

The Sussex Downs & Coast
Friday 21 – Sunday 23 May 2010

(2 nights, Moderate 'B' grade; 6-10 miles daily)

***Splendid walking along one of Britain's most beautiful
Stretches of heritage coast, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
And Britain's new National Park***

Deans Place Hotel, Alfriston

The 14th Century Deans Place Country Hotel lies in the heart of the Sussex Countryside in the beautiful downland village of Alfriston. Set in four acres of gardens, Deans Place has a heated outdoor pool, croquet and mini putting green and a large terrace for alfresco dining during the summer months. Deans Place is a 'Best Loved' Hotel, Johansens recommended and its restaurant has been awarded an AA rosette.

Price per person for 2 nights: £273 singles (3 only), double and twin occupancy; £10 per night supplement for single occupancy of double room

Price includes:

- En-suite accommodation
- 3-course dinners
- Full English breakfasts
- One packed lunch
- Friday evening walk
- Two full-day guided walks
- Mini-bus or taxis where necessary
- Two guide-hosts providing commentaries on features of historical and general interest along the way

Price excludes:

- One pub lunch
- Optional teas
- Bus fares on Sunday (where applicable)
- Drinks and items of a personal nature

Itinerary

Friday (*'A' and 'B' Grade*) A welcome meeting followed by a short evening walk exploring Alfriston, the perfect downland village, steeped in history and set in a valley that reaches back into the mists of time. Dinner in the hotel's award-winning restaurant.

Saturday (*'B' Grade*) From our hotel door we join the meandering River Cuckmere where cattle browse in lush water meadows. Vast green panoramas gently unfold as we traverse springy downland turf, experiencing that elemental sense of timelessness so unique to Sussex. A deeply sunken smugglers' route takes us down to Jevington for lunch at our favourite pub, The Eight Bells. Then magnificent views of the distant Weald with blue hills, patchwork fields and little woodlands. We return via Wilmington with its ruined priory and mysterious Long Man cut into the chalk. This truly splendid walk combines the great open spaces of the South Downs with the vast spreading acres of the Weald, the beautiful Cuckmere Valley and three downland villages. (*8 miles, 'B' grade*)

Sunday (*'B' Grade*) Today you can walk for either 6 or 10-miles. Whatever your choice, you will enjoy one of the finest coastal walks in England with stunning views of the spectacular Seven Sisters towering above Cuckmere Haven. An ever-changing kaleidoscope of clouds race across a blue sky as the musical outpourings of skylarks, seemingly suspended above, accompany us. We picnic at Birling Gap where high white cliffs meet an aquamarine sea and ever pounding waves crash and hiss along the pebble shore. This most exhilarating of walks culminates at Beachy Head and a farewell tea at Exceat's excellent old farmhouse. The coastal stretch of this walk is particularly undulating so expect a number of 'ups' and 'downs' over great waves of landscape. (*6 miles, 'B' grade or 10 miles 'C' grade*)

Travel Information _By rail: regular Eastbourne trains from London Victoria to Polegate (1.20 hours) with onward travel by taxi (15 minutes).

By road: total mileage from central London: 66 miles (1.50 hours). Ample car parking at the hotel. We can arrange car-sharing or taxi-sharing if required.