








































# Symbols Key

	Parking		Picnic Site		Fishing		Bus stop
	Information Centre		Walks/Trails		Theme/ Pleasure Park		Train station
	Visitor Centre		Cycle Trail		Cathedral/ Abbey		Stile
	Public Convenience		Horse Riding		Museum		Viewpoint
	Forestry Commission		Public House		Castle/ Fort		Gate
	Public Telephone		Viewpoint		Building of Historic Interest		Hazards/ Take care
	Camp Site		Country Park		English Heritage		
	Caravan Site		Garden		National Trust		
	Camp/Caravan Site		Nature Reserve		Other Tourist Feature		
	Leisure Centre		Water Activities		High Weald Landscape Trail		
	Golf Course		Slipway		Interesting feature		

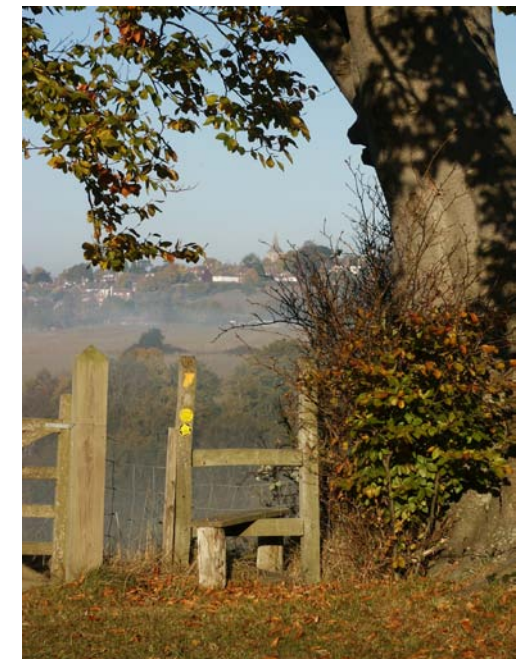
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# Chapter 1: Horsham to Cuckfield, 1.1



## A Forest Landscape

The western-most section of the Trail underwrites Sussex's claim to be the most wooded county in England. In St Leonard's Forest you pass from cool valley woodlands with small streams and hammer ponds to exhilarating ridge-top views. The gentler slopes of the Ouse Valley are more open farmland. The path goes through several small villages but for the most part you are unaware of the considerable population hidden away in this stretch of countryside so close to major transport routes.

## Horsham Town

Central Horsham is a comfortable mix of old and new.

### 1. The central Carfax

Originally The Skarfolkes, the open common land where the "poor folk" set up their squats. Today's green and gold street furniture and outdoor cafes make it a pleasant place to begin or end your exploration. Both the Carfax and the adjacent Causeway display a variety of different building styles and materials, including Horsham stone slab roofs.

### 2. The Victorian Town Hall

Look for the tails of the St Leonard dragon and the horses of the town's name.

### 3. Water features

There are two contrasting man-made water features in the Bishopric. Give Angela Conner's Cosmic Cycle, her tribute to locally-born poet Percy Bysshe Shelley, time to demonstrate its dramatic quality. The watercourse beyond is

gentler, more obviously reminiscent of today's High Weald countryside. But the power and force of the water in the Cycle echoes its use in the iron industry and its shaping of the land.



Section 1, Map 1, Horsham to Cuckfield



#### 4. Storm damage

The woods fringing St Leonard's Forest present a view common in the South-East since the great storm of 1987. Individual trees tower above scrub rapidly growing where large trees fell. Oaks, beech or pine, they tend to be lop-sided and scraggy where they lost huge branches or were once dominated by equal or larger neighbours. The oaks have often adapted best, sprouting anew even from their trunks.

#### 5. Sheepwash Gill

The steeper section of the stream, near Roosthole Pond car park, harbours rare mosses, ferns and liverworts. Up here you can find robust sphagnum mosses, the ones all too often sacrificed to line hanging baskets, and the perky little hard ferns.

