



**WALK&
CYCLE**

Rye: Tripping Along the Cobbles

Trail Summary

Trail : SUSSTR0019
Activity : Walk
Type : Family
Author : Len Markham
Distance : 1.6 miles / 2.6 kms
Ascent : 69 feet / 21 metres
Location : TQ922206 / TN31 7LJ

The fairytale little town rises above the lush marshes, its old defensive walls and gates, cannon and look-out towers harking back to prosperous days when trade was good and everybody had to be tucked up in bed before the portcullis was dropped shut. One of the Cinque Ports, Rye grew rich before its local watercourses silted up and the sea retreated. The port blossomed from the profits of trade, the modern town presenting a delightful assemblage of picturesque old red-shingled houses, cobbled streets and quiet car-free precincts bright with gardens and window boxes.

This tour treads a labyrinthine way down the most interesting streets, offering places to explore almost on every corner.

The trail has been taken from the book *Kiddiwalks in East Sussex* by Len Markham. It has been reproduced with the kind permission of the publisher, Countryside Books.



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Trail Description

1. Turn right from the car park to the roundabout and go left, then swing left up Landgate under the old gateway. Continue along Hilder's Cliff to the lookout point. The view south is over Romney Marsh to the tree-clad heights of Iden. Swing right.
2. Turn right down the cobbled Conduit Hill to the roundabout.
3. Turn left on Cinque Ports Street.
4. Turn right on Station Approach.
5. Turn left on Crown Fields and continue beside the railway line to Ferry Road.
6. Turn right down Ferry Road and go over the level crossing to Rye Pottery on your right beside the River Tillingham.
7. Turn left on a riverside footpath and pass the windmill. The original structure was destroyed by fire in 1930 and rebuilt. Cross the railway line and continue to the road, weaving left and right to the Strand Quay.
8. Turn left by the Rye Town Model Exhibition and continue up the cobbled Mermaid Street, swinging right on West Street to reach St Mary's church. Continue to the church front entrance.
9. Turn left on Lion Street and go immediately right on Market Street.
10. Turn right on Pump Street past the old Water Tower and proceed to Ypres Tower Museum (selective opening - telephone: 01797 226728). Descend the steps in front of the Gun Garden and cross the A259, going straight forward on Rock Channel.
11. Go left along the raised footway near the old Ferry Cottage. Until 1927 this was the home of the local ferryman. Dryshod shepherds would bring their flocks to market in Rye. But sheepdogs were charged full fare and had to swim alongside the flocks. Go left off the bank back to the car park.



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Background Notes

Rye was one of the Cinque Ports charged with helping defend the Channel coast against French invasion, its status bringing trading privileges. In the 16th century, the sea retreated leaving only constricted and shallow access along the local river courses. The harbour is now two miles downstream. The Water Tower (point 10) was built in 1735 to provide the town's water supply. It was used for the dumping of rubbish and rewards were offered for information leading to the arrest of miscreants responsible for disposing of trash like calves' feet! The Ypres Tower dates from the 13th century. It was supposed to deter the French although it fell to their depredations in 1377 when they entered the town and burnt every one of its wooden buildings. The cannon in front of the tower were manufactured in 1980 to commemorate the 80th birthday of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. They replaced a battery of six brass pieces impressed with the arms of Spain. These were presented to the town by Elizabeth I in recognition of the part Rye played in the defeat of the Armada.

Rye Town Model Exhibition

The Rye Town Model Exhibition is located at point 8 on the route. Seven hundred years of local history are brought to life in this dramatic exposition, with narration and sound and light effects combining brilliantly to show how the town developed. On the upper floor is a collection of old slot machines and coin-in-the-slot mechanical tableaux. Open daily from Easter until November. Telephone: 01797 223902.

The Gun Garden

The Gun Garden is located in point 10 on the route. Children will revel in a hands-on experience of pretending to repel invaders using the black cannon.

Trail Map



Location

Rye is between Hastings and New Romney on the A259. Start on the eastern side of the town and park in the Bedford Place pay and display car park (GR 923206). Toilet facilities are available close by.