This leaflet aims to encourage car-free travel from Lewes. It is produced by the Lewes Town Partnership, which is supported by Lewes Town Council.

lewestownpartnership.wordpress.com

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Lewes District Council



### SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK

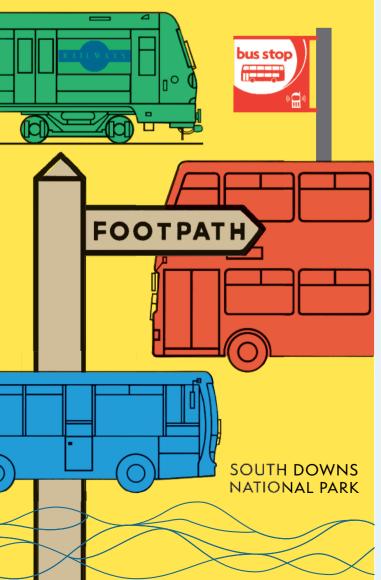
For more ideas on car-free days out see www.travelloglewes.co.uk

For more on what to see and do in the Lewes area, visit www.staylewes.org

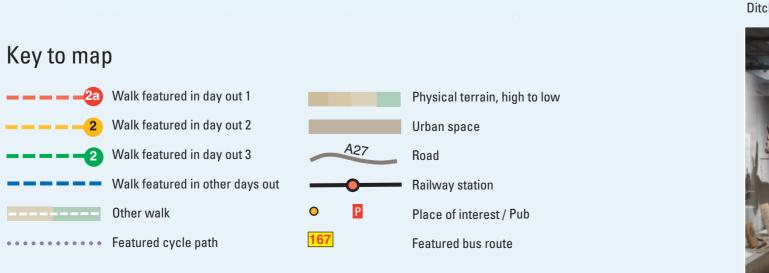
Details correct at time of going to print. We do not accept any responsibility for loss, damage or injury, however caused, arising directly or indirectly from use of this leaflet. Text and walks research: Tim Locke Design and artwork: Andy Gammon Art & Design, Lewes



# **CAR-FREE** around Lewes on foot and by public transport **DAYS OUT FROM LEWES**











Sundial on Bishopstone church porch. Photo: Tim Locke.



### PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFORMATION

For information about public transport including bus routes and timetables visit www.traveline.info/se.

The Discovery Ticket gives unlimited travel across the South Downs and beyond in the south of England. www.southdowns.gov.uk/discoveryticket.

National rail enquiries Tel: 03457 484950, www.nationalrail.co.uk.

### **BUS COMPANIES**

Brighton and Hove (routes 12, 28, 29, 29B, 79; Saver tickets, cover all-day travel) Tel: 01273 886200, www.buses.co.uk.

Compass Travel (routes 123, 125, 143, 167) Tel: 01903 690025 www.compass-travel.co.uk

CTLA Lewes area community transport Tel: 01273 517332, www.ctla.org.uk.

**Cuckmere Buses** (serves Cuckmere Valley, including Ramblerbus 47) Tel: 01323 870920, www.cuckmerebuses.org.uk.

The map shows some dedicated cycle paths that can be used to explore the area. The South Downs offer the best mountain biking in the Southeast, with a vast network of bridleways including most of the South Downs Way itself.

### Ideas for cycle rides:

On the **west side** of Lewes, a well-signed cycle path runs parallel to the A27, past Falmer and the entrance to Stanmer Park, while the South Downs Way leads over Ditchling Beacon towards 'Jack and Jill' windmills. On the east side of Lewes, a cycle path leaves the far end of South Street, follows the river and crosses the A26 to go through the industrial estate. Here, route 90 signs lead to the cycle path beside the A27, giving access to Glynde and a network of quiet lanes around Ripe and Arlington, and (via road crossing) Firle, where off-roaders can follow the track beneath the Downs described in Day Out 2 towards Berwick and Alfriston, or climb up the South Downs to join the South Downs Way. South of Lewes the best options are off-road, along the South Downs Way as described in Day Out 1 to Rodmell, then continuing on it up to Firle Beacon and on to Alfriston. The Egrets Way is currently being developed as a cycle route by the River Ouse. Well-signposted, a stretch of National Cycle Route (NCN) 2 runs mostly along the seafront and roads between Brighton, Seaford and Exceat, then inland along a road north to Berwick; see www.sustrans.org.uk. **North of Lewes** are some excellent quiet roads in the rolling countryside of the Weald. You can take your bike on a train; particularly useful stations for exploring the area are Glynde, Berwick, Falmer, Southease, Bishopstone and Seaford.

