



Firle Beacon from Alfriston

**Explore two delightful ancient Sussex villages on this moderate walk.
Take in fine views of the fabulous surrounding countryside**

Essential Facts

- Route distance: 14.5 km (9.1 miles)
- Approximate time: 4 hours
- Approx. total ascent: 220 metres
- Start point Grid Ref: TQ 517 038
- GPS Ref: TQ 51721 03818
- Recommended O.S. Map: TQ 51721 03818
- Toughness Rating: Sussex 2

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

**Up For A
CHALLENGE ?**

**Take a Great Walk and HELP
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An Individual Walk
A Team Effort**

Full Info from the Great Walks web site

THE ROUTE

This walk sets out from the quintessential Sussex village of Alfriston, off the A27 west of Eastbourne. On reaching Alfriston use the car park as you enter the village from the A27.

From the car park turn left and head into the village centre. On reaching Waterloo Square, with the market cross, turn right and the Ye Olde Smugglers Inn (it also has a sign 'Market Inn') will be facing you. Continue on to the pub and turn right into West Street. Now follow this quiet lane all the way up, until you reach a waymark for Firle (4 miles) at **S**.

Keep ahead on a wide gravel track (Comp Lane), enjoying fine views of rolling countryside. Please note this right of way has access for motorised vehicles. On reaching a road with Bo-Peep Farmhouse on your left continue on to a waymark on the left hand side at **A**. This point is the beginning of the optional shorter route.

For the shorter route now follow the sign uphill through woods to a gate. Go through and take the sunken, orchid lined (in early summer) path to a gate and then a waymark at **D**. This now follows the main route.

On the main route, from point **A**, keep ahead and on meeting cottages pass them on the left and continue on to waymark at **B**. Turn right here and follow the track to a gate opposite a lovely cottage. Go through here into the Firle Estate and follow the waymarks to a direction post indicating Firle House or Firle church. Feel free to visit the house but please return to the post and take the direction for the church to a gate. Go through onto a pleasant lane and on reaching the Post Office turn right and keep ahead if you wish to visit the Ram Inn. I can recommend it!

Now return to the Post Office bearing right past the war memorial onto a wide track. Follow a bridleway sign to a waymark at **C**. Turn right here and ascend steadily to a ridge keeping ahead to a gate. You are now on the South Downs Way, and will soon reach the summit at Firle Beacon - affording 360 degree views of superb Sussex countryside.

Continue on to the waymark at **D** and on through a car park. On reaching a path fork, keep ahead to a waymark for the South Downs Way and continue on to a gate at **E**. Go through and follow the fence to a metal gate and waymark. Cross here and continue on down to a road (Kings Ride) which leads you back into Alfriston High Street and thence to the car park.



Firle Place



Looking From The Downs

Refreshment

George Inn Inn High Street, Alfriston Tel: 01323 870319 Food served, rooms available	Chestnuts Tea Rooms Tea Rooms 8 High Street, Alfriston Tel: 01323 870298 Varied menu
Ye Olde Smugglers Inn Public House Waterloo Square, Alfriston Tel: 01323 870241 Food served, outside seating	The Star Inn Public House High Street, Alfriston Tel: 01323 870495 Food served, rooms available
Badgers Tea House Tea Rooms 13 North Street, Alfriston Tel: 01323 871336 Varied menu	The Ram Inn Public House The Street, Firle Tel: 01273 858222 Food served, outside seating

LOCAL INFO

Gangs, figureheads and heavy lorries

A popular market town, **Alfriston** boasts the only market cross left in East Sussex. Having been the target for lorries more than once, it still proudly stands in the small square. Steeped in history, the Inns of the village tell many a tale of monks and violent gangs, notably the Alfriston gang led by Stanton Collins who used the Market Cross Inn as their base. A few metres away is the delightful Star Inn guarded by a large red lion, originally a figurehead from a 17th century Dutch ship.

Dominating the village green is the 14th century church grandly known as the Cathedral of the Downs due to its imposing size. Close-by is the Clergy House. The first property purchased by the National Trust, it was built in 1350 as a residence for priests.

Tourists flock to Alfriston during the day and it is a great place to explore. But if you wait until evening the mood changes and the village travels back again in time.

Firle is a small and very pretty 'English' village, home to many carnivals, fairs and horse shows. Village life centres around the Ram Inn which began as a Court House and coaching inn. In fact you can still see the Court Room and the cells now hold beer and wine instead of criminals.

Taking centre stage at Firle is the imposing Firle Place. For over half a millennium it has been the home of the Gage family and is open at various times of the year for visitors. Over looking Firle Estate, it is a lovely spot for lunch and a 'nose' around.

