

Coastal Walk – 4½ miles

Birlinging Gap & Crowlink, Surrey

A lovely walk in the high summer on part of the Seven Sisters with plenty of wild flowers to see, full of historical interest and beautiful views along the Sussex coast. The last part of the walk is the smugglers route from East Dean to Birling Gap. The chalk cliffs are white due to the constant erosion of the sea

Getting there:

Road: From the A259 take the small road to Birling Gap **Foot:** part of South Downs Way **Bus:** (B=bus stop) Bus to Crowlink car park daily tel 01272 474747 For public transport information visit www.traveline.org.uk

Maps and start grid ref: OS Landranger 199 g.r. TV555959, Explorer 123

Facilities: car park, toilets, café and restaurant at Birling Gap

Terrain: Steep in places, with stiles to negotiate, walking boots advised

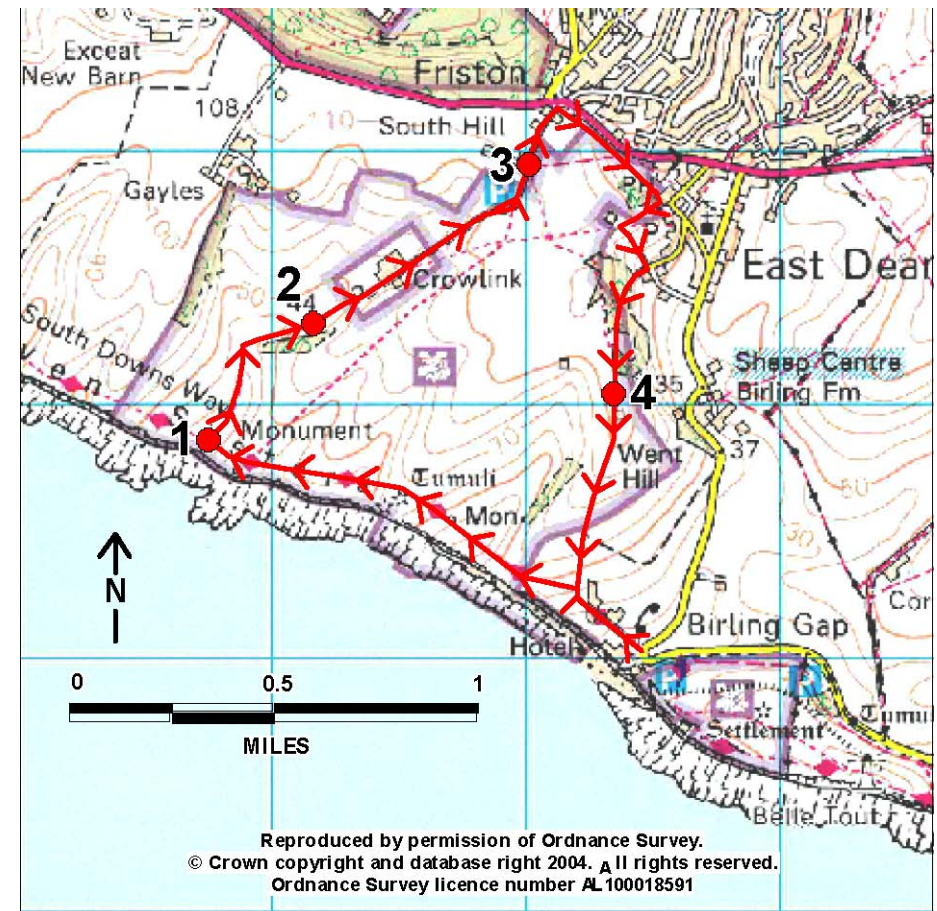
Distance: 4.5 miles **Accessibility:** Height gain of 60m over the walk. If on the beach beware the tide comes in very quickly. It is very easy **and dangerous to be cut off** at the base of the cliffs. Don't swim at low tides and do not use inflatables. Cliffs are dangerous-children should be supervised

Points of interest: Follow the track up the hill behind the toilets then left at yellow way-marking sign. Go through the gate and then up onto the Down. Continue on this path looking out for the following features:

1. Cross three 'sisters' of the Seven Sisters on a lovely herb rich turf. In summer skylarks regularly rise from the grassland singing and wheatears are seen in the coombes. After descending the third hill before turning inland notice the markings on the hill ahead- these are the foundations of cottages which became unsafe due to cliff erosion which erodes at approximately 1m/year
2. During World War Two fighter planes regularly landed at a nearby airfield shattering the peace, now dragonflies and damselflies stage spectacular air shows at the dewpond in the summer which is really good at attracting interesting wildlife
3. At church simple graves of people washed ashore, some dating back to 1830
4. Hobbes Eares fairly close to the church yard is now a hay meadow but was once arable land - meadow is full of pyramidal and common spotted orchids and knapweed in late summer. On Went Hill early spider orchids are found in the spring. You need to walk up after turning right at the bottom of Hobbes Eares. It is important to climb over the wall, via the steps so you head back towards Birling Gap

Property contact details: 01323 871318, Countryside Office South Downs

National Trust properties nearby: Alfriston Clergy House. Monks House, Batemans, Sheffield Park



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