### **Cycle repair shops:**

Lewes Cycleshack, 53 Cliffe High St, Lewes, Tel: 01273 479688. Cycleshack 2, 39a Friars Walk, Lewes, Tel: 01273 483108. Mr Cycles, 26 Clinton Place, Seaford, Tel: 01323 893130, www.mrcvcles.co.uk. Dr Bike, is a free service offering minor bike repairs, safety checks and advice, every Saturday 10am–12pm outside Nutty Wizard Café, Cliffe High Street, Lewes, www.drbikelewes.com.

### Cycle hire:

Friston Cycles, Seven Sisters Country Park, Exceat, Tel: 01323 870310, www.fristoncycles.co.uk. Housedean Farm Campsite, Brighton Road, near Lewes, Tel: 07919 668816, www.south downswaybikehire.co.uk; pick up from Cycle Shack in Lewes by arrangement.



The South Downs above Kingston. Photo: Tim Locke.

# DAY OUT 1

### **RODMELL AND MONK'S HOUSE**

Along the River Ouse, or over the Downs, to visit the Woolfs' Sussex home. Walk from Lewes or take the train. Optional circular walk from Southease railway station.

### **BUS No.123**

Lewes–Newhaven (Monday–Saturday). Alight Abergavenny Arms, then a 5-minute walk along The Street (on the right-hand side of the pub).

TRAIN Southease then circular walk (2.5 miles, 4km, 1 hour). Leave Southease station on platform 1 side, follow the track, over the river. At Southease village green, keep to the right of the church (itself has fragments of medieval wall paintings inside), and at the top of it find the signposted permissive footpath on the right, through a gate then up along field edges parallel to the main road, to the edge of Rodmell. Emerge on road just after Rodmell village sign, then carry along the road and turn right at the Abergavenny Arms into the village to reach Monk's House. Carry on, past end of road, on track to River Ouse, where turn right along riverside path to bridge near Southease station; recross the bridge to return to station.

REFRESHMENTS Abergavenny Arms, Rodmell (Tel: 01273 472416) Café at Southease Youth Hostel (east side of Southease rail station; Tel: 0845 371 9574). Juggs, Kingston (off route; Tel: 01273 472523).

WALKS from Lewes: You have a choice of options, a or b. The easier is along the River Ouse (3.7 miles, 6km, 1hr 15min, level): 1a Leave Lewes near the river bridge on Cliffe High Street, taking Railway Lane (on the right-hand side of the Riverside shopping hall), then as the road bends right keep forward through the gate into the Railway Land nature reserve. Follow the riverside path for 2.8 miles/4.5km on the raised dyke along the canalised River Ouse, and with views over the adjacent watermeadows and under the rail and road bridges. After passing under the second set of power lines, 2a take a track, signposted bridleway, on the right into Rodmell and to Monk's House.

The more demanding and spectacular high-level route over the South Downs (5.6 miles, 9km, 2hr 30min, hilly) starts from the southwest side of Lewes, by the Swan (pub), at the far end of Southover High Street. 1 Follow the main road out of town, past the Swan on your right, then next right into Juggs Road. This soon rises to a bridge over the A27, and becomes an unsurfaced track. Enter a field, then pass Ashcombe Windmill, and drop to the road. Cross over to the track opposite, past a line of houses at the edge of Kingston. 2D Where the track divides at the foot of the slope, fork left, steeply up. At the top, turn left on the South Downs Way, and follow signposts, passing the Hemisphere signpost after 1 mile/1.6km, then reaching the top of a metalled lane. (3b) Turn left (leaving the South Downs Way) to drop to the main road by the Abergavenny Arms. Take The Street opposite into Rodmell and to Monk's House. Return to Lewes: with Monk's House on left, follow the village street to reach the bus stop, **bus No.123**, by the Abergavenny Arms. Alternatively, for Southease railway station, turn left out of Monk's House onto the pavement, then left on the licensed path to Southease, where you turn left for the station.

