



Summer Ramble 2024: South Downs (15 – 20 September)

The Rambling Club Summer Trip for 2024 will be to the South Downs National Park, staying in YHA South Downs in Southeast. The trip will be 5 nights and will contain five or six walks detailed below, largely based around the South Downs Way. The exact order of the walks in the trip will be left flexible.

The trip will take place from Sunday 15th September to Friday 20th September. The accommodation costs will be between £65 - £85 depending on the exact numbers. Transport is not included in this price.

Spaces will be limited to 10 spaces. The form will stay open at least until 23:59 on Sunday 21st July and may stay open beyond this if spaces remain. If oversubscribed places will first go to those who filled out the pre-sign-up form then be allocated by lot. The sign-up form can be found here:

<https://forms.gle/vFMUK3aWE5fNE1zr5>

Seven Sisters & Beachy Head: Seaford to Eastbourne

Distance: 21km / 13 miles

Elevation Gain: 589m

The route begins from Seaford Station. We will set off southeast along the coast, climbing Seaford Head & South Hill (~80m) for a view of the town, chalk cliffs and Cuckmere Haven. Heading around the mouth of the Cuckmere River, we'll enter the Seven Sisters country park where we follow the South Downs Way which we'll follow all the way to Eastbourne. We'll head across the Seven Sisters cliffs to reach Birling Gap before climbing Beachy Head up to 161m, the highest point in the walk. For a while we'll walk along the top of the cliffs before descending into Eastbourne where we'll catch the train back.

Devil's Dyke and Fulking Hill: Hassocks to Portislade

Distance: 16km / 10 miles

Elevation Gain: 403m

The walk begins in Hassocks, following the railway line to Clayton before passing over the eastern edge of Walconbury Hill and descending into Pyecombe. We then join the South Downs Way and climb West Hill (211m). Descending again we reach Saddlecomb and Devil's Dyke. We leave the South Downs Way to head up through the valley itself to the top and then head across to the lesser summit of Fulking Hill (206m), leaving the South Downs Way and descending into Portislade, Brighton where we'll catch the train back.

Ditchling Beacon: Lewes to Falmer

Distance: 16km / 10 miles

Elevation Gain: 336m

We begin in Lewes, climbing up Mount Harry onto the main ridge of this area. We pass over several peaks along the ridge, the highest of which being Ditchling Beacon, the highest point in East Sussex (and third highest in the South Downs) at 248m. We leave the South Downs way to descend via Highpark Wood and Millbank Wood into Falmer on the edge of Brighton.

The Wilmington Man & Friston Forest: Eastbourne to Polegate

Distance: 20km / 12 miles

Elevation Gain: 461m

We begin in Eastbourne, heading west to join the South Downs northwards over the Eastbourne Downs, the highest of which reaches 201m. We pass through Jevington before entering Friston Forest and Lullington Heath nature reserve. We'll then climb Windover Hill (188m) before descending and walking below the northside of Wilmington Hill for a good view of the Wilmington Man. We continue to descend through Folkington before finally reaching our destination of Polegate where we'll catch the train back.

Over the Hills & Along the Valley: Southease to Bishopstone

Distance: 21km / 13 miles

Elevation Gain: 427m

For this walk we simply begin at the hostel, joining the South Downs immediately and heading eastwards over the ridge, including Itford Hill (164m), Firle Beacon (217m, the highest) and others. We descend into Alfriston, leaving the South Downs Way to head along the Cuckmere River a short distance before climbing again over some small hills along The Comp towards Bishopstone where we'll catch the train back.

The top of the South Downs: Haslemere & Blackdown Circular (optional)

Distance: 13km / 8 miles

Elevation Gain: 302m

We begin at Haslemere station, heading out of town along the Serpent Trail towards Barfold Wood where we climb up towards the top of the hills. We walk along high ground across to the Temple of the Winds before heading across the Western Side of the Hill to the summit of Blackdown (280m) and the western viewpoint. We continue to the Brian Checkley memorial viewpoint then descend gently through Chase Wood, across the River Wey and head back into Haslemere.