

Islington u3a Longer Walks Group

Walk Title	Battle Circular	Walk No.	591
Area	Sussex	Type	Circular
Date	Thursday 15 th October 2026		
Distance	11.8 miles (19 km)		
Timing	5 hours 30 minutes walking time + travel + lunch stop. Allow at least 10 hours. Therefore expect to be back in Islington by 7:00pm		
Meeting up & travel	Meet at London Bridge at 9:40am to catch the 9:53am Hastings train to Battle, arriving 11:12am. Trains back leave at 4:37pm, 5:01, 5:37, 6:06, 6:37pm. Buy a same-day, off-peak return Knockholt – Battle, £18.75 with SRC		
Route	A pretty walk through the rolling hills of 1066 country. It offers some fabulous views of the surrounding countryside and a picturesque town with its historic abbey. For the first part of the morning we follow the 1066 Country Walk long-distance path.		
Lunch	Bring a snack to eat at approximately 12:30/1:00pm as we will not arrive at The White Hart in Netherfield until c 3:00/3:30pm (8.4 miles/13.5km into the walk) www.white-hart-netherfield.co.uk (01424 817848).		
Dropping out	By taxi from the late lunch stop (247 Taxis 01424 247247). Journey time is 6-7 minutes so you could visit Battle Abbey before it closes at 5:00pm.		
Suitability	Suitable for any reasonably fit regular walker. Some undulations but no long, steep climbs. About 10 stiles, some of them fairly dilapidated. Some paths where nettles and brambles have encroached. Wear comfortable waterproof walking shoes/boots. Check weather forecast for temperature and likelihood of rain and wear, or carry, an extra layer or waterproofs as necessary. Members should advise the Walk Leader of their 'ICE' (in case of emergency) phone number if they have any health concerns.		
Facilities	There are toilets at London Bridge station, on the trains and at the pub but not at Battle station.		
Walk source	Saturday Walkers' Club www.walkingclub.org.uk/walk/battle-circular		
Map & references	OS Explorer 124 OS Landranger 199		
Leader & contact details	<u>Walk Leader:</u> Sara Hayes <u>Beforehand</u> e-mail: sarahayes100@gmail.com <u>On the day</u> mobile: 07791 894442		
Interesting facts	The Battle of Hastings was fought on 14 October 1066 between the Norman-French army of William, Duke of Normandy, and an English army under the Anglo-Saxon King Harold Godwinson, beginning the Norman Conquest of England. It took place		

approximately 7 miles (11 km) northwest of Hastings, close to the present-day town of Battle, East Sussex, and was a decisive Norman victory.

The background to the battle was the death of the childless King Edward the Confessor in January 1066, which set up a succession struggle between several claimants to his throne. Harold was crowned king shortly after Edward's death but faced invasions by William, his own brother Tostig, and the Norwegian king Harald Hardrada (Harold III of Norway). Hardrada and Tostig defeated a hastily gathered army of Englishmen at the Battle of Fulford on 20 September 1066. They were in turn defeated by Harold at the Battle of Stamford Bridge on 25 September. The deaths of Tostig and Hardrada at Stamford Bridge left William as Harold's only serious opponent. While Harold and his forces were recovering, William landed his invasion forces in the south of England at Pevensey on 28 September and established a beachhead for his conquest of the kingdom. Harold was forced to march south swiftly, gathering forces as he went.

The numbers present at the battle are unknown as even modern estimates vary considerably. The composition of the forces is clearer: the English army was composed almost entirely of infantry and had few archers, whereas only about half of the invading force was infantry, the rest split equally between cavalry and archers. Harold appears to have tried to surprise William, but scouts found his army and reported its arrival to William, who marched from Hastings to the battlefield to confront Harold. The battle lasted from about 9 am to dusk. Early efforts by the invaders to break the English battle lines had little effect. Therefore, the Normans adopted the tactic of pretending to flee in panic and then turning on their pursuers. Harold's death, probably near the end of the battle, led to the retreat and defeat of most of his army. After further marching and some skirmishing, William was crowned as king on Christmas Day 1066.

There continued to be rebellions and resistance to William's rule, but Hastings effectively marked the culmination of William's conquest of England. Casualty figures are difficult to assess, but some historians estimate that 2,000 invaders died along with about twice that number of Englishmen. William founded a monastery at the site of the battle, with the high altar of the abbey church said to mark the spot where Harold died.