

Exploring Winchelsea, Countryside and Coast

In the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

What is the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty?

Thank you for choosing to visit this corner of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Lying at the heart of the South East, and covering parts of Sussex, Surrey and Kent, the High Weald is one of England's finest landscapes, protected by government legislation since 1983 to ensure its conservation for present and future generations.

The High Weald is protected for its unique character of small irregular fields, abundant woods and hedges, scattered farmsteads and sunken lanes, draped over rolling hills.



What makes it special?

Its distinctive sandstone outcrops, rich iron deposits and streams that have carved deep ravines (called gills) through the underlying soft clays and sandstones.

The area has a distinctive pattern of scattered farmsteads arising from early settlement by independent farmers. Villages, located on the drier hilltops and originating through trade, punctuate the skyline. Links with the area's wooded past are evident in the number of weather-boarded and timber-framed buildings.

The distinctive network of radiating routes, created by drovers moving their pigs to and from the High Weald to feed on acorns and beech masts, are now preserved as footpaths, bridleways and roads. The latter are often narrow, deeply sunken and edged with ancient wooded banks and wildlife-rich verges.

Woodland in the AONB has a distinctive pattern of small woods, gills (wooded ravines) and shaws (copses). The High Weald boasts the greatest proportion of ancient woodland in the country, managed for centuries by skilled workers.

The area's fields and heath reveals irregular-shaped fields and common land, little changed since medieval times, with colourful patches of heather, gorse and flower-rich meadows buzzing with wildlife.



Exploring Winchelsea, Countryside and Coast

A guide to walking and cycling



Welcome to Winchelsea and the High Weald

We hope this booklet will inspire you to spend time exploring the ancient cinque port of Winchelsea and its countryside.

From the wonderful town architecture you see as you explore its unique grid system layout, to the open countryside and coast you can view from the many view points, there is a real sense that you are walking through a special area of the English countryside.

Exploring from the town you will experience a diverse landscape where you can still see evidence of Winchelsea's prosperous past, of defence against invaders and the elements and of traditional farming techniques. Today, Winchelsea is a wonderful hidden place to explore. So whether you are here to peer into the past, experience local colour and culture, indulge on local food and drink, or just to relax, you'll find Winchelsea the most idyllic place to be.

Caring for the area

This is a protected landscape celebrated for its landscape, wildlife, history and culture. You can help us to look after it by:

- Using public transport to reduce road traffic
- Being considerate to other road users, pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders, and obey speed limits when driving
- Recycling your rubbish or disposing of it in litter bins
- Taking care not to disturb wildlife or farm animals, and respect local residents
- Buying local produce from independent businesses which help the local economy and rural employment

Thank you for your co-operation.

This is your guide on how to get the most out of your visit.

This booklet contains seven walking and bike routes for you to explore. They are of differing lengths and will allow you to experience the diverse countryside around Winchelsea. There is a brief history of Winchelsea to help set the scene and inform you how history has moulded the landscape you see today. If you are planning a visit to the area then please refer to the 'planning a holiday section', which contains useful contact points to help make your stay easy. Elsewhere you will find interesting information about what makes the Winchelsea area special.



High Weald landscape

A brief history

Winchelsea has endured over 700 turbulent years of history.

'Old Winchelsea' was claimed by the sea after the savage storm of 1287 and the new town (present day Winchelsea) was built on Iham Hill under the royal patronage of Edward I. It was favoured as one of the cinque (pronounced 'sink') ports where the English fleet under the King's command would gather for royal duties or military action. With the mouth of the River Brede lapping at the foot of the hill, a harbour was built and Winchelsea grew swiftly on timber exports and wine imports in the 14th century, as well as on fishing, smuggling and piracy.

For a time the town thrived, but misfortune was soon to plague the residents again: in 1348 the Black Death arrived and many lives were lost. Less than a century after the harbour was built the tide turned once again, the sea began to retreat and the harbour and fortunes of the town fell into decline as merchants moved away. French and Spanish raids further depleted the populace despite the fortified gates and ramparts, and Winchelsea never fully recovered. Indeed the threat of invasion remained during the Napoleonic war, when the Royal Military Canal was built as a strategic defence for this vulnerable section of the south coast.

Since then the town has gradually retreated from the pace of the modern world. Today, echoes of its colourful history still resonant from the ancient buildings and stone town gates whilst traces of the ancient boundary ditches etched into the surrounding landscape hint at its former eminence. This guide unveils some of its secrets...



