

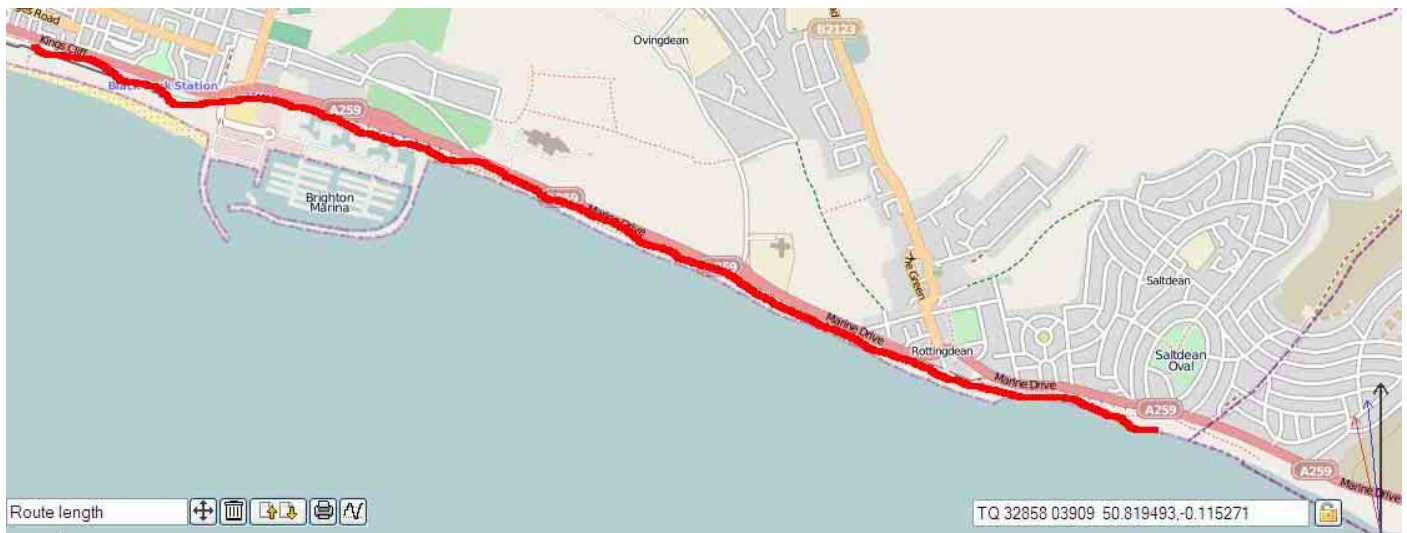
# ACCESSIBLE RAMBLES IN SUSSEX Brighton area

last revised 21/05/2010

Please read the introduction before reading this section

## BRIGHTON AREA

ON THE TRAIL OF THE DADDY LONGLEGS RAILWAY- THE UNDERCLIFF WALK TO ROTTINGDEAN AND SALTDEAN grade 1, 2



**Researched:** 15/1/10

**Summary:** This ramble follows the course of the famous railway that ran from Brighton to Rottingdean in the sea. The daddy longlegs ran on twin tracks, 18ft apart. You can find more details at <http://www.whitstablepier.com/volks/dll.htm>. East of Brighton Marina at low tide it is still possible to see the concrete blocks which formed the sleepers. At high tide in high winds this can be a dramatic and adventurous route, with waves crashing against the sea defences and flying high in the air. This is one of the few seaside accessible routes which has substantial stretches without buildings.

**Map** Landranger 198, Explorer 122 and Brighton street maps

**Grid reference:** TQ325036 (Volks Railway station) TQ 335034, Marina bus stop

**Public Transport:** Brighton and Hove buses 7,14b, 21, 21b, 23, 27, 27a, 47, 52 and 57 run to Brighton Marina. Brighton and Hove buses 2, 2a, 12, 12a, 12b, 14, 14b, 14c, 27, 27a and 47 run to Rottingdean. The Volks Electric railway runs along from near the pier to just before the marina. Brighton council say that there is a ramp available for wheelchair users.

**Car parking:** There is parking along the marine drive to the east of Brighton pier. This is obviously more heavily used in summer bank holidays and weekends. It may be a good idea to travel along the drive until you reach a parking place. Cars park parallel to the road so trailer parking should be possible outside peak times. If there is no parking at all then you can try driving to the Marina and parking in the ASDA car park. There is also a public multi-story car park in the marina but I have not checked the access.

