



Climping Beach

Distance: 8 km=5 miles

easy walking

Region: West Sussex

Date written: 9-jul-2015

Author: Sackboot

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Refreshments: Climping café, Littlehampton Marina

Map: Explorer 121 (Arundel) *but the map in this guide should be sufficient*

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Beach, sea, river, marina, village

In Brief

This walk is the first on this site to include a lovely long walk along a beach! Nowadays you won't find many in W.Sussex that are still wild and free. One of them is Climping Beach, near Littlehampton. Just one factor that might influence your choice of date: *don't go during a high tide*. This is because the shingle on the beach is too uncomfortable to walk on but at low or medium tide there is a wide mixed sand-and-pebble strip all the way which is perfectly walkable. To check before you go, try the tide times website at: www.tidetimes.org.uk and click on "Worthing". Climping (or Clymping) is an ancient parish with a church, a (disused) windmill and sand dunes and a good country pub which may close out-of-season (to enquire at the *Black Horse*, ring 01903-715175). The beach is popular but not as crowded as the resort towns and there is a large overflow car park.



This being the seaside, shorts would normally be fine, but until the field paths have been restored (see below) wearing shorts would be inadvisable because of the undergrowth, Practically any sensible footwear will do. It's also fine for your dog.

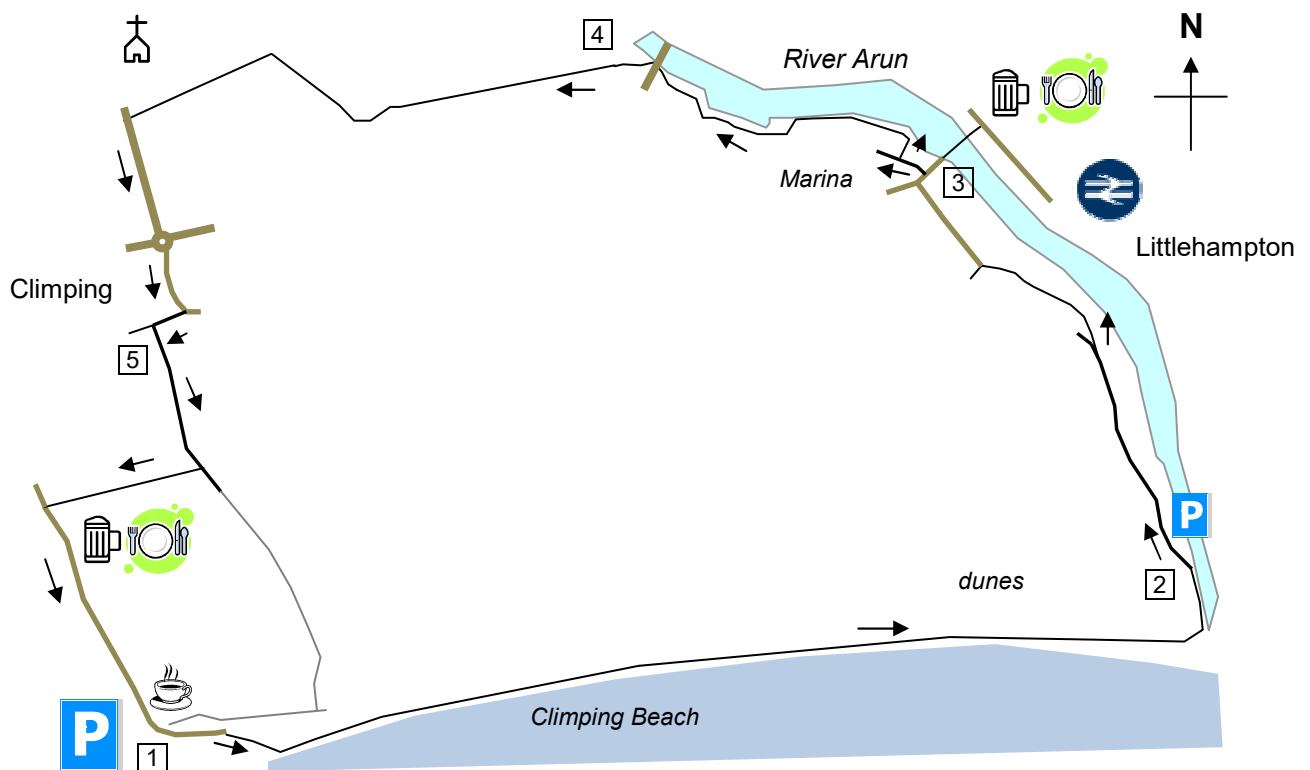
In 2024-5 the beach car park was still closed (?), probably due to flooding. (There's room for about ten cars along the road but these quickly get taken up.) So the best advice is to start at the **West Beach** car park (see below.) This walk needs some revision and precise feedback is invited.



