Welcome

We hope this leaflet will inspire you to spend a spare hour or two exploring the beautiful countryside on your doorstep. Whether you are someone who has always lived in the area or a visitor staying only a couple of days, we hope these short circular walks will appeal to you. The diverse landscapes and associated wildlife can be appreciated at all times of the year, so every season has something new to offer. We hope you find the maps and paths easy to follow and an enjoyable way to explore the countryside around Rye.

Walking the routes

Although these walks are short and relatively easy, they will be more challenging after heavy rain, and however hard we try they will always be hilly. Wear comfortable, sturdy footwear and don’t rush. Find your way along the paths or across the fields on the maps indicated the recommended direction of travel, and all instructions are given assuming this is the direction being followed.

Follow the County Code and you can have a safe and pleasant walk without impacting on the landscape you have come to enjoy.

We recommend that this leaflet is used in conjunction with the following Distance Survey maps:

1-25 000 Explorer maps:
124 Hastings and Bexhill
125 Romney Marsh
136 The Weald

The County Code

Please enjoy your countryside walk and respect it for yourself and others.

- Enjoy the countryside and respect its life and work
- Guard against all risk of fire
- If you open any gates please close them behind you
- Keep your dogs under control
- Keep to rights of way across farmland
- Use gates and stiles to cross fences, hedges and walls
- Leave livestock, crops and machinery alone
- Take your litter home
- Help to keep all water clean
- Protect wildlife, plants and trees
- Take special care on country roads
- Make no unnecessary noise

Localities

Where possible local pubs and shops have been highlighted on the maps. Why not time your walk to have a quick drink beforehand or a meal out afterwards? If you are coming to a village specifically try one of these walks, consider catching the bus. For further information on local services in this area, contact Tourism on (070) 608 2 608.

The Public Rights of Way

Footpaths (often waymarked in yellow) can be used by walkers, cyclists and motor vehicles
Bridleways (often waymarked in blue) can be used by walkers, horseriders and cyclists
Byways (often waymarked in red) can be used by walkers, horseriders, cyclists and motor vehicles

Public Rights of Way

If you have any queries or complaints about public rights of way in the area please contact the Rural Services on 01273 482354.

Other walking information

You can purchase a Rye Bay Country walk pack, which has a selection of local leaflets to help you further explore other walks, wildlife and landscapes of Rye and the surrounding countryside. Included is information on the 1066 Country Walk, Maritime Heritage Trails, Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, and guided walks and events. Send a cheque made payable to East Sussex County Council for £1.50 to the address below.

Rye Bay Countrywalk Office
11b High Street
Rye, East Sussex TN31 7JL

If you require any other information about walking in this area please do not hesitate to contact us.

Planning your visit

Rye Tourist Information Centre can provide you with a variety of information about the local area including accommodation, attractions and places to eat and drink.

A useful publication is the Rye Guide, produced by the Rye and District Hotel and Caterers Association. This has a comprehensive list of accommodation available in the town, villages and surrounding countryside for your free copy or any other information please contact:

Rye Tourist Information Centre
The Heritage Centre
Strand Quay
Rye, East Sussex TN31 7JY
Tel: 01273 482354
email: ryetic@rother.gov.uk
or visit www.rye.org

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Bixley and Flatropers Woods

This walk passes through a beautiful woodland complex with open glades dominated by heathland plants. As you follow the route you will pass through areas managed in different ways for timber.

Flatropers Wood is a nature reserve owned by the Sussex Wildlife Trust and is home to a diverse range of plants and animals. The reserve is semi-natural woodland, some areas are coppiced on rotation to open up glades. You may see signs of Wild Boar - keep a look out for their hoof prints in the mud. Huge piles of pine needles can be seen from the pathway. These are the nests of Wood Ants and are often drinking with activity.

In autumn the wood boast an amazing array of large fungi, including the Fly Agaric. You are welcome to explore the reserve using the network of paths, but please allow more time for this.

Flatropers Woods is a commercial wood managed by Forestry Enterprise. Here you will walk through a plantation of mature Oak trees before passing through clearings and a coniferous Wood. The rides and glades are full of heathland plants including heather, Tormentil and Broom.

Northiam

Northiam is a pretty East Sussex village with weatherboarded houses. It is situated on the old coach road to Rye, so many travellers have stopped here on route, including Queen Elizabeth I.

Descending through gently rolling farmland, passing through little woods and planting streams, this walk takes you through the typical patchwork countryside of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. As the route joins the Sussex Border Path, you may see dragonflies darting near the water or hear grasshoppers chirping in long grass. The hedgerows are full of a variety of plants including Hawthorn and Blackthorn, providing flowers and nectar for insects in spring and berries for birds in autumn.

The walk then rises up Queen's Way - a path dedicated to the memory of Queen Elizabeth, brother of Christopher and former Parish Councillor. The route passes close by the famous Great Dixter House and Gardens before heading through some of the village.

Great Dixter House and Gardens

The house, partly dating from the 15th century, is surrounded by Christopher Lloyd’s beautiful ever-changing gardens. The house and gardens are open to the public from April to October. Admission fees apply. For further information call 01797 252878.

Northiam

Northiam

Winchelsea

Guestling Wood

Guestling Wood is an ancient woodland of mainly Sweet Chestnut coppice intergrown with some large Oak trees. Part of the wood is managed by the Woodland Trust and the walk passes coppiced clearings, where timber has been cut for fencing.

The wood is a beautiful place to walk through at any time of year. In spring woodland flowers such as Bluebells and Wood Anemones are present in abundance. In summer the newly coppiced areas are full of Foxgloves and asters is the time for bird walks among falling leaves.

In the winter months the wood becomes a haven for birds such as woodpeckers and tits that search for food through the trees.

Camber Castle

A walk through part of Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, protected for its abundant and special wildlife. You will see sheep grazed pasture, intersected with ditches, ponds and gravel pits full of wetland wildlife.

This low-lying flat land was formed behind shingle ridges deposited by the sea. Henry VIII constructed Camber Castle on the edge of the coast to protect Rye from invasion. A garrison of up to 42 men was stationed here but the Castle became redundant as the sea moved. The first section of the walk follows the Royal Military Canal path. The Canal arcs between Chill End and Hythe and was built, in the 19th century, to protect the coast against Napoleon.

Castles Walker is a flooded gravel pit, formed by shingle extraction. It is now a haven for a large variety of birds including gulls, herons, ducks and geese, which feed on the remaining gravel pits and shingle. Only a short distance from the route is a broadwater hide, where you can shelter and watch the birds.

The final section of the walk follows the route of an old railway line, which used to transport extracted shingle from Rye Harbour.

Camber Castle is open to the public on Saturday and Sunday afternoons between 2pm and 5pm in July, August and September. It can also be entered on guided walks at other times of the year. For more details phone 01797 223862.