

Islington U3A Longer Walks Group

Walk Title	Berwick – Exceat (+ option to Seaford)	Walk No.	359
Area	East-Sussex	Type	Linear
Date	Wednesday 27 April 2022		
Distance	7.4m miles; lunch stop after 4.1m; optional extension to Seaford 3.7m		
Timing	3.5 hours walking time to Exceat (or 5 to Seaford) + travel + lunch stop. Allow 9 hours min in total. Therefore expect to be back in London by 6pm (or 8pm with extension).		
Meeting up & travel	Meet at 10.10am near platform at Victoria Station for Eastbourne bound train departing at 10.24am. Arrives at Lewes at 11.26am and change to Hastings bound train departing at 11.46am. Arrives 11.57am at Berwick. Buses from Exceat every 10/15 min to Seaford from where there are direct trains to Victoria at xx.25 and xx.53. Buy off-peak return Victoria to Seaford or with FP and SRC from Croydon to Seaford £16.65.		
Route	<p>We will take the alternative start from Berwick taking in two churches; one in the pretty village of Alciston and another Berwick church, which was decorated by members of the Bloomsbury Group. Walk will link Berwick, Alfriston, Exceat, and Cuckmere Haven and Seaford if you opt for the 3.7m extension.</p> <p>Fairly flat sections along the small villages and along the pretty valley of the Cuckmere River South of Alfriston.</p> <p>The walk ends at the Cuckmere Inn by Exceat Bridge, from where there are very regular buses back to Seaford - or you can walk to Seaford via Cuckmere Haven and over the cliffs of Seaford Head, a beautiful 6km (3.7 miles) extension, with stunning backward views of the chalk cliffs of the Seven Sisters.</p>		
Lunch	A table has been booked at the pub The George Inn in Alfriston Picnics can be eaten in a park near the church. Please indicate if you will eat in the pub.		
Dropping out	This is quite a short walk but there may be buses from Alfriston.		
Suitability	<p>Suitable for any reasonably fit regular walker. There are no particular difficulties.</p> <p>Terrain: paths, some road, wood paths, meadows.</p> <p>Possible obstacles: some stiles;</p> <p>Comfortable waterproof walking shoes/ boots. Waterproof jacket. Check weather forecast for temperature and likelihood of rain. Wear, or carry, an extra layer. Bring swimsuit if very brave.</p>		
Facilities	There are loos on the train, in the middle at Lewes but not Berwick station; the pub in the middle and there is a pub and tearoom at Exceat and a pub at Seaford station. Quite a lot in fact.		
Walk source	SWC 90 walk Pdf		
Map &	OS Explorer OL25 (formerly 123) or OS Landranger 199		

references	
Leader & contact details	<p>Walk Leader: <u>Pia Rainey</u> phone: 07775 782860 (text preferred) e-mail: piarainey@icloud.com</p>
Interesting facts	<p>The Cuckmere River is relatively small at Alfriston, so it is a surprise to notice that it is tidal. High tide at Cuckmere Haven sends a pulse of river water back up the river and sometimes at this point it is even flowing backwards. It takes some time for this pulse to reach this high up the river, however, and by the time it does the tide is already falling down by the sea.</p> <p>Berwick church is famous for its murals, which were painted in 1941 by Duncan Grant, a member of the Bloomsbury Group. At the time he was living with Vanessa Bell, sister of Virginia Woolf, at the nearby farmhouse of Charleston. Bell had originally rented the farmhouse in the First World War when Grant was a conscientious objector and so was made to come to Sussex to work on the land. The paintings have many charming details - for example depictions of the four seasons on one side of the altar rail and the four Anglican sacraments on the other. But Grant's decoration of the church was controversial and not just on artistic grounds. The Bloomsbury Group had unconventional (ie modern) attitudes to sexual morality, and Grant and Bell had an illegitimate child, Angelica. She was used as the model for the Virgin Mary in the mural of the annunciation. This scandalised many Christians at the time. Angelica remained unaware of her true father's identity until she was 16. Vanessa and her husband Clive Bell were already leading separate lives by the time she was born but he was happy to let her take his surname. Grant also went along with the deception. Vanessa thought this meant her daughter had two fathers. "In reality," Angelica later wrote, "I had none".</p> <p>The Martello Tower in Seaford is the most westerly of a chain of 103 such fortresses built to protect the South East coast of England against invasion in the early part of the Napoleonic Wars. The other end of the chain is in Aldeburgh in Suffolk.</p>