








































# 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		

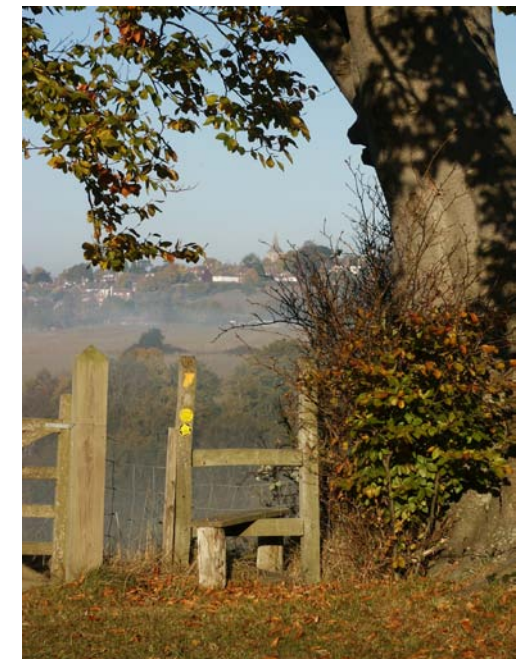
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# Chapter 4: Groombridge to Matfield, 4.1



## A Lordly Landscape

There are fine views towards Kent's greensand ridge and the North Downs as you cross the undulating country south of Tunbridge Wells. The Trail passes close to Harrison's and Eridge Rocks - two good exposures of the Ardingly sandstone - runs through the spacious parkland of the Nevill Estate and delivers you into the orchards of Kent.

### 74. Harrison's Rocks

Detour to see this outcrop, one of the most popular climbing areas in south-east England. Wooden boxing and matting help to reduce erosion from trampling around the base of the rocks.

### 75. A for Abergavenny

The decoration on Normans Cottages just south of Park Corner introduces you to the Abergavenny or Nevill Estate. You will soon recognise the ornate 'A' and the pottery medallions on the decorative course. The ridge finials and the chimney pots are also typical 19th century clay products.

### 76. Eridge Rocks

Sussex Wildlife Trust is working for a compromise between conservation and access on this SSSI.

Conservation first of all of the rocks themselves, because understanding how this outcrop was created has helped to unlock some of the earth's secrets. The second part of the treasure is the mosses, liverworts, lichens and filmy ferns clinging to the rocks. Once they grew on Harrison's Rocks as well. Other rare lichens grow on the old pollarded oaks nearby.

Local gentry used to hold grand picnics amongst the huge rocks. Erosion, seeking out lines of softer material, has carved strange shapes. Water filtering down oozes out where it meets an impermeable layer, often undercutting the whole block.

### 77. Eridge Green

Ornament taken to extreme could be said to characterise this village. Modern cottages emulate the decorative work on the estate cottages. The ornate wind vane on the church incorporates the familiar Nevill rose.

### 78. Eridge Park

A sense of space and calm pervades as you enter what may be one of the oldest deer parks in the country. The tall fences to contain the high leaping deer are hidden in the valleys and at first glance nothing man-made breaks the horizon. More peaceful now than when the lakes were used to power medieval iron furnaces.

### 79. Woodland giants

Look for the heavy-crowned pollard trees that show this woodland was once wood pasture. Deer and cattle grazed the grass beneath, while the lopped branches were used as fuel and the leaves as fodder. Scrub and young trees have grown up since grazing ceased.

