

Acknowledgements:

With thanks to Ellis Berg, John Prior and Pamela Howard and all the owners of railway homes for bringing their carriages to life.

Map artwork by Peter White (Manhood Wildlife & Heritage Group)

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Text by Dr. Bill Martin

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Other Heritage Trail and Walk Leaflets:

Produced by the Manhood Wildlife and Heritage Group (mwhg.org.uk)

available Selsey Town Hall, Raycraft (Selsey) and the RSPB Visitor Centre (Sidlesham)

The Selsey Heritage Trail (Discover Selsey's Twelve Blue Plaques)

A Sense of Place Walks: East Beach Amble; Seaside Stroll; Tracks, Trees and Tees; Beyond the Sleepy Lagoon; Tales of the Medmerry Marshes & Walk the Selsey Tramway

Walks around Sidlesham by Dr. Bill Martin

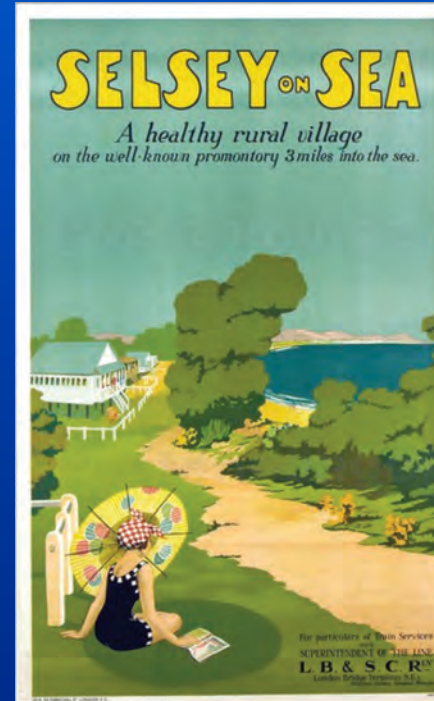


The Selsey Heritage Trail



All Aboard

Selsey's love affair with railway carriages
A two mile stroll around the East Beach area of Selsey.



PREPARE FOR THE SUMMER RAIL COACHES

SUITABLE FOR BUNGALOWS

5 COMPARTMENT 3RD CLASS £25 EACH
4 COMPARTMENT COMPOSITE £27 EACH

DELIVERED ON SITE
PLOTS OF LAND SUITABLE FOR ABOVE FOR SALE
Apply 4 WESTGATE, CHICHESTER

*This advertisement
appeared in
The Chichester Observer
(30th May 1923)*

Written by Dr. Bill Martin
Manhood Wildlife &
Heritage Group
&
Selsey Walking &
Outdoor Festival



All Aboard

(Route & Points of Interest)

During this 2 mile stroll the locations of 18 'railway homes' will be identified and you could spot at least a further 10 other properties which are built around railway carriages. Several properties have been built to incorporate one or two railway coaches, while more modern buildings have also been constructed on the site of former carriages. Whilst following this trail please remember that the railway carriage homes are private properties and the owner's privacy should be respected at all times.

