ACCESSIBLE RAMBLES IN SUSSEX

Last revised 12/01/2010

PUBLISHED BY THE SUSSEX AREA OF THE RAMBLERS

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WELCOME!

Despite development, Sussex is still a beautiful county. Ashdown Forest, the Pevensey Levels, the Wealden woodlands, the downs and the seaside are great areas to explore. Being in the countryside can lift your spirits like few other experiences. Sussex has over 4,000 miles of footpaths and many areas of open access, but many of these have stiles, slippery ground or slopes which can cause problems for many people. We could not find a comprehensive guide to rambles that would avoid these hazards, so we set out to create one ourselves.

This is very much a work in progress. Initially a lot of entries will consist of references on to web sites of other organizations or individuals who have surveyed rambles. But we are launching a programme of surveys which will increase the number of excursions set out in full here. Have a look at the date on the front cover. If it has changed since you last looked then we have added new material.

The Sussex area of the Ramblers is publishing this guide to encourage you to get out and explore the countryside if you:

- Use a wheelchair or buggy for mobility or;
- Want to explore the countryside with children in a pram or something similar or;
- Are less agile than you would like to be.

Right now there are lots of examples of rambles where we are not sure of all the relevant information (where the information is missing or shown with a question mark). We have included these because you might like to explore these rather than wait until they can be served up on a plate for you. Obviously we welcome information about these or other rambles. Send your information to chris.smith@hbhelp.co.uk or write to Chris Smith, PO box 2660, Lewes, BN7 2RW.

Generally we have limited ourselves to country routes of at least 4km (2 km each way for linear routes)- tes that we think that are worth travelling to explore. But in the “other resources and ideas” section we list some shorter and urban routes.

Copyright

The copyright to most of this material is held by the Ramblers. You are welcome to reproduce is for the purpose of encouraging rambling provided that:

- no charge is made and
- the aim of reproduction is not to make a profit and,
- you provide a link to this guide or the web address.

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Credits

This guide has been written by Chris Smith. Chris would like to thank the following who have contributed comments, information or rambles- Malcolm McDonnell, Andrew le Gresley of East Sussex County Council rights of way, Lewes Footpath Group, John Harmer, Derek Knight, Dave Bangs Linda Rivers

Health Warning

Inspired by the example of the Disabled Ramblers organization (www.disabledramblers.co.uk/) we encourage you to be adventurous. Where possible we have tried to include contact details you can use for up to date information. Most rambles have a date when the information was last checked. If the date is old then you may want to be cautious.

The countryside is always changing. Remember that:

- The person surveying the ramble may not have used the same equipment that you do. Surveyors use their best efforts to describe a route, but mistakes do occur.
- Bad weather can turn an easy path into a nightmare. Particularly in the weald, bad conditions can turn a path to a quagmire. The downs may be a better bet in winter.
- Paths can get illegally obstructed, some fool in a four wheel drive vehicle can carve up the route or the surface may not be properly maintained. Report any problems to the council responsible for highways. Later on we tell you how you can do this.

Please let us know about any problems you come across with these routes. Contact chris.smith@hbhelp.co.uk or write to Chris Smith, PO box 2660, Lewes, BN7 2RW.

Grading the rambles

We have graded the rambles into three grades. They are taken from the gradings used by the Disabled Ramblers organisation which in turn are related to categories used by the Natural England (formerly the Countryside Agency). Broadly these categories map on to the Zone definitions described in the Countryside Agency publication: 'By All Reasonable Means'. Category 1 maps to Zone A, Category 2 maps to Zone B, Category 3 maps to Zone C.)

CATEGORY 1 implies generally high quality surfaces along the route. The surfaces will be for the most part, smooth and all weather. This means tarmac or good quality crushed stone will predominate. However, there may occasionally be short stretches of rougher path and some seasonal surfaces such as grass or compressed earth. The path will be adequately wide, with a normal standard of 1.5m, though 'pinch points' may occur, for example through gates. Cross slopes will be normally very small say up to 1 in 12. Occasionally cross slopes may be steeper, but there will usually be ways around such sections. There will be no steep hills greater than 1 in 12, except perhaps for very short stretches and the total height significant height climbed during the ramble will not exceed 30 metres. No stiles or similar obstructions.

CATEGORY 2 expects generally good surfaces, but allows longer stretches of stony going (stones up to 40mm) beaten earth or grass track-way, The path will be adequately wide, generally of the order of 1.5m, though a number of narrow stretches down to 1.2m may be present as well as 'pinch points' through gates etc. Small steps not bigger than 40mm may be encountered. Cross slopes will generally be very small, but sections involving cambers, say up to 1 in 8 may occur for short stretches. Small stretches of soft going or involving ruts (up to 40mm) will occasionally be encountered, but usually these may be bypassed.
Hills will generally be no more than 1 in 10, with occasional steeper stretches up to 1 in 8. Total significant) height climbed may be up to 150 metres in a day. No stiles or similar obstructions.

CATEGORY 3 means longer stretches of rough going with side slopes and some ruts (max depth 100mm). The paths may well be stony tracks with quite large stones (some stones max 100mm), or there may be very wet and soft sections. Occasional steps up to 100mm may be encountered). Cambers may also be correspondingly steeper, sometimes in excess of 1 in 8. Hills may be long and steep, with some stretches even up to 1 in 5, or very occasionally 1 in 4. Total height climbed during a day may be up to 300 metres. No stiles or similar obstructions.

CATEGORY 4 Refers to routes that are not wheelchair or pram accessible but are useful for ramblers with limited agility. There are no stiles and height gain is generally less than 200 metres in total. No ascents steeper than 1 in 12 and no long hills. There is nowhere that scrambling is required.

The height assessment used as a basis of route classification is based upon clearly identifiable hills along the route. Normal small ups and downs encountered on any ramble are discounted.

GATES

On most of these rambles you will need to go through gates. A typical gate is about 1.3 metres high and roughly the same width. It is likely to be secured with a bolt or latch about two thirds of the way up, or higher. In a number of cases there may be a lever on the bolt which extends over the top of the gate. This is to make the gate easier for horse riders to open. The lever can make the gate easier for you to open if you can reach it, but otherwise adds weight to the bolt.

Where gates differ substantially from this description this is mentioned in the text.

Circles and Lines

A very large number of accessible rambles are linear. It is quite difficult to find circular accessible rambles. However the problems of coming back the same way can be overrated. On a linear ramble you can go as far as you like and then turn back. You also get different views on the way back. Even better, you know how far you have to go and have no navigation problems.

However there are often possibilities to come back by public transport. Wherever possible we describe these.

Getting to the Rambles

We encourage you to use public transport wherever possible. In theory bus and train companies have put a lot of effort into accessible public transport in recent years. The reality can sometimes be a bit different. But the more transport companies are challenged to provide proper access the more they will do it.

Trains

The majority of trains in Sussex are run by Southern Railways. The majority of their stations are, in theory, wheelchair accessible. See http://www.southernrailway.com/your-journey/network-map/?access=on. The key problem can often be getting on to an off of the trains, although ramps are available. It is a good idea to contact the train company to make sure they can meet your needs. Where stations are not accessible the railway company should organize a taxi from the nearest accessible station to a point outside the station. There may be problems with large buggies. Contact the train companies. South Eastern Trains run services from Tunbridge Wells to Hastings. First Capital Connect run services on the same route as Southern from Brighton to London. Generally speaking trains will take wheelchairs and wheelchair sized powered chairs. They will not take buggies or scooters

Many of the stations you may want to used are unstaffed, but trains carry ramps.

Buses

Generally speaking buses will take wheelchairs and wheelchair sized powered chairs. They will not take buggies or scooters. Buses will take pushchairs.

