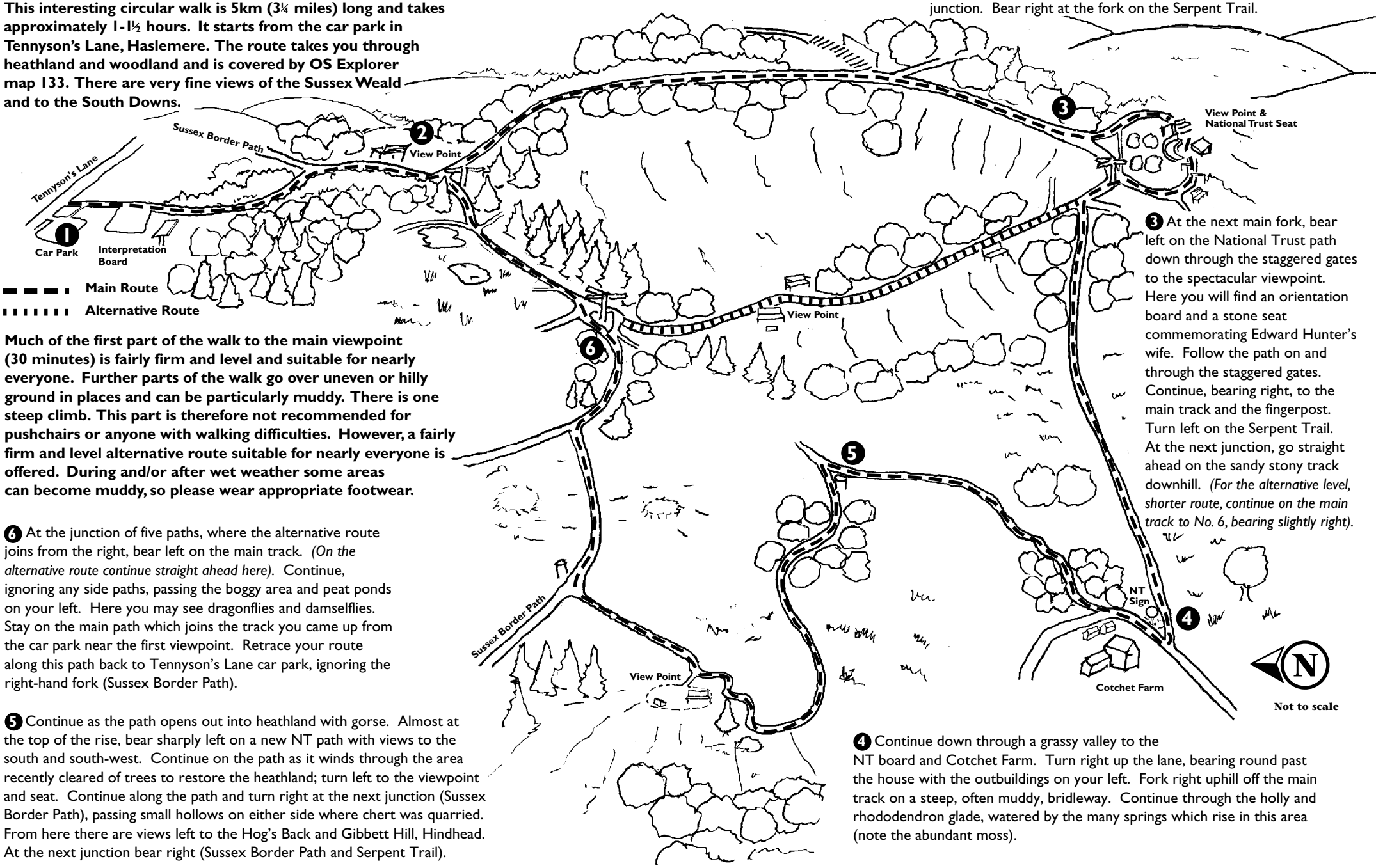
Black Down Walk

About This Walk

This interesting circular walk is 5km (3¼ miles) long and takes approximately 1-1½ hours. It starts from the car park in Tennyson's Lane, Haslemere. The route takes you through heathland and woodland and is covered by OS Explorer map 133. There are very fine views of the Sussex Weald and to the South Downs.



Much of the first part of the walk to the main viewpoint (30 minutes) is fairly firm and level and suitable for nearly everyone. Further parts of the walk go over uneven or hilly ground in places and can be particularly muddy. There is one steep climb. This part is therefore not recommended for pushchairs or anyone with walking difficulties. However, a fairly firm and level alternative route suitable for nearly everyone is offered. During and/or after wet weather some areas can become muddy, so please wear appropriate footwear.

1 Start at the car park in Tennyson's Lane. Go up the track off the lane, past the second car park and continue, passing the interpretation board. A track (Sussex Border Path) joins from the left. Continue on up the sunken lane edged with bilberry and gorse, surrounded by coniferous and mixed woodland.

2 Turn left after a short distance to the viewpoint and seat for good views to the south-east. Continue on along the track. Turn left at fork (after approx. 75m), following the Serpent Trail and left again at next fork. Continue, ignoring any side paths and pass through the beech hanger. Continue straight ahead at the junction. Bear right at the fork on the Serpent Trail.

3 At the next main fork, bear left on the National Trust path down through the staggered gates to the spectacular viewpoint. Here you will find an orientation board and a stone seat commemorating Edward Hunter's wife. Follow the path on and through the staggered gates. Continue, bearing right, to the main track and the fingerpost. Turn left on the Serpent Trail. At the next junction, go straight ahead on the sandy stony track downhill. *(For the alternative level, shorter route, continue on the main track to No. 6, bearing slightly right).*

4 Continue down through a grassy valley to the NT board and Cotchet Farm. Turn right up the lane, bearing round past the house with the outbuildings on your left. Fork right uphill off the main track on a steep, often muddy, bridleway. Continue through the holly and rhododendron glade, watered by the many springs which rise in this area (note the abundant moss).

5 Continue as the path opens out into heathland with gorse. Almost at the top of the rise, bear sharply left on a new NT path with views to the south and south-west. Continue on the path as it winds through the area recently cleared of trees to restore the heathland; turn left to the viewpoint and seat. Continue along the path and turn right at the next junction (Sussex Border Path), passing small hollows on either side where chert was quarried. From here there are views left to the Hog's Back and Gibbett Hill, Hindhead. At the next junction bear right (Sussex Border Path and Serpent Trail).

6 At the junction of five paths, where the alternative route joins from the right, bear left on the main track. *(On the alternative route continue straight ahead here).* Continue, ignoring any side paths, passing the boggy area and peat ponds on your left. Here you may see dragonflies and damselflies. Stay on the main path which joins the track you came up from the car park near the first viewpoint. Retrace your route along this path back to Tennyson's Lane car park, ignoring the right-hand fork (Sussex Border Path).