

University of Sussex boundary walk



Way marker posts mark the route at regular intervals

Front Belt, Badgers and the Pelham Wall

The walk starts at Knights Gate Road at the main entrance to the University of Sussex. You then proceed due west down some wooden steps that take you into an old linear mainly beech woodland (Front Belt), and the path runs next to the old ivy clad Pelham flint wall. The Pelhams were the aristocrats who owned the estate before the University was built, and the wall is likely to be in the order of 300 years old, roughly the age of the beech trees in the woodland belt. On Friday 16 October 1987, winds in excess of 100 mph swept across southern England, and many old beeches and elms on campus were damaged or destroyed. The root plates of these trees were heaved up, forming cavities underneath. Many of these cavities are now occupied by badgers, and you can see their excavations on your right as you walk west along the path.



Robin (above) and herring gull (left)

As you proceed west, you cross the Southern Ring Road and the entrance to the Innovation

Centre, then the Southern Ring Road again just after the electricity sub-station. After crossing the road, you walk between a variety of trees that were planted by the original groundsman, Mr Don Collier, after the University opened in 1961, so these trees are all less than about 40 years old. This section of the path takes you to the other University entrance, after passing the Tenant Lain cottages on your right. Further trees are due to be planted along this belt during this year (2008) near the Western entrance.



Richmond Hill towards Stanmer Park

Richmond Hill, Russell's Clump and Grubbings

After crossing the road, the path runs through the Sport Centre car park with the Pelham wall now on your left. Growing along the wall is a good population of English elm trees. Most of these are young, and have grown suckers after the original trees were blown

down. The path then runs behind the Sport Centre through a fine stand of 300-year-old oaks, veers north and emerges at the bottom of Richmond Hill.

As you climb Richmond Hill, you pass Russell's Clump on your right, which is an ancient beech plantation that was also badly damaged by the 1987 winds. On the eastern edge of the clump is the University's wildlife dew pond, constructed in spring 2005 from money contributed for environmental improvements after the building of the Medical School. The pond is now supporting breeding frogs, dragonflies and much other wildlife, and providing drinking and bathing water for birds and other animals in dry summers. The short alternative walk post (7) directs you with a yellow arrow to this pond, and you are then left to make your way back to the centre of campus.



Dragonfly on the dew pond



Clouded Yellow butterfly on Hawkweed (top) and Fritillary on Knapweed (above)

The boundary walk proceeds north past the trees on your right up Richmond Hill to some more trees where you bear right. You then bear left and follow the tree line north, eventually passing through a kiss gate, into a field and further up Richmond Hill.

The top of the hill has the ancient name of Grubbings, and it is here that you will see a small pile of rubble that used to be the University observatory. This is a superb place to get your bearings and view the whole of the campus. It is also possible to see Falmer Church tower emerging from the trees in the distance to the south east, and Stanmer Park due west.



Jackdaw (top), blue tit (middle) and squirrel (bottom) are frequent visitors

Boundary Belt and Sunny Bank Wood

The footpath then turns east past the old observatory and down the hill past a field recently named the 'Field of Uncertainty' because it could not be established whether it was on University ground or not for some time. It is not. At the bottom of the hill you meet the Euro Constituency, County Constituency and Church Parish boundary, marked by a linear tract of woodland. Fallow deer can sometimes be seen emerging from these trees. You pass on to a farm track at the bottom of the hill, and have to climb over a stile into woodland on your right. This was called Sunny Bank Wood by one of the oldest residents of Falmer, Mrs Doris Williams, who wrote an informative book about the village, and worked at the University for many years.

On entering the wood, you can turn right and walk on the level back to the centre of campus. Alternatively, you can continue with the boundary walk by going straight ahead up a winding and sometimes muddy track that climbs quite steeply through the wood. You can see the chalk and flints exposed through the path, and many species of tree and ground flora in this rich little woodland including wild alpine strawberry.

Tenant Lain Belt

On reaching the top of the hill you come to a 'T Junction', the boundary walk proceeds left for a few metres and then right. The route then passes through Tenant Lain Belt, which is a wind break of mainly wind-damaged beech trees. About half way along, you will pass the Biology Field Trials Plot; this is an open air laboratory where ecological research is done for the School of Life Sciences. You also cross the road to the Sports Pavilion. At the southern end of the tree belt, you emerge into Falmer Village, but before you do, there is a notable tree on your right; this is a *Ginkgo biloba* or a maidenhair tree. Believed to originate from China, this tree is supposed to have medicinal properties. This specimen is clearly very old, probably in excess of 200 years. At the road, turn right and you will find yourself back at the beginning of the walk.