- **For more information on the fascinating history of this town, pick up a copy of the 'Winchelsea – Official Town Guide'.**



Winchelsea Town Seal

How to use this brochure

Planning a holiday

The countryside and attractions around Winchelsea offer much to see and do. The following sources of information will help you plan your break and get the most from your stay.

Where to stay

- For accommodation which has made a special effort to accommodate walkers and cyclists, view www.ruralways.com
- For other accommodation, view www.1066country.com or contact the Tourist Information Centre www.rye.org.uk or e-mail ryetic@rother.gov.uk or telephone 01797 226696

Travel information

- Winchelsea is accessible by regular trains from Rye and Hastings, please view www.traveline.org.uk or telephone 0870 6082608.
- Winchelsea Train Station is located just outside the town. Allow a fifteen minute walk from the station or ask your accommodation provider to provide a taxi.
- Situated on the Sustrans cycle network route 2. Winchelsea can be visited on cycles. See www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk for more information.

Eating out

- There are a good variety of places to eat and drink with many pubs, restaurants, cafes and teashops serving local dishes and produce fresh from the surrounding countryside. Please view www.1066country.com for listings.

Attractions

- There are many interesting attractions to suit all tastes. Please view www.1066country.com or www.rye.org.uk Attractions can also be found along the walks and bike rides described in this booklet.

Useful websites

To find out more about Winchelsea and its surroundings, view:

- Winchelsea: www.winchelseatown.co.uk
- Landscape and outdoor recreation: www.highweald.org
- Guided walks, rides and events: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/env/cms/pages/exploringes/main.htm
- Leisure Activities Around East Sussex: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/leisureandtourism
- Historic Properties: www.nationaltrust.org.uk



Winchelsea

Events throughout the year

Why not plan your stay around a traditional event? Winchelsea has a thriving community and throughout the year local groups and charities hold a series of interesting and fun events. Many give a special insight into hidden traditions, which have been carried out in the town for centuries. For an up to date listing of events visit www.winchelseatown.co.uk or check out the town information board next to the village shop. Below are just some of the events and traditions you could experience:

- Easter Monday Mayoring – There has been a Mayor of Winchelsea for over 700 years. Ceremony takes place annually on Easter Monday at the Upper Court Hall at 11 o'clock.
- Morris Dancing – Traditional Morris Dancers from Sussex come to Winchelsea each early May Bank Holiday Sunday to perform.
- Hastings Jack in the Green – May Day Bank Holiday weekend.
- Open Gardens Day – Beautiful secret gardens opened up to the public as part of the National Gardens Scheme – July.

- Winchelsea Cricket Club – Matches held on selected weekends throughout the summer. Founded 1795. Beautiful ground with marvellous views of the Brede Valley.
- Annual Garden Fete and Flower Show – All the ingredients of a traditional village fete.
- Friends of the Ancient Monuments – Fund raising events, lectures and tours of the ancient cellars throughout the year.
- Painting Exhibitions – Held throughout the year at the Lower Court Hall. Local art by local artists.



May Day, Hastings

Local produce

The High Weald and Rye Bay is famous for its local produce. Whether you are looking for a gift to take home or want to try a local speciality you will be spoilt for choice. The landscape around has been farmed for many centuries and provides some of the areas finest produce. The marshes are known for there Romney Marsh lamb whilst the coast is brimming with local seafood such as Rye Bay scallops, said to be the best in the world, whilst up in the High Weald there are many orchards producing traditional apple varieties ready to be tasted. If out walking why not visit a local pub and enjoy great home made food and local ale.

Below are some of the local shops/restaurants where you can purchase local produce:

- Windmill Orchard Farm Shop, Icklesham. 01797 227219
Local apples, juice, jams, honey.
- Suttons Fish Shop, Winchelsea Beach. 01797 226261
Local seafood and game.
- Wickham Organic Meats, Winchelsea. 01797 226261
Local organic meat
- Sedlescombe Organic Vineyard, Sedlescombe. 0800 980 2884
Locally produced organic wine
- The Tea Tree, Winchelsea. 01797 226102. www.the-tea-tree.co.uk
Speciality teas

