

# SLINDON ESTATE AND STANE STREET, WEST SUSSEX, SOUTH DOWNS



**Challenging Terrain**

**8 miles  
Circular  
3.5 to 4 hours**

221214



## Access Notes



- 1. The walk follows mostly field and woodland paths, many of which can get very muddy after periods of rain so good waterproof boots are recommended.*
- 2. There are several long and steady climbs and descents throughout. Some of the fields you pass through are likely to be holding sheep so take care with dogs.*
- 3. There are several gates on route plus one stile (which has an adjacent dog gate).*
- 4. Some of the quiet village streets have no pavements so take care of any traffic at these points.*

**The Forge, the community cafe and shop, provides the perfect place for refreshments half way round the route.**

Slindon Forge, Reynolds Lane, BN18 0QT  
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[www.slindonforge.co.uk](http://www.slindonforge.co.uk)

An 8 mile circular walk through the Slindon Estate within the South Downs in West Sussex. The route begins along a stretch of the old Roman Road, Stane Street, plunging you into 2000 years of history as you journey along one of the best remaining examples of a Roman Road in the country. The remainder of the walk loops through the woodland and downland of the estate, taking in the charming village of Slindon along the way.

## Getting there

The walk starts and finishes at the free National Trust Bignor Hill car park. Heading south along the A29, turn left at Bury, signed to the Bignor Roman Villa. Follow the signs to the villa and pass this on the right. The post code for Roman Villa is **RH20 1PH**. Continue beyond the villa (and vineyards) and fork left at the next junction. A few yards later turn left to take the unclassified road (with a thatched barn to the left and Jay's Farm to the right). Follow this narrow road which climbs and winds uphill for about a mile. At the top you will emerge to the National Trust Bignor Hill car park

## Walk Sections

**Go → 1 Start to Shippam's Poste**



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Walk through the length of the car park, away from the entrance lane. Stay on the main wide stone track and pass through the gate to continue on this track, heading for two radio masts on the hill ahead. The path passes through a gap within a grassy bank, immediately afterwards fork left onto the track signed for the South Downs Way, with the grassy bank to the left and the radio masts now across to the right.

Another track merges in from the left, marking the point of a staggered crossroads. Go straight ahead here onto the narrower grass path signed as a footpath to Gumber Bothy. Keep ahead on this path, sitting on top of the grass embankment. You are now following a section of the old Roman Road, Stane Street, which ran from Londinium (London) to Noviomagus (Chichester).

You will reach a stile (with adjacent dog stile) ahead. Take a moment here to enjoy the view ahead, the most famous view of Stane Street. The obvious path runs steadily downhill and on a clear day the views extend out to Chichester Cathedral and the Isle of Wight beyond. Cross the stile (there are likely to be sheep grazing from this point) and follow the path along the top of the raised causeway, known as the agger. The short cropped turf is recommended (by some!) for walking barefoot in the summer months, taking in the 2000 years of history that this path has experienced.

The path descends a little to merge with a path with fenced fields to the left. Continue on this long straight route of Stane Street for some distance, ignoring any paths off to the left. Pass through a gate and keep ahead on the bridleway and you'll see the buildings of Gumber Farm down to the left.

Gumber Farm has a secret history. During World War II it was used as a decoy airfield with lights and wooden aircraft put in place mimicking a military airfield, in an attempt to protect the real airfields at Ford and Tangmere from bombings. Today, Gumber Farm is a working sheep farm as well as having a camping barn.

Pass through the next gate and keep ahead, staying close to the left-hand fence of this sheep field. The path soon runs between old hedgerows and leads you through the next gate into a section of woodland. A few paces later you'll come to a major junction of paths, with a signpost known as Shippam's Poste.

## 1 → 2 Shippam's Poste to Vehicle Track



If you look carefully you'll see that there are actually eight paths coming together at this star junction. Take the second path on the left, signed to Madehurst, marked with a blue arrow as a public bridleway. Soon, if you're on the right path, you'll be walking with the woodland to the right and a line of trees with an

open field beyond to the left.

This entire walking route is within Slindon Estate, the National Trust's largest traditional estate on the South Downs. The 3,500 acre estate has existed since the 7th century and is 4 miles long and 2 miles at its widest. For many years the estate belonged to the Archbishops of Canterbury and included a palace and deer park. It has been managed by the National Trust since 1950.

The path continues between low hedgerows with open fields each side. At the bottom of the slope, keep ahead climbing on the public bridleway, now a track running to the left of an open crop field. Follow this track for some distance and eventually it will lead you down into a dip at a crossroads with a vehicle track.

