

Useful Information

Directions

All the walks were tested in 2007. However, please note that some footpaths may be diverted and buildings such as pubs may have changed their name since the walks were written. If you have any comments please send them to the Harbour Office to be considered for the next edition.

Distances and Timings

All distances and timings are approximate.

Maps

The maps provided are a guide and are not to scale. Please use OS Explorer Map 120 (Chichester).

Map References

The reference given is for the start point of the walk.

Public Transport

Buses: Stagecoach run most of the local buses. Timetable details are at www.stagecoachbus.com/south or telephone **0871 200 22 33** (10p per minute).

For the Selsey – Itchenor service see www.compass-travel.co.uk

Trains: Timetable information is at www.nationalrail.co.uk or telephone **08457 48 49 50**.

Stiles and Gates

Please note stiles are gradually being replaced with gates where appropriate. This may affect some of the walk directions and photos.

Tides

Please note some paths are flooded at high tide. If you have misjudged the times, you usually only have to wait a short while before the path is clear enough to use. Tide times can be found at www.conservancy.co.uk or from the Harbour Office, please note these are only a prediction and factors such as low pressure can make the tide higher than expected.

Tourist Information

Chichester: www.visitchichester.org or telephone **01243 775888**.

Hayling Island: www.visithavant.co.uk or telephone **023 9246 7111**.

Weather

Please check the weather before starting your walk and take the appropriate clothing. Weather forecasts can be found at www.conservancy.co.uk or from the local tourist offices.

Acknowledgements

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- **Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs**

Even when going out locally, it's best to get the latest information about where and when you go; for example, your rights to go onto some areas of open land may be restricted while work is carried out, for safety reasons or during breeding seasons. Follow advice and local signs, and be prepared for the unexpected.

- **Leave gates and property as you find them**

Please respect the working life of the countryside, as our actions can affect people's livelihoods, our heritage, and the safety and welfare of animals and ourselves.

- **Protect plants and animals and take your litter home**

We have a responsibility to protect our countryside, so make sure you don't harm animals, birds, plants or trees.

- **Keep dogs under control**

The countryside is a great place to exercise dogs, but it's every owner's duty to make sure their dog is not a danger or nuisance to farm animals, wildlife or other people.

- **Consider other people**

Showing consideration and respect for other people makes the countryside a pleasant environment for everyone – at home, at work and at leisure.



6

6km/4 miles

1.5 hours

Map Ref. SZ 780 985 - Ordnance Survey Explorer 120

Walk 6

West Wittering Beach & East Head

A 6km walk along the sandy beach of West Wittering and around the sand dunes of East Head with far-reaching views across to the Isle of Wight. This walk is good at anytime of the year but avoid sunny, summer weekends when up to 15,000 people come down to the beach. As the walk passes a crabbing pool, take along a bucket and line to see what you can catch.

Start Point

Old House at Home pub, Rookwood Road, West Wittering

By Road

Take the A286 towards Witterings and follow signs for West Wittering. Park in Rookwood Road near the Old House at Home pub. Alternatively you can park in the beach car park (daily charge) and begin the walk from there. Please note this road is very busy on hot summer days.

By Bus

Service 52 or 53 Chichester to the Witterings. Bus stops on both sides of the road near the Old House at Home.

Refreshments

Old House at Home, West Wittering, café (seasonal) in the beach car park and a restaurant on Rookwood Road.

Toilets

In Pound Road and in the beach car park.

Tides

The walk is most enjoyable at low tide when large expanses of sand are revealed. East Head is on tidal sands. When the tide is 4.6m or higher it is possible to walk through the dunes instead.

Walk Directions

From the Old House at Home in Rookwood Road, look for the large brown signs to West Wittering Beach on the corner of Pound Road. Turn into Pound Road (1). On your left are public toilets, immediately past these bear left (2) and follow the road down to the car park entrance.





At the entrance booths, turn left and walk onto the beach.

On the beach, turn right and continue along either on the sand or on the flat area in front of the beach huts. Straight ahead of you is Hayling Island and across the water to your left is the Isle of Wight.

As you near the red flag there are some benches, unless the tide is very low, you will need to walk on the upper shingle area to get around the corner onto East Head.

Follow the beach around the sand dune spit. Depending on the wind, you may prefer to walk around the spit in an anti-clockwise direction.

If you do go into the dunes, please avoid trampling on Marram Grass and please stay out of the fenced or roped off areas.

When you have completed the circuit of East Head, finish on the land side. Head towards the car park but rather than going into it, follow the footpath round to the left (3). If the tide is high you can take the path on the right up a small bank, or continue along the shoreline.

If you have gone along the shoreline go up the concrete steps to join the path on top of the sea wall. Shortly past the crabbing pool, you will come onto a grassy area called Snowhill. There are a number of benches here to rest and enjoy the view.

Bear right across the grass. Turn right along the lane (4). You will pass a row of cottages on your left and then come to a wide gravelled drive on your left (5).

Follow the footpath signs through a small caravan park, through a gate and then across a field and over a wall into the churchyard. Take time to visit St Peter & St Paul Church.

Bear left across the churchyard which will bring you into Pound Road. Turn left with the school on your right and continue around back to your start point.

3

4

5

Shell Guide

As you walk along look out for these common shells.



Razor

A common burrowing mollusc. It burrows vertically into the sand leaving a small hole through which it feeds.

Common Whelk

Pretty, whorled shell which is popular with children. Whelks are carnivorous and can live for up to 10 years.



Common Cockle

This cockle is eaten by both man and birds such as Oystercatchers.

Slipper Limpet

These were accidentally introduced into Britain from the United States in the late 1800s.



Native Oyster

These are bi-valve which means 'two shells'. Oysters change their sex depending on the temperature of the water.

Common Mussel

This edible mussel is found in shallow water attached to stones. They may live up to 15 years or more, and produce their young 'spats' during spring/early summer.



Extra Items of Interest

East Head

East Head is an important sand dune feature at the entrance to Chichester Harbour. It is used for recreation by many thousands of walkers and tourists each year. The hinge – the point of the dune system that connects it to the land is very fragile. East Head has been slowly rotating anticlockwise for the last two centuries.

The dunes are owned by the National Trust and are designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Marram Grass is essential as its deeply-penetrating root system helps stabilise the sand. However, it will die if trampled on which is why certain areas are roped off to encourage new growth.

West Wittering Estate

In 1951 the Church Commissioners, who owned all the land between the harbour entrance and East Wittering, were in discussion with Butlins and another similar organisation with a view to selling the land for a holiday complex. As a result the West Wittering Estate Company was set up by local residents. They purchased the land for £20,546.14s9d to preserve it for public enjoyment and to protect the rural and undeveloped nature of the area. The car park has been run commercially since the 1920s and provides many facilities including a beach patrol.