### 80. Tracks and trails

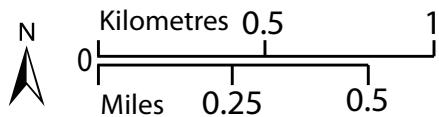
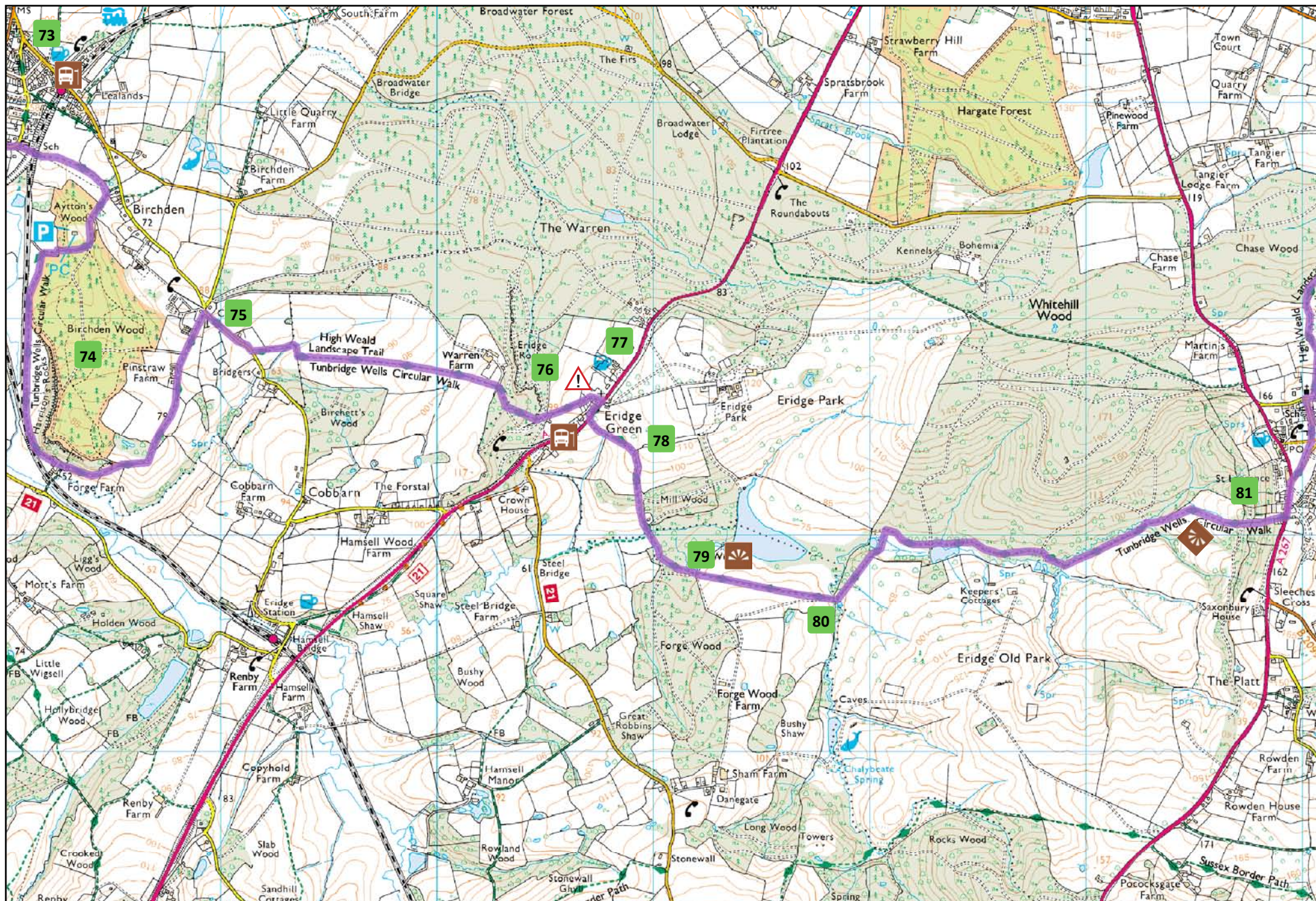
The often-muddy paths make excellent hunting grounds for animal tracks. The small "slots" of the wild roe deer are plentiful. Look for bigger cloven hoofprints as well; roughly scuffed areas under the trees suggest pigs are among the free range animals mentioned on notices.