### PLACES OF INTEREST

**Railway Land** *Free access; always open.* A local nature reserve, on a riverside area of woodland and meadow, partly on an area of former railway sidings and partly on former house gardens. It includes the reedbed creation 'Heart of Reeds', by Chris Drury, and is noted as a site for birds, wild flowers, insects and amphibians.

Juggs Road This route leads to Brighton, from where women used jugs to carry fish to market, hence the Juggs pub, Kingston

Ashcombe Windmill This is a modern replica of a six-sailed windmill that stood on the same site until being destroyed by a storm in 1916. Known as 'Old Six Sweeps' it was one of many windmills that once dotted the landscape around Lewes.

Monk's House Rodmell; National Trust; Tel: 01273 474760; seasonal opening. The final house of Virginia and Leonard Woolf is a hugely evocative place, decorated as it was in their lifetime. The Woolfs came here in 1919 and established it as a country base for visiting Virginia's sister, Vanessa, at Charleston. Virginia's writing hut is at the end of the garden. It was from here that Virginia left to drown in the Ouse river in 1941. Rodmell village itself has a striking array of local building styles and materials, including thatch, weatherboarding and flint.

### DAY OUT 2

### GLYNDE, FIRLE, CHARLESTON AND BERWICK CHURCH

A wonderful blend of scenery, historic houses and unspoilt villages, including places closely associated with the Bloomsbury Group. Although the whole route involves a full day's walk, it can be divided into short sections by using bus and train, with several pubs and tea rooms to wait in until your bus or train is due. There's also an optional diversion to Glyndebourne opera house.

BUS No.125 from Lewes to Glynde, Firle, Charleston (entrance road at A27), Alciston, Berwick Church and Alfriston. Cuckmere Valley Ramblerbus 47 (weekends, Easter to October) makes a circuit from Berwick station via Alfriston, Exceat and Litlington.

### TRAIN Glynde (join walk at 3).

REFRESHMENTS Trevor Arms, Glynde (Tel: 01273 858208). Little Cottage Tea Rooms, Glynde (Tel: 01273 858215). Tea rooms at Glynde Place and Firle Place when houses are open. Ram Inn, Firle (Tel: 01273 858222). Café at Charleston during opening hours. Cricketers (pub), Berwick (Tel: 01323 870469). Rose Cottage (pub), Alciston (Tel: 01323 870377). Good range of pubs and tea rooms in Alfriston.

### **TOILETS** Glynde, Charleston and Alfriston.

WALK Lewes to Firle (5 miles/8km, 2hr 30min, hilly) 1 From the far end of Cliffe High Street, on the east side of town, walk up Chapel Hill, which climbs steadily (outstanding views over Lewes from the path up on the right side of this road). At the end of the road, by the golf clubhouse, take the gate on the right and follow the path to maintain the previous direction, eventually forking right at a post and heading down into a valley. Pass a fenced pond and carry on the valley floor till you reach a kissing gate to the right of a nature reserve sign. Go through this, up the left side of the valley steeply to the top, then turn right to see Mount Caburn (left, through a gate, is the continuation) **2** 

Return to the gate, carry along the top, with the fence on your left until a stile in the fence\* – don't cross this but turn right across grass, and follow the route down to Glynde. Turn left on the road then immediately right along the village street, past the railway station (3) (if starting from here, turn right along the street), and opposite the Trevor Arms fork left. Turn left along the pavement by the A27 and soon cross by traffic island and take road on right to Firle. At next junction turn left through gates of Firle Place, then bear right along fence, through gate and over pasture, passing to left of tennis court, then right through gates and bear right through car park. Turn left along Firle village street.

\*For Glyndebourne, carry along the fence; the path later drops to a junction by woodland, carry on ahead, to left of woods, then turn right near wind turbine and descend to Glyndebourne; you can turn left along the road towards Ringmer for bus No.28, 125 or 143 back to Lewes.

