



# EASTBOURNE



*Further Afield*



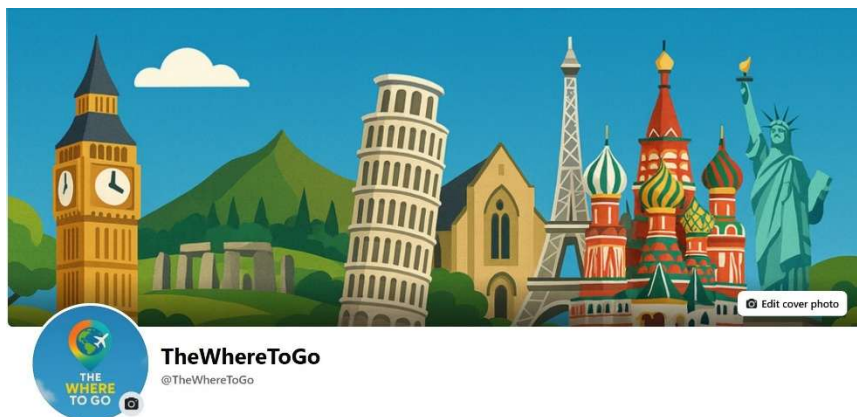
## The inside cover for your information.....



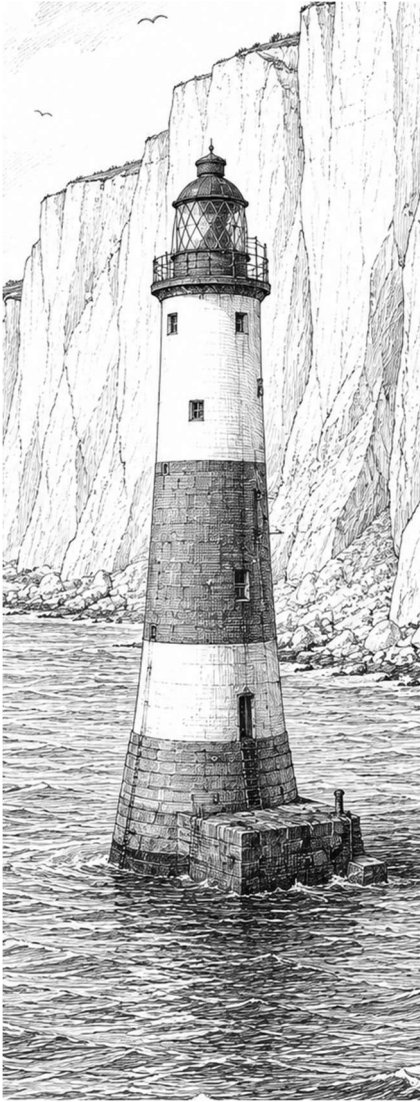
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## Introduction



Situated on the south coast of England, Eastbourne is known for its elegant seafront, Victorian architecture and dramatic coastal scenery. Although the area has ancient origins, including Roman settlements and farming communities on the nearby South Downs, Eastbourne remained a collection of small villages until the 19th century.

The arrival of the railway in 1849 opened the town to tourism and rapid development. Backed by the wealthy Duke of Devonshire, Eastbourne was carefully planned as an upmarket seaside resort, attracting visitors seeking clean air, sea bathing and relaxation. Today, Eastbourne combines traditional seaside charm with cultural attractions, beautiful beaches and easy access to the surrounding countryside.

Beyond the elegant seafront, Eastbourne is surrounded by some of southern England's most striking landscapes and historic villages. To the east stands the mighty Pevensey Castle, first built by the Romans and later linked to William the Conqueror's invasion of 1066. Sovereign Harbour brings a modern contrast, with its busy marina, waterfront cafés and luxury apartments.

West of the town, the dramatic white cliffs of Beachy Head and the Seven Sisters create one of Britain's finest coastal views, while the Litlington White Horse overlooks the South Downs nearby. Inland, the picturesque village of Alfriston offers medieval charm, timber-framed buildings, riverside walks and some beautiful places to take afternoon tea.

Close by, Berwick Church is famous for its remarkable Bloomsbury Group murals painted by Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell. The area is surrounded by fields and woodland with walking trails to take you in all directions. Further west, the mysterious Long Man of Wilmington, carved into the chalk hillside, remains one of Sussex's most iconic and debated ancient figures.

## Pevensey Castle



Pevensey Castle is one of the most historically important castles in southern England. Originally built as a Roman fort during the 3rd century, the site later became famous as the landing place of William the Conqueror in 1066 before the Battle of Hastings. Following the Norman invasion, the existing Roman walls were adapted into a medieval castle.

