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Lewes to Saltdean

The South Downs Way and Virginia Woolf country.

Start: Lewes station

Finish: Brighton station

Length: 15.5km (9.6 miles). For a shorter walk and other variations, see *below* **Walk options**.

Time: 4 hours 45 minutes. For the whole outing, including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 9 hours.

Transport: Twice hourly trains run between London Victoria and Lewes (journey time: 1 hour 5 minutes). Take the nearest train to 9.30am. From London Bridge and other Thameslink stations, you can change at East Croydon for the train from Victoria. If not walking onto Brighton from Saltdean, there is a frequent coastal bus service to Brighton. A return rail ticket to Lewes is valid from Brighton. For those driving, park centrally in Lewes; the train station has a car park.

OS Landranger Map: 198

OS Explorer Map: OL11 (formerly 122) Lewes, map reference TQ416098, is in East Sussex.

Toughness: 4 out of 10.

Walk notes: This fine South Downs walk follows ridges of chalk grassland offering

panoramic views in all directions. It begins in the historic town of Lewes, then the route quickly rises to follow a ridge along the top of the Downs before descending for lunch to the picturesque and historic village of Rodmell with its literary associations. In the afternoon it gently climbs back over the Downs to the sea to emerge at the town of Saltdean, with the option to continue for a further 8.5 km to Brighton.

Walk options: The directions for the following variations appear at the end of the main walk text. (*see p260*).

a) Alternative return to Lewes via

Northeast Manor: This route, which is lower-lying than the main walk route, takes you inland via Northeast Manor. You follow the main walk directions to point [5], then follow the directions for this option at the end of the main walk text.

b) Shorter walk ending at

Southeast: You can reduce the length of the walk to 12.5km (7.8 miles) by ending at Southeast and returning by train to Lewes from there. Follow the main walk directions until point [5], then

follow the directions at the end of the main walk text.

- c) Lewes to Seaford walk (via South Downs):** For the ultimate, invigorating long walk (24.8km/15.4 miles) from Lewes to Seaford, you can take the short walk option (b) above, ending at Southease station, then take the separate **Southease to Seaford** (walk 26, option (a) in this book) which starts at Southease station.

An option of this walk to Brighton via Rottingdean is available on the website of the Saturday Walkers' Club www.walkingclub.org.uk in the 'Time Out Country Walks 2' section.

WALK DIRECTIONS

[1] Numbers refer to the map.

Coming out of **Lewes station** (past the ticket office), *turn right along Station Road to then immediately cross to the other side via a zebra crossing and in 100 metres turn left along Southover Road*, your direction west. *In 120 metres cross over Garden Street and enter the flint-walled arched gate to **Southover Grange Gardens** on your left.*

Continue on the path inside the gardens with the flint wall to your right. After 70 metres take the path off to the left to pass by **Southover House** across the lawn on your right-hand side. (In summer you might consider visiting the house for coffee before continuing.) Then after 40 metres turn right just before the water course (20 metres before the public conveniences), your direction west, to further on enter the walled garden through the arched entrance.

Turn left on the red-brick path to cross

the footbridge over the water channel, then veer right to take the path west to *exit the gardens through a metal gate in the far corner opposite Elm Tree House.*

*Turn left on the road (Southover High Street), your direction 150 degrees, to continue for 50 metres up to the mini roundabout. Once there, with the **Kings Head** pub on your left, turn right, still on Southover High Street. Continue west passing **Southover Parish Church** on your left and after 200 metres pass **Anne of Cleves House** on your right.*

In a further 220 metres cross a mini roundabout to continue in the same direction as before, passing the **Swan Inn** on your right, with a three-armed road sign on the left-hand side marked 'Kingston, Rodmell, Piddinghoe'. In 20 metres *turn right up Juggs Road on a bridleway to the left of the road.* In 320 metres the road veers left and you continue to cross over the A27 deep below on a metal single-track road bridge.

