**Polegate to Newhaven, Sunday 22nd June 2008**

21 walkers, 19 miles – leader Colin Saunders

There was a turn-out of 21 bipeds, plus Holly and Tilly. As we all gathered outside Polegate Station, true to Colin's usual custom the map was held up on the wall while he indicated the day's route with the promise of several watering holes on the way (morning coffee, lunch, afternoon tea) along with a fine dollop of splendid views and plenty of fresh air. Oh... and a little bit of exercise thrown in for good measure! The first few miles took us via Abbotts Wood and as Colin planned to push on to Alfriston for lunch he decided on a morning coffee stop, at the "idyllic" Arlington Tea Garden, to keep us going until then. It was a charming little establishment which also sold plants and sported a small menagerie, including chickens, a fine rooster; a couple of chinchillas in a cage plus a golden Labrador puppy curled up on a blanket sleeping peacefully in the sun (obviously had the right idea). After this welcome refreshment stop we set off for Berwick Station via Arlington Reservoir. We made a brief stop at the station to look at plaque on the wall which commemorated the relaunching of the Vanguard Way by the National Chairman of the Ramblers Association on 6 May 1998. Here we joined the Vanguard Way, taking us into Berwick village and then on to Alfriston where the group dispersed to various hostelries and tea stops to have lunch. After lunch we started off following the Cuckmere River. The two Labradors enjoyed the romp along the banks and they both tested out their swimming skills, while we humans could only marvel at their agility and speed! Following the river as far as Littlington we diverted through the village, descended into Charleston Bottom (Friston Forest) to shortly ascend the 200 or so steps, taking us up through Westdean to the gap in the wall where our efforts were rewarded with the fine view of the Cuckmere River as it opens out into the sea. We then descended into Exceat and on to the coast – then over Seaford Head into Seaford. with a bracing wind to either help or hinder our pace depending on our individual aerodynamic qualities!! Our final watering hole for the day was the kiosk right on the seafront next to the Martello Tower with picnic benches on the beach where customers can sit to enjoy their cups of tea, cakes and ice-creams while they watch the waves and breathe in the briny air. The Martello Tower houses an interesting folk/local history museum and well worth a visit, but already closed when we arrived. Some hardy souls pushed on to Newhaven with Colin to complete the 19 miles while a few of us took the soft option and called it a day at Seaford. Great walk!!!

Report to Lesley Secker