Over the centuries the fortress played important defensive roles during medieval conflicts and later wars. Its thick stone walls and strategic location near the coast made it an important military stronghold. Today visitors can explore extensive ruins including towers, gateways and sections of the original Roman fortifications.



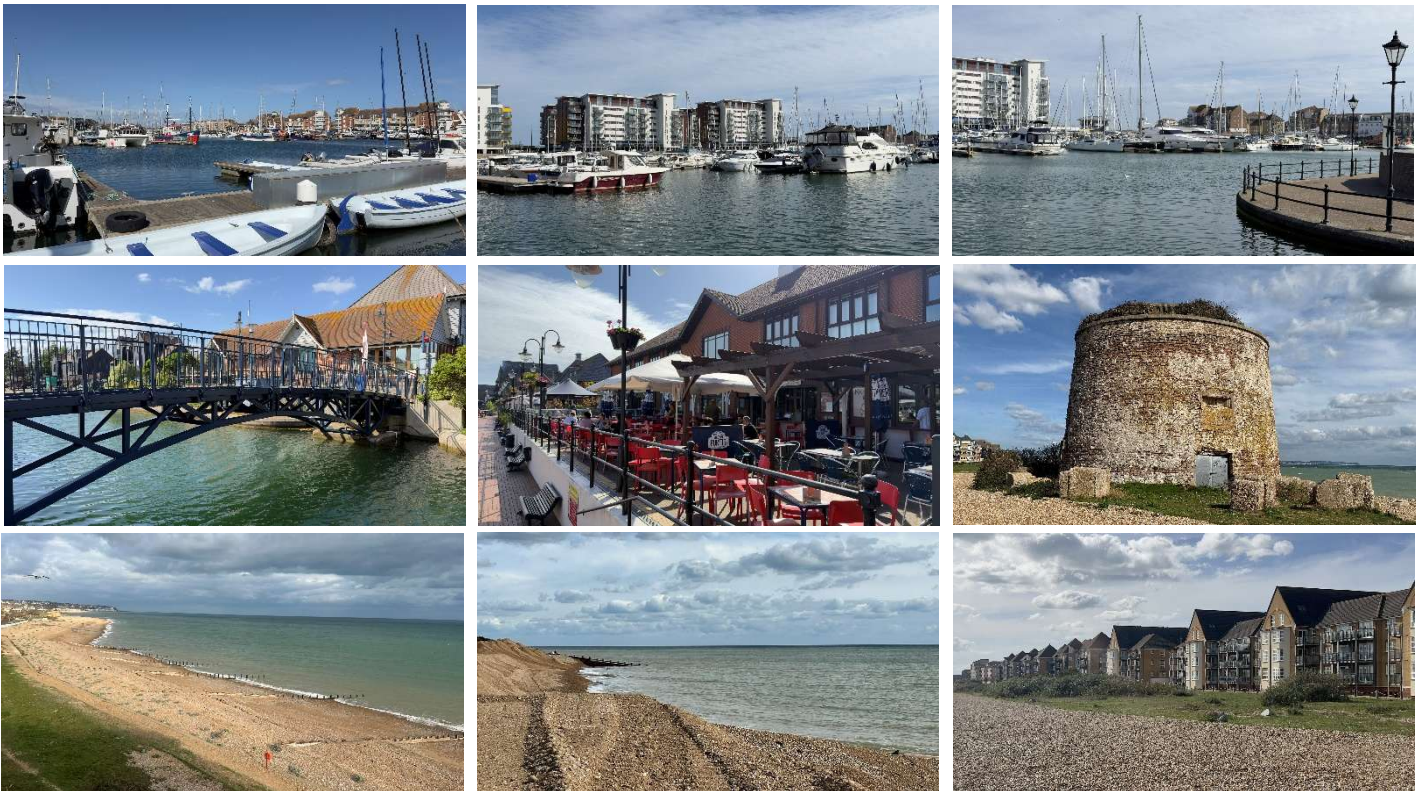
## Sovereign Harbour

Sovereign Harbour is one of the largest marina complexes in northern Europe and represents Eastbourne's modern waterfront development. Opened during the 1990s, the marina transformed former coastal land into a large residential, leisure and boating destination.

The harbour contains hundreds of berths for yachts and motorboats, along with restaurants, cafés, apartments and waterside walkways. Locks connect the marina basins with the English Channel, allowing vessels to enter and leave according to tidal conditions.

Sovereign Harbour differs significantly from Eastbourne's traditional Victorian seafront, offering a more contemporary atmosphere focused on leisure boating and waterfront living. It has become popular with residents, sailors and visitors seeking restaurants and quieter coastal scenery out of town.