Continue on this tarmac lane uphill following it round as it veers to the left in 240 metres. In a further 200 metres, at the top of the hill, the lane becomes a car-wide track. Keep straight on down this, your direction due west.

In 250 metres go through a wooden gate (left of a wooden fieldgate) into a field and follow the path in the same direction as before, initially due west. Take the path across the centre of the field towards the direction of the V-shaped paths ahead on the downs, (visible after about 100 metres).

In 650 metres exit through a wooden gate (left of a metal fieldgate) on the opposite side of the field, to go past some small stables on your right and then a mock-Tudor house on your left. The path becomes a tarmac lane with houses to your left.

In 140 metres you cross over a road with a sign on your left telling you this is Kingston [2]. Continue up the car-wide tarmac track opposite passing by a brick

encased red postbox on your right.

In 400 metres where the lane ends, at a junction of tracks and a three-armed path sign, continue up a potentially muddy fenced-in car-wide track, your direction 240 degrees.

In 300 metres go through a metal gate (left of a metal fieldgate) and continue uphill for 80 metres to *where the path divides (the 'V' shape)*. Take the left-hand fork to follow this path upwards, your direction initially 210 degrees, (ignoring all ways off) until after 600 metres at the top of the hill it merges with the South Downs Way **[3]** indicated by a post with a blue (bridleway) arrow.

Veer left on the South Downs Way ignoring all ways off for the next 3.8km until point [4] below.

In more detail: In 70 metres go through a wooden gate (to the left of a fieldgate) and continue uphill with a wire fence to your right. In 100 metres pass by a cattle grid on your right to continue up along the South Downs Way, still the wire fence off to your right.

In 600 metres ignore a major path running off left downhill to continue along the top ridge with the fence on your right. In 140 metres go through a wooden gate on your right, then initially go right uphill for 60 metres following the marked South Downs Way. Then turn left, to follow the top of the ridge along a concrete track, your direction 130 degrees. (There are now good views of the sea coast to your right and ahead.)

In 1.5km at a footpath crossroads, cross over a car-wide track to go through a wooden gate opposite to continue down the left-hand side of a field, bordered by a fence.

In a further 300 metres go over a crossroads of paths, (flanked by two metal gates) to continue in the same direction, along the left-hand side of this next field. In 400 metres (having crossed the meridian line), go through a metal

gate to continue along a fenced-in path.

*In 200 metres at a crossroads of paths at **Mill Hill, [4]** (indicated on the black wrought iron gates of the large house on your right).*

[If you are intending to skip lunch at Rodmell, (which will cut the walk by 1.6km). Ignore the direction below to turn left, and continue down the South Downs Way (SDW). In 600 metres you reach a path T-junction. Turn right to leave the SDW. Rejoin the directions at point [6] below.]

Turn left down a tarmac lane leaving the South Downs Way, following the route of mini-pylons, your direction east. (This is Mill Lane)[].*

In 900 metres the lane ends at a crossroads. This is the village of **Rodmell**. *Cross this road with care* for the **Abergavenny Arms [5]**, the suggested lunch stop, on your left.

[At this point, you may choose to take various options

- (a) Return to Lewes via Northease Manor**
- (b) The Shorter walk ending at Southease**
- (c) The Longer walk ending at Seaford**

Follow the appropriate directions at the end of this main text.]

Otherwise, to continue on the main walk to Saltdean:

After lunch turn left from the pub door, crossing over a lane (The Street that leads down to Monk's House), to continue along the pavement along the left-hand side of the main road.

In 180 metres ignore a footpath sign to your left, to continue down the pavement of the main road.

After 200 metres *cross over the road to go down a car wide track (bridleway) parallel to the road*. In 150 metres the

track curves up and round to the right away from the road to join the South Downs Way, your direction 220 degrees.