There is a small car park near the Ramble at Rottingdean but this is often full. There is a larger car park just to the east of Rottingdean, but the surface of this is quite rough and there is a steep (1 in 8?) hill down into the village. Car parking is possible in the streets around the front at Saltdean. The streets nearest the front have double yellow lines.

**Accessible toilet** At Ovingdean, on the ramble, about half way along and at Rottingdean on the undercliff walk just immediately east of the ramp to Rottingdean, also slightly off route in Brighton Marina in the shopping Mall on the South side of the main road, behind a building currently occupied by "Subway".

**Refreshments:** Various pubs and café's in Brighton Marina which, being of recent development, are likely to have wheelchair access, Various cafes and pubs in Rottingdean (not checked), There may be take away counters by the Volks station.

**Grade:** 1 (2 if returning by the cliff route)

**Length:** 5 km each way with the possibility of extension at either end

**More details:** The ramble starts from the Volks Electric Railway at Paston Place- the midpoint on the route. It was at this point that passengers would disembark to join the daddy longlegs, which left from the groyne to your left. Start off along this groyne. Cross the railway and immediately turn left along a concrete path. (If you have parked to the west of here you can reach this point by following the path on the sea side of the road. If you have parked to the east you should know that there is no level access to the sea path between Paston Place and Black Rock stations.) Follow this path alongside the railway (and past Britain's first urban naturist beach.- The naturists are, however hidden behind a stone barrier). You reach Black Rock station. After this cross a car park and aim for Brighton Marina. At the time of researching the ramble this route was under development and a signed temporary diversion was in place. By summer 2010 there should be a permanent route. You pass under the road to the Marina and you should aim to keep as near to the cliff as possible. You emerge on the concrete walkway that will take you to Rottingdean



If you are coming by bus or from the ASDA car park you need to cross the car park aiming towards the flyover that takes the road into the development. Turn right here and go up a ramp (about 10 metres at about 1 in 12) and then turn right.

This part of the route is due to be subject to diversions in the period Spring 2010 to Spring 2012 but I am told that the diversion, which will be through the Marina, will be wheelchair accessible.

Once you are on the undercliff walk it is impossible to get lost. Keep going straight ahead with the cliffs above you and the sea on your right. (Sometimes the first stretch is closed because of rock falls. There is a step free route through the marina, running mainly along the north edge of the boating area. Ask for directions)

On the first part of the way your views are obscured by the marina development. As far as Ovingdean there is a sea wall about a metre high to your right. This will stop you falling into the sea but will obscure the view for smaller wheelchair users. Providing that you can see over it, at low tide you can see the concrete blocks that mark the route of the daddy longlegs railway.



On reaching Rottingdean you have a number of options. You can continue along the undercliff to Saltdean, a further kilometre, return the way you came or take the over cliff route back.

The route to Saltdean has some fine views, but when you reach the end you must either go up a small ramp, through a tunnel and then turn right, travelling about 100 metres at around 1 in 20, or attempt about 100 metres at something like 1 in 7. The first route brings you out near Saltdean Lido (not accessible) near some reasonable car parking. The second will bring you out on the south side of the road, going past a café (accessibility not checked). The route back to Rottingdean along the top of the cliffs is not recommended. There are some steep hills and you must go along the side of the road.

*The route of the Daddy Long Legs* Copyright Les Chatfield and licenced under the [Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/) license

To go to the village, or to return along the cliff route go up one of the ramps. Avoid the one on the left, the first one you come to. It looks temptingly gentle, but only leads you to the next ramp, which you hit at an awkward angle. The other ramps rise for about 10 metres at around 1 in 10. This will bring you to the centre of Rottingdean.

A route back along the cliffs is possible. It is hilly and there are a number of stretches of up to 100 metres of up to about one in 10- grade 2. It has fine views, but you will be by the side of a main road. Follow the footpath west past the pub and then across the pub car park. From here you can pick up the paved footpath/cycle route, which is good tarmac or attempt the grass route by the edge of the (fenced) cliff, which is more scenic and a bit further from the road. The grass track varies between wide stretches of fairly smooth grass and narrow stretches where the path may be muddy. You may have to double back to the cycle route at some points. Both routes are obvious.