- The Little Shop, Winchelsea
Homemade cakes
- The Place, Camber Sands. 01797 225057
www.theplacecambersands.co.uk
Restaurant. Local seafood and organic dishes
- J.Wicken’s Family Butchers, Winchelsea
Local meat produce

Farmers’ Markets are also held in the area selling a wide variety of local produce:

- Rye – Every Wednesday, 10am-1pm, Strand Quay. 01797 280226
- Hastings – 2nd Thursday of the month, 9am-1pm. 01424 457109
- Brede – Every Friday, 10am-12pm. 01424 882836



Lookers hut

Wildlife in the area

Winchelsea is on the edge of the High Weald AONB and looks out over the Rye Bay. Much of the landscape has been designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The area is a haven for wildlife and an ideal place to watch and learn about many rare and protected species. You may be lucky to see ‘booming’ Bitterns at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve or Water Voles on the Pett Levels swimming across the many drainage ditches. The river valleys are humming with dragonflies and damselflies and you can often see Kingfishers darting along just above the water. Along the coast, shingle ridges support plants such as the beautiful Yellow Horned-poppy and birds such as Tern, Plover and Oystercatcher which lay their eggs on the bare shingle. The sand dunes at Camber are also a haven for insects like the Brown Tailed Moth whose caterpillar lives on the bright orange berried sea buckthorn.



Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

Why not visit some of these wildlife sites:
Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Shingle ridges, gravel pits and salt marshes. There are birdhides and an Information Centre 01797 223862 www.naturereserve.ryeharbour.org.uk
Hastings Country Park Open grasslands, woods and cliffs. Visitors Centre 01424 781338 www.hastings.gov.uk
Camber Sands Dune system and sandy beach – 01797 226488 www.eastsussex.gov.uk
Guestling Wood 400 year old coppice wood owned by the Woodland Trust. Good spring flowers.
Pett Pools Sussex Wildlife Trust Reserve. Pools and reedbeds, excellent for bird watching.
Beckley Woods Mixed conifer and broad-leaved woodland, good for butterflies. Managed by Forest Enterprise.
Flatropers Woods Semi-natural ancient oak and sweet chestnut coppice woodland with many spring flowers. Managed by Sussex Wildlife Trust.

For up to date wildlife sightings in the Rye Bay area visit www.Rxwildlife.org.uk

Exploring the area

Venturing out into the countryside on foot or by bike is the best way to get the most out of your trip. This is simple to do with our selection of delightful walks and cycle rides featuring places of interest, breathtaking views, and where to stop for a well deserved bite to eat or drop to drink. Each route is accompanied by a ‘Fact Pack’ which summarises the essential information you need before you set out. The following general guidance may also help.

Maps

Ordnance Survey Explorer maps no 124 and 125 are recommended and provide further information on paths in the area.

Signage

Each path is waymarked at intervals. Coloured arrows indicate the status and direction of the path. This is summarised below:

Footpath
yellow arrow



Bridlepath
blue arrow



Byway
red arrow



Clothing

Walkers should be prepared by wearing stout footwear and warm, waterproof clothing. Please remember that paths can become muddy in wet weather. Cyclists should wear high visibility clothing for personal safety.

Walking

The Winchelsea area has several long-distance trails passing through the countryside. Several of the walks in this brochure pass along these trails, but if you are interested in taking time to explore further a field then why not visit the website below.

- 1066 Country Walk** 31 mile path from Rye to Pevensey, but can be walked in stages via links to Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne.
- The Royal Military Canal** 28 mile. Runs from Cliff End to Hythe in Kent
- Saxon Shore Way** 63 mile. Follows the Kent and Sussex coastline. It starts at Rye and terminates at Gravesend.
- The High Weald Landscape Trail** 90 mile walk from Rye to Horsham.
- Sussex Border Path** 150 mile. From Emsworth, Hampshire to Rye following along the east/west Sussex county border.

For further information, please view www.ruralways.org.uk/walking/maps.php or visit a local bookshop.

Cycling

National Cycle Network route 2 runs from Folkestone (with connections to route 1 to Dover) in the east to Hastings in the west, and continues as far as Cornwall in the south west. For more information about the National Cycle Route visit www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk

Visit www.eastsussex.gov.uk for further cycling routes in the county.

