

See back issues and get more information about Sussex Ramblers at [www.sussex-ramblers.org.uk](http://www.sussex-ramblers.org.uk)

## NEWLY OPEN



### SHEFFIELD FOREST

It may be cheating to include Sheffield forest in a list of newly open routes. But it has comparatively recently become statutory access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) act. This relatively unknown forest can be found around TQ429269, between Nutley and Dane Hill in the East Sussex High Weald. For a map follow this link:

<http://www.streetmap.co.uk/map.srf?x=542950&y=126950&z=0&sv=TQ429269&st=5&mapp=map.srf&searchp=ids.srf> If you click on zoom level 3 you will see the access land, which is shaded in brown.

It is sometimes said that we in Sussex got little benefit from the CROW act which the Ramblers campaigned for for over half a century. But Sheffield Forest shows that this is not true. The rights under the act are particularly important because the Forestry Commission, who own it, are selling off the eastern parts of wood. Without CROW rights the access would probably be lost. As it is walkers need to be vigilant that access is not discouraged.

The eastern forest has been described by David Bangs, author of many books about the Sussex countryside, as “an ancient woodland site, with deep mossy gills, woodcock, sheets of bluebells and some wild daffodils, with small areas of old meadow which have been planted up with oak. Much of it has an open canopy of hemlock, larch and pine, with large areas of old sweet chestnut coppice, with holly and hazel and some hornbeam coppice. It is silent and tranquil, extensive and lovely. “

The Forestry Commission web site at <http://www.forestry.gov.uk/website/WildWoods.nsf/LUWeb-DocsByKey/EnglandEastSussexNoForestSheffieldForest> describes the whole wood as “ A large, mainly coniferous wood with remnant deciduous parts. Undulating terrain with streams make this an interesting forest to walk in.” It also describes the varied flora and fauna you may see.



Whilst mature walkers sometimes prefer a footpath to follow, tomorrows walkers- the under 15s, prefer somewhere they can frolic, explore and generally get dirty. Why not take them there?

Photos of Sheffield Forest © Copyright Robin Webster and licensed for reuse under this [Creative Commons Licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

## NEWS FROM EAST SUSSEX

As you will probably have noticed, the East and West Sussex county council rights of way teams take it in turns to let you know about improvements to the rights of way system. This month is East Sussex's turn and the material below, including the pictures, is from them.

### *Surfacing work:*

Chalvington and Ripe Byway 33/34 – TQ5254/0916 - Vanguard Way – first phase of resurfacing work complete.

Byway 33/34 has been closed for some time due to the poor condition of the surface. We have now secured funding to commence repairs to the path and our in-house maintenance team has recently completed the first phase of surface improvements.

This has involved laying a recycled concrete base and carrying out ditching works from Poundfield Corner to the junction with public footpaths Chalvington and Ripe 30 and Arlington 21. The byway will remain closed to all users after these initial works have been completed. Topping of the paths with a wearing course of limestone will be undertaken during the summer 2010/11 and this section of the path will then be re-opened to the public.

The remainder of the path, from its junction with Footpaths 21 and 30 to Sheepcote Lane at Selmeston Croft, will remain closed until further funding is available in 2011/2012. At this time, repair works will be carried out to this section and the whole byway re-opened to all users.

This work will eventually allow the full reopening of a popular section of Vanguard Way, as a



the



as

well



tion of Vanguard Way, as a

vital bridleway/byway link in the area.

### *Bridge work:*

Barcombe BR4 – Bridge refurbishment – TQ4435/1759

ESCC's Capital Bridge Team has recently completed refurbishment of an 8.7metre bridge on a well-used Barcombe bridleway. (Before, during and after photos are below.)

### *Path Order update:*

Hailsham BR68c – TQ5801/1121 - update regarding the reopening of Weald Way through Sheppey Walk.

Following a public inquiry late last year, the order to divert Hailsham Bridleway 68c was confirmed on 24th February. Therefore, ESCC is now in correspondence with the owners of the fence (which currently obstructs the Weald Way) to seek the reopening of this route.

