

LAYING THE GHOST OF THE GOLDSTONE GROUND



A Self-Guided Walk from The Goldstone to
the American Express Community Stadium
via Withdean Stadium

Introduction

The opening of the American Express Community Stadium finally allows us to say goodbye to the Goldstone Ground on our own terms, a contrast to the trauma of 26 April 1997. It's time to lay the ghost of the Goldstone, exorcise the Archer demon – and, for those yet to gaze upon the retail park, perhaps take this opportunity to see what they did.

This pamphlet describes a symbolic route from Hove Park to the Amex Stadium via our temporary venue at Withdean. It's 6.4 miles long and climbs to 551 feet above sea level. It keeps away from traffic where possible and leads through some quiet parts of the city with wide views and past places of Albion interest. It's *my* idea of the best route.

There is no organised walk. It is *not* intended as a march, protest, demonstration or triumphal display. It is, for each of us, a personal journey; there is no timetable, no time-limit. It is a self-guided walk that can be undertaken at any time (although it would be difficult in the dark). It will probably take the average walker two to three hours.

If you wish to undertake this walk, you do so at your own risk. Identified hazards in addition to road crossings are noted, but you are responsible for your own safety. Children should be accompanied.




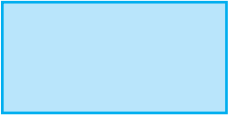


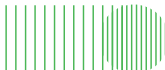


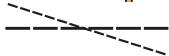
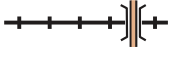




There are sections on grass and rough paths, so please wear footwear appropriate for uneven ground. There is one lengthy hill but no overly steep sections. However, the route is *not* suitable for wheelchairs, pushchairs or bicycles. It is exposed in parts so you should carry a waterproof/windproof jacket in adverse weather; but it could be very hot and/or sunny! Do not attempt it unless you are fit enough to complete it. You are advised to carry your own food and drink as there are no shops en route, just a few cafés and pubs. There are public toilets, but none for three miles after Withdean Stadium.

The walk starts at the Goldstone Ground Heritage Board in Hove Park, which will be unveiled at 10 am on 30th July 2011 by Dick Knight, Albion's life-president, before the friendly against Spurs. You might like to undertake the walk then; or perhaps for the first game at The Amex, the Sussex Senior Cup final, on 16th July; or maybe on 6th August, the first league game against Doncaster Rovers; or on your first visit to the new stadium whenever that might be. Please note that there will be no first-aid, stewards, food, drink or transport organised on these or any other days.

I hope you enjoy this walk, and that it helps you and me finally to exorcise that ghost of the Goldstone Ground.

Tim Carder

Map legend (NB maps are *not* to scale)

	Route		Directions (numbered)
	Grassy area		Albion point of interest
	Woodland		Other point of interest
	Golf fairway/green		Hazard
	Roads/Traffic lights		
	Paths		
	Railway/Bridge		
	Fence/Gate		
	Earthbank		
	Buildings and other man-made objects		
	Pond		

Refreshments available from:

Hove Park Café
Station Hotel, Hampstead Road
Withdean Sportsman
Wild Park Café
The Hiker's Rest, Coldean Lane

Public toilets at:

Hove Park
Hove Recreation Ground
Withdean Sports Complex
Wild Park Café

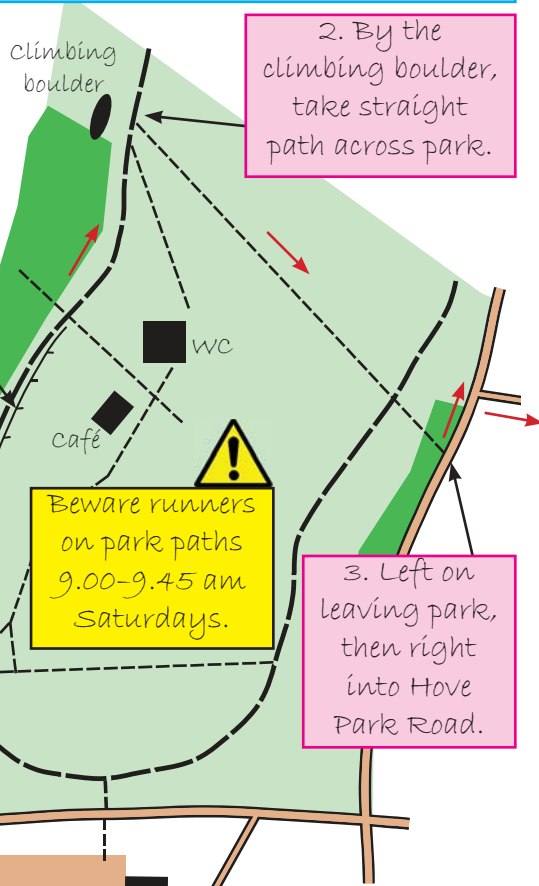
Hove Park opened in 1906 and was used as an Albion training ground in the 1970s and '80s. It saw skirmishes between rival 'fans', a demo in support of sacked manager Chris Cattlin, and Liam Brady's 1996 announcement of a takeover consortium.

On Fans United Day, 8 February 1997, this railing was adorned with supportive messages from fans of other clubs.

1. From the Goldstone, walk northwards along wide path.

The 'Goldstone' name derives from this 20-ton rock. Legends surround its origin and history.

START
Goldstone Ground heritage board (to be unveiled 30th July 2011).



Beware runners on park paths 9.00-9.45 am Saturdays.

3. Left on leaving park, then right into Hove Park Road.

The Goldstone Retail Park lies on the site of the Goldstone Ground, home to the Albion 1902-97. The site of the centre spot is near the point where JJB Sports abuts Toys'R'Us.

Withdean Stadium has a long and varied history: lambing field, playing fields, tennis centre, zoo, 'Olympic' stadium, sports arena, league football ground 1999-2011.

Station Road becomes a rough track, 'Snakey Lane'. Beware uneven ground.

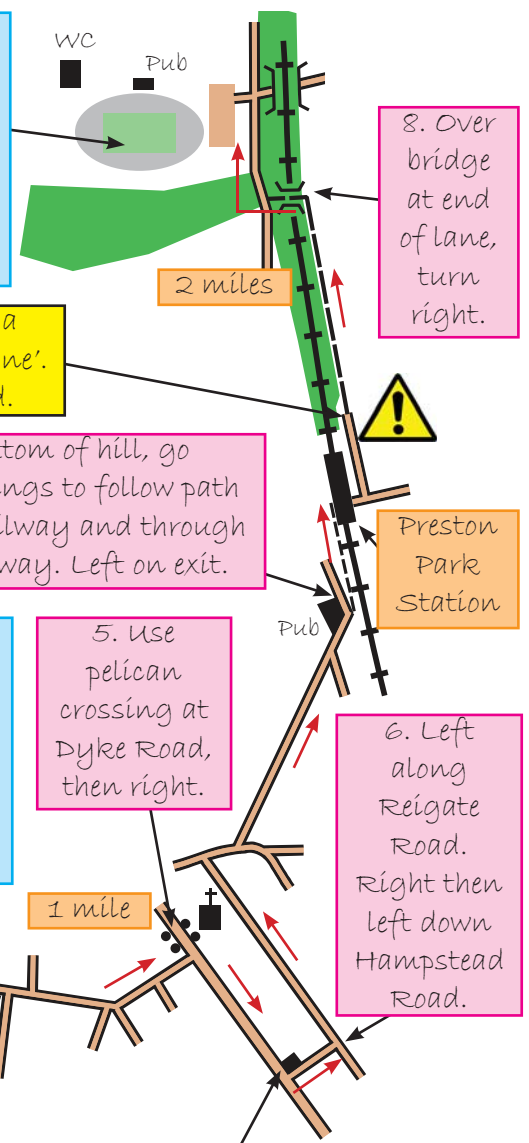
7. At bottom of hill, go between railings to follow path alongside railway and through station subway. Left on exit.

