



# WALK 3 THE TRUNDLE

Distance: 7 km

Rating: CHALLENGING



This route offers diverse scenery and habitats, rising from the river valley to the Trundle, with magnificent views across the West Sussex countryside. The descent via Chalkpit Lane is rich with points of historical interest.

## HISTORY

- A** **Chalkpit Lane** was once the main route to London from Chichester via Midhurst. The ancient road was used by William Blake's coach in 1800 when he first came to this area.
- B** The original "**Rubbin' House**" was the place where coach horses were rubbed down after their steep climb up Chalkpit Lane. It burnt down in 1992, but the current house, built in 1994, is sympathetic to the original. It is said that the local gibbet was nearby at **Seven Points**.
- C** At the summit of the Trundle is a **Neolithic causewayed enclosure** and **Iron Age fort**. Built between about 4,400 BC and 4,000 BC, the Neolithic enclosure was the first constructed in the South Downs, representing the earliest signs of a settled farming community. The outer bank on the Trundle is all that remains of the Iron Age fort, begun in around 700 BC.
- D** 'Trundle' is a Saxon word meaning circle. **The Trundle** is also known as **St Roche's Hill** after the 14th century French saint, in whose name a chapel was built near the summit. This was already in a state of ruin by 1570. A **windmill** built here in about 1660 burned down in 1773. The wooden WWII **radar masts** that served RAF Tangmere were removed in 1955 and today have been replaced by two **radio masts**.
- E** To the west of Chalkpit Lane are the **Lavant caves**. They are now filled, but locals explored them into the 1960s. They were "excavated" in 1893 by Charles Dawson, who went on to create the notorious Piltdown Man hoax. His finds have now been discredited.
- F** In **Bexley Bushes** to the east of Chalkpit Lane are significant archaeological remains, including a **Neolithic flint mine** and **medieval banks and ditches**.
- G** Recent excavations south west of Bexley Bushes revealed evidence of **Iron Age round houses** and a **woodhenge** to the west of Chalkpit Lane.
- H** From at least the 1760s until the First World War there was a commercial **chalk pit** and **limekilns** here. The largest pit is now used as a rifle range.

## NATURE

This walk passes through a very diverse range of habitats, from woodland, meadows, to chalk grassland, and arable margins, offering sightings of **deer** as well as rare downland flora and fauna.



Roe deer

The summit of the Trundle is home to many small but beautiful flowers that thrive on the well-drained chalky soil. These include **field scabious**, **round-headed rampion**, and the tiny **squinancywort**.



Field scabious

A range of orchids can be found, including **common spotted**, **pyramidal** and **chalk fragrant varieties**.



Round-headed rampion

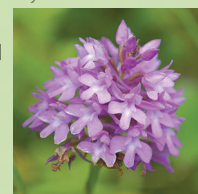
In summer the sky is filled with the chattering song of **skylarks**, while small flocks of **yellowhammers** swoop from hedge to hedge. **Kestrels** hover on the stiff breeze above the slopes of the hill, while **buzzards** and **red kites** soar on the thermals that rise from the summit.



Skylark

At ground level, **common blue** and **dark green fritillary** butterflies gorge themselves on the abundant **scabious** and wild herbs such as **basil**, **thyme** and **marjoram**.

There are many interesting trees to be seen. Nearby Seven Points are some **juniper trees**, now protected by a conservation project; while in autumn the descent down Chalkpit lane is brightened by the red berries of **whitebeam**, **wayfaring tree**, and **spindle** (poisonous!).



Pyramidal orchid

In the shady sections of the lower path, the banks sprout impressive **nettle-leaved bellflowers** as well as reclusive woodland plants such as **sanicle**.