The development also contributed to economic regeneration in eastern parts of the town. Today Sovereign Harbour combines maritime activity with tourism and modern housing, showing how Eastbourne has expanded beyond its historic role as a classic seaside resort.



## Gildredge Manor



Set within the leafy surroundings of Eastbourne's Old Town, Gildredge Manor is one of the town's significant historic buildings. Built in 1776 for Reverend Dr Henry Lushington, the elegant Georgian house later became home to the influential Gilbert and Davies-Gilbert families, whose landholdings helped shape much of Eastbourne's development.

Over the centuries the manor has served various roles, including housing the original Towner Art Gallery (from 1923 to 2007) before falling into serious decline. Rescued and restored in the early 21st century, the Grade II listed building now stands once again as a local landmark, admired for its period architecture, grand interiors and rich history.

Surrounding the manor, Manor Gardens and neighbouring Gildredge Park provide a peaceful green space on the borders of the town. The gardens retain traces of their historic origins, including the charming Hermitage, which is the small, yellow, ornamental thatched garden building. Mature trees, open lawns and ornamental planting create a tranquil setting for walks and relaxation and a good picnic venue when the sun is out.



## Beachy Head

Beachy Head is a spectacularly dramatic chalk headland situated just west of Eastbourne. Towering an impressive 531 feet (162 metres) it is the highest chalk sea cliff in Great Britain and a lot higher than the 'White' Cliffs of Dover which reach a maximum height of 350 feet (110 metres). This iconic landscape was formed roughly 65 to 100 million years ago and was formed from the compacted skeletal remains of microscopic marine organisms that once thrived in the warm sea.



Below the cliffs sits the famous red-and-white striped Beachy Head Lighthouse which was built in 1902 and replaced the older Belle Tout Lighthouse, which sat precariously on the cliff summit but was often obscured by low-lying coastal fog. Due to relentless coastal erosion, the cliffs are constantly changing, occasionally resulting in massive, spectacular rockfalls that drop thousands of tons of pure white chalk onto the waves below.

Today, Beachy Head is a cornerstone of the South Downs National Park and a major tourist draw. The windswept clifftops are covered in rich chalk grassland, providing a unique habitat for wildflowers, butterflies, and migrating birds. Visitors flock here to walk the South Downs Way, soaking in panoramic views that stretch all the way across the Seven Sisters. It remains a place of raw, natural beauty, offering an unforgettable and humbling perspective on the power of the British coastline.



## Birling Gap & Seven Sisters

Just a few miles west of Beachy Head lies Birling Gap, an enclosed pebble beach that serves as the main gateway to the iconic Seven Sisters. These undulating, brilliant white chalk cliffs offer one of the most striking landscapes on the British coastline. Unlike the heavily managed cliffs of Dover, the Seven Sisters remain entirely natural and undefended against the sea, allowing them to retain their pristine, stark white appearance.

Managed by the National Trust, Birling Gap is a small hamlet and a living lesson in the power of nature. The sea consumes up to one metre of land here every single year. A historic row of coastguard cottages built on the clifftop stands as a poignant symbol of this reality; several have already been demolished as the edge creeps closer, and the remaining houses sit precariously close to the drop. The most recent picture (on the right) was taken by me in 2026, and the other one is from archives dated 1969....



*Interesting to note that although the area is widely recognised as the Seven Sisters, it is argued that there are actually eight sisters. The peaks were originally named centuries ago when there were only seven distinct hills. However, relentless marine erosion has carved out an additional peak over time. Today, a walk along the coastal path will take you over eight distinct crests: Went Hill, Baily's Hill, Flat Hill, Flagstaff Point, Brass Point, Rough Brow, Short Brow and Haven Brow (from East to West)*



## Litlington White Horse

The Litlington White Horse is one of the most distinctive landmarks in the South Downs of East Sussex. Cut into the chalk hillside of Hindover Hill above the village of Litlington, the giant white horse overlooks the beautiful Cuckmere Valley near the famous Seven Sisters cliffs. Visible from miles around, it has become an important symbol of the local landscape and a familiar sight for walkers exploring the South Downs National Park.

The present horse was created in 1924 by local residents to replace an earlier figure dating from the 1830s. Measuring around 235 feet long, it is maintained by regular chalking to keep its bright white appearance against the green hillside. Unlike many ancient hill figures in England, the Litlington White Horse is relatively modern, yet it blends naturally into the surrounding countryside and has become part of Sussex folklore.



## Alfriston



Alfriston is a picturesque historic village located within the South Downs National Park near Eastbourne. Known for its medieval streets, timber-framed buildings and riverside setting, the village is often regarded as one of the prettiest in Sussex.