### 81. A thing of beauty

A warning about adders as you enter the park implies you may be lucky enough to see one. Sheltered patches of dried bracken are an early summer haunt of these beautiful, small, diamond-patterned black and grey snakes. They curl in the sunshine, soaking up the warmth they need to be able to move quickly after mice and other small prey. Their camouflage makes them hard to spot and all too often you just hear them quietly slide away at your footfall. Always admire adders from a distance and never bend down towards them.







- High Weald Landscape Trail
- 4 Interesting feature

Also use Ordnance Survey Map: Explorer 135  
**Section 4, Map 1, Groombridge to Matfield**  
[www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent](http://www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent)





## 4.2



### 82. Frant

Early commuters created a gracious village of Victorian and neo-Georgian houses around Frant's triangular green. The school inscription offers good advice to all parents and guardians. Alongside it is the village crest of Sussex martlets and a fern frond, signifying the clearing in the ferns from which the village has derived its name. The heraldic martlets are based on martins or swallows but are always shown without legs.

The interior of the 19th century church is refreshingly different from many village churches, full of light and colour.

### 83. Chase Wood

Conifers often get a bad press, but look a little closer at them here. The purple-grey bark at the base of Scots pines gradually merges into orangey-pinks towards the top. Feathery larches glow golden in autumn as their needles fall and then brighten the spring with the light of their new foliage. The fallen needles are slow to rot and give perfect conditions for many fungi. Follow the smell trail of the stinkhorn in late summer, or search

for the varied hues of milkcaps and russulas in autumn.

### 84. Brickhouse Farm

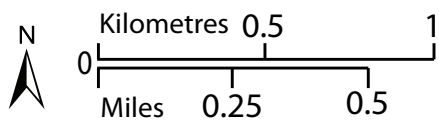
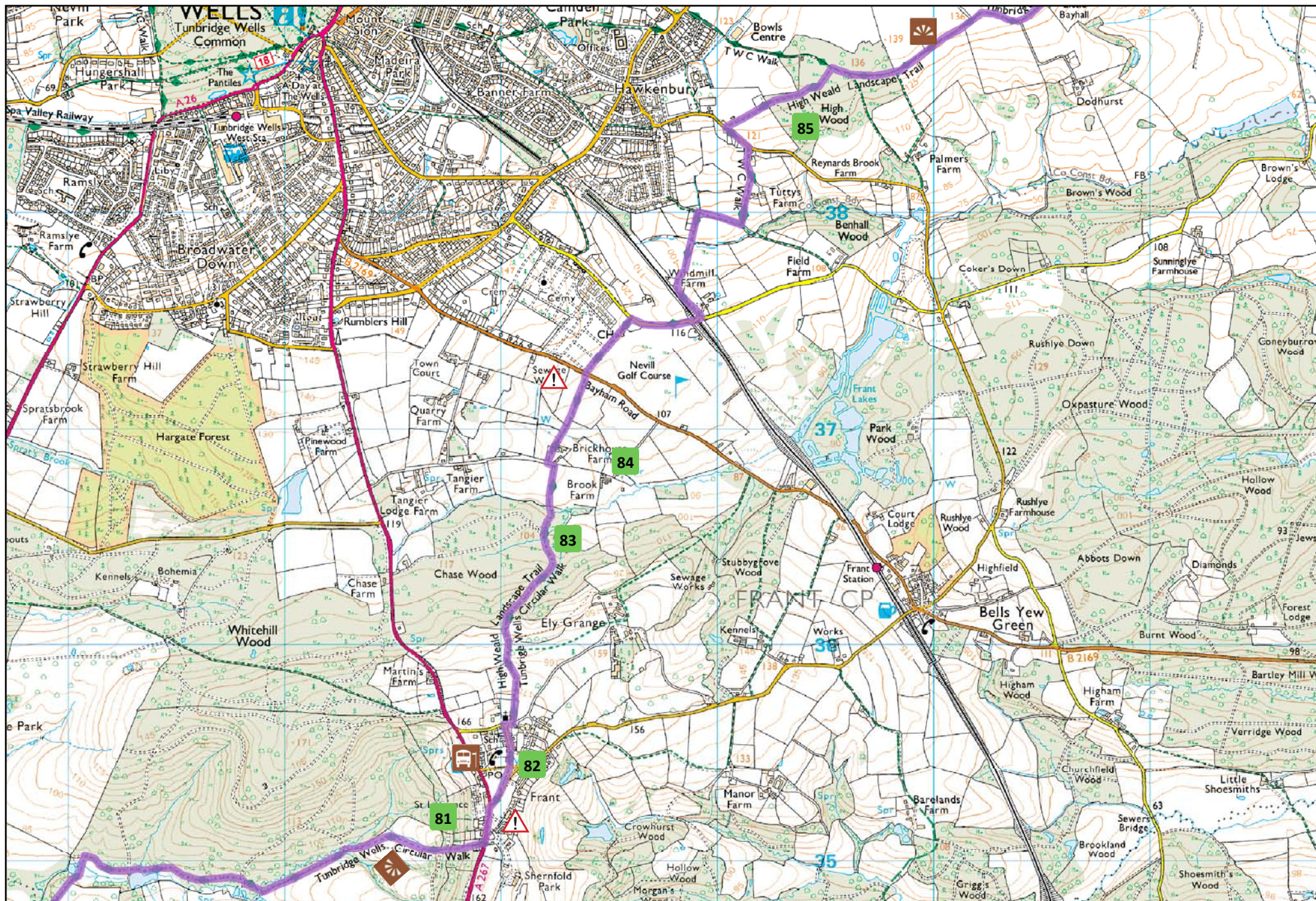
The 19th century granary over an implement shed and the cottage show typically decorative Nevill Estate brickwork.