Cycle hire and repair

Rye Hire, 1 Cyprus Place, Rye, East Sussex, TN31 7DR.
Tel/Fax: 01797 223033 / 227826
Email: info@ryehire.co.uk

The routes

Choosing a walk

We have selected a variety of different length routes with different themes. Route variations and links are described in the Fact Pack accompanying each walk.
Time taken to complete will vary according to fitness and number of stops made.
Local buses and trains (see Fact Pack panel) can be used to shorten walks or access start points but please phone local transport providers before setting out as services may vary during the year (please see page 2 for contact details).

Take care!

Please take special care where sections of routes follow narrow country lanes, cross main roads or railway lines. Walkers should face on-coming traffic.



Walks

- | | | |
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Cycle rides

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Fairlight Country Park

Walk 1

Start & finish

Winchelsea Church.

Distance

3.5 miles/6km.

Terrain

Undulating with crossing of stiles, gates and footbridges. Not suitable for wheelchairs.

Services

Pubs, shop and tearoom in Winchelsea.

The Royal Military Canal

Follow the 1066 Country Walk out of the town and pass ancient monuments standing in the landscape. Imagine how it would have been during the town's prosperous past and see what affects the threat of war had on the landscape. Today, wildlife thrives in the tranquillity of this landscape with its Nature Reserve and Canal buzzing with life throughout the year.

New Gate

The remains of the gate you can see is called the 'New Gate' and marks the original southern boundary ditch of the town. The town however never grew as far as the gate due to a decline in population and the need to defend a smaller area from French invaders.

Wickham Manor

William Penn, who founded Pennsylvania in 1672, once lived in this 15th Century Farmhouse. The farm is now owned by the national Trust, who manage much of the land around the town.

Pannel Valley

The Pannel Valley Nature Reserve is a wonderful place to watch birds. Birdhides overlooking scrapes and reedbeds allow you to quietly enjoy the wildlife. The water levels are controlled to allow wading birds to feed and the shingle islands provide nesting sites for birds such as lapwings, which have a green sheen and spiky crest. Look out for Water Vole swimming across the drainage ditches and the many swans, which come to the area.

Royal Military Canal

The growing threat of Napoleon Bonaparte led to the building of a defensive barrier on the low lying land between Winchelsea and Hythe in 1804. Dug by hand, the 28 mile canal was completed in 1809. The excavated soil was piled up on the landward side to protect troops from enemy fire. At every 500 metres along the canal's length a kink was made, called an enfilade, to enable cannons to be fired down each stretch. The Canal was never called on for use in defence, but the guard houses did help control smuggling which was rife on the Romney Marsh at the time. The soldiers, however, were often corrupt and could easily be bribed by the smugglers with either money or contraband goods.

Directions

- 1 Walk south along Monks Walk to bend in the road.
- 2 Cross the stile over the stone wall and head down the field.
- 3 Cross the stiles and bear left onto the road just below the New Gate.
- 4 Turn right on the road and walk to the bend, take the path to the left across the field.
- 5 After crossing the canal, turn left and walk along the bank until reaching the road.
- 6 Turn left and return to Winchelsea via the Strand Gate.



New Gate



Pett Level



Walk 2

Start & finish

Mill Lane, Winchelsea
TQ 903175.

Distance

4 miles/6.5km.

Terrain

Undulating with some steep uphill sections. Numerous stiles means route is unsuitable for wheelchairs.

Services

Pubs, shop and tearoom in Winchelsea.
Pub at Cock Marling.

Valley and vistas walk

With fantastic views across the important wildlife haven of the Brede Valley you can really get an insight into why the River Brede was once a major waterway bringing goods to this once busy port. From down in the valley you cross the River Brede, teaming with wildlife, before climbing up the other side. There is a chance for a drink at the pub in Cock Marling before following the route round to link up with a section of the 1066 Country Walk and back into Winchelsea.

St Leonard’s Windmill

The remains of St Leonard’s Windmill, destroyed in the Great Storm in 1987, overlooks the Brede Valley. Near the site is the Millennium Beacon which is lit on special occasions. The windmill is the site

where Jon met Slinky Grandon in *The Gay Dolphin Adventure*, one of the adventures of the children’s author Malcolm Saville (1901-82). Saville used many real locations and is best known for *The Lone Pine Club* although he also wrote about the English countryside. Other nearby locations used in his books include the Mermaid Hotel in Rye, the inspiration behind *The Gay Dolphin Hotel*, and Camber Castle where the Warrenders first met the Mortons.