Firle to Charleston, Berwick and Alfriston (up to 6 miles, 9.6km, generally level) 4 Go past Ram Inn on left, where the road bends right. Leave the village, past entrance to church (left) and, where road ends keep forward on main track, then ignore track to right and follow the track as it curves left alongside the estate wall (the next track on the right leads up to the South Downs Way for a fine high-level alternative; turn left at the top and follow via Firle Beacon and Bopeep to Alfriston).

After 1 mile/1.6km, you pass a pair of Gothic-windowed cottages (ignore track to left). For Charleston (5) turn left at next track junction, past a house called Tilton Meadow and left at the next junction, by barns. Follow the concrete bridleway past a rightangled bend, then immediately after turn left towards Charleston (or carry on to A27 to return by **bus No.125**). To continue Ignore left turn and carry on main track. Cross a road and carry along track. Pass triangular bench (track to left is optional diversion to Alciston). 6 Just past converted barn, bear left on main track towards Berwick church, ignoring track ahead.

At end of field, fork right, passing churchyard and then entering it by gate. (To return by bus, carry on beyond church, on walled path and soon on driveway, then right at road junction through Berwick village and past the Cricketers to the A27 for **bus No.125**.) Leave churchyard by gate through which you entered it and turn right by post, following VW (Vanguard Way) yellow markers, across field by grassy strip.

At top, turn left on track, then forward on road down to Alfriston's main street. Turn left for bus No.125 stop at rear of coach park. Cuckmere Valley Ramblerbus 47 for Seaford, Berwick station and trains to Lewes.

### PLACES OF INTEREST

Glynde An estate village built for Glynde Place, (Tel: 01273 858224, www.glynde.co.uk) the Elizabethan house at the north end, adjacent to the classical chapel is home to the VIIth Viscount and Viscountess Hampden and is open to the public on some days. Glynde Forge, with its striking horseshoe-shaped doorway, is still in operation and it's often possible to look inside when the owner is present.

Firle Place Seasonal opening, Tel: 01273 858307, www.firle.com. The grand country house of the Gage family, whose name is given to 'greengages', refaced with Caen limestone recycled from Lewes Priory. Tudor, with 18th-century remodelling; its wonderfully light interior features magnificent old masters and Sèvres porcelain. Tea room.

Firle village Also known as West Firle, the estate village for Firle Place is beautifully placed beneath the Downs. The church has Gage family memorials and a striking stained glass window of 1985 by John Piper, with Blake's Tree of Life; also the graves of Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant. Near Firle is Furlongs, the cottage where artist Eric Ravilious lived prior to World War II.

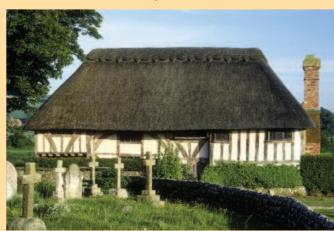
Charleston Tel: 01323 811265, www.charleston.org.uk; café; seasonal opening; prebooking available; guided tours only. Supremely atmospheric retreat of the Bloomsbury Group, a group of intellectuals and artists from the first half of the 20th century, and who included Vanessa Bell, Duncan Grant and Clive Bell; Virginia Woolf and John Maynard Keynes frequently visited. The former farmhouse is full of their paintings and colourful, hand-crafted decorations.

Alciston Unspoilt linear village with huge tithe barn at southern end, and the remains of a medieval dovecote near the church.

Berwick church Members of the Bloomsbury Group painted this downland church during World War II, illustrating the life of Christ against the backdrop of Sussex and the South Downs using themselves, their friends and local people as models. The building's spectacular transformation was controversial at the time, but has survived as a unique showcase of the work of Duncan Grant, Vanessa Bell and Quentin Bell.

Alfriston The largest village of the Cuckmere valley is full of interest: look out for the weathered market cross at the centre, and around the imposing church a village green abutted by the Clergy House (National Trust, Tel: 01323 871961; seasonal opening), a thatched and half-timbered 'Wealden hall' structure which is a rare survival in its original medieval state, and has an enchanting cottage garden.





Andrew Butler.

Mount Caburn One of Sussex's most impressive hillforts, with visible Iron Age and Saxon ramparts and views down the Ouse Valley. A national nature reserve, where a range of species thrive on the south-facing grassland slopes, including orchids and rare butterflies. A popular haunt of paragliders.

