



**Birling Gap to Beachy Head**

A shorter, easier exploration of this iconic coastline, taking in two historic lighthouses and an optional descent to the stony beach below the cliffs

Essential Facts	
▪ Route distance:	6.4 km (4.0 miles)
▪ Approximate time:	2 hours
▪ Approx. total ascent:	180 metres
▪ Start point Grid Ref:	TV 554 960
▪ GPS Ref:	TV 55427 96020
▪ Recommended O.S. Map:	Explorer 123
▪ Toughness Rating	Sussex 1

Please see the notes on Toughness Ratings at the end of this report

**Up For A  
CHALLENGE ?**

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- An Individual Walk
- A Team Effort

Full Info from the Great Walks web site

## THE ROUTE

This cliff-top walk starts from the public car park at Birling Gap, west of Beachy Head. Before or after the walk you could descend the steps down to the stony beach below the cliffs. From here you get stupendous views of the Seven Sisters to the West, and the towering white cliffs to the east.

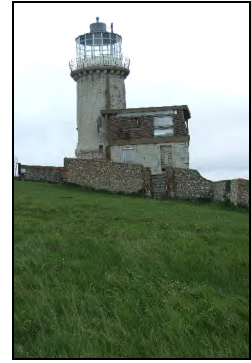
From the car park, **S**, seek the red telephone box at the end of the row of Coastguard Cottages. From here the signed footpath leads you up the hill, with the cliff edge over to your right. Throughout this walk take great care not to go too close to the edges, which are crumbly and eroding fast. Huge chunks frequently and unexpectedly fall to the sea below!

Continuing steadily upwards you'll soon sight the Belle Tout Lighthouse above you. Pass the lighthouse on the landward side, **A**. Then go towards the sea, but pick up a grassy path by the surfaced track leading down the hill. From here you will see the outline of Beachy Head itself, over to the east, with the distinctive lighthouse sitting below the headland.

Soon you reach a gateway, **C**, by a small car park on your left. Carry on ahead, passing the car park and then beginning your ascent to Beachy Head. From the summit at **D**, there are great views out over the English Channel. You'll also see Eastbourne to the east.

From the summit you could continue around the headland, maybe calling in at either the Beachy Head Countryside Centre or the Beachy Head Inn, both of which sit by the road over to your left. But our defined walk route descends from Beachy Head by the same path you arrived on, back to the roadside car park.

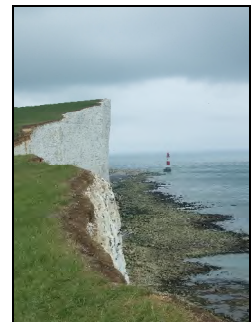
Returning to the gateway at **C** you could climb again to the Belle Tout Lighthouse and then back to the start. However, you may wish to take the gentler way home, bearing right from **C**, and following the grassy path parallel to the road. This path winds round the promontory upon which Belle Tout Light sits, and arrives back at Birling Gap, **S**.



**Belle Tout Lighthouse**



**The Seven Sisters**



**Beachy Head**

## Refreshment

Birling Gap Hotel  
Hotel and Bar  
Birling Gap  
Tel: 01323 423197  
Restaurant, bar, gardens

The Beachy Head Inn  
Public House  
Beachy Head  
Tel: 01323 728060  
Popular pub with  
snacks and meals



