



Lewes and Rodmell

Distance: 16 km=10 miles

moderate walking

Region: East Sussex

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Refreshments: Lewes, Rodmell

Map: Explorer 122 (Steyning) *but the maps in this guide should be sufficient*

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Hills, views, river, historic town

In Brief

This is a vigorous and bracing walk over the hills to the south of Lewes, East Sussex. As well as making a satisfying walk on its own, it is also one part of the *Lewes Monster* of 32 km=20 miles. There is a good inn over half way round the walk: to make enquiries at the *Abergavenny Arms*, ring 01273-472416.



There are no nettles, so shorts are fine. Boots are recommended because of the impact of the hard chalk, but good walking shoes would be adequate. Your dog can also come on this adventure.

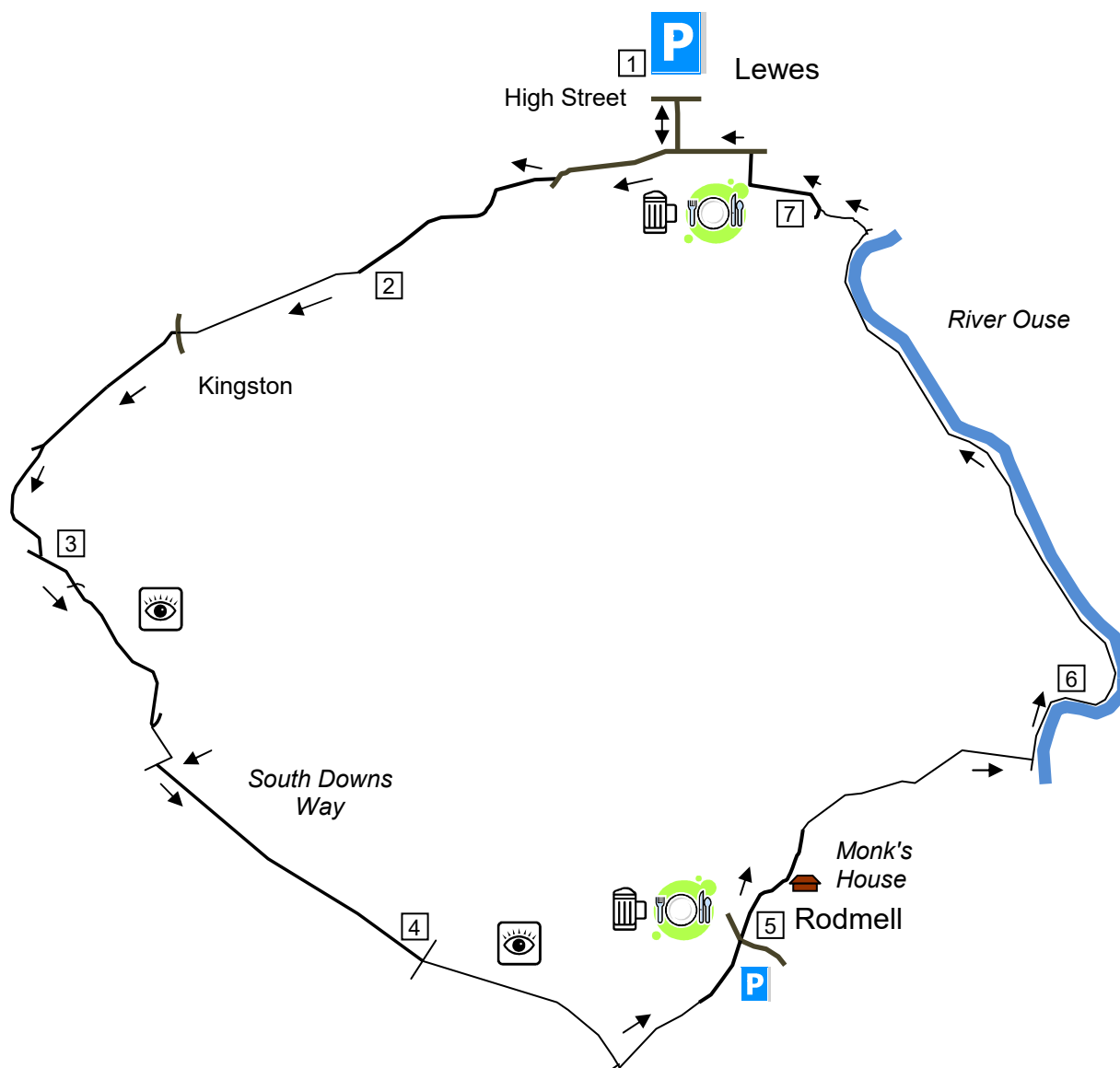


The walk begins in **Lewes, East Sussex**, by **rail** or by car. On Sundays there were no parking charges at the time of writing, and the best place to start is the **Westgate Street** car park, postcode **BN7 1XT**. On Saturdays, the best place to park is **County Hall**, postcode **BN7 1UE** (£1 all day as 2019). An alternative starting point is **Rodmell**. There is limited space to park in the narrow lane and rather more on the roadside on the other side of the main road, in Mill Lane. The NT *Monks House* car park is for visitors to the house and garden. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

- See map overleaf.** Starting in Lewes High Street, take the narrow cobbled lane **Keere Street** downhill beside the Fifteenth Century Bookshop. At the bottom of this picturesque landmark, keep ahead along Southover High Street past *Southover Grange* and the public gardens beside it. At a T-junction and mini-roundabout by the *Kings Head* pub, turn **right** on the main street, still called Southover High Street. You pass the parish church and *Anne of Cleves house* as you go. *A fuller description of all these buildings will be found in the other walk in this series [Lewes and the South Downs](#).* Veer **left** on the main road past the *Swan* pub and take the next smaller road **right**, Juggs Road, using the tarmac footway, signposted

South Downs Way. Follow the lane gradually uphill, ignoring a footpath right, passing Jubilee Gardens with its beautiful beech tree. The lane bends left, goes high above the A27 trunk road and bends right again uphill. After the last house, your lane becomes a level chalky track.



