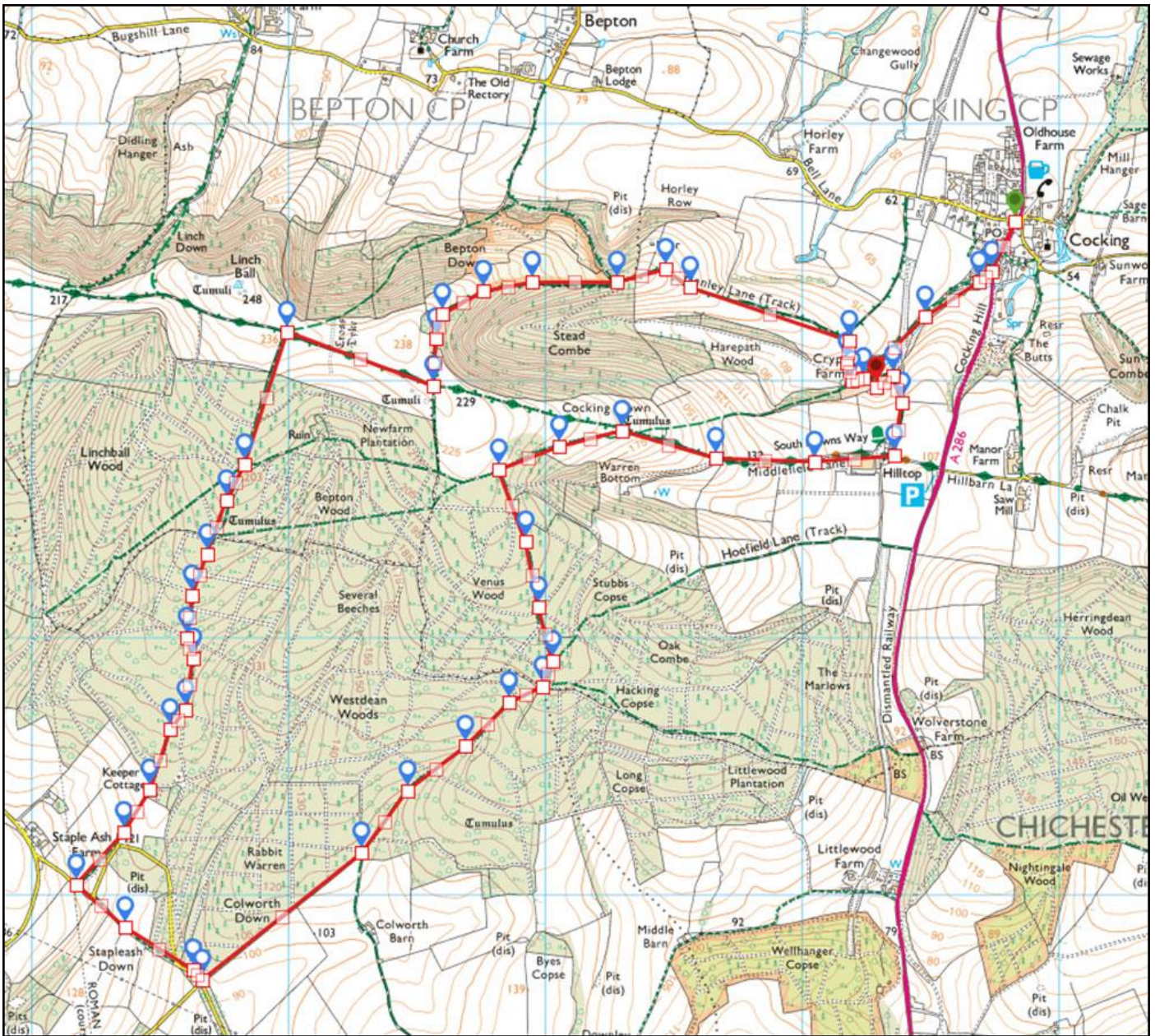


The Blue Bell, Cocking and West Dean Woods Loop

Distance: 11.22 km, Height Gain: 327 m, Duration 3 – 3.5 hours, Map Sheets OL8 or Landranger 197.



Description

Take the footpath alongside the A286 South to the edge of the village then take the lane on the right past Malthouse Cottages, just before the main road starts to climb up to the top of the Downs. The route heads south, climbing steeply to reach the South Downs Way and then follows this ridge-top path west to perform a circuit of Westdean Woods before returning down the ridge and along old farm tracks. There are beautiful views across the surrounding hills throughout the walk and plenty of wildlife within the woodland which is a mixture of majestic pines and coppiced hazel.

The route consists of long steady ascents and descents throughout, a couple of sections being fairly steep. There are some gates plus two stiles to negotiate (both stiles have open fencing alongside for dogs). The chalk paths on the climbs/descents can become slippery when wet and the farm tracks can be very muddy in winter and after periods of rain, so good boots are a must. You may come across sheep and cattle grazing the fenced fields adjacent to the South Downs Way so take care with dogs.