The main bus company in the Brighton area is Brighton and Hove buses. They also run to Tunbridge Wells, Eastbourne and Steyning. They have bus services that run up to sites like Devils Dyke, Ditchling Beacon and Stanmer Park. They publish a timetable “Bus times” twice a year which has comprehensive information about accessibility as well as timetables. Their web site is at http://www.buses.co.uk/

Outside the Brighton area the largest operator is Stagecoach, a national company. It has two operations in Sussex, Stagecoach South runs buses along the West Sussex coastal area and as far north as Midhurst. Stagecoach East Sussex runs buses in the Eastbourne and Hastings area. Stagecoach has a web site at www.stagecoachbus.com/

Cuckmere Community Transport runs the Saturday 25 service from Lewes to Alfriston, local services in the Cuckmere Valley and Rambler buses in the Cuckmere Valley. On 30/12/09 they told us: Our 47 service (Cuckmere Valley Ramblerbus) still uses a high floor vehicle, I'm afraid, so is not suitable for wheelchair users. This applies also to our 40 service and at present 38 and 42. 38 and 42 will convert soon, but 40 and 47 will remain high floor until the next generation of low floor minibuses is available from Mercedes. The problem is the width of the road from Exceat through Litlington to Wilmington. We have tried low floor, but the buses are about 6ins wider than high floor, and because of traffic, we have suffered too much very expensive damage to our vehicles to continue with their use. The next generation (which we are in discussion with Mercedes about) will be narrower – we are promised. As to 25 and 26, our low floor buses are all fitted with ramps which can carry up to 300kg, and are thus not suitable for scooters. They can accept some wider wheelchairs, but it is so dependent upon wheelbase. The ramps will cope with loading from ground level, and some of the buses have a kneeling facility as well. The problem can be finding a wide enough area which is also flat from which wheelchair users will be safe to board or alight. Thus it is not as easy as for ambulant people, but we usually find somewhere. To ensure that we are able to accommodate wheelchair users, we advise advance booking onto 01323 870920. Please leave a message, as we are all volunteers and have to work for our livings too. We will phone back!"
For details of other buses in West Sussex see http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/ccm/content/roads-and-transport/public-transport/buses-and-coaches/bus-timetables.en;jsessionid=a7TclurtEaza

For details of other buses in East Sussex see
http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/roadsandtransport/public/buses/downloadmaps.htm

Last time I looked only the East Sussex buses web site had details of accessibility of bus routes.

However almost all Brighton and Hove buses are wheelchair accessible.

There can be problems using wheelchair ramps if there is no kerb. Where we recommend rambles using buses we say whether or not a kerb is available at the bus stop.

Car

Cars can be ideal if you need to transport equipment for your ramble. Wherever possible we say whether or not car parking is likely to be suitable for a trailer towing a tramper or similar equipment.

Cars do present problems with linear rambles because you have to have to come back to the place that you started.

Rights and Responsibilities in the Countryside

Keeping footpaths and other rights of way open is the responsibility of the highway authority. In Sussex that means the counties of East Sussex and West Sussex and the unitary authority of Brighton and Hove. But councils can delegate responsibilities to other bodies. Currently both East and West Sussex delegate their powers in the South Downs to the South Downs Area of National Beauty board. East Sussex delegates powers in Hastings and Eastbourne to the councils for those towns.

There are three main types of right of way other than roads. These are:

Footpaths: You have the right to travel along these on foot, with a pram, with a wheelchair, including motorized chairs or similar if you need them. Footpaths are shown as short red dashes on landranger ordnance survey maps and as short green dashes on ordnance survey explorer maps.

Bridleways: You have the right to travel along these on a horse or bicycle on foot, with a pram, with a wheelchair, including motorized chairs or similar if you need them. Bridleways are shown as long red dashes on landranger maps and as long green dashes on explorer maps. Cyclists are supposed to give way to other traffic and there is no obligation to make routes suitable for them.

Byways: You have the right to travel along these on a horse, horse and cart or bicycle on foot, with a pram, with a wheelchair, including motorized chairs or similar if you need them. There may also be rights for motor vehicles to use some byways although many motoring rights have been abolished. There is more information about byways at
http://www.ramblers.org.uk/rights_of_way/knowledge_portal/advice_notes/byways_restricted_byways_and_tracks.htm

Owners of land can give additional rights to whoever they want and there may be some private rights. For example owners of a house may have a right to use a way to get to their home.

On some types of downland there is a right to roam where you want. These places are shown in brown and yellow on the latest landranger maps. Landowners may allow people to go where they want on some land. In this case there will usually be signposts on the land. But otherwise there is no right to go where you want on private land.

Maintaining rights of way

Generally speaking it is the responsibility of the highway authority to maintain the surface of the right of way, including most bridges. The landowner must maintain stiles, gates and any bridges over ditches they have constructed themselves. The landowner must not obstruct the way. The highway authority has a duty to make sure that the landowner carries out their duties. You can find more information at http://www.ramblers.org.uk/rights_of_way/knowledge_portal/advice_notes/

The highway authority must make sure that the right of way is in good enough condition to be used by the usual traffic that it gets. So, unfortunately, there is no obligation to maintain a way so that it is fit for prams or wheelchairs, unless you can show that a reasonable number of people use the route using prams or wheelchairs, or the route is advertised as being suitable for people with these. On footpaths, ramblers are expected to put up with mud or ruts unless these last all year or make the path positively dangerous.

No stiles or similar obstructions that would stop access by horses are allowed on bridleways or byways. But there is nothing to make a landowner take stiles down on footpaths, although highway authorities and the Ramblers do encourage landowners to remove unnecessary stiles, although a stile must be maintained in a reasonable and safe condition. However a new stile or similar is another matter. If a landowner erects a stile or similar where there has not been one before, then this is an obstruction. You should report it to the highway authority saying why this is a problem for you. More about stiles at:
http://www.ramblers.org.uk/rights_of_way/knowledge_portal/advice_notes/stiles_gaps_gates.htm

Crops grown across rights of way can be a particular problem. Landowners are allowed to plough up paths in order to grow crops, but are supposed to reinstate the path shortly afterwards. The path may be much rougher after re-instatement. If you are in a group and come across a route that is obstructed by crops and feel that you can travel though the crop the usual advice is to travel in single file so that the route is clearly marked out for future travellers. You can find more information about ploughing at:
http://www.ramblers.org.uk/rights_of_way/knowledge_portal/advice_notes/ploughing_and_cropping.htm

Reporting Problems

Footpath problems can be reported to West Sussex County Council at
https://secure.westsussex.gov.uk/formbuilder/showForm.do?title=Public%20Rights%20of%20Way%20Feedback%20Form

and to East Sussex County Council at
https://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/contactus/emailus/email.aspx?n=Rights+of+Way&e=rightsofway&d=eastsussex.gov.uk

If you know that the problem is inside the South Downs area of outstanding national beauty(AONB) it may be quicker to report the problem to the South Downs Joint Committee
http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/rte.asp?id=158
The comittee will also deal with problems over problems with access areas on the downs.

It may be good idea to spell out why a particular issue may be a particular problem to the less able.

Maps and Grid References

Maps

A map is essential to help you ramble. We recommend the maps published by the Ordnance Survey, which are available from libraries and many book shops. There are two main series:

Explorer maps: These are 1/25,000 scale and are probably the best for route finding. But you will need quite a few to cover Sussex.

Landranger maps: These are 1/50,000 scale and have less detail. But they cover a greater area.

In this guide we sometimes use some very old maps from the seventh series of Ordnance Survey maps. These are over 30 years old and show the country as it was some time ago. We do this because copyright rules mean that we cannot use newer maps without paying Ordnance Survey a large sum of money. These maps will show you where the walk is, but we recommend that you get hold of more recent maps.

Grid references

Maps are divided into grid squares which allow you to pinpoint any location.

Every reference starts with two letters which tells you which 100 kilometre square in the country the place is in. For most of Sussex the letters are TQ, although in West Sussex west of Littlehampton the letters are SU.

