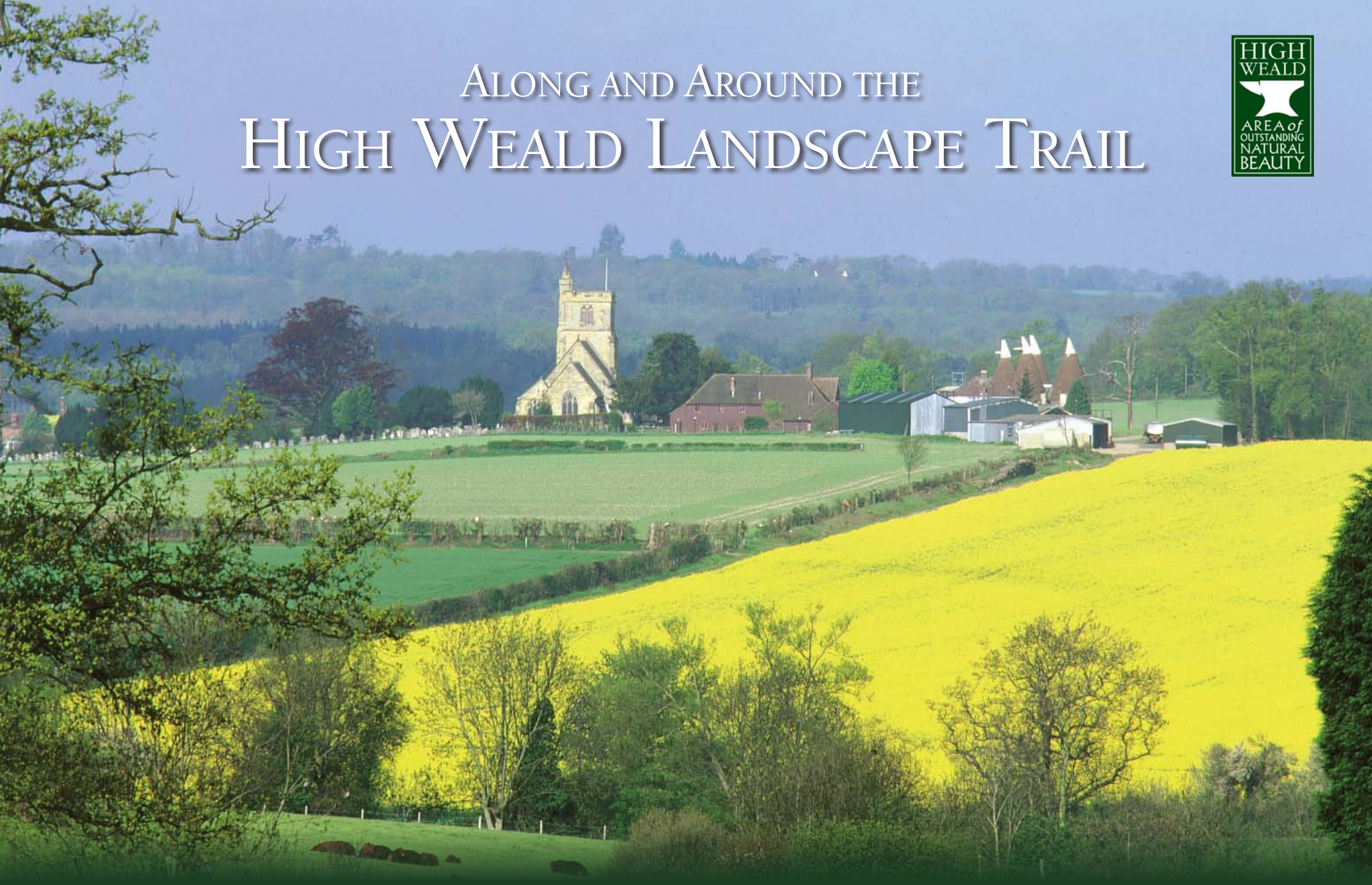


# ALONG AND AROUND THE HIGH WEALD LANDSCAPE TRAIL





# Chapters

## **Chapter 1 Horsham to Cuckfield**

23.3km (14.5 miles)