Shirley Drive (Liam Brady) and Rigden Road (Dick Knight) were important venues in 1996 as the Albion takeover consortium was forged in their homes.

5. Use pelican crossing at Dyke Road, then right.

4. Along Hove Park Road, then up ramp and through Hove Recreation Ground. Continue to Dyke Road.

The house at the corner of Wincombe Road belonged to Albion director Noah Clark. In 1910 he had plaster replicas of the Southern League championship shield and FA Charity Shield installed in the gables to mark the club's first major triumphs.



6. Left along Reigate Road. Right then left down Hampstead Road.

8. Over bridge at end of lane, turn right.

11. After second gate, walk on grass past large tree and aim for obvious break in woods. Go through gate and continue uphill to yet another gate. Please close all gates behind you.

There is no made path in Withdean Park. The ground may be uneven, especially through woods.

12. After gate, carry straight on between two wooded areas. On reaching main wood, ignore large path. Turn right and take next path on left by bin into woods.

13. On exit from woods, turn right and follow road uphill.

16. Cross Ditchling Road and turn left.

10. Right into Peacock Lane, an ancient sunken lane. Left through gate marked 'Beware pond' and follow 'stepping-stone' path between two ponds to second gate.

Withdean Stadium
WC Pub

2 miles

3 miles

Shelter

Surrenden Field is the former home ground of Brighton & Hove Rangers, amateur forerunners of the Albion in 1900/01. Gillingham (as New Brompton), Leicester Fosse (now City) and West Ham United all played here. The location was quite remote in 1900, and the London Road much narrower.

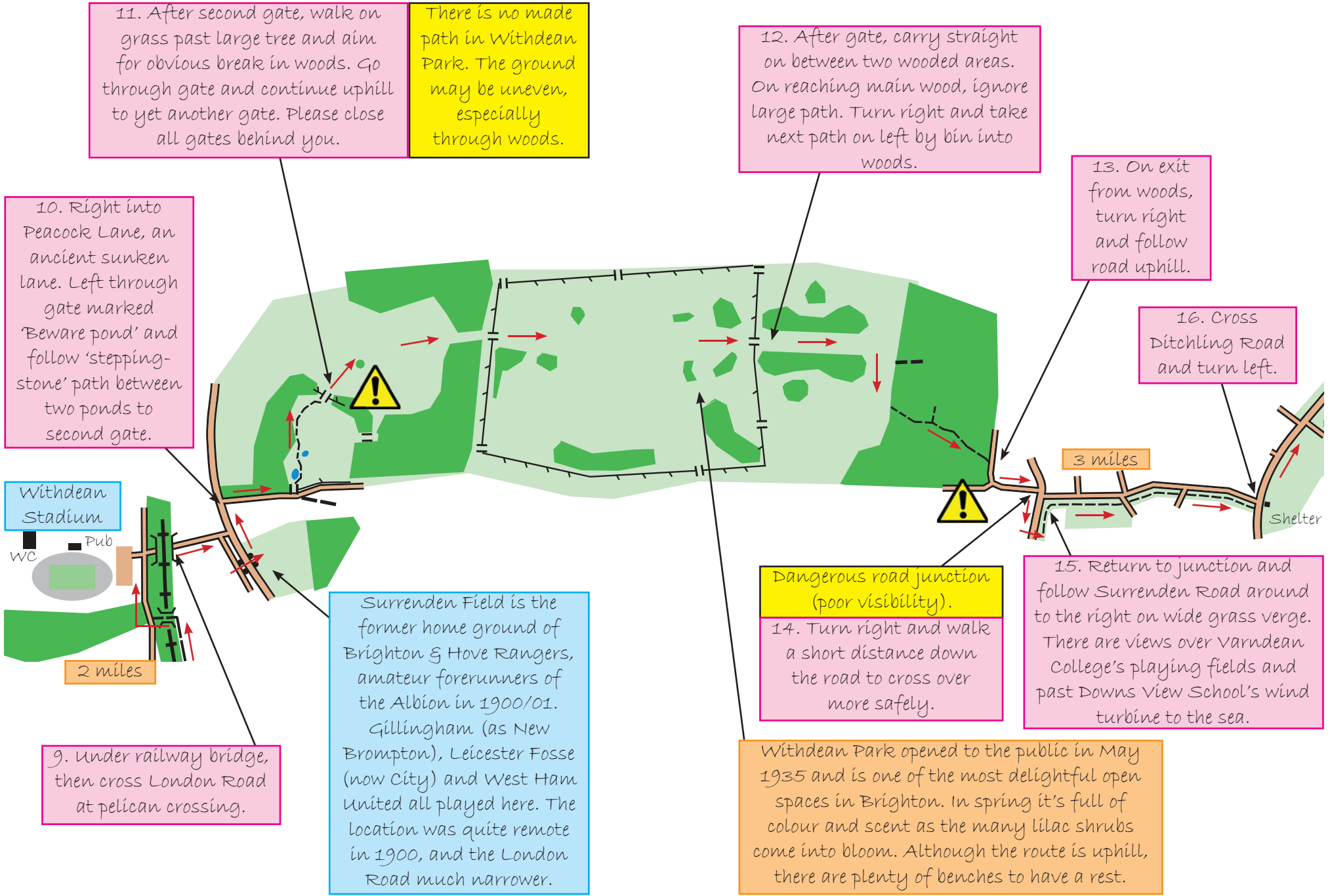
Dangerous road junction (poor visibility).

