

## THE 'HOLYWELL'

*'Holywell'*

Fresh springs flow from Holywell Coombe, at the base of the Downs.

*A Holywell Coombe, au pied des Downs, il coule des sources fraîches.*

The springs feed a fen, pond and streams, rare wetland habitats in the normally dry chalk land.

The wet soils around Holywell have preserved important geological and organic remains, including tiny pollen grains from plants growing around the area since the last Ice Age. The soils provide us with a complete record of how the plant communities have changed around Holywell over the last 12,000 years.

Holywell Coombe was an ideal place to settle. Excavations have shown us that there was an important Bronze Age settlement in Holywell about 3,800 years ago.

The spring at Holywell is thought to have been the first resting place for pilgrims from Europe on their way to the shrine of St Thomas at Canterbury.

RECONSTRUCTION DRAWING OF THE BRONZE AGE SETTLEMENT AT HOLYWELL COOMBE, BASED ON

## THE FIRST FARMERS

*Les premiers fermiers*

The Folkestone Downs have been under the gentle influence of grazing since the arrival of the first farmers from Europe 4-5,000 years ago.

*Les Downs de Folkestone ont été doucement modelés par le pâturage depuis l'arrivée des premiers fermiers en provenance d'Europe, il y a 4-5.000 ans environ.*

Stone Age farmers cleared the natural forest to graze animals on the hills. Over hundreds of years, settlements were abandoned and re-occupied. As the woods were cleared, soil erosion left thin soils over the chalk. The steep hills were grazed for hundreds or possibly thousands of years, creating a grassland rich in wild flowers.

## CASTLE HILL & CRETE ROAD

*La Colline de Castle Hill*

The massive earthworks on Castle Hill (Caesar's Camp) are the remains of a Norman ringwork and bailey castle.

*Les ouvrages de terre massifs situés sur Castle Hill (Caesar's Camp) sont les vestiges d'un château normand en bois.*

The wooden castle was probably built in King Stephen's reign in the 1140's. The local name 'Caesar's Camp' is recent; the earthworks were built about 700 years after the Romans left Britain.



CASTLE HILL ABOUT 800 YEARS AGO

Crete Road is a very ancient route which may have led to France before the land bridge was breached by rising sea levels. Now, below the Downs you can see a very modern route to France; the Channel Tunnel is the first fixed link for approximately 8,000 years.

Avec  
résumés  
en français

# Explore

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## THE FOLKESTONE DOWNS



## THE FOLKESTONE DOWNS ~ A SPECIAL PLACE

The Folkestone Downs are recognised as being important in Europe for their wildlife and landscape. They are a special place in the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The AONB is a nationally important landscape, legally protected to maintain its special character, for now and for the future generations. The AONB covers about a quarter of Kent and includes the North Downs from Surrey to the White Cliffs, areas of the Greensand Ridge and the Romney Marsh. The Kent Downs AONB Unit works in partnership with other organisations to support local people in conserving and enhancing this special landscape.

## A COMMITMENT TO CARING FOR THE FOLKESTONE DOWNS

Much of the Folkestone Downs is owned by Eurotunnel, who have commissioned the White Cliffs Countryside Project to undertake the day to day management of it. Eurotunnel is a core member of the steering group of the White Cliffs Countryside Project and is committed to caring for this special place.



## YOU CAN HELP

People of all ages can help care for the Folkestone Downs.

Local people are helping with practical work to improve footpaths and conserve wildlife. Voluntary wardens help to keep an eye on the area. If you are interested in helping in any way please contact us.

## WHITE CLIFFS COUNTRYSIDE PARTNERSHIP

The Project cares for and manages the cliffs and countryside around Folkestone and Dover. We conserve the wildlife and landscape, especially the ancient chalk grassland, helping people understand and get to the countryside.

Tel: 01304 241806



This partnership is being partly financed by the European Regional Development Fund

## VANISHING DOWNLAND

*Les prairies en voie de disparition*

Open downland was once common in much of southern Britain.

*Les prairies non clôturées étaient jadis chose courante dans une grande partie du sud de l'Angleterre.*

During the Napoleonic, First and Second World Wars, large areas were ploughed for arable crops. Since the Second World War over 80% of downland has been lost so that today only small fragments remain. The Folkestone Downs are especially important as they are now one of the largest areas of chalk downland remaining in Kent.

*—plus de 80 pour cent des prairies ont disparu, si bien qu'il n'en reste plus aujourd'hui que de petits fragments.*



COWSLIPS & EARLY PURPLE ORCHIDS



LOOKING TOWARDS HOLYWELL



MARBLED WHITE

HAREBELL



## WHY GRAZE?

*Pourquoi faire paître les troupeaux?*

The tradition of grazing created downland.

*C'est la tradition du pâturage qui a donné naissance aux prairies.*

Grazing allows a wonderful variety of plants and butterflies to live on the Downs. Each plant uses slightly different conditions and none gains dominance. In places, it is possible to find as many as 40 types of plant in a single square metre.

