



Seaford Circular via Alfriston and Bishopstone walk

A new perspective on, and glorious panoramic views of, the South Downs.

Length 25.8 kms (15 3/4 miles)

Toughness 7/10; 450m of ascent/descents

Maps Explorer map OL 25 (formerly OS Explorer map 123)

Walk Notes This is a map-led or gps-led walk with only minimal written instructions. For the place names noted below in bold please refer to the Explorer OL 25 map or your gps device . The walk incorporates sections of three other SWC walks but most of it follows quieter trails than the “popular” South Downs routes in the area (eg the Seven Sisters and the Southease to Alfriston trail) and which are not included in other SWC walks. It has some glorious panoramic views of the South Downs with many spots for a picnic.

The outline instructions are written doing the walk anti-clockwise but you can do it clockwise as your Alfriston lunch stop is about half way, ie around 8 miles.

Walk Options You could shorten the walk by missing out Alfriston altogether and going past the turning for the **Rathfinny vineyard (para RV)**, continuing on the **Comp track** until you reach the confluence of paths in **para A** where you take a very sharp left. This makes for a picnic lunch of around 16 km (10m).

Also, from Hope Gap the main route continues along the coast past Coastguard Cottages before turning inland, but an 'inland' alternative is described via South Hill Barn which shaves 800 metres off the distance.

Using local buses, you can start the walk from Eastbourne Road, Seaford, 6.7 km into the main route. The stop is called 'Seaford, Chyngton Lane' and buses 12, 12A, 12X, 13 and 701 provide useful services.

In Alfriston, buses 26, 47 and 126 provide a reasonable service in and out on weekends. The bus stop is Alfriston, Waterloo Square, and comes after 13.6 km of the main route.

You could walk the route in reverse (clockwise) starting at Bishopstone station, cutting out 3.1km along the seafront. Using the main route, this would provide a satisfyingly spectacular finish over Seaford Head. Or you could combine this with a finish at the Eastbourne Road bus stop mentioned above, to give a shorter walk of 16km (10 miles).

Travel

Trains: From London Victoria buy a day return to Seaford changing at Lewes. Take a train after 9.30am arriving at Seaford at around 11.15. At a steady pace you should arrive in Seaford at the end of your walk around 6pm.

There are two trains an hour from Seaford to Lewes and from there trains back to London. You may find it more convenient not to get off at Lewes but to continue on to Brighton where there are more connecting (and faster) trains back to London.

Eat

Refreshments: Please refer to [CW1.31](#) Glynde to Seaford for detailed information about pub lunch options in Alfriston and refreshments in Seaford. Note also that there is a trailer cafe at South Hill Barn (Brewster's Coffee Co, open till 5pm, but possibly closing earlier in winter).

Author

PTB May 2018, some amendments SG Sep 2024

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 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](#)

Copyright

© [Saturday Walkers Club](#). All Rights Reserved. No commercial use. No copying. No derivatives. Free with attribution for one time non-commercial use only. www.walkingclub.org.uk/site/license.shtml

Walk Directions

Outline Walk Directions – to be used in conjunction with OS map OL 25 or gps

with OS maps

1. Turn right out of Seaford Station on Church Street and at the end of the road left and right on The Causeway. Head the short distance to the coast where you turn left along the **Vanguard Way** on a concrete promenade, passing a Martello Tower . You are following the start of SWC Book 2 Walk 28, Seaford to Eastbourne – the Seven Sisters Walk)
2. Climb very steeply up to **Seaford Head** and continue on the **Vanguard Way** and (newly waymarked) England Coast Path, steadily downhill to **Hope Gap**.
3. At **Hope Gap** you have a choice. For the main walk, continue on the coast path and Vanguard Way. You reach a three armed wooden signpost, with the Coastguard Cottages to your right, indicating paths back to Seaford Head, right on the England Coast Path and Vanguard Way and left to South Hill Barn. Ignore all these options and continue ahead at the left (top) side of a grass triangle. You pass a triangular stone war memorial and rejoin the Vanguard Way shortly at the next signpost. Ignore the next path over a stile (which leads back to South Hill Barn). Take the next path at a wooden marker post (note that you could continue to the A259 for an early lunch at the Cuckmere Inn, but you will need to retrace your steps as the main road is far too busy with no pavement), steeply uphill up a bank at first, keeping to the right of a wire fence. It soon levels out and becomes a wide grass path. Turn right at an unmarked junction through a (probably open) field gate, before the first barns on your right, then left at the end of the first field, between wire fences, then turn right on a cycle path at the next junction. Ignore the following paragraph.
4. Alternatively, from Hope Gap take a signed path to your left along **Hope Bottom** soon bearing left and then passing **South Hill Barn** on your left. There are often exhibitions here as well as refreshments. After **South Hill Barn** you bear right and steeply downhill on a concrete road (watch out for traffic going to and from the car park) and continue ahead past **Chyngton Farm** on your right on an unmade road (Chyngton Lane). There are houses on your left and later on your right. You pass a cycle path signposted on your right, where the main route rejoins you.
5. You continue on the cycle path, crossing the very busy **Eastbourne Road**, continuing slightly to the right on Chyngton Lane North. The path continues to the left of Dymock Farm and then crosses the **Alfriston Road**.
6. The path bears left and your route merges with a path on your right. The track is called **the Comp**. Ignore a second path on your right and a path across the golf course to your left.
7. [RV] Take the next path to the right, entering **Rathfinny Vineyard**. Head downhill, passing a post with a button which if you press it will encourage you to stock up your wine cellar at the vineyard on your right.

