

High Weald Anvil²⁰⁰⁵

A **free** guide to the Area of **Outstanding** Natural Beauty



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• *Special 'Landscape Detectives' Edition* •



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Welcome to the sixth edition of The High Weald Anvil



dedicated to the theme of "Landscape Detectives". Sherlock Holmes – arguably the most famous detective EVER – has a High Weald connection: his creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, was a Crowborough resident – living in Windlesham Manor. (The Manor was ceremonially

exorcised after Conan Doyle's death in 1930 and is now a residential home.) On a murky winter's day, nearby Ashdown Forest is certainly somewhat reminiscent of Dartmoor – the setting for the The Hound of The Baskervilles. Perhaps this was one of the things that the author liked about the area! (For a modern detective story set on Ashdown Forest, turn to page 19.)

The High Weald area has been the setting for some famous – and infamous – landscape detective work. Mary and Gideon Mantell were Dinosaur Detectives. Their 1822 fossil discovery in a quarry near Cuckfield proved to be the remains of a large plant-eating dinosaur, Iguanodon – the first of its kind to be found anywhere in the world.

In 1911, Charles Dawson – another amateur geologist – found some fossil bones near Piltdown. For years, these were thought to be the remains of a "missing link" between man and the apes. "Piltdown Man", as he became known, was finally revealed to be a hoax in the 1950s. But who was the culprit? The finger of blame even rested briefly on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle! In 1996, the hoaxer was finally unmasked as a frustrated zoologist called Martin Hinton. However, some people remain unconvinced to this day...

The Piltdown hoax may seem like a silly waste of scientists' time. But the research required to reveal that Piltdown Man was a forgery – and, further, to reveal the perpetrator – was actually of enormous benefit to the study of geology in general.

Research into our landscape's past will be of enormous benefit to it in the future. But the High Weald still has many unsolved mysteries. Like a crime detective, a landscape detective builds up a picture from many types of evidence: clues are found in old maps and documents, aerial photographs, archaeological remains, earthworks, "indicator" plant species – and, as our Oral History feature reveals, the spoken word.

I hope you will enjoy reading about some of the High Weald's modern Landscape Detectives. Maybe you will be inspired to become one yourself!

The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith
President, High Weald AONB

The High Weald Anvil has been published by the High Weald AONB Unit. The Unit is a specialist team that advises on the management of the nationally valued landscape. It furthers understanding of the area's special qualities and enables action to conserve it.

The High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee (a partnership of 13 local authorities, the Countryside Agency and organisations representing community, recreation, wildlife and farming interests) guides the work of the High Weald AONB Unit.

Editor/writer **Janina Holubecki** (except where otherwise indicated).
Attractions and events information compiled by **Kerry Baldwin**.

Published by High Weald AONB Unit, Woodland Enterprise Centre, Hastings Road, Flimwell, East Sussex, TN5 7PR
Tel 01580 879500 Fax 01580 879499
email info@highweald.org website www.highweald.org

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Watching the detectives



Before we could begin to see the most effective ways in which we could care for the High Weald landscape, we felt it was vital to understand the forces that shaped our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Making of The High Weald (which you can download from our website) collects together and summarises much of the historical landscape research that has so far been done – but there is still lots of work to do!

The High Weald AONB Unit is currently involved in several research projects, the results of which will not only guide and inform AONB conservation strategies – but will also be of use to other conservation organisations and to landowners.

Though several professional "landscape detectives" are at work in the High Weald,

many volunteer researchers are also making their mark. In some cases, the research projects rely on information collected by volunteers. In this issue of the Anvil, we interview some volunteer researchers who are contributing greatly to our knowledge of the High Weald. But there are many more unsung heroes.

There are many ways to get involved: research doesn't have to be complicated or time consuming. Help us to monitor threatened wildlife by reporting unusual plants and animals spotted on a walk, or contribute to climate change research by recording when you see the first snowdrop appear or leaf fall in your garden every year. Biological record and climate research both rely on data collected by thousands of ordinary people to demonstrate that changes are occurring in the natural world. The vol-

ume of data needed could not be collected any other way (see page 9).

If you have more time to spare, you could help with archive research for our Ancient Woodland Project, or help to transcribe tape recordings for the Ashdown Forest Oral History Project. The contact details for these projects can be found on the relevant page.

Finally, if you are interested in the High Weald's special landscape and would like to get more involved in caring for – and learning about – the AONB, why not join Friends of The High Weald? You will find details on page 18.

Councillor Paulina Stockell,
Chairman: High Weald Joint
Advisory Committee

Research news from the Unit

The High Weald AONB Unit is currently running a series of research projects aimed at increasing our understanding and knowledge of how the High Weald landscape works.

Work is ongoing on the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) project (page 4). The Unit is also hosting a two-year pilot project to research the cultural and wildlife importance of woodland sites in and around the High Weald AONB (pages 6 and 7).

The Unit has begun an Oral History project to record the spoken memories of past custodians of the High Weald landscape (page 3).

A major project is underway to identify the sustainable characteristics of rural settlements. Work is also underway to map and characterise historic farmsteads.

All of these projects help us to understand the workings of this complex landscape, both in terms of its history – what happened how and where, but also in terms of what happens today – how the landscape is used by the current generation. This all adds to our understanding of the landscape and how best to preserve its special qualities.

Andrew Shaw

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Forest memories

The High Weald AONB Unit has begun a project to record the spoken memories – ‘oral histories’ – of past custodians of the High Weald landscape. This diverse group of people includes retired livestock farmers, fruit and hop growers, foresters, charcoal makers, coppice workers and commoners. Initially, the focus will be on the Ashdown Forest area, but if this pilot project is successful, it is hoped that the whole of the AONB will eventually be covered.



High Weald residents, by getting involved through groups such as Friends of The High Weald, can make a valuable contribution to research about the history of the area. Local Historian Pat Selby became a “Friend of the High Weald” in 2004, when this group was first formed by the High Weald AONB Unit. Since then, Pat has been using her Oral History expertise to help the Unit to set up the Oral History project for the Ashdown Forest area.

Pat first became interested in Local History when she was living in the London Borough of Sutton. She and her family – along with many other residents – used a small area of wasteland in between two arms of the River Wandle as their bit of countryside in the city. When the Council revealed plans to turn the wasteland into a formal park, Pat was at the forefront of the campaign to conserve it as a natural open space for wildlife instead. She researched the history of the site to back up the residents’ campaign. When they won, she began to realise just how useful (and important) local history can be.

The far-sighted Borough then funded a project to look into the history of a nearby factory that was being pulled down. They were looking for volunteers to tape record the recollections of past employees and, again, Pat got involved. She had received no training in Oral History at this stage, but as she says, she’s a “people person” and the technique came naturally to her. She subsequently joined the Croydon Oral History Group.

Pat moved to Crowborough, on the edge of Ashdown Forest, eight years ago – and found herself in a totally unfamiliar landscape that she knew nothing about. The University of Sussex Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) was running outreach courses locally – and so Pat and her husband Stephen attended one called “Wealden Wildlife” to learn more about their new surroundings. The course tutor suggested they might like to study for the CCE degree in Landscape Studies. Pat found this idea very daunting, as it was a long time since she’d been in formal education. However, she and Stephen decided to attempt one module – Vernacular Buildings – to see how they got on. Pat was shocked when she got 70% for her first assignment – and realised she could do it after all! She graduated with a BA (Hons) in 2004.

Over six years, Pat studied several various modules for the degree, including Planning and Policy, Conservation and Agriculture and Natural Habitats. However, when the time came for her to study her specialist subject, Oral History, she found it was no longer a module in its own right. “I had to put up a very good argument to study Oral History in as much depth as I wanted – you could say I was a bit of a maverick!” she laughs.

Pat got her way. In fact her final dissertation – The History of a High Weald Dairy Farm 1939 – 2004: A Farmer and His Landscape

Through Oral History, we can learn in detail about ways of life that, in some cases, no longer exist; and we can preserve spoken memories – before they are lost forever – to bring history alive for future generations.

It is envisaged that the oral history recordings will be invaluable material for use in future interpretation projects requiring “real voices” to tell the story of the High Weald – for example at the Ashdown Forest Centre. This form of interpretation is used to great effect in many modern museums, for example Brighton Museum.

Some members of the Friends of the High

Weald – plus others with an interest in the history of Ashdown Forest – have been enlisted as volunteer interviewers. They will attend an Oral History training day in April before setting out on their mission with their recording equipment. Interviewees are being enlisted by word of mouth – there appears to be no shortage of people who would like to tell us about “how life on the Forest used to be”!

The Ashdown Forest Oral History Project is being funded by the Unit’s Weald Heathland Initiative that is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, through the Tomorrow’s Heathland Heritage Programme.



Clockwise from above: Cyril Walter on horse, Hollybush Cottage; Percy Scott and Charlie Gorrings stooking oats, Duddleswell; Romany children on the Forest; Rose Penfold with house cow, Horney Common.

1940s photographs by kind permission of Peter Kirby

included a large Oral History element. For this project, she chose a farm that had been run by the same family since 1939 – and charted all the changes in farming as seen through the eyes of that one family.

“Farming has changed so much in the last 60 years that if you don’t record the memories of today’s 80-year-olds, then you will never get some details on record. This particularly applies to Ashdown Forest. The Forest is changing: sadly, a lot of properties are being sold to people who are not using their Commoners’ Rights and so it is not being used as it once was. This is our last chance to find out how the old Commoners really lived.” She quotes Oral Historian George Ewart Evans: “Tomorrow may be too late. Once this knowledge is under the soil, no amount of digging will ever recover it!”

Pat considers Oral History to be her most useful (and enjoyable) local history research tool. “It’s so enlightening sometimes: one interviewee said he had an uncle who went from farm to farm, thatching hay ricks – in the days before hay was baled. I’d never even heard of that trade before – it was a complete revelation!”

“Oral History has a lot to do with memory. Over the years, things get remembered out of context and this adds an extra challenge. I often check oral histories against documented evidence.” However, some people do have very good memories indeed and their recollections are exact. Pat remembers the case of one farmer who, in his late 80s, remembered the exact date a doodlebug bomb fell on one of his fields. (The field was called Doodlebug Field thereafter!)

Pat is particularly emphatic about the importance of accurately transcribing oral history recordings: “An exact transcription can – and should – preserve the local dialects and way of talking. I often use a Sussex dialect dictionary when transcribing in case I come across an unfamiliar word in the recording. In one interview, the interviewee used the word “brutting”. I had no idea what it meant, so I asked him to explain. He said it referred to cows nibbling the lower branches of trees! As I said – enlightening!”

Centre for Continuing Education (CCE)

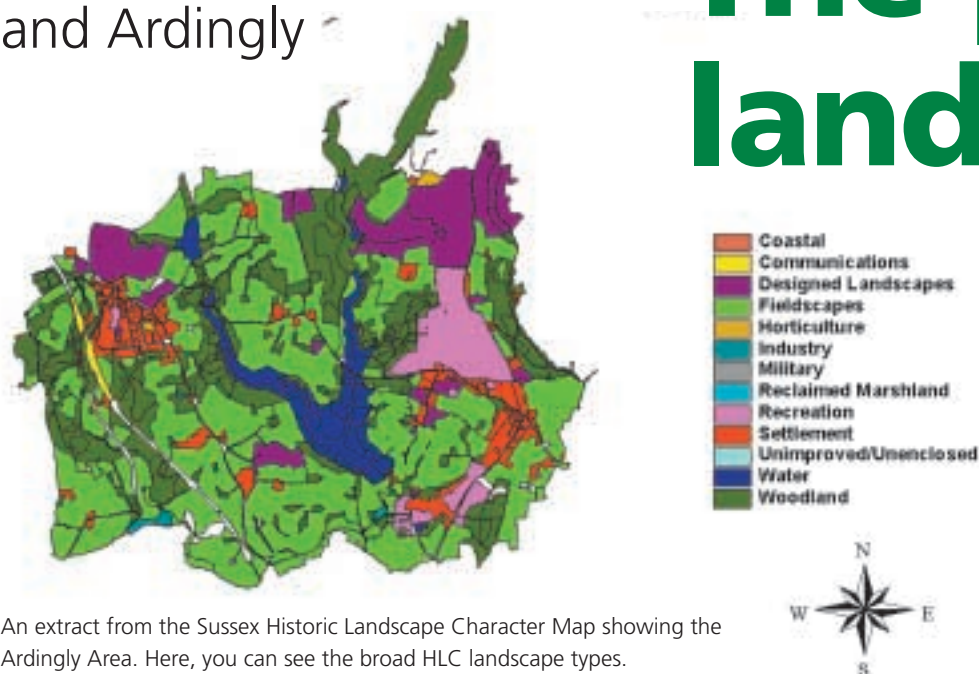
The Sussex Institute
Essex House
University of Sussex
Falmer
Brighton BN1 9QQ
01273 877888
si-enquiries@sussex.ac.uk
www.sussex.ac.uk/cce

Transcribing recordings is an essential part of the Oral History project. We are looking for more volunteers to help with this. Audio typing skills would be particularly useful! Please contact the High Weald AONB Unit for more details.

