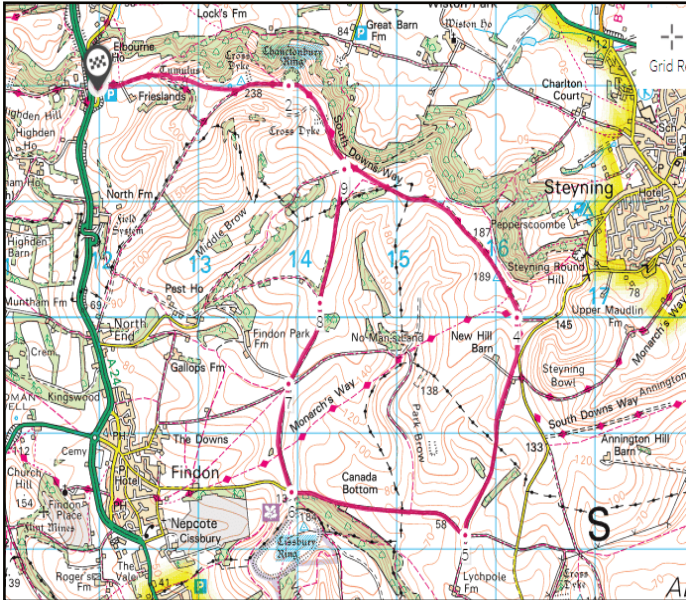




SELF-GUIDED WALK

Chanctonbury & Cissbury Rings

A 10½ mile walk with a steady climb reaching a high point of 791 at Chanctonbury Ring.



This exhilarating walk follows high routes across the Downs, visits two significant historical sites and provides excellent views in all directions.

The walk starts at the car park at the top of the hill above Washington on the eastern side of the A24 at TQ 1202 1206, but could equally commence at other car parks near either ring.

Wherever you start, a steady climb is required to reach Chanctonbury Ring. The ring is one of the high points of the Downs at 791 feet. It sits on the edge of the northern escarpment and provides excellent views across the Weald to Back Mount, Leith Hill and the North Downs. Seen from the north, it is one of the most visible features of the South Downs ridge.

Human activity at Chanctonbury dates back to the late Bronze Age when barrows were constructed. After disuse it was reoccupied in the Roman period when two temples were built on the site.

The plantation of beech trees for which the ring is now well known was started in the mid 18th century, but largely destroyed in the storm of 1987. The current trees have grown subsequently.

Visiting the ring on a sunny day, it is difficult to imagine that it is reputed to be one of the most haunted places in Sussex. In his book *The Old Ways* Robert Macfarlane recounts an uncomfortable night spent there.

There are various routes to Cissbury Ring. Ours follows the South Downs Way before heading westwards to the ring.

Cissbury Ring has an even older history than Chanctonbury. Its earth ramparts indicate a hill fort, in fact the largest in Sussex and one of the largest in Europe. Building started around 250 BC. But 2,000 years before that the ring was the site of one of the first Neolithic flint mines in Britain. When you reach the ring take the path up to the higher rampart and walk the circumference. Chanctonbury Ring may have better views to the north, but Cissbury provides outstanding views along the coast from the Seven Sisters in the east to the Isle of Wight in the west.

Parking is off road a few yards along the South Downs Way and is accessed from the old Washington Road.

You can read more about Chanctonbury Ring and Cissbury Ring at the following:

<http://www.sussexarch.org.uk/saaf/chanctonbury.html>

<http://www.sussexarch.org.uk/saaf/cissbury.html>