**Eastbourne Circular, Saturday 12th February 2011**

20 walkers, 20.4 miles – leader Clare KIrkbride

There was a good turnout for Clare's social walk around Eastbourne starting at 10.15am. The weather was overcast and mild. We walked up to the Beachy Head ridge, and avoided the sea mist on the top by turning northwards along the South Downs Way towards Willingdon, with fine views of our afternoon route across the Pevensey Levels, descending through the day's only patch of greasy mud to the Wheatsheaf pub. Startled by 6 customers for lunch, the chef served us in due course, but the dishes were worth the wait, and we left our lunch spot within the hour. We took a very small detour to head east across fields which were reasonably dry underfoot then followed part of the Cuckoo Trail between Polegate and Stone Cross where we joined part of the 1066 Country Walk, diverting to admire the ancient buildings in Pevensey village including the two churches and the castle, which was in use from Roman times when the sea lapped the foot of the walls, till the end of World War II. We negotiated a little floodwater on the Pevensey Levels as well as a train at the level crossing before arriving at the Castle Inn in the village of Pevensey Bay for tea. The pub dog, a massive beast, was incensed by our hats (!) but the bar staff served us with generous helpings of good tea and coffee, before we emerged to tackle the trail along the shingle for half-a-mile or so. Thereafter, the station lay more or less an hour away, so the sprinters scorched ahead, and the leader dawdled with the last of the group, and arrived at 6pm. The ascent totalled 420m and the distance 20.4 miles.