The walk begins at **Climping Beach**, near Littlehampton, West Sussex, www.w3w.co/jelly.lives.easy, postcode **BN17 5RN**. There is a small café here, open seasonally. The car park is in flux (2024), possibly closed, or much reduced due to massive coastal engineering, making the **West Beach** car park, www.w3w.co/cure.fish.snack, postcode **BN17 5DL**, a better option for now. You can come by **rail** via Littlehampton. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).


The Walk

- 1** Facing the sea, turn **left** along the beach. If you go down the shingle you will find a fairly sandy strip and, although there are pebbles here and there, it is quite comfortable to walk on. At low tide, you may find even more sand. *If you are walking at high tide, you can make use of a tarmac drive and continue over the dunes.* Your first destination is a long breakwater in the distance. It guards the outflow of the River Arun. After a walk of 2 km, turn **left** back up the beach alongside a sea barrier, looking across the river to Littlehampton and its funfair.




- 2** Go through a pay-and-display car park (*alternate start*) and continue near the river. You can either take a concrete lane or go down a strip of sand even closer to the river. If you choose the sandy route, you need to go left-right round a creek by the marina and possibly duck under some boarding ramps, after which you must exit left back to the concrete lane, through the Littlehampton Yacht Club and ferry entrance. Continue along the lane and, where it bears left to the golf club car park, leave the lane by forking **right** on a narrow tarmac footpath. There are small sand dunes here and, as a temporary diversion, on your right a footbridge takes you to an islet with a seat, a possible picnic spot. Continue following the high path, passing a creek with several interesting old wrecks, going beside the white *Dormy Cottage*. You come out to a road. Keep straight ahead along the road, ignoring a footpath on your left. On your right soon is *Rita's Café*, a pleasant outlet with generous sandwiches. At a T-junction, turn **right**. Straight ahead, but not on your route, is a swing bridge and, on the other side of the Arun you will find two pubs, the *Steam Packet* and the *Arun View*, both well regarded for food. *This route also leads to Littlehampton Railway Station (by turning right), in case you began the walk there.*

Believe it or not, the River Arun didn't always reach the sea here. Until the late 1400s it flowed into the River Adur 10 miles to the east. That route got silted up and the river found its own way to form the present estuary during the 1500s.

 **3** Turn immediately **left** on a wide tarmac drive for the Littlehampton Marina. In 50m, turn **right** as indicated, continue straight across the gravel to the riverside and turn **left** on a grassy path. [2024-25: this part of the path was temporarily closed due to floods and walkers had to go round another way; it seems to be usable again, or there's an easy bypass: feedback welcome.] After several mobile homes (once very clean and bright, but after the floods of 2024-25 looking in a rather sorry state), you pass the Marina and, at a fingerpost, your path veers left across the concrete slipway. It and then veers right on a tarmac drive, passing the *Boat House Café* which is noted for its fresh fish but also serves good coffee. Keep right by some chalets and fork **left**, as directed by a signpost, through a gravel parking area and through a modern kissing-gate onto a woodland path. The path quickly winds its way out of the wood close to a road bridge. Continue under the road bridge on a wide path, bypassing any standing water. (The author forked **right** up a bank onto a higher path which re-joins the wide path; but recent reports found it impassable.) Very shortly, before a solid metal fence, turn **left** on a path (very overgrown in high summer), up a step, over a wooden bridge into a field.

