



## The Star

### Birlinging Gap, Beachy Head

① Walk away from the car park, keeping the road on your left. Ignore the South Downs Way sign by the road and continue on the grassy path. Keep to the right of the next car park and follow the path between the trees.

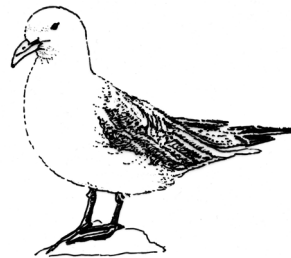
② Keep parallel to the road and when you see a junction with a concrete track, take the next left path down to meet it. Follow the bridleway signposted 'Cornish Farm and Birling Manor'. Glance back here for an unexpected view of the old Belle Tout lighthouse. Pass a finger post and continue ahead. Follow the concrete track as it bends right, avoiding the bridleway going straight on. Look for a gate on the right and head east, keeping the fence on your right.

Make for another gate and continue ahead. ③ Pass alongside lines of bushes before reaching the next gate. Traffic on the A259 zips by on the skyline. Pass an access track to Bullockdown Farm and along here you can see flint walls enclosing fields and pastures.

④ Pass through a gate to the road and turn right, following the wide grassy verge. On reaching two adjoining gates on the right, cross the road and take the grassy path. Follow the path towards Eastbourne, signposted 'seafront' and soon you meet the South Downs Way.

Bear sharp right here ⑤ and follow the long distance trail as it climbs steadily between bushes and vegetation. Keep right when another path comes in from the left and make for a viewpoint, with the first glimpse of Beachy Head lighthouse at the foot of the cliff. Cross the grass, up the slope to the trig point. In front of you now are the Beachy Head Inn and South Downs Countryside Centre.

Return to the South Downs Way and follow it west. ⑥ The path can be seen ahead, running over the undulating cliff top. Keep the Belle Tout lighthouse in your sight and follow the path up towards it. Keep to the right of the old lighthouse and soon the car park at Birling Gap edges into the view, as do the famous Seven Sisters cliffs. Bear right at the South Downs Way post and follow the path down and round to the left. Swing left just before the road and return to the car park at Birling Gap.



Kittiwake

In the nesting season you might see one from the colony at Splashpoint near Seaford and also along the cliffs there may be Fulmars and Peregrine Falcons. Kittiwakes spend half the year wandering the Atlantic. They only return to the coast to breed and usually arrive here from February onwards, keen to secure the best spot on the cliff face.



**Round-headed Rampion**  
The Sussex county flower, the Round-headed Rampion (*Phyteuma orbiculare*), belongs to the family of plants known as Campanulaceae, the 'bellflowers.' It grows in the highest densities on the chalk grasslands and thrives when the sun is at its peak, waiting until the warmth of mid-summer before unfurling its complex flowers. The blue-purple flower-heads may appear to be one flower, but are a cluster of up to approximately thirty individual florets. Sometimes the flowers may perch upon a leafless stem of over 40cm.

Bee Orchid

There are 56 species of orchid native to the UK and 23 of those can be found across Sussex. *Ophrys apifera*, known in Europe as the bee orchid, is a perennial herbaceous plant of the family Orchidaceae. *Ophrys apifera* grows to a height of 15–50 centimetres. In Britain you will see the pale pink and deep mauve flowers June to July.



Bumblebee

In Britain there are 24 species of these pollinators. The queen emerges from hibernation in the spring and starts to make a nest, often below ground and often taking over a disused mouse or vole hole. She builds up her brood of worker bees over the summer, until there are a few hundred bees all in the same nest (in a honey bee hive there would be thousands). At the end of summer new queens will mate and look for a fresh site to spend the winter. The rest of the nest will eventually die.

## WALK 6



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**Distance:** 7.5 miles approximately.

**Route:** Birlinging Gap.

**Map:** OS Explorer OL25, Eastbourne & Beachy Head.

**Conditions:** Downland paths and tracks cliff-top greensward, no stiles.

**Refreshments:** Birlinging Gap and Beachy Head Inn.

### WALK 6

The Polizzi Collection

