

Wealden and Eastbourne Walking Festival 2016



Hurry, there are still some places left on walks in the Wealden and Eastbourne Walking Festival which starts on Saturday 24th September and ends on Sunday 2nd October.

There are all types of walks from short 1-2 mile walks up to 12 miles routes. Options include walks for health at any easy pace, walks round historic places, wildlife walks and Nordic walking taster sessions. You can go round historic sights such as Old Eastbourne and Pevensey or walk through the stunning countryside of the High Weald, South Downs National Park or the coastal cliffs. There is even a trail running session.

With so much on offer, it would be a shame to miss out. Go to the [Sussex Walking Festival](#) website for details

Pokemon Go and the future of footpath walking

The new mobile phone game, Pokemon Go, gives us an insight into future options for walking, running or riding on footpaths, as well as for route finding. I am not suggesting that we will all be playing games on our phones as we walk,

but the type of interactions that are possible with Pokemon Go give an idea of how augmented reality (AR) can enhance the way we enjoy walks and enrich our experience.

Many of you may not know much about Pokemon Go so let me give a very brief description. It is an app that you run on your mobile phone which has a database of locations in which to find imaginary Pokemon creatures. As you approach a place shown in the database, your mobile phone starts to give you clues (e.g. a sound of rustling grass) to let you know you are near a Pokemon. When you find the right spot, the figure of the Pokemon appears on your phone screen and you can swipe the screen in certain ways to "capture" it. Players can collect sets of Pokemon and train them to compete against other people's Pokemon.

The game has caught on like wildfire for a combination of reasons: there are a whole generation of young adults who grew up playing Pokemon on games consoles and they are nostalgic for the games and the characters; it is also a competitive activity and you can compare your success against your friends or others you meet; and thirdly, it is social – lots of Pokemon are "located" at points of interest (e.g. Mayfield War Memorial) so people meet while searching for them or while competing against others at places called Pokemon "gyms". Who knows how long the craze will last? But for the moment it has many people getting out in the fresh air rather than sitting inside in front of their screens.

The idea of Pokemon Go may not interest many people, and may actively turn off even more; however the concept of something popping up on your mobile screen at specific locations while you are out on a route has many other interesting applications.

Firstly, it could be used to provide information on points or objects of interest. For example, there is the site of a medieval hunting lodge in Hawksden Park Wood, 2 miles from

Mayfield. With no remains visible, it is hard to imagine what it would have looked like. But an app on your mobile phone could superimpose a picture of its likely look and structure on the screen when you point the phone at the site. An even more ambitious project would allow you to see today's peaceful woods in the area as the bustling industrial sites they would have been during the age when Wealden was the centre of the English iron industry.

Displays on your mobile need not be limited to historical details. They could show flowers in detail or how they change during the seasons; or take birdsongs and show pictures of the birds themselves.

For those who need encouragement to get out and discover the delights of the countryside (maybe some children), then games could be the way forward, with items to find along a route or games to play at various points – for example, pointing the phone at a tree and having to select what type of tree it is from a list.

For orienteers, the phone could show when you have reached checkpoints, so that checkpoints no longer need to be real. Similarly for “hare and hounds” races, the markers could be shown on screen.

These are just a few ideas. No doubt there are many more that can, and will, be thought of.

For those of us who appreciate the wonder of the countryside through which we can walk, jog, run, cycle, or ride, the important thing will be to develop and use those apps which increase our knowledge, appreciation and care for the areas where we go, rather than just taking us into virtual worlds that just happen to be outside.

Vanguard way closure – live map updates



Today I went on a run with some friends from [Crowborough Runners](#).

It was a glorious day and we enjoyed running in the sunshine, chatting as we went and stopping to enjoy the views from time to time. Our route was a loop: from the Crow & Gate on the A27 just south of Crowborough to High Hurstwood and back.

There were lots of lovely paths and some quiet roads.

But we found one major problem. We went on a [part of the Vanguard Way that is closed for repairs](#). At first we just thought the path was overgrown and then we came to a bridge that had been blocked off with a footpath the other side that had partially fallen away. It was a scramble through brambles and nettles and over a stream to get round.

The moral of our adventure is that we should have checked on the [East Sussex website listing footpath closures](#).

It also has reinforced my view of the great value of route maps showing up to date information when you are choosing where to walk/run/ride.

That is what Routopedia is aiming to provide.

If such a map already exists, please let me know below. Or

please leave any other comments about route closures and updates.

Fighting through a hedgerow near Wellbrook



You can just about see the stile behind the hedge in the picture. It was a real fight to get through the hedge and into the field beyond last Sunday (17th April 2016). But I rarely let anything stop me, so I tried to pin back the

brambles and pushed my way through, collecting some impressive scratches on the way.