A Forest Landscape

## **Chapter 2 Cuckfield to East Grinstead**

27.4km (17.0 miles)

A Landscape for Leisure

## **Chapter 3 East Grinstead to Groombridge**

21.0km (13.1 miles)

Man's Mark on the Landscape

## **Chapter 4 Groombridge to Matfield**

22.8km (14.1 miles)

A Lordly Landscape

## **Chapter 5 Matfield to Rolvenden**

30.6km (19 miles)

A Productive Landscape

## **Chapter 6 Rolvenden to Flackley Ash**

20.0km (12.5 miles)

A Changing Landscape

## **Chapter 7 Flackley Ash to Rye**

7.1km (4.4 miles)

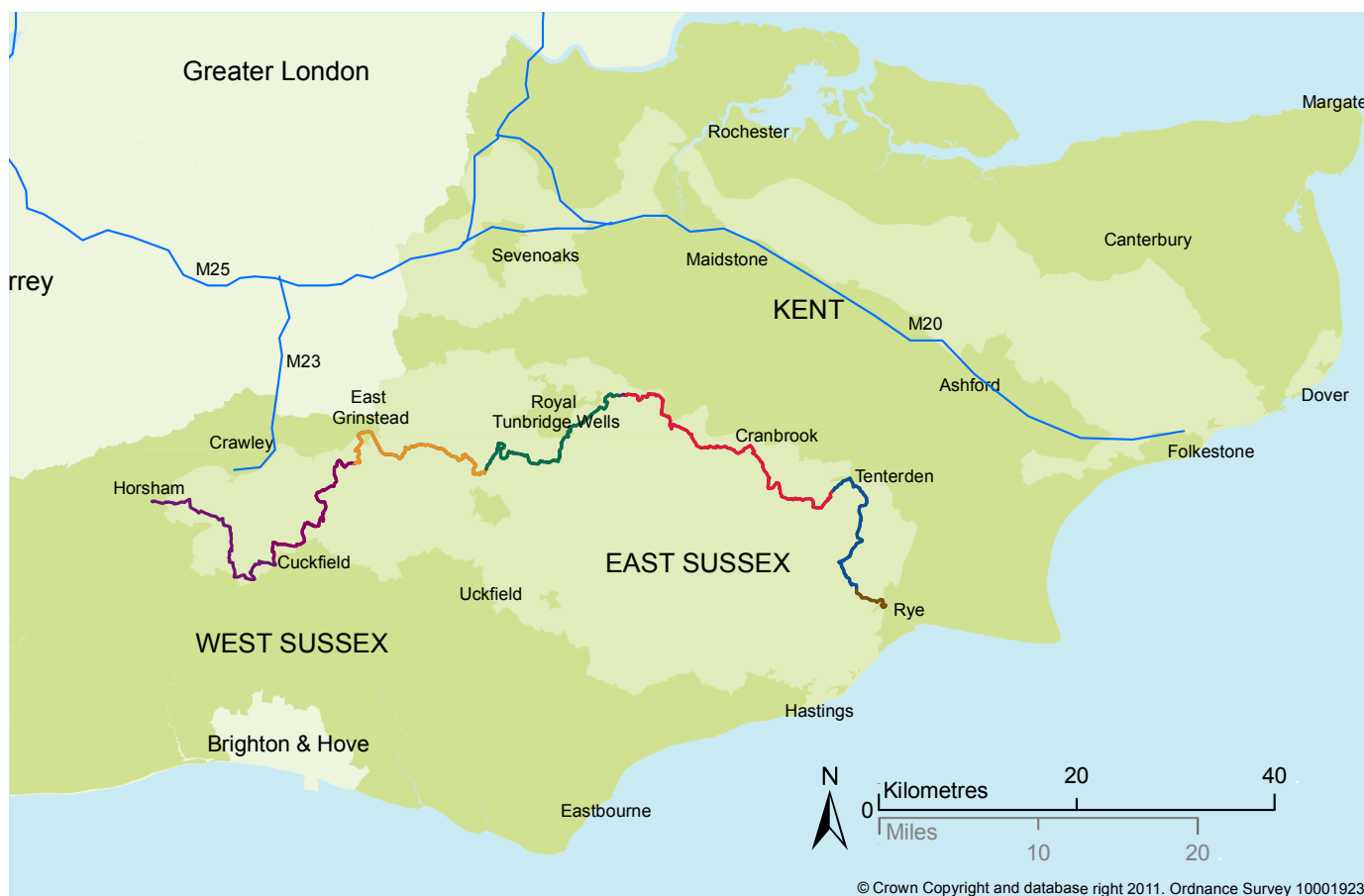
A Landscape of Rivers and Marsh

# The High Weald Landscape Trail

The High Weald Landscape Trail crosses the counties of West Sussex, East Sussex and Kent providing an opportunity to explore the heart of south-east England.

Meandering through one of England's finest landscapes - the High Weald - the 145 kilometre/95 mile Trail links the area's ridge-top villages and allows exploration of the features that make the area unique.

To find out more about the area's special features, watch the videos at [www.highweald.org/learn/about-the-high-weald.html](http://www.highweald.org/learn/about-the-high-weald.html) or to download a spotter's guide visit [www.highweald.org.html](http://www.highweald.org.html)





# Guide Information

## Maps

The route maps are reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Explorer Series and are of a scale no smaller than 1:25,000.

All sections of the walk follow legally defined rights of way unless otherwise indicated on route maps. Before using the route guide, walkers are advised to study the key to the route maps and map symbols. It is also recommended that you take an OS Explorer map with you.

## Walking the route

Route maps and features of interest are set out for walking the route in an easterly direction and can be read in reverse if walking the route in a westerly direction.

## Distances and times

The distances in the guidebook are given in kilometres and miles. The exact conversion of miles to kilometres is 1 mile to 1.6093km. For convenience the approximate conversion is 1 mile to 1.6km.

## Waymarking

In West Sussex the route is waymarked by a metal, circular High Weald Landscape Trail disc on wooden finger posts. Occasionally fingers are routed with "High Weald Landscape Trail". In East Sussex the route is waymarked with metal, circular High Weald Landscape Trail discs routed into the directional blue and yellow arrows used to sign the rights of way network. In Kent the route is waymarked by circular waymark discs with the trail logo in the centre of the directional arrow. These are yellow for a public footpath, blue for a public bridleway and red for a public byway.

You will see the waymarkers fixed to posts, or gates or stiles. The walk has been waymarked in such a way that it is possible to walk the route in either direction. In Kent, link routes that connect the path with towns and train stations are also waymarked with the High Weald Landscape Trail logo.



## Acknowledgements

Produced by the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee 2012



With support from:



This onguide has been created using material produced for the High Weald Landscape Trail Guidebook published in 1999.