When you are above the marina the cycle route descends steeply. You can follow this back to the marina and marine drive, but if you started from Paston Place you may prefer to remain at high level and go along Kings Cliff, which has a wide sea side pavement. This road gradually descends to the pier. Cross Marine Drive to the Pier and then turn left to travel along the drive back to the start. (Alternatively turn right and extend the ramble along the front towards Hove Lagoon, 4 km away.

## DITCHLING BEACON TO THE JACK AND JILL WINDMILL grades 2 and 4



**Researched:** 02/02/10

**Summary:** A linear ramble along the downland ridge between two car parks with wide ranging views in all directions, although perhaps not as good as views at Firle beacon..

**Map** Landranger 198, Explorer 122

**Grid reference:** TQ333129 and TQ302134

**Public Transport:** Brighton and Hove Buses to Ditchling Beacon on Sundays all year, more frequently in summer.

**Car parking:** Car parks at either end of the ramble. Both of these can get very crowded at busy times like warm weekends. Those with trailers may be better of parking in the road at Ditchling Beacon. Do not park immediately opposite the car park exit as this causes an obstruction.

**Accessible toilet:** none on route. Nearest at Ditchling under the Village Hall (car park)

**Refreshments:** There is often an ice cream van at Ditchling beacon in the car park. There is a small cafe open at Jill windmill on Sunday afternoons between May and September (access details not yet checked)

**Length:** 3.3 km each way

## Jack and Jill Windmills

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**Details:** Whichever end you start the main problems come immediately after the car park. Starting at Jack and Jill car park an obvious track goes east, climbing 50 metres in the first kilometre. The track is stony at this end, giving a dry, but bumpy ride, if on wheels.

Starting at Ditchling Beacon there may be problems getting out of the car park. This is surrounded by an earth bund and the only step free exit to this ramble is at the north-west side of the car park. This can occasionally be obstructed by cars. After this there is a

raised length of stone in the path designed to aid drainage. This can be avoided by passing to the north. At this point there are some ruts. Just west of the Beacon there is a slope that can be muddy, but there are a number of alternative routes here.

Otherwise the route is on grass or stone and earth so is fairly easy. Navigation is simple except if you are coming from the Jack and Jill car park. If coming from this direction make sure you bear left at a Y junction 200 metres from the car park. There are 3 gates.

There are 90 metres of ascent travelling from Jack and Jill to the Beacon and 23 metres of ascent going the other way.

The ramble can be combined with one going east from the Ditchling Beacon car park, but those using wheels will have to navigate across the car park. See the notes above about obstructions.

Although the bridleways to the south of this route look promising on the map we have not been able to find any routes on them which meet the gradings for this guide.

Brighton Council says about Ditchling Beacon: "Ditchling Beacon is one of a chain of prominent hill fort sites with views over the weald, although only traces remain of the rampart and ditch. At 248 metres (814 feet) it is the third highest point in the South Downs National Park. Two hectares on the north east slope of the beacon were given to the National Trust in 1953 as a memorial to Flying Officer Demetriadi who was killed in action in 1940. The nature reserve to the north east is owned by Sussex Wildlife Trust and farmland to the south east is privately owned. To the south east, across Ditchling Road, is Big Bottom open access land owned by Brighton & Hove City Council. The car park was given to the National Trust by Brighton Borough Council in 1981."

Jill windmill is open to the public most Sundays between May and September, 2-5 but there are steep stairs. A virtual tour is available at <http://www.jillwindmill.org.uk/tour01a.htm> Jack is in private ownership and not open.

## DITCHLING BEACON TO MOUNT HARRY grade 3 and 4



**Researched:** 6/4/10

**Summary:** A linear ramble along the downland ridge from Ditchling Beacon car park with wide ranging views in all directions, although perhaps not as good as views at Firle beacon..

**Map** Landranger 198, Explorer 122

**Grid reference:** TQ333129 and TQ302134

**Public Transport:** Brighton and Hove Buses to Ditchling Beacon on Sundays all year, more frequently in summer.

**Car parking:** Car park at the start of the ramble. This can get very crowded at busy times like warm weekends. Those with trailers may be better of parking in the road. Do not park immediately opposite the car park exit as this causes an obstruction.