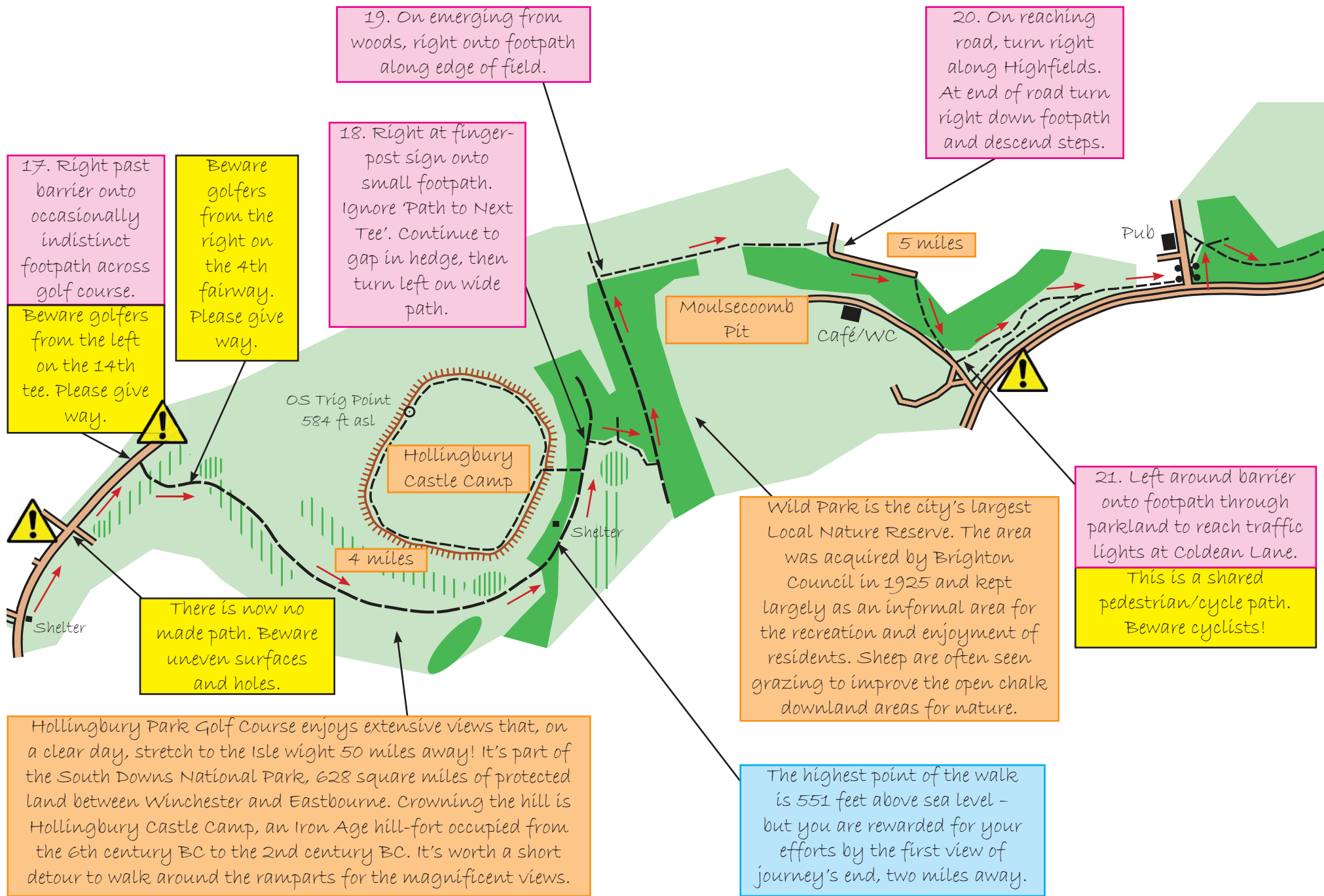
14. Turn right and walk a short distance down the road to cross over more safely.