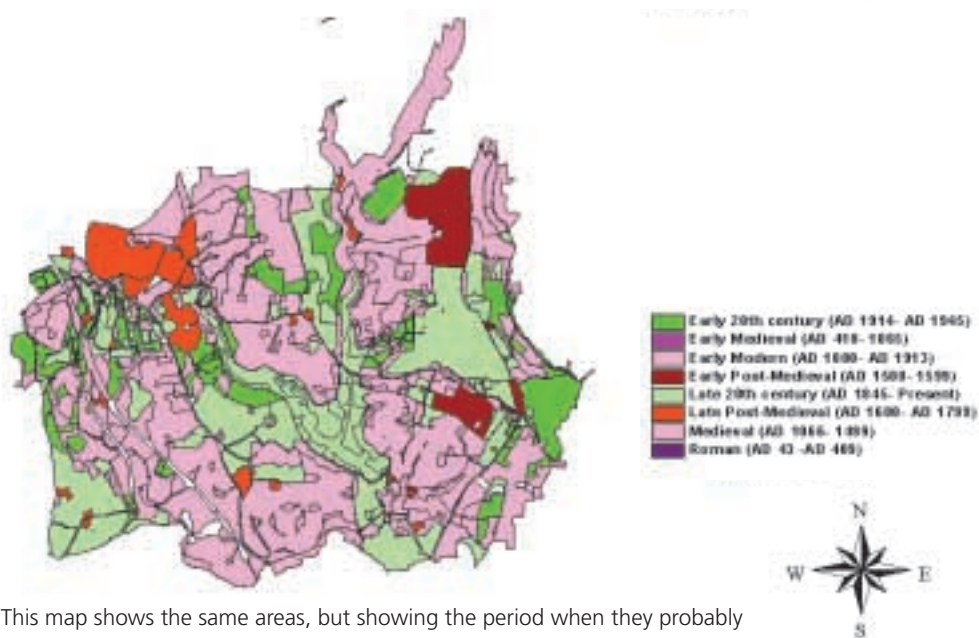
Do you like these pages? Send us your views by post or email: info@highweald.org

Balcombe
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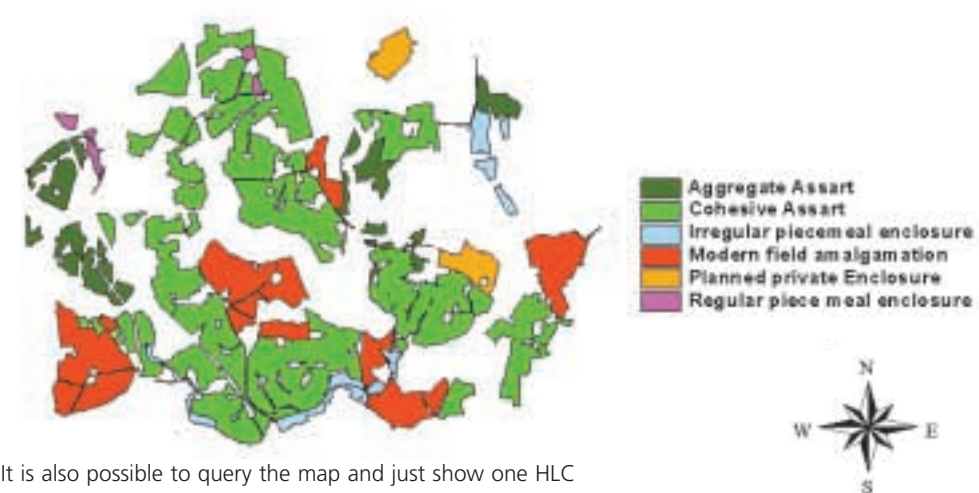
The professional landscape detective



An extract from the Sussex Historic Landscape Character Map showing the Ardingly Area. Here, you can see the broad HLC landscape types.



This map shows the same areas, but showing the period when they probably originated. This gives an indication of the antiquity of the present landscape.



It is also possible to query the map and just show one HLC type – such as fields – as this map shows.

Why not explore this area for real by doing our featured walk on page 13?

The Sussex Historic Landscape Characterisation Project (2003-2006) is part of the England-wide project run by the English Heritage Characterisation Team and is a partnership between English Heritage, East and West Sussex County Councils, Brighton and Hove Unitary Authority, the South Downs Conservation Board and the High Weald AONB.

The High Weald covers parts of Kent, Surrey and East and West Sussex: much of the AONB lies in the project area. Nicola previously undertook the HLC for Surrey – this can be viewed on Surrey County Council's website at www.surreycc.gov.uk/maps. On the Surrey Interactive Map, click on "Your Environment" and then tick the "Historic Landscape" layer to see the interactive HLC Map.



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Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is an important new way of understanding the countryside. It looks at the character and historical pattern of today's landscape and explains how we've arrived at the present view by understanding the processes that have shaped it. The aim is to systematically characterise the present landscape according to a pre-defined checklist of historic and physical attributes. All areas of England will eventually undergo HLC.



Measuring a saw pit for a more traditional historic landscape survey

Whether the term "Landscape Detective" conjures up a mental picture of Sherlock Holmes, Miss Marple, Hercule Poirot or Inspector Morse; the sleuth will invariably be imagined in an outside setting. However, a modern Landscape Detective may not necessarily spend their working day out in the fresh air – in fact they are quite likely to be stuck in front of a computer instead!

Nicola Bannister works as a freelance Landscape Archaeologist and normally carries out Historic Landscape Surveys, using a combination of fieldwork and archive work. However, for her present work on the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) of Sussex – East and West – she never leaves her office!

For Nicola's 3-year project, each individual parcel of land in the countryside of the whole of East and West Sussex has to be mapped and the historic characteristics – such as field shapes – that can be seen in the present landscape recorded. Rather wistfully Nicola explains that, due to the sheer scale of the project, fieldwork is out of the question. Instead, she has to rely on a variety of old maps and aerial photos for her information.

Nicola studies digitised versions of four editions of large-scale Ordnance Survey (OS) maps – covering the period 1860 to 1940. She also looks at the Surveyors' draft drawing for the first edition, which provides additional detail. A chronological series of maps can illustrate how land use has changed over time. Even place names – for example den – can give valuable information (see page 20). Additionally, the aerial photo surveys of 1947 and 2002 contain much valuable detail not shown on maps. For example, the type of field boundary – be it hedge, fence or wall – shows up clearly.

Using sophisticated computer software called a Geographical Information System (GIS) Nicola uses a modern Ordnance Survey base map to digitally outline every field (or group of fields),

common, heath and wood. The result is a collection of irregular shapes called GIS polygons. "I'm now on about polygon number 15,000 and I've hardly even started on the High Weald, which covers quite a large chunk of Sussex."

For each area of the present landscape described by a GIS polygon, historic attributes are chosen from a historic landscape attribute checklist. This has been specially devised by Nicola using features from other HLC areas – but tailored to the landscapes of Sussex. For example, in the case of fields, these attributes describe their shapes (regular, semi-regular or irregular – the dominant shape of High Weald fields); types of boundaries (fence, ditch, hedge or wooded hedge – the latter common in the High Weald); relationship with other landscape features and present degree of field boundary loss compared with the oldest OS 1st Edition map.

"Using GIS, we can now look at elements in our present landscape to see whether they existed in the past. In this way, we are easily able to see which parcels of land have changed over time – and which have not. GIS cleverly enables us to develop a set of colour-coded digital map layers that can be viewed all at once – or in any combination – making historical landscape analysis easier than ever before. Like the landscape itself, the historical information provided by HLC is fluid and can be changed and updated: being digital, the project can easily be added to in the future."

Historic Landscape Characterisation provides guidance and understanding about the nature and character of the landscape we live, work and play in today – in order to best manage change in the countryside for tomorrow and for future generations. The Sussex HLC will be used in strategic decision-making such as planning control, where it will form an advisory information source. It will also be made available to schools and libraries as an educational tool.

15,000 polygons down, but how many still to go? Nicola guesses about 100,000!

Spare time sleuth

Kerry Baldwin, High Weald AONB Unit Administrator, lives in Hailsham but has always felt very “at home” in the High Weald. When she started investigating her family history, she began to realise why...

I first became interested in tracing my family history after finding some details of great grandparents in an old family bible when clearing out my grandparent's house. All of my subsequent investigations have been carried out online through various genealogy websites: these days, with the Internet, you don't actually have to leave the house to find out any information. You can even

belonging to such waggon and horses”.

The next generations of the family were farmers in the Burwash area. My four times great grandfather George, mentioned in the 1851 census, was a Farmer of 120 acres – employing 4 people – at Battenhurst Farm near Ticehurst. This farm still exists today. My direct line then seems to have shifted to Dallington. Again, they were farmers and by the 1881 census, my great great grandfather, William, is a Farmer of 20 acres at Earls Down, Warbleton with a second occupation – “chicken fattener”! A machine had been invented by a local farmer that literally crammed food into

seen many of these terracotta reliefs – usually bowls of fruit, cherubs and flowers – and wondered what they were all about. Little did I know I had a family connection.

I am also tenuously linked – through a husband of my three times great grandmother – to ‘Mad Jack’ Fuller, Squire of Brightling and local Member of Parliament from 1757 to 1834. Known as an eccentric, he was responsible for building various follies around the Brightling area, such as the Sugar Loaf and the pyramid tomb in Brightling churchyard. Funnily enough, as a child I remember my grandmother telling me

Kerry by Jack Fuller's tomb, Brightling



order copies of birth, marriage and death certificates online.

Three strands of my family tree, the Harmers, the Pilbeams and the Messages have all been in the High Weald for hundreds of years and can be traced around the villages of Sussex. Taking just one strand, the Pilbeam family, I discovered that they were mainly farmers in what has always been my favourite part of the High Weald. The first on record was Robert Pilbeame, who lived in Ticehurst. His son John Pilbeam (he dropped the e) and grandson Stephen were Yeomen at Wadhurst. (Yeomen being farmers who are not tenants but own their land.) Stephen, according to the Manor of Burwash Court records, purchased an orchard and half an acre of land in Burwash in 1772 – formerly called Lucks and later Butlers. His will, proved (i.e. verified) in 1782, shows him leaving to his eldest son “my carrier's waggon and the seven best cart horses and two best riding horses I shall have at the time of my decease and also the tilts, harness, saddles, bridles, halters and tackle

chickens to speed up fattening before they were carried to London on the new railway lines. It would appear William was one of the earliest involved in this illustrious career.

William's son George farmed at Three Cups Corner – and my great uncle Sidney inherited the farm. My grandfather, Ronald Charles, moved to Punnett's Town, where he had a dairy and for many years delivered milk to the local area including Heathfield. Some elderly residents still remember my mum helping him out in the 1960s, accompanied by me as a small child!