Newly claimed route - Withyham FP86 update – TQ4943/3564.

The landowner has agreed to install a stile to reopen public access along this recently claimed route. This work should be complete shortly and, following this, ESCC will sign the route and carry out any necessary

vegetation clearance. (Editor's note- this is the path we featured last month, the one that Ramblers East Sussex footpath secretary Malcolm McDonnell laboured long and hard to get re-opened.)

(Editors' note- ESCC are too modest to mention that they have also published an order to open a bridle-way between Streat Church and Hayleigh Farm, along the route of the track shown on Ordnance survey maps TQ350153 and thereabouts. In practice this route has been used as a walking, horse and cycle route for many years, in preference to the existing footpath.)

### ***Access improvements:***

#### **Access improvements to the Barcombe Paths to Prosperity circular walk – Near TQ4328/1493**

We have recently been carrying out access improvements on this popular circular walk created and promoted by ESCC. With landowner consent, we have so far replaced 11 stiles with squeeze stiles – allowing easier access and a step-free circular walk from Barcombe Mills to the Anchor Inn. Link to walk below:

<http://frs.accessesussex.org/pathstoprosperity/WalkDetail.aspx?walkid=51>

#### **Ashdown Forest – new permissive Weald Way off-road link at Camp Hill – TQ4723/2879**



Following requests from a Ramblers Association rep., our maintenance team have now carried out works to create a permissive Weald Way link to allow walkers to avoid a busy road near Duddleswell.

### ***Enforcement work:***

#### **Rotherfield FP10 – TQ5308/2692**

Following Rights of Way Team contact, the northern end of this path has been reopened where it leaves the public byway. This longstanding fence obstruction is now resolved.

#### **East Hoathly FP20 – TQ5207/1473**

Our Enforcement Officer has recently negotiated the removal of a poor stile and replacement of a bridge on this route. (Before and after photos below.)



#### **Longman FP17 – TQ5586/0669**

Several obstructions (a locked gate and three poor stiles) on this previously unavailable path have now been cleared or improved by the landowner following Enforcement Officer contact.

#### **Longman BR21 – Weald Way – TQ5386/0561**

As a result of negotiation with the landowner, several stiles obstructing the line of this bridleway have been removed and replaced with equestrian gates.

Westham FP28 – TQ6056/0632

A locked gate blocking this path has now been mitigated by the installation of an adjacent pedestrian gate. This work was carried out by the landowner following an approach from the Rights of Way Team.

### **Staffing update:**

As of the 1<sup>st</sup> March, the Rights of Way Team has two new Area Officers. Marcus Cleveland is the South Wealden Area Officer; Emma Simms is overseeing the North Wealden Area.

## **PERMISSIVE PATHS**

Let us know of any permissive paths you think could do with some publicity..

### **STANMER PARK BRIGHTON**



Without telling anyone much (well not me) Brighton council have developed an excellent 5 mile easy access trail starting in Stanmer Park and extending to the downs above Stanmer, to within less than a mile of Ditchling Beacon. The trail then returns through Great Wood. It is a lovely route with varied scenery, partly on permissive routes and partly on existing rights of way and suitable for prams and wheelchairs or indeed anyone. Unfortunately the lie of the land means that there are 1 in 12 gradients near the start and finish but these can be avoided by doing only part of the route. Details at

[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)

Photo Copyright Paul Gillett and licensed for reuse under this [Creative Commons Licence](#)

Countryside stewardship walks can be found at <http://cwr.naturalengland.org.uk/>

## **WALKS ON NEWLY OPENED ROUTES**

Are you organising a walk that takes in a recently opened path? Send us the details. Please say what new path(s) you are using, a brief description of the walk, the time date and meeting point, mileage and how to contact the organiser if people want to come. We also welcome short accounts of walks you have done. Bear in mind that the newsletter goes out at the beginning of each month with a deadline of 24<sup>th</sup> of the month before.

## **STILL CLOSED**

Sadly, there are still a lot of paths that have been closed for some time.