Ginkgo biloba

Read more about wildlife on campus at www.sussex.ac.uk/walkonthewildside

Wildlife photography by Paul Cecil

University of Sussex

Boundary walk

Enjoy the beautiful countryside around campus on our boundary walk. It's free, it's a great way to keep fit, and there's always something interesting to see.

US
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Fallow deer



Kestrel



Long-tailed tits



Sparrowhawk



Ginkgo biloba



Fungi on a beech tree



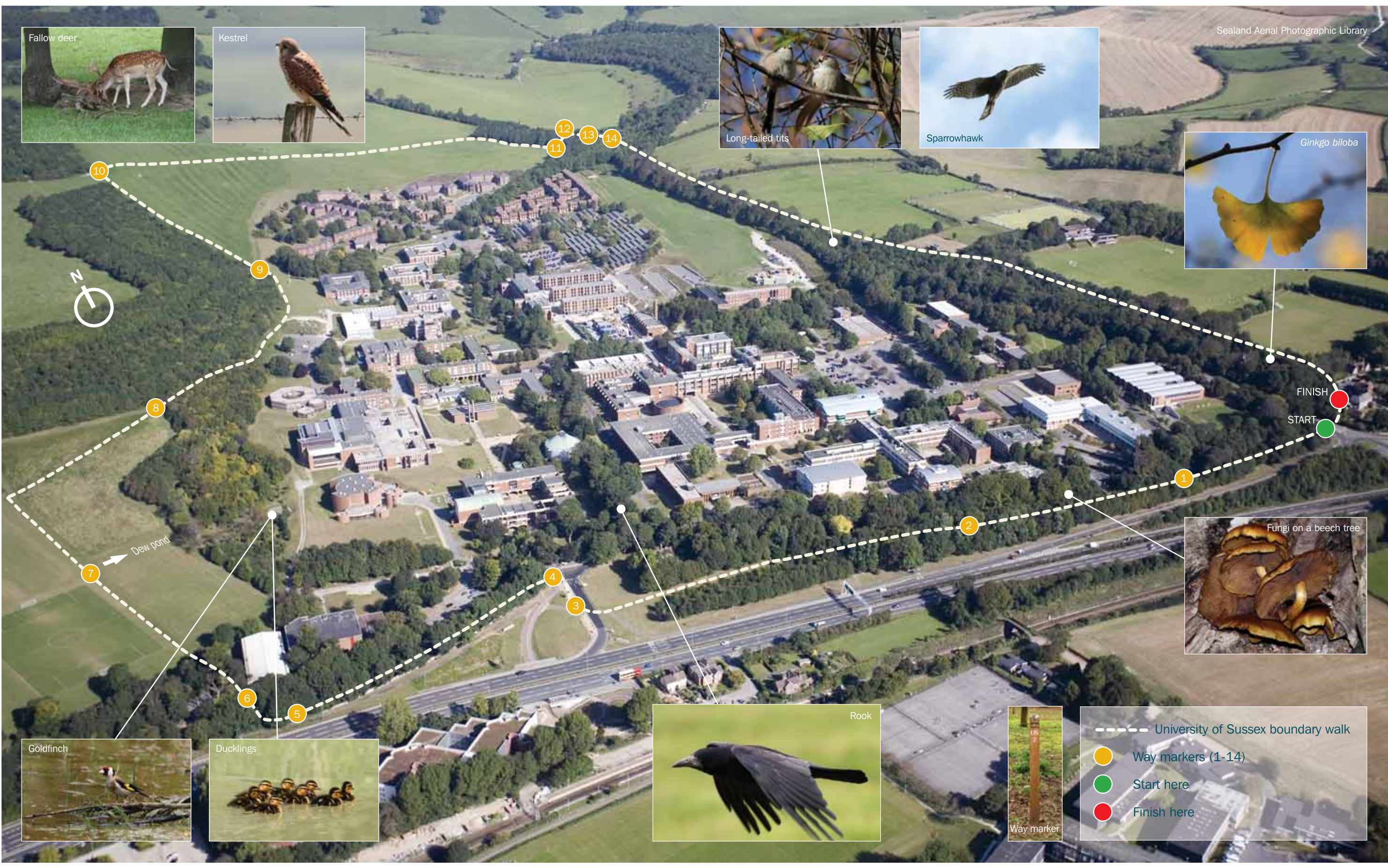
Rook



Way marker

--- University of Sussex boundary walk

- Way markers (1-14)
- Start here
- Finish here



Dew pond



Goldfinch



Ducklings