



BEACHY HEAD RAMBLERS

Newsletter

September / October 2019

www.beachyheadramblers.com

membership: beachyheadmembership@gmail.com

newsletter: alanhibbert@hotmail.com

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's Beachy Head Ramblers AGM will take place on Sunday 3rd November at 2pm in East Dean Village Hall. In addition to the usual business of the meeting there will be an illustrated presentation by Jackie and Geoff on their recent round-the-world cruise.

Lucie will be leading the pre-meeting walk, starting at East Dean car park at 10am and returning in time for the meeting.

As usual there will be snacks, cakes, teas and coffees available at the start of the meeting. Volunteers are needed to make cakes / scones / savoury snacks, and also to make teas and coffees on the day as well as the inevitable washing up. Please contact Elaine at esaunders21@hotmail.co.uk if you are willing to help.

BIG RESPONSE FOR 'COAST TO COAST' WALK

Following the email sent recently to all members there has been a positive response to the BHR holiday walking Wainwright's Coast to Coast walk, with 15 members signing up already.

The 194 mile Coast to Coast walk from St Bees on the Cumbrian coast to Robin Hood's Bay on the North Sea shore offers spectacular views as it crosses three National Parks : the Lake District, Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors. It is graded as a challenging Grade 6 walk. This holiday, in September 2020, will tackle the western section of the trail crossing the Lake District from St Bees to Kirkby Stephen in seven walking days of 9 – 15 miles a day, with baggage being transported for you each day. The intention is to then tackle the eastern section in September 2021.



Although the trek doesn't take place until September 2020, the need to make early bookings of both the accommodation and the luggage-carrying Sherpa bus means that members must sign up by 1st September this year. Contact Elaine at esaunders21@hotmail.co.uk

BHR SUMMER HOLIDAY 2020

For those of us who feel that a challenging Grade 6 walk is a little too much, there will be slightly gentler rambling available on next year's summer holiday. We'll be heading to the beautiful county of Devon where the walking will be on Exmoor and the north Devon coast. It is intended to include a trip to Lundy Island for a possible sighting of the puffins. Further details will be available in the coming months but for now make a note of the dates : Friday 19th to Thursday 25th June 2020.



Lundy Island

LEWES BONFIRE – A WALK TO SEE THE FIREWORKS



The closure of road and rail connections in the Lewes area on 5th November means that it is increasingly difficult these days to watch the spectacular event taking place on our doorstep. David Fry has a solution however ; a walk to Cliffe Hill to view the fireworks. Meet at Glynde village car park at 6.30pm on Tuesday 5th November and David will lead the walk to Cliffe Hill. Hot dogs will be provided but bring your own hot drinks (and wrap up warm!)

On an allied subject, David is keen on night-walking and wonders if anyone would like to join him. Talk to him about it on a walk or contact him at dfry.architects@gmail.com

❖ *(see the photo at the end of this newsletter)*

AUTUMN WALKING FESTIVALS

A reminder of the two walking festivals taking place nearby this September : The High Weald Walking Festival from 14th to 22nd September, covering the high weald area to the north of us including such places as Heathfield, Battle and Crowborough. Contact www.highwealdwalks.org for more information. This is closely followed by the Eastbourne & Lewes Walking Festival, happening from 20th to 29th September. The walks calendar is published on their website at www.eastbourneandleweswalkfest.org

SOUTH DOWNS NATIONAL PARK PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

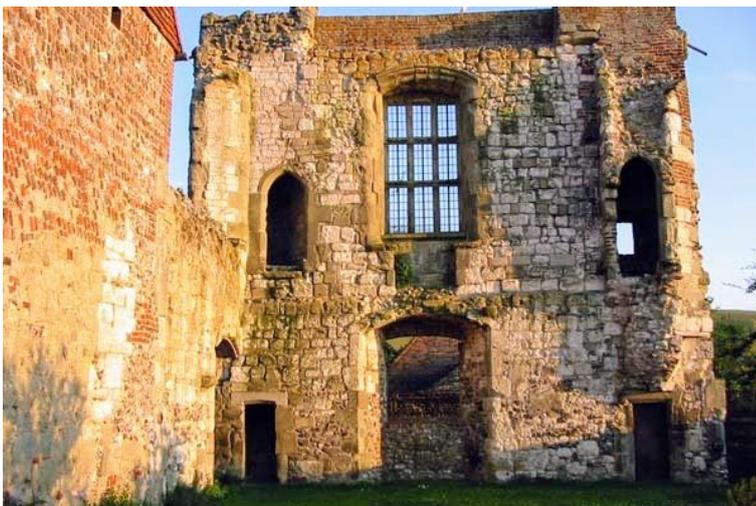
The SDNPA annual photo competition is now open for entries and the theme for this year's event is "experiencing the natural world". The judges are looking for images of people enjoying activities in the National Park, such as walking, cycling and horse riding. So there should be plenty of opportunities this autumn for the photographers amongst us



to combine their rambling with capturing some possible winning photographs. First prize is £250 with runner-up prizes of £150 and £50. The closing date for entries is Friday 18th October and entry forms can be downloaded from www.southdowns.gov.uk/care-for/enter-the-south-downs-photo-competition

❖ *Pictured above is last year's winner : "Autumn Gold" by Lorraine Heaysman*

WILMINGTON PRIORY OPEN DAYS



Many a BHR ramble has started from the car park at the foot of the Long Man and adjacent to Wilmington Priory. As part of this year's Heritage Open Days scheme the Priory is open to the public for 3 days in September.

