

JACK AND JILL WINDMILLS WALK

I thought that it was time to offer a downland walk, especially as the paths in the weald are currently very muddy following several weeks of inclement weather. This walk is from the Jack and Jill Windmills and heads out along the South Downs Way towards Ditchling Beacon, before heading south gently downhill into North Bottom. The return is via Lower Standean Farm before a gentle ascent to rejoin the South Downs Way. *Jack and Jill Windmills must be the most well know landmark on the entire South Downs. Jill nearest to the car park is a post mill and was moved to it's present site from Brighton in 1852 by a team of oxen! It is open to the public on most Sundays and Bank Holidays during the summer. Jack is a tower mill, and was built in 1866 and replaces an earlier post mill. It is privately owned and urgently in need of repair. It is hoped that this can be managed in conjunction with the current owner and the South Downs National Park Authority.*

From the car park, return to Mill Lane and turn left to follow a flint track uphill. At a fork in about 200 yards, keep left and follow the South Downs Way eastwards along the ridge for approximately 2 miles almost to Ditchling Beacon. *Ditchling Beacon is the third highest point on the South Downs at 814 feet. On a clear day the ridge of the North Downs can be seen as well as Ashdown Forest. Immediately to the south are the environs of Brighton and on a sunny day, the sparkling sea beckons!* Shortly before reaching the Beacon itself, turn right through a gate signed Heathy Brow on a bridleway. The bridleway descends gradually, then more steeply (ignore a bridleway coming in from your left) to a gate at a junction of paths. Take the right hand path, and follow this path as it curves down through North Bottom. Go through a way-marked gate, and continue beside the fence to walk down through this dry valley. *Dry valleys are found in chalk and limestone country and as the rock is porous, water seeps through it instead of forming streams.* Eventually, side-step to your right over a stile, maintain direction, and at a path junction, take the right fork. The track climbs gently to begin with then climbs more steeply and bears to the right, to go through a pair of gates before descending to the farm track at Lower Standean. Turn right onto this track, and follow it uphill past a barn to a pair of gates. Go through the gates, and turn left and then right along a field edge to a junction of paths.

At the path junction, turn right and follow an obvious path across a large field, and at the next gate continue ahead across open downland to join the South Downs Way a little to the west of Keymer Post. *There are superb views to your left of Wolstonbury and Newtimber Hills with the village of Pyecombe nestling snugly between them.* To return to the start of the walk, turn left along the ridge for a little under a mile to the start of the walk.

Distance: 5.5 miles **Stiles:** 1 **Map:** Ordnance Survey Explorer Map No.122

Parking: Free car park at the top of Mill Lane (can be busy at weekends)

Refreshments: The Jack and Jill Pub at Clayton or the Plough at Pyecombe

Public Transport: Sussex Bus routes 40/40X and Metro Bus routes 270/271 & 273 stop at the bottom of Mill Lane at it's junction with the A273 on the brow of Clayton Hill.

