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## NEWLY OPEN

It should have been West Sussex CC's turn this month. They say "News is thin on the ground this month I'm afraid. We are still building up to the start of some of the bigger projects. The routine inspection and maintenance programme continues as normal, which includes continued efforts to replace stiles for gaps and gates as well as dealing with enquiries as and when they come in. We should have some news for the next WSCC instalment."

But we are delighted to welcome news from the South Downs Joint Committee, whose correspondent Nigel James has sent us the material below and promises more in future.

### Cuckoo Corner – Lancing

A new access gate has been installed by the South Downs Joint Committee at Cuckoo Corner near Lancing College which is controlled by a radar lock system (*see photo*). This gate now gives access for those in Trumper vehicles or wheelchairs to the river-bank paths on the western bank of the River Adur, whilst preventing access to motorised vehicles. The paths along the river-bank are wide and level making them easy to use, providing everyone a wonderful opportunity to see the wildlife of the Adur Estuary and enjoy the spectacular views of the South Downs.



### South Downs Way / Middlefield Lane at Cocking

Major resurfacing of the South Downs Way (SDW) just to the south of Cocking village, from the A286 westwards has made the surface of this once rutted and often waterlogged track into a condition appropriate for National Trail standards. The first section adjacent to the farmyard is nice and flat and although a reasonable gradient is then required to be tackled, the new path surface makes it far more user friendly for all with rewards of stunning views. Indeed, the surface condition is now of such a good standard that this section of the SDW now forms part of a local health walk route led regularly by South Downs Joint Committee (SDJC) staff and attended by people of all ages from 8 to 80! The work was financed primarily by the South Downs Way National Trail Officer and project managed by the SDJC.

Nigel promises more news in future, including information about where stiles and gates have facilitated access to access land. Top stuff Nigel, keep it coming.

### East Sussex News- Wealdway now open again at Hailsham

Following the public enquiry, the diversion of the Wealdway at Hailsham is now in place. East Sussex Rights of Way team say: "You will be pleased to know we have opened up the Wealdway here. We did this as soon as we could after the notice period was up that I sent to the landowners. So the fence has gone. Hooray. (There are) a couple of wooden bollards in the photo which have been put in temporarily to prevent cars getting through. We will organise for some hard surfacing and metal bollards to be put in

soon. I thought it would be best to get rid of the fence as soon as possible so we sent the team in to do this. Contractors will follow on with the other work

## PERMISSIVE PATHS

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

### New Ringmer Path

A new Licensed path has opened in Ringmer from New Road (the road to Glynde) up onto the Downs via Ash to Saxon Cross writes Godfrey Howard. A group of Ringmer residents led by Ian Loughborough have been pressing for this route as an alternative to the path which passes close to the proposed wind turbine, and Glyndebourne Estates have now agreed, and the route has been registered with ESCC. The path goes from TQ442115 to 442104.

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 25<sup>th</sup> of the month before.

### London Blind Ramblers use new Ghurka Bridge



"For the fifth year, members of London Blind Ramblers have visited Sussex for a Bank Holiday long weekend, and this year it was from 28 May to 1 June, when the ten visitors stayed at Bradbury Hotel, East Preston. As usual, SW Sussex Group arranged transport and walks for the Saturday and Sunday, and then Arun-Adur Group took over for the Monday walk.

Saturday was blustery, wet weather and we struggled along the footpaths around Cissbury Ring area. However, our cheerful visitors never complained, and we ended the day with a cream tea. Sunday was a beautiful sunny day, and we walked along the coast from

Rustington to Worthing (see photo) and returned to the hotel by bus.

On Bank Holiday Monday sixteen members of Arun-Adur Group joined the visitors from LBR to walk in very pleasant weather on a circular walk from Burpham via North & South Stoke, using the re-built Gurkha bridge to take us up to the SDW for a well earned lunch break (see picture). A fairly early finish allowed our visitors to return to the Bradbury to celebrate the birthday of one of their members.

The groups look forward to meeting up every year, and it is now "old friends" catching up with the news. If any group has not tried walking with disabled ramblers then we can highly recommend *it*."

### Disabled Ramblers use new Newhaven Cycle route

Bob Mathews writes: Our first Ramble was a fairly short but interesting one from the Martello Tower Seaford to Newhaven Fort. Five couples ,plus one child, set off on a fine sunny day along the seafront. Following a short stretch beside the A259 we went via the Conservation path. Back along the A259,over the swing bridge and down the riverside walk. lots to see. Birds,butterflies and many smiling people.

Once in the Fort we found a lot of work has been undertaken to facilitate



disabled access. Following lunch we made our separate way around the top of the fort with its fabulous views, then it was time to return home. We had left at 11am returning at 5pm well satisfied by our first ramble.