15. Return to junction and follow Surrenden Road around to the right on wide grass verge. There are views over Varndean College's playing fields and past Downs View School's wind turbine to the sea.

9. Under railway bridge, then cross London Road at pelican crossing.

Withdean Park opened to the public in May 1935 and is one of the most delightful open spaces in Brighton. In spring it's full of colour and scent as the many lilac shrubs come into bloom. Although the route is uphill, there are plenty of benches to have a rest.





19. On emerging from woods, right onto footpath along edge of field.

18. Right at finger-post sign onto small footpath. Ignore 'Path to Next Tee'. Continue to gap in hedge, then turn left on wide path.

20. On reaching road, turn right along Highfields. At end of road turn right down footpath and descend steps.

17. Right past barrier onto occasionally indistinct footpath across golf course. Beware golfers from the left on the 14th tee. Please give way.

Beware golfers from the right on the 4th fairway. Please give way.

OS Trig Point
584 ft asl

Hollingbury
Castle Camp

Moulsecoomb
Pit

Café/WC

Pub

5 miles

4 miles

There is now no made path. Beware uneven surfaces and holes.

Wild Park is the city's largest Local Nature Reserve. The area was acquired by Brighton Council in 1925 and kept largely as an informal area for the recreation and enjoyment of residents. Sheep are often seen grazing to improve the open chalk downland areas for nature.

21. Left around barrier onto footpath through parkland to reach traffic lights at Coldean Lane. This is a shared pedestrian/cycle path. Beware cyclists!

Hollingbury Park Golf Course enjoys extensive views that, on a clear day, stretch to the Isle wight 50 miles away! It's part of the South Downs National Park, 628 square miles of protected land between Winchester and Eastbourne. Crowning the hill is Hollingbury Castle Camp, an Iron Age hill-fort occupied from the 6th century BC to the 2nd century BC. It's worth a short detour to walk around the ramparts for the magnificent views.