#### 6. Pondlife

The pond beside the trail is gradually drying up as the sphagnum, rushes and flag iris spread in. Even when the water is muddied by rain you can see the creatures that live on or near the surface - water boatman rowing up for a bubble of air and pond skaters spreading their six legs

wide to support their tiny weight. Frogs, common and palmate newts live here too.

#### 7. What's the countryside for?

Just above the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) at Sheepwash Gill, there is a strange barren landscape. On a busy Sunday this resounds to the roar of 100 or more trail bikes at £4-5,000 a piece; earnest riders walk the course laid out behind the chestnut fencing as carefully as any Badminton Trials horse rider. The site is masked by trees and the adjoining field is full of fieldfares on a quiet winter's day.

#### 8. Antics!

The sun catches on a bare patch of earth. It's moving! Crawling is too slow a word to describe the frantic activity of thousands of wood ants as they move over the great heap of dried pine needles and twigs, bracken bits and grass stems. At first the activity looks chaotic but then you see that it centres on the entrances at the top of their citadel. Take care not to sit down for your picnic near the ants; they don't bite but they can fire formic acid at you - and that stings!

#### 9. Lily Beds

The Lily of the Valley that legend says sprang up where drops of St Leonard's blood fell during his dragon-slaying still perfumes the air in May and June but at some distance from the path.

#### 10. Greenbroom Hill

The name suggests that this was once heath. The stems and spines of both broom and gorse are green because they, as well as the leaves, contain photosynthetic cells. The heather that would have been so common then is growing strongly near the path and around conifer stumps. But what happens to it as the bracken, birch and pine grow more strongly? It certainly won't survive under the oaks that are growing up in their sheltering tubes.

#### 11. Who was Mick?

Legend says Mick Mills was a smuggler who raced the Devil for his soul. They ran so fast, presumably along Race Hill that they set the very trees ablaze and that's why no trees will grow along the way!