8. You reach a four-armed footpath post where you cross a wide track (ignoring gates to left and right) and follow the path downhill. Turn right at a path junction with a wooden bridleway signpost and start to climb. Turn right again at a wooden signpost, then left at the next signpost, keeping to the right edge of this part of the vineyard, alongside a hedgerow. By Rathfinny Estate marker posts and signposts, go through a gap on your right and immediately turn left on a marked bridleway, ignoring the Rathfinny Trails ahead. Continue uphill with the hedgerow on your left. At the top of the climb turn right (South East at first) at a wooden signpost, with a wire fence on your left. There are extensive views to both sides and you may be able to spot the tip of the spire of Alfriston church to your left (at 70 degrees). The way is now gently downhill. At a wooden signpost take a bridleway to the left with wire fences on both sides. Ignore a wooden gate on your left and continue downhill (75°) with hedgerows on both sides, though there are occasional views to your left. Ignore another wooden gate and path to the left.
9. You continue on your path passing a camp site on your left and then shortly reaching the **Alfriston Road**.
10. Cross the **Alfriston Road** and turn left along the pavement soon bearing right to enter the lovely green in front of Alfriston Church which with its many wooden benches makes an ideal picnic spot. Alternatively you can continue along the Alfriston Road to lunch at one of its pubs – **the George Inn** with its attractive beer garden is recommended,
11. 12. After lunch and from opposite **the George Inn** take the **South Downs Way (SDW)** signed footpath going steadily uphill. (This is the reverse of a section of the Glynde to Seaford walk (Book 1 walk 31.)
12. You continue uphill on the **SDW** through open countryside eventually going through a wooden gate and you continue ahead ignoring a signed footpath to your left.
13. You reach the **Bo Peep car-park** and a narrow road to your right going steeply downhill. Here you take a path to your left with **Bostal Bottom** then (after a gate) Blackstone Bottom below on your left. The path rises briefly then drops again with wide views to the left and a rough hedgerow blocking views to the right. The path swings left and you continue ahead with superb panoramic views.
14. [A] You reach a complex path junction ! Take the path which is half right (South) passing to the left of a memorial bench.
15. You soon reach a fork in the path (not marked) and you go through a gap in to a field on your right (this is the right of way; you can continue on the left fork which becomes a surfaced track, but be sure to cut in to the field further down). Keep to the left of the field and go through a gap in to a second field with **Blackstone Barn** away to your right. At the corner of the field, follow the boundary round to the right (the way ahead looks tempting but it just leads to **Blatchington reservoirs**). Continue above **New Barn** on your right. You are heading for **Bishopstone**.

16. [B] Your path eventually meets a road opposite **Bishopstone church**; turn left here.
17. You now follow the written instructions for the Southease to Seaford walk **CW2.26** from Point 6 on page 4 of the pdf on the SWC website. Cross two fields and the A259, take the road ahead and go under the railway bridge (Bishopstone station is to your left) 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 Papuchinos at the Galley, a convenient refreshment stop).
18. 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. At a break in the housing on your left, 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 the car park in to Richmond Road, then turn left opposite Morrisons on Dane Road and left again for Seaford station.
19. **Note:** if you wish to avoid the only two stiles on this walk you can take the road in para [B] above on your right to soon meet the busy A259 where you turn left and then pick up the route just before **Bishopstone station**, where if you wish you can pick up a train back to Lewes.

© Saturday Walkers Club. All Rights Reserved. No commercial use. No copying. No derivatives. Free with attribution for one time non-commercial use only.
www.walkingclub.org.uk/site/license.shtml