Clergy House, Alfriston. Photo © National Trust <sup>®</sup> Images;

# DAY OUT 3

### SEAFORD AND THE SEVEN SISTERS PANORAMA

By train to Lewes' nearest stretch of coast, to see the atmospheric remains of a huge tide mill, Bishopstone's Saxon church, Seaford's unique museum, and a walk over Seaford Head to get the classic view of the Seven Sisters, one of England's great coastal highlights. Optional extension along the Cuckmere valley for a return by bus.

S No.12 Cuckmere Haven to Seaford and Bishopstone stations, for return leg. Option to extend walk to Alfriston, then bus No.125 to Lewes.

RAIN Bishopstone, Seaford.

EFRESHMENTS Full range in Seaford and Alfriston. Cuckmere Inn, Exceat Bridge (Tel: 01323 892247).

**OILETS** Seaford sea front, Alfriston.

VALK Bishopstone station to Tide Mills (1.5 miles, 2.4km, 1hr 15min). 1 Leave the station at the end of the platform (signed 'beach'), and left at the bottom towards the sea. Where the beach starts, turn right along the rear of the beach (along the remains of a railway, built for transporting materials to maintain a sea wall). (2) After 10–15 minutes' walking you reach a pond and relics of the Tide Mills and village. Return the same way.

### Bishopstone station to Bishopstone church

(1.5 miles, 2.4km, 45 min, nearly level). Leave at end of platform (signed 'beach'), and at bottom turn right under the bridge. Cross A259 take well-marked path opposite bus shelter (slightly to the right); Bishopstone village is visible ahead; turn right on joining a lane into the village (3) and return the same way.

### **Bishopstone station/Seaford station to Exceat Bridge**

(5 miles, 8km, 2hr 15min, one major climb). (If starting from Seaford Station, turn right, then right into Dane Road first left into Pelham Road, and at the sea turn left. From Bishopstone station, leave at the end of the platform, signed 'beach', and left at the bottom.) Carry on beside the beach to reach the Martello Tower Museum. Carry along the shore. Follow the clifftop path up and over Seaford Head, taking great care not to go near the edge. 4 Drop to the coastguard cottages, beyond which turn left – either along the fence (briefly rising) and through the gate along a grassy path (the Vanguard Way) or (dry conditions only) carry on to the shingle beach and turn left along the river (this leaves the river towards the end and turns right at T-junction with Vanguard Way); **5** both paths reach the Cuckmere Inn at Exceat Bridge, beside the A259 for the No.12 bus back to Seaford and Bishopstone stations.

You can further extend the walk by carrying along the left side of the Cuckmere River for 3.7 miles/6km/1hr 30min to Alfriston and taking **bus No.125** to return to Lewes, or by climbing onto the Seven Sisters by taking the South Downs Way from Exceat.

### PLACES OF INTEREST

**Bishopstone church** Open daytime Wednesday and Saturday. In a remarkably unspoilt, tucked-away downland village, founded in the 8th century, and enlarged around 1200; its numerous ancient features include a rare Saxon sundial above the porch.

Tide Mills Free access. Huge industrial relic just inland from the beach, this was a tide-powered corn mill in operation during the 18th and 19th centuries; the workers' village existed up until World War II, and the old station is still in evidence. On the shingle are remains of a seaplane base and Chailey Heritage Marine Hospital.

Martello Tower Museum Seaford; summer only; very limited opening times; Tel: 01323 898222; www.seafordmuseum.co.uk. An absorbing collection of local and social history within one of the best-preserved Martello Towers – a series of 74 defensive towers built in Napoleonic times to guard the English coast against invasion, this is rare in retaining a cannon.

Seaford Head The cliff gives an unrivalled view of the wavy profile of the Seven Sisters, the group of chalk cliffs between Cuckmere Haven and Birling Gap. Don't miss the view beneath the cliffs at Splash Point, at the Seaford end. On the far side of Seaford Head, steps lead down to the rocky foreshore at Hope Gap, an excellent spot for browsing rock pools and looking for fossils. Beneath the much-photographed coastguard cottages is the shingle beach of Cuckmere Haven, which retains 'dragon's teeth' concrete tank traps erected in World War II.