Without grazing, coarse grasses and thorny scrub bushes invade. The rare and special flowers and butterflies would be replaced by common shrubs of little interest.

Grazing on the Downs was abandoned after the Second World War. Since 1990 it has been restored to much of the Folkestone Downs to conserve and enhance this special landscape.

To graze we have had to fence. Fencing is to keep the cattle in and not people out!

*Pour faire paître les troupeaux, nous avons dû installer des clôtures. Les clôtures ont pour but d'empêcher le gros bétail de s'échapper et non d'interdire l'accès des enclos au public.*

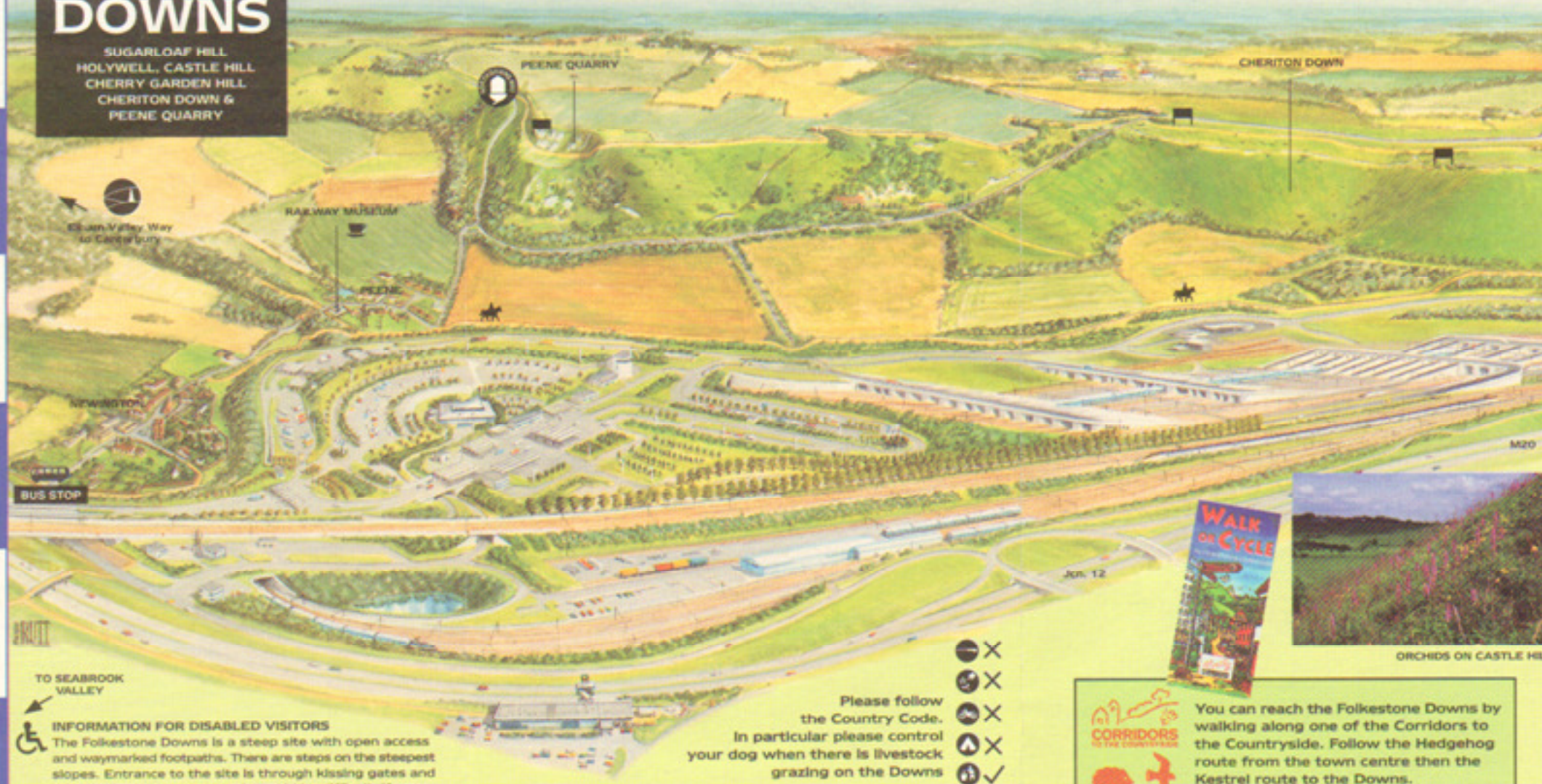
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# Explore THE FOLKESTONE DOWNS

SUGARLOAF HILL  
HOLYWELL, CASTLE HILL  
CHERRY GARDEN HILL  
CHERITON DOWN &  
PEENE QUARRY

The Folkestone Downs contain one of Britain's richest wildlife habitats, alive with wild flowers and butterflies. The Downs have a long and rich history.

