

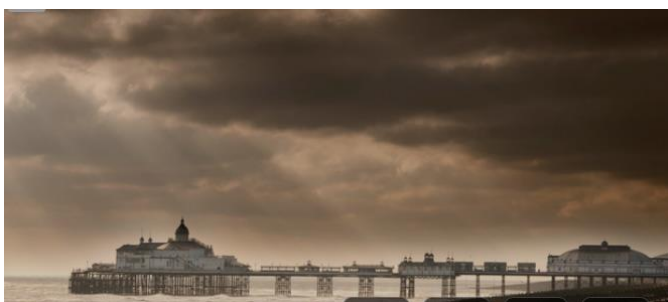
GROUP HOLIDAY TO EASTBOURNE AND BRIGHTON : 6-10 MARCH 2023

As with previous coach holidays, these trips provide an opportunity to visit and walk in an area that the group would not usually travel to. This year I was asked if we could go south, in the expectation of warmer weather!! The Eastbourne and Brighton trip met the group requirements for accommodation, pick-up and accessible walking.

The resort town of Eastbourne is the end (or start) of the South Downs Way. Southwest along the coast, in the South Downs National Park, are the tall chalk cliffs of Beachy Head and the Seven Sisters.

Our group of 21 started the journey on what was forecast to be coldest week of the year and may have also been the wettest. No obstacle to rambling folk, who always have “....suitable clothing” (A Wainright).

We boarded the coach at Crewe Railway Station late morning and after one Services stop, in late afternoon we arrived at the Burlington Hotel, on the Grand Parade overlooking the sea, close to Eastbourne Pier.



After settling in, some braved a blustery sea-front walk before dinner, while others searched out the local hostelries. The welcoming and friendly staff at the hotel met all requests for changes of room, additional heating and blankets. But that's another story!! We soon met together for an early dinner and time afterwards to discuss plans for the next 3 days.

The included trips out on 2 days were an attractive opportunity to explore the local towns of Lewis, Brighton, Rye and Hastings. A walk on the South Downs Way was planned for the free day.

Day 2 Trip to Brighton and Lewes

All wrapped up (I was wearing 5 layers) and watching the sea fret sitting above the sea, we set off on our trip. First stop Brighton and then on to Lewes.

The rambling tourists headed off to explore the town, walk the Lanes, sea front and famous Brighton Pleasure Pier, fitting in time to visit the iconic Royal Pavilion and the oldest Aquarium in the World- Sea Life.

There is a good selection of photographs on the SCR website. So here is some tourist information:

Brighton - along the seafront

Palace Pier is a 1,722ft long Victorian pleasure pier.



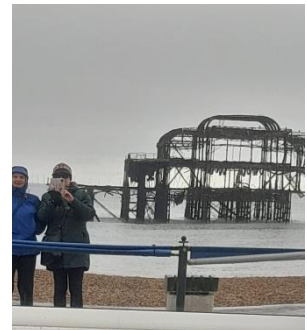
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Upside Down House

Doughnut



The ruined West Pier, opened in 1866. Closed to the public in 1975. After damage by storms, two fires and falling into the sea the structure was declared to be beyond repair.



The Royal Pavilion



The Royal Pavilion was constructed as the seaside retreat for King George IV. Suffering from ill-health, no doubt due to his extravagant and pleasure-seeking lifestyle, King George was advised to take to Brighton and benefit from the therapeutic properties of the sea.

It must have been, and still is, a striking structure for an English sea-side town, built in an exotic Indo-Islamic style. The opulent and lavish interior is influenced by Chinese and Indian fashions of the time.



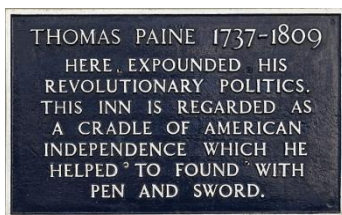
In 1850 the Brighton Pavilion was sold to the town under the Brighton Improvement Act. Queen Victoria disliked the Pavilion and the constant attention she attracted in Brighton. She built her own retreat, Osborne House on the Isle of Wight with proceeds from the sale. During the First World War it was transformed into a hospital for wounded soldiers from the Indian Army and until 1920 was a hospital for the rehabilitation of "limbless men" - injured British soldiers.

Later, the Pavilion became a tourist attraction to the town.

Lewes

In the afternoon we continued our tour to the Medieval town of Lewes.

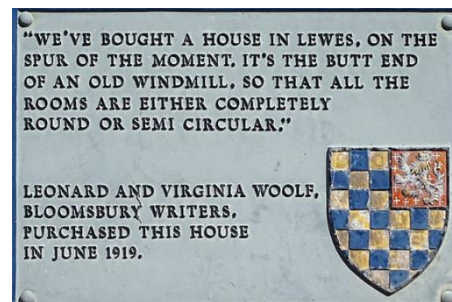
A walk around the town revealed several historic sites; Lewes Castle, Anne of Cleeve House, Tudor buildings, pubs and tea shops.



Plaque on the site of the former Bull Inn. Now the White Hart Hotel.



The Round House, a secluded former windmill down Pipe Passage, was owned by the writer Virginia Woolf.



