial) and keep ahead as the South Downs Way levels out. In 40 metres ignore a wooden swing gate to your left and in 20 metres you pass a four-armed sign in a field on the left, pointing onwards to Eastbourne; this is the **Keymer Post** which also points left to Keymer village. In 15 metres go through a wooden swing gate and continue straight on, as the ridge path now starts to go downhill, on a broad grassy way.
15. In 250 metres go through another wooden swing gate to the left of a metal fieldgate and in 10 metres you pass a **dew pond** on your left (Burnt House Pond). You now have gorse bushes over to your left.
16. In 250 metres you pass another dew pond, this time on your right. **[4]**.
17. In 325 metres go through a wooden swing gate to enter **Ditchling Beacon Nature Reserve** to continue ahead, now with a fenceline on your right as the ridge narrows. In a further 300 metres you pass a tall direction post on your right with markings back to Keymer Post. Here *turn right* through the wooden swing gate marked Access Land **to join the Main Walk Directions** .

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