River Brede

The river was once a major navigation river used to carry goods, such as cannon balls and cannons, which had been made in one of the many furnaces located in the High Weald. Today the River is a popular location for fishing and a good

haven for wildlife. It is not just humans who fish there. Look out for King Fishers darting up and down the river or Herons standing motionless on the banks waiting for a passing meal.

1066 Country Walk

This long distance walk is 31 miles long and runs from Pevensey to Rye passing by Battle Abbey. The first part from Pevensey follows in the footsteps of William the Conqueror as he went inland to fight King Harold at Battle. This part of the route is also an ‘E’ Path (E9) which forms part of the international network of European footpaths which cross from Winchester to Dover and into Europe.

Directions

- 1 Follow the path from Mill Lane, to the right of the Beacon and down the hill.
- 2 At the stile follow the yellow waymarking disc away from the tree line to the ditch and gate. Cross the bridge and continue across the fields until joining the track alongside the River Brede.
- 3 Continue along the riverside until the railway crossing.
- 4 After the railway, cross the footbridge to continue the walk. Alternatively, turn left to pick up the link to Icklesham.
- 5 Turn left onto the road at Float Farm and after the second bend turn right onto the footpath up the sunken path.
- 6 Turn right at the main road and left past Cott Marling cottage.
- 7 Cross the surfaced driveway, then turn immediately right onto a parallel track.



- 8 At the main road cross onto the verge and walk until reaching Woodside Cottages. Turn right and follow the footpath through Workhouse Wood.
- 9 Continue along the path across the stiles at the field edge and down the large field in the direction indicated and cross the lane at the bottom and onto Winchelsea Station and the road.
- 10 Follow the road to the junction with the A259, then turn immediately right using the verge, and right again onto the signed footpath along the surfaced track by the Southern Water entrance.
- 11 After crossing the footbridge turn left and follow the field edge, crossing the stile, to climb the hill back to Winchelsea.



Cock Marling

Walk 3

Start & finish

Entrance track to Castle Farm, Winchelsea Beach TQ 917175.

Distance

4.5 miles/7km.

Terrain

Largely flat. Gates and footbridges, path surface is uneven in places.

Services

Pubs, toilets, shop and teashop in Winchelsea. Pub and shop in Winchelsea Beach. All services available in Rye.



Camber Castle

Frontline fortress walk

Discover a castle landlocked away from the coastline it once proudly defended. Its stout sandstone walls now house wildlife rather than soldiers looking out to sea for enemy invaders. Enjoy this open flat landscape as you follow an easy access trail suitable for prams and all-terrain mobility vehicles. Why not stop off at the nearby Rye Harbour Nature Reserve and learn about the many different birds which visit the area.

Marsh Frogs can be heard 'laughing' on summer evenings. This strange sound, made during the mating season, is now common along the ditches in the Rye Bay and Romney Marsh area. The frogs, originally from Hungry, escaped from a garden pond near by in 1935 and are now very much part of the sights and sounds of this landscape.

Bitterns Castle Water is one of a handful of UK sites providing a suitable habitat for bitterns. Bitterns are shy and rarely seen birds, which look like a small, brown heron. Up to seven bitterns spend the winter at Castle Water and efforts to create more reedbed aim to encourage them to stay over the summer to breed.

Rye Harbour Nature Reserve

Designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to its important wildlife habitat of shingle ridges, grazing and salt marsh, arable fields, and intertidal sand and mud the Nature Reserve is a popular place to visit. Over 350 flowering plants have been recorded and it is nationally important for insects.

Its bird life includes 50 breeding species such as Little Tern, Common Tern, Sandwich Tern, Oystercatcher,

Red Shank, Ringed Plover, Corn Bunting, Yellow Wagtail, Wheatear, and is important for migrant and over wintering birds. Why not stop off and visit the Reserve's Information Centre or visit its birdwatching hides.

Camber Castle was built in the reign of Henry VIII to protect Rye from the growing threat of French and Spanish invasion.

The castle was one of a chain of south coast defences protecting vulnerable areas. However, extensive shingle silting by the sea in front of the castle undermined the castle's strategic role, as cannon fire was soon no longer able to reach the sea. It was abandoned in 1637, and now lays a mile inland.

The castle is open on weekends in the summer telephone 01797 223862 for opening times.

