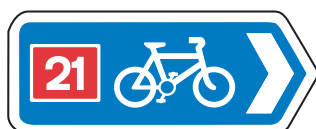


Cycling in East Sussex:
Avenue Verte Route Guide

Cuckoo Trail & Pevensey Levels circular



This circular ride offers a much gentler excursion than those exploring the High Weald further north. The parts of the route crossing the Pevensey Levels are as flat as anything you will find in the whole country.

Polegate – Herstmonceux

Go east from Polegate crossing the A27 by bridge before entering the Pevensey Levels, a landscape of deep drainage channels, tall reeds, and contented cows munching the lush grass in the rich pastures. The horizon looks like the rim of a saucer, just rising above the flat fields crossed on the ride. The buildings and domes surrounding Herstmonceux Castle appear on your right.

Ginger's Green – Horam

The main hill of the ride comes at the north edge of the Levels, climbing 60 metres as you cross the A271 to Ginger's Green and on to Stunts Green. Refreshment stops have been in short supply since leaving Hailsham but this is remedied in Cowbeech. Several crossings of the tributaries of the Cuckmere River mean a series of ups and downs on your way through Beestons and Marle Green to Horam, where you join the Cuckoo Trail.

Cuckoo Trail – Polegate

Year-on-year the trail becomes a more interesting ride. New sculptures are built and new interpretation boards give you background information about all that lies around you. Woodland management opens up new views and creates habitats for a variety of flora and fauna.

Glide gently downhill through mature woodland and admire the wonderful metal sculpture either side of Cattle Creep bridge depicting trains, bikes, horses, walkers, dogs and wild animals. Children will love the Wildlife Art Trail – a series of carved wooden tableaux depicting creatures such as hedgehogs and squirrels. The Cuckoo Trail takes you right back to Polegate.

Places of Interest ❖❖❖

Hellingly Church The church of St Peter and St. Paul has a rare circular churchyard of Saxon origin known as a cric. Standing seven feet above the surrounding houses it is held in place by tall brick walls. Its circular form is believed to represent the Celtic symbol for immortality and was raised above ground level to keep the dead dry.

Pevensey Levels The area was formed by a build-up of shingle across Pevensey Bay, which was reclaimed in the Middle Ages to create a broad plain of pasture land with dykes and isolated farms. It is now an internationally important wetland for wildlife.

Herstmonceux Castle Location of a fairytale castle, Science Centre and former Royal Observatory telescopes. It was from the Observatory's atomic clocks at Herstmonceux that the familiar 'six-pips' were sent by land-line to the BBC for broadcast to mark the start of each hour.

Cuckoo Trail Originally part of the Polegate to Eridge railway, which was named the Cuckoo Line after the tradition that the first cuckoo of spring was released at Heathfield Fair. It was

closed as part of the Beeching Cuts in 1968 and reopened as a leisure route shared by walkers, cyclists and horseriders in 1990. The trail is 14 miles long, from Heathfield in the north to Hampden Park, Eastbourne, in the south, and forms part of National Cycle Network Route 21 and the Avenue Verte London – Paris.

Starting point

Polegate

Distance

23 miles / 37 kilometres

Off road/rough sections

The Cuckoo Trail is a well-surfaced traffic-free railway path

Grade

Easy / Moderate

Major climbs

One main climb (60 metres) – from the Pevensey Levels up to Stunts

Green then several shorter ones between Stunts Green and Horam

Refreshments

Horam, Hailsham, Cowbee, Polegate

Tourist Information Centres

Lewes Tourist

Information Centre: 01273 483448

Eastbourne Tourist

Information Office: 0871 6630031

(calls charged at 10p per min from BT land lines)

Cycle Hire and Shops

Heathfield:

Cycle Revival: 01435 866118

Eastbourne:

Cycleman: 01323 501157

Eastbourne:

Phoenix Cycles: 01323 729060

Polegate:

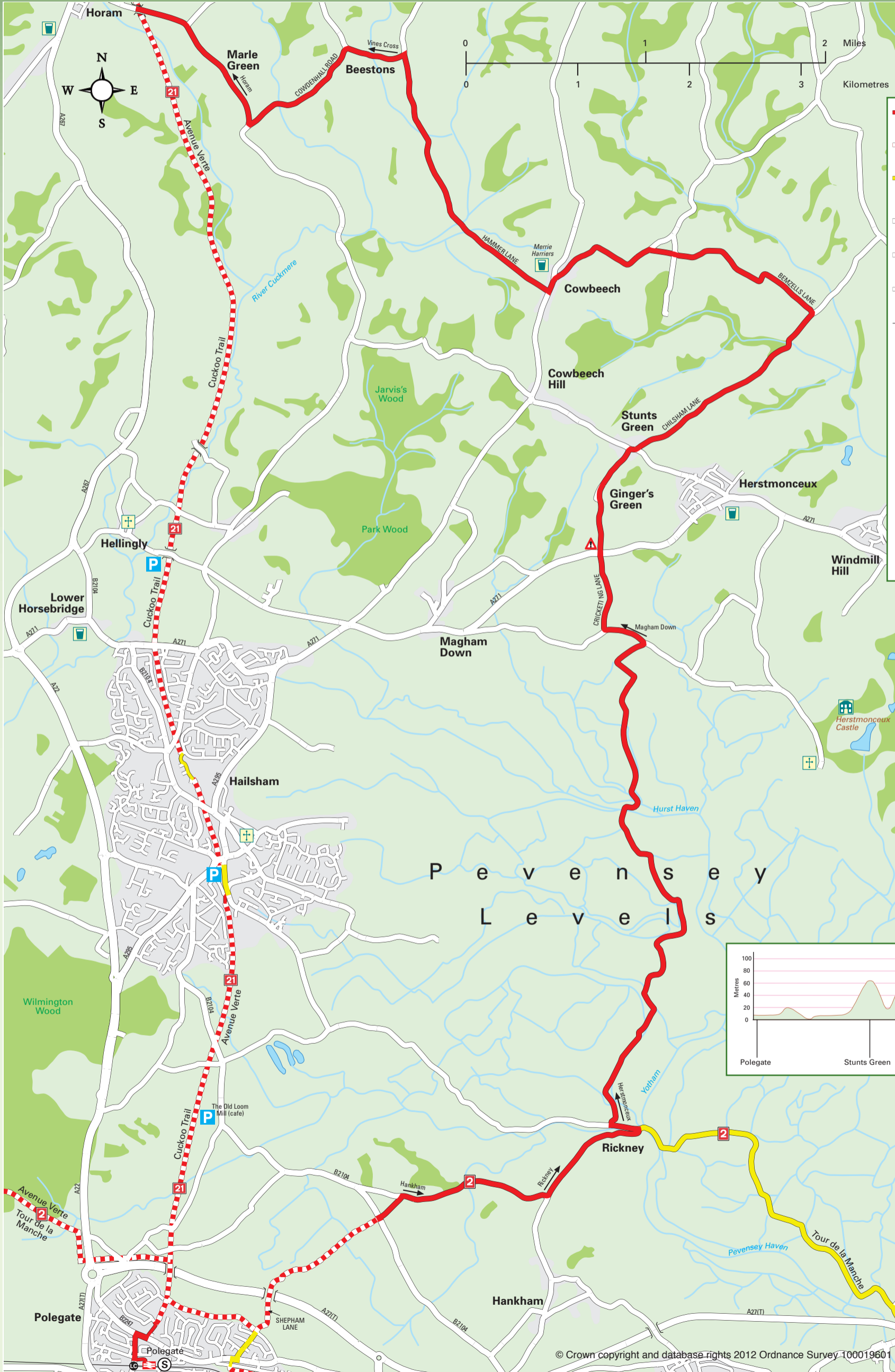
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Cycling in East Sussex

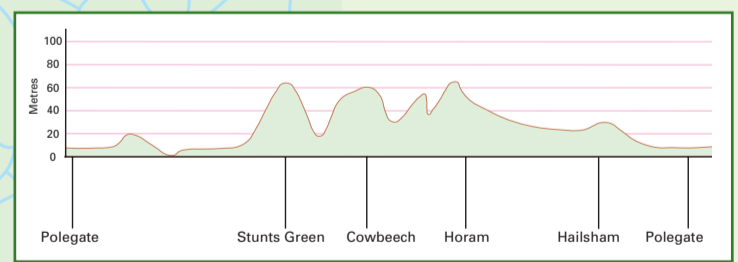
Cuckoo Trail & Pevensey Levels circular



Avenue Verte



	Circular Route (on road)
	Traffic-free route
	National Cycle Network (on road)
	A Road
	B Road
	Minor Road
	Railway (with level crossing)
	Railway Station (with name)
	Church
	Pub
	House of Interest
	Take Care!
	Follow Road Sign as Marked
	Car parking
	Start of route



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