



Lewes to Seaford via West Firle walk

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



Length 22.3 km (13.9 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 OL11, Brighton and Hove plus a tiny part of Explorer OL25, Eatbourne, to cover the final 2km or so to Seaford station
- Landranger 198, South Downs Brighton and Lewes.

Toughness 7/10 - 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, 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. Before these you turn left on a private road past Blackcap Farm, then steadily downhill through a glorious hidden valley, continuing to Bishopstone and from there to Seaford. **(13.6km, 8.5 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 first two sections closely follow [Walk 47, Lewes circular via Glynde and Southease](#) and [Book 1 Walk 31, Glynde to Seaford](#); refer to these walks for variations on the main route described here. On the third section, the descent from the South Downs to Bishopstone meets and eventually merges with the end of [Book 2 Walk 26, Southease to Seaford](#).

Walk options

There are three options for shortening the walk

1. Lewes to Seaford omitting West Firle 18km (11.2m) ; 7/10
2. Glynde to Seaford via West Firle 16.2km (10.1m); 6/10
3. Glynde to Seaford omitting West Firle 11.9km (7.4m); 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.

Towards the end of the walk you could swap on to [Book 2 Walk 26, Southease to Seaford](#) at the point where the routes meet, which is highlighted in the walk instructions. This route stays higher than the valley route on this walk (and saves 400m distance and 20m ascent).

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

If you are following the route via West Firle your lunch-time pub is the Ram Inn at West Firle ([01273 858222](tel:01273858222)). 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 stops are Papuchinos (at Seaford and Newhaven Sailing Club) and Salts Café in the recreation ground behind the sea-front road and about 400m from the station, which does soft drinks, tea and cakes and a range of excellent ice-creams. Open until about 6pm on weekends. Within Seaford railway station you have **Steamworks** mini-pub and bar, serving an excellent range of draught beers, spirits and soft drinks. It makes for a comfortable stop to while away time if you have a wait for your train home.

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, please leave a [comment](#), it really helps. Thanks!

You can also 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 • Traveline (bus times): 0871 200 22 33 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

Version Sep-24 [PeterB](#) [Alexander](#)

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Walk Directions

Brief walk directions (use in conjunction with a map)

The main walk falls into 3 parts.

1. Lewes Station to Glynde Station.

1. Turn right out of Lewes station and in 140m turn right again into Lansdown Place.
2. In another 450m turn right at traffic lights on to a pedestrianised shopping street (Cliffe High Street) with cafes and shops. Cross a bridge and pass the Harveys brewery, and continue straight on to Malling Street.
3. Cross Malling Street and climb steeply up Chapel Hill (signposted for Lewes Golf Club).
4. When you come to the golf club car car park, look for a footpath sign slightly to the right. Take the footpath through a gate leading into a field, maybe with docile cattle in it. Follow the path, initially along the top edge of the field then straight on. **Ignore a path down the hill to the right after 350m; this is the route of walk 2.25.** Our path now rises gradually with fine views across the valley to reach a metal fieldgate in a further 800m.
5. Go through the wooden gate to the left of the fieldgate and carry on in the same direction for 600m. Go through a metal gate and straight on (not on the fainter path through the grass on the right), but **after 50m merge with a**

broader grass path half right heading for the hilltop making sure you stay on the top of the hill and not descending into the dips to your left and right. Soon, views open up on to the wide plain of the Low Weald to the left. In 400m go down into a dip and up the other side to a gate with a stile. Cross this and another stile shortly after, with a fence now on your right.