**Accessible toilet:** none on route. Nearest at Ditchling under the Village Hall (car park)

**Refreshments:** There is often an ice cream van at Ditchling beacon in the car park.

**Length:** 5.2 km each way 42 metres of ascent going east. 83 metres of ascent on the return  
Steepest ascent/descent 1 in 18 for 250 metres. (But see details below)

### **Details:**

Leave the car park by the route you came in. Watch out for cars. Almost opposite, on the other side of the road is a gate. There is no kerb opposite the gate but at the time of research it was necessary to go to the right of a large stone to avoid a ledge of roughly 50 mm where the tarmac ends. Go through the gate.

The Navigation is then straightforward. Follow the route, which is mainly on shorn grass or on a chalk track. There are a number of areas where there can be puddles up to about 1 metre long and up to 40 mm deep after periods of rain. Many of these can be avoided, but there are two stretches of about 100 metres where wheeled ramblers will have to go through any puddles. Just before Blackcap there is a stretch of about 100 metres which contains a number of flints sticking out of the track up to 40mm high. There are four gates each way on this ramble. After the fourth the fences disappear and you are on open downland. The path forks. The direct route to Mount Harry goes to the right. But the path to the left goes to Blackcap. If there is a better place to be on the downs than Blackcap on a sunny day I have yet to find it. It is a fabulous viewpoint with views of 250 degrees around, encompassing the weald, the eastern downs, Lewes Racecourse, the sea and the downs towards Brighton. Soft turf invites you to lie down or to race your buggy round and round. Yet it is far less crowded than the other great downland spots and you can often have it to yourself. From Blackcap You can see Mount Harry straight ahead. It has a beacon fire basket on the top.

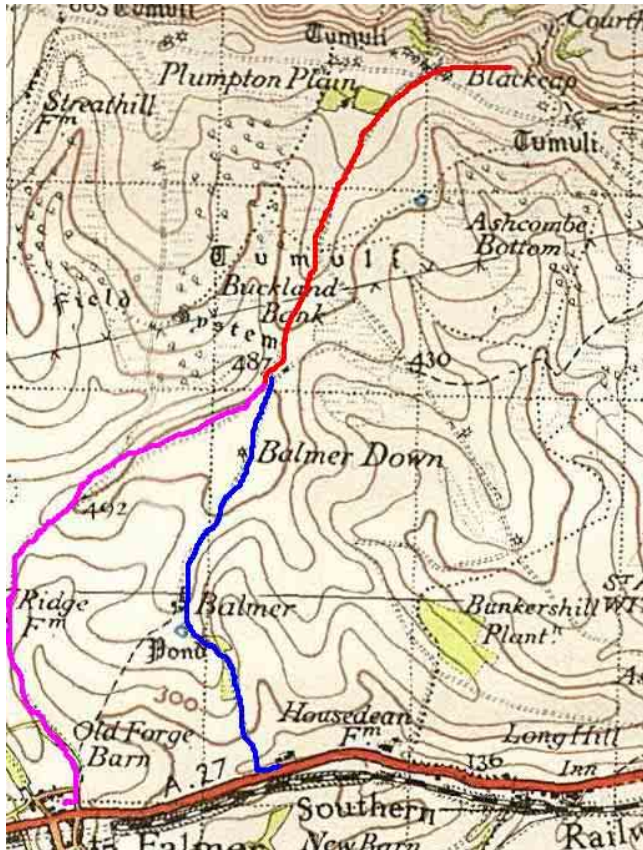


There is one significant obstacle on this ramble- the crossing of the track at Streat Farm. The photo shows the view looking left of the crossing. The ground slopes down towards the gate. By the gate the chalk section is well over a metre wide, is wide, but before the chalk comes to an end it narrows to about 0.5 of a metre. The grass on either side slopes smoothly at about 1 in 5 so it is possible to ride an all terrain buggy in a straight line. But care must be taken. On the east side of the crossing there is a piece of stone that protrudes about 70cm at its centre, tapering away to nothing at the sides. This

can be avoided by taking a detour to the north.

## STORMING UP TO BLACKCAP grade 3 or 4

See details for more information about grading and access issues.



**Researched:** 9/4/10

**Summary:** A wonderful ramble to the top of one of the loveliest viewpoints on the downs, with wide ranging views of sea, distant downland and nearby woods, but not without its problems. Alternative one has better views but a rougher surface. This is a good route to do out and back as the views are very different, depending on which way you are facing.

