



The tank turret – just one of the clues to the site's military history.



Woodlark

So how have we pieced together the story of Broadwater Warren? Well it's a combination of a desk job and a 'muddy boots, getting your hands dirty' kind of job!

Archaeologists have examined historical maps and photographs and done some detective work on the ground searching for earthworks and artefacts. We've also looked for clues from surrounding areas within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which shares much of our history. It is through this process that our 'story' starts to take shape. There are still some unsolved mysteries and there is much more to be discovered as our work here continues.

Unearthing the past



As our restoration work continues, the butt of the firing range will become much more visible.

If you'd like to know more, we'll be running archaeology walks here in the future. We would love to find out more too and are always looking for keen volunteers to get involved and help us to learn more, either on site or by undertaking historical research. You can get in touch with us by telephone on 01892 752430, or e-mail broadwater.warren@rspb.org.uk.

The use of metal detectors, excavation and the collection of artefacts is not permitted.

As you have seen, looking after wildlife brings plenty of other responsibilities. The RSPB manages all sorts of archaeological sites, spanning thousands of years, on its nature reserves: from a Napoleonic fort to prehistoric burial mounds and standing stones. We couldn't do this without the support of our members, and if you would like to become one of them, you can find out more at www.rspb.org.uk/join

We would like to thank Chris Butler Archaeological Services which has provided help and expertise.



Our thanks go to the following organisations who have supported this work, enabling us to discover, share and protect the archaeological heritage at Broadwater Warren nature reserve.



You can discover more about the High Weald story at www.highweald.org and about looking after our heritage at www.english-heritage.org.uk



The RSPB speaks out for birds and wildlife, tackling the problems that threaten our environment. Nature is amazing – help us keep it that way.

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654. BWVV-1363-10-11 Images: Front cover by Adrian Thomas (RSPB), tank turret and the butts both by Chris Butler. Woodlark by Chris Gomersall and nightjar by Andy Hay (both rspb-images.com).

Allow an hour or so to walk the 3.5 km (2 mile) history trail. It's a circular trail and this guide leads you around the route in a clockwise direction (but you can follow it in either direction). Simply follow the red arrows on the marker posts. The paths are in general flat or gently sloping, but can get muddy in winter and after rain so you may want to wear your walking boots or wellingtons.

Many of the archaeological features were created when the landscape was more open – a mix of heathland and scattered trees. The conifer plantations are more recent additions. Our ongoing work to remove these and to restore the heath will help rare and threatened species including birds such as nightjar and woodlark. As well as benefiting wildlife, this restoration work is uncovering hidden archaeology. We're working with experts to help interpret and preserve our history, as well as share it with you.

Broadwater Warren is quite a new RSPB reserve, but it has a long and varied history. On this walk we'll help you to discover its heritage and give you a feel for what life here might have been like over the past few hundred years.

Welcome to the History Trail



BROADWATER WARREN HISTORY TRAIL



A self-guided trail, which explores our fascinating history and reveals stories of military manoeuvres, royal shooting parties and boundary disputes.

The Trail

① STEP BACK IN TIME

What better place to get you started than the old road? Walk along this track and you're actually on the main road from Eridge to Groombridge, at least, you would have been if you were back in 1800.

② AN UNSOLVED MYSTERY

These D-shaped mounds appear in several places and are always adjacent to tracks, but we're really not sure what they are. We don't yet know why or when they were built. The age of the trees growing on top might give us some clues.

③ DRAWING THE BOUNDARIES

Banks like this one were formed in the days before machinery so all this earth must have been moved by hand. Its shape tells us it marks a boundary. The old road cuts through the bank, which can be seen running at right angles either side of the trail – this suggests that the boundary bank is older than the road.

④ WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Even the name of our site gives an insight into its history. A warren is a place where rabbits were farmed. This may seem strange to us now but when the Normans introduced rabbits to this country, sometime after 1066, they were valuable animals.

Coming from southern Europe, rabbits took a while to adapt to our cooler climate. Developing a warren often involved the construction of 'pillow mounds'. Here rabbits could be sheltered from adverse weather, fed and protected from predators. We think this is a pillow mound and in late medieval times this bank could have been riddled with rabbits.

⑩ THE HOLLOWAYS

There are numerous trackways surviving across Broadwater Warren, but the sunken lanes here are the most distinctive. Tracks like these can be found all over the High Weald. Used as drove roads, these deep tracks, surrounded by banks, were formed by centuries of use by feet, hooves and trotters.

⑪ HOLD YOUR NOSE

We're not certain, but this small, banked enclosure could date from medieval times and have been used for livestock. What would it have sounded and smelt like? Or perhaps it was built to keep livestock out and something unusual was grown here?

⑫ WHAT'S COOKING?

Can you see any circular mounds? Whilst ants will build mound-like hills, they're unlikely to build them in a straight line. There are eight mounds in total here spaced in a line at 15–20 m intervals. These

⑤ & ⑥ WATCH OUT FOR STRAY BULLETS

From the late 18th century through to the Second World War if you were a young man you could have been based here – the open heathland of Broadwater Warren provided an ideal landscape for military training. You're now standing at the top end of a firing range – look for the raised banks and sunken trenches of the firing points. Imagine taking your place on the bank or in the trench, surrounded by your fellow soldiers, aiming towards the targets.

⑦ & ⑧ BULLSEYE!

This 30 m long, 10 m wide and 6 m high earthen embankment formed the butts of the firing range created in the 19th century. They were reused during the Second World War. The targets were set up in front of the butts, which were designed to stop the bullets. Soldiers manning the targets would shelter in the trench – imagine the bullets whizzing over your head!