Then you take the left edge of the square in which the location you want to describe sits. Read the large figures at the top or bottom of the line, in the margin of the map. This will give you two figures (say 56). Then estimate how far your point is across the square in 10ths. For example if you think that the point is half way across the square it would be 5/10ths. This gives you the third figure- in this case 5. In my example the figure so far might be 565.

Finally take the bottom edge of the square in which the location you want to describe sits. Read the large figures at the side of the line, in the margin. This will give you the fourth and fith figures (say 12). Then estimate how far your point is up the square in 10ths. This will give you the final figure (say 2)

So your total reference might be TQ566122.

We use grid references to describe the start and finish of walks and also some points in between.

In many on-line mapping sites you can type in the grid references and the map will take you to the point pinpointed by the reference.- although sometimes they are not entirely accurate.

THE RAMBLES

WEST SUSSEX GENERALLY

GUIDE TO ACCESSIBLE RAMBLES

Researched: 28/12/09

Summary: This is a link to set of rambles in West Sussex created by Jenifer Fox and published by West Sussex County Council. Mostly 1-3 miles. Being revised at the time of research.

More details: http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/prow/pdfs/Wheelchair_Walks_in_WS.pdf

Grade: 1

DOWNSLINK

Researched: 28/12/09

Summary: This is a long distance linear path based on two old railways. Less work has been done on the surface than on some other railway paths so you may find yourself travelling muddy paths in bad weather. The most notable hazard is at Baynards, just over the Surrey border, where the route diverts steeply to avoid a tunnel. This section may be best avoided. The section from Bramley to Guildford is not on the old railway line and has steep sections. Other known hazards include a kilometre or so on road just north of Christ's hospital (soon to replaced), about 60ft of 1 in 6 at Henfield at TQ204162, a (fairly quiet) road section east of Steyning and some rough paths around the bridge over the Adur north of Shoreham (that may now have been replaced).

Public Transport: Railway stations at Shoreham, Christ's Hospital and Guildford. For buses see: http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/roads-and-transport/public-transport/

Car parking: At various points

Accessible toilet: not yet researched

Refreshments: At various points

Grade: 1, with short stretches of 2 plus some issues noted above.

Length: 59 Kilometres, of which about 40 kilometres are in Sussex

More details:
http://www2.westsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/prow/pdfs/downs_link_information_web.pdf
http://www2.westsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/prow/pdfs/downs_link_map_web.pdf

CHICHESTER AREA

SALTERNS WAY

Researched: 28/12/09

Grid reference: SU865043

Summary: This route from Chichester to the sea at West Wittering has been designed as a cycle and wheelchair route. It is a linear route.

Public Transport:

Car parking: See details

Accessible toilet: not yet researched

Refreshments: See details

Grade: 1?

Length: 18km each way

More details: http://www.conservancy.co.uk/uploads/user_documents/salternsway.pdf Chichester Harbour Commissioners also promote some other short routes and have details of a local wheelchair rental service. http://www.conservancy.co.uk/page/Access-for-All/343/

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

The Centurion Way, a cycle path running north from the West side of Chichester, and linking to a number of bridleways. *http://www2.westsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/prow/pdfs/CenturionWayLeaflet2002.pdf*
Chichester Canal

MIDHURST AND PETWORTH AREA

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

Charlton and Grafham Down
Wey South path
Parham Park (east-west, from Cootham gate) to Greatham Church
Higher stane street from eartham to Bignor hill...or Bignor village/Roman villa
Burton Park and burton Mill pond from Duncton Village or Burton church

WORTHING, LITTLEHAMPTON BOGNOR AREA

BOGNOR TO CLIMPING AND LITTLEHAMPTON

Researched: January 2010 by Derek Knight

Grid reference: SZ 920986 (Bognor Marine Drive West) TQ 02402, Littlehampton Station

Summary: A linear seaside ramble including some of the few non-urban beaches in this part of the world.

Public Transport: Railway stations at Bognor and Littlehampton. For buses see www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk

Car parking: See details

Accessible toilet: at Felpham and possibly elsewhere

Refreshments: See details

Grade: 1 from Marine Drive to Felpham Sailing Club and from Littlehampton to Climping. 3 or 4 inbetween the sailing club and Climping. See below.

Length: 9km from Marine Drive to Climping. A further 3.5 km from Climping to Littlehampton. There is no significant ascent or descent on this route.

More details

The linear route starts at the car park in Marine Drive West where there are public toilets and heads in an easterly direction along the tarmac surfaced promenade.

Continue through Bognor where there are numerous ramped access points to the promenade passed Butlins to Felpham and join footpath 3052, continuation of the promenade. At this point there is level access from Canning Road and the Lobster Pot cafe which open all year round.
The path continues in an easterly direction with a tarmac surface for approximately ¾ mile until its junction with bridleway 3043/1 passing The Boathouse cafe (only open from the Spring to Autumn)

and the Felpham Sailing Club. Level access can be gained to the path at this point from Blakes Road. Public toilets are located next to the Sailing Club set back from the path.

During the winter months parts of the path between the Sailing Club and the junction with the bridleway can become covered with shingle thrown up by the sea and which might cause problems for wheelchair and buggy users.

The path continues in an easterly direction from the junction with the bridleway for approximately ¾ mile until Sea Lane, Middleton on Sea is reached. The surface of this part of the path is mainly earth and grass which becomes very muddy after rainfall. At Hannah's Groyne, before reaching a wide kissing gate, there is a section of 200 yards where the surface is loose shingle which would be difficult to transverse for a wheelchair or buggy. The end of the path is marked by a wide kissing gate.

Wheelchair and buggy users wishing to continue to Elmer and Climping will need to use the highway. Firstly Sea Lane (no footpath for much of its length) and then in Middleton on Sea turning right along Elmer Road which has a tarmac path beside the road, in some parts only on one side of the road. Non wheelchair and buggy users can, but only at low tide, continue towards Elmer along the beach.

Footpath 829 commences at the entrance to the private housing estate and continues along the road until a ramp to the top of the beach. The path continues for 1½ miles in an easterly direction towards Atherington and Climping. Initially the path surface is firm but stony however halfway along become loose shingle and not very suitable for wheelchairs and buggies. You may want someone to research its current state for you. At Atherington there is a private car park with toilets, open during the summer period. The car park is below the level of path but there is no ramp access to it.

Editors note: From Climping it is possible to continue to Littlehampton. Exit the car park to the east to find a bridleway that is used as a cycleway. This will take you north to Climping Village, where you join Brookpit Lane. Turn right here and then turn right again at Ferry Road. This used to be the main road to Littlehampton but is now a dead end as the bridge is not safe for cars, so is very quiet. Cross the bridge. Ignore the turning on the right (River Road) but instead take the next turning right into Terminus Road, where you will find the railway station on your left.

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

Bridleways in the Angmering Park area
Whiteways Lodge (A29 to Stane Street)
Arundel park north/south or circular
Wiston post office / Hole steet / north up North Lane green lane to woodman's farm
Oldhouse Lane north to Blue idol ((east of Broadford Bridge, W Chiltinmgton)
THE FURE: Rowfold / Fewhurst Farm Lane north south) east of Billingshurst

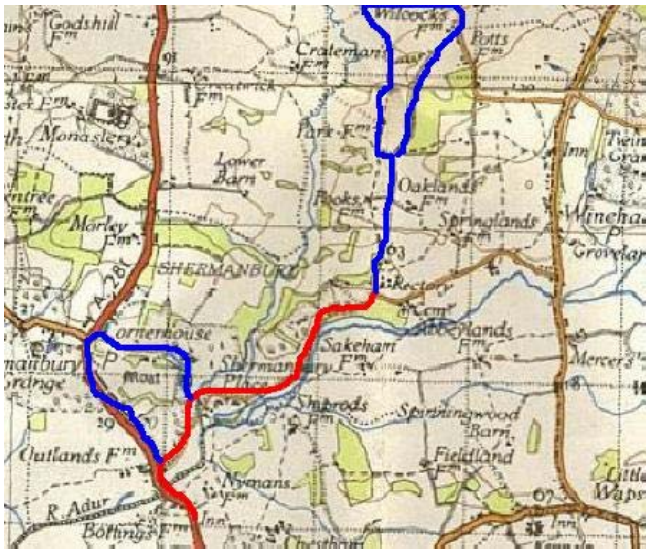
HORSHAM AREA

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

Dragon's Green, Shipley, north to Crookhorn Farm and Dogbarking cottages
Shipley Church / windmill south to Blonks farm and Hookhandle Lane to Spears Hill Washington
St Leonards forest: Roosthole Pond N to Colgate across Forest Ent land
Horsham: Holbrook(just north of A264 Bypass) / Northlands road north to the Nunnery

MID SUSSEX

THE ADUR, SHERMANBURY AND THE BULL



Researched: 13/2/10

Summary: A ramble with no significant ascents along a tree lined lane with riverside picnic opportunities, interesting buildings and a pub. This is linear ramble but there are possibilities for extensions which can give a dumbbell shaped walk.