Of course, when investigating the family tree, everybody wants to find royalty or somebody famous – and I was lucky enough to find two locally famous people in my line, through the Harmer family. My second cousin seven times removed was Jonathan Harmer, famous in the Heathfield area for his terracotta reliefs on gravestones in local cemeteries. His father was a stone mason and Jonathan created the terracotta decorations that can still be seen today. I have

there was a link to Mad Jack, but as I grew up I put it down to my overactive imagination. However, once you start your family history you find there is usually a grain of truth to many of the family rumours.

When I look back at my family tree, I now know why I have never felt like moving too far away from the High Weald. With three strands of my family entrenched as farmers on the clayey soil, I really feel like my roots belong here.

Websites

www.ancestry.co.uk
www.genesreunited.co.uk
www.bbc.co.uk/familyhistory
www.madjackfuller.blogspot.com/
www.villagenet.co.uk

Please note that information gained about family history from the Internet should never be taken as correct until real documents – such as birth and marriage certificates – have been tracked down.

News in brief

Heritage Lottery Fund bid

The High Weald AONB Unit has secured a £46,100 planning grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to develop a large project proposal that could secure a further £2 million from the Fund. The proposal will aim to enhance the special habitats of the High Weald and improve the public's understanding of its unique heritage.

The Unit has appointed a project development officer, Janet Whitman, to work with other organisations to develop the proposal.

The bid will focus on the surviving fragments of the Weald's medieval forests - Ashdown Forest, Broadwater and St Leonard's Forests - that once covered large tracts of the sandstone ridge between Horsham and Tunbridge Wells.

Tessa Hilder, Regional Manager for HLF, said “We're delighted to have been able to make this award which will ensure that local people are made more aware of the special habitats of the High Weald. It is wonderful that HLF is able to support a project that will promote the importance of the historic and environmental heritage of this site”.

If you would like further information, wish to join the Steering Group or have a project idea that could be included in the bid, please contact Janet Whitman on 01580 879962 or email j.whitman@highweald.org



High Weald secures grant

The High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) has secured a grant of £300,000 from Europe's INTER-REG IIB programme. The Committee's specialist team, the High Weald AONB Unit, worked with colleagues from Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands to develop ‘Lifescapes’, a project that aims to show how joint working within Europe can lead to new approaches to revitalising rural areas.

‘Lifescapes’ aims to bring people together to identify how the special features of local landscapes can add value to the products and services within. The grant will be used within the High Weald AONB to promote the area's local distinctiveness through green tourism projects and to train people in countryside skills and crafts. A recent article in the Daily Telegraph by Charles Glover suggested that rural crafts will be more profitable to the rural economy than farming within the next 10-15 years.

Further information available at www.highweald.org



Archaeological features as indicators of ancient woodland

Evidence of past management (for example coppice), varied woodland structure, an irregular boundary shape and the presence of archaeological remains – indicating past woodland use – are all clues suggesting ancient status.



Woodland boundary bank on the High Weald Landscape Trail, Benenden



Sunken "hollow-way", eroded through centuries of use. Bog wood, Burwash



Woodland ponds, Benenden – flooded pits remaining from an old industry

Book review

Portrait of a Woodland – Biodiversity in 40 acres

Charlotte de la Bedoyere

Charlotte de la Bedoyere's house is surrounded by forty acres of High Weald woodland, much of it ancient. The idea for this book was born when a survey of her woods revealed an amazing 250 native species of trees, shrubs and plants. This is an extremely personal account of Charlotte's 25-year fight against "the triple evils of neglect, deforestation and alien conifers" – as it says on the jacket – and of the plants and animals that inhabit the eleven different woods in Charlotte's care.

There are a couple of management ideas in the book that we could not condone: planting self-sown cotoneaster seedlings and planning to introduce the wild service tree. The former are non-native, while the latter are ancient woodland indicators and could confuse future surveys. However, the true glory of the book is its superb photographs, mostly taken by Charlotte herself – a true celebration of Ancient Woodland and the biodiversity it supports.

Search Press 2004. ISBN 1-84448-013-5

Janina Holubecki

The High Weald: ancient woodland stronghold

Abundant, small woods are a characteristic feature of the High Weald landscape – and 68% of this woodland is "ancient". Compare this with the national figure of 19%. The High Weald has more ancient woodland than any other AONB.

Ancient woodland is nationally regarded as the most important type of woodland for wildlife as it has provided a continuity of habitat conditions for a great variety of plants and animals over many centuries. Ancient woodland can also provide a living record of woodland management practices over the centuries – and is therefore a vital link to the past.

Ancient woodlands are a threatened resource and by definition are irreplaceable.

Why is there so much ancient woodland in the High Weald?

High Weald woods were relatively slow to be cleared – compared to those in the rest of Britain – because they were valued by local people for the resources they provided. In the past, Downland farmers brought their pigs to feed on the acorns; charcoal burners set up their camps to provide fuel for the iron smelting furnaces and woodcutters sought timber for ship-building. Although our woods were heavily exploited, they were rarely destroyed: careful management ensured that a supply of wood was always available.

Woods on the many steep slopes of the area – such as those found on the sides of High Weald gill streams – would not have yielded useful agricultural land if cleared and so were often left: another reason why the area has so much ancient woodland.



Old coppiced Hornbeam

Further information

If you are a keen botanist and would like to help with woodland field surveys; or would like to help with the archive research for the project, please contact Sally Westaway, Habitat Survey and Mapping Officer, at the High Weald AONB Unit: s.westaway@highweald.org 01580 879960

If you own a woodland or know of any information that might be useful for the survey we would love to know about it. To submit

Woodland

Rachel Nicholson and Pat Donovan are two of the volunteers researching the cultural and

Rachel and Pat got involved with the Ancient Woodland Survey through the Sussex Botanical Recording Society (SBRS), which was asked if any of its members would be interested in taking part. The Society undertakes research projects itself: for example, the Ashdown Forest Flora – a 5 year project to record in detail the plants found on the Forest. The Society is also just starting on a New Sussex Flora, due to be published in 2010, to replace the out-dated Sussex Plant Atlas of 1970.

"Amateurs can make a real contribution to research. They really come into their own when a project involves a long time scale because they can provide consistent recording over a long period, whilst short term projects come and go." Both Pat and Rachel feel that it's very satisfying to be able to contribute to the body of knowledge.

For the current survey project, the volunteers received a brief training in woodland archaeology and recognition of tree management techniques. They were also given an overview of the County Record Office and its cataloguing systems.

The volunteers are given an outline map of each site on which to record the physical features of the wood. They record interesting, very old or very large trees, types of management in the wood (i.e. coppicing, pollarding or unmanaged scrub) and archaeological features. These include saw pits, charcoal hearths, tracks and hollow-ways, ponds and the remains of iron workings; plus boundary features such as bank and ditch systems, which are of particular importance.

They are also given a botanical check-



Charcoal kiln before being covered in earth

list. From a botanical point of view, they are particularly looking for plants that are indicators of ancient woodland, but record all species found on the checklist. They also record invasive species, damage, disease or any other notable features. Finally, they write a brief summary – an "overall impression" of the wood to indicate which species dominate.

There are several practical considerations with this type of research. For example, winter is the best time to see the woodland archaeological features, whereas in summer these become difficult to see under the vegetation. However, many plants can only be identified in the spring and summer. Woods are surveyed from public rights of way and volunteers tend to concentrate on those local to them. Rachel surveyed 34 woods

A "charcoal hearth" is a round, levelled area in a wood indicating the previous site of a charcoal kiln



A long-time member of the SBRS, Pat originally developed her interest in plants by painting flowers whilst still at school; subsequently she went to Wimbledon Art School. Her botanical knowledge has mostly been gained by going out on field meetings with the SBRS and learning from the experts. Pat points out that the Botanical Society of the British Isles (BSBI) is concerned about the decline in fieldwork, as botany graduates generally don't tend to leave university with good plant identification skills.

How much do we really know about our ancient High Weald woods?



High Weald gill

this information, please go to the High Weald homepage at www.highweald.org and click on the Habitat Information Form button, or use the contact details above.

You can check whether woodland is on the Ancient Woodland Inventory by visiting www.magic.gov.uk (Magic provides a web based interactive map bringing together information on key environmental schemes and designations which can be searched by post code or place name.)

The Ancient Woodland Survey, hosted by the High Weald AONB Unit, is a two-year pilot project to update and enhance the existing Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) produced in 1989. Since its production, advances in mapping technologies – together with an increased understanding of the ecological role of small woodlands – mean that previous inaccuracies in the inventory can now be addressed.

The survey will record the extent and location of ancient woodland in the area and act as a baseline against which future change can be measured. This will help us to monitor the UK’s biodiversity commitment to maintain and restore ancient woodland sites.

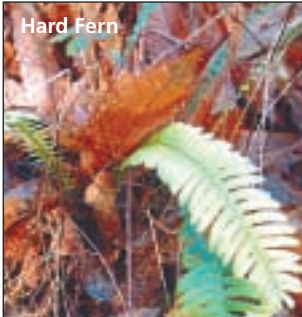
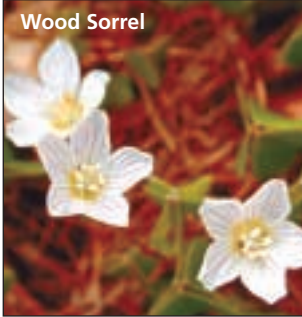
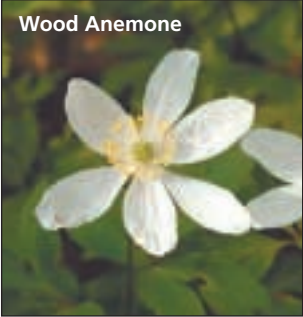
Revision of the AWI is being carried out using a combination of digital map sources, field surveys and historical archive research. Using a computer-based Geographical Information System (GIS), historical maps and aerial photographs can be overlaid with modern Ordnance Survey maps – allowing areas of more recent, or ‘secondary’ woodland to be eliminated prior to ground survey work and ancient woodland sites to be identified. These sites are then visited and a field survey is carried out. The survey identifies features that are likely to indicate ancient woodland, such as the presence of characteristic, specialised plants – as well as looking for other clues such as archaeological remains.

The research work is assisted by a small team of skilled and dedicated volunteers. Their time and local knowledge have contributed significantly to the project. Project Officer Sally Westaway says: “Without the help of volunteer researchers, the survey would take far longer to complete and there would be significantly less data available on which to base decisions”.

Ancient woodland indicator plants in the South East

In most parts of Britain it is possible to compile lists of flowering plants and ferns that are more likely to be found in ancient woodland than in recently planted woodland. These are all native woodland species that are generally slow at spreading from old woods to new ones (however this can be deceptive in the High Weald due to the density of woodland cover). Indicator species are also chosen for their conspicuous nature and ease of identification. When combined with other historical and land use evidence these species can be used in to show which woods are ancient.

Confusingly, some woodlands, despite being recently planted may still be ancient! If the soil has not been ploughed and the site has remained continuously wooded, then a seed bank of distinctive ancient woodland plants may still be present and able to take advantage of favourable conditions when they reoccur.



detectives

wildlife importance of woodland sites in and around the High Weald AONB



After a horticultural training, followed by a brief spell teaching Rural Science, Rachel left Britain for Africa, where her husband worked as a doctor for many years. Upon retirement, they returned to Britain and settled in the High Weald. Rachel joined the Sussex Botanical Recording Society (SBRS). For interest, Rachel and her husband attended some local short courses in Natural History run by a tutor from Sussex University’s Centre for Continuing Education (CCE). They found the teaching to be of such a high standard that they decided to enrol for the Field Biology Certificate at CCE (see page 3).

between March and July 2004!

For the archive research, Rachel and Pat work as a team, poring over old maps at the County Record Office in Lewes. First, they locate each wood on several old Ordnance Survey maps dating from the mid nineteenth to mid twentieth centuries. These are very accurate maps that record a massive amount of detail.

Then they move on to the tithe map – a typical date being 1847. These maps are very large and finding the woods is hard as they are merely shown as plots of land – not even named, but instead given a tithe number. (Woodland in the weald was non-titheable, hence was accurately recorded.) Once a plot of land is identi-

fied as the present-day wood in question, its number is then referenced in a separate index to the map – which records in detail its name, owner, tenant, tithe paid and its use or status at the time the map was made. “It takes ages”, says Pat.

