



# Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust

## Riverside Walks

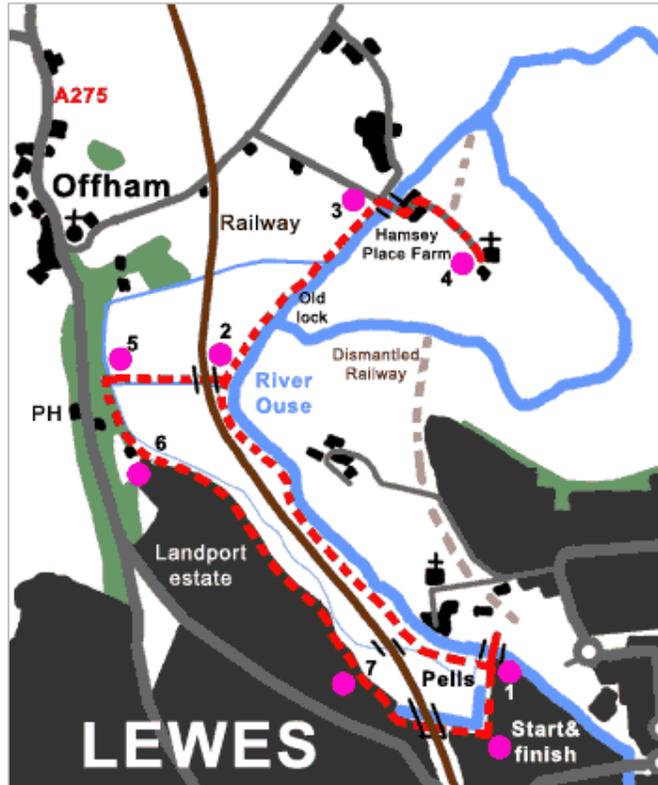
### Walk 2 - Lewes Pells to Hamsey Island. (OS Map – Explorer 122)

This is an easy walk of approximately 4 miles along the tidal stretch of the River Ouse in Lewes. The river is tidal between Newhaven and Barcombe Mills, and as a result the river below Barcombe Mills is noticeably different to that above. This route is not entirely circular but the section to Hamsey Island Church is worth a walk even though it does mean returning along the same path to continue with the rest of the walk.

#### Directions

**Start - TQ405105**, Southern most part of the L-shaped lake by the Pells outdoor swimming pool. The swimming pool was originally opened in 1860, and is Grade II listed. It is fed by a natural spring and was the first freshwater open-air pool in the country.

**Waypoint 1 - TQ414108**, Turn left onto the Sussex Ouse Valley Way along the west bank of the river. You can see Offham Church appear in the distance as you walk. Continue along the river bank past the phone lines and pill box beside the railway line. Eventually you come to a stile with a footpath heading off to the left. On your left as you walk you pass Landport housing estate. If walking between May and September keep a careful watch at the water's edge. You may be fortunate enough to observe the many grey mullet that are in this part of the river feeding.



Walking upstream towards Offham

**Waypoint 2 - TQ406117**, For now continue along the river bank, but remember this footpath for your return from Hamsey Island. As you approach the electricity pylons the remains of an old lock including a substantial amount of the brickwork can be seen. This lock was the first of 19 locks that formed the Upper Ouse Navigation. The bricks represent the lock hold where the barges were held whilst the water levels were equalised either side of the lock. The original course of the river heads off to the right. The land enclosed between this original meander and the diverted section of the river straightened to assist navigation is known as Hamsey Island. Pass by pill box no. A271 on your right, a 3rd pill box can also be seen across the field diagonally to your left.

Continue to the bridge that leads onto Hamsey Island on your right.

**Waypoint 3 - TQ412123**, Turn right to cross this bridge onto the island. Follow the track between the converted farm buildings. Go past Hamsey Place Farmhouse and around the corner. Just beyond the lake on your left a raised embankment is visible that used to carry the Lewes to Uckfield railway. Continue up the track until you reach St. Peter's Church.



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**Waypoint 4 - TQ414121**, From the church the views across the valley extend in all directions. There has been a building on the church site since Saxon times. It has been a parish church since the Norman Conquest in 1066, and is noted as a church in the Domesday Book of 1086. The name Hamsey is thought to be derived from the old English word Hamm meaning water meadow. Pause a while and then re-trace your steps back to the stile (now on your right) at waypoint 3.



**St Peter's Church  
Hamsey Island**

**Waypoint 2 again - TQ406117**, Cross this stile, and walk under the railway bridge. There is a small drainage stream on your left. Continue to the stile at the end. Have a look into this stream as you walk – it is filled with wildlife. On the day we walked we saw tadpoles, various frogs, sticklebacks and water boatmen. It's hard to believe that this shallow stream was once the "Chalkpit Cut". Constructed in 1809 it used to allow barges to reach a loading wharf below the chalkpit at Offham. From the chalkpit a tramway operated carrying chalk under the turnpike road (A275) and down the hill to the waiting barges below.



**The Old Chalkpit Cut**

**Waypoint 5 - TQ402117**, Cross over the stile, and turn left onto the track through the wood. The track takes you uphill.

**Waypoint 6 - TQ403115**, At the top of the hill take the left fork which takes you downhill. After a short distance you come to a footpath to the left. Turn left down this track and then immediately right so that the flint wall is on your right behind the brambles. Continue along this path until you see the children's playground through the trees. At this point head right back up to the wall and exit onto the byway.

**Waypoint 7 - TQ410108**, Turn left along this path passing behind the school, and then take the footpath at the 'no cycling' sign. This continues downhill with a brick and flint wall on the right, and a football pitch below you on the left. Cross the footbridge over the railway, and you find yourself back at the L-shaped lake. Walk around the lake back to the starting point.