Map Landranger 198, Explorer 122 (and 134 for the extension)

Grid reference: TQ223195

Public Transport: Stagecoach service 17 stops outside the western end of the lane. So you could do the ramble in reverse.

Car parking: Possible on the road at the start of the ramble. The approach to the ramble is down a little used dead end road from Wineham. Parking for one car with a trailer possible- possibly more. If you wanted to extend the ramble on tarmac you could park at any point on this road west of Wineham. It is also possible to park at the Bull Inn, even if not using the pub, as there is an old dog leg in the road near the pub.

Accessible toilet: none on route.

Refreshments: The Bull in at TQ211181 has step free access from the car park at the rear. The toilets have level access but are not wheelchair accessible.

Grade: The basic ramble is grade 1 in good weather, 2 after periods of rain. The extension to the Bull pub is grade 1. The extension to Ewhurst manor is grade 4. The northern extension is category 3 in good weather and 4 after periods of rain.

Length: The basic ramble is 2km each way (4km there and back), with no significant ascent. The return trip to the Bull adds 0.5 km. The extension to Ewhurst manor adds 1.5km. The northern extension adds 5.5 km and 22metres of ascent, mainly on tarmac at the start of the extension. The longest ramble you can do is 12km.

Details: The ramble starts at a turn in the road, where a lane turns off to the left. This is shortly after the tiny Shermanbury parish cemetery. Either cross a cattle grid which is largely filled in with earth, or open the large gate next to it. You then follow the lane for two km through woods and meadows to its end. The surface is sometimes tarmac and sometimes compacted earth and stone, but there is frequently an overlying cover of earth which can generate some surface mud. At around the 1km point there are two places where you can turn left for a picnic by the river Adur. One of these has a descent of about 5 metres at around 1 in 10. Shortly before Shermanbury Place a dip in the lane had about 5 cm depth of water in February after a period of rain but there are were no other issues on the route.

Shermanbury place is a grand house. According to Wikipedia it is a mansion built by John Challen in 1779 on the site of a 16th century Tudor house with projecting crosswings. Even more interesting is the Anglican church of St. Giles is well away from the modern roads, approached along a tree-lined bridleway leading to

Shermanbury Place, east of the Brighton road. A small church is mentioned in the Domesday Book, but the present structure is of 14th century origin. The roof is of Horsham stone slates with a weatherboarded belltower at the west end, containing two bells. The path to the church door is step free but it is usually locked. You will also see a rather gracious looking building in an advanced state of decay, whose former use I can only speculate on.

The lane ends at the main road where there are impressive gates, although you can use a side gate. You can turn round here, or extend the rambler by turning left on the pavement, which ends opposite the Bull Inn.

THE EWHURST EXTENSION

Because of a narrow bridge followed by a narrow footpath, this route is for walkers only, although it may be possible to get a light pushchair through.

Shortly after Shermanbury Place the lane turns sharp right. Shortly after this a track comes in from the left and a signpost to your right points four ways. Turn right here over the bridge and follow a path to Ewhurst Place. According to Wikpedia, the moated manor house was built by Thomas Peverel during the reign of Edward I. Only the early 14th century gatehouse, with a porters lodge attached survives. A room over the gateway has a cross shaped loop window.

Pass the gatehouse and follow the signposts to pick up the main drive going west. Ignore a path to the right and follow the drive to the main road. Here go left along the pavement for I km to arrive at the spot where the main track meets the main road. Here either turn left to return, or continue onwards to the Bull.

THE NORTHERN EXTENSION

Mud churned up by horses is the issue on this extension- so it should only be attempted after a period with no rain.

From the start point head north on tarmac for just under 1 km, to a turnoff for Oaklands farm. Here continue straight ahead. The path turns to earth and can be churned up by horses. There is 400 metres of this and if you do not like what you see turn back now. You will have to come back this way! For walkers it is possible to travel on the right hand side of the path, the other side of the fence.

After 350metres you will come to a junction. Turn left here for another 50 metres and then right on to a lane that is largely hard surfaced and forms the access route for a number of farms. Follow this for nearly 2 km. The path joins a quiet tarmac road at TQ229216. Here you have a choice. You could return the way you came or, if you were happy with the amount or lack of mud after Oaklands farm turn right along the road for 300 metres. Then, on your right, you will see a bridleway sign. Follow the bridleway through fields and woods to the junction mentioned at the beginning of this paragraph. Be warned that if the earlier part of this extension was muddy then this part will be muddy too!

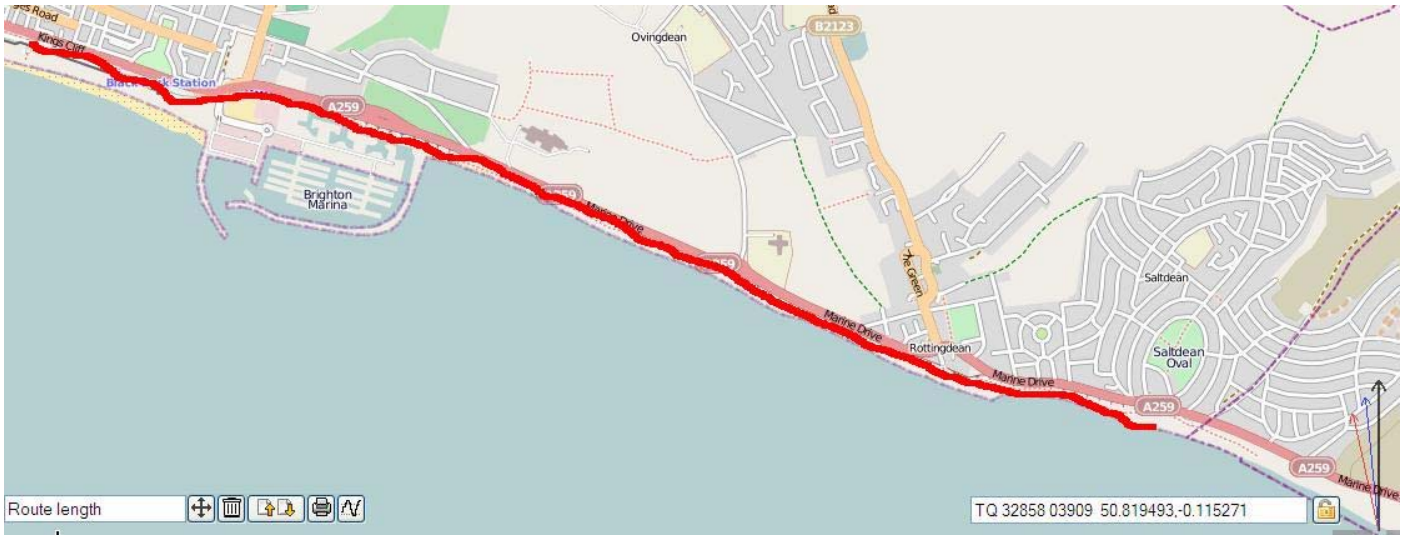
Finally, return to the start point the way you came.