The building dates back to 1215, when it began as an outpost of the Benedictine Abbey at Grestain in Normandy. Never a conventional priory with cloister and chapter, the monks prayed in the adjoining parish church.

The Priory has been added to and altered in every age and the result is a complex puzzle of structures and ruins, but part of it became a farmhouse. This is a chance to stroll the ruins and see inside the Landmark Trust's restoration of the farmhouse, now normally let for holidays.

Admission is free and there is no need to book, just turn up and stroll around. The opening times are Saturday and Sunday 14th & 15th September 10am – 4pm. Monday 16th September 10am – 1pm.

EXCEAT BRIDGE

East Sussex County Council has been awarded Local Growth Fund money by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, £1.5 million of which will go towards the cost of the bridge replacement project at Exceat. As a result, work is now scheduled to commence on a new bridge in May 2020. This despite the fact that the design of the new bridge is yet to be agreed between ESCC and South Downs National Park Authority. If work does begin as scheduled it will open up a notorious and frustrating bottle-neck, but will presumably mean a summer of disruption on the A259 next year.

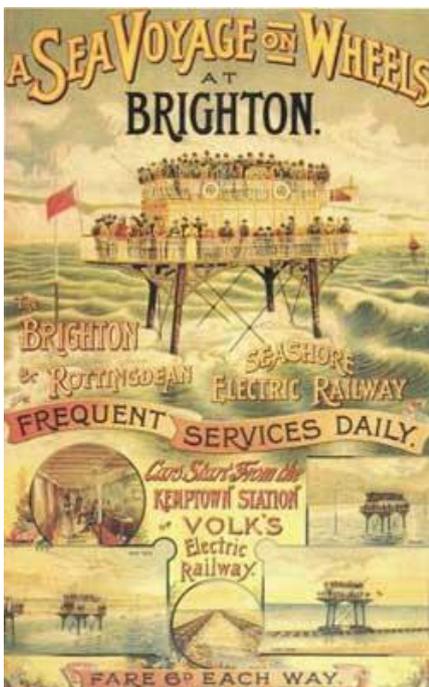
DID YOU CAMPAIGN FOR THE NATIONAL PARK?



A tenth anniversary celebratory event is being held this November for all those who were actively involved in the campaign to create the South Downs National Park, and the organisers of the event are keen to hear from anyone to whom this applies.

Hilary Benn, who signed the order that created the National Park, will be at the event in Ditchling on Monday 11th November. If you think this applies to you, and you would like more details, contact Geoff Cook at geoffacook@gmail.com

HISTORY WALKS : VOLK'S "DADDY LONG LEGS"



Occasionally our rambling will take us along parts of the Undercliff path between Brighton and Saltdean. At low tide the curious observer might notice the remains of a railway track out on the sea bed. This is all that remains of Volk's Daddy Long Legs :

In 1883 Magnus Volk, a native of Brighton, opened the first stretch of his electric railway. It ran along the seafront from the Aquarium to the Chain Pier and is, of course, still running to this day. The following year he extended the line to the east and, by 1892, he turned his attention to extending the line to Rottingdean.

Rejecting the idea of a viaduct he decided instead to build a railway that would “travel through the sea”. An Act of Parliament gave the go-ahead and construction began in 1894 with the installation of concrete sleepers set in to the chalk seabed to support the rails, a task only possible during the few hours of low tide each day. Standard poles were erected along the track side to carry the trolley wire which would provide the electrical power to the trains. The cost of construction was £30,000, the equivalent of around 2 ½ million today



The rails were submerged in all but the lowest tides but the trolley car stood 23 feet high above the track, supported on four legs which each sported four wheels. The two-tier car featured an ornate saloon, complete with potted plants and a refreshment counter. From there a staircase led to a promenade deck, the better to enjoy the healthy sea air.

The line opened in November 1896 but just one week later, in the same violent storm that destroyed the Chain Pier, the car was washed on to it's side and nearly destroyed. It was to be another eight months of restoration work before the line was re-opened in July 1897.



During the remaining months of 1897 no fewer than 45,000 people enjoyed the ride on Volk's amazing invention, but there were problems ahead : The service was often cancelled due to bad weather and rough seas, and cancellations and timetable disruption due to breakdowns were common. All of this plus the unexpected cost of the restoration put the Company in financial difficulties, and an inability to find further investment led to a perilous few years for the Volk's Company.

In 1901 Brighton Corporation required the Company to divert the track to make way for new sea defences, but the cost was prohibitive and the line closed for good, with the track and the car being sold for scrap.

Today the only clues to its existence are the words “dismantled railway” on the Ordnance Survey map and the sight of a few concrete sleepers from the Undercliff path at low tide.



- ❖ *Walks taking in parts of the Undercliff path take place on Sunday 1st September and Sunday 13th October. Full details in the September/October walks programme, the BHR website and the Ramblers app.*

Ladies walking boots, size 5 ½, brand new. FREE to a good home.
contact Elaine at esaunders21@hotmail.co.uk

-
-
-
-
-

A spectacular view of David Fry's recent night-walking expedition



If you have a news item or an item of interest you would like to see included in the newsletter please contact Alan Hibbert at alanhibbert@hotmail.com