Directions

- 1 At the sharp dog's leg bend in Sea Road, enter the track towards Castle Farm.
- 2 Where the track forks, pass through the gate on the left.
- 3 Continue through the gate on the left, along the river towards Rye.
- 4 Turn right at the path junction in front of the cottages, follow the shingle track to the Brede Sluice and onto the road to Rye Harbour.
- 5 Immediately after the bend, take the footpath on the right.
- 6 Follow the path along the track until reaching a large reedbed. Turn right, cross the footbridge and continue ignoring the path immediately on the left.
- 7 Keep the fence line on the left and reedbed on the right.



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- 8 Follow the path with the fence on the right and Castle Water on the left to the willow tree and onto Camber Castle.
- 9 Immediately before the Castle is a footpath spur along the fence line to a bird hide overlooking Castle Water.
- 10 To return to Rye cut back to the river. To continue the walk, follow the track to Castle Farm and retrace the route back to Winchelsea.

Suitable for wheel chairs from Rye. The Castle Farm track from Winchelsea is less even and an off-road buggy is the most suitable way for disabled people to experience this route.

Walk 4

Start & finish

Cliff End. TQ 887134 (bus no 344 stops outside 'The Smuggler' pub)

Distance

8 miles/13km

Terrain

Undulating with some steep sections, and crossing of stiles, gates and footbridges. Not suitable for wheelchairs

Services

Toilets and pubs at Cliff End, Fairlight and Pett villages.



Fairlight Cove

Walk with dinosaurs

Walk along the only section of coastline contained in the High Weald AONB and enjoy good views out to sea and along the coast. Take time to walk along the beach looking for signs of life from times gone by or enjoy a drink or two in the local pubs. With an easy access trail and visitor centre at Fairlight Country Park this walk will have something for everyone.

Dinosaur footprints (at Cliff End/Fairlight Cove). The three-toed footprints of an Iguanodon can be found in the bedrock along the beach, together with grooves which may be tail marks. Fossils from Megalosaurus and Cetiosaurus have also been found. The rocks of Fairlight Cove also contain insect, reptile and plant fossils and teeth of

early mammals. **Take care! Do not walk too close to the cliffs or visit on a rising tide.**

Fairlight Country Park extends over 640 acres, most of which is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) comprising two ancient woodlands, heathland, grassland and rocky coastline. There are stunning views across the Channel and Rye Bay. Bottlenose dolphin and harbour porpoise can be seen offshore from the top of the cliffs.

During the Second World War

Fairlight was on the front line of the UK's early warning system. A radar station was built in 1940 to give advance notice of enemy attacks and housed special equipment for tracking radio signals. It was surrounded by anti-aircraft guns to shoot down flying bombs before they

reached London. In the early 1960s it was closed and sealed.

Wildlife lookout The park is an excellent location for spotting wildlife. The woodlands contain rare dormice and scarce liverworts, mosses and lichens. The heath and acid grassland are excellent habitats for Dartford Warblers, Stonechats and Yellowhammers, and rare insects such as Beewolf, a bee-hunting wasp and an ant-eating spider *Micaria romana*, which occurs in only four other coastal areas in Britain.

Church of St Mary and St Peter

Records of a church in Pett date from the 13th century. The present church was built in 1864 in the 'Early English Decorated' style. The walls are faced with bluestone quarried from the Marsham slopes of the Pett ridge.

Directions

- 1 Pick up the footpath set back and to the right at the drive opposite the mouth of Pett Road.
- 2 Follow path around field edge and turn left at wooded west corner of field onto gravel lane T junction. Follow lane west towards heart of Fairlight Cove.
- 3 Turn right at 'Lower Waites Lane' sign into Broad Way.
- 4 Go straight on into Knowle Road, and follow to end into Knowle Wood. Cross footbridge and follow MHT disc.
- 5 Emerge from wood onto gravel road (Warren Road). From here you can go into Fairlight, turning left, or continue with the walk, by turning right.
- 6 Turn left at end of Warren Road, onto main road. Take footpath 40m on right and follow across fields in north easterly direction to Stonelink Wood.



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- 7 After passing through the wood, turn left and follow field edge until reach road.
- 8 Turn right and then left, immediately after the thatched white cottage, onto footpath and continue to follow the waymarks across the fields.
- 9 At dirt track take left hand fork of path towards Pett church
- 10 Take the footpath on the right approximately 200m beyond the entrance to Gatehurst Farm.
- 11 Cross the footbridge and proceed to Old Marsham Farm. Pass through the two gates at the bottom of the garden and cut east across the field to the start point.

