



**ramblers**

at the heart of walking

**Now Open**

**June / July 2017**

**From the Sussex Area of the Ramblers**

## **The importance of walking to the economy**

Wealden's biggest attractions are its countryside, heritage and scenery – that is the conclusion from visitor research carried out for Wealden Council



Tourism brings in some £250 million a year to Wealden and provides jobs for 7,000 local people.

When visitors were asked what they liked about the District, they said it was the ability to walk and take the landscape around them.

Some 75% of the visitors came on day trips, and most came from within 90 minutes driving distance:

To encourage them, they need to know more about other activities and attractions that were available in the area, a spokesman said. People mainly learnt of the attractions of visiting Wealden via word of mouth from friends and family, but social media was becoming increasingly influential in attracting visitors.

Tourism's contribution to the East Sussex economy has increased by 38% over the last 10 years and was worth over £1.4 billion in 2015. It employs 30,500 people across the county. Staying in villages and countryside accounted for 21% of the overnight stays in East Sussex.

So we have to ask, given its importance of walking to the local economy, why is more money not put into maintaining, signing and publicising the rights of way that will enable people to walk and take in the landscape around them.

# Now Open

Our report on improvements to the footpath network this month comes from East Sussex Council, who provided the words and pictures below.

## **Access Improvements:**

Selmeston Footpath 7d (S2233) – Stile replaced TQ 513/069

Following officer contact a stile has been replaced on Selmeston Footpath 7d.  
Before and after photos:



Beckley Footpath 21d - Stile (S5688) replaced) TQ 835/214

Following officer contact a stile has been replaced on Beckley Footpath 21d.  
Before and after photos:



Brede Footpath 5b – Gates installed TQ 835/210

Through negotiations with the landowner a footpath which had previously been obstructed is now open. Work was carried out by the ESCC maintenance team and involved the dismantling of approximately 250m of softwood post and rail fencing, use of tractor and flail to cut bramble which has grown up along the top of the riverbank and chainsaw clearance of fallen trees along the line of the footpath. Five metal pedestrian gates have also been installed and waymarking improved along the route.

Before and after photos of new gate (G6979):



Before and after photos of new gate (G6980):

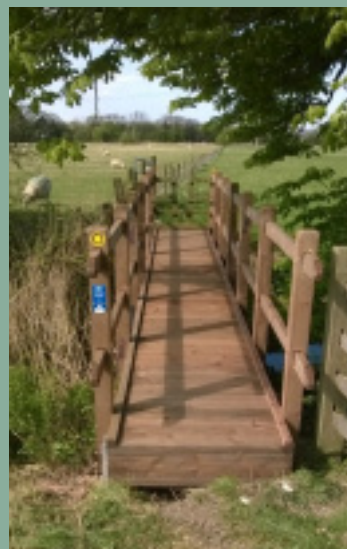


### **Bridge work**

East Guldeford Footpath 3a (B1560) Bridge Repaired TQ 936/215

An 8 metre bridge has recently been replaced on East Guldeford Footpath 3a by ESCC's Maintenance Rangers.

Photos:





### Frant FP 5 (B0020) Bridge Repaired TQ 571/361

A 6 metre bridge has recently been replaced on Frant FP 5 by ESCC's Maintenance Rangers.  
Photos:



### Pett FP 8b (B1875) Bridge Repaired TQ 896/156

The Maintenance Rangers have recently replaced a 13m bridge over the Royal Military Canal on Pett Footpath 8b which forms part of the popular Saxon Shore Way and Royal Military Canal Path. The bridge was closed earlier this year, as a beam was found to be rotten. The old bridge had been in place for around 20 years, but we were able to re-use the existing metal work. The replacement required three 13m wooden beams, which, unusually, we had to order from Derbyshire - due to there not being any local timber that was large enough.



## Retiring Footpath Officer Receives Award

At a recent meeting of Area Council Graham Elvey was presented with his Ramblers award for his "outstanding contribution to walking".

In addition to effectively managing, for seven years, the role of WestSussex Area Footpath Officer with a team of 60 plus Local Footpath Secretaries, he took on the task of re-launching the 150 mile

long Sussex Border Path (SBP).

