Sevenoaks Ramblers

The Most Beautiful Walk in Sussex, South Downs 19 miles

Sunday , 26th July

Mercifully, the forecast for the summer 2026 furnace of south-east England predicted a cooler temperature for this challenging, but immensely rewarding, walk. Indeed, dark cloud coverage made some anticipate rain for the first time for weeks. It was with mixed feelings that it did not arrive. The thirteen intrepid walkers who assembled in Alfriston were promised a beautiful walk with stunning views at the cost of their ‘blood, sweat and tears’ over the nineteen mile route. A steady climb onto the Downs preceded a slow descent to the very attractive village of Jevington, and its wonderful Anglo-Saxon church, famous for its ninth century tower, tapsel gate (one of an existing six) and the grave of the chief British prosector, Hartley Shawcross, at the 1945/6 Nuremberg trials. The party then ascended once more to the top of the Downs where, after two short breaks, passed Beachy Head to consume a packed lunch, and re-fill water bottles, at Birling Gap. Teaming as the spot was with tourists, now in full sunshine the group was perhaps relieved to set off again, until its members reached the daunting prospect of negotiating the Seven Sisters, of which there are in fact surely at least nine. Swirling gusts of dust and chalk, as well as walking against the wind, made completion of this switchback that much more difficult. However, by the time all thirteen had reached the top of the Cuckmere valley, it looked as though some had not even broken sweat. The party then followed the course of Cuckmere river past the village of Litlington, and its chalk horse, back to Alfriston. Not one member of the party had faltered during the day, though some would have been nursing sore limbs that evening. Thanks again for their excellent company which made the walk, surely one of the most beautiful in the UK, that much more enjoyable.




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