Walk 5

Start & finish

Doleham Station.
TQ 835165.

Distance

6.2 miles/10 kms.

Terrain

Undulating with some steep sections, and crossing of stiles, gates and footbridges. Not suitable for wheelchairs.

Services

Brede village. Pub and shop. Three Oaks, pub.



View from Doleham

An ogre's trail

Watch out there's an ogre about! Better check under that bridge! Taking the train to Doleham you will discover a landscape buzzing with wildlife and industrial heritage. During the summer months look out for damselflies skimming along Doleham Ditch, whilst in the winter enjoy the many birds, which visit wet scrapes in the valley.

Brede Waterworks was built in 1903 to supply water to Hastings and St Leonards from deep wells in the Brede valley. It was restored in 2004 and is housed in a Grade II listed building. The triple expansion steam engine is amongst a handful of surviving engines and was used to pump up to 4.5 million litres every day. It was powered by coal

brought up the river to a wharf just above Brede Bridge, until 1928, when the coal came by rail from Doleham Halt. The other steam engine is a little more modern, installed in 1940, and is capable of pumping 150,000 gallons of water per hour into reservoirs at Fairlight and Baldslow near Hastings. The engines are open to the public on the first Saturday in the month.

Brede village was famous for its iron works, as suggested in place names such as Forge Stream. Iron ore was imported at Rye and made into shot and cannon until the 1770 when the furnace was converted for the manufacture of gunpowder. This ended in 1808 when a large explosion completely destroyed the gunpowder mill and killed one William Sinden, who is said to have been blown into five parts.

The Sussex Ogre Brede was once home to the most famous of the Sussex Ogres who roamed the Sussex countryside every night in search of a child for his supper. Finally, the children of Sussex devised a plan of revenge. One evening they persuaded the giant to drink his fill of local ale then waited until he was asleep. As the ogre could only be harmed by a wooden weapon, they sawed him in half using a wooden saw. The site of this retribution was said to be between Brede Place and the Church in the area now known as Groaning Bridge. This Ogre is thought to refer to Sir Goddard Oxenbridge who died on the 9th March 1487 and is interred in Brede Church with his wife Ann. The ghost of Sir Goddard is said to still walk here and can be heard moaning on still evenings.

Directions

- 1 From the station, turn left onto the road.
- 2 At the bend take the footpath (with '1066 Country Walk' disc) on your right. Follow the track around a pond and across the field to the railway crossing.
- 3 Take care crossing the railway, continue over the footbridge, then straight ahead to the clump of trees and on towards Pattleton's Farm.
- 4 After crossing the stile on the field boundary, follow the path ahead to reach the driveway. Turn right and follow to Doleham Lane, then the main road.
- 5 Enter the drive for Crowham Manor on the left, then take the signposted footpath on your left, down the two fields to a footbridge.
- 6 Continue up the next field, and over the stile left of the white house. Bear left, in front of another house to



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reach the drive and then Cottage Lane, turning sharp right.

- 7 Just before the road bridge, cross the stile on your right and follow the path. Continue for half a mile (passing by the first footbridge).
- 8 After the second footbridge near the Waterworks, cross the field diagonally, as signposted, and onto the road.
- 9 At the main road, turn right and head downhill using the footway and road verge.
- 10 Directly after crossing the bridge, turn left onto the path.
- 11 Turn right at the confluence of the river with Doleham Ditch and continue along the bank until crossing the footbridge on your left.
- 12 Turn right at the barn onto North Lane and follow to the next junction. Turn right and continue down the hill to the Station.

Cycle route 1

Start & finish

Winchelsea Church.
TQ 905174.

Distance

5 miles/8 kms.

Terrain

Level off-road route:
mountain bikes
essential.

Services

Pubs, toilets, shop and
teashop in Winchelsea.
All services available in
Rye. Bike stands at Rye
Station and TIC.

Port to port circular

Riding down out of Winchelsea you will follow the old cliff line to the ancient port of Rye. With its church tower standing proudly on the skyline, Rye is a wonderful town to ride around or if you park up you can enjoy the museums and shops tucked away on hidden lanes. Once away from the ancient townscape you will experience the fresh openness of the marshes as you enjoy riding 'off-road' along a brideway running next to the Royal Military Canal.