6. 500m after this second stile, you come to a gate on the right. Here (**!150m BEFORE the gate leading to Mount Caburn**) turn LEFT on a grass path, soon heading downhill. You could of course detour to visit the Iron Age hill fort and double back to rejoin the route.
7. Follow the path downhill all the way to Glynde. Go through a gate and turn left on a lane to pass the village shop. (**In more detail:** Glynde is soon visible below, your direction 110 degrees. After 450m cross a stile 25m to the left of a fieldgate. Follow the path down in a similar direction, with a wire fence on your right, towards a house with white windows. In 500m cross a stile in the lower right hand corner of the field to continue downhill with the main path. In 150m go through a wooden gate to a road, where you turn left to pass the village shop after 15m.)
8. Turn right after the village shop and continue for 180m to Glynde Station.

2. Glynde Station to the Ram Inn West Firle.

1. Go past Glynde Station and continue along the road as it bends right and then left until you reach the busy A27.
2. Cross the A27 and continue ahead along the lane until you reach a driveway to your left signposted to Preston Court.
3. 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 a four-armed footpath sign, cattle grid and gate. Turn left here, joining the South Downs Way. Walk along the top of the ridge, soon passing some masts. After 1.4 km you come to a car park where you rejoin the main route at point **[A]**.
4. To continue to the Ram Inn at West Firle: turn left down the car-wide tarmac driveway. In 150m you come to a dilapidated barn on your right and the driveway to a house on your left. Go straight on through metal fieldgates and almost immediately cross a stile into a field on your left.
5. Follow the right-hand side of the field to a metal swing gate. Continue along the field boundary, and in 120m pass a clump of trees and barns. Immediately beyond the barns, turn left on a track and then right on to a lane past Preston House (on your left) to reach a cross-roads. Ignore all three roads here and go half-right through the entrance to Firle Park.
6. 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.

7. 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. Turn left along the tarmac road into West Firle village, heading due south.
2. In 110m you pass Firle Stores and Post Office on your left and bear right with the road. 25m further on, turn left off the road up the passageway leading to the Church of St Peter, Firle (the entrance is to the right).
3. With the church entrance behind you, go straight ahead to exit the churchyard and turn right down the road, your direction 295°. After 65m you come to a T-junction.
4. Turn left, your direction 190° initially, into the private road which has a notice 'Bridleway. No motor vehicles.'
5. In 85 metres you come to the end of the brick and stone farm building on your left. Keep straight on, ignoring ways off until in 150m at a fork in the path, take the left (main) fork.
6. Follow the track with a stone wall on your left, gently uphill. After 500m there is a stone gateway with a wooden gate over to the left. Ignore the minor path to the right going into the trees and bear right for 15m to a set of double fieldgates. Go through the gates, and keep ahead along a wide track, with open fields to your left and a line of trees to your right, steadily uphill towards the ridge ahead, your direction due south. Firle Tower is now much closer, behind and to the left.
7. Ignore ways off and 550m up this track go through the wooden swing gate to the right of a metal fieldgate and walk straight ahead uphill. After 90m, before getting to the top of the hill, the path veers left towards the top of the ridge, your direction 170° initially.
8. Follow the path now more steeply uphill for 400m as it leads you to the top of the ridge. Make for the fence that runs along the ridge top. On a clear day you can see the sea on your right with Newhaven prominent at 220° and Seaford just visible at 190°. 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.
9. Before the radio masts, you reach a small car park **[A]** and beyond it, a road descending to your right. Turn left here on the private road serving Blackcap Farm. After the farm the drive turns right towards the farmhouse, but you continue ahead through a wooden gate. Continue due South on a grassy path following the left edge of a field by a wire fence, soon passing a possibly dried up dew pond on your right. Go through another gate and continue more steeply downhill. You pass through a narrow belt of trees and after going through another gate the grassy path bottoms out. Go through a gate in to

another field (i.e. do not follow the tractor track upwards and to the right) and continue through a lovely remote valley with no habitations in sight. The hills on your right are Fore Hill and Snap Hill, on the left are Heighton Hill and Gardener's Hill. You reach a path junction where you follow the blue arrow to the right between hedgerows (not sharply right into the next field).

