



"Our earliest ANCESTORS"

"The Long Man of Wilmington looks naked towards the sbires" wrote Kipling of the enigmatic hill figure on the Downs. In the area around the Long Man are many monuments to our early, pre-Roman ancestors - their homes, fields, temples and burial places. Many of these can be seen (if not always understood) from this walk of outstanding views.

Length 11½ Miles = 18½ Kilometres

Approximately 8 hours - Grade 4

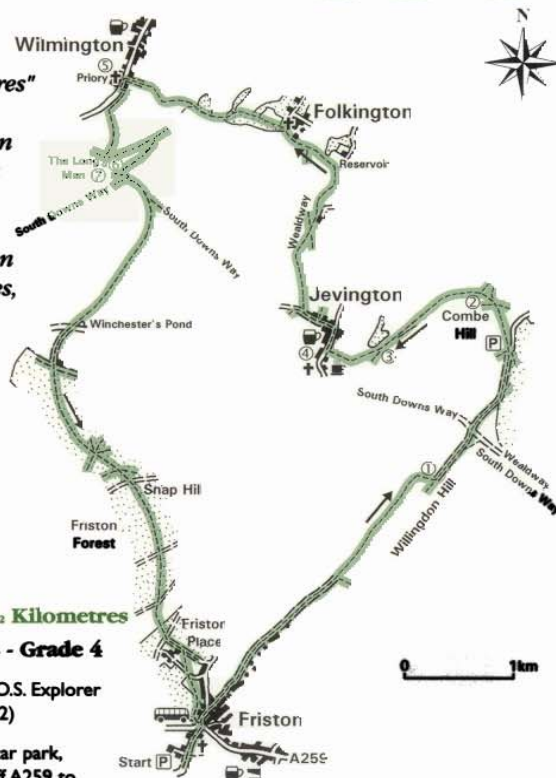
START - Friston Church (O.S. Explorer 16 - NGR 552982)

ACCESS - Car - Crowlink car park, Friston (access off A259 to side of church)
Bus - 21, 710, 712, 713 and 714 (alight at Friston)
Train - Nil

PUBLIC TOILETS - Wilmington car park

REFRESHMENTS - Pubs at East Dean (½ mile off route), Jevington, Wilmington
Tea Rooms at Jevington, Wilmington
Restaurants at East Dean (½ mile off route), Jevington
Village shop at East Dean (½ mile off route)

CAUTION - This walk includes two crossings of the A259 road.



11½
Miles



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- How did our ancestors obtain drinking water on the waterless Downs? The concreted hollow provides the answer. This was once a "dew pond" - its bottom lined with successive layers of clay and straw endlessly trampled to form a waterproof lining. This then trapped rainwater and dew (by condensation) to form a pond. The concrete liner is a relatively modern addition.
- Combe Hill illustrates a site of continuing importance to our ancestors over thousands of years. Around the top of the hill two rings of interrupted banks and ditches form a "causewayed camp" now some 5,000 years old. Here Neolithic men laboured with animal bones and wood spades to make what? Temple, arena, market place - no-one now knows. Guarding each end of the approach to the hilltop are the spirits of the later Bronze Age people buried clutching their possessions and facing the sunrise under what is now a grassy mound but which was once a gleaming white, chalk barrow.
- Ploughing in Iron Age Sussex was a tiring activity. The primitive ploughs had to be used twice - up and down then across and back over the same piece of land to break the soil. The resulting square fields gradually became terraced into the hillside separated by banks of soil called lynchetts. On the steeper parts of the Downs these have been preserved by the absence of later ploughing, leaving today's footpath to step down through the Iron Age fields.
- In Jevington church a stone tablet shows Christ thrusting a sword into a beast of evil. This very rare Saxon mural, made to teach the illiterate the bible stories, was
- rediscovered in the church floor in 1875 and is now mounted on the wall. Also wall mounted, a "blue plaque" on the nearby Hungry Monk restaurant commemorates the inspired mixing of toffee and bananas to create banoffi pie.
- Wilmington Priory was founded by French monks in the 12th century. Their barn was so large that its remains now accommodate the car park. The Priory church, with its famous butterfly and its new millennium stained glass windows, remains to serve today's parish. The huge yew tree in the churchyard, propped to stop it collapsing, is some 23 feet around the bottom and some thousands of years old.
- The enigmatic Long Man of Wilmington attracts many theories but provides little evidence to back them up. Now outlined in stone, he was formerly carved in the chalk of the hill. His first definite mention was as late as 1710, but the monument was old then. A picture drawn by bored monks, commemoration of the Saxon conquest of Pevensey, a Roman soldier or a Neolithic god opening the gates of dawn. The "Long Man asking the traveller - like the Sphinx - to solve the dark mystery of its own origins".
- At the top of Windover Hill the footpath wends through the filled in pits and waste heaps of the oldest industry in Sussex. Here the Neolithic people dug deep shafts with bone picks and wood shovels to prise from the earth the precious flint they needed for their tools. Later Neolithic and Bronze Age rulers were buried in the long and round barrows on the hilltop, so their spirits could enjoy the fine view still available today.

11½
Miles