

The Follies Walk



Robertsbridge community walk 20

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This walk takes in the **follies** in and around Brightling that were built in the 1800s by **Jack Fuller**, the controversial former owner of **Brightling Park estate** and MP for Sussex. It also features stunning views of the coast and South Downs.



Walk Guide

Distance: 19.5km/
12miles

Grade: Moderate

Stiles: 3

Livestock: Cows &
Sheep

Link to **Ordnance
Survey Map**

Start coordinates

Grid reference
TQ 733235

What Three Words
boomed.dwarf.
remaining

1 From Robertsbridge railway station head west along Brightling Road and turn right up Ludpit Lane. After 300m take the path on the left. Follow the path through the trees and then downhill over a field and along a narrow path to the side of Column Wood.

2 After crossing the stile at the end of the wood, head over the grassy field and look out for the bridge on the right next to some trees. Cross the bridge and continue through the next field, keeping to its left edge. Go over the stile next to Burgh Wood and follow the path downhill over the cow fields, staying close to the edge of a line of trees and hedges. After 500m cross a stile into some woods and follow the path between the metal railings through the **Socknersh Manor** estate.

3 After passing the Manor house, take the farm track on the left that heads south west and follow it for around 1.5km as far as Brightling Road. Now turn right and after 400m bear left along the lane to Hollingrove. At the junction at the top of the hill, continue to the right and take the path on the right that runs between some cottages. Follow the path uphill for 150m, and take the path on the left.

4 This path goes to the Tower, a 12m folly said to have views of Bodiam Castle, which Jack Fuller bought in 1828 and restored. The tower can no longer be climbed but there are good views from the nearby fields of the sea and the South and North Downs. From the Tower continue along the path down to Battle Road, turn right and then a few metres later take the bridlepath on the left.



5 Walk past the chain of lakes and the cricket pitch then turn right and walk through some farm buildings before bearing left into a sheep field. On the right there are views of Fuller's neoclassical Temple, designed by **Sir Robert Smirke**, also the architect of the British Museum. Continue along the path through the sheep fields, interspersed by a small woodland. Shortly after entering a large wood, cross the stream then bear right and follow the track uphill until it forks.

6 Take the left fork and continue for 750m as far as the road to Wood's Corner. Turn left immediately, go past a metal gate and take the path to the Sugar Loaf on the right. This folly was put up by Fuller after making a bet that he could see the spire of Dallington Church from his lawn. After realising this wasn't possible, he built the spire shaped folly to win the bet.

7 Now continue south on the path to Battle Road. Turn right, walk past the **Swan Inn** in Wood's Corner and at the junction turn right. Follow the Brightling road for just over 1km before turning left along the Burwash road.



8 The Observatory is soon visible on the right. Now part of a private house, the tower once housed astronomical equipment and **JMW Turner** painted several landscapes there. Take the path on the right just after the house and follow it diagonally over the field to the Brightling road. The Obelisk can be seen to the left. Also known as the Needle, it lies at one of Sussex's highest points and was reportedly built to mark the Battle of Waterloo.

9 On reaching the road, turn right and walk to **Brightling Church**. In the churchyard look out for Jack Fuller's mausoleum, a pyramid commissioned several decades before his death in 1838. Back on the road, walk south to the road junction, go through the gate and follow the path to Hollingrove.

10 Turn left and at the junction bear right and follow the road for around 3km. Around 200m after passing the lane to Mountfield Park Farm, look out for a path on the left. Go through the gate and head uphill through the field to the wood. On the other side of the wood continue straight across the field and head down the track at the far end. Follow the track to Glottenham Manor nursing home, then continue along the lane towards Robertsbridge. Shortly before the railway bridge take the path on the left that runs to Bishop's Meadow. Go through the gate into Bishops Lane and walk through Mill Rise to the railway station.