4 Follow the nice clear straight path across the barley field for nearly 600m until you reach a hedge just in front of a Chalet village [Jun 2025: report of field planted over, walker went round edge]. Turn **right** and then **left** at the corner. [2022: the path was nice and clear; but in case it has been planted over, as in 2017-2025, you should cross the field aiming for a gap in the far hedge, 600m distant, some 20m to the right of a caravan park; 2021: the field had been ploughed up – if this persists, please report this to W.Sussex C.C.!] Entering the next field turn **right** and fork immediately **left** on a narrower path, avoiding the large metal gate ahead [2025: layout of paths changed? walker followed tractor paths, straight ahead until the path began to veer right, saw an obvious gap in the wheat and it followed a curving path around the field to the metal gate, right at the end, meeting the road described below]. *You have a good view on your right of Arundel Castle and the South Downs.* In 250m, your path veers **left** at a fingerpost onto a wide path running close to the field on your left and comes out in 350m, via a large metal gate and a short patch of grass, to a road. Your route is **left** along the road, but 300m to the right, if you wish to visit, is the late 12th / early 13th-century church of St Mary's Clymping, with many interesting features. Having turned **left** on the road, using the footway, continue to a roundabout and cross straight over to Crookthorn Lane opposite. (To avoid the barrier, it is best to switch first to the right-hand side.)

 **5** Just after a thatched cottage, turn **right** on a byway, passing St Mary's Clymping Primary School. Ignoring the footpath ahead, turn **left** opposite the school on a wide track between fields. After 300m, you reach a 4-way signposted junction. *If you are not visiting the old village, there is a short cut here: simply keep straight ahead on the track and turn **right** at the beach, or on a tarmac track, back to the start.* Turn **right** on a nice clear path across the wheat field, continuing on a drive past thatched cottages to a lane. Turn **left**, immediately reaching the “wonderful” *Black Horse Inn*, a traditional country pub, often busy at weekends, *sometimes closed off-season*, which sometimes has a carvery. Continue on the lane, passing some old flint houses of the village and some woodland, arriving back at the beach where the walk began.

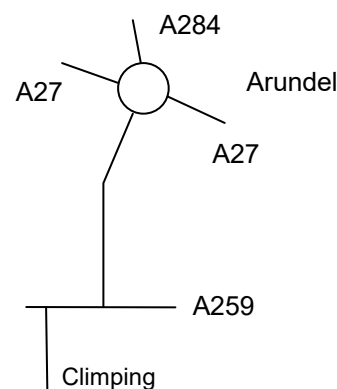


Getting there

By car: arriving at the big Arundel roundabout (via the A29/A284 or the A27), take the minor turning for *Ford, Climping*. Go 3 miles through Ford, crossing a railway, to a major crossing of the A259 with a roundabout. Turn **right** on the A259 and, in nearly ½ mile, turn **left** as for *Climping Beach*. Park at the end of the lane in the car park. There is a modest charge by ticket, calculated from arrival time. A possible alternative free parking site is Crookthorn Lane, postcode **BN17 5QU**, with some competition from the school run.

An alternative route is via the A24 and Worthing. Follow signs through *Littlehampton* and, from the A259, look for *Climping Beach* as above.

By train: begin the walk at **Littlehampton Railway Station**. Turn **right** out of the station and, in 200m, turn **left** between two pubs and cross the River Arun via a long pedestrian bridge. Start the walk at section [3], but turn immediately **right** instead of **left**.



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