We ramble on the last Sunday in the month. Our next outing is by a cross country one via the short route from Seaford to The Golden Galleon. Why not join us? Look us up. [www.sussexroamability.co.uk](http://www.sussexroamability.co.uk)

## STILL CLOSED

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

## 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.

### Cereal Offenders in Hartfield and Withyham

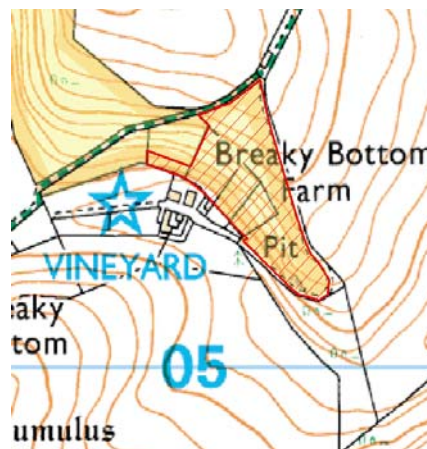
Footpath Hartfield 19 is a very popular path linking the villages of Hartfield and Withyham. It provides stunning views of the High Weald scenery and may be combined into an attractive 3 mile circular walk between these iconic Sussex villages. Unfortunately, every year since 2005 FP19 has been ploughed out and overcropped by the landowner, Buckhurst Estate. These regular transgressions have been reported to East Sussex CC every year, but nothing is ever done.

- FP19APIC1 path near Hartfield overcropped with beans
- FP19BPIC1 path towards Withyham through cereal crop.
- FP19BPIC2 path towards Hartfield heavily ploughed out – see picture- arrow shows stile into next field



### Scandal at Breaky Bottom

The grass downland above Breaky Bottom vineyard, in the Downs above Rodmell (at Grid reference TQ405055) is one of the areas that people were given access to under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (the right to roam). It ought to be one of the places you can relax and take in the secluded downland scenery, away from roads, trains and all the other distractions of modern life. It is what is known as “unimproved downland”, which means that it has not been improved for cultivation and is close to its natural state. The site is shown in cream on the map, to the south of the footpath (shown in green)



Except you can't. The access land is shown in cream on the map. But the owner, Breaky Bottom Vineyard, applied for and got a restriction order stopping people entering the area highlighted in red on the map. The reason given is that there is a small pit at the extreme south east corner of the site and people might fall in it. This is despite the fact that there are unfenced pits all over the South Downs access land, including one above Northease about 500 yards away. You would have thought that the obvious thing to do would be put a fence around the top (about 70yards of fencing would be needed). But Natural England and the owner said that a fence would be unsightly.

Having got their restriction, the vineyard proceeded to erect perhaps a mile of ugly new fencing all over the site (See picture for a sample). Fencing is shown in black or grey lines on the map. The three paddocks just above the pit are now just one. Undaunted by this, Natural England renewed the restriction in April. For reasons that we don't understand they decided to allow access to one of the paddocks to the west of the site and part of one in the centre. The area shown in red on the map remains legally inaccessible.

## **CHAOS AND CONFUSION**

This means that there are now 3 areas on the site:

- 1)The area to the east- You have the legal right to roam on this but in practice you can't because the landowner has fenced it off. The South Downs Joint Committee say they will try to arrange access, but we are told they don't have any funding available to do so.
- 2)The area in the centre, where you are legally prohibited from going on the grounds that you might fall into the pit because there is officially no fence to protect you from the pit, but in practice you can't go anyway because there are a number of barbed wire fences which will come between both you and the pit and you and the access footpath.
- 3) The east side of the site, which you are legally prohibited from entering. But in practice there is nothing to stop you and Natural England has not bothered to erect a sign saying that access is prohibited, so it seems people may use the site anyway not knowing about the restrictions.

The whole area is still shown as access land on the ordnance survey maps.

Lewes District Council has the power under mines and quarry's legislation to demand that a fence be erected at the top of the quarry. We are told that they refuse to do so because they say that there is no evidence that people use the site (and of course if they don't use the site it is because they aren't allowed to because the quarry isn't fenced.) Meanwhile the landowner can erect any fences he wants to on access land and the Committee has to try to find the money to build stiles or gates.

Sussex Ramblers access officer Brian Bailey says 'The situation at Breaky Bottom highlights the problems of the CROW act on the South Downs. Not only has Natural England been unnecessarily conservative in designating access land, but the South Downs Joint Committee and local councils have let landowners get round the provisions of the act and frustrate its intentions. Access land in the Downs comes up for review in a few years time and we must make sure that these mistakes are not repeated.'

All this will become the responsibility of the new National Park in April, but in the meantime Lewes District Council should require the fencing of the quarry and Natural England should urgently review the restriction.



## **OTHER THINGS**

### **POLEGATE PROPOSALS**

Brian Cheater has forwarded the following appeal from CPRE- "Help please!

Some of you will recall an application for 520 houses refused by Wealden DC last December. This development is hard against the National Park at Polegate East Sussex (see picture, taken from Folkington Hill - it would extend houses seen on right hand side towards, and across the foot of the Downs)

This development would have significant landscape impacts particularly from Folkington Down (you may have seen an article in the Times from David Dimbleby some 18 months ago on this <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/environment/article5409186.ece>).

CPRE Sussex plans to continue to fight against this development, and I hope your group may join us to avoid a dangerous precedent being set. At this stage, the most important approach is to become a party to the Inquiry and to press the Planning Inspectorate NOT to set a date for the Inquiry until the status of the South East Plan has been clarified.

I expect that those groups who wish to resist this unwelcome case will eventually link up their positions (as some of us did at Glyndebourne), but at this point the more groups who write to PINS the better. Can you indicate if you think your group will object? For more details contact CPRE on

<http://www.cpresussex.org.uk/>

### **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 Joint Committee

<http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/rte.asp?id=158>

The committee will also deal with problems over problems with access areas on the downs.

If you know who your Ramblers local footpath secretary is please also report it to them.

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.)

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