But this information is necessary to see whether the present woodland has ever been cleared for another use for any length of time – thus breaking its chain of continuous existence – and therefore making it less likely that plants indicative of ancient woodland will survive the non-wooded years. For example, if in the past an existing wood was once a hop field, it is unlikely to be classed as ancient. This information is then compared with the botanical data – and hopefully the two research methods – archive and fieldwork – will back each other up!

Rachel and Pat have found the map research fascinating, if a bit tedious at times. “What interested me most about the maps is seeing how little the landscape has changed” says Rachel. “Most of the woodlands of the mid nineteenth century do still exist today, though some are a bit smaller and there are a few more conifer plantations.”

Rachel even managed to find her house on the tithe map as it was built in 1830. Since then, the house and land have both been split up, but she noticed something on the map: “The front lawn was a lawn even then – so it has been undisturbed grassland for a long time – and this probably explains why I get such interesting mushrooms growing on it!”

Why not visit your local Record Office? (It is advisable to make an appointment, particularly if you want to look at old maps.)

East Sussex Records Office
The Maltings, Castle Precincts, Lewes
01273 482349
email: archives@eastsussex.gov.uk
www.eastsussexcc.gov.uk

West Sussex Records Office
Orchard Street, Chichester (near County Hall)
01243 753600
email: records.office@westsussex.gov.uk
www.westsussex.gov.uk

The Centre for Kentish Studies
Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone
01622 694363
email: archives@kent.gov.uk
www.kent.gov.uk

Land management contacts**Weald Meadows Initiative (WMI)**

The Weald Meadows Initiative provides farmers, landowners and other clients with site-specific and practical support to enable the management, creation and enhancement of wildflower grassland.

www.highweald.org

Dawn Brickwood 01580 879957

Email meadows@highweald.org

Weald Heathland Initiative (WHI)

Two Heathland Project Officers offer expert advice, training and grants to heathland owners, managers and community groups.

www.highweald.org

Caroline FitzGerald 01580 879958

Email c.fitzgerald@highweald.org

Richard Allum 01293 544118

Email r.allum@highweald.org

Weald Grazing Network

The Weald Grazing Network aims to enable grazing on important sites.

Caroline FitzGerald 01580 879958

Email c.fitzgerald@highweald.org

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)

A national charity, FWAG provides farmers and landowners with practical advice – in order to support wildlife, landscape, archaeology, access and other conservation issues.

www.fwag.org.uk

Kent & Sussex Weald – Rebecca Harvey/Stephen Podd
01580 879399

Email rebecca.harvey@highweald.org

Kent High Weald Project (KHWP)

A countryside management project operating within the Borough of Tunbridge Wells, most of which lies within the High Weald AONB.

www.kenthighwealdproject.org

Will Farmer 01580 715918

Email will.farmer@khwp.org

West Sussex County Council

A countryside management service dedicated to the conservation of the High Weald AONB and surrounding area within West Sussex.

www.westsussex.gov.uk

Jackie Lewis(p/t) 01293 542088

Email jackie.lewis@westsussex.gov.uk

East Sussex County Council – Rye Bay Office

Dedicated to the conservation of the Rye Bay and Rother area of the High Weald.

www.ryebay.demon.co.uk

Simon Fathers 01797 226488

Email rangers@ryebay.demon.co.uk

Surrey County Council

www.countryside-management.org.uk

Diane Cooper, Countryside Management, 01483 517591

Weald Meadows Initiative

Action for valued grasslands

We would like to thank all our customers and acknowledge the help and support of our partners and agents – Agrifactors (Southern) Ltd.

The Weald Meadows Initiative can

- Help you source sustainably harvested wildflower seed, particularly Weald Native Origin Wildflower and Grass Seed (WNOS), for enhancement and creation projects within the area.
- Provide you with site-specific, specialist advice on managing and maintaining species rich grassland, enhancing species-poor grasslands and creating new wildlife areas.
- Offer you training and events that will further your understanding of wildflower meadows and their management.



For further information visit

www.highweald.org

Dawn Brickwood

Dawn Brickwood
Weald Meadows Officer
meadows@highweald.org

Are you trying to manage any land for wildlife? Fields, woods, paddocks, gardens – and community spaces such as churchyards – can all support valuable and threatened wild animals and plants.

Land management AGONY



Our High Weald Agony Aunts Daisy and Hazel will attempt to answer some land management and wildlife queries.



Dear Hazel,
I've got some old, dying trees in my small woodland – plus a lot of dead bits of wood lying around. They are rotting and I'm worried that they will spread disease to my healthy trees. What do you advise?

You will be pleased to know that the solution to this is easy: do nothing! Dead wood is not normally a threat to the health of your remaining trees or your woodland in general*. In fact, quite the opposite is true. Dead wood and dying trees are very useful as homes for a large range of wildlife like bats, insects, fungi, lichens and mosses. Around a third of woodland species nest in holes in trees; insects such as the rare violet click beetle are found in hollow trees and birds such as woodpeckers feed by seeking out insects under bark.

Standing trees provide a different kind of habitat from dead wood lying on the woodland floor – and it's not just completely dead trees which contribute. As far as nature is concerned, variety is the spice of life: as trees reach old age, rot-holes, hollow trunks and dead branches all start to make these 'veterans' more interesting as habitats.

So do try to resist the urge to "tidy up" your wood. If you have very old or dead trees and they are not standing near a footpath, building or road – then leave them to decay naturally. If there is not much fallen dead wood, you could actually create "habitat piles" of cut wood stacked in a shady area of the woodland and left to rot away. If you really must tidy up, remember that it's better to stack dead wood into neat piles and leave it in the woodland – rather than removing it altogether. Of course these piles should not be your firewood stores because you could burn all the creatures that are sheltering there!

*The one exception to this is wood infected with Honey fungus.

For more information, go to www.hdra.org.uk/factsheets/dc19.htm
www.stumps.biz/honeyfungus.htm

Dear Daisy,
I've got terrible thistles in my meadow this year. How can I get rid of them without damaging the wildflowers? Please help.

The application of herbicides across the whole field would be damaging: if possible, thistle management should be done by hand! Spear Thistles are best removed as rosettes in April and May before seeding, attacking them again in late autumn. One option is to use a special "Lazy Dog Tool" for this. Creeping Thistle is tackled during late May and June: you could try using a "Lazy Dog Chisel Hoe". By cutting just below ground level this weakens the plant's rhizome. After the hay is cut, remove the flowering seed heads from any remaining thistles you missed earlier in the year (This is done to prevent ripening and re-distribution by sheep and birds.)

You could say that this sounds very back breaking and labour intensive, but the design of the "Lazy Dog Tools" help reduce the arduous work, provided the ground is soft. The advantages of this method of thistle control are:

- The work can be done early in the season
- There are no chemical preparations involved, hence no special protective clothing, no face masks, no storage and no disposal problems
- Sheep are not excluded from the meadows
- Damage to other plant species and soil bacteria is avoided.

Both the "Lazy Dog Tool" and the "Lazy Dog Chisel Hoe" are reasonably priced and can add some job satisfaction and healthy exercise to the mundane task of thistle pulling.

Don't forget that some thistles are actually rare plants themselves e.g. Melancholy Thistle and Meadow Thistle, and special care is needed not to harm or damage them! Further details: "Lazy Dog Tool Company" – 01751 417351 www.lazydogtoolco.co.uk
For other weed control options, look at the Meadows page on the High Weald AONB Website at www.highweald.org

Dear Hazel,
I'm puzzled. I have found some rather pathetic bits of heather growing in a wood, of all places! What does this mean?

What you have there is a remnant of the once widespread heathland and woodland mosaic that occurred on the sandy ridge tops across the High Weald. Most of this special habitat has been lost due to changes in lifestyle and land management over the last 200 years. In past times, grazing animals prevented the open heathy areas from becoming covered in scrub and trees. However, with the decline in livestock farming, most of our heaths have now become densely wooded.

In the High Weald today, only tiny fragments of heath exist outside Ashdown Forest. Many of these were re-created by the 1987 storm, in newly open areas – where trees had blown down. These new heathy glades erupted in a blaze of purple heather the following summer – only to disappear again as trees grew back and once more shaded out the light. If no open glades remain within a wood, heather can sometimes be found at the side of tracks or rides.

In the High Weald, woods and heaths have always existed side-by-side – and some species have adapted to life on the edge where the two habitats meet. This means that heathland remnants – glades and rides – within woodlands are very important – being the last refuge of some of our rarest insects and birds. Woodland dwellers like the Fritillary butterflies actually need the open spaces within woods where sunlight penetrates. Nightjar, Tree Pipit, Yellowhammer and Linnet are bird species that depend on both the woodland edge and the open areas.

If you know of any heathy woods or small heathland fragments, we would love to know about them. To submit this information, please go to the High Weald Homepage at www.highweald.org and click on the Habitat Information Form link.

Exploring the High Weald



View on Ardingly walk, page 13

Wildlife of the High Weald

How you can help

During the last two decades, a network of biological record centres has gradually spread across the country. The aim of these centres is to collect and store information on local wildlife and habitats. The status of the local wildlife and any changes in populations can then be determined and the information used by decision-makers and other people with an interest such as local authorities, planners, conservation organisations, academics, local naturalists and the general public.

In order to provide up-to-date information, each record centre needs a constant stream of wildlife information coming in. Everyone in the High Weald AONB can now help to safeguard local wildlife simply by passing on any biological records to the appropriate Centre.

But what is a biological record? Basically, it consists of the four 'w's: who, what, where and when.

Who – the person who made the observation, preferably with contact details in case further information is needed.

What – the bird, plant or animal that was seen with as much detail as possible, e.g. 'a thrush' is acceptable but 'a song thrush nesting in a hedge' is better.



Burnet Moths on Vetch

When – ideally, the exact date if possible but it can be as vague as month, season or year.

Where – the location of the species. A good written description e.g. Seen from the footpath to the south of the pond at Scotney Castle near Lamberhurst. Better still, a location name and an Ordnance Survey grid reference. (Instructions for estimating grid references can be found on the legend of Ordnance Survey maps.)

All records will be welcomed, not just those of rare and threatened species. To keep it simple, you could limit the records to the species in your garden – or just to sightings that particularly interested you, such as seeing a Water Vole, Common Darter dragonfly or a Kestrel whilst out walking.

Contacts

If you would like to find out more about helping to protect the wildlife of the AONB through biological recording, please contact:

Kent & Medway Biological Records Centre
Tyland Barn, Maidstone.
www.kmbrc.org.uk
01622 685646

Sussex Biological Records Centre
www.sxbrc.org.uk
01273 497553

UK Phenology Network
(Climate change monitoring)
www.phenology.org.uk

Planning your visit

Travelling around the High Weald AONB

Wherever possible, use public transport. Information on the frequency of the services is provided but, for exact times, please call TraveLine 0870 6082608 www.traveline.org.uk If you do choose to travel by car, please use car parks or if spaces are not available, park in a sensible location that will not cause obstruction. Leave your car securely locked with any valuables out of sight.



Silver Hill walk, page 12

Rights of way

Most landowners welcome people on their land, provided that they do not stray from the rights of way and that they abide by the visitors' code.



Footpaths, for use by pedestrians only, are marked using yellow arrows



Bridleways, for use by horses, cyclists, and pedestrians, are marked with blue arrows



Byways, paths open to all traffic, are marked with red arrows

Where rights of way leave the road, metal or wooden finger posts, or a stone plinth indicate the way. At other points, such as field boundaries or path junctions, footpaths are marked with short posts or taller finger posts. In addition to the posts, public rights of way in Kent and East Sussex are usually marked with small coloured arrows to show the status of the path and direction. In West Sussex the classification of the rights of way is carved in words in the finger post. If the status of a path changes along its length, so does the colour of the arrows or the wording on the finger post. Where a right of way is a promoted path, the arrows are used in conjunction with the route's own symbol.

High Weald paths can be muddy at all times of year so waterproof boots are recommended.