Authors – Lorna Jenner, Eila Lawton, Gerry Sherwin

Illustrator – Sandra Fernandez

Photographers - High Weald AONB Unit staff

Images of Horsham town centre - Horsham District Council

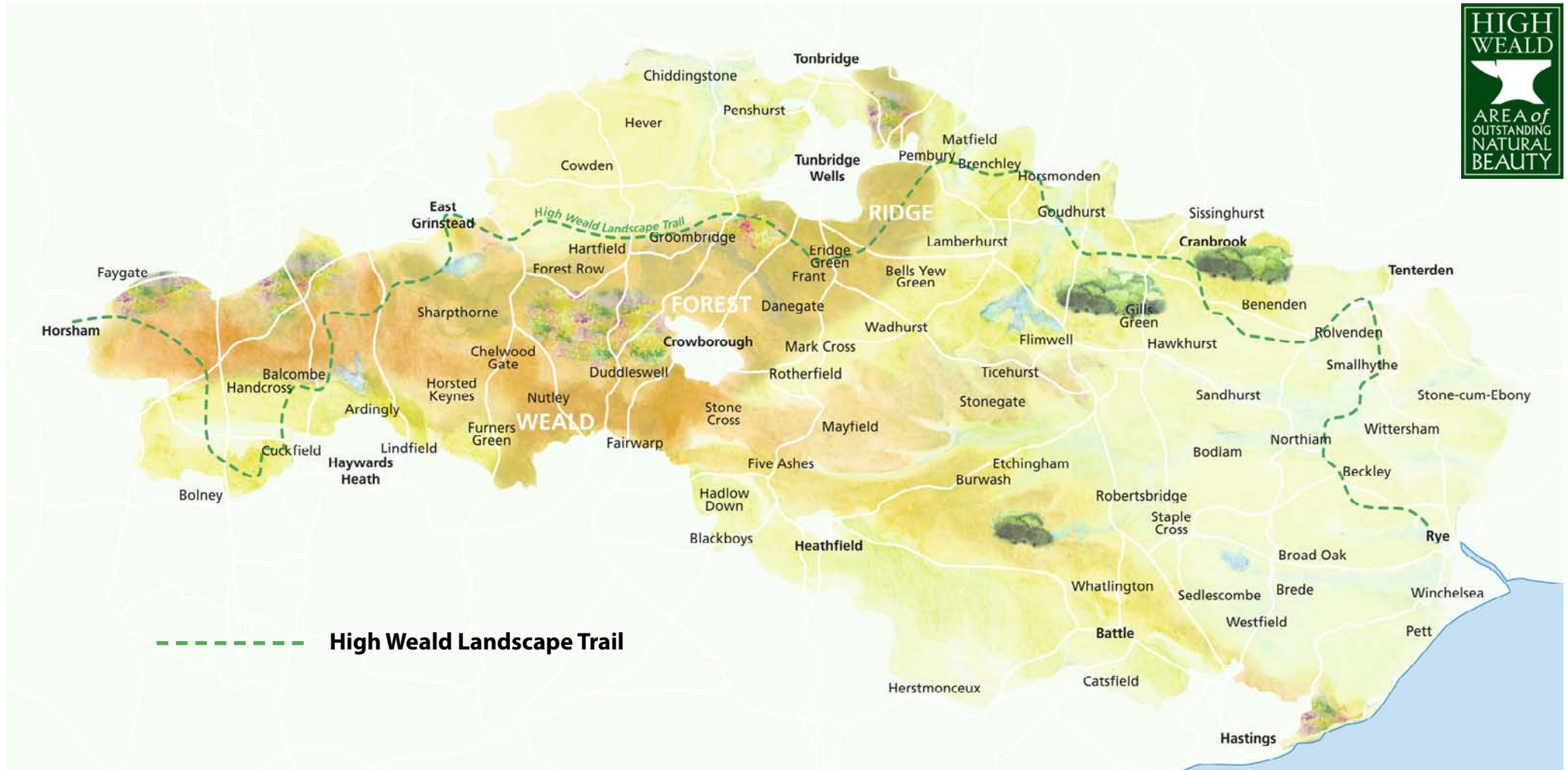
Image of the Ypres Tower - Rye Museum

Designed by Explore Kent.