- 2** The track finally takes you through a small wooden gate beside a large one. From here, Newmarket Hill and your future route come into view. Keep ahead across the big grass meadow and, at the corner of the fence in 30m, veer slightly left on a path across the centre. On your right now is the Ashcombe windmill. (For more details, see the other walk in this series *Lewes and the South Downs*.) Kingston-near-Lewes is visible in the valley. Your route is through another small wooden gate and down the track to a road, Ashcombe Hollow. As a quick diversion, [the Jugg country pub is 600m on your left down a lane to the right](#). Cross straight over on a tarmac drive uphill. Where the houses finally end, ignore a bridleway left and keep ahead on the chalky track. After a small metal gate beside a large one, 100m further you reach a major fork. Take the **left** fork, marked with blue and yellow arrows. This track winds, then curves left to the top of the Downs, with ever-improving views. At the top, you meet a major crossing path. Bear **left** on it, thus joining the South Downs Way.



The **Lewes Monster** joins the walk here and finishes at the end



of this walk.

- 3 You can see your chalky path ahead. The path takes you through a small wooden gate and across the grass. You now join a chalky track coming from the right, going uphill. You are soon on a wonderful high section of the South Downs Way on Swanborough Hill with views east across the Ouse valley towards Mount Caburn and Glynde. You reach a 3-way fingerpost where the track turn sharp left downhill. Leave the track here to continue straight on, on a level path across the grass beside a fence. In nearly 200m, your path goes **right** through a wooden gate beside a crop field. In 60m, at a post, turn **left**, avoiding the path ahead. You are now on a concrete path running between fields with views on each side.
- 4 This long path ends in 1½ km at a T-junction of concrete paths. Continue straight ahead through a small gate and along the grass downhill beside a fence on your left. After 400m, at a junction of paths, go through two small gates by a cow pasture. Continue along the left-hand side uphill. [A sign on the left of the path marks the Meridian Line \(East and West Hemispheres\)](#). Ignore a gate on your left which leads only to a rider's track. Continue through a small metal gate and along a narrow path between fences. You pass a small house appropriately called *Hilltop* and come out to a 4-way fingerposted junction next to a gate on your right to another house *Mill Hill*. Leave the SDW here by turning **left** here on a tarmac path. It is invitingly signed "*to the pub*" and is marked *Rodwell*. Follow the byway all the way, passing drives to houses and, then continuing on a residential road, Mill Lane, passing a green and more houses on your left, until you reach the main road known as Piddinghoe. The *Abergavenny Arms* is opposite.



