

Coastal Erosion



The chalk cliffs are kept white due to the constant effect of erosion. It is happening all the time, from tiny flakes to large falls, this is how the chalk cliffs are kept clean and white.

The chalk cliffs of the Seven Sisters are crumbling at a rate of 60cm per year on average - at Birling Gap this rate of erosion is much quicker.



Bee orchid



Common spotted orchid

The Countryside Code

Respect other people:

- consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors
- leave gates and property as you find them and follow paths unless wider access is available

Protect the natural environment:

- leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home
- keep dogs under effective control

Enjoy the outdoors:

- plan ahead and be prepared
- follow advice and local signs



Leaflet designed and prepared by Gill Mattock

In liaison with Eastbourne Borough Council



Eastbourne's Walking Champion

2020

Circular Walk 4



Moderate

Start/Finish:

Beachy Head Countryside Visitor Centre

Length: 8 miles

Time: 3 to 3½ hours + stops

Refreshments: Beachy Head pub, Birling Gap café, Hikers Rest café & Tiger Inn (East Dean), Eastbourne Downs Golf Club

Explorer Map 123



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1. Cross the road outside the centre and turn right on the tarmacked path. When you get to the bus stop, leave the path and follow one of the several grass tracks towards Belle Tout lighthouse continuing along the cliffs with great views of the Seven Sisters. Continue to Birling Gap (where the Visitor Centre is well worth a brief stop).

Belle Tout lighthouse

Built in 1832 but decommissioned in 1902, it was in danger of falling into the sea because of coastal erosion. In 1999 it was moved 17m back from the edge and will probably have to be moved again. It has featured in many films, most notably Life and Loves of a She Devil. It is now a B&B.



2. Leave Birling Gap via the toilet block and turn left onto the stony track going uphill following it round the corner as it narrows to a gate directly ahead (ignoring the path to the left).

The Red Barn

This distinctive landmark was built in the 1830s by Mary Gilbert-Davies, a local landowner, for farm workers. The lack of water and other harsh conditions drove them away and it has been unoccupied ever since.



3. Go through the gate, heading inland, then another following the grass track up the hill passing by a red roofed barn. Bear slightly right to closely follow the tree line until you get to a narrow path heading downhill through the trees. Follow this going through 2 gates until you reach a wide metal gate which leads to a narrow road. Follow this road to East Dean village green.
4. Leave the green via the pedestrian road between the Tiger Inn and the Hiker's Rest café passing the village hall. Cross the road and turn left. When you reach the main A259 cross carefully and turn right.



5. After 100 yds or so, turn left into Downsvie Lane and continue to a metal gate. Take the footpath to the right of the gate. This path takes you through a pretty downland valley eventually reaching the concrete road of the golf course.
6. When you reach the top of the hill turn right onto the South Downs Way. Go past the Golf Club house (refreshments), cross the busy A259 carefully and continue for 15 mins or so passing a dew pond and going slightly downhill until you get to another road.
7. Cross and follow the grassy path next to the road which will take you back to Beachy Head Countryside Centre where the exhibition and art gallery are well worth a visit.

The Downland

The 4000 acres of Downland is owned and managed by Eastbourne Borough Council. It was purchased in 1926 for the benefit of all. It forms the Eastern end of the South Downs National Park and the beginning/end of the South Downs Way, a 100 mile long national trail between Eastbourne and Winchester.

