

Off The Beaten Track – An active day in Bexhill

Tyre's pumped, full bottle of water in my bag and a westerly wind blowing I start my active day in Bexhill by cycling the Coastal Culture Trail from Jerwood Gallery in Hastings to De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill. The track is completely off road and takes you on a whistle stop tour of Sidney Little's concrete paradise that is the promenade in Hastings to the glistening new public space that Bexhill is now so proud of.

Two medium sized hills including Galleys Hill, where you can stop and look back over to St Leonards and onto Bexhill, are to be contended with but well worth the climb. If you're lucky you might catch a glider taking a risky leap of faith or a horse rider gently trotting along the path.

As I approach the De La Warr Pavilion I am greeted by lots of families taking advantage of the RYA Bexhill Sailing Club free taster day. The sun is shining and it's a real treat to see young people pushing dingys out onto the English Channel for the first time. Next along is the famous Bexhill Rowing Club who's new base is a shiny club house leading straight onto the beach.

I've got my own bike today but you can hire one from Bexhill Bikes and they have special deals for children. The promenade which opened to cyclists in 2014 is well used by well respecting riders and walkers alike sharing the views out to sea.

I cycle to the west end of the seafront passing the Sunlight Café, made famous by local band Keane, and part of the Keane Trail, before heading back in search of Egerton Park. Nestled in the park is Bexhill Museum which is a must visit while in the area. With stacks of information on the motor racing history of the town, the museum is family friendly and brings history to life with interactive displays and activity afternoons in the school holidays.

As well as the home of the museum, Egerton Park offers a range of facilities including a popular children's play-zone, a fitness area and tennis courts. The Park is also home to both indoor and outdoor bowling clubs, Bexhill Tennis Club and Egerton Park Family Learning Centre.

Bexhill does public space really well. The openness of the area ensures that all ages have a place there and can feel comfortable in the environment which includes water fountains for children to splash about in. Leisure is high on the agenda in this town and proves that this doesn't have to come at a high price for the user.

I am struck at how accessible facilities are and that well being is a part of life for people in Bexhill. At every turn people are walking, cycling, swimming, playing tennis, roller blading and running. It's low cost and welcoming to visitors to get involved. Mass activities like the organised public Charleston Dance at the De La Warr Pavilion attract thousands of visitors every year.

De La Warr Pavilion is the big draw to the town for those who don't know it but the atmosphere and feeling of inclusiveness will make you come back. There are endless activities to treat your family too and you don't need a lot of experience or a large bank account to dip your toe in.

Shops

Old n' Gold - <https://plus.google.com/108377447669371538100/about?gl=uk&hl=en>

Starlings - <http://www.starlingsgifts.co.uk/>

La Collina Gardens <http://www.lacollinagardens.co.uk/>

Music Is Not Dead <http://musicsnotdead.com/>

Shopping guide <http://www.rother.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=17785&p=0>

Activities

De La Warr Pavilion – www.dlwp.com

Bexhill Sailing Club - <http://www.bexhillsc.co.uk/>

Bexhill Bicycles - <http://www.bexhillbicycle.com/>

Keane Trail <http://www.keanetrail.org.uk/category/east-sussex/bexhill-on-sea/>

Egerton Park <http://www.rother.gov.uk/egerton>

Bexhill Museum <http://www.bexhillmuseum.co.uk/>

Eat

Little British Tea Shop - http://www.littlebritishteashop.net/html/contact_us.html

Wholesome Cafe - <http://www.wholesomecafebexhill.co.uk/>

Di Paoplo - <http://www.dipaolocaferestaurant.co.uk/>

Find out more at: Coastal Culture Trail – www.coastalculturetrail.com