The highest point of the walk is 551 feet above sea level - but you are rewarded for your efforts by the first view of journey's end, two miles away.

Stony Mere Way and University Way are the names given to the new link road into the University of Sussex, funded by SEEDA to improve the stadium area infrastructure. This road is used by stadium traffic accessing the university's car-parks. 'Stanmer' means 'stony mere (or pond)'.

The University of Sussex campus was designed by Sir Basil Spence and opened in 1962. The car-parks are used by stadium traffic on event days.

Still a shared pedestrian/cycle path. Beware cyclists!

Stanmer Park is a beautiful and popular park, originally laid out in the 1720s for the Pelham family, later earls of Chichester. It was acquired by Brighton Council in 1947 along with Falmer village and the sites of the universities and the Amex Stadium.

24. Use subway under A27 then footbridge over railway line.

There is now no made path. Beware uneven surfaces and holes.

22. Cross Coldean Lane at traffic lights. Left onto rough path along verge, then right at signpost. Take right fork on entering woods.

6 miles

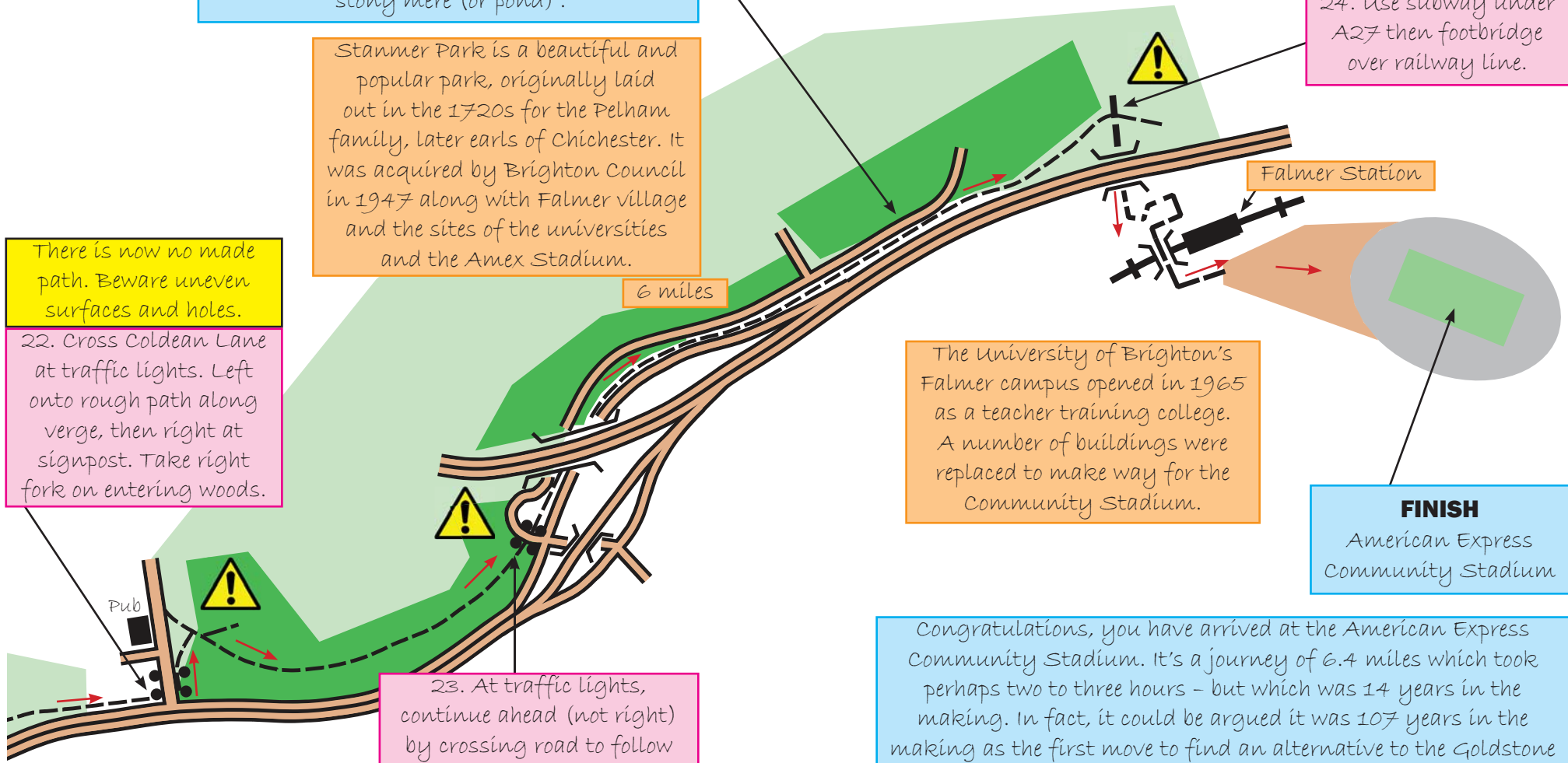
The University of Brighton's Falmer campus opened in 1965 as a teacher training college. A number of buildings were replaced to make way for the Community Stadium.