The Birling Gap Hotel

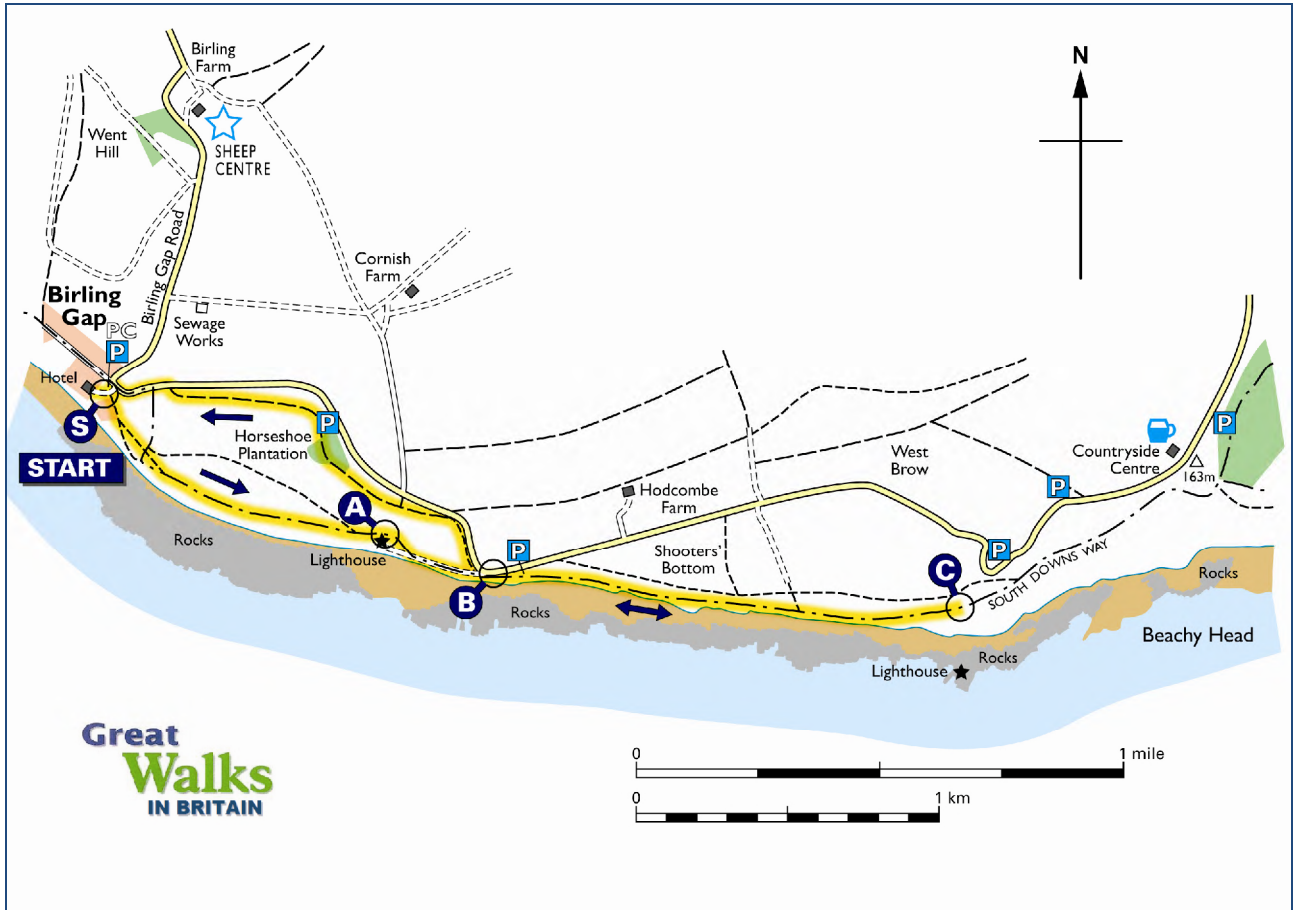
## LOCAL INFO

The high white cliffs of Beachy Head and the neighbouring Seven Sisters represent one of the most iconic section of coastline to be found anywhere in the British Isles.

So impressed upon our national consciousness are these cliffs that they are often mistaken for, or portrayed as, the 'White Cliffs of Dover'. Wishing no offence to our Kentish friends. Let's face it, the cliffs above Dover are rather more grey than white.

### BIRLING GAP TO BEACHY HEAD G.P.S. WAYPOINTS

WAYPOINT NAME	MAP REF	CO-ORDINATES			ELEVATION: Metres
BIR S	S	TV	55427	96020	20
BIR A	A	TV	56375	95566	80
BIR B	B	TV	56714	95420	42
BIR C	C	TV	58265	95315	160



**Great  
Walks  
IN BRITAIN**

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MAP LEGEND					
	Great Walks route		Church with tower		Spot height - metres
	Motorway		Church with spire		Information centre
	Main road		Other place of worship		Parking
	Secondary road		Cathedral / Abbey		Public convenience
	Minor road		Building		Public house
	Other road		Built up area		Picnic site
	Track		Woodland		Camp site
	Footpath		Sand, shingle or mud		Major tourist feature
	Bridleway		Water feature		Other tourist feature
	National trail				
	Railway				

## Safety First

**Safety should always** be your first priority in planning and undertaking a walk, whether on your own or leading a group. Please read these Safety First and Walking Our Routes notes.