# High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty





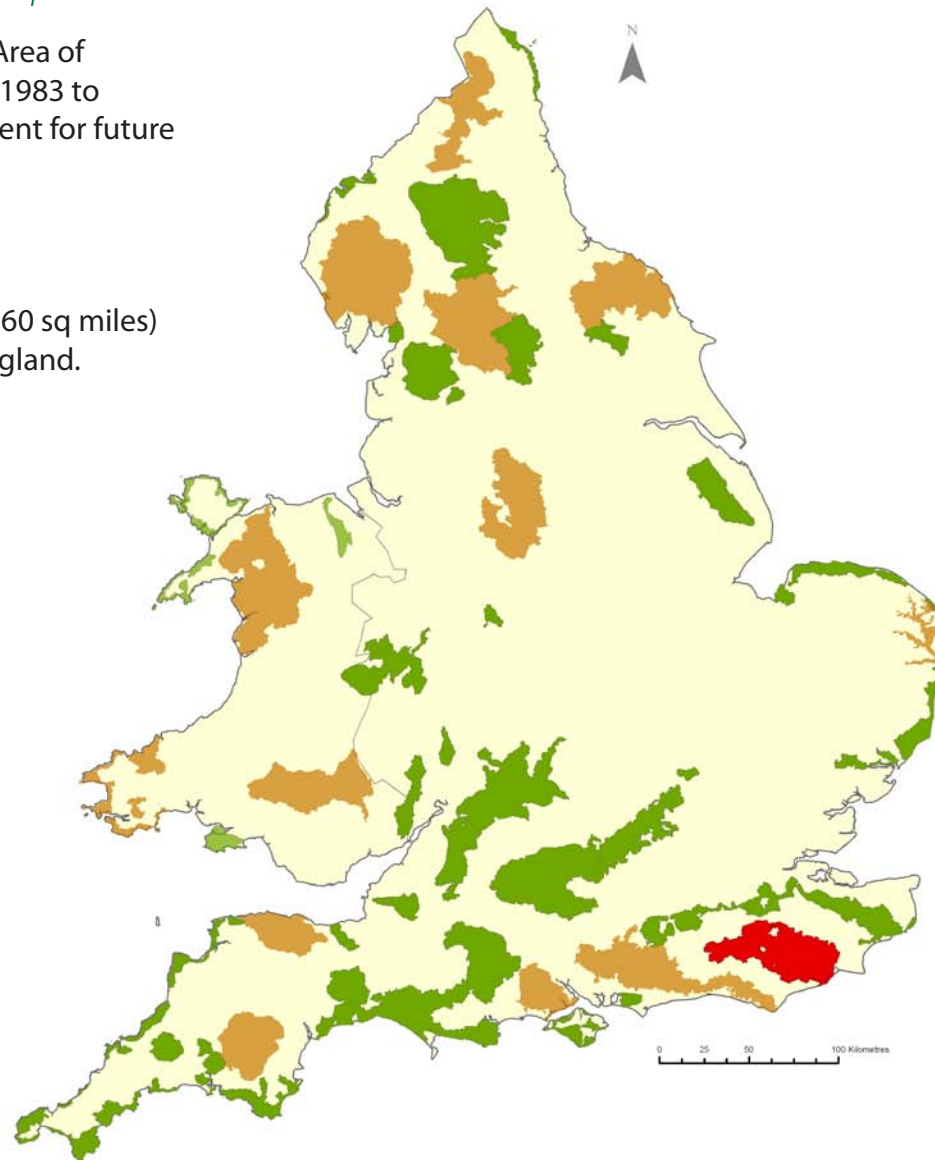
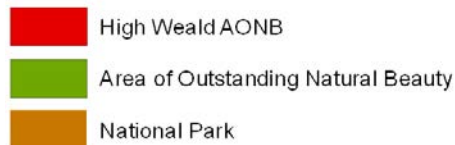
# About the High Weald

## *One of England's Finest Landscapes*

The High Weald was designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1983 to ensure its conservation and enhancement for future generations.

It:

- is the hilly core of the Weald
- covers an area of 1,450 sq km (560 sq miles)
- is the fourth largest AONB in England.



## *The Story of the High Weald*

As long ago as the Neolithic period, (8,000 to 800 BC) or even earlier, farmers from the South Downs, North Downs and coastal plains began to use the area's woods as a seasonal source of food for their animals. Each year, in late summer or early autumn, they would drive their pigs into the High Weald woods to fatten them on acorns and beech mast (nuts), an activity known as "pannage". Farmers would return with their pigs to the same woodland pastures - known as "dens" - year after year. Pannage, more than any other activity, has created the character of the landscape we see today; the High Weald is still essentially a medieval landscape.