The settlement developed during the Saxon period and later became an important market village serving surrounding farming communities. Many of its historic buildings survive today, including inns, cottages and the famous Clergy House, which was the first property acquired by the National Trust in 1896.

Alfriston is also home to St Andrew's Church, sometimes nicknamed the "Cathedral of the Downs" because of its impressive size. The village sits beside the River Cuckmere and is surrounded by scenic countryside popular with walkers and cyclists.

Its peaceful atmosphere and preserved architecture have made Alfriston a popular filming location and visitor destination. Besides enjoying a walk around this lovely village, I can highly recommend a number of tea shops where you can enjoy a wonderful afternoon tea.



## Berwick Church

St Michael and All Angels Church is a small historic church famous for its remarkable wall paintings created by the Bloomsbury Group artists during the 20th century. Located in the village of Berwick, the church combines medieval architecture with modern artistic heritage.

The church dates back largely to the 13th century, although parts are older. In the 1940s, artists including Duncan Grant and Vanessa Bell decorated the interior with colourful murals, transforming the building into a unique blend of religious space and artistic expression.



The paintings include biblical scenes, decorative patterns and portraits created in the distinctive Bloomsbury style. The result is unlike most traditional English churches and has attracted art enthusiasts from around the world.

Surrounded by the peaceful Sussex countryside, Berwick Church offers visitors a quieter cultural experience away from the busy coast. It reflects the important connection between East Sussex and Britain's artistic communities during the 20th century and remains one of the region's hidden cultural gems.





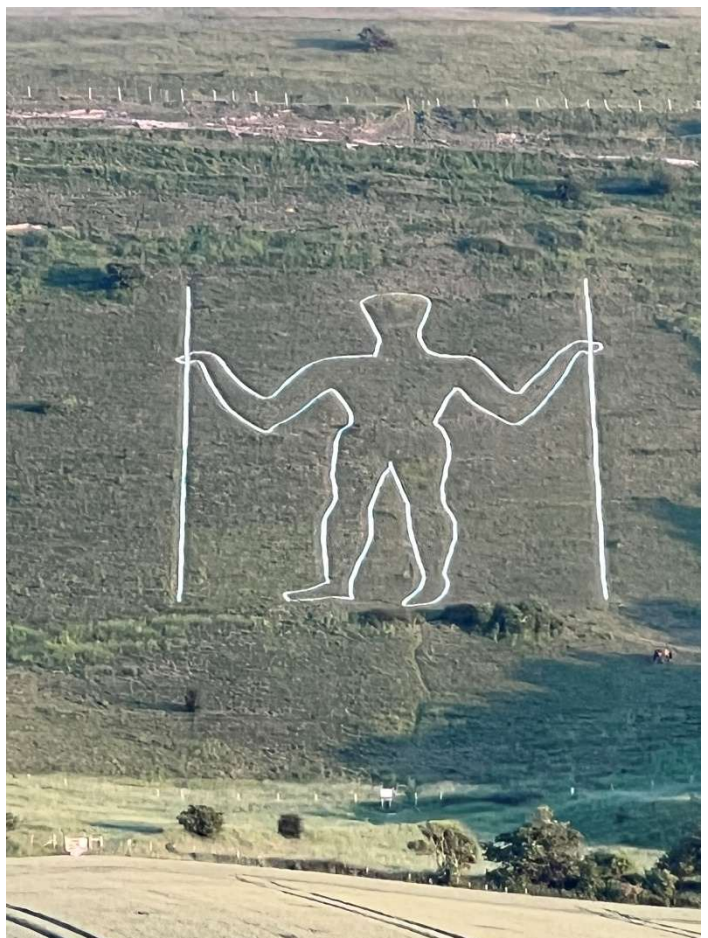
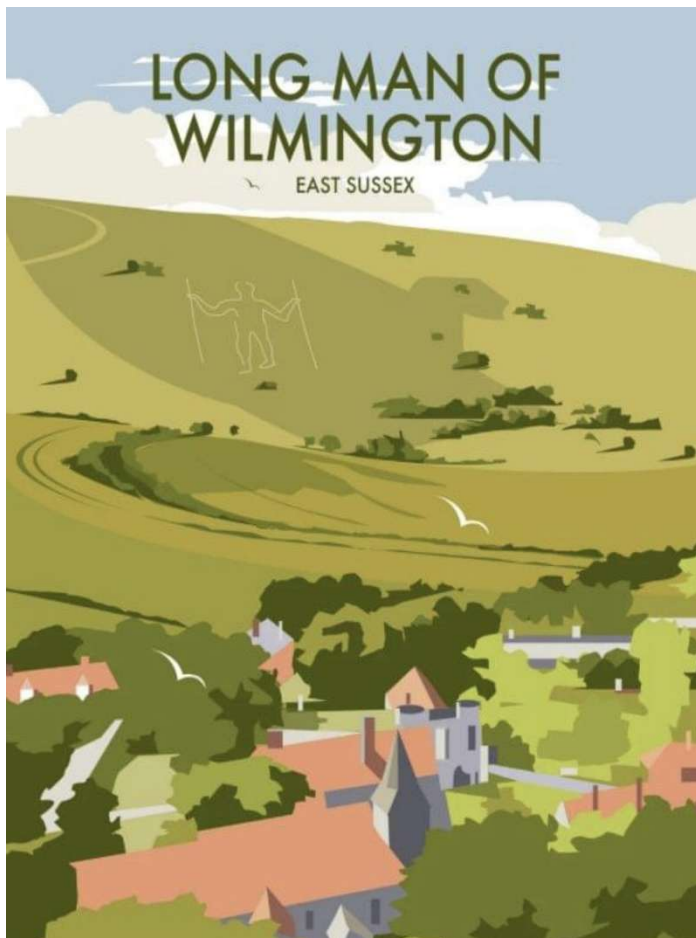
## Long Man of Wilmington