**Lead a group** of other walkers only if you have leadership and navigational experience adequate for the 'worst case' conditions which may be encountered on the particular walk, bearing in mind the terrain, possible weather and navigational demands.

**Weigh up the capabilities** of your party, in terms of fitness and walking speed. Adjust your time expectations accordingly.

**Ensure** all your party are adequately clothed for the weather and conditions. Footwear is particularly important. Clothing must protect against cold, wet or strong sun according to the time of year.

**Emergencies** are quite rare, but it is essential to think ahead about what to do if someone in your party sustains an injury. Will you have a First Aid kit? Is there a qualified First Aider in the party? How could help be summoned in a serious eventuality?

**Refreshment**, particularly water, can be vital. Dehydration in hot summer conditions can be rapid, and frequent intake of fluids is essential.

**On tougher walks** it is a good idea to tell someone where you are planning to go – and when you expect to be back. Remember - mobile phones often lose reception in mountainous or isolated areas.

**All our walks use legitimate routes:** Public Rights of Way, Public Footpaths, Bridleways, Permissive Paths, Access Land, Byways and Roads.

**Road** walking calls for particular care. When there is no defined footpath or verge wide enough for safe walking it is usually best to walk on the right – facing oncoming traffic. An exception may be a tight bend, where walkers would be more visible on the left.

**Occasionally** you may find a public footpath blocked or unuseable. It is perfectly in order to take the shortest available diversion without damaging crops, perhaps around a field margin.

**It is courteous** to close gates after passing through, sometimes even if the gate was open when you arrived – particularly if it is obvious livestock may escape.

**Mutual respect** for farm animals is to be encouraged! Don't frighten or annoy them, but equally don't put your party members in danger or discomfort. You certainly wouldn't be the first walkers to go round the outside of a field of frisky bullocks.

**Dogs** should always be kept on a lead anywhere near farm animals, and under close supervision elsewhere in the countryside.

## Walking Our Routes

**Our walks** are designed to be negotiated using the route directions in conjunction with the map section provided. We suggest walkers also take the Ordnance Survey Explorer or Outdoor Leisure map recommended for each walk.

**On mountain, moorland and open heathland** walks it is **ESSENTIAL** to have navigational expertise and tools, including the recommended Ordnance Survey map(s).

**Take care** to observe any cautions in the route description; exposed paths, areas liable to flooding etc.

**Consider conditions before setting off.** Will heavy rain have made a water meadow impassable? Will frost or snow make a path slippery?

**When navigating the route** look for clues to confirm you are in the right place. Are map features where you would expect on the ground? Are features mentioned in the text where expected? If you suspect you may have taken a wrong turn, take action sooner rather than later. It is better to re-trace to a known point rather than carry on regardless with the possibility of becoming increasingly confused.

**All our routes are carefully checked** before publication, but features can change on the ground – sometimes surprisingly quickly. Footpaths may be re-routed, buildings can appear or change significantly and these days pub names seem to change frequently.

**The approximate time** given for each walk is based on an average walking speed of 2.5 miles per hour (4 km/hour), plus an allowance for ascent, descent and any difficult terrain.

**Total ascent** is the approximate total ascent over the whole walk.

**GPS users** can enter in the waypoints provided in each of our walk reports. It is important to read our guide **Introducing GPS for Walkers**, available as a PDF file from the Great Walks in Britain web site.

**Remember that GPS** is a great navigational tool, but only one of those available to the navigator. Never dispense with conventional map and compass – and the training and skills to use them, especially on mountain, moorland or open heathland walks.

### TOUGHNESS RATINGS

All our **Sussex & The South Downs** routes can be undertaken by reasonably fit walkers able to utilise our map segments, together with the route guidance notes. Always consider recent and forecast weather.

Each walk has been allocated a **Toughness Rating**:

1. Easier walks with modest ascent and generally on well defined paths. There may be stiles or narrow gateways to negotiate.
2. Routes which are more demanding. They may include more ascent and possibly paths which are looser or more difficult underfoot.
3. More strenuous walks with some steep sections, higher paths or places which may be wet and boggy.
4. The most demanding walks in this edition. There may be prolonged steep ascents. Conditions may be challenging underfoot.

Toughness Ratings are allocated in the context of the terrain in the edition area. For example a walk rated as demanding in Cambridgeshire may be equivalent to an easier or moderate route in the Brecon Beacons.