**University of Sussex boundary walk**

**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 first 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.

**Richmond Hill, Russell’s Clump and Grubbings**

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 owners of 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.

**Way marker posts**

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**Hawthorn (top) and Pink ladybird (above)**

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**Squirrel (bottom)**

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**Soil belt and hillock**

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**The boundary walk proceeds north**

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**

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 Stanner Park due west.

**boundary belt and sunny bank wood**

The boundary belt and sunny bank wood is 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 past (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.

**Fritillary on Knapweed (top) and Hawkweed (middle)**

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 belt, you emerge into Falmer Village, but before you do, there is a notable tree on your right; this is a Ginkgo biloba or 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
Dew pond

Way markers (1-14)
Start here
Finish here

Sparrowhawk
Long-tailed tits
Fungi on a beech tree
Ginkgo biloba
Rook
Ducklings
Goldfinch
Kestrel
Fallow deer

Sealand Aerial Photographic Library