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

Balcombe: Pilstye lane south from Balcombe to Brook Street
Sheffield Forest

BRIGHTON AREA

ON THE TRAIL OF THE DADDY LONGLEGS RAILWAY- THE UNDERCLIFF WALK TO ROTTINGDEAN AND SALTDEAN



#Researched: 15/1/10

Summary: This ramble follows the course of the famous railway that ran from Brighton to Rottindean 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.

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.

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.

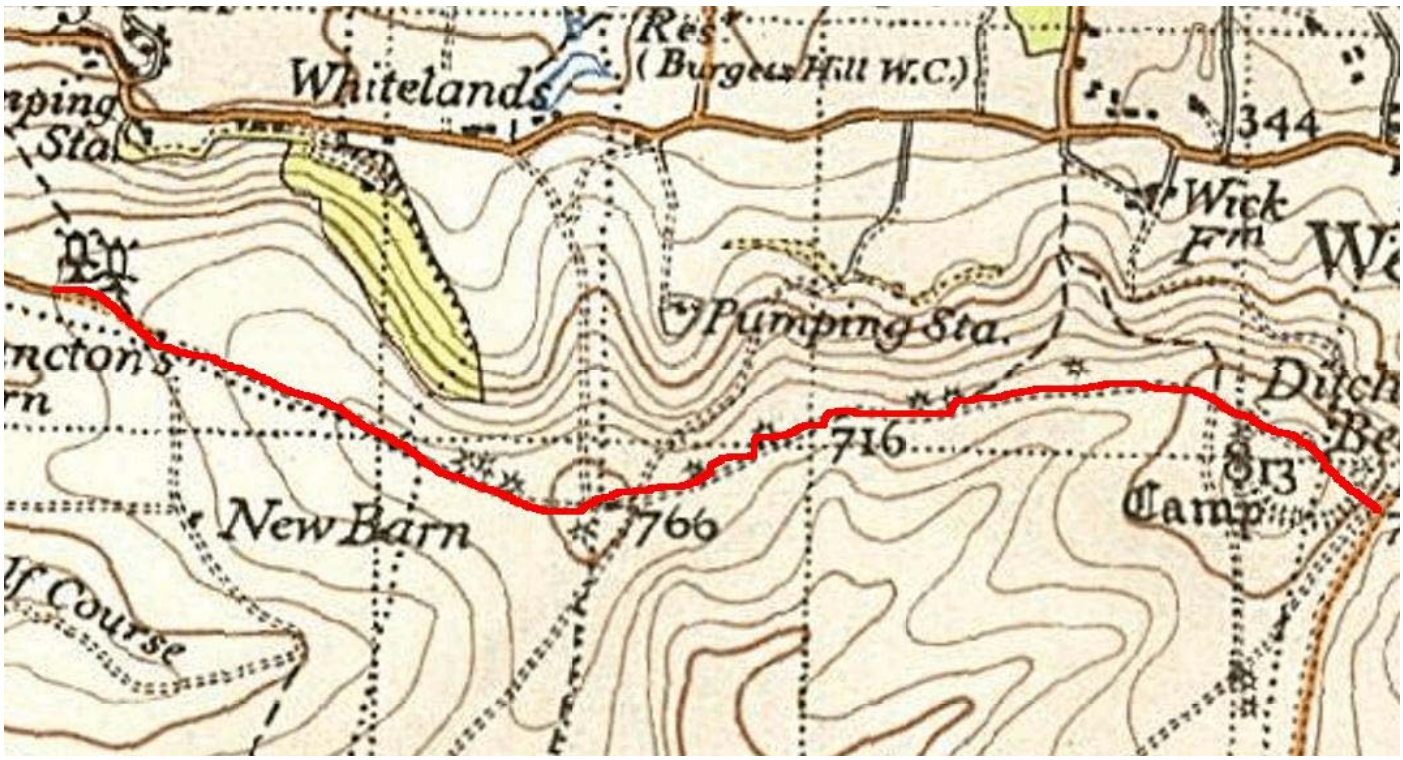
To go to the village, or to return along the cliff route go up one of the ramps. Avoid the one on the left, the first one you come to. It looks temptingly gentle, but only leads you to the next ramp, which you hit at an awkward angle. The other ramps rise for about 10 metres at around 1 in 10. This will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



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 Ditching 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.

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)

Grade: 2

Length: 3.3 km each way

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 Septermber, 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.

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
Bridleways to the east of Woodingdean

EAST GRINSTEAD AND CRAWLEY AREA

WORTH WAY

Researched: 28/12/09

Summary: A trail along an old railway track between Three Bridges and East Grinstead. Some on road sections at Grange Road, Rowfant and Three Bridges. One hill of perhaps 30 metres at 1 in 8 at Three Bridges.

Grid reference: TQ386382

Public Transport: Train stations at Three Bridges and East Grinstead at each end of the route.

Car parking: Small car park at the East Grinstead end of the trail, as well as larger car parks in town. Other car parking not yet researched

Accessible toilet: not yet researched

Refreshments: At various points

Grade: 1?

Length: 16 km each way.

More details: *http://www2.westsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/prow/pdfs/WorthWay.pdf*

FOREST WAY

Researched: 28/12/09

Summary: A trail along an old railway track between Groombridge and East Grinstead. Largely flat and well surfaced but at Groombridge and Three Bridges (and possibly in one or two other places) old bridges are not in place and the route comes down to the road. Typically there is a climb of about 15 metres at 1 in 10. Groombridge end - no easy access to village. Route to Eridge Station also involves longer but gentler uphill climb, then really steep and narrow downhill on Forge Road.

Grid reference: TQ426351 (car park in Forest Row)

Public Transport: Hourly weekday & Saturday bus service from Hartfield, to Groombridge & Tunbridge Wells, and Forest Row & East Grinstead. East Grinstead Railway station is on the opposite side of town to the beginning of the trail and other villages tend to be up steep hills from the trail. At the Groombridge end there is no way of getting into the village without going up a steep hill. It may be better to take small roads to Eridge Station

Car parking: Difficult at both ends. The car park at Forest Row may be your best bet. Some parking at the Old Hartfield Station TQ479361 .

Accessible toilet: not yet researched

Refreshments: Most services at Forest Row, Hartfield. Short uphill on footway alongside B2026, then easy approach up High Street footway to 2 pubs, tea room and shop

Grade: 1?

Length: 14.5 km each way.

