

# Rye Rides

On-road and off-road  
cycle routes for everyone

# Rye Rides

Welcome to Rye Rides, an opportunity to explore by bike the stunning and contrasting countryside and historic towns and villages of this area.

From the flat coastal plains of Rye Bay, to the rolling hills and orchards of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, we hope you will enjoy cycling this hidden part of East Sussex.

## Trains

There is a regular train service to Rye and Winchelsea stations from both Hastings and Ashford.

For further information on train times and fares phone 08457 484950 (24 hours).

As bikes are still carried free on trains in the Connex South Central Region please make use of this facility and leave your cars at home. However, if you are travelling into the county from elsewhere there may be restrictions on services which should be checked before you depart.

## Tourist Information

Further information about the area and places to visit can be found at:

Rye Tourist Information Centre  
The Heritage Centre  
Strand Quay  
Rye, East Sussex TN31 7AY  
Tel: 01797 226696

If you wish to extend your stay they can also provide you with a comprehensive list of accommodation available in the town, villages and surrounding countryside. There are cycle racks outside the Heritage Centre for your use.

## Cycle Hire

Bikes of all kinds may be hired from:

Rye Hire  
1 Cyprus Place  
Rye  
East Sussex TN31 7DR  
Tel: 01797 223033

## How to use this guide

The maps inside show suggested on- and off-road routes for everyone to enjoy. The rides are in the form of circuits and have been designed so that they can be linked up for the more energetic – with short-cuts for those who have bitten off more than they can chew!



The approximate distance and estimated time required are shown, but weather, bike condition, fitness, speed, map-reading ability and puncture stops must be taken into account when planning your day.

Best way to go arrows ➡ indicate the recommended direction of travel in order to take full advantage of downhill and the prevailing westerly wind.

We recommend that this guide is used in conjunction with Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer Maps (sheets 124 and 125), available from good bookshops and newsagents, as the maps inside are not drawn to scale and the cycle routes have not been specifically waymarked on the ground.

## Safety

Although these rides have been carefully researched and use quiet roads, byways and bridleways wherever possible, there are certain sections and crossings where extreme caution is required. These are highlighted with the ⚠ symbol, and it may be appropriate to get off your bike and use the footway where available. Extreme care is required in Rye town centre which can be very busy, and at the junction of Station Road and the A259 at Winchelsea. We recommend that children under 16 be accompanied by an adult.

## Good Cycling Code

The roads and bridleways which make up these routes are open to many users. Please follow this simple code to ensure enjoyable riding and safety for you and others:

- Give way to horseriders and walkers
- Do not ride in a manner that causes danger to others
- Be self-sufficient and make sure your bike is safe to ride
- Be courteous and considerate to others
- Be visible, wear bright clothing
- Do not race, and warn of your approach
- Wear a helmet
- Follow the Country Code

## Public Rights of Way



**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



**Footpaths** (often waymarked in yellow) can be used by walkers, but cycling is **NOT** allowed



# Weald and Coast

Through historic Winchelsea and the undulating High Weald countryside, passing through the villages of Pett and Pett Level and along the coast to Winchelsea Beach.



## Winchelsea Town

The town that exists today was rebuilt in the 13th century under the direction of Edward I after old Winchelsea was destroyed by sea and storms. Once a busy port trading in wines and spices, historic Winchelsea deserves some time for exploring further. Leaflets are available from the Tea Tree and the Museum.



## Submerged Forest

5200 years ago there was a forest of oak, hazel and alder trees. Among the trees Stone Age people hunted for animals and birds. At low tide on the beach at Pett Level you can see the roots, trunks and branches of this forest. Follow the footpath through the gate beside the Boat House.



## Royal Military Canal

See Canal and Castle route.



## Birdwatching

In late summer wading birds congregate at Pett Pools before continuing their migratory passage to Africa. An array of brightly coloured ducks may also be seen feeding at these pools during the winter months. For further birdwatching in the area visit the Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, 2 miles east of here.