In 1km at a path junction, continue ahead to leave the SDW **[6]**

In 80 metres you pass between some farm buildings for 130 metres, and continue up the (now) shingle car wide track. After 800 metres turn left to go through a wooden gate into a field. Follow the track down and then up and round to the right to go through a wooden gate at the top after 400 metres, to come out onto a lane.

Continue in the same direction along the lane, which leads down to Telscombe. In 400 metres you pass by **St. Laurence Church**, Telscombe on your left-hand side, to go up the lane to leave Telscombe.

After 400 metres *at the top of the lane*, go through a wooden gate to the right of a cattle grid. **[7]** Ignore a car wide track forking up to the right. **[!]** In 25 metres, *fork right* along an unmarked bridleway *across a field*, your direction due west.

After 100 metres you pass by (30 metres to your left) the fenced in Telscombe Tye Dew Pond (sometimes dried up in summer). After 350 metres, at the corner of a fenced in garden on your right-hand side, continue along its edge to go through a wooden gate (right of a metal fieldgate) after 50 metres. Continue along a car wide shingle track (bridleway), your direction 290 degrees, (with Saltdean visible down to your left).

In 400 metres ignore a wooden gate (right of a metal fieldgate) ahead and *turn left, initially up a car wide shingle track*, your direction 230 degrees. After 1km go through a wooden gate (left of a metal fieldgate) to go down Longridge Avenue (Saltdean).

In 550 metres you pass by the **Spanish Lady** pub on your left and after a further 60 metres, cross over the coast road to reach the cliff edge. **[8]**

Turn right (passing by a bus stop for buses to Brighton), to reach Whitecliffe Beach Café on your left after 100 metres, (with Saltdean Lido on the other side of the coast road).

If not walking onto Brighton, there is a frequent coastal bus service to Brighton.

Extension from Saltdean to Brighton

This is a straightforward extension to the walk westwards along the coast into Brighton, which adds 8.5km (the first 4km being a cliff walk), to the overall walk.

On reaching the coast at Saltdean turn right in a westerly direction to Brighton Pier.

From Brighton Pier to the railway station

Coming off the pier, turn left (or walk past it, if coming from the direction of this walk) for 40 metres, and then cross the main coast road by the pedestrian lights in front of the Royal Albion Hotel.

Turn left on the far side of the road. In 50 metres, ignore a turning to a kind of plaza to the right, and in 40 metres ignore another minor road right. But in 20 metres more turn right up a larger street (East Street) with shops in the distance.

60 metres along this road, in the second turning on the right (Pool Valley), you can find the **Mock Turtle** tea rooms. Otherwise, continue on East Street, and in 90 metres more, where the road curves left into Bartholomews, keep straight on up a part pedestriansied area towards the domed gateway of **Brighton Royal Pavilion** visible in the distance.

In 130 metres cross a busy road at Castle Square, and carry on for another 70 metres to pass under the domed gateway. The Pavilion is now to your immediate right

Take the second path to the left beyond the gateway to go diagonally across the

park. In 80 metres, keep straight on, with the Brighton Dome, another Pavilion-like building on your right, to exit the park in its far corner in 100 metres.

Here turn right on another part-pedestrianised road, passing the entrance to the **Pavilion Theatre** on your right.

In 90 metres you come to a road junction, and go left. In 30 metres ignore Regent Street to the right, but in another 40 metres, go right up Gardner Street, which is full of alternative shops and cafés. This is the **North Laines** area of the town.

In 150 metres, at the end of Gardner Street, go left and then right into Upper Gardner Street

At the end of this, in 150 metres, turn left uphill. Follow this road to the top of the hill, ignoring ways off.

In 160 metres, cross Frederick Place and go up the steps for 20 metres to a main road, where you turn right. **Brighton Station** is 200 metres away at the end of this street.

Walk Options

a) Alternative return to Lewes via Northease Manor:

Follow the main walk directions until point [5].

Coming out of the pub turn left down the lane, your direction 30 degrees. In 40 metres you pass by a National Trust sign on your right saying 'Monk's House 400 yards'.