Mapping information: www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk

If you have any queries or comments about rights of way in the area, or would like further information on access to the High Weald countryside, contact:

West Sussex County Council – 01243 777620
East Sussex County Council – 01273 482250
Kent County Council – 0845 3450210

VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

Houses, gardens and castles

1. The Almonry

High Street, Battle, East Sussex
01424 772210

2. Bateman's

Bateman's Lane, Burwash, East Sussex
01435 882302
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Open: 19 Mar-30 Oct, 11am-5pm, house, garden, shop & tea-room. 2 Nov-23 Dec, 11am-4pm, Garden, shop & tea-room.

3. Battle Abbey

Battle, East Sussex
01424 773792
www.english-heritage.org.uk

4. Bayham Abbey

Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890381
www.english-heritage.org.uk

5. Bedgebury Pinetum

Park Lane, Goudhurst, Kent
01580 211781
www.forestry.gov.uk/bedgebury
Open: daily, 10am-6pm, summer and 10am-4pm winter.

6. Bodiam Castle

Bodiam, Robertsbridge, East Sussex
01580 830436
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/places/bodiamcastle
Open: Daily 8 Feb-30 Oct, 10am-6pm and 5 Nov-12 Feb 2006, 10am-4pm. Last entry one hour before closing (or dusk if earlier).

7. Borde Hill Gardens

Balcombe Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
01444 450326
www.bordehill.co.uk
Open: daily all year, 10am-6pm (or dusk if earlier)

8. Brickwall House and Gardens

Northiam, East Sussex
01797 223329

9. Chiddingstone Castle

Chiddingstone, Edenbridge, Kent
01892 870347

10. Finchcocks

Goudhurst, Kent
01580 211702
www.finchcocks.co.uk

11. Great Dixter House & Gardens

Northiam, Rye, East Sussex
01797 252878
www.greatdixter.co.uk
Open: From 24 Apr on Tues and Sun 2pm-5pm.

12. Great Maytham Hall

Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent
01580 241346
www.cha.org.uk

13. Groombridge Place Gardens & the Enchanted Forest

Groombridge, Tunbridge Wells, East Sussex
01892 861444
www.groombridge.co.uk
Open: 21 Mar – 5 Nov, 9.30am-6pm or dusk if earlier.

14. Hammerwood Park

East Grinstead, East Sussex
01342 850594

15. Hever Castle & Gardens

Hever, Edenbridge, Kent
01732 865224
www.hevercastle.co.uk

16. High Beeches Gardens

High Beeches, Handcross, West Sussex
01444 400589
www.highbeeches.com
Open: 18 Mar – 31 Oct, every day except Weds. 1pm-5pm.

17. Hole Park Gardens

Hole Park, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent
01580 241344
www.holepark.com
Open: BH Mon & Sun, Easter to 3 July inc. Weds & Thurs, Easter to end Oct. All 2pm-6pm.

18. Lamb House

Rye, East Sussex
01892 890651
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

19. Leonardslee Gardens

Lower Beeding, Horsham, West Sussex
01403 891212
www.leonardslee.com

20. Marle Place Gardens

Brenchley, Nr Tonbridge, Kent
01892 722304
www.marleplace.co.uk
Open: 25 Mar – 3 Oct, Fri, Sat, Sun & Mon, 10am-5pm.

21. Merriments Garden

Hurst Green, East Sussex
01580 860666
www.merriments.co.uk

22. Nymans Garden

Handcross, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
01444 400321
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

23. Owl House & Gardens

Mount Pleasant, Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890230

24. Pashley Manor Gardens

Ticehurst, East Sussex
01580 200888
www.pashleymanorgardens.com
Open: 5 Apr – 29 Sept, Tues, Wed, Thurs & Sat & BH Mon, 11am-5pm

25. Penshurst Place

Penshurst, Tonbridge, Kent
01892 870307
www.penshurstplace.com

26. Priest House

North Lane, West Hoathly, West Sussex
01342 810479
www.sussexpast.co.uk

27. Sackville College

East Grinstead, West Sussex
01342 326561

28. Saint Hill Manor

Saint Hill Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex
01342 326711
Open: Daily, on the hour, 2, 3, 4, & 5pm

29. Scotney Castle Garden & Estate

Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 891081
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/scotneycastle
Open: 23 Mar – 30 Oct, Wed – Sun, 11am-6pm, last entry at 5pm or dusk if earlier. Old Castle, 1 May – 25 Sept, 11am-5.30pm.

30. Sheffield Park Garden

Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 790231
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

31. Sissinghurst Castle Garden

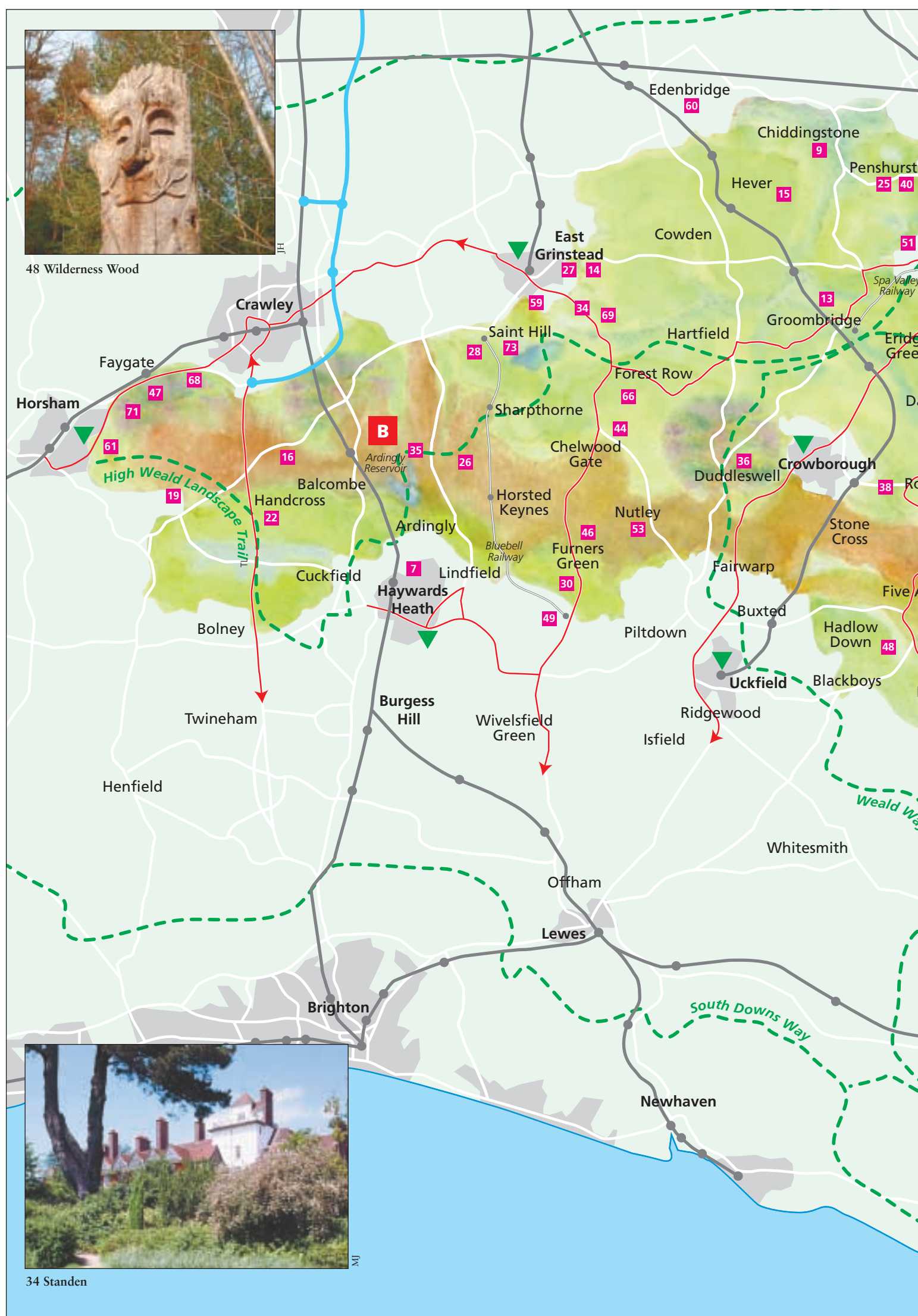
Biddenden Road, Cranbrook, Kent
01580 710700
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/places
Open: 19 Mar – 30 Oct, Mon, Tues & Fri, 11am-6.30pm (or dusk if earlier). Sat & Sun, 10am-6.30pm (or dusk if earlier) (last entry 1 hour before closing)

32. Smallhythe Place

Smallhythe, nr Tenterden, Kent
01580 762334
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Open: 26 Mar – 29 Oct, Sat to Wed, Open Good Friday, 11am-5pm. Last admission 4.30pm

33. Sprivers Garden

Horsmonden, Kent
01892 890651
www.nationaltrust.org.uk



34. Standen

East Grinstead, West Sussex
01342 323029
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/standen
Open: 18 Mar – 30 Oct, Wed – Sun & BH Mon, House 11am-5pm (last entry 4.30pm). Shop & Restaurant 11am-5pm & Garden 11am-6pm
See advert page 14

35. Wakehurst Place

Ardingly, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
01444 894066
www.kew.org

Vineyards

36. Barnsgate Manor Vineyard

Herons Ghyll, Crowborough, East Sussex
01825 713366
www.barnsgate.co.uk

37. Carr Taylor Vineyards

Westfield, Hastings, East Sussex
01424 752501
www.carr-taylor.com

38. Davenport Vineyards

Limney Farm, Castle Hill, Rotherfield, East Sussex
01892 852380
www.davenportvineyards.co.uk
Open: all year by appointment, please phone for details

39. Lamberhurst Vineyards

The Down, Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890412
Open: every day, 9.30am-5.00pm

40. Penshurst Vineyards

Penshurst, Tonbridge, Kent
01892 870255
www.penshurst.co.uk

41. Sandhurst Vineyards

Hoads Farm, Crouch Lane, Sandhurst, Cranbrook, Kent
01580 850296
www.sandhurstvineyards.co.uk
Open all year, phone to check.

42. Sedlescombe Vineyard

Cripps Corner, Robertsbridge, East Sussex
01580 830175
www.englishorganicwine.co.uk