The Abergavenny Arms is a truly unspoilt pub that serves an excellent menu and a selection of ales and other drinks. There must be a connection with the Marquess of Abergavenny. (See the walk [A Way Through the Rocks: Groombridge](#) in this series.) They also serve cream teas. The pub can provide a list of Bed & Breakfast places in the area.

- 5 Go down the narrow lane beside the pub, following a sign for the *Monk's House*. As you traverse this winding high street with tasteful modern and traditional houses, you pass on your right the entrance to St Peter's church. *This is definitely not to be missed with its distinctive short pointed steeple, its Norman arch, lancet windows, relics and its sheer atmosphere.* The Monk's House is the next significant building. In fact its garden backs onto the churchyard.

The Monk's House was the country retreat of Virginia and Leonard Woolf, which they bought in 1919 to get away from the bustle of Bloomsbury. Virginia lived and wrote here and in 1941 her ashes were scattered under an elm in the garden. The little garden studio where she wrote is on show. Husband Leonard lived here till his death in 1969. The house is an interesting museum of simple 1920s living. It belongs to The National Trust and is open during the warmer months Wed-Sun.

At the end of the village, continue on a dirt track, passing a rather untidy farm and waterworks. Keep ahead through a wooden gate, followed by another further down the track. Your path runs beside a water channel and the whole area is criss-crossed by them, forming a home to many bird species and other animals and plants. The track curves right giving you a good view ahead to Beddingham Hill and, over to the left, to Mount Caburn. After a small metal gate, you reach the bank of the River Ouse. Scramble up the embankment and turn left along the top beside the river on a good grassy path.

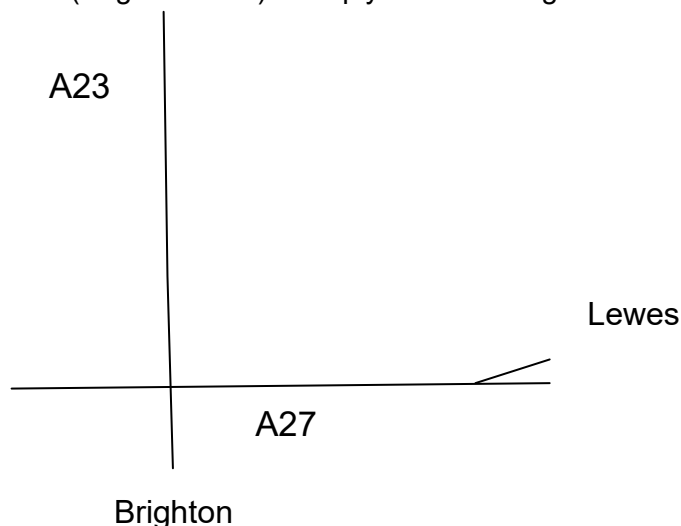
6 You go through two wooden gates and the river zigzags right-left as the Glynde Reach meets the River. After an avoidable stile and another similar you are on a very pleasant grassy path. Eventually you approach a road bridge. Just before the bridge, your path goes left-right through bushes. Keep to the right of a wire fence to go under the road (the A27). Follow the path between bushes. As the path twists to the right, you pass an iron fence on your left. 10m after the fence, turn **left** on a surfaced path that runs beside a recycling centre on your left. Continue ahead on a tarmac lane and, at a junction, veer **right**.

7 Follow the lane, Ham Lane, past various smallholdings, a motor yard with old Underground signs and later a school and playing fields. The lane bends right and meets Montfield Road. Turn **left**, passing a football ground and the entrance to Lewes railway station. Keep straight ahead to reach the *Kings Head* pub, where the road on your right will take you back to the High Street, where the walk began.



Getting there

By car: the easiest way to Lewes is via the A27 and, if from coming from the north, the M23 / A23 (Brighton road). Simply follow the signs all the way to the town.



By train: begin at Lewes station.

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