



SKIING THE LEWES ALPS

No, not downhill skiing, but cross-country skiing. And, yes, it is possible in Lewes: the past two winters have brought copious cold and snow, and I've managed about ten days watching the good-natured bemusement of passing motorists as I skied round Bradford Road and up to The Avenue. Some teenagers even said I looked cool (that doesn't happen too often). Zero carbon footprint, and all the right sort of exercise; very smug and virtuous I felt, as my arms and bum ached benignly.

The ski kit is super-light and comfy, and the motion is sliding and like moon-walking, with fish-scale like grippy bits beneath the bottom of each ski to stop you sliding back. The pace is far from frenetic in Sussex-style cross-country: you keep stopping to explain to people what you're doing.

With the freak cold conditions of 2009 and 2010, the Downs above Kingston looked sparkling and strangely like the wilds of Norway. The best, compact, smooth snow was on the top of Landport Bottom; beyond that two of us ventured towards Mount Harry, met (all at the same time) a runner in shorts and an artist with an easel, all in deep snow, while an unseen bagpiper tweedled surreally in the background. One day, I tell myself, I will ski triumphantly down School Hill. But it couldn't happen again this winter. Could it?

More Sussex pleasures in Tim Locke's *Slow Sussex*, Guide Book of the Year Finalist in British Press Awards (£14.99 from Skylark, Lewes Tourist Information Centre and Barbican House). Visit facebook.com/slowsussex for details of walks he's doing.