The Folkestone Downs are an excellent place for walks with outstanding views.



ORCHIDS ON CASTLE HILL

TO SEABROOK VALLEY



**INFORMATION FOR DISABLED VISITORS**  
The Folkestone Downs is a steep site with open access and waymarked footpaths. There are steps on the steepest slopes. Entrance to the site is through kissing gates and stiles. Access in a wheelchair would be difficult. If you would like more information please contact us.

Please follow the Country Code. In particular please control your dog when there is livestock grazing on the Downs

- X
- X
- X
- X
- X
- ✓



You can reach the Folkestone Downs by walking along one of the Corridors to the Countryside. Follow the Hedgehog route from the town centre then the Kestrel route to the Downs.

KEY:  
Légende:



FOOTPATH  
Sentier

There are two circular walks waymarked on the Downs, follow the red or blue waymarkers.



CASTLE HILL WALK (1hr)  
Circuit pédestre Castle Hill



HOLYWELL WALK (1hr)  
Circuit pédestre Holywell

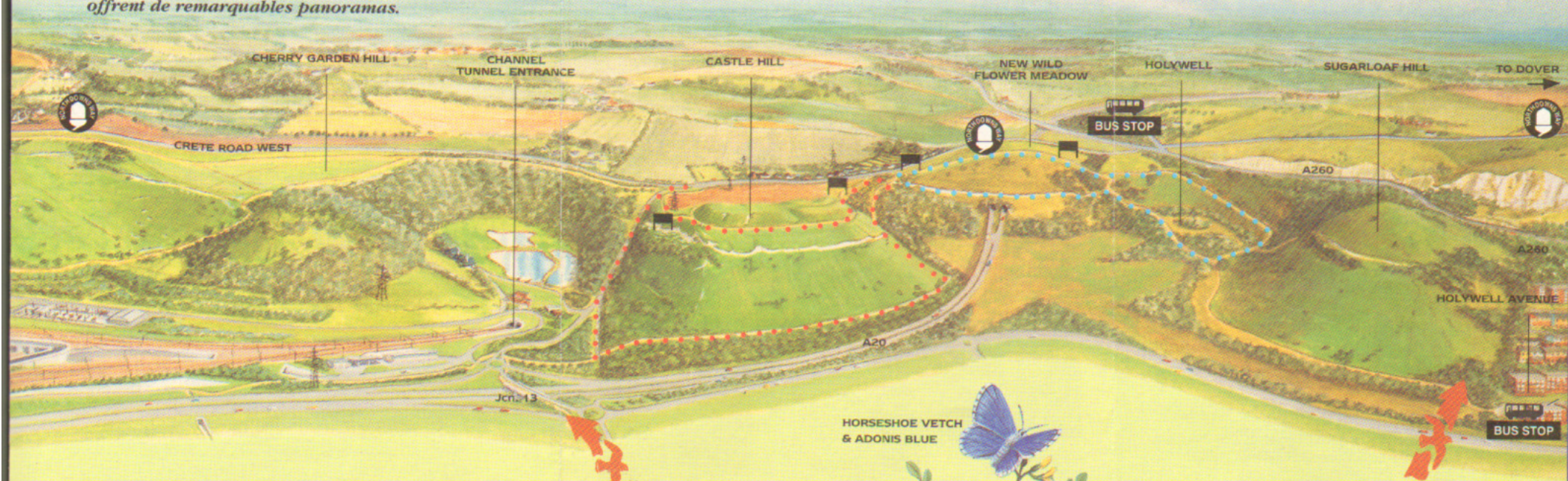
NORTH DOWNS WAY

Les Downs de Folkestone constituent l'un des habitats naturels les plus riches de Grande-Bretagne et regorgent de fleurs sauvages et de papillons. Les Downs ont une longue et riche histoire.

Les Downs de Folkestone se prêtent tout particulièrement à la promenade à pied et offrent de remarquables panoramas.

# A special place

## Un site exceptionnel



### THE FIRST FLOWERS

*Les premières fleurs*

The Downs are the home to many rare and delicate flowers and butterflies.

*Les Downs abritent un grand nombre de fleurs et de papillons rares et délicats.*

In spring, downland flowers such as cowslip are mostly yellow to attract the few active insects. Later, the delicate colours of scented thyme, rockrose and milkwort tint the hills, followed by scabious, knapweed and harebell.



SCABIOUS

Many insects are dependent on the wild plants. The butterflies and moths are especially beautiful.

The Folkestone Downs are specially known for the rare adonis blue butterfly. Of the 60 or so types of butterfly found in the whole of Britain, 32 have been found on the Folkestone Downs.



### TAKE A WALK AND SEE

*Venez vous promener et constatez par vous-même !*

Footpaths and circular walks with information panels and excellent views are waymarked.

*Il existe des circuits pédestres balisés, qui sont équipés de panneaux d'informations et offrent de remarquables panoramas.*