Winchelsea

## Places to stop

- The Two Sawyers, Pett Road, Pett. Large gardens and B&B
- Suttons Fish Shop, Sea Road, Winchelsea
- New Inn, Winchelsea
- The Tea Tree, High Street, Winchelsea

# Weald and Coast

- Start point Winchelsea Station, at the end of Station Road turn left onto A259, then turn right up steep hill to Winchelsea
- On-road route – 12 miles (19km) 3 hours
- Very hilly sections

	Warning
	Busy road
	Quiet road
	Off-road section
	Direction of travel



	Site of interest
	Public House
	Shop
	Teashop
	Footpath
WC	Toilets

MAP NOT DRAWN TO SCALE

# Canal and Castle

Following the banks of the Royal Military Canal to Sea Road, then heading towards Winchelsea where you can catch the train home or continue back to Rye along the Cadborough Cliff bridleway – part of the Sustrans National Cycle Network route no.2.



## Royal Military Canal

Built between 1804 and 1809 the Royal Military Canal runs for 28 miles from Pett Level to Hythe. It is made up of two sections linked together by the rivers Rother and Brede and was designed to act as a canal and fortification against Napoleon's threat of invasion.



## Canal Wildlife

This canal has now become very important for fishing (permits required) and many other forms of wildlife. In summer watch out for emperor dragonflies, reed warblers and the noisy marsh frog introduced to Britain from Hungary in 1935. Mute swans and kingfishers can be seen all year.



## Camber Castle

This castle was built in 1539 by Henry VIII as an artillery fortress, with rounded towers to deflect cannon-shot. It is one of a chain of similar coastal fortifications which stretch from East Anglia to South Wales, the cost of which drained Henry's treasury.

These drastic measures were felt necessary as, due to Henry's religious reformations, he faced powerful enemies, including the Holy Roman Emperor and the Pope. However, within 100 years the sea retreated, as did the threat of war, leaving the castle redundant.

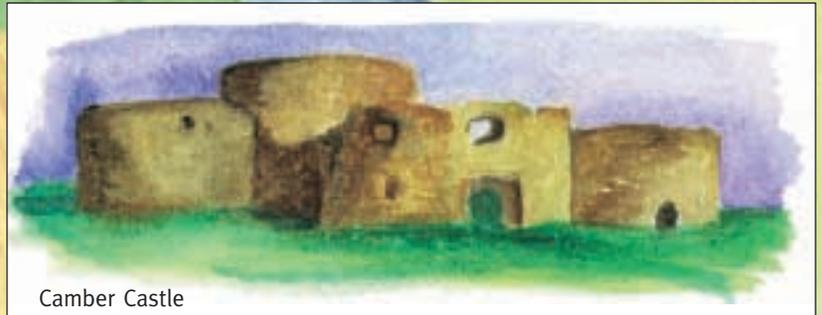


## Winchelsea Town

See Weald and Coast route.