## 2 → 3 Vehicle Track to Downe's Barn



Go straight ahead onto the public bridleway opposite, a grassy path which leads you into a belt of woodland. At the edge of the woodland you'll emerge to a staggered T-junction with another bridleway, keep straight ahead to join this track. At the next T-junction, turn right on the public bridleway.

At the next junction, where the public bridleway turns left, keep straight ahead on the public footpath. Pass through the staggered barrier and continue on this path with a tall hedgerow to the right and a fence to the left. You will reach a stile and gate ahead, go straight on (there is a convenient gap alongside the gate) and follow the main bridleway ahead through the tunnel of trees (ignoring the bridleway signed off to the right).

Continue just to the next junction of paths, marked with a signpost, the point where the fence begins to bend left. Fork right here and then, a few yards further on (at the next three-way signpost), fork right again onto the track heading steadily downhill under a tunnel of trees. After just a short distance you will pass Downe's Barn on the right.

## 3 → 4 Downe's Barn to Slindon Forge

Stay ahead on this woodland track and eventually you will emerge out to the road in Slindon village, immediately opposite Slindon College. Turn left, following the road edge, with the college boundary wall running on the right. Now an independent boy's college, the building was once the manor house at the heart of the Slindon Estate. Two thirds of the properties in the village are estate houses, most of which can be identified by their distinctive burgundy coloured paintwork.

After passing St Richard's Church on the left, you'll reach a road junction with a circular bench surrounding a tree at its centre. Turn right here onto Church Hill. Follow Church Hill all the way



to its end, passing St Mary's Church and the village Duck Pond along the way. At the T-junction turn right.

Continue downhill passing horse paddocks on the left. Where the pavement ends, cross to the right-hand road edge and proceed with caution along the narrow section of road without pavement (taking care of any traffic). Stay on the main road as it bends left. Just beyond the community orchard on the right, you'll reach The Forge (the community cafe and shop) which is a great place to stop for refreshments.

## 4 → 5 Slindon Forge to Mill Lane

Formerly the village blacksmith's, The Forge opened in October



2012 as a community run shop and cafe. The shop stocks a wide range of items, with an emphasis on local produce wherever possible, including some of its own unique products. The cafe is licensed, serves delicious coffee, light meals and cakes – much of it homemade, or sourced from local suppliers. There's free wi-fi and dogs, cyclists and walkers are made very welcome. In fine weather you can sit outside and enjoy the views across the fields to the woods.

When you are ready to continue your walk, retrace your steps back along the main road, passing the community orchard and heading uphill past the horse paddocks. Ignore Church Hill off to the left, simply keep straight ahead on School Hill passing Elm Cottage to the right.

Continue past Gaston Farm to the right and at the top of the slope, the road bends left passing the Old School. Just after passing the Old Bakery on the left, take the first right turning into Mill Lane.

## 5 → 6 Mill Lane to Great Down



Follow Mill Lane and, where it bends right, keep straight ahead to join the track marked as a public bridleway into Slindon Estate (passing through the gap alongside the wooden gate). Soon this becomes a fenced track climbing steadily between open fields. Stay on the main track as it enters a belt of woodland and leads you steadily downhill.

As you emerge from the trees, continue ahead for a few more yards (passing a pretty circular copse with a bench on the left) to reach a crossroads of paths marked with a signpost. Go straight on here, signed as the bridle road to Bignor. Follow this long straight path. Down to the left you'll be passing Dencher Wood and ahead you'll have great views across the hills. At the end of this long field, keep ahead on the track through a gap in the tree line and you'll see a four-way signpost. Go ahead on the public bridleway climbing gradually up the next hillside field, known as Great Down.

## 6 → 7 Great Down to End



Continue on the obvious bridle path and some way in you'll come to a gate. Pass through this (note this field is likely to be holding sheep) and continue in the same direction across the centre of this grass pasture.

At the top of the field the path levels off and the next gate leads you onto a belt of woodland. Follow the main path through the woodland, keeping straight ahead at the minor crossroads. Ignore any smaller paths off left and right and then, at the major fork, keep right. Keep ahead climbing steadily on this main track, soon with open fields once again visible through the tree line to the right.

At the top of the slope, you'll come to a T-junction with another bridleway (Gumber Corner). Turn right here and follow the track

steadily downhill. Immediately after passing a bench on the left, fork left onto the narrow public bridleway which leads you through the belt of woodland. At the crossroads, keep straight ahead and then keep ahead again as another path merges in from the left. The path leads you through a gate to reach the car park where the walk began.

**Disclaimer**

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

**Walking Safety**

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

Please support The Forge community shop and café which has sponsored this walk together with the National Trust and the South Downs National Park.

*A brilliant transformation and an example of what can be achieved when villagers work together.*

Mr & Mrs & G, Boxgrove

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