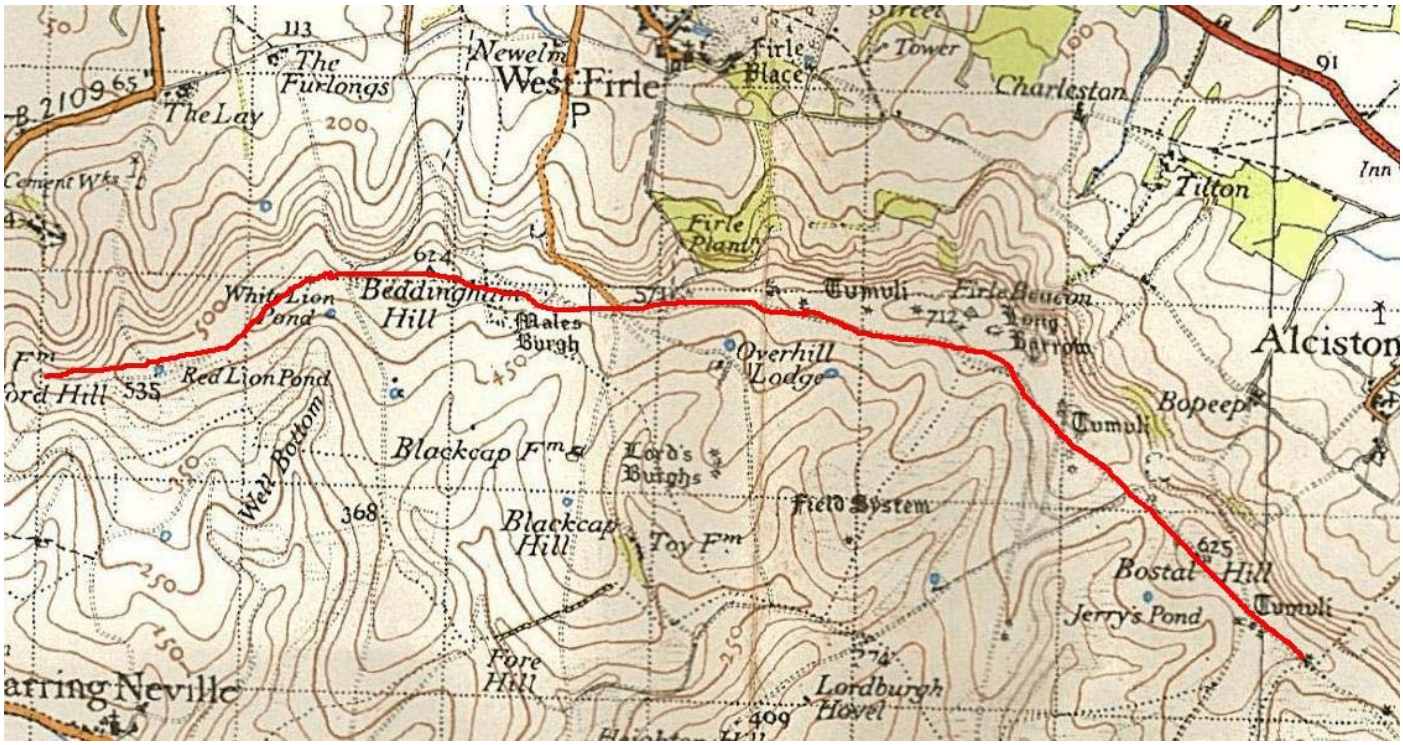
More details:
http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/98CE20E4-44BB-488A-AAB8-F2B716AEFF5A/0/forest_way.pdf

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

Worth: Copthorne Common south to Old Rowfant
Worth Lodge farm crossroad (east of farm) on Worth Way) south to Worth Abbey through Worth Forest

LEWES AREA

FIRLE BEACON AND BEDDINGHAM HILL



Researched: 02/01/10

Grid reference: TQ468058

Summary: This linear route is one of the grand panorama routes of Sussex, which extensive views of the downs, the low weald and the sea.

Public Transport: none

Car parking: at TQ 468058. There will normally be parking available for trailers

Accessible toilet: nearest known is in the Trevor Arms at Glynde. Middle Farm on the A27 may be a possibility.

Refreshments: Trevor Arms, Middle Farm, Ram Inn at Firle (not wheelchair accessible) None of these are on the route.

Grade: 2

Length: up to 13km round trip

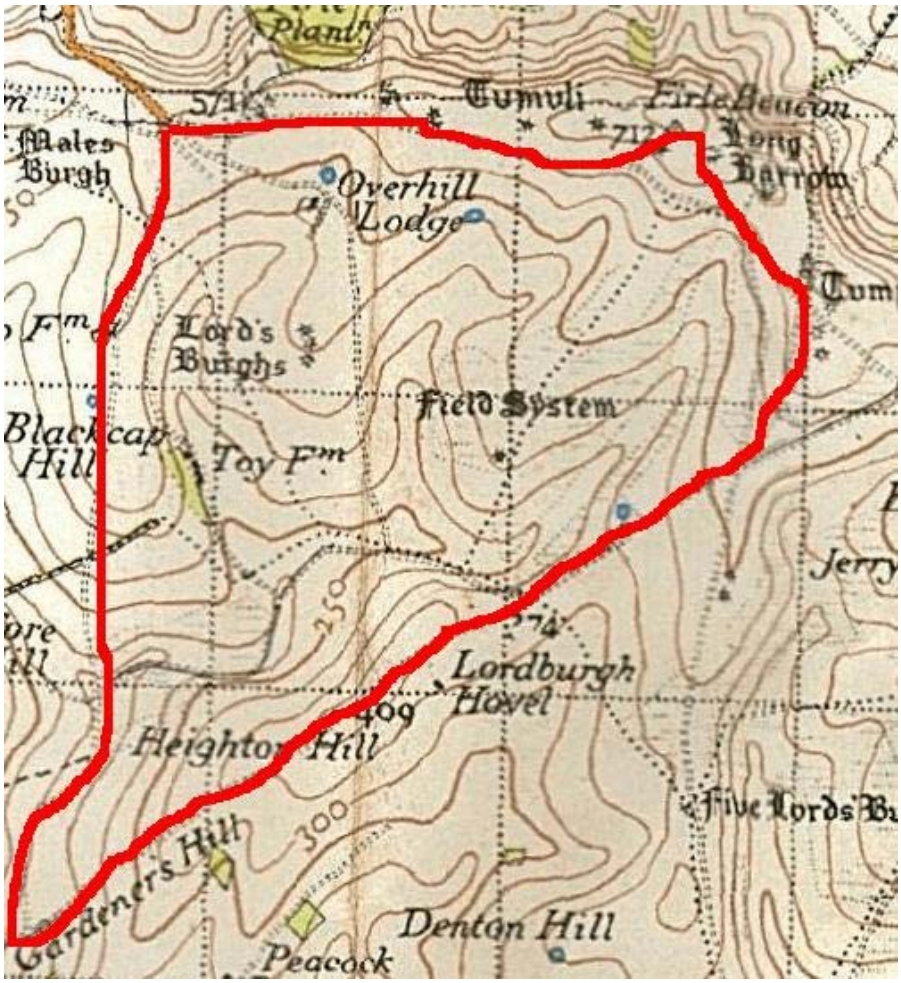
More details: From the car park on the downs between Beddingham Hill and Firle Beacon the South Downs Way runs in two directions, both of which are accessible. The ground is mainly gently climbing and falling grass, cropped close by sheep. It is rarely soggy, except after severe rain. Perhaps the most challenging part of the ramble is the car park at the beginning, where cars have created some ruts. Pick your parking place carefully. There are a number of gates but, except where leaving the car park, these are often left open.

Going west the route is obvious and well signposted. You can travel past Beddingham radio towers for over 3 kilometres until Itford hill, where the route starts to slope down steeply to the valley and it would be sensible to turn back. Part of the route is on a chalk track.

Going east the route is equally obvious and slopes gently up to Firle Beacon. After the Beacon the route turns South East and after a further 600 metres or so, begins to descend about 400 metres at around 1 in 11 to Bo Peep car park. The route is on a track which can be muddy in bad weather. You can see most of the descent from the top of the hill so you can decide whether or not to attempt it. There is a similar climb on the other side. Once you are up this you can continue, descending gently, for another 1.5 km.

Going west your total height gain will be about 95 metres. Going east the height gain is similar to Firle Beacon. If you then go to the furthest point recommended there is a height further gain of about 100 metres.

FIRLE BEACON CIRCULAR



Researched: 02/01/10

Grid reference: TQ468058

Summary: This route sacrifices some of the panorama of the ramble above for the sake of the variety of a circular walk. In doing so it adds to the degree of difficulty considerably, with at total of 250 metres of ascent, including one point where 80 metres are gained in under a kilometre.

Public Transport: none

Car parking: at TQ 468058. There will normally be parking available for trailers

Accessible toilet: nearest known is in the Trevor Arms at Glynde. Middle Farm on the A27 may be a possibility.

Refreshments: Trevor Arms, Middle Farm, Ram Inn at Firle (not wheelchair accessible) None of these are on the route.