### Places to stop

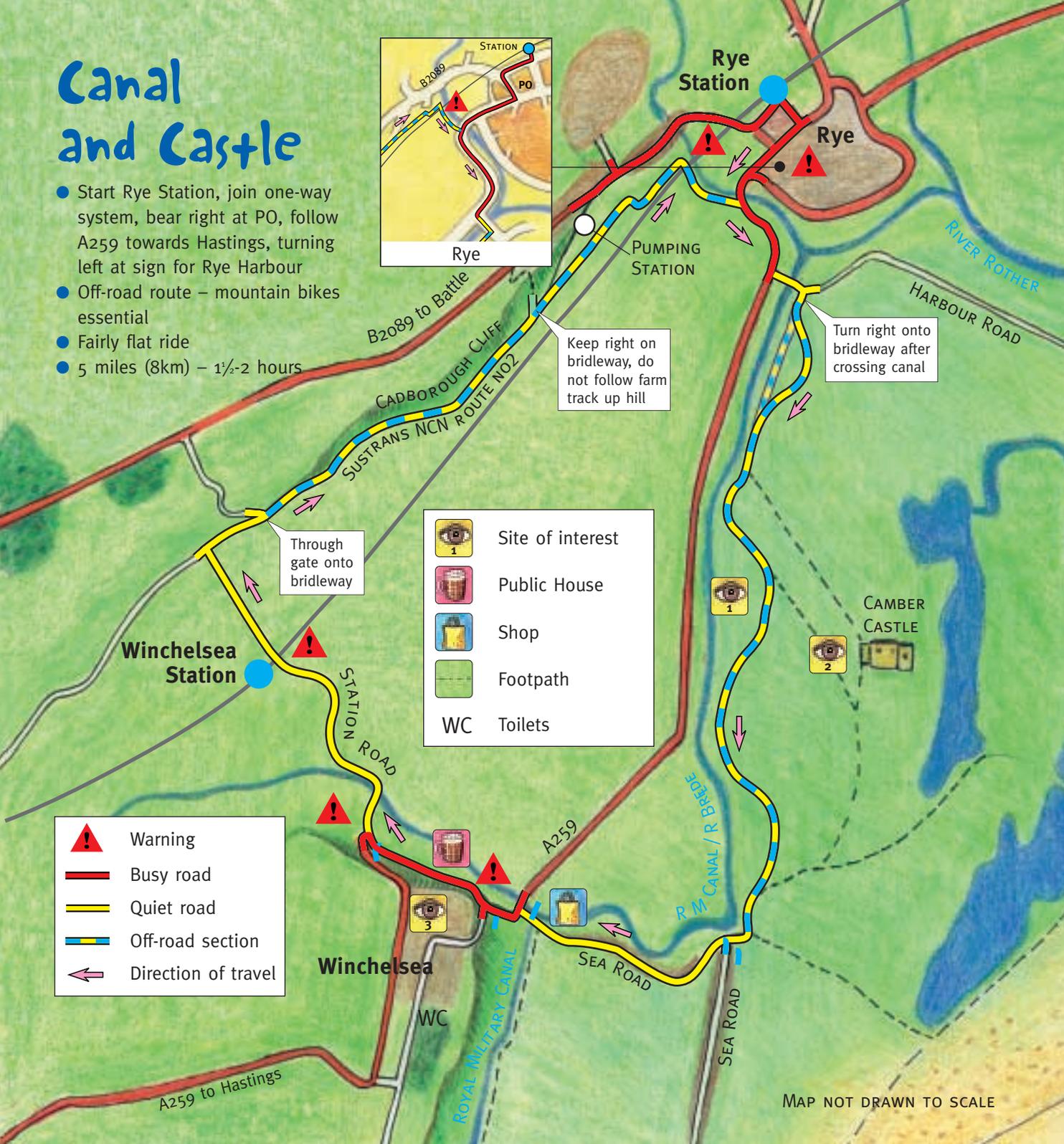
- Pubs and shops in both Rye and Winchelsea



Camber Castle

# Canal and Castle

- Start Rye Station, join one-way system, bear right at PO, follow A259 towards Hastings, turning left at sign for Rye Harbour
- Off-road route – mountain bikes essential
- Fairly flat ride
- 5 miles (8km) – 1½-2 hours



Keep right on brideway, do not follow farm track up hill

Turn right onto brideway after crossing canal

Through gate onto brideway

	Site of interest
	Public House
	Shop
	Footpath
WC	Toilets

	Warning
	Busy road
	Quiet road
	Off-road section
	Direction of travel



# Orchards and Oasts

## On-road route

Along the Royal Military Road which follows the route of the Royal Military Canal, a quick steep climb up the old sea cliff and into the undulating High Weald of oast houses and orchards, through the beautiful village of Iden and back into Rye. (Return to the station via Deadmans Lane – caution required, very narrow lane and can be busy at times).