### 85. A working woodland

Compare the plants growing underneath the different ages and heights of coppice in High Wood; they respond to the amount of light reaching them in any year. Coppiced chestnut can grow upwards of well over a metre in a good season. The spread of the stool - the actual base of the tree - gives you an idea of the overall age.







High Weald Landscape Trail  
4 Interesting feature

Also use Ordnance Survey Map: Explorer 136  
**Section 4, Map 2, Groombridge to Matfield**  
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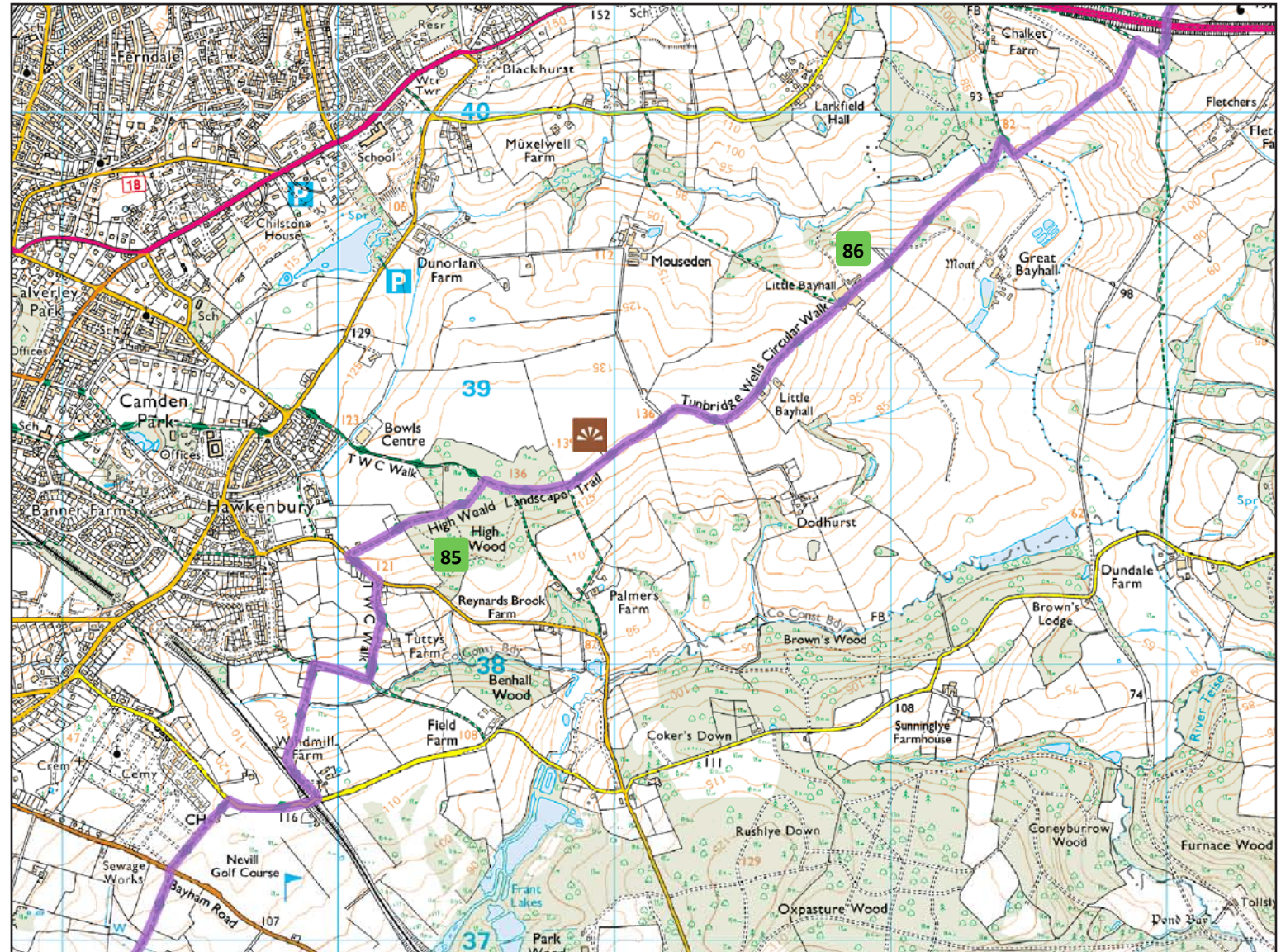


# 4.3



## 86. A modern farmyard

Little Bayhall farmyard is littered with machinery new and old, piles of plastic piping, heaps of wood and fencing material. Amongst this functional chaos, cows are being milked, calves call for food, hay is stacked in the barn and sparrows quarrel over titbits.



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Miles 0 0.25 0.5

Also use Ordnance Survey Map: Explorer 136  
**Section 4, Map 3, Groombridge to Matfield**  
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### 87. Ridgeway views

There are good views west to Tunbridge Wells and east over the valleys of the Teise tributaries to the communications tower above Cranbrook. The plentiful water in the valley explains the number of sizeable farms. You can pinpoint Sunninglye Farm by its square oast.

### 88. If trees could talk...

The superb oak near the stile onto Romford Road is at least 200 years old. Someone treasures it; ivy has been cleared from its trunk - not that ivy could harm such a magnificent specimen and would provide nesting sites and berries for birds if it were left.