Long Man of Wilmington is one of Britain's most famous hill figures and stands on the South Downs near Eastbourne. The enormous outline of a human figure carved into the hillside measures over 230 feet tall and can be seen from considerable distances across the surrounding countryside.

The origins of the Long Man remain uncertain, with theories ranging from ancient pagan symbolism to later medieval or even 18th-century creation. The figure holds two long staffs and has become an enduring mystery within Sussex folklore and archaeology.

Unlike chalk figures cut directly into the hillside, the modern outline is formed using concrete blocks and lime. The surrounding landscape offers excellent walking routes and panoramic views across the South Downs National Park.

The Long Man has inspired myths, artistic interpretations and local legends for generations. Today it remains an important cultural landmark associated with Sussex identity and attracts visitors interested in history, archaeology and the dramatic scenery of the South Downs countryside.

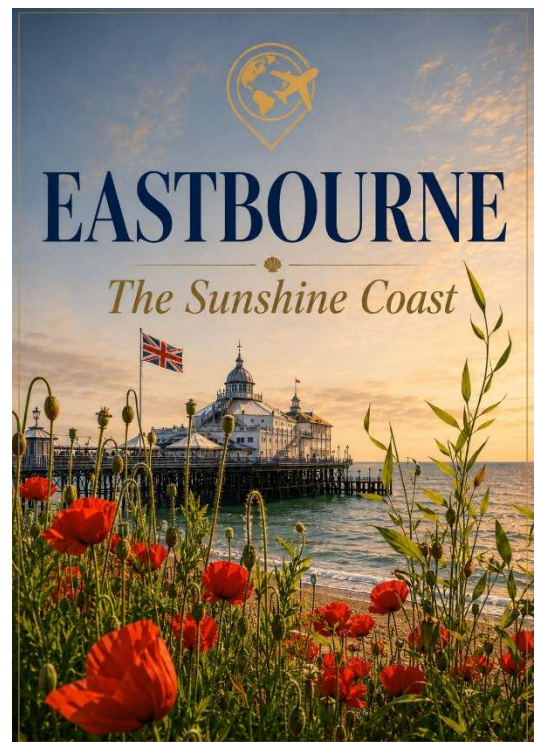


## Reflection

The area around Eastbourne offers as much for the visitor as the town itself. From the ancient ruins of Pevensey Castle to the dramatic cliffs of Beachy Head, the area combines history, landscape and culture in a way that constantly changes from one location to the next. What stands out most is the contrast between old and new. Sovereign Harbour represents modern Eastbourne, with its marina, cafés and waterfront living, while Alfriston preserves tradition with timber-framed buildings and quiet tea rooms.

Beachy Head, Birling Gap and the Seven Sisters demonstrate both the beauty and power of the coastline, shaped continuously by erosion and the sea. Meanwhile, landmarks such as the Litlington White Horse and the Long Man of Wilmington connect the landscape with local folklore and mystery. Overall, the journey highlights Eastbourne as a gateway to history, nature and culture. Each place offers something different, yet together they create a rich and memorable portrait of Eastbourne beyond the seafront.

**Don't forget the other book in this series called, [Eastbourne – The Sunshine Coast](#). You can download the guide and watch the video at [www.thewheretogo.com](http://www.thewheretogo.com)**



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