## Off-road route

Along the Royal Military Road then following the River Rother to New Bridge and Iden. Past oast houses and orchards, through woods and along tracks into the village of Peasmarsh. This route is challenging and suited primarily to the enthusiast!

## Oast Houses

There are many oast houses to be found in this part of East Sussex and Kent, reflecting the former importance of the brewing industry in the area. Most of the oasts which you see today are converted to private homes, but were once used as kilns for drying hops which had been grown on the farm. These were delivered to the nearest brewery, and the beer would have been drunk locally. Nowadays, many British brewers find it cheaper to import mass-produced hops from abroad.

## Hops

Hops have been a well known feature of the Kent and East Sussex countryside since they were introduced from the Low Countries at the end of the 15th century. Opposed at first by many people as “an unwholesome weed” which adulterated good ale, hops nevertheless became popular for the flavour they gave beer and for their preservative qualities.

## Orchards

Traditional tall tree orchards interspersed with poplar windbreaks can still be seen in this area, but these are now largely being replaced with closer packed bush varieties which are easier to manage. Locally produced apple juice is a must to try and can be found in many of the shops in the area.

## Places to stop

Numerous pubs and shops including:

- Rumples Inn and Restaurant, Peasmarsh Road, Rye Foreign
- The Cock Horse Inn, Main Street, Peasmarsh
- Cornerways Teashop, Main Street, Peasmarsh
- Hare and Hounds, Main Street, Peasmarsh
- Playden Oast Hotel, Playden

# Orchards and Oasts

- Start Rye Station, through station car park, right at Rope Walk, left at mini roundabout, follow road to left, on to A268, over bridge and right into Military Road. Return via Deadmans Lane – care needed, very narrow lane and can be busy
- On-road route – 12 miles (19km) 3 hours
- Off-road route – 9 miles (14.5km) 2½ hours difficult, especially in wet weather, mountain bikes essential

	Warning
	Busy road
	Quiet road
	Off-road section
	Direction of travel

Bridleway follows farm track opposite cottage

Bridleway is just past bridge and cottages on left by side of bridge

Look for bridleway opposite weather-board cottages and post box

Turn into Malt-house Lane and keep right, along track through woods behind houses

	Public House
	Teashop
	Footpath
	Orchards
	Toilets

MAP NOT DRAWN TO SCALE



## National Cycle Network

In September 1995 Sustrans was allocated £42.5 million from the National Lottery Millennium Fund to part-fund the National Cycle Network. This is a linked series of traffic-calmed roads and traffic-free paths reaching all parts of mainland Britain. It is intended to benefit both existing cyclists and new cyclists encouraged by these safe and attractive routes.

Some routes in 'Rye Rides' have been improved recently as part of the National Cycle Network. Sustrans is working with East Sussex County Council to carry out these improvements but until then we certainly advise the use of mountain bikes on all off- road sections.

The route of the National Cycle Network through Rye is from the Station, along Cadborough Cliff bridleway, passing Winchelsea Station before heading through Winchelsea and out past the New Gate. Sustrans is also working with the Highways Agency to address the issues of safety where the route crosses the A259 trunk road.

Further information on the National Cycle Network can be obtained from:

Sustrans  
145 Isingwold Road  
Brighton BN2 9SH

**Sustrans**  
ROUTES FOR PEOPLE

## Cycling in East Sussex

For other information about recreational cycling in East Sussex please contact:

Countryside Access and Recreation  
East Sussex County Council  
Sackville House  
Sackville Road  
Lewes  
East Sussex BN7 1UE

Tel: 01273 481654 Fax 01273 479536.

For general enquiries concerning cycling on roads in East Sussex please contact Countryside Management on 01273 482670.

