

MAKE TRACKS

bike rides by train in East Hampshire

Twelve fantastic countryside routes
for families and enthusiasts



Welcome

The lanes and tracks that weave through and around the Hampshire Downs and Hangars are among the finest cycling country in England.

This is an introduction to some of those rides in East Hampshire; circular routes that start and end at train stations. Think of it as a taster. There's something for all fitness levels here, from gentle lane rides with recommended pub stops, to challenging off-road routes with lung-busting climbs and brake-burning descents.

Each ride has been mapped and tested on 'hybrids' (all-purpose bikes, not specialist road or off-road bikes). Full details and downloadable maps are all at www.easthampshirerail.co.uk/cycling.

We've tried to be as clear as possible with directions without being too boring – but if you do take a wrong turning, there are worse places to lose yourself than in the beech-lined byways of this beautiful neck of the woods. You can always get the next train...

Photos below: 1 - Ancient Yews at Kingley Vale, 2 - Compton pit-stop, 3 - View to Hawley and Selborne, 4 - Billy Trail Hayling Island, 5 - Bluebells near Liphook, 6 - Poet's Stone near Steep, 7 - Butser Hill, 8 - Red Lion at Chalton.

Starting points: Liphook, Liss, Petersfield and Rowlands Castle stations

Get the routes

Each ride has been explained, mapped and tested by local, weekend cyclists (thank you Simon, Abi, Richard and especially Kathy, who take no responsibility if you get lost!).

To download the full details and route maps go to

www.easthampshirerail.co.uk/cycling/

Local cycle shops

Owens Cycles, Steep - 01730 260446
Cycle Works, Petersfield - 01730 263370
Liphook Cycles, Liphook - 01428 727858

This guide is produced by East Hampshire Community Rail Partnership and East Hampshire District Council. To find out more about these organisations visit:

www.easthampshirerail.co.uk
www.easthants.gov.uk

www.southwesternrailway.com/travelling-with-us/travelling-with-a-bike



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Route 1: In search of Nirvana

Starting/end point: Liphook / Liss
Distance/Time: 15 miles / 1.5 to 2 hours
On/off road: road **Effort:** moderate
Head east for the greensand heathland of Milland and surrounding area – a very different feel to the chalk downlands of many of the rides in this little guide. The Buddhist monastery at Chithurst makes a peaceful stop.

Route 3: Ups and Downs

Starting/end point: Petersfield
Distance/Time: 30 miles / 2 to 3 hours
On/off road: road **Effort:** strenuous
One of the Ups and Downs routes, a popular charity cycle. It features the harmless-sounding Harvesting Lane, a punishing climb to the highest point on the South Downs.

Route 5: Swiss time

Starting/end point: Petersfield
(optional shorter finish Liss)
Distance/Time: 16 miles / 2 hours
On/off road: road **Effort:** moderate
Quiet beech-lined lanes with some fun downhill stretches (and, yes, a few steep climbs), skirting Ashford Hangers in a scenic area known locally as Little Switzerland.

Route 7: Park life

Starting/end point: Petersfield
Distance/Time: 20 miles / 3 hours +
On/off road: off-road **Effort:** challenging
Off-riders will love this route, running through the Queen Elizabeth Country Park and up onto the Downs. Not for the faint-hearted.

Route 9: Take off from Stansted

Starting/end point: Rowlands Castle
Distance/Time: 11 miles / 1.5 hours
On/off road: mainly off-road **Effort:** easy(ish)
Short and sweet route that runs past Stansted House and through its landscaped parkland. Mainly on the flat, but with a couple of steep hills to set the pulses racing.

Route 11: The little church on the hill

Starting/end point: Rowlands Castle
Distance/Time: 10 miles / 1 to 1.5 hours
On/off road: road **Effort:** easy
An easy, circular route with downland views on quiet country lanes. Takes in the villages of Chalton and Finchdean and the ancient chapel in the field at Idsworth.

LIPHOOK

LISS

PETERSFIELD

ROWLANDS
CASTLE

Route 2: Midhurst meander

Starting/end point: Liphook / Liss
Distance/Time: 19 miles / 2 hours +
On/off road: road **Effort:** strenuous in parts
Explore the tranquil, deep-set lanes to Hollycombe Steam Collection, the gardens at Woolbeding and beyond to the polo fields of Cowdray.

Route 4: Downs to the sea

Starting/end point: Petersfield – but any station on the line
Distance/Time: 18 miles (each way) / 2 hours
On/off road: road **Effort:** easy
The perfect summer cycle. Pack swim things, and follow the train line through Downland countryside to the Billy Trail, the path that follows the line of the old Hayling steam railway that runs along Langstone Harbour.

Route 6: Sustained effort

Starting/end point: Petersfield
Distance/Time: 16.5 miles / 1.5 hours +
On/off road: mainly off-road **Effort:** moderate
A fine circular route up to the Sustainability Centre and Old Winchester Hill, with views across to the Isle of Wight.

Route 8: A Harrowing experience

Starting/end point: Petersfield
Distance/Time: 21 miles / 2 hours
On/off road: road **Effort:** easy
Make time to stop at the Harrow, serial winner of the 'Most Unspoilt Pub' award, before (or more sensibly after) tackling this undulating route.

Route 10: Straight outta Compton

Starting/end point: Rowlands Castle
Distance/Time: 20 miles / 3 hours +
On/off road: bit of both **Effort:** strenuous
Long and lovely meander through picturesque Sussex villages. Has some big climbs and a few very tempting refreshment stops at award-winning country pubs.

Route 12: Fit for a king

Starting/end point: Rowlands Castle
Distance/Time: 20 miles / 3 hours
On/off road: off-road **Effort:** strenuous
Challenging cycle with steep climbs and great hill-top views. Takes you through the nationally important Kingley Vale nature reserve with its butterfly-rich grassland and 2,000 year old yews.