Day 3 Walking on the South Downs Way

Eastbourne is an ideal location for walking with many walks and trails to explore.

The 100 miles South Downs Way route from Winchester to Eastbourne follows old tracks and drove roads finishing along the chalk cliffs in the seaside section to Eastbourne. This part has the iconic and undulating Seven Sisters, Birling Gap, Belle Tout Lighthouse and the Beachy Head.



SEVEN SISTERS TO EASTBOURNE

7½ MILES ♦ 3-4 HOURS ♦ GRADE: CHALLENGING

During my research of walks in the area I had planned on a linear walk between Eastbourne and the Seven Sisters Visitors Centre. It is an established and well described section of the South Downs Way with a regular bus service in the park area, parallel to the route.

In the event I was unable to lead (erratic eyesight and on light activities after 2 cataract operations) and in good company with Bev who was troubled with severe sciatica. What a pair! We were figuring on a bus-ride there and back, and perhaps easy walking in the Seven Sisters Country Park.



Thanks to Jim, Andy, Anne and Helen for organising a walking day out to suit everyone.

It started out as a wet day and the group began walking from Eastbourne with the wind behind them.

Bev and I started out with a walk through Eastbourne Town to catch a bus to the Visitors Centre and Country Park. The rain had stopped once we got there.

The group walked together to the Birling Gap cafe. After which it started raining heavily. Undaunted, Helen led half the group up Went Hill over The Downs and down to East Dean, from where they caught the bus back to Eastbourne.



The other half walked all the way over the Seven Sisters to the Visitors Centre and back by bus to Eastbourne. Well done, it was a strenuous walk.

There are more photos on the SCR website.





The chalk cliffs are spectacular and tempted Bev and I to walk over two of the Seven Sisters from the beach at Cliff End on the South Downs Way.

The third looked a bit steep, so we turned off over The Downs to discover the site of Friston Airfield and a forest trail to Friston where

we found sanctuary from the rain and ate our lunch in the porch of St Mary the Virgin Church.



Having returned by bus, we explored Eastbourne town centre. It was good to find a pedestrianised shopping centre which was well provided with high street and independent shops, cafes and bars.

Jenny did a similar walk the next day, over three of the Seven Sisters.

So fair to say that all the walkers in the group enjoyed rambling on the South Downs Way and others enjoyed Eastbourne and thought it a better town centre than Brighton.

Day 3 Trip to Rye and Hastings

The Medieval gateway to Rye Town



A morning in Rye to explore the medieval cobbled streets in the centre of town.

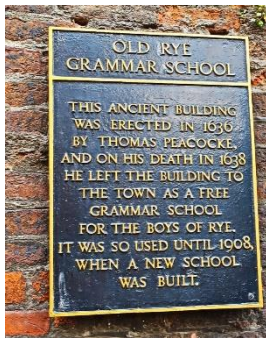
Mermaid Street is lined with half-timbered Tudor buildings and the famous Mermaid Inn.



The Mermaid

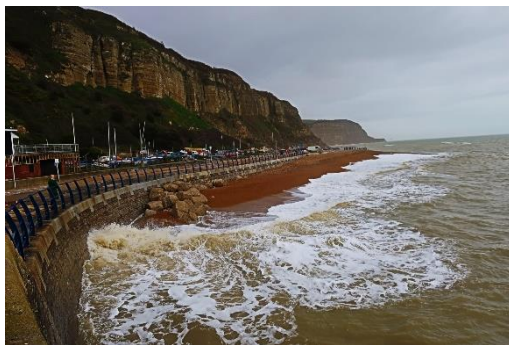


Helen, Judith and Elizabeth tackled the tricky climb up the tower of the Norman St. Mary's Church with splendid views over Rye town, which has been home to many famous residents.



The Afternoon in Hastings

The town gives its name to the Battle of Hastings (1066) but with the castle 8 miles to the north-west, our explorations were to the Old Town, the Hastings Fishermen's Museum, Art Gallery and local eateries and shops. There was something for everyone !



Hastings is situated where the sandstone beds, at the heart of the Weald, known geologically as the Hastings Sands, meet the English Channel, forming tall cliffs to the east of the town.



Until the development of tourism, fishing was the major industry. The fishing fleet, based at the Stade remains Europe's largest beach-launched fishing fleet.



Bev and I came upon The Dolphin pub just as it started raining. We found Paul in there enjoying a quiet pint.

A good spot for lunch. Catch of the day.

And soon it was time to return to Eastbourne for our last evening.



Everyone said they enjoyed the trip. I think we all saw and did what we wanted to do down on that small area of the South Coast. We had sociable gatherings in various lounges and bars at the hotel and the Belgian Beer Bar, just around the corner. We were 'treated' to evening entertainers, and my team: Bev, Jane and Jackie won the quiz.

The weather forecast for our return journey was heavy snow. It didn't, at least in the south and so we had a good run back to Crewe, again with just one service stop on the way.

As ever thank you to everyone who helped me to put this holiday together. I would like to think that a good time was had by all.

Eastbourne Blog
Eileen Dorman
20-March-2023