**Map** Landranger 198, Explorer 122

**Grid reference:** TQ 353090 (start of alternative one), TQ363092 (start of alternative two)

**Public Transport:** Brighton buses 28 and 29 serve Falmer Village for alternative one. Coming from Brighton there is a gradient of about 1 in 10 for about 10 metres to get to the start. Coming from Lewes there is a gradient of about 1 in 12 for about 10 metres to get up to the bridge from the village bus stop. We advise against using public

transport to get to and from alternative 2. The bus stops are right by the dual carriage way and it is extremely unpleasant to wait there. Falmer railway station about 400 metres from the start of alternative one but the south platform is only accessible via a footbridge or a long diversion.

**Car parking:** For alternative one leave the A27 at the Falmer slip road. Follow signs to Sussex University but turn immediately right after you get on to the University Road. Park by the Swan pub. There is always enough parking here for trailers.

For alternative two you need to be travelling east along the A27 (Turn at Falmer Village if necessary). After Falmer Village you descend a hill, through trees. After about a kilometre there is a turning sharp left at which the cycle lane disappears. It is very easy to miss this. Turn left and immediately right. There is room for one or two cars to park here before the road narrows. I have never seen anyone else parked here.

**Accessible toilet:** The University of Sussex is nearby. You can find their web site at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/> Search on "map" and "access around Campus" to find details of facilities.

**Refreshments:** The Swan at Falmer is at the start of alternative one. The pub says that there is step free access via the beer garden and that the toilets have step free access, although they are not wheelchair adapted and the men's toilet is a bit of a journey from the bar area. Sussex University has a number of cafe's and shops.

**Length:** Alternative one 4.8 kilometres each way, 120 metres of ascent going out and a further 30 on the return. Steepest ascent 1 in 20. Alternative two 3.9 kilometres each way, 150 metres of ascent going out and 30 metres of ascent. Steepest ascent 1 in 12 on the initial part of the ramble and on the return before Balmer Farm. Link route between two start points 1km long and 30 metres of ascent or descent.

### **Details:**

#### **Alternative 1** (shown in pink on the map)

This alternative starts at the Swan pub in Falmer. Leave the pub heading west on tarmac for about 100 metres and turn left on the tarmac road at the end. Follow this road north for a kilometre until you reach a junction where the road heads left you can see a bridleway heading off to the right. There are metal barriers preventing cars using this way, but they have been buried in rubble leaving a gap which has eroded. There is an eroded chalk area about 60 cm wide, but it is possible to straddle this by going on to the grass which is slightly higher. If you can do this the accessible width is about 90 cm. In some ways it is good to have this obstacle at the start as, if you can negotiate it, you should be able to cope with other issues later on.

The route ascends slowly straight ahead, passing hedgerows and woods, with great views opening out. The only time any navigation is needed is when a bridleway turns off to the left. Keep straight ahead until you see a broad chalk track join your route. This is alternative 2 coming up to join you. At this point follow the instructions below for the combined route.

The route is always at least a metre wide but it is sometimes necessary to straddle a central chalk path eroded to depth of up to about 8 cm. Sometimes there are drainage ditches at each side. No gates, 7 muddy patches, usually no more than 3 metres but depth up to 8 cm of liquid mud after periods of rain.



*Spring on Balmer Down, Near Blackcap*

#### **Alternative 2** (shown in blue on the map)

This route has similar long distance views to alternative one, but the immediate environment is not quite so attractive. It is also steeper. But the surface is far better. There are no gates. From the parking place follow the tarmac road to Balmer Farm north up the hill. The road kinks left as it enters the farm and turns to concrete. Keep as straight ahead as you can. After Balmer Farm the track turns to compacted chalk at least 3 metres wide. After Balmer Huff the route starts to descend and you will see a fence and path come in to your left. This is alternative one. Now follow the instructions for the combined route.

#### **Combined route**

Whichever route you came on the combined route carries on straight ahead. There is a gate at the start, but this is usually open. Keep straight on until you meet the South Downs Way, going through one further gate. Conditions are similar to alternative one but there is only one muddy part- shallow but up to 100metres long. There are fewer eroded central sections of path. However right at the end of this route is the problem shown in the picture. The picture has been taken facing

south. . The erosion in the middle is 70 cm wide and roughly 16cm deep. There is not space for a wheelchair to navigate either side of the erosion. I have asked the South Downs Joint Committee to try to remedy this, but it is not likely that anything will be done about it before 2011.

If you can surmount this obstacle turn right through a gate to find open country. Follow the left hand track to attain the summit of Blackcap, with wide ranging views.

