

Lewes to Seaford via West Firle walk

Glorious ramble over the South Downs to the sea covering areas less frequently walked



Length 22.9 km (14.3 miles); 544m of ascent and 545m of descent.

You will need to allow at least 6 hours for the walk and for the full day out - trains and meals and drinks - 10 hours

Maps

- Explorer 122, Brighton and Hove plus a tiny part of Explorer 123 to cover the final 2km or so to Seaford station
- Landranger 198, South Downs Brighton and Lewes.

Toughness 8/10 - two major climbs; (but three if you opt for the valley route, rather than the circular ridge path in the Lewes to Glynde section).

Features This walk, along with the shorter options below, is mainly along ridges and offers superb downland views throughout with two excellent lunch-time pubs. The beauty of this walk is that you can see the way ahead so direction finding is fairly easy.

- The walk starts in Lewes, crosses the River Ouse in the town centre and then climbs a lane to a golf club car-park. You then take a signposted path following a circular ridge route, with glorious views throughout followed by a long descent into Glynde. **(6.1km, 3.8miles)**
- From Glynde station you pass the Trevor Arms , a possible early lunch-time pub stop, go through the village to cross over the busy A24 and then take a route passing Preston Court Farm. You go through the

entrance to Firle Park, cross a field and enter the village of West Firle for lunch and drinks at the Ram Inn. **(2.6km, 1.6 miles)**

- From the Ram Inn you take the road through the village to start a long climb up, to a spot near Firle Beacon. You then follow a clear path at the top of the ridge heading for two large radio masts clearly visible in the distance. You pass these and then at the next field boundary find a gently descending path which eventually brings you to Bishopstone and from there to Seaford. **(14.2km, 8.9 miles)**

Author's Note: This is not the 15.4m Lewes to Seaford walk 24c in Time Book of Country Walks Volume 2 but a shorter, more direct variation which links sections of three different SWC walks to provide a glorious ramble over the South Downs covering areas less frequently walked. The shorter options from Glynde are suitable not just for summer but spring and autumn also and possibly in winter if done at a brisk pace and the weather is clear and fine. The main 14.3m walk is a companion walk to Book 1 Walk 31, Glynde to Seaford and Free Walk 47, Lewes circular via Glynde and Southease.

Walk options

There are three options for shortening the walk

1. Lewes to Seaford omitting West Firle 18.6km (11.6m) ; 7/10
2. Glynde to Seaford via West Firle 16.8km (10.5m); 6/10
3. Glynde to Seaford omitting West Firle 12.5km (7.8m); 5/10 **

** There is no lunch-time pub on this short option. Unless you want to start with lunch in Glynde you need to take a picnic/snack lunch and have a meal in Seaford.

You can also do a very short walk from Lewes to Glynde and from there catch a train back to Lewes or Brighton for connecting trains back to London.

Transport Trains

These are from London Victoria and run direct to Lewes. You could also catch a train from London Victoria to Brighton and then take a connecting train to Lewes or Glynde.

If you are starting the walk from Glynde then you can change at Lewes or catch a train to Brighton and take a connecting train. On a Sunday you have a better connection to Glynde via Brighton.

Buy a day return to Seaford. This also covers you for journeys to and from Brighton

If you end the walk in Glynde there are hourly trains from there to Brighton and Lewes.

Bus

You can take a leisurely bus-ride to the centre of Brighton from a bus-stop just 50m beyond Seaford Station.

Car

You can park in Lewes and catch a train from Seaford to Lewes or park in Brighton and again catch a train from Seaford to Brighton

Suggested train

If starting the walk at Lewes take the nearest train to 09.45.

In British Summer Time for the shorter walks from Glynde you can take the nearest train to 10.45.

Lunch and Tea

The Trevor Arms in Glynde has closed

If you are following the route via West Firle your lunch-time pub is the Ram Inn at West Firle (01273 858222). This Pub and Bed and Breakfast is very popular in summer so you will need to ring ahead to book a table.


There are no refreshment stops beyond West Firle until you have completed the 8.9m leg into Seaford so it is advisable to take some snacks and plenty of water with you on this long stretch.

In Seaford the recommended tea stop is Salts Café in the recreation ground behind the sea-front road and about 400m from the station. It does soft drinks, tea and cakes and a range of excellent ice-creams. Open until about 6pm on weekends.

If you did the short walk from Glynde to Seaford and want a meal there then Trawlers fish and chip shop is recommended. It is just a few yards from Seaford Station but is not open on a Sunday. There are other meal options in Seaford and it is worth googling "cafes in Seaford" to find some alternatives. Choice may be restricted on a Sunday when places tend to close early.

Help Us!

After the walk, we would love to get your [feedback](#)

You can upload photos to the  [SWC Group on Flickr](#) ([upload your photos](#)) and [videos to](#)  [Youtube](#). This walk's tags are:



By Car **Start** BN7 2UP **Finish**BN25 2AR

Help National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33
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Walk Directions

It is best to use an OS map but as this is a “composite” walk using the instructions for three different SWC walks you can use these. You will need

- **Time Out Country Walks Volume 2**, preferably the latest 2011 edition, earlier editions will be fine but will mean you will have to follow alternative directions on the final leg of the walk ,
- **paras 1 to 23 of the on-line download instructions for Book 1 Walk 31, Glynde to Seaford**. The download instructions for Book, 1 can be found [here](#).

