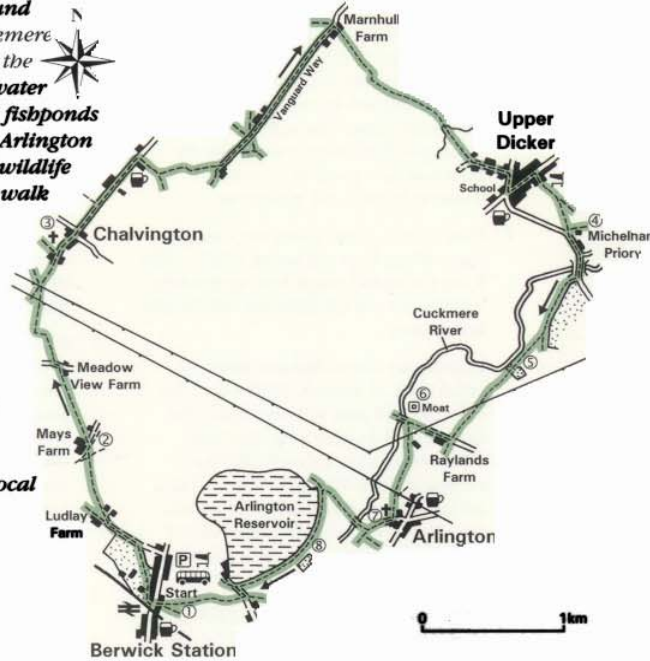




"Water water EVERYWHERE"

This walk around the upper Cuckmere valley looks at the uses made of water from medieval fishponds to the modern Arlington Reservoir and wildlife sanctuary. The walk also visits the beautiful, moated Michelbam Priory, whose 15th century monks were not adverse to making unauthorised visits to their local watering hole.



Length 8 Miles - 13 Kilometres
Approximately 5 hours - Grade 3

START - Berwick Station (O.S. Explorer 16 - NGR 525068)

ACCESS - Car - Berwick Station or Arlington reservoir car parks (accessed off Berwick to Upper Dicker road)

Bus - Cuckmere Valley Ramblerbus

Train - Berwick Station

PUBLIC TOILETS - Arlington reservoir car park

REFRESHMENTS - Pubs at Berwick, Upper Dicker, Arlington
Village shops at Berwick, Upper Dicker

8
Miles



"Water water EVERYWHERE"

- This part of Berwick grew up around the railway station. Note the station cottages and the signal box restored to its interwar Southern Railway colours. The long distance footpath from Croydon to Newhaven passes here called the "Vanguard Way" since it was originally conceived by a group of commuters travelling home in the guards van.
- Mays Farm is a well-preserved Georgian house dating from the period 1720 - 1780. It has the typical simple lines, symmetrical front, porch and tall casement windows of such houses.
- Chalvington church features, amongst other items of interest, fragments of the oldest stained glass in Sussex (late 13th century) and an early king post roof. Whilst here spare a thought for the poverty stricken Wydon family. In 1562 a collection had to be made from no less than 25 other persons in the parish to support this family - "the pore inhabitants of Rype".
- Michelham Priory was built in 1229 as a place of escape from the world for 13 canons to devote their lives to serving God. Unfortunately, a moat and gatehouse were soon needed to keep the world out. However, as time went on the ideals suffered - later monks were accused of visiting inns and entertaining women, although these may just have been stories used as "evidence" by the commissioners of Henry VIII to close the Priory down and loot its wealth in the 1530s. The remains of the Priory are now open to the public as is its fine, working watermill.
- Fish formed an important part of the medieval diet, since they could be obtained fresh at any time of the year. The walk passes along the western edge of the Michelham Priory fishponds, which were situated in the middle of the hunting park (another source of fresh food). Such ponds were managed as a modern fish farm is, with a chain of ponds containing fish of different ages.
- North of Raylands Farm, another moated site of unknown age can be glimpsed on the Cuckmere floodplain.
- At Arlington the route passes straight over the site of the medieval village. Over the centuries the village has shrunk, possibly following the Black Death of 1348 when a third of the population of Sussex died. The inhabited part of Arlington has moved back to the central crossroads, leaving the tell-tale humps and bumps of the ghost village between the church and the river.
- Between 1969 and 1971 bulldozers created the largest water feature on this walk, the 120 acre Arlington Reservoir. Built to supply five million gallons of water a day to the Eastbourne area abstracted from the Cuckmere River, the reservoir has also become a nature reserve. It is particularly famed for its bird life, with up to 170 species breeding in the area and 10,000 migrating birds using it each year.

8
Miles