#### 12. 16th century EU?

Frenchbridge Gill is the stream dammed to make Hawkins Hammer

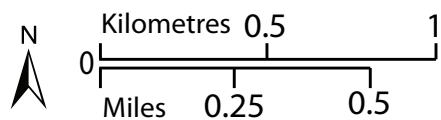
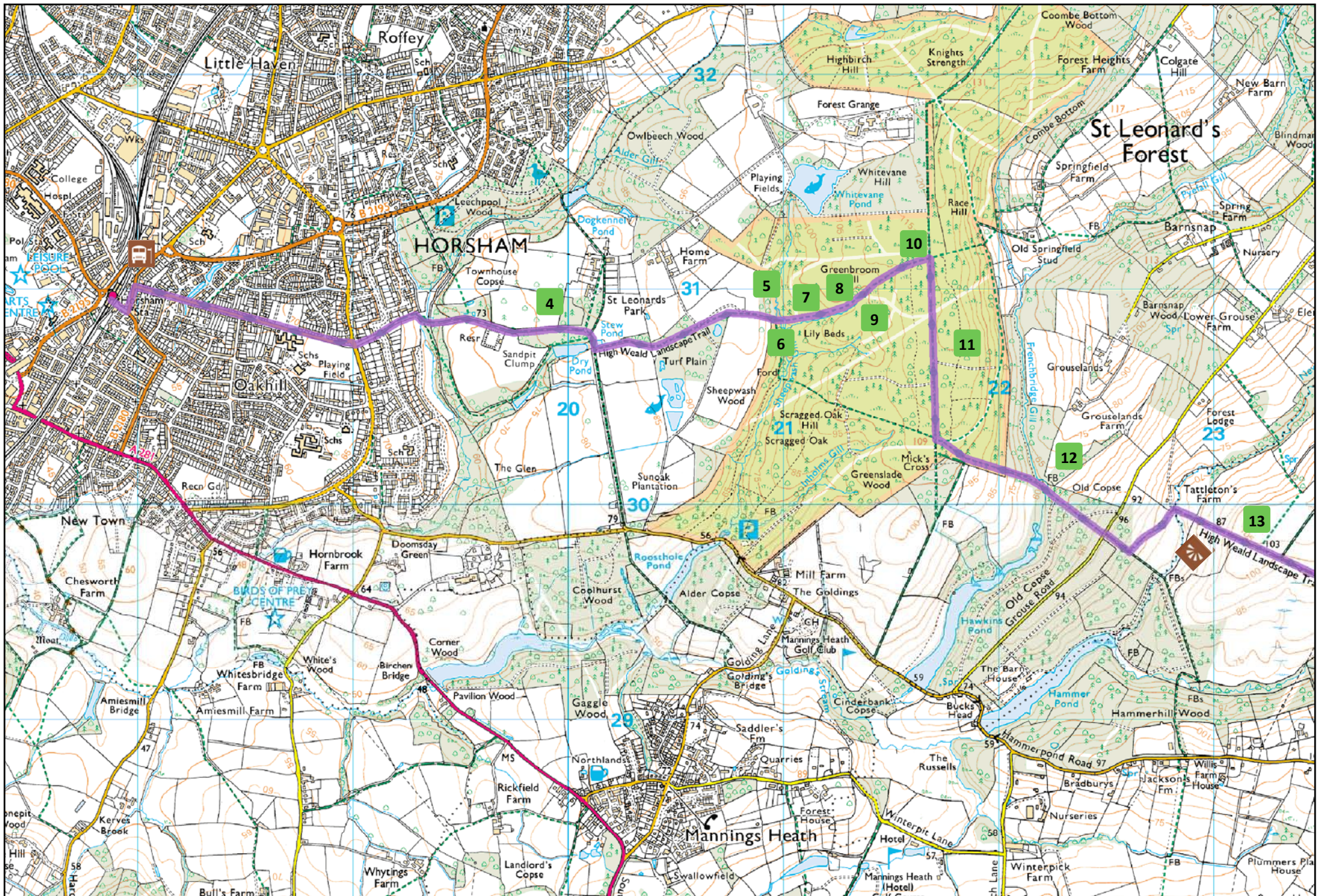
Pond. The use of water-power in the iron industry was introduced from France in the 16th century. Perhaps this name commemorates a skilled immigrant worker.



#### 13. Ridge-top views

From the open land east of Grouse Road you can see the shape of the countryside. The afforested ridges stretch into the distance; the houses are dotted along the roads that follow the better-drained ridgetops.







 High Weald Landscape Trail  
 Interesting feature

Also use Ordnance Survey Map: Explorer 134  
**Section 1, Map 2, Horsham to Cuckfield**  
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#### 14. Defence of the realm

There are three sets of “tank traps” along the trail between Tattleton’s Farm (now demolished) and the road to the east. The blocks of concrete were supplementary to barriers placed across roads and to natural obstacles like rivers and gills. It can be an interesting exercise to work out just what path the defence planners thought the German tanks might take.

The pill box hidden in the woods near the junction of the lane and road has one larger opening, presumably for an anti-tank gun.

#### 15. Industrial relics

The dam you walk across at the more westerly pond is typical of a hammer pond, stopping up a narrow gill to get a good fall of water to power a water wheel below the embayment.

#### 16. Slaugham village

There is an interesting diversity of building styles and materials, including at least four different tile shapes on the cottages. The house just south of The Chequers appears to be made of well-dressed stone. But look carefully at the side - how

fashion changes!

Other curiosities stand near The Chequers: an unusually coloured traditional phone box, an Edward VII postbox and the modernised 17th century village well.

#### 17. Slaugham Church

The contrast between the precisely cut stones known as “ashlars” and the amazingly irregular lumps of local sandstone in the older external walls is a foretaste of the architectural variety you will see inside. Don’t miss the gaping fish on the Sussex marble font, or the bas-relief monument to Richard Covert - the size of the nearby Covert mansion will then come as no surprise.