Brief walk directions (use in conjunction with a map)

The main walk falls into 3 parts.

1. **Lewes Station to Glynde Station - Book 2 walk 25, pages 268-269 of the 2011 edition.**
 1. Turn right out of Lewes station and head towards the centre of town
 2. Turn right on the main shopping street with its cafes and shops, and cross the bridge to continue straight on.
 3. Cross a road and climb steeply up a lane to a golf club car park.
 4. At the end of the golf-club car park find a footpath sign and go through a wooden gate to follow the clear path away from the car-park .
 5. After 320m on this path the walk directions in the first para, column 2 on page 268 of the book suggest you veer slightly right to go downhill. However the suggested and much nicer route with superb views and which also saves you a stiff 700m climb is to continue ahead on the path at first walking below the golf course. After about a kilometre you go through a gate (a footpath sign is 30m ahead of you) and turn right to continue on a path making sure you stay on the top of the hill and not descending into the dip to your right. After about 400m the path goes down and up a small dip to cross a stile and you continue ahead for another 400m with a field boundary to your right until you reach another stile just to your right. Here

you pick up the directions in the penultimate paragraph, column 2 page 268 of the book.

6. Follow the path downhill all the way to Glynde. You go through a gate and turn left on a lane to pass the village shop.
7. Turn right after the village shop and continue to Glynde Station.

2. **Glynde Station to the Ram Inn West Firle. Paras 1 to 23 of the download instructions for Book 1 Walk 31 Glynde to Seaford.**

1. Go past Glynde Station and the Trevor Arms pub and continue along the road until you reach the busy A27. (It is not recommended you turn right just after the Trevor Arms to cross some fields as this adds nothing to the walk.)
2. Cross the A27 and continue ahead along the lane until you reach a driveway to your left signposted to Preston Court. Here you can shorten the route – and not take lunch at the Ram Inn – by continuing ahead up the lane for almost 2km, climbing steadily until you reach the four-armed footpath sign, cattle grid and gate, marking the start of the Book 2 Walk 26 section of the walk.
3. To continue to the Ram Inn at West Firle: turn left down the driveway, cross a stile just past a barn and continue ahead across a field
4. Go through a swing gate and continue ahead, past a barn to then swing right on a lane to reach a cross-roads where you continue ahead to go through the entrance to Firle Park.
5. Bear right across a grassy area to find a kissing gate 100m away and continue ahead across a field towards some tennis courts just visible ahead.
6. Go through a gate with a cricket field ahead of you and bear right with a track to reach the Ram Inn in about 100m.

3. **Ram Inn, West Firle to Seaford**

1. Follow the download instructions from the Ram Inn (para 16) to **near the top of the ridge (para 23)**. Here **do not** turn left for the route to Alfriston – but climb a little further up the hill to find the clear ridge path and **turn right** to follow the path towards two tall radio masts in the distance ahead of you.
2. Follow the path past the radio masts and in 200m you reach a field boundary with a gate, a four-armed footpath sign and a cattle grid. Here you pick up the instructions for **Book 2 Walk 26, Southeast to Seaford, page 277, 2nd column note [4]**. Because of the direction you have come from you turn left to leave the South Downs Way.
3. For the next few kilometres you essentially head south towards Bishopstone. When you reach **point [5]** on page 278 in the walk instructions you have a choice: follow the 2011 Book 2 instructions **or** take the route described in earlier editions of Book 2 and the route shown on the GPX map.
4. **Earlier versions of Book 2 directions and route shown on GPX map.**

1. Continue straight on at the path junction, descending with a barbed-wire fence to your left where you reach Poverty Bottom. This path becomes a car-wide track and you soon pass buildings of the South Eastern Water treatment works where the track becomes a tarmac lane. Continue along the lane for the next 1.3km to the village of Norton.
2. At the village of Norton you come to a junction with a car-wide gravel track to the left and a house on the corner. (If you want to take a short cut you can continue on the quiet lane all the way into Bishopstone and pick up the book instructions at the next paragraph after **point [6]** "In 70 metres where the road bends right.....")
3. However the main route is leave the lane and turn right over a stile at the junction and follow the car-wide cinder track for 700 metres to the top of the hill. At the top of the hill go straight ahead for 40m to a fence. Here there are fine views of Newhaven. Turn left at the fence to follow the ridge but then follow a faint path that curves left aiming slightly to the right of St Andrews Church to your left in the valley below. In 150m you reach a kissing gate leading into a wood.** **You have now joined the 2011 Book 2 Walk 26 instructions at the top of page 279.**
4. ** Rather than follow the cinder track it may be easier and quicker to take a clear grassy path about 6 metres below and to the left of the main track. Follow the now narrow path round to the left missing the views of Newhaven but with fine views of St Andrews Church and the village of Bishopstone to your left and in 200m you will reach the kissing gate leading into the wood.
5. **Current 2011 edition of Book 2 directions.** Follow the directions from **point [5]** on page 278 to Bishopstone and after perhaps resting at St Andrews church - a lovely place to stop.
6. [Both options continue] Continue the short distance into Seaford. En route you pass Bishopstone station where you can pick up trains to Lewes or Brighton.
7. If you have the energy then Seaford is a nice place to swim in the sea, but the beach is shingle so appropriate footwear might be helpful. The tide does not go very far out at Seaford so you do not have to specifically time your arrival.

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