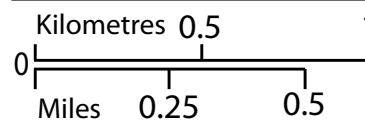
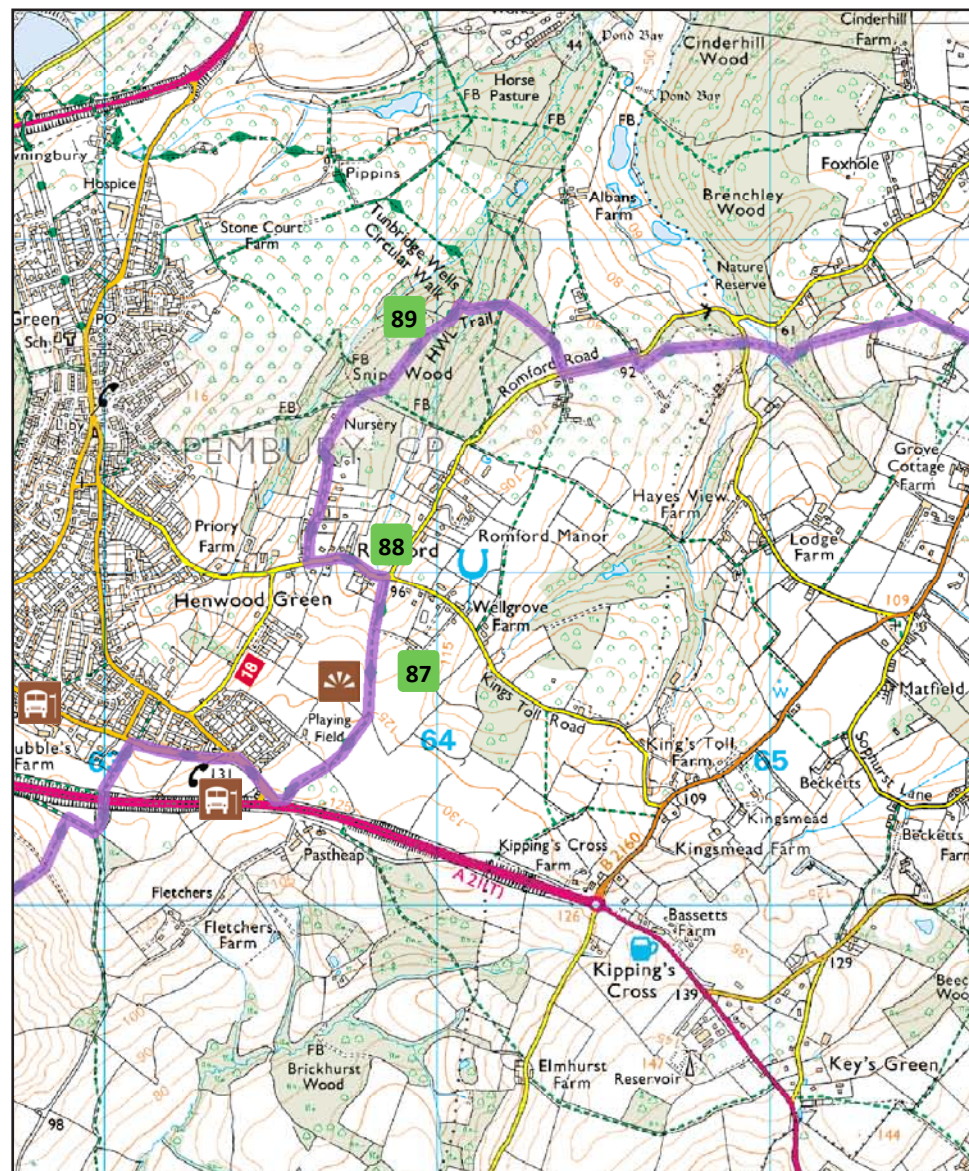
### 89. Snipe Wood

This small wood is a typical mix - coppice and standard trees, conifers and broadleaves. The grove of Scots pines to your left was probably planted early last century for railway sleepers. Concrete does that job better now; these will probably be used as timber.



Royal Tunbridge Wells is situated to the north of the High Weald Landscape Trail and is accessible from the Trail via the clearly

waymarked Tunbridge Wells Circular Walk link route. The town began to develop in the 17th century after the discovery of many small springs with health-giving properties, which attracted many thousands of visitors wishing to "take the waters". (It is still possible to take spa waters served by the town's "dipper" at the Bath House built in 1804).



Also use Ordnance Survey Map: Explorer 136  
**Section 4, Map 4, Groombridge to Matfield**  
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