Common blue

KESTREL

BUZZARD

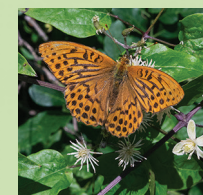
RED KITE



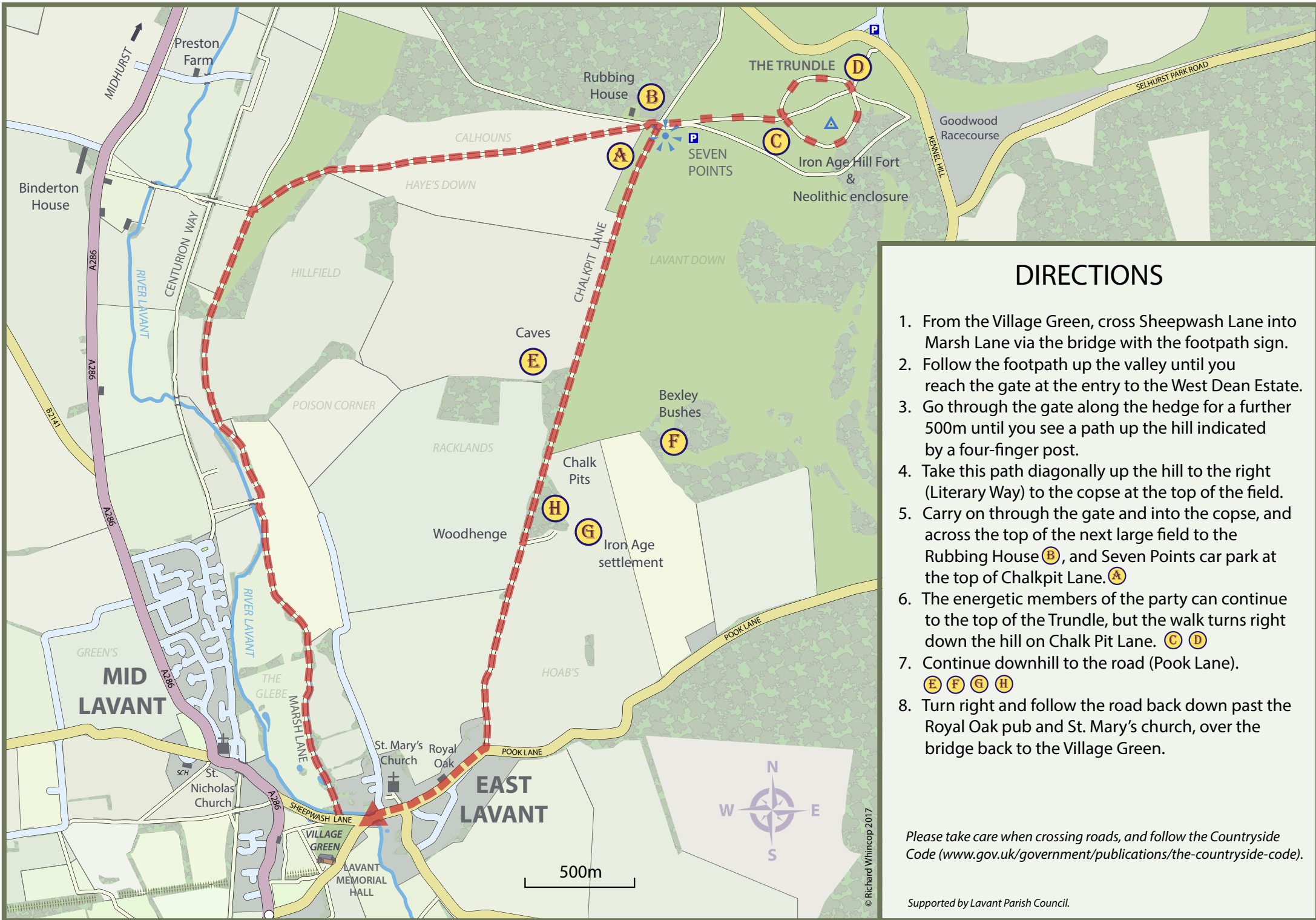
Nettle-leaved bellflower



Wayfaring tree



Dark green fritillary



## DIRECTIONS

1. From the Village Green, cross Sheepwash Lane into Marsh Lane via the bridge with the footpath sign.
2. Follow the footpath up the valley until you reach the gate at the entry to the West Dean Estate.
3. Go through the gate along the hedge for a further 500m until you see a path up the hill indicated by a four-finger post.
4. Take this path diagonally up the hill to the right (Literary Way) to the copse at the top of the field.
5. Carry on through the gate and into the copse, and across the top of the next large field to the Rubbing House (B), and Seven Points car park at the top of Chalkpit Lane. (A)
6. The energetic members of the party can continue to the top of the Trundle, but the walk turns right down the hill on Chalk Pit Lane. (C) (D)
7. Continue downhill to the road (Pook Lane). (E) (F) (G) (H)
8. Turn right and follow the road back down past the Royal Oak pub and St. Mary's church, over the bridge back to the Village Green.

Please take care when crossing roads, and follow the Countryside Code ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-countryside-code)).

Supported by Lavant Parish Council.

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