I have reported the problem to East Sussex County Council so hopefully it will be fixed relatively soon (you can report any footpath problem, as well as other issues with roads etc. on the [fixmystreet](http://fixmystreet.com) website). It may even be one of the tasks assigned to the voluntary group in Mayfield who clear footpaths and repair stiles, in which case I may end up helping to clear it myself.

In the meantime, I suggest avoiding this footpath (M&FA 79, which meets the A267 between Wellbrook and Mere's Lane and whose northern end is on Fir Toll Road on the drive leading to Naylor's Farm Cottages) especially if you do not like mud – there is about 3 inches to wade through at the lowest point of the path.

Welcoming the chiffchaffs



I must admit I could not recognise a chiffchaff – until I looked at images on Google.

But on a run this morning near Combe Farm, just on the Mayfield/Wadhurst parish boundary, I saw a twitcher looking through binoculars. As I passed him I asked if he had seen anything interesting.

He replied that he had just seen the first chiffchaff of the spring. The tiny bird, the size of a 50p piece, had migrated back from Africa, and was now enjoying (we hope) a bit of English sunshine.

A real sign that spring has arrived.

Future of Rights of Way in

East Sussex



East Sussex County Council have recently run a survey to find out how people are using the local Rights of Way (RoW) and the 10 countryside areas managed by the council. They also asked for ways to encourage use.

The results can be accessed from [their website](#) or by clicking on the image on the left. The page also gives updates on actions being put in place.

Not surprisingly the survey results show that the main reasons for people to use the Rights of Way are for fresh air, relaxation, exercise, scenery, wildlife and walking.

Interestingly, the key reasons that put people off using them were lack of information, access and the facilities that were available. Hopefully this site can help on the information – not just on the RoW themselves but also on how to access them, what facilities are available nearby, and with different routes for all tastes and levels of fitness

Mayfield Open to Visitors



St Dunstan's
Mayfield

Mayfield has much to offer visitors – a lovely village set in beautiful countryside, historic buildings, interesting shops and walks with fantastic views to name only a few.

But we have not been good at publicising our village. We have a sign from the main road promoting Mayfield as a historic village, but no information readily available for those who turn off to have a look.

There is a plan to remedy that, to provide more information and to attract more visitors. For my part, I am working on some 10-15 mile walks starting from Wadhurst station and passing through Mayfield about halfway. This will allow visitors to come by train, enjoy a wonderful walk in the High Weald and have a break in Mayfield in the middle, stopping to have a look and for refreshments.

Watch out for the new walks, which should be published in the next couple of months.

If you have any suggestions – either for walks or for information about the village that you would like to know – please leave me a comment and I will see how I can take up your suggestions.

Thinking



I was looking at the [Living Streets website](#) today and felt I had to share the quote on their homepage:

“All truly great thoughts are conceived by walking” Friedrich Nietzsche

Another good reason to go out for a walk.

(By the way, if you are not aware of the Living Streets mission to get everyone walking more, do go to their website, have a look, and sign up)

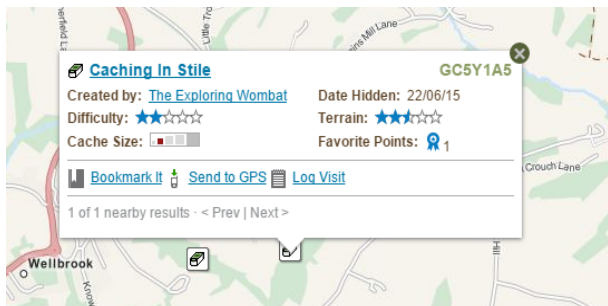
New routes and app from ESCC

East Sussex County Council (ESCC) now have a page listing circular walks in the county. There are nearly 40 listed ranging in distance from 1.5 miles to 9 miles.

They also have an app which you can download to your smartphone for use with these walks. I have not yet tried out the app but will report back when I have the chance.

You can find details of these walks and download the app by [clicking/touching/swiping here](#)

Geocaching



Today I found my first geocache, well hidden in a stile in Mayfield.

For those who do not know, geocaches are small containers hidden in many countries all over the world.

Go to the [geocaching website](#) and look on a map to find out where there are caches near you. You can then try to find them using the locations given and, if necessary, clues. You can also leave behind small objects for others to find and anyone can create their own caches.

Finding caches can add fun to a walk for children or adults.

The cache I found was on Mayfield and Five Ashes footpath 14,

which starts at the very bottom of Vale Road, beyond the Bowls Club, bearing slightly left across the fields by Versyns Farm and Longs Farm and coming out on Piccadilly Lane by Old Sandalls.

Have fun if you decide to do some geocaching yourself. Routopedia will look at adding details of geocaches on some routes and even adding routes based round geocaches.