[!]*In 300 metres (and 70 metres before Monk's House) turn left off the road following the yellow footpath arrow opposite a triangular road sign indicating 'School 30 mph', going through a kissing gate to the right of a wooden fieldgate 'Denholme'.*

In 35 metres go through a squeeze stile. Continue straight ahead across an open space, your direction 300 degrees.

[A1] In 50 metres cross a brick stepped stile over a flint wall and continue with tennis courts to your left and a hedge to your right.

In 50 metres enter a field passing a wooden fence to your right and a post with yellow (footpath) arrows to continue in the same direction (290 degrees), to follow a footpath across the middle of a field.

In 350 metres you exit the field to join the main road. *Carefully cross this fast road and turn right.* Keep to the narrow grass verge on the left-hand side of this road for safety.

In a further 250 metres you pass by the entrance to **Northease Manor** School on your left at which point the pavement becomes tarmac. **[!]** In 50 metres carefully cross back over the road **[A2]** to *turn right through a double metal fieldgate onto a car-wide track. In 10 metres turn left* on the footpath marked by a post, to enter a field, your direction 340 degrees.

In 280 metres cross over a stile into the next field, to continue ahead, your direction 310 degrees. After 150 metres, on reaching a corner post on your right, continue in the same direction, now with a barbed wire fence on your right. In 60 metres *go over a stile on your right* (right of a metal fieldgate), *to come out onto a lane and turn left.*

In 25 metres, where the lane curves to the left, leave the lane to enter a field on your right via an old metal kissing gate (left of a metal fieldgate) marked by a footpath sign. Pass under an electric cable, continuing in the same direction as before, your direction 320 degrees, keeping the hedge and wire fence to your right as you cross this field.

In 100 metres exit through a wooden

gate to cross a car-wide track and after 15 metres go through another wooden gate, to continue with a wire fence on your right, your direction 300 degrees. After 100 metres continue now with a 2.5 metre-high brick wall on your right-hand side.

In 120 metres go over a stile and cross a tarmac lane to go along a narrow footpath enclosed by a one metre high flint wall.

After 30 metres go over a stile on your left to continue in the same direction along the right-hand edge of a small field. In 60 metres cross a stile in the right-hand corner of this small field, to go along the left-hand edge of the next field, going under some mini pylon cables after 10 metres.

In 180 metres go through a wooden kissing gate and continue on the footpath up across a field, your direction 340 degrees. In 180 metres *the footpath divides as marked by a wooden footpath post*. There is also a circular drain set in concrete between the paths. *Turn right*, down across the field, your direction 10 degrees. (With a view of Lewes ahead in the distance.)

After 350 metres just after passing under some mini-pylon cables you go through a kissing gate. *Go down some steps and after 15 metres turn right*, down a concrete car-wide track, your direction 60 degrees **[A3]**.

In 20 metres turn left up a footpath following the direction of a yellow (footpath) arrow on a post, your direction 330 degrees. After 30 metres go through a wooden kissing gate and in another 30 metres continue along a narrow footpath between a barbed wire fence on your left and trees on your right. In 80 metres you pass by a pen of wooden hutches on your left (where there might be geese).

After 150 metres you emerge into a field to veer slightly right across the field, your direction 10 degrees. In 300 metres go through a wooden kissing gate, to

continue in the same direction.

In 100 metres *the path brings you close to the main road on your left, where you veer right following the footpath* with a ditch stream now on your left, your direction 70 degrees.

After 40 metres go under some mini-pylon cables. In 160 metres go through a wooden kissing gate. After 500 metres the stream goes underground to your left and you *turn left* through a wooden kissing gate (to the left of a metal fieldgate) *to go in the direction of the busy A27*, your direction 20 degrees. In 50 metres go through another wooden kissing gate and turn right.

After 10 metres turn left to *take the underpass under the A27* and then veer right on the tarmac road. *In 70 metres turn left at a T-junction*, your direction 350 degrees.