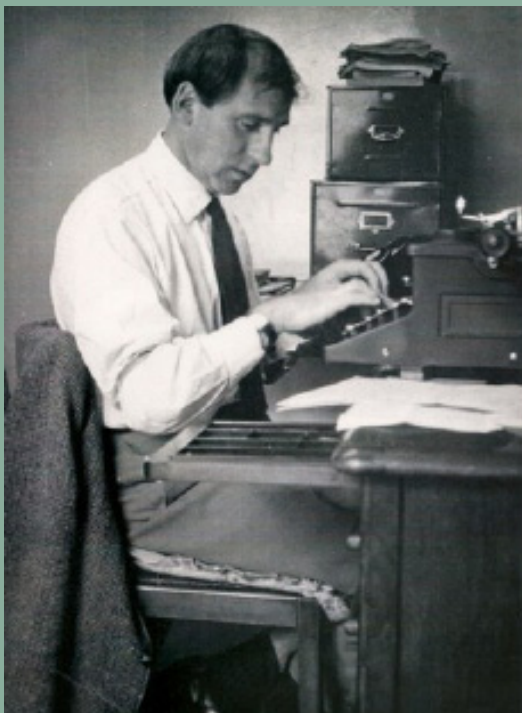
This was successfully achieved in September 2016 at a special re-launch event attended by the originators of the path, Ben Perkins and Aeneas Mackintosh, together with Kate Ashbrook.

A big thank you to Graham from both Sussex Ramblers and all walkers in the two counties.



## Alan Larcombe

This article celebrates the life of Alan Larcombe, who died earlier this year aged 91. He had led a very full life, which included being presumed dead in the 39-45 war, a life in journalism and moves around Sussex. You can find a newspaper obituary [here](#) but although this mentions his love of walking, it does not explain his involvement with the Ramblers.



Alan was Seaford local footpath secretary for about about 12 years plus some others that he gave up when his second wife Tricia became ill.

He was involved with the campaign against the Glyndebourne windmill amongst other things, and his knowledge of the local press was invaluable to the Ramblers.

It is often said that you meet the most interesting people when you join the Ramblers and your editor is sad not to have met him.

## High Weald AONB Walking Festival - Dream or Reality?

There is a feeling we need to highlight the High Weald AONB in our Area, especially as the South Downs is now protected as a National Park.

A walking festival would be a great opportunity to showcase via walks the diversity and beauty of this AONB.

A number of groups and the High Weald Unit at Flimwell are supportive of this but a leader is needed to pull it all together.

Are you that leader? If so please get in contact with Clive Grumett Vice-Chair of Sussex Area [chairman@sussexramblers.org.uk](mailto:chairman@sussexramblers.org.uk) and we'll take it from there.

## Walking And Ecstasy

When your editor's namesake and former MP Chris Smith got up to address the national conference of the Ramblers some years ago he suggested that walking was ecstasy. Otherwise, he said, why do it? This raised some comment amongst the members.

In the olden days they were not so reticent. Here is GHB Ward, founder of the Sheffield Clarion Ramblers and one of the key people involved in the founding of the Ramblers Association in the 1930s

"Is the world getting hold of you? Is your life becoming a round of drudgery and a mere figure? Are you becoming a machine? - something with movement but without mind? Do troubles and sorrows and worries press on you unduly? Then go and find these woods and vales and moors and get your Heart's-ease there. This cankering world will never consume your soul if you can only find and realise what beauties there are to be seen, what new life-wine can be drunk, what unsullied happiness awaits you, outside this grimy city."

The grimy city was Sheffield, but after cycling through the heavily polluted Steine in Brighton the day after an idyllic walk between Balcombe and Ardingly, his words seemed quite appropriate for today.

The words are taken from a new book " Clarion Call, Sheffield's Access Pioneers by Dave Sissons, Terry Howard and Roly Smith. Price £7.99



# Car Vandalism At Downland Car Parks

It could be argued that placing car parks right in the middle of the downs is vandalism in itself, but a more conventional type of vandalism has been highlighted in the recent edition of "Walk", the magazine of the national Ramblers Association. There have been outbreaks of vandalism in rural car parks at Cocking in West Sussex and in the Meon Valley.

It is worth saying that you run no such risk if you follow the walks on the sustainable web site "[Travellog Lewes](#)", all of which are capable of being followed without a car, even, in most cases, on Sundays.

