

P R E F A C E

MOST countryside guides just provide general information on chosen landscapes, or they may describe public 'trails', like the South Downs Way, or suggest 'pub walks', or circular walks on rights of way. Some wildlife guides give information on important nature reserves.

This guide breaks those limited patterns and describes **all** the interesting landscape sites on the Brighton Downs, whether there's a right of access or not. **It focuses particularly on the traditional old Down pasture sites, because these form the most important local habitat.** They are as characteristic of the Brighton Downs as heather moorland is of Exmoor or Dartmoor, or lakes and tarns are of the Lake District.

The book is divided into two parts, which can be read independently.

Part Two is the 'Site by Site Guide'.

This is where you look if you just want to glean some information on good local Downland to visit. I have divided the Brighton Downs into 22 sub-landscapes for descriptive purposes. These sub-landscapes link urban areas to the remote areas of the Downs, to help encourage wider use and a sense of public ownership of all our local Downs.

Appendix 1 also has a short **guide to the legal position on access.** We need

to know our rights in the countryside, if we are to be confident there.

All sites described in the Gazetteer have six figure map references attached. If you do not know how to read a map reference, you can find out from your Ordnance Survey Explorer map, which has a simple guide as part of its key.

Part One is 'The Backstory'. This extended section has some landscape history, some natural history, some geology and archaeology, and quite a lot about the way the growth of the Brighton conurbation has altered our Downs. I hope readers will see the Downs differently after reading this section.

I have been influenced by the famous series of guides by Nairn and Pevsner called 'The Buildings of England', published on a county by county basis in the 1960's and still in print. That series attempted to describe all significant local buildings (exteriors and interiors) **quite irrespective of whether they were accessible to the public.** In doing so the authors provided a great public service and helped inform the cultural conservation movement.

Like Nairn and Pevsner I leave it up to readers to make their own arrangements for access.