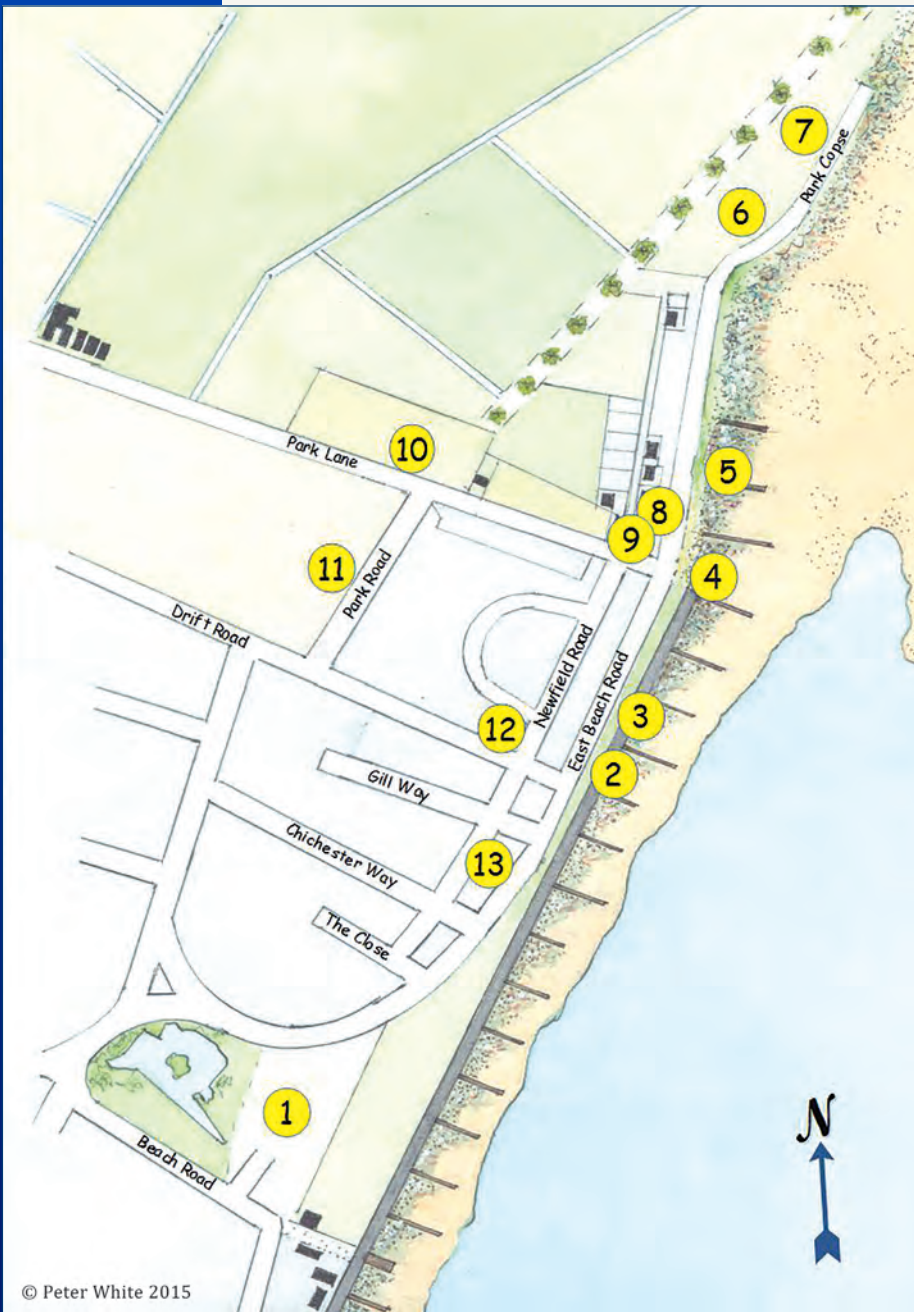
1 Start at East Beach Car Park.

Walk onto the promenade, turn left, heading northeast towards Pagham and Bognor.

Start looking to your left now - can you spot any railway homes?

Clues: Look for the carriage windows, bricked up bases or steps up to the front door, showing that the carriages had been propped up to have their wheels removed. (For example No 87 Seaholme) There are two carriages here, sideways to the road, others may be end-on.

2 Walk along the promenade, parallel to East Beach Road which is below you to your left. Stop at the point where East Beach Road turns sharply left to become Drift Road.



In 1920 Jacob Berg, known locally as Tommy, bought land between Drift Road and Park Lane to create the Park Estate which had 50 plots, each with a property which could be leased as holiday accommodation for £10 per year. Tommy, a tailor from the East End of London, came to Selsey as a friend of the playwright R. C. Sherriff, who wrote 'Journey's End' which was based on his own experiences as a captain in World War One. Tommy also had another friend, a traffic inspector at Waterloo Station, who may have been his source for the carriages on the Park Estate. Timber for the bungalows came from Tidworth Army Camp near Aldershot.

About the same time an advertisement appeared in the Chichester Observer offering rail coaches for sale for £25. (see front cover).

Note the Blue Plaque for the Mulberry Harbour. During World War Two the Park Estate was closed and soldiers were billeted in some of the properties. After the war people continued to lease properties and later they were able to purchase the freehold.