Grade: 3

Length: 10km

More details: Use landranger map 123 for this ramble. It will help you locate which field you are in. Follow the Firle and Beddingham route going east. Pass Firle Beacon and then, about 500mtrs later look out for a four way junction sign. (If you start to descend steeply you have gone too far.) At the junction turn right. Go through a gate and you will find yourself in a large field. There is no clear route across the short grass. Head south/southwest keeping a little to the right of the highest ground. (Avoid the obvious track which goes along the south east side of the field. After about 600 metres there is a signpost in the field which indicates a four way junction.

Turn right here and go through a gate that is about 20 metres from the signpost. Unlike most of the fields around here the field that you are now in is sometimes used for crops, but a beaten earth route, going straight down ahead, leads you south west in the direction of Newhaven. Follow this through three fields usually on grass. The third field contains a very large number of small rounded grassy hummocks up to 30cm high, which are an obstacle because of their sheer number. Once you have gone through the gate into the field head slightly left and you eventually come to a hummock free path.

At TQ470036 go through a gate. (This gate can be difficult to open if coming from the other way because of a large lump of wood on the same side as the latch.) Then start to descend steeply at gradient of about 1 in 7. The legal right of way is overgrown, so you need to go slightly to the right, down a route which is still largely grass but has some bare chalk and can be uneven.

Having reached the bottom, turn right into a lovely little valley along a grass track which can be wet after rain but should only cause problems after persistently bad weather. Now might be the time to eat your sandwiches, congratulate yourself on having got down the hill and prepare yourself for the climb to come.

Having rested, continue heading north. At first the route bends to follow the valley, but then sets off straight ahead up a hill with a number of gates. The route is either on rough grass or on a grass and chalk track which may get churned up in bad weather by farm vehicles. In less than a kilometre the route gains 80 metres in height, and at the steepest part the gradient is about 1 in 9 for half a kilometre. Once at the top of this, the gradient eases off and after Blackcap farm a concrete or tarmac surface returns you to the car park.

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

Chailey Common offers the possibility of a number of circular rambles
http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/80C8FEB1-B7C7-4721-B41C-1EA03A2DBBE8/0/chailey_common_leaflet.pdf

The off road cycle route from Newhaven to Bishopstone offers a tarmac route from Newhaven to Bishopstone, which can be combined with a ramble along the front at Seaford.
Bridleways around Plumpton and Streat
Bridleways around the Anchor Inn, Barcombe.

UCKFIELD AREA AND THE ASHDOWN FOREST

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

Ashdown Forest bridleways

EASTBOURNE/HAILSHAM/POLEGATE AREA

BEACHY HEAD BONANZA

Researched: 28/12/09

Grid reference: TV555960

Summary: An exhilarating ramble with wide views taking in some of the most famous scenery in England.

Public Transport: Brighton and Hove buses run along the road from Birling Gap to Beachy Head and onwards. They also run along the A259. Note that buses EITHER run along the A259 OR via Beachy Head. Check that you are on the right bus. The route runs from Brighton to Eastbourne and the buses are wheelchair accessible. There is no public transport at Butts Brow although the very intrepid could catch Stagecoach buses from Eastbourne to Polegate at the bottom of the steep hill.

Car parking: At both ends of the route and at Beachy Head and other points in between.

Accessible toilet: Not yet researched

Refreshments: See details

Grade: 3?

Length: 11 kilometres

More details:
http://www.eastbourne.gov.uk/EasySiteWeb/getresource.axd?AssetID=265&type=full&servicetype=Inline

SEVEN SISTERS PARK AND FRISTON FOREST

Researched: 28/12/09

Grid reference: TV 520994

Summary: Flat ramble of about 2km each way to the sea. Mostly surfaced, but grass at the last part and a pebbled beach makes access to the sea at the end very difficult. Steeper rambles in Friston Forest. Note that the country park is managed by East Sussex County Council and the forest by the Forestry Commission, so you have to ask the right organisation for information.

Public Transport: Brighton and Hove buses from Eastbourne and Brighton- wheelchair accessible.

Car parking: on the south side of the main road and also to the north in Friston Forest. Friston Forest may be a better bet for those with trailers.

Accessible toilet: at visitor centre

Refreshments: cafe at the start point. Access not yet checked

Grade: 1 for the ramble to the sea, 1-3 for routes in Friston forest “access for all” map available from visitor centre

Length: 2km each way to the sea, various in Friston forest

More details: 01323 870280 or www.sevensisters.org.uk for the country park. We hope to have further information about rambles in Friston Forest shortly.

THE CUCKOO TRAIL

Researched: 28/12/09

Summary: A trail along an old railway track between Hampden Park (Eastbourne) and Heathfield. Largely flat and well surfaced but at one or two other places old bridges are not in place and the route comes down to the road. Typically there is a climb of about 15 metres at 1 in 12. The section south of Polegate is partly next to a dual carriageway and not so attractive. At Heathfield there is a steep climb to the village. Perhaps the most attractive section is between Polegate and Horam.

Grid reference: TQ 584052 (start of trail at Polegate) TQ578217(end of trail at Heathfield)

Public Transport: Railway stations at Polegate and Hampden Park. For bus services see www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk

Car parking: Car parking on the trail at Hailsham, Heathfield and at Loom Mill.

Accessible toilet: not yet researched

Refreshments: Most services Forest Row, Polegate, The Loom Mill between Hailsham and Polegate, Hailsham, Horam and Heathfield

Grade: 1?

Length: 21 km each way.

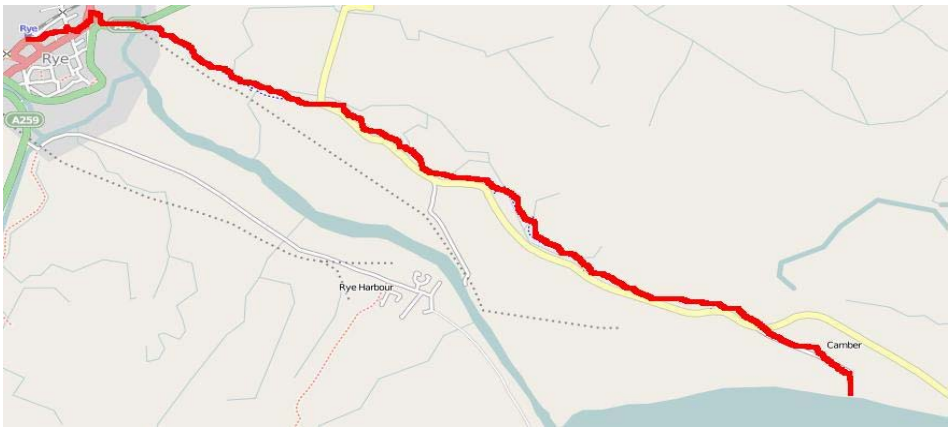
More details: http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/walks/cuckootrail/

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

The old coach road between Firle and Berwick, with links to the cycle route to Berwick Station
Pevensey level bridleways

RYE AREA

RYE TO CAMBER AND ONWARDS



Researched: June 08

Summary: linear ramble on cycle route from Rye to Camber, either off road or by the side of the road. Fine views of Romney Marshes, but parts of the ramble are next to a road.

Grid reference: TQ924206

Public Transport: A route from Rye Station is possible. If arriving from Ashford exit by the gate on the left hand side of the station building, turn left and cross the car park until you reach Rope Walk. Turn left and follow the A268 along narrow pavements (minimum 1 metre wide). At the second junction turn right into Fishmarket Road (kerb of about 40cm) then first left into New Road by two car parks, where the Ramble begins. Stagecoach buses run from Rye to Camber and beyond and stop near the car parks at the beginning of the Ramble and at the Station.

Car parking: Two car parks at the start of the ramble at TQ924206. These are quite small and if you have a trailer you may do better at the numerous car parks by the station. There are large car parks in Camber, but these can get very busy in the summer.

Accessible toilet: Opposite Rye station and in the western car park at the start of the ramble- possibly also in Camber.

Refreshments, Numerous in Rye and Camber. Access not yet checked but see details for the ramble below.

