

## Route 4: Downs to the sea

### Route Overview:

The perfect summer cycle. Pack swim things, and head over the Downs to the Billy Trail, the path that follows the line of the old Hayling steam railway that runs along Langstone Harbour to a Blue Flag beach

<b>Distance</b>	18 miles each way (29 kms) – but easy!
<b>Time</b>	2 hours (one way)
<b>Level/ Terrain</b>	Mostly level
<b>Elevation:</b>	Flat. 600ft ascents, mostly on one hill. 748 calories each way
<b>Start &amp; Finish Point</b>	Petersfield
<b>Optional:</b> as this route follows the line down and takes you right past Havant and Rowlands Castle rail stations, you can start or finish your cycle at any of these points.	

### Route Description:

1. From Petersfield station (down-line side), cycle into town – down Lavant Street, right at end and curve round into the square with its sunny coffee shops and Wednesday and Saturday morning markets. Take St Peter’s Road between two of these coffee shops, to the left of the church, follow it round and turn right and south on the Causeway out of town.
2. After about half a mile, take a left up a short steep hill towards Buriton. Continue on this road, barred to through traffic, until you reach the village. Go straight over at the crossroads, under the railway bridge and up a properly steep hill – the only one on the ride, so make the most of it!
3. Keep going on this quiet, tree-lined lane for a few miles. You’ll pass through the tiny hamlet of Finchdean, following the train line down. There’s a left turn, after 50 yards the road bends left over the railway line and immediately right (take care, these are gravelly turns).
4. The next open stretch takes you past Idsworth church on an elevated spot in a field your left, well worth a quick stop, and continue on into Rowlands Castle
5. From Rowlands Castle, keep heading south with the green to your right, up a gentle hill and then opposite the church come off the road to your left along a bridlepath following signs for Havant (*if you miss it, just follow the road up to the roundabout at the top next to garage and pub, and go straight ahead following signs to Havant. There’s a cycle path through Leigh Park, follow this for a couple of miles down to the train station*).
6. If you took the path, follow it to the end where it meets a road. Turn left then right down Prospect Lane, then at the end of this road turn left and right again all the way down New Lane to the rail crossing. Just across the tracks, take the path on your left. This runs alongside a stream down to the busy road that leads left onto Hayling Island (where windsurfing was invented). Go straight across here and follow the path that runs through trees parallel to the road and out onto the causeway bridge.

7. Once across, keep right and follow the well-signposted Hayling Billy Trail (repurposing an old steam rail line that ran until the '60s), a five mile straight route with the old oyster beds and the harbour to your right. At the end, cross over and cycle the last 400 yards down to the beach
8. Have a swim and a drink at the Inn on the Beach (there's an excellent chippie too, the Coastguard, a mile or so east at the other end of the sea front road) then do it all in reverse. If you don't fancy the whole ride, jump on the train at either Havant or Rowlands Castle Stations.

[https://gb.mapometer.com/cycling/route\\_4933008.html](https://gb.mapometer.com/cycling/route_4933008.html)