FINISH
American Express Community Stadium

23. At traffic lights, continue ahead (not right) by crossing road to follow pavement under bypass.

This is a shared pedestrian/cycle path. Beware cyclists!

Congratulations, you have arrived at the American Express Community Stadium. It's a journey of 6.4 miles which took perhaps two to three hours - but which was 14 years in the making. In fact, it could be argued it was 107 years in the making as the first move to find an alternative to the Goldstone Ground was in 1904! To all those who battled for and worked on the new Community Stadium, your efforts will be appreciated by all who visit it. Thank you!



Final Thoughts

The Goldstone Ground was graced by great players – Whiting and Webb, Cook and Wilson, McNichol and Langley, Smith and Napier, Ward and Horton, Lawrenson and Foster, Saunders and Nelson – but it was never a neat stadium. It was ramshackle, and dilapidated towards the end of its life. But it was home to generations of fans – and a home that was taken from us prematurely.

Now, 14 years later as you say a final goodbye to the site where Albion played for 95 years and head for our new home, just imagine that the Goldstone had not been sold. What state would our club now be in? Would it still be a dynamic operation on the way up? Would we have such fraternity among fans and such away support? And would we have a state-of-the-art stadium capable of expansion to 30,000?

With the difficulties over finding another site well documented, the city council would probably have insisted we remain at the Goldstone. Neighbouring firms might have been relocated to enable a hybrid stadium to expand up to, say, 16,000 seats in the style of Luton, but the club would be inhibited by an inadequate ground on a restricted site.

Now I have no time at all for Bill Archer, and I know exactly where Brighton & Hove Albion would be today if we hadn't been driven him out, but here's the conundrum: where would the club be today if Archer had never become involved? It's something I find difficult to resolve.

And while you wrestle with that thought, spare another for Withdean Stadium. Most fans considered it unsuitable for league football, but never forget that Withdean kept the Albion alive for 12 years. Had it not been for Withdean – or Gillingham's Priestfield Stadium for that matter – there would be no Brighton & Hove Albion and no Amex Stadium.

If you have enjoyed this walk and finally exorcised that ghost, you might like to visit the Albion Museum when it opens in the Amex Stadium's North Stand.

You might also like to make a contribution to the Goldstone Heritage Fund which is paying for the heritage board. Please make payment via Barclays Bank account 60937320, sort code 20-20-62, in the name of "Goldstone Heritage Fund". Cheques or postal orders should be sent to John Kirkland, 32 Buchans Lawn, Crawley RH15 9NZ.

I would like to thank the Albion Supporters' Club and my wife Judith for support in production of this walk and pamphlet.

Tim Carder, 2011