



# A Sense of Place

## Walk 1: East Beach Amble

Start from East Beach Car Park. Walk away from the sea-front, following the Selsey Tram Way PF\* (1) beside the pond (2) to the western exit. Look left to building in the centre of roundabout (3). Turn right and walk along East Beach Road for a hundred yards. Turn left at Fontwell Road (4), continuing to a T-junction at Drift Road. Turn left and walk to the T-junction with Manor Lane. A PF\* sign on the corner directs you down a stony track on the right with hedges on either side (5).

Follow this to Park Farm Livery Stables then cross another stony track, walk through a gate keeping the stables on your right. At PF\* sign follow the concrete farm track until it veers off to the left. Continue straight along a dirt track with the deep ditch on your right the whole time (6).

Go through a small field gate where the track narrows and turns left at the PF\* sign. There is a line of tall trees on your left.

At a small group of houses on your left, turn sharp right at the PF\* sign and follow the field margin. Pass a memorial stone to Kitty V Child and a welcome bench. Go through a wooded area (7), to emerge onto a shingle beach. This area forms part of Pagham Harbour Nature Reserve (8).

Turn right along the ridge of shingle beach (9), past a small oak wood (10). Aim for the houses and join a track. Continue past Park Copse and turn left at the PF\* returning to the shingle beach (11).

Turn right and walk along the shingle to join the sea wall (12). To avoid walking on the shingle carry on along the track and turn left at the end to join the sea wall. Follow the seawall (13) along the coastline past the beacon (14 & 15), turn right by the children's playground returning to East Beach Car Park (16) for a welcome cup of tea (in season).

\*PF = Public Footpath

**1 Selsey Tram** A light railway from Chichester to Selsey, 1897-1935. It carried 80,000 passengers a year in its heyday. There were 8 stations and 3 halts. The playground mound is the site of Beach Station.



**2 East Beach Pond** Spectacular dragonflies, well adapted airborne insects, haven't changed in design since prehistory. Watch dramatic displays between June & August on warm sunny days near water.



**3 Listening Post** A very rare Grade 2 Listed building, built in the First World War to give early warning of approaching airships. Inside is a concrete acoustic mirror shaped like a modern satellite dish.



**4 Gardens** Gardens are increasingly valuable for wildlife. A mix of shrubs and low growing plants provide food and shelter for birds, insects and butterflies also lawns attract blackbirds and thrushes.



**5 Field Hedges** Hedges are often old landscape features and can be aged by counting the number of woody species. Drift Road's mainly hawthorn hedge is much younger than the one in Park Lane.



**6 Ditch & Fields** Ditches are for more than just drainage – many different wild flowers grow in the ditch and the field borders. Wild carrot is very common in this area. You may even see a rare water vole here.



**7 Footpath** These common oaks (Quercus robur) have leaves growing close to the twigs and acorns on stalks. Oaks are nature reserves in their own right and can host over 200 different types of insect.



**8 Severals** These salt water lagoons and reed beds are important feeding and resting grounds for migrating birds. Little Egrets are becoming more common here, possibly a sign of global warming.



**9 Shingle Plants** The shingle must be stable for plants to grow in these harsh conditions. Some of these plants are very specialised. You will find seakale and yellow-horned poppy in the summer.



**10 Woodland** The medieval Bishop's Park is now mostly under the sea. Fossil wood and deer antlers have been found here. An important hunting area in Tudor times, this woodland and Park Copse are all that remain, along with the street names (Park Rd and Park Avenue). Sussex is famous for its bluebell woods which are rare outside the UK. Look out for bluebells on the beach which are a remnant of the old woodland.



**11 Smuggling** Smuggling was active in remote Selsey for hundreds of years. In the 1700's everyone seems to have been involved. One local farmer, smuggling part time, made £10,000 profit in 6 years.



● See Blue Plaque to learn about Eric Coates

**12 Sea Wall** Built in 1955 the sea wall has to be repaired constantly. In the last century Selsey lost more land per yard sea frontage than anywhere else in the UK – an estimated 25 yards per year.



**13 Railway Carriage Houses** Look for the houses converted from train carriages along here. Some may have come from The Selsey Tram railway. Can you spot the "No Smoking" signs on the windows?



● See Blue Plaque to learn about the Mulberry Harbour

**14 Spanish Armada** The Armada was sighted passing close to Selsey Bill in 1588 on its way down the channel. A scheme to drive the Spanish ships on to Owers Rocks failed. Beacons were used to signal danger from the sea.



**15 The Barracks** stood between 1803-1812, near the site of East Beach car park, defence against invasion by Bonaparte. It housed 346 men, with hospital beds for 50 patients. Hoary Cress, a common South Coast plant, came to Britain in the bedding of sick troops returning from the Walcheren expedition in 1809, a possible link to the barracks.



**16 Fishermen's Huts** Their traditional name is 'Tarred huts' or 'Fishshops'. St Wilfred taught the local men to fish when he settled in Selsey in 681. Selsey crabs and lobsters are famous worldwide.

