

The Slater Trail

A circular walk through landscape which inspired the artist Eric Slater (1896–1963), who lived for most of his life in Seaford. A keen walker, he developed an intimate knowledge of the surrounding countryside and loved to observe the cliffs, sea and sky.

Slater died in obscurity but a series of exhibitions and a book about his life have brought him back to the public eye. His colour woodcuts, which favour design over accuracy, were popular in the 1930s. The walk takes about 2 hrs 15 mins and can start in Seaford or at South Hill Barn - both offer free parking. From the the barn there's also the choice of two shorter circular walks, each of just over an hour.

1 Start at the Martello tower on Seaford bay which Slater depicts in his 1930 colour woodcut *Seaford Head*. Slater shortens the sweep of the bay which stretches for about 3 kilometres from Newhaven to Splash Point. The postcode of the Martello tower for sat-nav is **BN25 1JH**.

2 Past the toilets, café and beach huts, it's a five minute stroll to Splash Point, the inspiration for Slater's print *Rough Sea*. The cliff formation has changed considerably since he made it in 1929.

3 Follow the Vanguard Way path to the top of Seaford Head. It's a steep ten minute climb with warning signs to keep away from the cliff edge.

4 You might like to rest on the bench at the top near the 18th tee

of the golf course! Enjoy the coastal panorama with views of the Downs and Friston Forest.

5 After the Seven Sisters cliffs come into view, follow the coastal path and after five minutes you'll see a weather station to the left and a sign welcoming you to the nature reserve on the right. A little further on you'll see South Hill Barn on your left.

6 Continue past the 15th tee and past a sign about rabbits until you are level with the barn where there's a stile. Cross the stile into the field and head to the barn. There's another stile about 20 metres to the left of the barn. Cross that and head towards the Seven Sisters cliffs.

7 Take any one of the three paths **C** - later they merge into one - past the iron bar gate and after five minutes you'll reach a cattle grid. On the left, 70 metres further on, near a stile, there's a similar view to Slater's print *Cuckmere Haven*.

8 Carry on down the path towards the coastguard cottages. When you reach the second cattle grid you are approaching the scene which inspired Slater's *The Coastguard Station*. A memorial to Canadian soldiers is 70 metres to the left. Walk down to the beach and compare Slater's 1930 view to the one today.

9 Back up from the beach, 100 metres right of the memorial, go through Walkers' gate and follow the footpath which runs parallel to the River Cuckmere.

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After about 10 minutes you'll pass a stile which leads back to the stile in 7. Carry on the lower path and through a second gate from where you can see the A259 road. Further on, at the third gate, there's a sign saying 'Welcome to the Cuckmere Valley'. Bear left and pass through a newer gate (unless you want to drop by the Cuckmere Inn pub or the Seven Sisters Visitor Centre which are straight on, either side of Exceat Bridge).

10 Follow the gentle upslope of the path through the field. To your right, you'll see Friston Forest and High and Over. At the next gate there's a view similar to Slater's print *The Stack Yard*. On the left, another sight of South Hill Barn which is where you are heading.

11 Through another gate and then turn left to Chyngton Farm towards South Hill Barn. Through the farmyard and then it's a ten minute walk up the concrete track to the barn.

12 At the barn turn right and follow the concrete track to the 14th tee of the golf course. Near a telephone mast the track becomes a grassy path with views of Seaford town and bay.

13 Follow the path towards the 18th tee and then carry on down Seaford Head to the beach and Martello Tower.

Starting and finishing at Seaford, the walk takes about 2hrs 15mins. You could also start and finish the same circuit at South Hill Barn (7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6). For shorter circuits starting and finishing at the barn: heading East (6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11), about 1hr 15mins. Heading West (12, 13, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6) about 1hr 5mins.



For more information about Eric Slater and many more of his beautiful woodcuts, and to buy a copy of the book *Slater's Sussex*, visit the website:

www.ericlater.co.uk



Seaford Head
1930



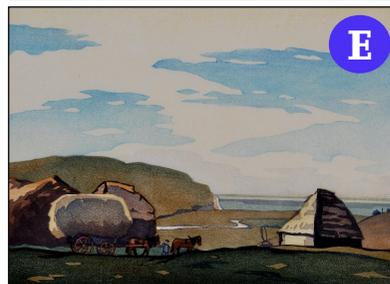
Rough Sea
1929



Cuckmere Haven
1929



The Coastguard
Station
1930



The Stack Yard
1938

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In the footsteps
of Seaford artist
Eric Slater