# The Key Character Components of the High Weald

The five key components are:

## **Narrow, often sunken lanes**



Pigs being driven along the same route between their parent villages in the Downs and the High Weald formed tracks, known as droves. The radiating network of roughly north-south droving routes lives on as the area's roads, lanes, bridleways and footpaths. Many have become sunken, after centuries of use by trotters, feet, hooves - and later, cartwheels.

## **Scattered farmsteads and hamlets**



Over 38 per cent of the area's houses are in the countryside outside villages. The area's distinctive pattern of scattered settlements stems from the dens that were scattered across the area – over time they became permanent farmsteads and hamlets, many of which remain today.

## **Abundant, interconnected ancient woods and hedges**



Woodlands have been a valuable resource for centuries, yielding acorns for pigs, timber for building, fuel for heating and charcoal for iron-smelting. As a result, numerous small woods interconnected by narrow shaws (strips of deciduous woodland between fields and along roadsides) and hedges still cover one-third of the High Weald, making it one of the most densely wooded parts of the country.

## **Small, irregular-shaped fields and heaths**



Small, irregularly-shaped fields were hewn out of woodland pastures by settlers to create the farmed landscape we know today. Though parkland creation and agricultural developments have led to boundary changes, the shape of many fields hasn't changed in centuries.

## **Rolling hills dissected by steep-sided gill streams, studded with sandstone outcrops and dotted with ponds**



Clays form the low valleys of the High Weald, while harder sandstone forms the high ridges that run








































east-west. The sandstone outcrops scattered across the area and cliffs at the coast are a sign of what lies underneath. Gills – steep-sided, narrow, often wooded valleys with small, fast flowing streams - support liverworts and mosses. Many ponds are often by-products of past industries; fish ponds, mineral extraction, marl pits, hammer ponds and mill ponds. They are often found hidden in woodlands, tucked in field corners and next to farmsteads.

These fundamental characteristics of the High Weald AONB are enriched by locally distinctive and nationally important details. These include castles, abbeys, historic parks and gardens, hop gardens and orchards, oast houses and parish churches, veteran trees and local populations of key threatened species.





# 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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*Order maps over the telephone (by cheque, credit or debit card) by calling Kent County Council on:*

**08458 247 600**

*(Mon - Fri: 8am - 8pm)*





# Useful Information

*Plan ahead for your walk. Take all the information you require with you.  
Find tips for planning your walk on [www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent](http://www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent)*



Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs. Leave gates as you find them. Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home. Keep dogs under close control.



For further information visit:  
[www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk)

## Signage on public rights of way



Footpath



Bridleway



Byway



Restricted Byway



To plan your journey using public transport you can find travel information and advice, by calling Traveline on:

**0871 200 22 33**

Available from 8am until 8pm.  
Calls charged at the national rate.

## Reporting a problem

If you experience a problem on the High Weald Landscape Trail please contact:

**West Sussex County Council** - Horsham to East Grinstead section  
01243 777620  
[prow@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:prow@westsussex.gov.uk)  
[www.westsussex.gov.uk](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk)

**East Sussex County Council** - East Grinstead to near Matfield (feature of interest 87) and from near Flackley Ash (feature of interest 135) to Rye sections  
0345 608 0193  
[rightsofway@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:rightsofway@eastsussex.gov.uk)  
[www.eastsussex.gov.uk/rightsofway](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/rightsofway)

**Kent County Council** - Matfield (feature of interest 87) near Flackley Ash (feature of interest 135)  
08453 450210  
[prow@kent.gov.uk](mailto:prow@kent.gov.uk)  
[www.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccess](http://www.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccess)

For other useful information visit the Long Distance Walkers Association website: [www.ldwa.org.uk](http://www.ldwa.org.uk)