The light shining through the 600 year old yew in the churchyard shows it to be partly hollow. The living part of any tree is just under the bark - the heartwood is support only. Churchyard yews, evergreen and long-lived, are often seen as symbols of everlasting life and the triumph of good over evil.

#### 18. Slaugham Place

The path running south-east

from the churchyard leads to the picturesque ruins of one of the finest of the many 16th century mansions built by iron magnates. Sir William Covert’s house is said to have housed 70 people. It fell into disrepair in the 1730s; historians suggest it was just too big and costly to run once the iron boom was over.

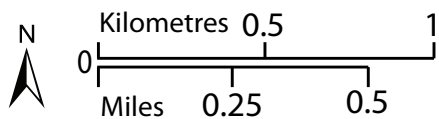
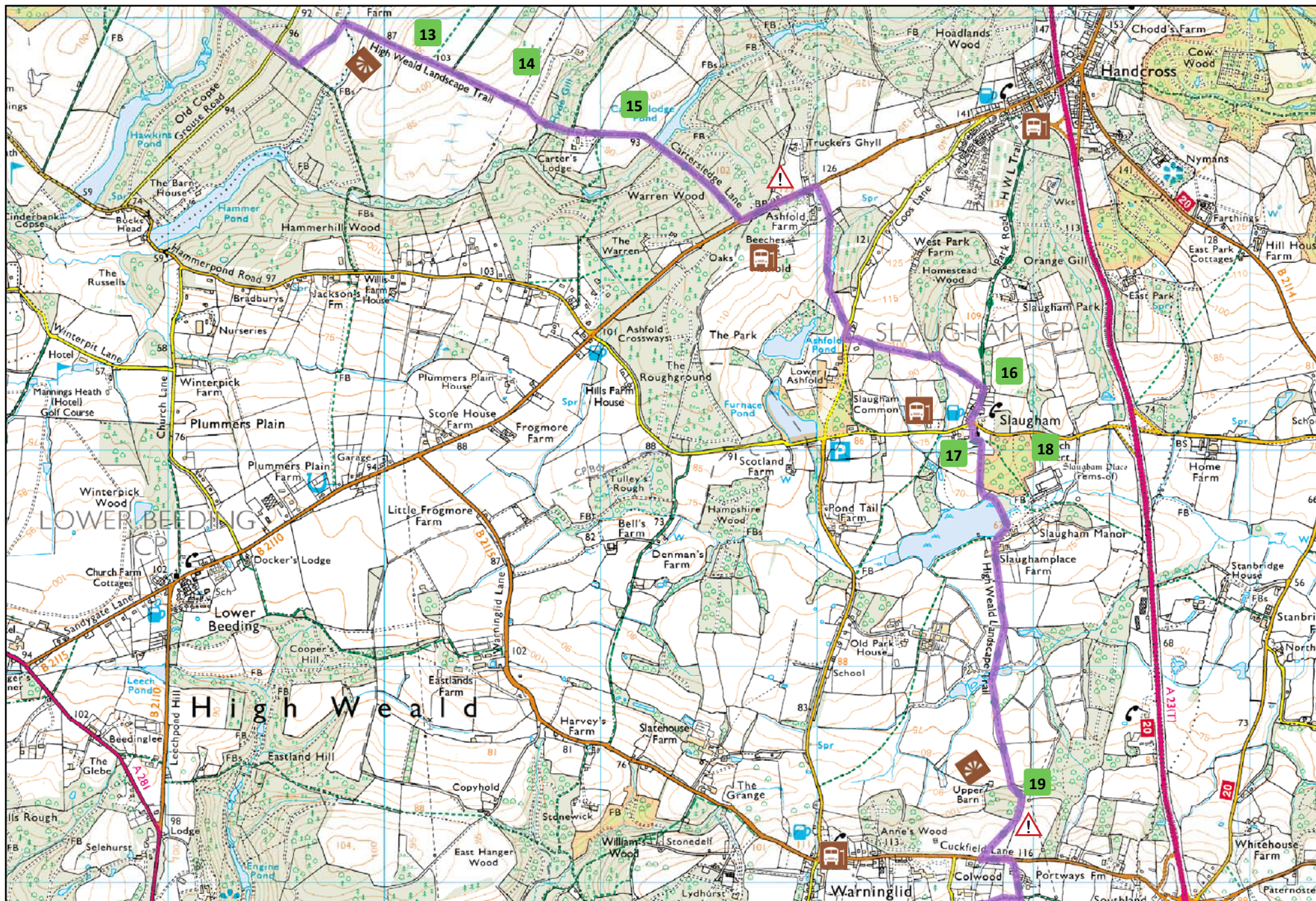
#### 19. Ancient woodland?