Cadborough Cliff This section of the ride follows the Sustrans National Cycle Network no.2 and is a purpose-made track with easy access gates. The route is also part of the 1066 Country Walk from Rye to Pevensey. With the flat floodplain of the River Brede to your right you will notice the preserved cliff line to

your left which forms the landward boundary of the Romney Marsh. Once the sea would have lapped against the base of this cliff line, which is now landlocked like Camber Castle which can be seen in the distance across the marsh.

Rye stands on a hill at the estuary of the River Rother, but was once a fishing village almost surrounded by the sea. It had been under the ownership of the Abbey of Fecamp of Normandy since 1027, until claimed by Henry III in 1247. Like the other south coast ports, Rye endured numerous attacks from French and Spanish raiders and was fortified with a stone wall, parts of which remain, together with the Landgate and Ypres Tower. Residents and visitors to Rye include Conrad Aiken, Joseph Conrad, H.G.

Wells, and G.K. Chesterton, Radcliffe Hall and Rumer Godden. Lamb House was lived in by both Henry James and E.F. Benson. In 1891 Edward Burne-Jones dedicated a stained glass window to St. Mary's Church.

Decoy site As you cycle along the track you will notice two strange concrete huts. These huts are called Stanton Sectional Shelters and are rare examples of decoy huts used to fool German bombers. The area you are standing in used to contain several of these huts which were used, along with lighting, to give the impression to bomber pilots that they were over an important industrial site. They would then bomb this area resulting in them missing their real targets further along the coast.

Directions

- 1 Turn left on to the A259.
- 2 On the bend, turn right onto Station Road
- 3 Pass through the gate onto the brideway to Rye.
- 4 Keep right: do not follow the farm track uphill.
- 5 Continue the route by turning right and rejoining the main road, or stop in Rye.
- 6 After crossing the river, turn right onto the brideway.
- 7 Turn right onto Sea Road, and return to Winchelsea.



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Cycle route 2

Start & finish

Winchelsea Church.
TQ 905174.

Distance

12 miles/19 kms.

Terrain

Undulating route. On road route.

Services

Pubs, toilets, shop and
teashop in Winchelsea.
Pubs and shops in Pett,
Cliff End and
Winchelsea Beach.

Bike to the beach

A circular route which will take you up into the High Weald and provide excellent views across the Rye Bay. You will pass through the village of Pett with its pubs and down to Cliff End. If you fancy a rest, the shingle beach is an excellent place to sit or go rock pooling. If you are interested in bird watching then stop off at Pett Pools to see what migrant birds are visiting, before heading back to Winchelsea.

Hog Hill Windmill This black, tarred post mill was moved to Hogg Hill from Pett in 1813. An unusual feature is that its winding fan is mounted above the roof and not on the side. It is a private residence, not open to the public, but it is well worth walking up to it and enjoying fantastic views across the Rye Bay towards France.

Petrified Past (at the foreshore of Pett Level). This area is of great geological and biological importance. The remains of a submerged forest can be seen sticking out of the mud at low tide. These are the only recorded examples in British Wealden strata of this age probably belonging to the now extinct family of tree ferns, the Tempskyaceae. The forest is 5,000 years old and became submerged with the isostatic subsiding of south east Britain at the rate of 1.2mm a year.

Pett Pools This Sussex Wildlife Trust Reserve attracts numerous migrant waders during late summer and autumn. The four shallow lagoons were excavated in 1946 to provide clay when the present sea wall was constructed. There is now access to the Reserve, excellent views from the laybys.

Directions

- 1 Turn left and cycle along until you meet a sharp right-hand bend just outside the town.
- 2 Do not follow the bend round but carry straight on down Wickham Lane, passing through the New Gate
- 3 Continue ahead, at the junction carry on ahead towards Pett along Pannel Lane.
- 4 At Pett turn right along the main street until you turn left down Rosemary Lane.
- 5 Follow down the lane down to Cliff End passing the 'Smugglers Pub on your right.
- 6 Continue along the straight Sea Road with the sea Wall on your Right to Winchelsea Beach.
- 7 Follow the road through the village, with its sharp left turn bend until you reach the junction with the A259
- 8 Turn left and then left again up the hill, passing through the old gate, back to Winchelsea.



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