It is possible to join the Mount Harry/Ditchling Beacon ramble here. See details of this ramble for more about Blackcap. But returning the same way is just as joyful.



### ***Link Route***

It is possible to link the start of alternative one and alternative two via a tarmac cycle route, making a circular route. But this runs right by the side of the A27, with traffic rushing by at up to 70 miles an hour, so is not recommended.

## STANMER grade 1 and 3

**Researched:** 13/2/10

**Summary:** One of the most delightful accessible rambles in the area is Brighton Council's 8km route starting in Stanmer Park. The surface is designed to be friendly to those using wheels and the scenery on the route which heads north from the park through woodland and downland is very good

**Map** Landranger 198, Explorer 122

**Grid reference:** TQ336096 and around

**Public Transport:** Brighton buses 25, 28 and 29 go past Stanmer Park Entrance travelling eastbound. To access the ramble from bus services going west get off at Falmer Station and follow the directions from the railway station below. Bus 78 goes into the park, terminating at Stanmer Village, on Sundays, bank holidays and summer Saturdays. Falmer rail station is within about 400 metres of the park entrance-step free route from the eastbound platform only via Sussex University and the cycle path, but a short descent of about 1 in 10 down the subway under the main road.

**Car parking:** car parks at the park entrance, in Stanmer Village and at Upper Lodge Walk. The car park at Upper Lodge Walk is particularly useful if you want to avoid the steeper ascents or descents, but it is quite small, is not good for trailers and may get full at busy times.

**Accessible toilet:** in Stanmer Village

**Refreshments:** Café in Stanmer Village. The café has a 4cm cill on the door but the outside seating has step free access.

**Grade:** If you want to do the whole ramble the grade must be 3 because the ascent is 10m more than the maximum for a grade 2 ramble, but the surface is much better than you would expect on grade 3. Grade two rambles are possible starting from Upper Lodge Walk in either direction and there are grade 1 possibilities between the park entrance and Stanmer Village.

**Length:** up to 8 km

**Details:** [http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/Stanmer\\_and\\_Ditchling\\_Beacon.pdf](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/Stanmer_and_Ditchling_Beacon.pdf) or get a leaflet by ringing 01273 290000 and asking for details of the Stanmer easy access trail.

The overall ascent on the ramble is 160 metres, with a corresponding descent. It is better to do the ramble counter clockwise. You start with an ascent where the route leaves the park road. This ascends 60m in 500m with some short stretches of 1 in 8. The official ramble is not quite circular and you are left to find your own descent from the monument at the end of the ramble. There are a variety of routes to do this.



*Cyclist on the trail*

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The map will show you that there are alternative routes which would enable you to shorten the ramble travelling via Stanmer Village, which has a wheelchair accessible toilet and a café.

Half way round the ramble the route meets the road to Ditchling Beacon. By travelling roughly 1.3 km up this road it is possible to link to routes from Ditchling Beacon. But this road is often busy and there are no verges. The parallel bridleways do not offer wheelchair access.



## EAST BRIGHTON

Brighton council can also give you details of a route in East Brighton. According to their web site "This partly surfaced 5.5km route follows the top of the hill from Whitehawk Hill, alongside the racecourse and around to Sheepcote Valley. There are panoramic views from most of the length of the route.

There is a small car park at the entrance to East Brighton Golf Club off Roedean Road and vehicles can pick up or drop off at the top of Manor Hill near the top of Whitehawk Hill. The route can easily be joined from Warren Road and the top of Wilson Avenue. There are also steeper paths joining the route at Whitehawk Hill, Sheepcote Valley and from Bevendean" . Brighton Council 01273 290000

For a guide to the area see

[http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/CS\\_East\\_Brighton\\_2010.pdf](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/CS_East_Brighton_2010.pdf)

## SHORT ROUTES

Brighton Council have created easy access trails at Hollingbury Woods [www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/countryside/C.S\\_Hollingbury\\_2007\(lowres\).pdf](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/countryside/C.S_Hollingbury_2007(lowres).pdf) Details from Brighton Council 01273 290000

## Routes we have not researched yet. Would you like to research them?

The seafront to the downs cycle route

[http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/Brighton82\\_-\\_both\\_maps\\_watermarked.pdf](http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/Brighton82_-_both_maps_watermarked.pdf) or get a leaflet by ringing 01273 290000 and asking for details of the Devils Dyke cycle route