In 50 metres you pass by the entrance to Southdown Sports Club on your right. Immediately after, *turn right into Priory Park*. Cross the lawn towards the ruins of the **Priory of St. Pancras**. After 150 metres you pass to the right of the ruins. In 80 metres pass the knight's helmet shaped monument on your right 'to mark the 700th anniversary of the Battle of Lewes fought on the 14th May 1264 unveiled by the Duke of Norfolk'.

In 50 metres *exit through a 1.5 metre-wide gap in the brick wall* leading out onto Convent Field. *In 7 metres turn left up towards a flint wall*. After 20 metres, on reaching the wall, *turn right along a tarmac path* with a playing field on your right, your direction east. *In 70 metres turn left*, your direction north, passing by a large grass mound behind a wall to your left, and Lewes Football club to your right.

In 120 metres you come out onto the road, where there is a fine view of Lewes Castle on your left-hand side. Cross this road and turn left. In 20 metres you *come to a mini roundabout*. *Turn right* and after 100 metres come to **Lewes station** on your right for trains back to

London.

For tea, continue past the station on Station Road to cross the railway, then after 100 metres cross Lansdown Place and after another 30 metres you come to the **Garden Room Café**, the suggested place for tea, on your right.

b) Shorter walk ending at Southease:

Follow the main walk to point [5].

After lunch, coming out of the pub, turn left down the lane, your direction 30 degrees. In 400 metres, you pass by **Monk's House** on your right. (see p262 **Woolf's Lair**). (If you want to visit the church take the footpath to the right just before Monk's House, opposite the small road leading off to the left 'To Barley Field'.)

In 80 metres just before the road veers left, take the signposted car-wide track ahead, crossing through a brown metal fieldgate with Monk's House car park on the right-hand side.

Follow this track for 900 metres through several gates along the way until you come to the raised bank of the River Ouse.

Climb up the raised bank and turn right onto a footpath and go through a kissing gate to follow the footpath along the west bank of the river.

In 1.6km, having gone through several gates along the way, you go through a wooden gate to turn left onto a tarmac road crossing the Southease Bridge over the Ouse. In 300 metres you come to **Southease station**.

From here, you can return by train to London, changing at Lewes.

c) Lewes to Seaford walk (via South Downs):

Follow the above short walk option to Southease station.

From Southease station, you start the

separate Southease to Seaford walk (walk 26, option a) in this book).

Lunch & tea places

Abergavenny Arms Newhaven Road, Rodmell, BN7 3EZ (01273 472416).

Open: 11am-3.30pm, 5.30-11pm Mon-Fri; 11am-11pm Sat; noon-10.30pm Sun.

Food served: noon-2pm, 6-9pm Mon-Fri; noon-3.30pm, 6-9.30pm Sat; noon-3.30pm Sun. This large friendly pub has a log fire and a wide menu advertising 'traditional English wholesome home-made food'. This is the suggested lunch stop for the main walk. It also offers cream teas during July and August on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 2.30pm to 5.30pm.

The Spanish Lady Longridge Avenue, Saltdean BN2 8LH (01273 303383).

Whitecliffs Beach Café Marine Drive, Saltdean BN2 8SQ (01273 309219)

Saltdean Lido There is a kind of grand pavilion sticking out from the front of and there is a café is planned.

Rottingdean From Saltdean it is only a further 1.2 km to Rottingdean, where there are many tea options.

Garden Room Café & Gallery 14 Station Street, Lewes, BN4 2DA (01273 478636). **Open:** 10am-5pm Mon-Sat. Situated close to the station, this is the suggested tea stop for the main walk.

White Hart Hotel 55 High Street, Lewes. BN4 1XE (01273 476694/ www.whitehartlewes.co.uk). **Open** 10am-10pm. **Food served** noon-2.15pm, 7-10.15pm daily. One of several alternatives for tea in the centre of town.