43. Tenterden Vineyard Park

Small Hythe, Tenterden, Kent
01580 763033
www.chapelownwines.co.uk

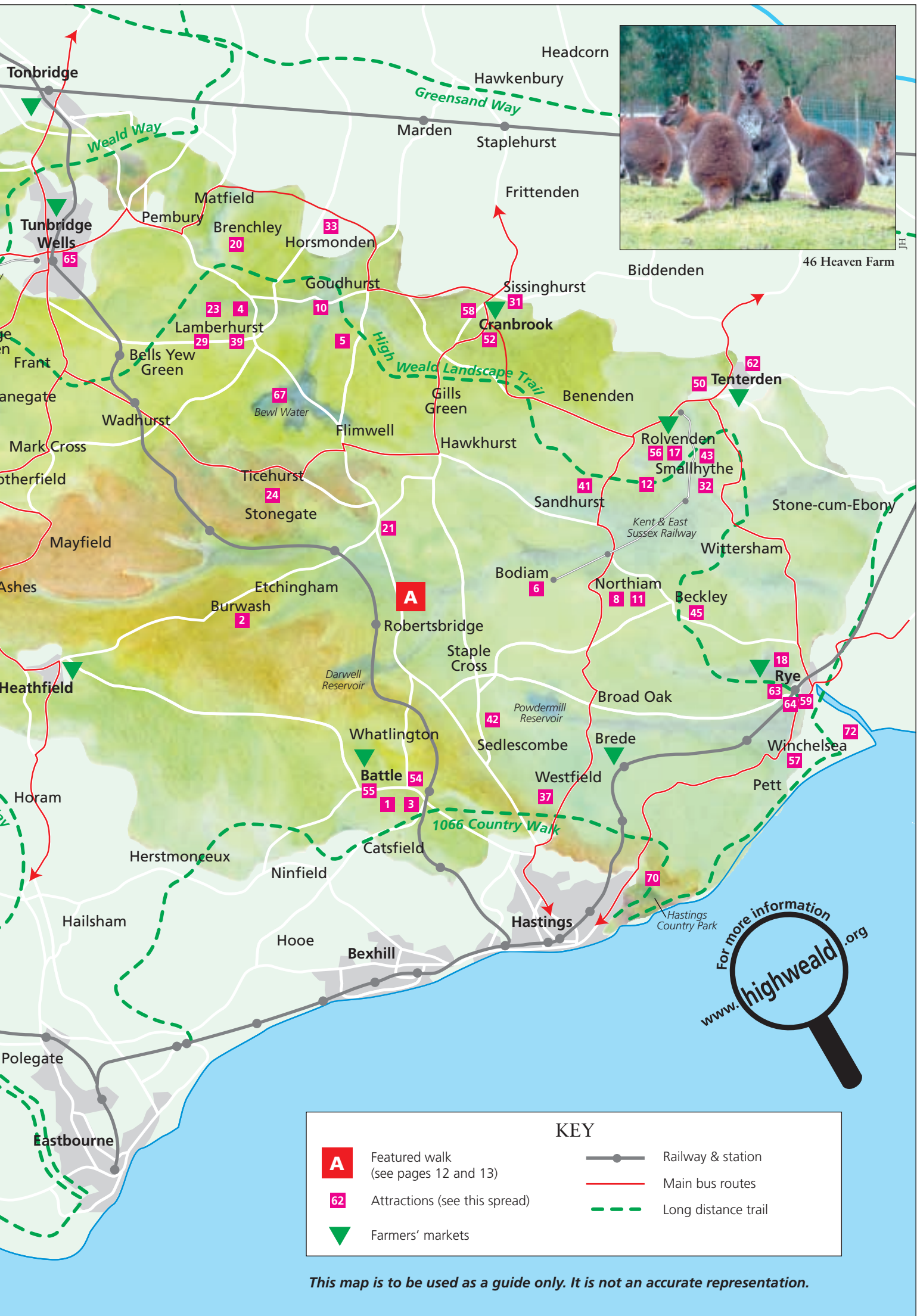
Farms and woods

44. Ashdown Forest Llama Park

Wych Cross, Forest Row, East Sussex
01825 712040
www.llamapark.co.uk
Open: Every day except 25/26 Dec, daily 10am-5pm

45. Farm World

Great Knelle, Beckley, East Sussex
01797 260250



56. CM Booth Collection of Historic Vehicles
Falstaff Antiques, 63 High Street, Rolvenden, Kent
01580 241234
www.morganmuseum.co.uk
Open: Mon – Sat 10am–5.30pm

57. Court Hall Museum
Winchelsea, East Sussex
01797 226382

58. Cranbrook Museum
Carriers Road, Cranbrook, Kent
01580 712516
www.cranbrookmuseum.org
Open: 1 Apr–31 Oct, Tues – Sat, 2pm–4.30pm, & BH Mons.

59. East Grinstead Town Museum
Eat Court, East Grinstead, West Sussex
01342 712087
http://www.hodgers.com/eastgrinsteadmuseum/
Open: 5 Jan – 21 Dec, Weds & Sats, 2pm–4pm

60. Eden Valley Museum
Church House, 72 High Street, Edenbridge, Kent
01732 868102
www.evmt.org.uk
Open: 1 Feb – 22 Dec, Tues & Wed 2pm–4.30pm, Thurs & Sat 10am–4.30pm & summer Sundays 2pm–4.30pm

61. Horsham Museum
9 Causeway, Horsham, West Sussex
01403 254959
Open: Mon – Sat except BH Mon, 10am–5pm

62. Tenterden and District Museum
Tenterden, Kent
01580 764310
www.ukpages.net/kent/museum.htm

63. Rye Heritage Centre
Strand Quay, Rye, East Sussex
01797 226696
www.rye.org.uk/heritage

64. Rye Castle Museum
Rye, East Sussex
01797 226728
www.rye.org.uk/public/museum/rye_castle_museum.htm

65. Tunbridge Wells Museum
Tunbridge Wells, Kent
01892 554171
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/museum

Country Parks/sites

66. Ashdown Forest Visitor Centre
Wych Cross, Forest Row
01342 823583

67. Bewl Water
Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890661
www.bewl.co.uk
Open: 9am–sunset except Christmas Day and 16 July, Concert Day

68. Buchan Country Park
Horsham Road, Crawley, West Sussex
01293 542088
www.westsussex.gov.uk
Open: Every Day

69. Forest Way Country Park
East Grinstead
01293 542088
www.westsussex.gov.uk
Open: Every Day

70. Hastings Country Park
Fairlight, East Sussex
01424 813225

71. St Leonards Forest
Horsham, West Sussex
01293 542088
www.westsussex.gov.uk
Open: Every Day

Nature Reserves

72. Rye Harbour NR
Rye, East Sussex
01797 223862

73. Weirwood NR
Saint Hill, West Sussex
01273 482670

Public transport information

Traveline
0870 608 2608
National Rail enquiries
08457 48 49 50
National Express (coach)
08705 80 80 80

Accommodation

Tourism South East
01892 540766 or local tourist information centres.

Battle TIC
01424 773721
Burgess Hill TIC
01444 238202
Crawley TIC
01293 846968
East Grinstead TIC
01342 410121
Hastings (Old Town) TIC
01424 781111
Hastings (Queens Square) TIC
01424 781111
Horsham TIC
01403 211661
Rye TIC
01797 226696
Sevenoaks TIC
01732 450305
Tenterden TIC
01580 763572
Tonbridge TIC
01732 770929
Tunbridge Wells TIC
01892 515675

Banks

In addition to main towns, banks with cashpoints can be found in the following villages:

Wadhurst
Cranbrook
Forest Row
Hawkhurst
Battle
Heathfield

Websites

www.highweald.org
www.visitbritain.com
www.sussexcountry.co.uk
www.sussexlive.com
www.villagenet.co.uk



46. Heaven Farm
Furners Green, Danehill, Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 790226
www.heavenfarm.co.uk
Open: Daily, Mar – Oct, 10am–5.30pm
See advert on page 14

47. Holmbush Farmworld
Faygate, Horsham, East Sussex
01293 851110
www.holmbushfarm.co.uk
Open: Feb – Nov

48. Wilderness Wood
Hadlow Down, Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 830509
www.wildernesswood.co.uk
Open: Every day, 10am–5.30pm (or dusk if earlier)
See advert on page 14

Steam Railways

49. Bluebell Railway
Sheffield Park Station, Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 722370
www.bluebell-railway.co.uk

50. Kent & East Sussex Railway
Tenterden Town Station, Tenterden, Kent
0870 6006074
www.ksr.org.uk
Please see website or request a brochure for opening times

51. Spa Valley Railway
West Station, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
01892 537715
www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk

Windmills

52. Cranbrook Union Windmill
The Hill, Cranbrook, Kent
01580 712256
http://users.argonet.co.uk/users/tonysing/Union/

53. Nutley Windmill
Nutley, Uckfield, East Sussex
01435 873367
54. Stocks Mill
Rye Road, Wittersham, Kent
01797 270295

Museums

54. Battle Museum of Local History
Battle, East Sussex
01424 775955

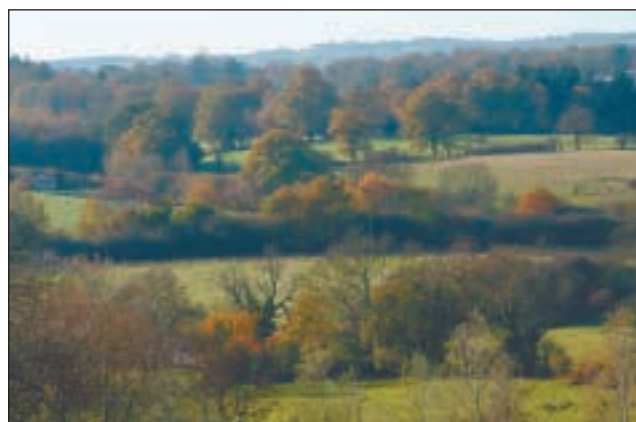
55. Yesterday's World
89–90 High Street, Battle, East Sussex
01424 774269
www.yesterdaysworld.co.uk
Open: Daily except 25.26 Dec & 1 Jan, 9.30am

The small settlement of Silver Hill is located on the A21 between Hurst Green and Robertsbridge. Silver Hill itself is reached near the beginning of this walk by an easy climb to 110 metres (360 feet). At the top of the hill there is a covered reservoir and Royal Observer Corps underground observation post.

The peaceful countryside of today hides a more violent past, the area having been terrorised by the notorious Hawkhurst Gang of smugglers. In 1740 a Revenue Officer, Thomas Carswell, was shot and killed at Silver Hill whilst trying to apprehend some of the smugglers.

Directions:

Starting from the road junction at Silver Hill, head along the road signposted to Bodiam for a short distance before turning left onto the signposted footpath. Follow the path along the driveway for approximately 335 metres (365 yards) until the driveway bears left. At this point turn sharp right and follow the grassy path between the two sets of cottages, before bearing left into the field.



A typical High Weald view

Cross the field in the direction indicated, and on the far side turn right to follow the path uphill along the field edge to reach a stile. Continue to follow the path along the edge of the next field, bearing left across a stile and then along the way-marked path as it skirts the edge of a covered reservoir. Turn right onto the field entrance track, and then right again onto the lane.

Follow the lane for a short distance to the next road junction. Turn left and head downhill along Beech House Lane, signposted to Salehurst. After approximately 625 metres (685 yards) turn right onto the signposted footpath, opposite a house on the left, and follow along the edge of two fields. After the stile and field gate, follow the route across the corner of the next field to reach a stile and the main A21.

Using the roadside verge, turn right and follow for a short distance before crossing the main road with care and following the signposted path along the driveway. Continue along the surfaced drive until it makes a sharp left turn, at which point cross the stile ahead and follow the path, bearing right, around the edge of the field. The route continues to follow the field edge paths, with views to the south west.