But how would you know your shots were hitting target? We think this crescent-shaped mound could have been the command post – an ideal spot for a flag signaller to communicate between the firing point and the soldiers manning the nearby butts.

⑬ STORAGE SOLUTION

There are several quarries around Broadwater Warren. They were used during military training or to remove sand and sandstone for construction purposes. This one has remarkably square sides and we think it could have been built as a military store.

⑭ SCRAP METAL

We've found the turret of a tank here. From what remains, it appears to be a Churchill tank, which was used during the Second World War. Who did it belong to and why do you think it was left here? We're trying to piece together its story...

⑮ FULL CIRCLE

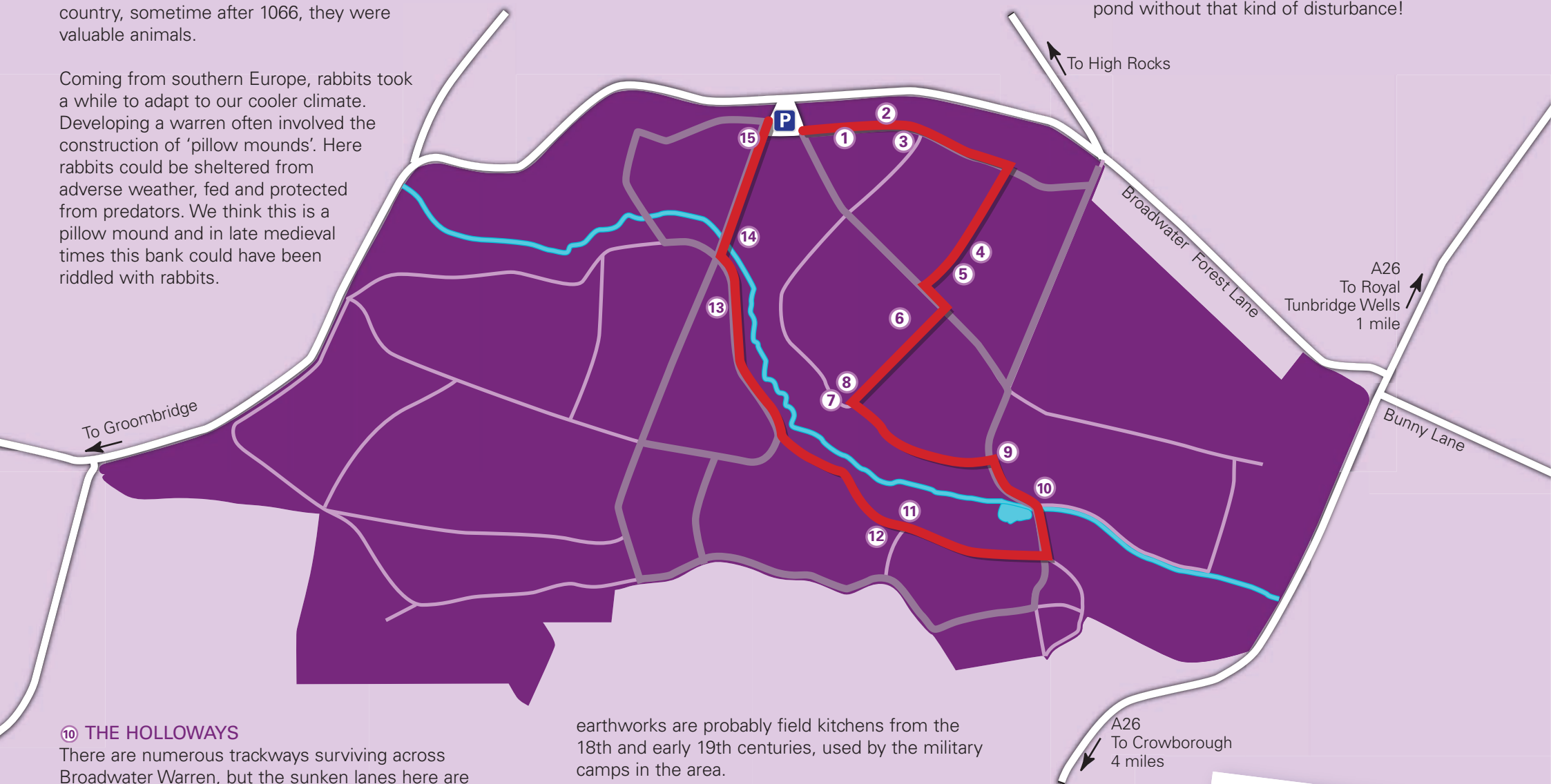
We'll finish the trail as we started it, re-joining the old road.

Watch out for wildlife – the well-camouflaged **nightjar** can be tricky to spot!

⑨ BOUNDARY DISPUTES

This bank marks what was the boundary of the Eridge Park Estate. If you followed the line of the boundary, you'd find that it makes a detour up this slope.

In the late 19th century, The Prince of Wales and other dignitaries enjoyed shooting parties at Eridge Park. The pond was created so these VIPs could enjoy a spot of wildfowling. This could explain the 'dogleg' in the boundary bank – if you stood at the top of the slope you'd have a great vantage point over the water. Nowadays, we're trying to encourage wildlife to enjoy the pond without that kind of disturbance!



Key:

- Water
- Heath and woodland
- Car park
- Main tracks
- Smaller tracks
- Trail