3 Continue for 200m until you reach a building adjacent to the seawall - this is Seabank.

Seabank is built around 2 Stroudley carriages, later named Clarrie & Annabel, which are available to rent as holiday accommodation. Similar carriages operate today on the Bluebell Line in East Sussex. When the seawall was constructed in the 1950s, a previous owner of Seabank refused to pay to have the carriages moved further away from the sea, resulting in the only even numbered property on this stretch of East Beach Road!



- 4** Continue along the promenade, remember to keep looking left. Stop at the end of the promenade.

Note the Blue Plaque for Eric Coates, who composed the music for 'Desert Island Discs'.

- 5** Walk down the slope from the promenade and turn right onto the unpaved section of East Beach Road.

Stop at No 161.

Turnstiles is a holiday let built around 2 railway carriages. Separate leases for the frontage between the road and the high water mark became available for these properties during the 1960s..

- 6** Continue on East Beach Road, looking left, until you reach a bend and the road becomes Park Copse.

Ahead of you is the most obvious of the railway carriages - Santos.

Santos was built in 1897 as a First Class Car for the Folkstone Vestibule Limited and then refurbished as a Parlour car by Pullman in 1919 by the London, Chatham and Dover Railway to serve their new terminus in Victoria. Pullman carriages, which carried individual names rather than numbers, were manufactured in Pennsylvania, USA and shipped as flat-packs to be fitted out in England. Originally named Mabel, this carriage was renamed Santos by previous owners to commemorate their honeymoon in South America. Canadian soldiers were billeted here during World War Two.

- 7** Next door is Green Bungalow with its distinctive 'Smoking' window clearly visible. Continue to Hilda and Tulip.

Hilda started her journey in 1897 as a luxury Pullman sleeping car on the Southern Railway carrying passengers of status and nobility, including members of the Royal Family. She was moved to her current location in 1932 and has now been restored as bed and breakfast accommodation.

Tulip was built in 1897 by Jackson and Sharpe in Delaware, USA. The company was known for their production of the most elegant private carriages. Tulip, the only one to be shipped to England, was used as part of the Folkstone train until 1914 and then refurbished in 1919. Withdrawn from service in 1930, she was moved to her current position where she became very neglected until her present owner restored many of her original features to their former splendour. The property is available for rent as holiday accommodation.

Notice the railway wagon being used as storage at the side of No 12. The modern building at No 13, which replaces two former railway carriages, is the first property on Park Copse to be granted planning permission for a two storey building. It was for sale at £1.2m in 2014 - the railway carriages cost £25 in 1923!

Turn around here and retrace your steps back along Park Copse and East Beach Road, re-passing Nutshell (173) and The Camp (163), which are both built around railway carriages.

- 8** Stop at the building immediately before the corner of East Beach Road and Park Lane.

This is Rorke's Drift. This modern building replaced 'Wi Wurry', the former home of Tommy Berg, the owner of the Park Estate.

- 9** Turn right into Park Lane.

Immediately on the right is Stewarton (built around 2 carriages). Soldiers were billeted here during World War Two and when Winston Churchill visited Selsey to check on the building of the Mulberry Harbour he attended a meeting held in this property. Prince Edward and Mrs Simpson may also have visited Stewarton, while they were living in Bognor, prior to their move to Paris. They arrived in Selsey incognito transported there in a customised Buick, described as 'the most romantic car in the world'. The Buick, purchased by Edward for Mrs Simpson, was one of pair shipped over from the USA. The second was apparently sent by Mr Simpson in an attempt to woo his wife back!

Next door, No 4 Park Lane is Dora, a Pullman Parlour Car, originally built in 1897. Available as a holiday let it retains many original features including sliding carriage doors. Dora is one of 9 Pullman carriages which can be found in Selsey. There were two others, Albert Victor (Park Road) was lost to redevelopment in the 1960s and Dorothy (Park Copse) was destroyed by fire in the 1980s.





10 Continue up Park Lane and opposite the junction with Park Road, stands No 24 St. Georges.

This is a 1906 Pullman Kitchen Car kit, Princess Ena, constructed for the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway (LBSCR) and often used with two other carriages called the Duchess of Norfolk and Princess Patricia. This carriage was withdrawn from service in 1932.