Chalvington and Ripe Byway 33/34 – TQ5254/0916 - Vanguard Way  
Remains closed at present. See above.

### Undercliff Walk at Brighton Marina

Part of this path will be closed shortly to enable those famous footpath blockers Southern Water to carry out work. Apparently there will be a wheelchair and pram accessible diversion through the Marina.

### Cliff Path at Telscombe Tye between Brighton and Newhaven

This shameful saga continues. As the picture shows, Southern Water has wired over the clifftop path and have obstructed the route for years. Work on an agreed diversion has now ceased for 18 months while Southern Water undertakes more works on its plant.



## WEST SUSSEX

### Unavailable paths in West Sussex

You can see a list of these for West Sussex at: [www.westsussex.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/leisure-and-tourism/public-rights-of-way/4--unavailable-routes](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/leisure-and-tourism/public-rights-of-way/4--unavailable-routes) On this page there are links to paths that are temporarily closed and those that are long term unavailable for other reasons.

## EAST SUSSEX

East Sussex currently only has available a list of paths temporarily obstructed for maintenance. This list is at <http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism/countryside/rightsofway/pathclosures.htm> This list is updated on a fortnightly basis. They hope to have a list of long term unavailable paths on their site soon.

## OTHER THINGS

### PATH NUMBERS AND GRID REFERENCES

In this newsletter paths are identified by grid references. In some cases path numbers are used. There is no easy way to find out the path number in East Sussex but in West Sussex you can find a map of paths with numbers at [www.westsussex.gov.uk/imap](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/imap) . The map can also provide a quick way of checking grid references as if you put the cursor over the spot you want the grid reference appears in the bottom left corner. Otherwise visit [www.streetmap.co.uk](http://www.streetmap.co.uk) and type in the grid reference you want to locate prefixed by TQ for most of Sussex or SU for western West Sussex. You will need to go to zoom level 3 or 4 in the zoom control on the right hand side.

### COULD YOU BE (MORE) ACTIVE IN THE RAMBLERS?

Throughout Sussex Ramblers volunteers are active, checking paths, reporting problems, lobbying for more access, organising walks and putting out information like this. We always need more members and, in the current financial situation your support is particularly valuable. If you are not yet a member why not join now? It's easy. For further information. Visit <http://www.ramblers.org.uk/membership/about/joinand-share-the-joy.htm> Walking groups can affiliate to the Ramblers.

If you are already a member but are not yet active could you do something practical? Sussex area is always looking for people to help by checking paths, lobbying for open access, leading walks, helping with publicity, monitoring the press, to name just a few things. If you are interested email me at [chris.smith@hbhelp.co.uk](mailto:chris.smith@hbhelp.co.uk), saying what you might be interested in and I will point you in the right direction.

### Reporting Path 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 Board <http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/rte.asp?id=158> The board will also deal with problems over problems with access areas on the downs.

This information was compiled from usually reliable sources, but mistakes get made and things do change. Please let us know about any mistakes or changes.

This newsletter is now being received by people active in the Ramblers in Sussex, as well as people and groups outside the Ramblers who are interested in receiving it. They include councillors, walking groups, parish councils and others. If you have received it via someone else and you want to get the newsletter in future then you need to email

Chris Smith at [chris.smith@hbhelp.co.uk](mailto:chris.smith@hbhelp.co.uk). (If you want to be taken off of the list then email the same address). Your email will not be given to anyone else or used for any other purpose. You can chose to have your mailing with pictures (which makes a bigger file) or without (which may be better if you have a dial up connection- you can still see the pictures on the web site above.)

*Published by the Sussex Area of the Ramblers*

*Ramblers - at the heart of walking*

*The Ramblers' Association is a registered charity (England & Wales no 1093577, Scotland no SC039799) and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England & Wales (no 4458492). Registered office: 2nd floor, Camel-ford House, 87-90 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TW*

*Visit our websites at [www.sussex-ramblers.org.uk](http://www.sussex-ramblers.org.uk) and [www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)*

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