

CUT OUT  
& KEEP

Photo: Ian Lancaster

The South Downs Way awaits on this historic walk

# Washington heights

A walk to the West Sussex village of Sullington to see its ancient church, tithe barn and museum, returning along a splendid stretch of the South Downs Way

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**T**he first part of the walk passes through the escarpment village of Washington which has more than 40

Grade II listed buildings. The church went through a major restoration in 1866 and has a lovely barrel-vaulted ceiling. Next door, the Old Vicarage is surrounded by a stunning 3.5-acre NGS garden boasting more than 3,000 trees. It is open to the public every Thursday except in winter.

Sullington too has its own St Mary's which predates its Washington namesake by a couple of centuries, to Saxon times. The yew tree in the churchyard is even older. Just inside the church is a marble effigy of a knight dressed in chain mail. It is believed to be Sir William de Couvert whose manor house is set just behind the

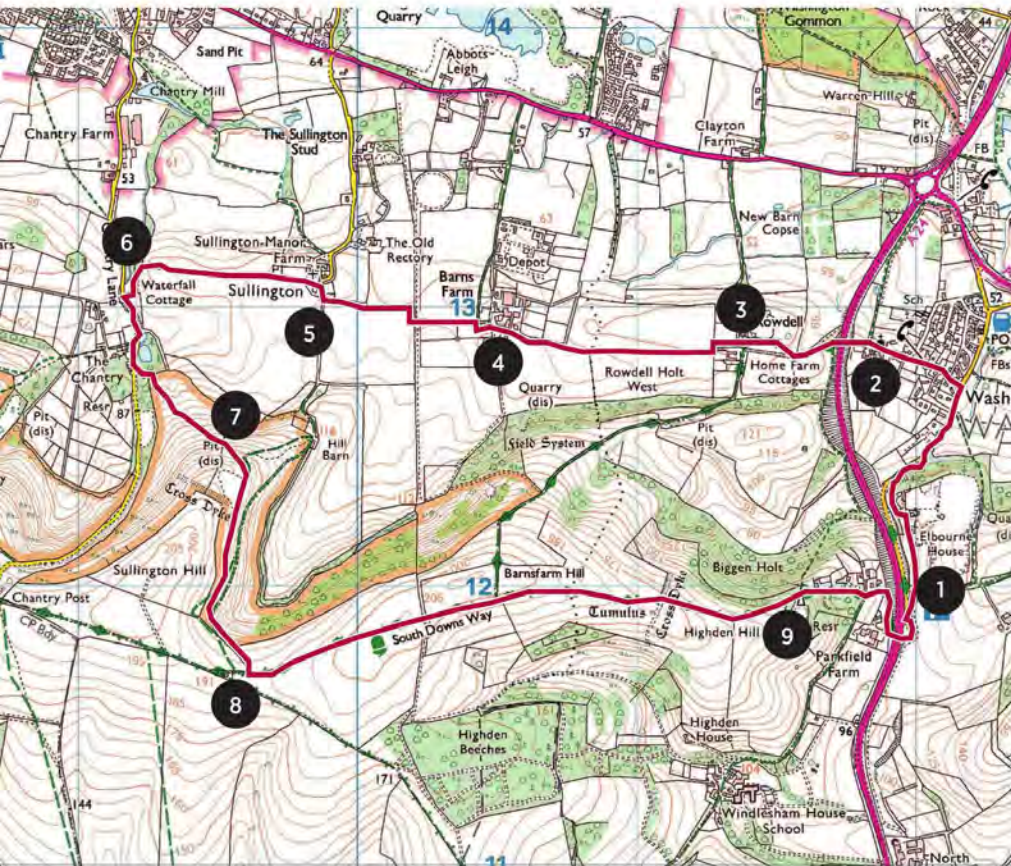


church. It also dates to the 11th century. The de Couverts were Lords of the Manor for nearly 200 years until the Earl of Arundel took it over.

## Brought to you by Friends of The South Downs

Membership starts from £2.50 per month and grants access to a comprehensive programme of guided walks and strolls. Non-members can take part in taster sessions. 01798 875073 (Monday to Wednesday 9am to 1pm). [friendsofthesouthdowns.org.uk](http://friendsofthesouthdowns.org.uk)





**COMPASS POINTS**

- Location:** Washington.

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- Distance:** Five and a half miles (9km).

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- Terrain:** Well-made footpaths; one steep ascent.

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- Ascent:** 700ft.

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- Where to park:** South Downs Way car park, just off A24 south of Washington.

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- Grid reference:** TQ 120120

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- Sat nav:** RH20 4AX

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- What3Words:** ///encloses.rich.exhaled

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- Map:** OS Explorer OL10 Arundel & Pulborough.

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- Dog-friendly:** Yes.

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- Refreshments:** Café in Sullington or The Frankland Arms, Washington.

**THE WALK**

**1** Leave the car park via the entrance and turn right along a wide track. Soon after passing a bungalow, turn sharp left at a fingerpost and follow the rough track as it descends to join a minor road to Washington. Just after passing the 30-limit signs turn left to walk up The Street into the old part of the village.

**2** The attractively situated St Mary's Church soon comes into view with its vicarage and NGS garden next door (prior booking required to visit). Continue past the church to cross the bridge that spans the busy A24. Ignore the footpath on the left but go right at a fork leading to Rowdell Cottage and Barn.

**3** A high wooded fence in front of a house marks the place to zig-zag left into trees then immediately right along an enclosed (sometimes muddy) path. It turns left then right to become a field-edge track with the Downs in view.

**4** At a sign saying: 'Wild Life Conservation Headland.

No Access, Keep to Bridleway' continue ahead past Barns Farm as it goes right and then left at a fingerpost, later crossing gallops into a field.

**5** Go through a farm gate and bear right towards the church to arrive in the tiny hamlet of Sullington. The huge tithe barn is visible behind The Old Workshop café but is not open to the public. After visiting, take the track in front of the church to a gate and into a field.

**6** On reaching the woods, go through a gate and follow the path left then right to reach a quiet lane. Turn left to discover a small and unexpected waterfall. Walk past Chantry Mere on the left with its series of ponds and, just after passing The Chantry (on the right), turn left up a bridleway to begin the ascent of Sullington Hill.

**7** A gate at the halfway point of the climb affords the chance to turn around to admire the view over Storrington and sand pits. The path joins a farm track on the left and later sweeps left to

join another. A lone barn is visible on the horizon.

**8** Pass through a gate and turn left to join the South Downs Way. Cattle may be grazing here. The path gently rises to the top of Barnsfarm Hill. Continue ahead through wooden gate. Chanctonbury Hill and Cissbury Ring can both be clearly seen on the horizon.

**9** The path gradually descends and after passing through a metal gate into woodland it becomes a lane. Follow this back to the A24 which has to be crossed on foot (fortunately, there is a wide central reservation). Follow the route on the far side where you came in to return to the car park. ♦

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