10. Follow the path, which may be overgrown, for 200m to reach a path junction.
11. At this junction, it is possible to switch on to Book 2 Walk 26, Southease to Seaford, a high route leading over Norton Hill and down to Bishopstone Church, saving 400m distance and 20m ascent. To do this, go straight on at the junction (point [5] in the directions for that walk) and follow the directions from the start of page 4 of the PDF. After Bishopstone Church **[B]** below] the routes merge.
12. To continue with our route, turn **left** at the path junction and descend to reach Poverty Bottom. This path becomes a car-wide track with a barbed-wire fence to your left and you soon pass buildings of the South East Water treatment works where the track becomes a tarmac lane. Continue along the lane to the hamlet of Norton.
13. As you come into Norton you reach a junction with a car-wide gravel track to the left and a house on the corner. (At this point if you are tired, you could continue straight on along a quiet road for 1.1km to Bishopstone Church, saving 700m distance and 20m ascent.)
14. Turn right through a gate just before the junction and follow the car-wide dirt track uphill for 700m. As you approach the top of the climb, the track turns to the right and you ignore a very faint path to the left. There are several paths in this area, none of which are marked, but in practice you cannot go far wrong. In 70m, just before the top of the climb, you will see a concrete trough ahead, on the right of the path. There are two grass paths to the left here; take the first path, just before an isolated bush. In 200m take a path to the left into woods, rejoining Walk 2/26 on page 4 of the pdf at the kissing gate into the wood, marked 'In memory of Dick Dennis'.
15. Go through this gate and continue downhill on a path under trees, your direction 150 degrees. In 300m go left through a wooden kissing gate.
16. Keep to the left-hand edge of the field beyond, following a flint wall to your left. In 50m go through a kissing gate, to then take the path half right across the field towards Bishopstone church, your direction 110 degrees.
17. In 270 metres cross over a stile and turn left along a car-wide track. In 25m go right uphill on a concrete path and in 20m turn left up some wooden steps, your direction east. Cross a grassy space to enter the churchyard of St. Andrew's Church **[B]** (a lovely place to stop) through an iron gate.

18. Turn right to follow the path around the church and turn left on to the paved path to exit the churchyard through a lychgate. Turn right on the gravel path down to the road for 40 metres and then turn right on to the road.
19. In 70 metres, where the road bends right, there are two footpaths marked by a post to the left of a wooden gate. Take the right hand path, following the direction for 'Bishopstone Station $\frac{3}{4}$ mile' diagonally across the field, your direction south. In 300 metres, in the far corner of the field, go through a metal kissing-gate and veer right to walk in a valley with a hilly bank on your left hand side, and hedgerow and metal fencing on your right, your direction 220 degrees.
20. In 400m cross a stile and ascend the bank ahead to emerge on to the busy A259 (cross with care). Turn right on the A259 for 30m , then turn left on Marine Parade (pavement on the right).
21. You pass Bishopstone station where you can pick up trains to Lewes or Brighton. Go under the railway bridge and past the entrance to Buckle Caravan Park, then follow the pavement round to the left. Go through the first gap in the barriers and turn left along the seafront, following signs for the Vanguard Way and the Sussex Ouse Valley Way, on a concrete path with the shingle beach on your right (or alternatively turn right instead for Seaford and Newhaven Sailing Club, which houses Papachinos at the Galley, a convenient refreshment stop). Continue on concrete below the seawall, passing beach huts and a sign for Bönningstedt Promenade (in recognition of a twinning link with a German town). When the concrete comes to an end, leave the beach and cross the main road. After the houses on your left end, go through the first gap in the brick wall on your left and down a tarmac slope to enter The Salts (recreation ground). Cut diagonally across the grass, keeping to the left of a play area and cafe (another refreshment option), then cross the cricket field (unless play is in progress), towards a tarmac path (to the right of a cream coloured building and in the direction of the church). Once on the tarmac path, keep right of a car park in to Richmond Road, then turn left opposite Morrisons on Dane Road and left again for Seaford station.

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