



Sevenoaks Ramblers

Lewes to Rodmell - 14.5 miles

Sunday, 31st May

The forecast for the day was a welcome drop in temperature from the 30 plus of recent days and overcast though quite humid. Once we were on the Downs however the cool breeze made the walking very pleasant as the cloud moved away and the sun came out for the latter, downhill, part of the walk.

7 of us left Lewes (and 7 returned) in a happy crew, though the male sex was heavily outnumbered, and passed through the shopping streets and past the Harvey's brewery and shop before we starting the climb up our first steep hill to the Golf Club, looking down to the river below, the red metal clad Grand Designs house and over the valley, towards the hills ahead. Rather than following the footpath along the Bottom all the way to Mount Caburn we took a shorter (but steeper) climb to the ridge which gave us views to the North and the south as we followed a rugged path into what is known as the Fort, but current belief is that it was in fact an iron age sacred area with numerous graves with grave goods.

There was a short stop to recover our breath, rehydrate, and admire the views as we dropped through the wild ponies into the picturesque Glynde village, then crossed the valley to tackle our steepest climb onto the Downs at Beddingham Hill. We followed the ridge with views back across Mount Caburn and Lewes towards the High Weald and southwards to Seaford Head and the start of the Seven Sisters at Cuckmere. As we followed the ridge along Newhaven became clearer and we had a good view of the Household Waste Recycling Plant.

Here, and throughout the walk, we were accompanied by the sound and sighting of skylarks, and surrounded by wild flowers including fields of poppies.

We dropped down to Southease, past the YHA café, to the first of our churches. St Peter's was open and we were able to go in and inspect this ancient building – definitely worth taking time to explore it – before moving on to Rodwell for our second church. This one, also St Peter's, was open and rewarded our visit though it was shortened by the demands of lunch which we took in the churchyard.

It was agreed that we would forego the pub and unfortunately missed the Monk's House, as we started on our last climb back up onto the Downs. While the ascent was equivalent to the previous it was much less steep as we followed the ridge, again with long views on either side, before we dropped down through Swanborough Manor and the nature reserve, past the priory ruins and into Lewes and the Depot Cinema/posh café where we rehydrated.

A really enjoyable walk, in ideal weather with a companionable number, and at a surprisingly brisk pace, given the amount of ascent – Sharon's Garmin at the end told us that our walking pace was a very creditable 3.2 mph. Thanks to all for the pictures and making it a real pleasure to share hike with you.