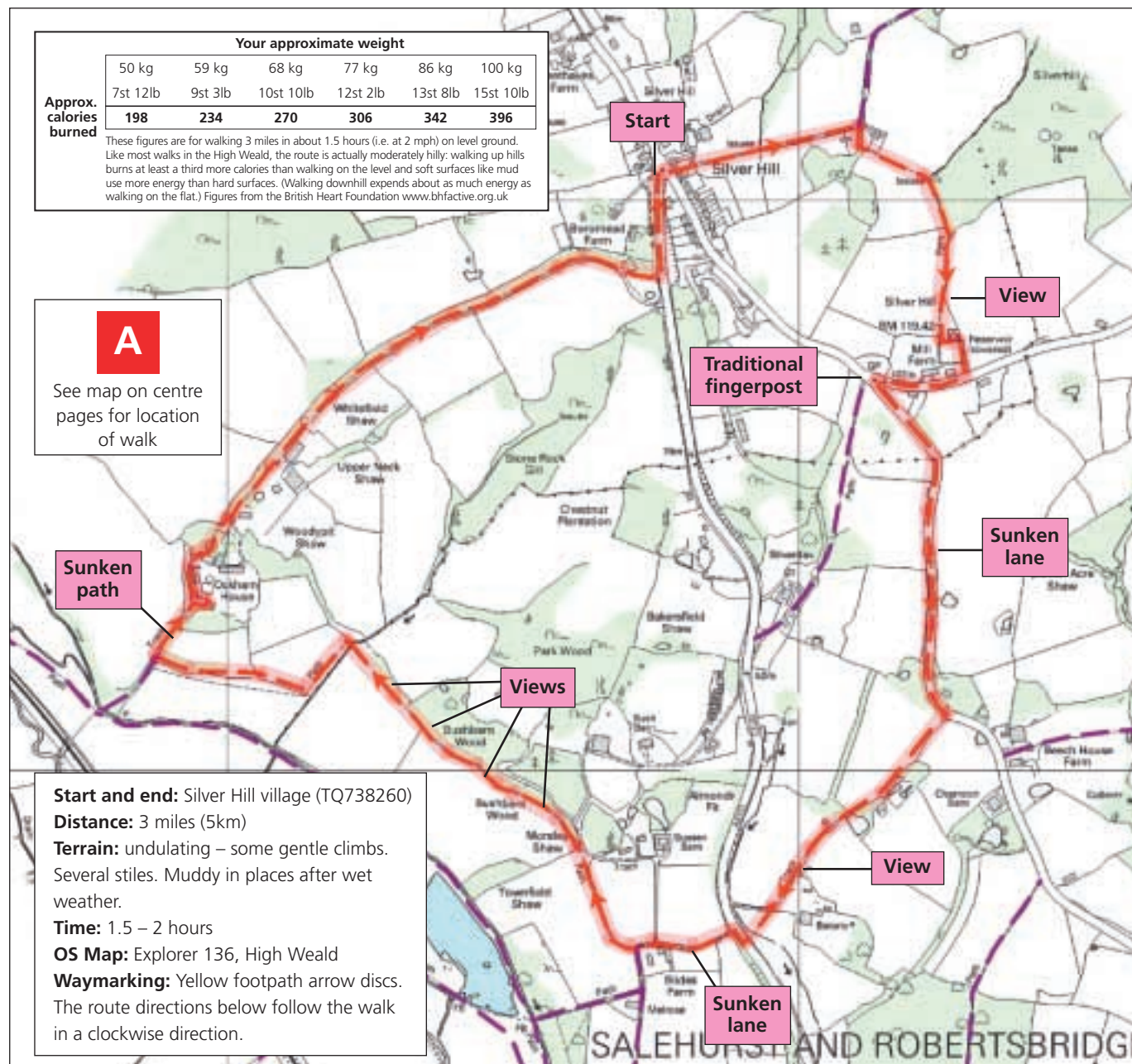
In the corner of the third field, follow the waymarked path to the right, across a stile, and then turn left. Follow the field edge path to the next field boundary, where the waymarked path turns right. Follow the route uphill through the next two fields, keeping the boundary trees on your left. Cross the track at the top of the second field and continue straight ahead crossing an area of rough ground, to reach a sunken path.

Turn right and follow the path uphill, ignoring the path junction on the left, to reach a surfaced drive in front of the main house. The footpath turns sharp left at this point to follow the route immediately beside the metal fencing rather than using the drive. After a short distance, turn right onto a wide grassy area and follow this as it narrows into a path before joining the main drive.

This walk is one of a series produced by East Sussex County Council's Paths to Prosperity project. Phone 01273 482250 for copies or download from www.eastsussexcc.gov.uk

Silver Hill

This short circular walk has lovely views of typical High Weald countryside, looking out across the Rother Valley. It follows some characteristic sunken drive routes – created by early farmers moving their pigs to and from the woodland for fattening on acorns.

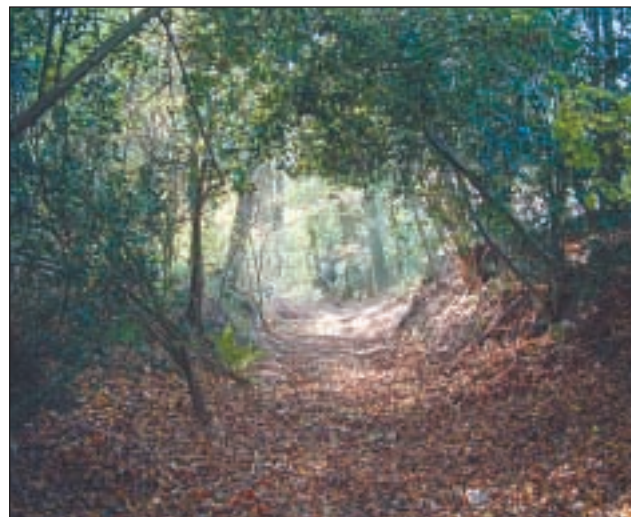


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Continue to follow the main drive away from Ockham House for a distance of approximately 860 metres (940 yards). Just before reaching the main road, the drive bears right, at which point continue straight ahead to reach the main A21, a few metres north of the main drive entrance.

Cross the main road and turn left. Taking care on the narrow roadside verge, follow the main road for a short distance back to Silver Hill and the start of the walk.

The walk follows several sunken routeways



Fact Pack

Services

Silver Hill The White Horse Inn, public house and restaurant 01580 860235, where you can park if combining this walk with a visit to the pub. Otherwise, there is limited street parking in Silver Hill. There are local shops at both Hurst Green and Robertsbridge villages.

There are no public toilets on this route.

Public transport

Bus: Bus service operates Monday to Saturday between Maidstone and Hastings.
Train: A regular service operates via Robertsbridge Station approx 2 miles away. Travelline – www.travelline.org.uk 0870 6082608

Local attractions

Merriments Gardens 01580 860666
 Pashley Manor 01580 200888
 Bodiam Castle 01580 830436

Local producers

Bramley Organic Farm 01580 830566
Naturally grown veg, soft fruit and apples
 Oakwood Farm 01580 830893
Apples, apple juice, potatoes and cider
 Ringden Farm 01580 879385
Cloudy apple juice, cloudy pear juice, apples and pears

Accommodation

Holly Cottage 01634 300089
 Tudor Cottage 01732 369168

Start and end: Balcombe village (TQ309308) which has a main line train station

Alternative start – Ardingly Reservoir car park (TQ335287)

Distance: 10 miles (16km)

Terrain: undulating with a few short, steep climbs. Lots of stiles. Muddy in places.

Time: 5 hours

OS Map: Explorer 135, Ashdown Forest

Waymarking: High Weald Circular Walks waymarking discs (red arrow) in conjunction with High Weald Landscape Trail discs (green arrow).

The route is designed to be followed in an anti-clockwise direction.

Directions:

Start the walk in Balcombe. Near the Half Moon Pub there is a track towards Balcombe House. Bear right on the track at the junction and do not go along the side of the house. Continue downhill on the footpath to a drive. Cross to a footpath opposite, with a wood on the left, leading to a lane. Turn left, continue on the lane around some bends to come to the top end of Ardingly Reservoir. Cross the bridge and turn right onto a bridleway.

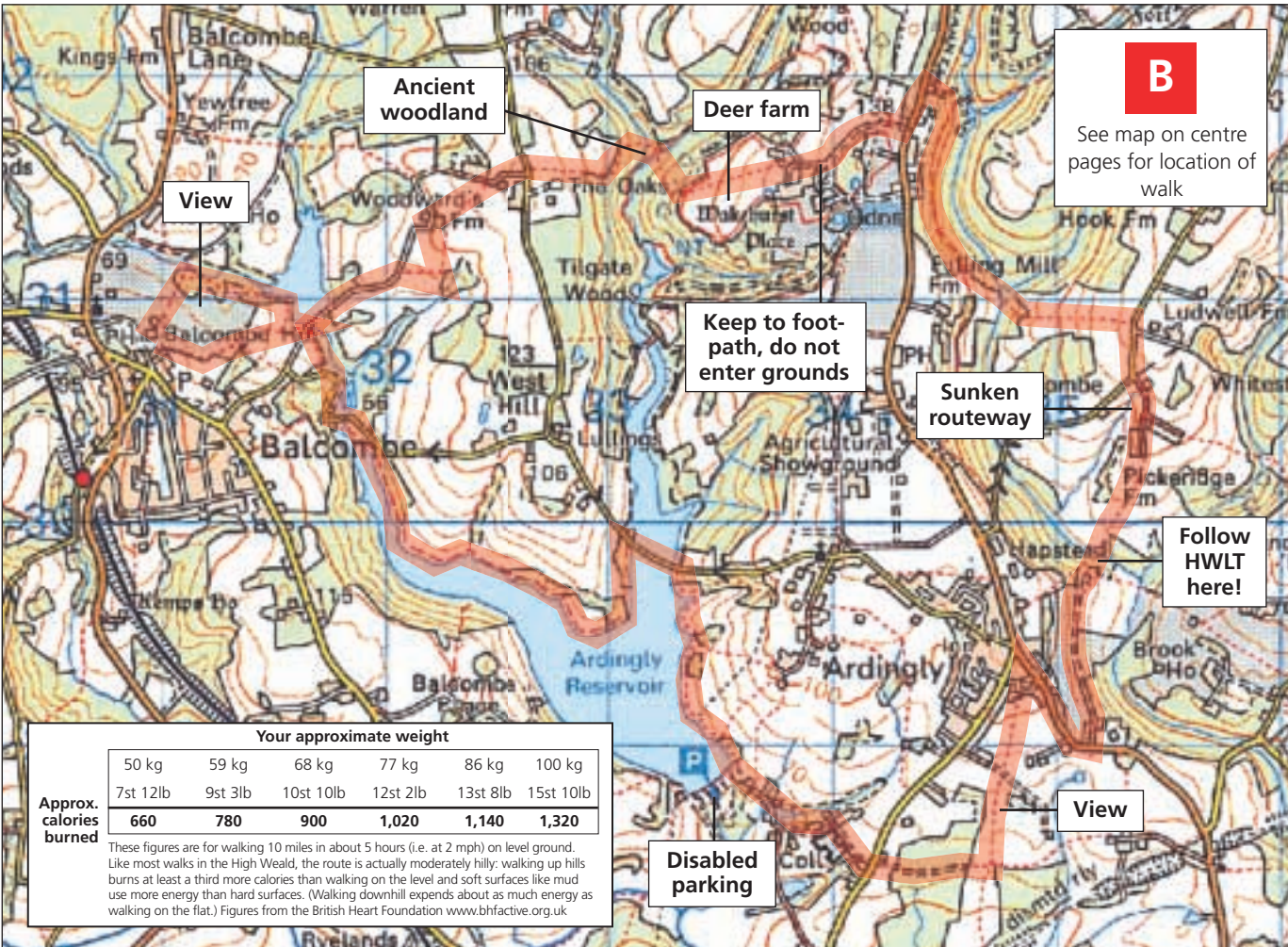
Follow the bridleway around the reservoir until you reach the road. Turn right and cross the bridge. On the other side, turn right and continue along a footpath beside the reservoir. Continue on this footpath until you reach the dam at the end of the reservoir. (Alternative start.) Here, you will meet the High Weald Landscape Trail (HWLT). Turn left and follow the trail past Ardingly College. Cross the road and continue on the HWLT, turning left when you meet another path at a junction.

Continue on the footpath to the B2028 road. Turn right and follow the road a short distance. Turn left up a track and continue on the HWLT, heading north. (Ignore another High Weald circular walk leaving the Landscape trail and heading east at Withyland.) At Pickeridge Farm the route follows a lane for a short distance. At Ludwell Farm it turns left off the lane and crosses fields to some woodland. Continue through the woodland, joining a bridleway coming in from the left and gradually turning north again until you reach a junction with another bridleway. Turn left onto this, leaving the HWLT.

After a short, steep climb, you reach the B2028 road again. Turn left and walk down the road a short distance until, on the right hand side of the road, there is a footpath that skirts Wakehurst Place. Stay on the footpath here and do not enter Wakehurst's private grounds. Follow this footpath through Horsbridge Wood and Bloomers Valley. When you reach another path, turn left to cross the Ardingly Brook. The path takes you out of the woodland and turns left along its edge. Continue on the footpath to reach a lane. Cross the lane and

Ardingly

Water is never far from this circular route which skirts the edge of Ardingly reservoir and passes Balcombe Lake and an attractive mill pond. There are good views and the route passes through ancient woodland and follows sunken routeways – both characteristic High Weald features.



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continue on a farm track. Very shortly, a left hand footpath leaves the track. Take this footpath to continue towards Balcombe.

At a path junction turn right, do not enter the wood. Continue along the footpath to Balcombe Lake and walk along the dam on a drive. At the end of the dam, take the path on the right. Follow the path that goes along the edge of the Lake. It then leaves the lake and heads off into a wood. The path meets another path: turn left here and head back into Balcombe village.

