



YOUR COUNTRYSIDE:

NOW OPEN!

October 2009

See back issues and get more information about Sussex Ramblers at www.sussex-ramblers.org.uk

NOW OPEN- HOW TO GET IT

If you have been forwarded this edition and would like your very own copy please email me at chris.smith@hbhelp.co.uk The newsletter can be sent to anyone who is interested. You do not have to be a member or the Ramblers, but we encourage you to join!

You can have the newsletter with or without pictures. Please let me know which you would like. If you are using a dial up connection it is better to opt for without pictures as the file with pictures can take a long time to download. You can still see the pictures at www.sussex-ramblers.org.uk. Look for the current edition of now open on the site. If you would like to change the format in which you get the newsletter please let me know.

NEWLY OPEN

Please send details of any path or other walking area in Sussex that has recently been opened up. There are no clear rules about what "recently" means. Tell us about any path that has been closed for some time and now reopened and that walkers from outside the immediate area might not know about. Don't forget brand new paths and access areas too! Please give grid references and a general idea of where the path is. It is helpful if you can give some idea of good walks that can be done using the path.

No news from West Sussex this month. East Sussex County Council report the following:

Hartfield Footpath 1 – TQ 460/296.

Whilst working in the area, ESCC's Rights of Way Maintenance Team took the opportunity to repair a stile – in time for a guided walk at the end of October.

Forest Row Footpaths FPs 6,7,9,10,11 near TQ431/387.

ESCC's Maintenance Team have recently carried out extensive vegetation clearance on these popular routes north of Ashurst Wood.

Hartfield Footpath 6 – TQ 456/328.

This bridge had been closed since 2007 following floods which washed away a bridge to Newbridge Mill. This bridge has now been replaced by the landowner and the path was reopened this month.

Westmeston Bridleway 20 (Wapple Way) – TQ 340/145.

This well used bridleway has recently been resurfaced by ESCC's in-house maintenance team. This work was made possible by a contribution from the Mid-Sussex Bridleways Association.

Ticehurst Bridleway 1b (Round Bewl Water route) – TQ 662/323.

A section of the heavily used Round Bawl route was improved this month by the Rights of Way Team.

Uckfield Footpath 41 – TQ 475/210.

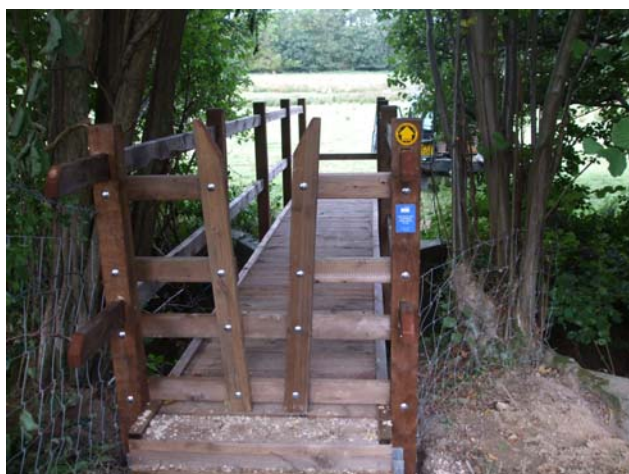
This path is now reopen following Environment Agency flood alleviation work.

Brede Footpaths 13 - TQ836/205 and 27 – TQ 835/192

Cropped footpaths cleared by the landowner at ESCC request. Picture right

Mountfield Footpath 6b – TQ 730/219 and Ewhurst Footpath 8.

ESCC's Capital Bridge Team recently replaced two 8m footbridges on these paths. (Pictures below.)



PERMISSIVE PATHS

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

.Other 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 25th of the month before.

OPEN FOR ALL?

This article is prompted by a number of things that have happened since the last bulletin

- West Sussex County Council told us that over 160 stiles had been replaced by more accessible facilities, but could not tell us which paths were now disability friendly
- A wheelchair user sent in an anguished plea for information about where she could and could not go in her motorised buggy and complaining about the number of celebrations of new stiles.
- I noted that there are no details of routes in Sussex on the disabled ramblers site, even though we have lots of routes that are disabled friendly.

This is not just a minority issue. Many Ramblers are not as fit as they might like to be. Some of us have children in pushchairs. Others have problems with flexibility or the use of their arms that make stiles

particularly difficult. But there is little information about accessible walks and it is rare to see a Ramblers Walk programme that says how disability friendly a walk is.

This is a plea for YOU to send in details of walks that you think are disability friendly. To help you, you will find set out below the categories of accessibility used by the Disabled Ramblers Association. It would be very useful to say what category the walk comes into.

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 *significant* (see [Note below](#)) height climbed during the ramble will not exceed 30 metres.