This small woodland east of Upper Barn is probably a remnant of a much larger wood. Compare east and south boundaries. Gnarled old coppice trees mark one edge; on the other, the trees just stop.

Several large beeches in the wood must be at least 200 years old. Their close set leaves and wide spreading shallow root systems prevent other plants from growing in their shade.







-  High Weald Landscape Trail
-  4 Interesting feature

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## 20. Modern utilities

Tucked away alongside Colwood Court, one of the many large and attractive houses built in the area by well-to-do commuters of various eras, you can see the functional concrete shape of the Warninglid Water Tower. This not only provides a good flow of water to surrounding properties but also supports aerials for mobile phones.

## 21. Wykehurst Park

There are fine views of the South Downs from the top of the ridge south of the Ouse valley. The Wykehurst Park mansion is well sited to enjoy these too. To enjoy more than a glimpse of the extraordinary sight of a French chateau in the rolling Sussex countryside, you must detour onto the footpath running west just south of the house. The golden stone from Caen in Normandy is as foreign as the architecture but no less beautiful.

## 22. Bolney

Bolney's beautiful church, hidden above the road, is evidence of a thriving community here as long ago as the 10th century. ("Bolla's island" suggests rather marshy surrounds at that time.) From the

19th century its fortunes have been allied to the London/South Coast road. Changes in the route of what is now the A23 road probably explains the fragmentation of the village into three, even four parts. House names indicate ex-shops near Top Street but the heart of the village now lies south of the Trail.

A detour south not only allows you to piece together the history of the village from the buildings of different ages but to visit and admire the church and the pub named after its bells.

Go into the church to see at least Gertrude Margaret Hodgson's memorial window; she obviously loved the countryside you are walking through. The marvellous lych gate is a celebration of Sussex as well - Sussex stone, Sussex oak and, one hopes, Sussex workmanship. You can see from underneath how the great slabs of the Horsham stone roof are supported.

## 23. Weald woodland

Under the busy A23 road and you are soon walking amongst well managed woodland; blocks of

coppice and newly-planted trees protected from grazing and weather extremes by the plastic Tulley tubes.

## 24. The Pickwell Estate

The landscaped grounds, exotic plantings and workers' cottages grouped around the big house are in the traditional estate pattern. The estate also demonstrates new approaches to generating income. The four-wheel drive course you will cross in Black Forest was set up after the destruction of the 1987 Great Storm. It, along with the lakes, is used for management training and other corporate events.

## 25. The Cuckfield Estate

In contrast, this estate has been broken up. The Elizabethan house and its immediate surroundings have been sold off. The villagers have clubbed together to buy and protect New England Wood; they have made trails and planted new trees.