Grade: 1

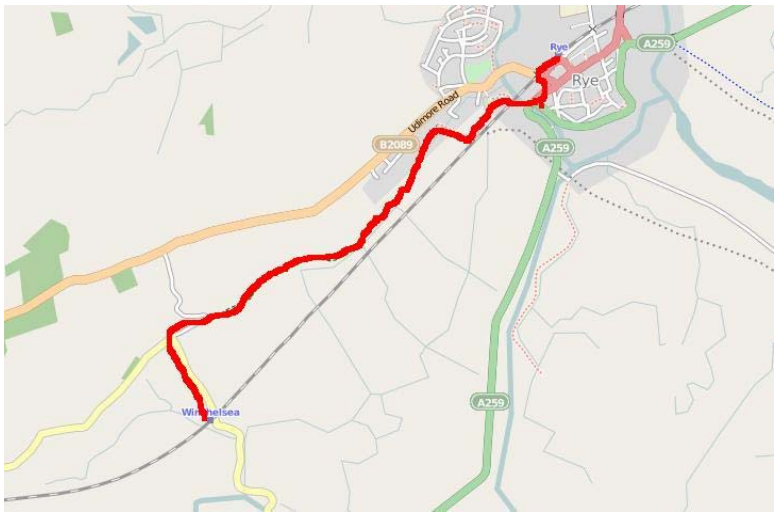
Length: 5km each way.

Details: From the car parks head east towards the river, on the right hand side of the road. Cross the river and immediately turn right down a slope (about 10 metres at about 1 in 10) then follow the cycle route straight ahead across fields to the main road ahead. Cross the road carefully and join the cycle route again on the other side. This is separate from the road, but runs parallel to it for most of the way to Camber. On the edge of Camber the cycle route joins the main road, but you can use pavements. Camber beach is to the right.

It is possible to continue on the cycle route to Lydd in Kent, but the first part is on the road (although it may be possible to travel on the sea defence for part of the way instead). After this the route runs parallel to the road. Stagecoach buses run back to Rye from Lydd.

Map:
http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=592350&y=120650&z=0&sv=TQ923206&st=5&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf (use the third level of zoom up from the bottom. Note that the arrow shown on the map can be inaccurate.)

RYE TO WINCHELSEA



Researched: 20/12/09

Summary: linear ramble on cycle route from Rye to Wincheslea, offering varied views of marshland to the south and hillside to the north. Good for wildlife.

Grid reference: TQ919203

Public Transport: A route from Rye Station is possible. If arriving from Hastings go forward to exit the station in Rope Walk. Turn right and cross the Railway Then right again through the car park to return to the main station building. If arriving from Ashford exit by the gate on the left hand side of the station building. From the main station building walk south west along the A268, parallel to the railway. Cross the B2089 and turn first right along narrow pavements (minimum 1 metre) to the junction of two main roads and the start of the ramble. Note that until December 2010 hardly any trains stop at Winchelsea station, but an improved frequency is planned after then.

Car parking: Car park at the start of the ramble. There is also a car park at TQ915204 a little way into the Ramble. You can access this from the B2089. This may be a better bet for those with trailers.

Accessible toilet: Opposite Rye station and by the tourist office, which is just to the south of the start of the ramble. The tourist office has a Radar key.

Refreshments: Numerous in Rye. The best bet is likely to be the development around the tourist office, which has a number of cafes and restaurants and is on level ground. Many of these were closed on the day of research, but this is a new development and places should have good access.

Grade: 1

Length: 3.5km each way.

Details: From the junction of the A268 and the A259 cross the bridge over the river to the west and then turn immediately right. Cross the railway, encountering a number of gates. There are 10 on this ramble. The first five do not have any catches, so are easy to open. The remainder have catches. After crossing the railway turn left following the cycle path signs, past a car park. Keep following the cycle path signs for nearly 3km. You will then join a small road. Head straight ahead and follow the road round to the left. This will bring you to Winchelsea station.

The surface is tarmac at the start, giving way to impacted shale and then, in some places, grass. Once you get to the road you are on tarmac.

At the moment you will now have to return the same way as hardly any trains stop. You might want to turn round at the end of the path, but stopping trains are promised from December 2010. We intend to research a route which would continue from Winchelsea station to join up with rambles around Rye Harbour nature reserve, creating a circular ramble of about 10 km, but this will involve traversing a busy road at Winchelsea.

Map:
http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=591950&y=120350&z=0&sv=TQ919203&st=5&mapp=map.srf&sear

chp=ids.srf(use the third level of zoom up from the bottom. Note that the arrow shown on the map can be inaccurate.)

RYE TO PLAYDEN

Researched: 28/12/09

Grid reference: TQ 919205

Summary: This is a walk from Rye Station to Playden. Although the detailed walk description mentions stiles these have now all been replaced by kissing gates.

Public Transport: The ramble starts from Rye Station, trains from Ashford, Hastings and Eastbourne. All buses running to and through Rye stop at the station.

Car parking: A considerable amount of parking at and next to Rye Station

Accessible toilet: opposite Rye Station

Refreshments: See details

Grade: 4

Length: 5 kilometres

More details:
http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/DC1E844D-170A-4AA3-A6D2-15762CFAED66/0/PlaydenWebVersion.pdf

RYE HARBOUR NATURE RESERVE

Researched: 28/12/09

Summary: Nature reserve with numerous footpaths, many accessible, Wheelchair hire

Public Transport: Bus to Rye Harbour from Rye Station. According to East Sussex council the bus is wheelchair accessible.

Car parking: 80 metres from the reserve.

Accessible toilet: near car park

Refreshments: pubs at Rye Harbour, access not yet checked

Grade: 1-2?

Length: various including the 5km circular Camber Castle Ramble
http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/FBA6E774-8F72-40CA-9789-C6F452C266FF/0/camber_castle.pdf

More details: http://www.wildrye.info/ and http://www.wildrye.info/access/disabilities/

OTHER RESOURCES AND IDEAS

There are a number of other places you might go for ideas:

Walks with wheelchairs/walks with buggies

These linked web sites have a number of short rambles in Sussex. http://www.walkswithbuggies.com/ http://www.walkswithwheelchairs.com/

SUSTRANS

Sustrans is an organisation dedicated to promoting cycle routes. As many as possible of these are traffic free so they can be a good resource for other ramblers with wheels. But bear in mind that cyclists may be happier to go up hills than you are and may be happier on busy roads than you.

They have maps which show off and on road cycle routes throughout the country. Here is a link to their on-line map http://www.sustrans.org.uk/map

BRIDLEWAYS AND BYWAYS

It is illegal to put a stile across a bridleway or byway so you should not meet any of these obstructions on these routes.

However horses use these routes and horses can churn up a lot of mud in bad weather. Gates can sometimes be in poor condition and hard to open.

But bridleways and byways are particularly worth exploring on the South Downs. This is because:

- There are a large number of bridleways on the Downs;
- The Downs are made of chalk which tends to drain well;
- Routes on the Downs are maintained by the South Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Board, which has a policy of maintaining gates even though it has no legal duty to do so.
- There are a number of places where you can get a bus to the top of the top of the Downs (Devils Dyke and Ditchling Beacon) and a number of car parks also on the ridge of the Downs, so you can start your ramble without going up steep hills.

WOODLANDS AND OTHER SHORT ROUTES

A number of woodlands and wildlife sites have short paved trails. In East Sussex see
http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/disabledaccess/woodlands/default.htm
and
http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/disabledaccess/other/default.htm

In Brighton there is a route around Hollingbury Woods
http://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/downloads/bhcc/Hollingbury_Woods_Easy_Access_Trail.pdf

Published by the Sussex Area of the Ramblers

Ramblers - at the heart of walking

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Visit our websites at www.sussex-ramblers.org.uk and www.ramblers.org.uk

Find your local Ramblers group at http://www.ramblers.co.uk/groups/groupInfo.php?group=SX