## TAX PLANNING IN FIRLE

The Firle Estate is situated in East Sussex to the east of Lewes in the South Downs. It includes Firle Place, the seat of the Gage family for many generations. One Lord Gage commanded the British forces in the American War of Independence. Apart from buildings, the estate includes gardens at Firle Place and also Parkland, outside of the gardens but near to Firle Place. The remainder of the estate consists of lowland fields, mainly south of the A27 (many of them cropped) and the high downs, including Firle Beacon – the subject of one of the wartime series of posters entitled "It's Your Country- Fight for it Now". There are a number of small woods on the estate.



CHARLESTON FARMHOUSE FROM THE DOWNS,  
PERMISSIVE PATH IN THE FOREGROUND

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Governments have adopted a scheme to exempt property from inheritance tax in return for undertakings about public access and the adoption of measures designed to conserve the property. This can apply to land, buildings and works of art. The Firle estate opens Firle Place, a stately home, on a number of days per week in return for one exemption, but the estate has managed to get out of paying inheritance tax on the whole of the rest of the estate in return for what appears to be the granting of two new paths. The exemption is worth many millions.

The exemption from inheritance tax covers the bulk of the estate which would otherwise be the subject of tax (agricultural land is not taxable). The villages of West Firle and Alciston, together with the road up to Bo-peep, Charleston House and another small area are excluded. The exemption covers a large amount of valuable land and also a number of valuable buildings to which there is no access.

There are a number of rights of way through the estate. There is also statutory access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way act. With the exception of the two paths described below the Firle estate has not granted any free access in return for its inheritance tax exemption. There is no access to any of the woodlands on the estate except in the odd case where a right of way passes through, even though these woodlands are described in the third section as unsuited to commercial production but having a high amenity value.

The undertakings given to obtain tax exemption are in three sections. The first section was made in 1984 and covers Firle Place and its gardens and parkland. The second section was made in 2005 and covers the lowland area around Charleston, and Alciston (the north east of the area of exemption) It includes Tilton House (although not, apparently, the whole of Tilton Farm. Charleston House is not now owned by the estate but the estate owns some ancilliary buildings there.) It is this section which requires the creation of two paths - South from Charleston Farmhouse to meet the old coach road and South from the car park at the Barley Mow Inn at Selmeston, to join the lane about 375metres to the south. The third section consists of the downland area of the estate and also the part of the estate running towards the A27 at Middle Farm.

Agricultural land in the area sells for around £7-10 thousand pounds per acre, a 3 bedroomed former farmworker's cottage on the estate might be worth in the region of £3/400,000. The value of Tilton House must run to millions.

In 2014 inheritance tax was 40% percent of any inheritance over £325,000. Agricultural land and buildings may be eligible for relief from inheritance tax even if not exempted under this scheme. This relief may be up to 100%. However woodland is not considered to be agricultural land unless managed for timber.

You can find out who benefits from Inheritance tax exemption at <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/heritage/lbsearch.htm> You may care to explore what is going on in your area.

For details of a walk inspecting the Firle paths see [here](#)



## Readers write

Chris Duff comments:

"The item on cycling on footpaths caught my attention. There are many footpaths where cycling is certainly not desirable. In our area of West Sussex there are narrow footpaths across wheat and barley fields, for example, and we know that cyclists tend to wander more than walkers. Farmers will not be happy having their crops damaged by wandering cyclists. Also, there are leisure cyclists and off-road cyclists. The latter group can cause almost as much damage as off-road motorcyclists. A ticklish problem to sort out".

Peter Lovett says:

"Thanks for your newsletter, which was most interesting this month especially Knepp Castle. Sussex wildlife is marvellous now and from a walk this week - Fairmile Bottom and around Rewell Wood some pic's are at [www.sussex Rambler.blogspot.com](http://www.sussex Rambler.blogspot.com). Enjoy!"



# About this newsletter.

This year we hope to put the newsletter out monthly on the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month or thereabouts. Please send in your contributions. As you can see we particularly need stuff from west Sussex. Anything of interest to walkers in Sussex is of interest. Please keep it short if you can. Send your contributions to [comms@sussexramblers.org.uk](mailto:comms@sussexramblers.org.uk)

## **Our web site**

Have a look at our new web site at <http://www.sussexramblers.org.uk/>

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