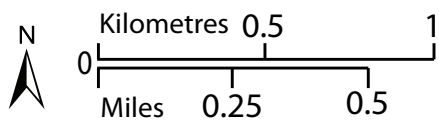
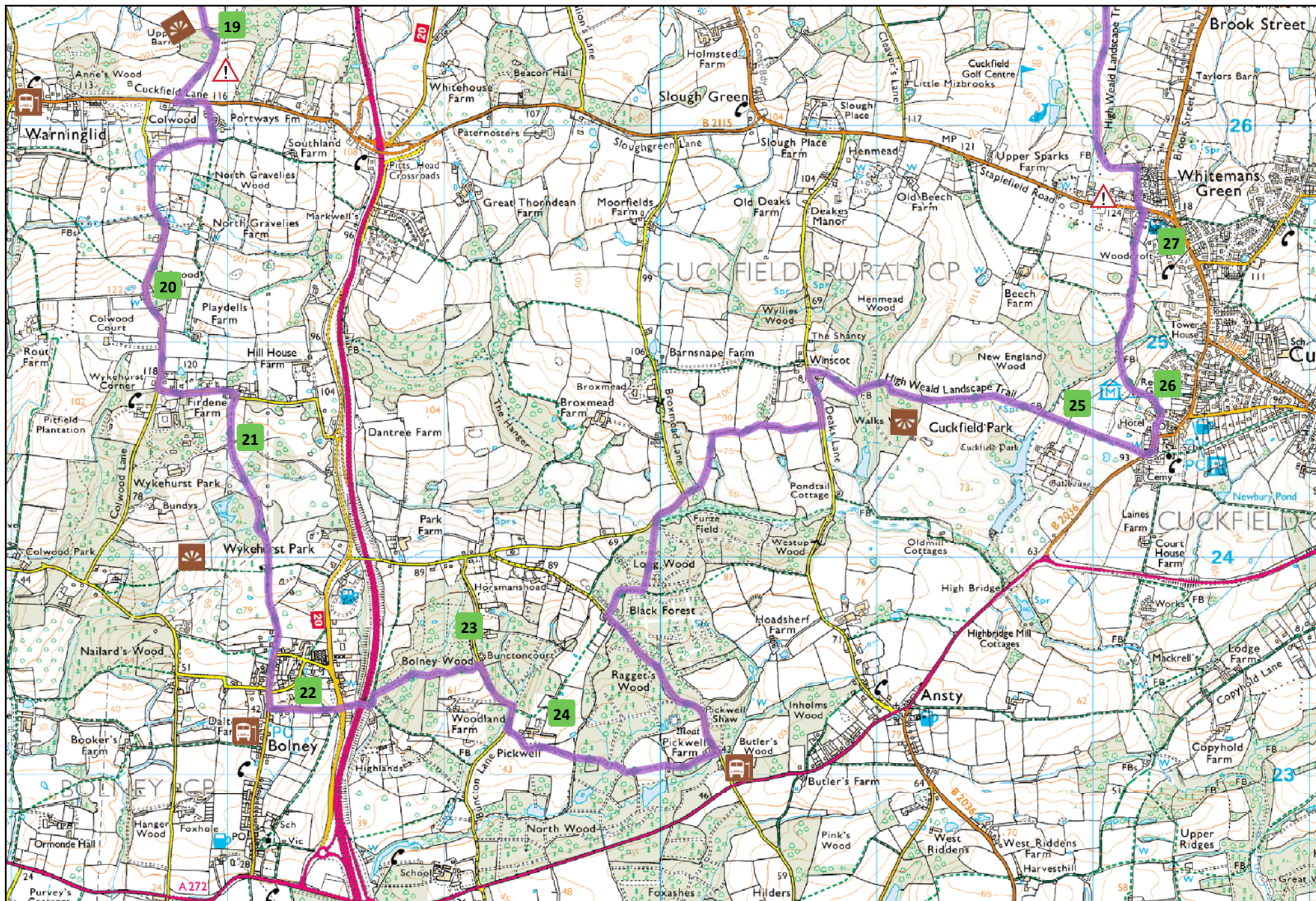
## 26. Cuckfield



Cuckfield was both market town and coach stop on the London-Brighton turnpike road. There are excellent views from the churchyard of the South Downs hills that lay ahead

of the coaches. No wonder they needed to change horses along the route.







 High Weald Landscape Trail  
 4 Interesting feature

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