## Cycling on Romney Marsh

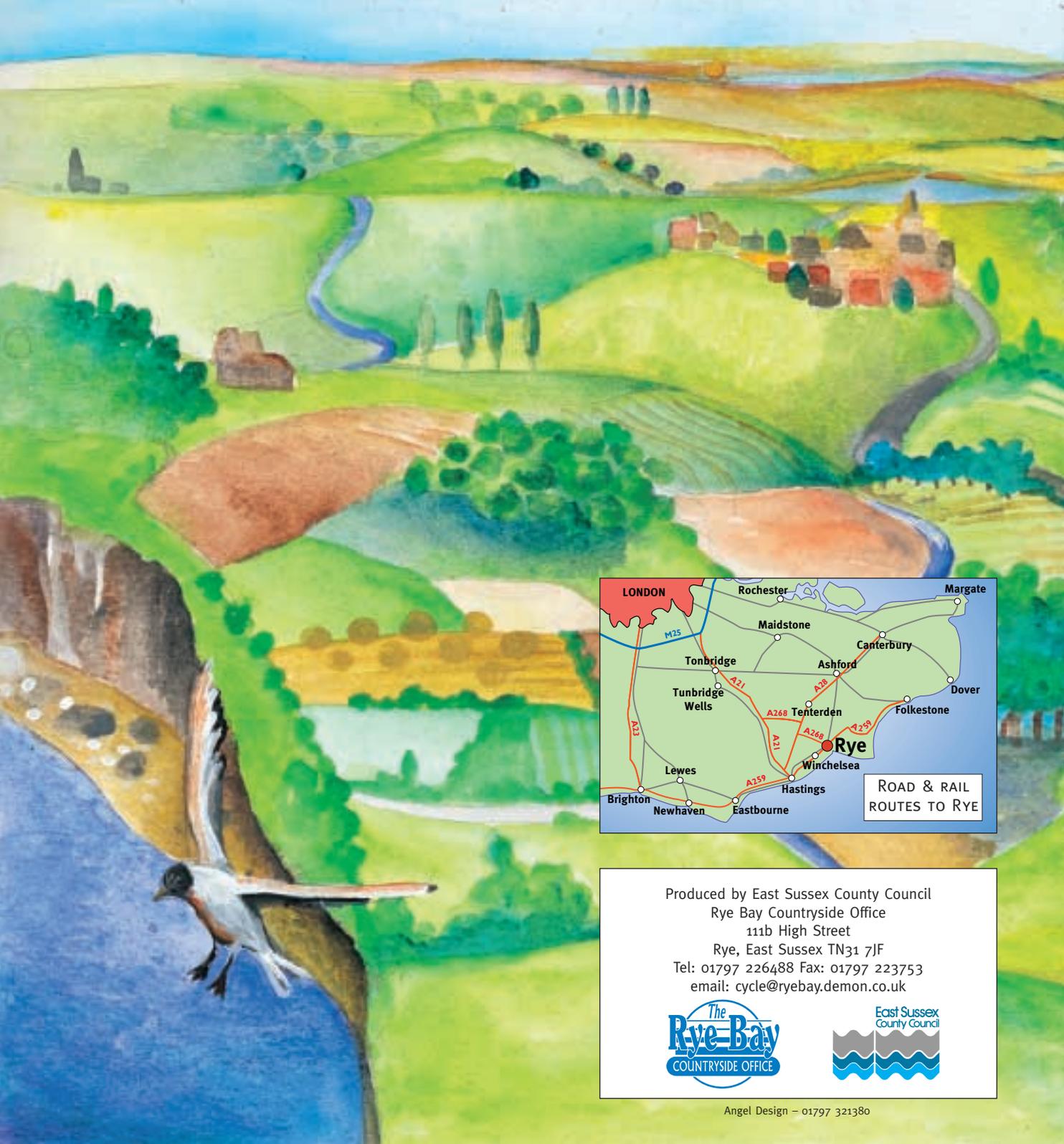
A series of self-guided cycle routes on the Romney Marsh is available from The Romney Marsh Countryside Project on 01797 367934.

## Cycling in the High Weald

For other information on walking and cycling in the High Weald please contact the High Weald Unit on 01580 879500.







Produced by East Sussex County Council  
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