11 Turn into Park Road to see 4 more carriages.

14 Park Road (on the left) is Venus II. Originally a 1st Class car for Folkstone Vestibule Ltd, she was rebuilt as a Parlour Car in 1919 and withdrawn from service in 1930. This was the second Pullman vehicle to be named Venus, hence it is named Venus II. A tariff discovered in the lining of the carriage priced breakfast at 4 shillings (20p), a pot of tea at 1 shilling (5p) and a bottle of Pommery Champagne at 25 shillings (£1.25p)

11 Park Road is Figaro (on the right). Originally built in 1892 by the Gilbert Car Company, New York, as a baggage car with 24 seats for the Hastings Car Train. Rebuilt in 1920 as a Parlour Car at Pullman, she was withdrawn from service in 1930.

9 Park Road is Louise (on the right). This is the oldest carriage in Selsey. Originally built in 1876 as a Pullman Parlour Car, named Mr Ariel. Transferred to Derby for the Midland Railway in 1881, then to the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway and renamed Louise after Queen Victoria's daughter. This was the first Pullman to have electric lighting. In 1912 it was rebuilt as a kitchen car and was eventually withdrawn from service in 1929.

6 Park Road is Dolphin (on the left). Originally built in 1891 by the Gilbert Car Company, New York and assembled at Ashford for the Hastings Car Train. Refurbished in 1896, with compartments and corridors, then withdrawn from service in 1930. Many of her original features were restored by a previous owner.

On the right hand corner of Park Road and Drift Road is Driftwood. This was Tommy Berg's second home, then named 'Dun Robin', where he reputedly entertained a number of lady friends. At the time of the Park Estate there were open fields on the south side of Drift Road.

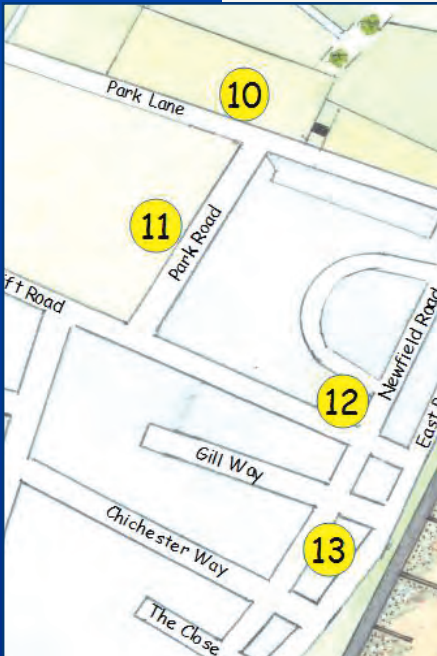
12 Turn left and continue down Drift Road to the corner with Newfield Road.

Newfield Road once had a garage with a petrol pump as well as a general store.

[If you would like to see more carriage homes walk down Newfield Road and turn left into Park Crescent, returning to (12) the junction of Newfield Road and Drift Road.]

13 Continue towards the seawall, turning right onto the pavement at the side of East Beach Road. Make your way back to the car park, getting a closer view of the carriages you may have spotted on your outward journey.

Along East Beach Road look out for Seasiding (105), Seaholme (87), Iveshead (73) and other possible carriage homes.



Further information:

Dora, Hilda, Seabanks, Tulip & Turnstiles are available as holiday homes and/or bed and breakfast.

Some of the carriages may have arrived on The Selsey Tramway which operated until 1935. Photographs show other carriages being transported from Chichester Station on the road by Pickfords and E.A. White & Sons of Chichester.

Other railway carriage properties are located nearby on the seafront in Bracklesham, East Wittering and Pagham and a thatched carriage can be found opposite the church in Slindon.

Ride on the Bluebell Railway in East Sussex (www.bluebell-railway.co.uk) or have afternoon tea in the waiting room of the former Petworth Station where you can also stay overnight in a carriage (old-station.co.uk)

'A Car called Constance' - The History of Gilbert Cars, South East & Chatham Railway Society 2007 (ISBN 978-0-902835-23-8) contains pictures of the interiors of Pullman carriages, including Figaro & Dolphin.

The London Brighton & South Coast Railway (& The Brighton Circle) www.lbscr.org

The Pullman Society: www.thepullmansociety.org.uk

Vintage Carriages Trust: www.vintagecarriagestrust.org

The Selsey Tram: David Bathurst 1992 Phillimore & Co. ISBN 0 85033 839 5