No village would be complete without its church and Firle is no exception. St Peters has a beautiful stained glass window by John Piper showing Blake's Tree of Life. A beautiful modern work of art and worth the effort to see.



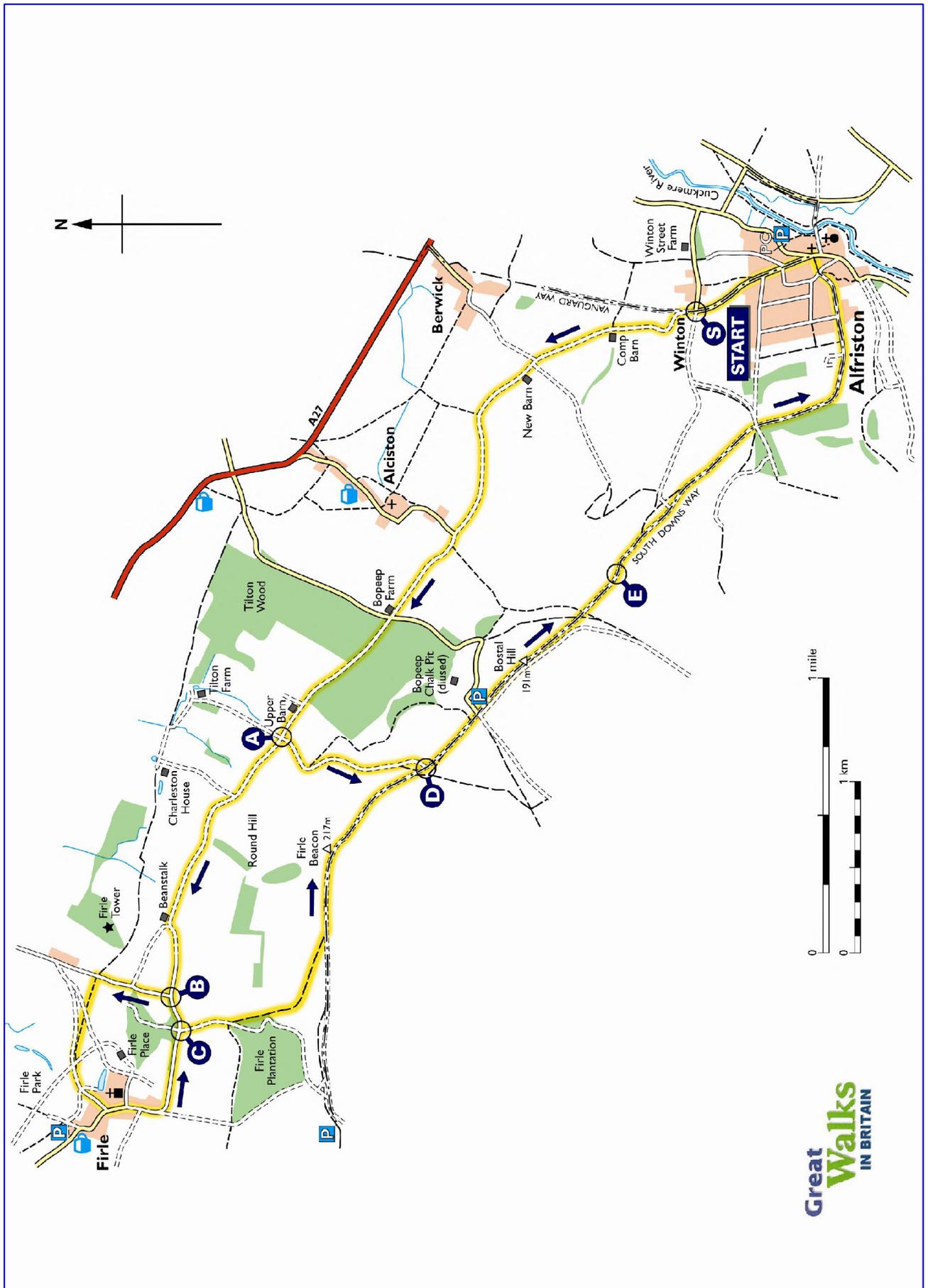
Ye Olde Smugglers Inn

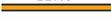
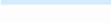


The George Inn

**FIRLE BEACON FROM ALFRISTON
G.P.S. WAYPOINTS**

WAYPOINT NAME	MAP REF		CO-ORDINATES		ELEVATION: Metres
AFC S	S	TQ	51721	03818	39
AFC A	A	TQ	49198	06197	60
AFC B	B	TQ	47698	06852	34
AFC C	C	TQ	47508	06786	54
AFC D	D	TQ	49061	05413	199
AFC E	E	TQ	50160	04272	170



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