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* (see [Note below](#)) height climbed may be up to 150 metres in a day.

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 *significant* (see [Note below](#)) height climbed during a day may be up to 300 metres.

CATEGORY 4 covers paths and trails outside of the three categories defined above.

**Note: 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. The purpose of this assessment is based upon recognizing the impact of hills on battery capacity and the heating and possible safety cutouts of small electric motors over sustained climbs*

To this set I would suggest a further **category 4a** which would be any path or trail not covered by categories 1-3 but which has no stiles or steps more than 30 cm high and no long sets of steps.

Routes can be up to 8 miles long and if you can find circular walks this would be great.

A NEW DISABLED RAMBLER'S GROUP FOR SUSSEX?



Despite its name, the disabled ramblers' group is mainly a group of wheelchair users who organise rambles for members and campaign for better access. Organised rambles can be particularly important for wheelchair users who need to know that they are not likely to be stranded miles from home. Support is normally organised for participants.

Bob Mathews says "I am setting up a Social Group to explore the woods and open Downland. Avoiding stiles and gates. If you are disabled and have a wheelchair contact me for further details." Phone 01323892647

email to sussexromability@aol.com Please bring this to the attention of anyone who might be interested.

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 On this page there are links to paths that are temporarily closed and those that are long term unavailable for other reasons.

Please let us know of any paths that have been unavailable for at least a year which are not on these lists. Please let us know the grid reference of the problem(s), what the problem is and the footpath number if you know it.

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 in the autumn

Rum do's in Ripe

The parish of Ripe with Chalvington is a quiet walking area, away from the hustle and bustle of the South Downs that overlook it. It has more than its fair share of rights of way problems, and Ramblers Footpath Secretary Godfrey Howard has been working away to deal with them. Here are a couple of the long term issues:



British Horse Society Activist Jackie Rowland reports that at Veals Farm Chalvington at the corner of Ripe Lane and Deanland Road, (Grid reference 520114) the landowner appears to have unilaterally moved the Bridleway, which runs along a wide track, to a route to the west which is a narrow permissive footpath used mainly by anglers. Not surprisingly this is causing friction between anglers and riders. ESCC have been informed. The picture shows the gate across the legal route.

The Lamb Inn at Ripe is a good place to stop off for a drink on your walk. But if you look for the entrance to the path that leads west from it at 510102, you will see no sign for it, only someone's garden. At the other end of the path, at 508103 a sign threatens attack by loose dogs- although there is no evidence of them.

This has been going on for some time, although the path does not actually seem to be obstructed and there seem to be no dogs. The path could be used by anyone not intimidated by the alleged dogs and lack of signage.

RANDOM SNIPPETS

It may be old news to hard core computer techies, but your editor was pleased to discover that the on-line resource www.streetmap.co.uk uses Ordnance Survey maps in quite a useful way. You can choose to see the 1/50,000 (4th zoom level up) or the 1/25,000 maps.(3rd Zoom level up) You can search using grid references (you have to put the preliminary letters in before the 6 figure grid reference- TQ for most of Sussex, SU for most of western West Sussex) and you can also get the map to show you the grid reference of a particular point.

The [Ordnance Survey website](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk) has a similar facility but it only shows very small areas so far as I can tell.

[Multimap](http://www.multimap.com) will also let you search on grid references but only goes up to 1/50,000. You can print out quite large areas by reducing the scale.

OTHER NEWS

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 . 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.

PUBLIC ENQUIRY- YOUR CHANCE TO ATTEND

Weald Way Public Inquiry – Upper Horsebridge – Hailsham Bridleway 68c – TQ 580/112.

A Public Inquiry to consider a diversion order for Hailsham Bridleway 68c will be held on the 20th October at Dicker Village Hall. If successful, the Order will reopen public access along the Weald Way through Sheppey Walk, Hailsham. This will be an opportunity to come to a public enquiry. Many people are put off from objecting to footpath diversions or closures because they feel worried about the possibility of having to speak at a public enquiry. This is your chance to find out that they are not as frightening as you think.

WELCOME TO KINGSTON- West Sussex

Geraldine Walker, who is chairman of Kingston Parish Council in West Sussex writes to welcome walkers to the parish, which is largely rural and is situated between Ferring on the East and East Preston on the West. But she also says “ we should like to mention our concerns with regard to large groups of walkers walking down Kingston Lane leading to Kingston Gorse. This lane is very narrow, has ditches on either side and is in a derestricted speed zone. Traffic has difficulty passing each other let alone a group of people. “

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. [Click here](#) for further information. 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 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 [here](#) and to East Sussex County Council [here](#). 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 [here](#). The board will also deal with problems over problems with access areas on the downs. Please don't leave it to somebody else!

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.

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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 [here](#)