## **OTHER DAYS OUT**

### **DITCHLING BEACON AND DITCHLING VILLAGE**

Walk via South Downs Way from Lewes, along Spital Road and alongside the prison wall, then right at bridleway signpost, left at stables and buildings, later keeping forward on South Downs Way (5 miles, 8km, 2hr 30min, hilly), or take the infrequent bus **No.167** from Lewes to Ditchling; walk from Ditchling to Ditchling Beacon. Return by **bus No.79** (hourly at weekends and bank holidays only) to Brighton, for frequent trains and buses back to Lewes.

### DITCHLING VILLAGE

**Ditchling** (reached by train to **Plumpton**, then walk; or take the infrequent **bus No.167** from Lewes to Ditchling), a handsome village beneath the Downs, has some fine old buildings, many close to the churchyard and the Ditchling Museum of Art + Craft (Tel: 01273 844744, www.ditchlingmuseumartcraft.org.uk), in a stunning redevelopment that won a RIBA award; it holds an internationally important collection of works related to artists and craftspeople who once lived and worked here, including sculptor and letter designer Eric Gill and calligrapher Edward **Johnston**; temporary exhibitions, shop and café.

### DITCHLING BEACON

From Ditchling, follow the Sussex Border Path southwards, rising steadily up the escarpment to join the South Downs Way, on which you turn left to Ditchling Beacon. Ringed by the grassy ramparts of an Iron Age hillfort, it is the highest point in East Sussex (814ft/248m) and on a clear day you are rewarded with a huge view over the **Weald** to the Surrey hills.

Train or bus No.123 to Newhaven; from station, turn left, across the bridge, then first left into Riverside. The harbour, full of fishing boats and yachts, and used by ferries serving Dieppe, has much atmosphere. From there walk up Fort Road to Newhaven Fort (Tel: 01273 517622; www.newhavenfort.org.uk), one of the largest military museums in the Southeast, with gun emplacements, a labyrinth of tunnels to explore and lively displays illustrating the fort's role through two world wars.

### UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX, STANMER PARK AND HOLLINGBURY HILLFOR

Train or bus Nos.28/29/29B to Falmer, then under subway to University of Sussex, where turn left in front of Falmer House on University Way, then at road bend opposite sports hall go right through barrier into Stanmer Park. Cross sports pitch diagonally and head right through parkland to Stanmer House and church. Return the same way.

For Hollingbury, train or bus Nos 28/29/29B to Moulsecoomb (bus: alight Brighton University); turn left out of station, under railway then right up steps, and soon left at signpost on rising path turning left in front of green-roofed building, then up across grass on main path, and right on broad grassy track (take mental note of this point as you will return the same way) and keep on this track which immediately curves left, then left at signpost by golf course sign, and left at next signpost to reach low banks marking ramparts of Hollingbury Hillfort.

### UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

The main part of University of Sussex campus was designed in the 1960s by Sir Basil Spence, architect of Coventry Cathedral and is widely considered a design classic for its period; Falmer House is grade 1 listed status.

### **STANMER PARK**

The park has free access for walking through parkland nature reserve and includes Stanmer House (built 1722 for the Pelham family, now a restaurant/café and bar) and church (local history displays, open on Sunday afternoons); tea room; walks through woodlands into the Wild Park and up to the South Downs Way.

### HOLLINGBURY HILLFORT

Rising above the Brighton suburbs, Hollingbury Hillfort is an Iron Age site with visible ramparts and spectacular views extending to the Isle of Wight.

### SUSSEX OUSE VALLEY WAY TO ISFIELD

Walk from Lewes along Sussex Ouse Valley Way, signposted along river, crossing to west side at Willey's Bridge; 5 miles, 8km, level. A delightful, mostly riverside walk north from Lewes. After 1.5 miles (2.4km) reach a lane and detour right to Hamsey **church**, a medieval church that escaped Victorian restorers. Carry on along the Sussex Ouse Valley Way via the pretty millpond at **Barcombe Mills** to **Isfield**, where steam and diesel trains run on the Lavender Line. Return by bus Nos.29/29B.