

Long Man of Wilmington

The Long Man of Wilmington is a 226 feet high figure cut into the side of Windover Hill, near Eastbourne. It is well worth a visit as part of a trip around the South Downs (see separate sheet).



Also known as the Wilmington Giant it is the second largest representation of the human form in the world. Only the Giant Of Attacama in Chile stands higher at 393 feet high.

Mystery surrounds the origins of the Long Man, and even the outline has changed over the years.

Originally the outline was marked in packed chalk but over the years grass grew over this. Right up to the 19th Century he was only visible in certain light conditions and after a light fall of snow. In 1874 he was marked out in yellow bricks.

During the Second World War the Long Man was painted green so that German planes couldn't use it as a landmark. In 1969 the bricks were replaced with concrete blocks. These are now painted each year, allowing the Long Man to be visible for many miles.

There are many theories about the origins of the Long Man. Some local people think that he is prehistoric. Others believe that he was constructed by a monk from the nearby Priory at some point between the 11th and 15th centuries.

"The Giant keeps his secret and from his hillside flings out a perpetual challenge."

Rev A.A Evans

Visiting the Long Man

The Long Man of Wilmington is signposted from the A27, 2 miles west from the Junction with the A22 at Polegate. Drive through Wilmington and there is a free public car park on the right hand side of the road. There is an information board in the car park providing further details.

Cross the road and follow the public footpath along side the road and then across the fields. This leads to the bottom of the figure. Even from the base of the figure there are outstanding views inland across the fields of Sussex with very little evidence of any built up areas.

For a longer walk take there is a circular path that runs along the bottom of the hill, up to the top, around The Long Man and back down again. Follow it in either direction.

The horizontal ripples in the side of the hill are due to weathering and animal activity. From the top of the Hill there are lovely views across the Downs, and down into the Cuckmere Valley. In the distance you will see the sea.



The landscape is covered in fragments of flint.

Thousands of years ago flint was mined on the hill. The filled in mine shafts can still be seen.