Short Walk – 1 mile

If you are a wheelchair user – or cannot walk far – Ardingly Reservoir has disabled parking spaces near the top of the dam and the path around the reservoir is surfaced part of the way to make it easier to walk on and for wheelchairs. This makes a suitable linear route for disabled users, turning back where the surfacing ends and retracing your steps.

There are plenty of seats from which to admire spectacular views across the water for the length of the route. The reservoir and surrounding area are important habitats – not only water but woodland too – and you will see a wide variety of wildlife. An optional visit to the bird hide, with its bird identification boards, will bring you even closer to nature – so take your binoculars!

NB the route has two sloping sections, leading to/from the car park and the bird hide. A helper is required for these sections. The route is not suitable during winter or wet weather when it may become muddy and slippery.



Birdwatching hide

Fact Pack

Services

Ardingly (short detour) – The Oak Inn (01444 892244) and The Gardeners Arms (01444 892328) plus village shop
Balcombe – Half Moon Inn (01444 811582) and The Balcombe Tea Rooms (01444 811777) plus village shop.

Public Toilets

There are no public toilets on the route
Nearest public/disabled toilets – Haywards Heath

Public Transport

Bus: Infrequent bus routes that run to Ardingly and Balcombe. Phone 0870 6082608 for further information or visit www.travelline.org.uk.
Rail: Balcombe is on the main Brighton to London Victoria line with a regular service. Phone 0870 6082608 for further information or visit www.travelline.org.uk

Local Attractions

Ardingly Reservoir 01444 892549
Borde Hill Gardens 01444 450326
Priest House 01342 810479
Wakehurst Place 01444 894066

Local Producers based in the Ardingly area

Andrew King 01825 790495
Cleft hazel hurdles
Laines Organic Farm 01444 452480
Seasonal outdoor vegetables
Havelock Deer & Poultry Farm 01444 892438
Venison, game, free range eggs

Accommodation

Highley Manor 01444 811711
Rocks Lane Cottage 01444 811245
Copyhold Hollow 01444 413265

 THE NATIONAL TRUST

STANDEN

East Grinstead, West Sussex RH19 4NE



A beautiful Arts & Crafts Home, built in the 1890s, decorated with Morris & Co carpets, fabrics and wallpapers. The 12 acre garden is set on a hillside overlooking the Sussex countryside and there are beautiful walks through Hollybush & Standen Woods set in the AONB of the High Weald. Open from mid-March until the end of October, Wed-Sun & Bank Holidays.

For further information, please ring the Property Office on 01342 323029 or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/standen

Wilderness Wood

Relax and have fun in this beautiful High Weald woodland, and find out how it is sustainably managed.

A unique family-run working woodland with woodland trails and bluebell walk, play area, picnic places and BBQs, tearoom and tea garden with local food, gift shop with local products.

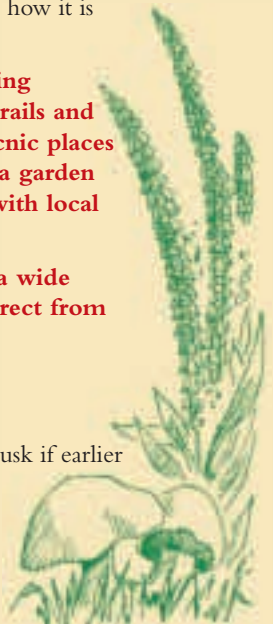
Buy garden furniture and a wide range of wood products direct from the grower/maker

Many special events and children's activities.

Open daily 10am – 5.30pm/dusk if earlier
On A272 in Hadlow Down,
N.E. of Uckfield

Tel: 01825 830509

www.wildernesswood.co.uk



Heaven Farm



Stable tea rooms
Nature Trail
Cart Lodge craft shop
Farm museum
Country coach tours
Caravans and camping

*170 years of farming
in the heart of the
Sussex Weald*

Open March to November inclusive, 10am to 5pm

Furners Green, Uckfield, Sussex, TN22 3RG

Tel: 01825 790226 Fax: 01825 790881
www.heavenfarm.co.uk

Events



- Antique Craft & Book Fairs
- Displays, Exhibitions and Talks
- Family Fun, Sports & Outdoor Activities
- Guided Walks
- Kids Activities
- Music, Drama & Dance
- Wildlife & Gardening

May

- 1 May
Canal and Castle Bike Ride
Rye, East Sussex
Organised by: Sue Etherington or Chrissie Townsend, 01273 481441
1200–1500 hours
Meet at Rye Railway Station, Rye, East Sussex. Circular guided bike ride from Rye railway station with East Sussex County Council Ranger, Simon Fathers – following the Royal Military Canal and up into the Cinque Port of Winchelsea for lunch. Back to Rye following the path under the old cliff line. 5 mile cycle, partly off road and on the flat.

- 1 – 31 May
Sculpture in the Garden
Borde Hill Gardens, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
01444 450326
www.bordehill.co.uk
1000–1700 hours
Surrey Sculpture Society brings alive the Garden with over 70 sculptures.

- 1 May
May Day Celebrations
Town Centre, Horsham, West Sussex
01293 536887
1130 – 1500 hours
Traditional Morris dancing (Cotswold style) to welcome in the summer. The group will also be performing in the main street of Rusper village, near Horsham.

- 1 May
Bird Walks on the Ashdown Forest
Long car park, Ashdown Forest Centre, East Sussex
Organised by: Ashdown Forest Bird Group
01892 611414
0900 – 1030 hours
Walks led by the group at 9 am and 10 am from Long Car Park and 9.30 am and 10.30 am from Ashdown Forest Centre. Please phone for further information and booking.

- 1 – 2 May
Tales of Robin Hood
Groombridge Place Gardens, near Tunbridge Wells, Kent
01892 861444
www.groombridge.co.uk
Back for the 7th year to popular acclaim. Jugglers, storyteller, dancers and minstrels.

- 2 May
Castles and Wildlife from Rye
Meet at Hastings College centre, beside Library and St Marys Church, Lion Street, top of Rye, East Sussex
Organised by: Dr Barry Yates
01797 223862
1015 – 1330 hours
Visit Henry VIII's seaside castle – now high and dry – and a birdwatching hide at Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, with the man who looks after the castle, East Sussex County Council's Dr Barry Yates. A 3 mile walk on the level. Entrance Fee: £3 for adults, children free. Booking essential.

- 2 May
Early May – Bluebell Time at High Beeches
High Beeches Gardens, Handcross, West Sussex
01444 400589
www.highbeeches.com
gardens@highbeeches.com
This best-loved native blooms throughout the open glades, with the sweet scented 'Loderi' hybrid rhododendrons, the Chilean 'fire bush' and other beautiful spring flowers. Gardens are open and Gardeners' Royal Benevolent Society have a stall and information in the Stable Room.

- 3 – 26 May
Rhododendron and Azalea Time
Leonardslee Gardens, Lower Beeding, Horsham, West Sussex
01403 891212
Mid May is when the Rhododendrons, Azaleas and Bluebell banks are at their peak of flower. The very best time to visit Leonardslee.

- 4 – 5 May
First World War Weekend
Kent and East Sussex Railway, Tenterden Town Station, Tenterden, Kent
0870 6006074
www.kesr.org.uk
enquiries@kesr.org.uk
See website for further details of the Red Timetable.

- 4 May
Bird Walk on Ashdown Forest
Long car park on the A22 near Wych Cross, opposite the Llama Farm, Grid Reference: TQ429309
Organised by: Sussex Wildlife Trust, 01273 492630
www.sussexwt.org.uk
enquiries@sussexwt.org.uk
0900–1100 hours
A gentle 3 mile walk to see the birds of Ashdown Forest. Sorry, no children or dogs. Toilets and coffee available at the Llama Farm. Entrance Fee: Donations to Sussex Wildlife Trust appreciated. Meet at Long car park.

- 5 May
Housekeeping at Bateman's
Batemans, Burwash, East Sussex
01435 882302
batemans@nationaltrust.org.uk
1000–1200 hours
The conservation team will give an exclusive tour of the house with demonstrations showing how this 17th century house and its contents are conserved and cared for. Followed by coffee and cakes in the Mulberry Tea Room. Entrance Fee: £10 adults

- 7 May
Horsham Day of Dance
Horsham Town Centre, Horsham, West Sussex
01293 536887
1030–1600 hours
A display of different styles of traditional Morris dancing by many local (Sussex) Morris teams in and around the town centre – finishing with an open-air barn dance.

- 8 May
Bluebell Walk
Powdermill Trust Nature Reserve, B2102 at High Cross – between Rotherfield and Argos Hill
Grid Reference: TQ557289
Organised by: Powdermill Trust for Nature Conservation
www.powdermilltrust.co.uk
1400 hours
1 hour walk round the Powdermill Trust nature reserve. No dogs please. Meet at the Reserve Car Park.

- 14–15 May
Nurture Nature Weekend
Marle Place Gardens, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent
01892 722304
www.marleplace.co.uk
lindel@marleplace.co.uk
Exploring wildlife in the gardens and woodland. Various special activities going on for all ages. Displays, games and advice kindly given by a team from the Kent Wildlife Trust. Entrance Fee: Event included in normal entrance fee

- 14 – 15 May
Hardy Plant Society Show & Plant Fair
Hole Park, near Rolvenden, Kent
01580 241344
info@holepark.com
Plant Society Show with teas and plant stall available.

- 14 May
Dormouse Awareness
Bedgebury Pinetum, nr Goudhurst, Kent
01580 211781
www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk
1000–1130 hours
Come out into the forest with Ranger Steve Peters (who will feature in a new wildlife series with Bill Oddie) and look for dormice and other wildlife. Places are severely restricted. Donations please. Booking is essential.

- 15 May
Spring Plant Fair
Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex
01580 200888
www.pashleymanorgardens.com
info@pashleymanorgardens.com
Our twice-yearly Plant Fairs need no introduction to keen gardeners in the South East, offering as they do the chance to buy from approximately 30 first-class nurseries specialising in unusual, rare, herbaceous and alpine plants and shrubs.

- 19 May
Open Air Theatre
Saint Hill Manor, Saint Hill Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex
01342 326711
1500–1700 hours
Summer outdoor performance of Shakespeare's famous classic The Merry Wives of Windsor with 'The Rain or Shine Theatre Company'. Entrance Fee: Tickets £8.50 including tea

- 27 May
Evening Chorus
Buchan Country Park, Crawley
01293 542088
1945–2200 hours
For all those lazy bird lovers who missed the dawn chorus, come and enjoy the subtler evening chorus. Listen to the change of shifts as our night creatures become active, whilst the daytime ones go to roost. Meet at the Country-side Centre at 7.40 pm. Booking essential.

- 28 May
Heathfield & District Agricultural Show
Little Tottingworth Farm Broad Oak, Heathfield, East Sussex (A265 between Heathfield & Burwash)
01435 864587
The premier one-day agricultural show in the South East, combining traditional Working Steam and Country Ways areas with a Livestock and Horse Show, trade stands, main arena events and much more. High Weald AONB Unit, including the Weald Meadows Initiative, will have a marquee in Row A with various activities, displays and demonstrations throughout the day.

- 28–30 May
Merrie England Weekend
Hever Castle and Gardens, nr Edenbridge, Kent
01732 861701
Life in Tudor England with medieval market stalls, music and dance.

June

- 4 – 5 June
Garden Show at Bewl
Bewl Water, Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890661
The 6th show, including plant and craft stalls, garden produce, refreshments, and children's entertainment. Car park ticket includes free entry to show. Organised by the Kent & Sussex Border Lions Club in aid of Macmillan Cancer Relief. Entrance Fee: £5. All profits made by the Lions are donated to charity.

- 5 June
Nurture Meadow Event
Plovers Meadow, nr Blackboys, East Sussex, Grid Reference: TQ536212
Organised by: Sussex Wildlife Trust, 01892 852470
www.sussexwt.org.uk
enquiries@sussexwt.org.uk
1100–1600 hours
Sussex Wildlife Trust event. Live wildlife exhibits, environmental and conservation stalls including a stall with Powdermill Trust for Nature Conservation. Picnic area serving light refreshments. Children's games and competitions, face painting and clay sculpting. Woodland and lakeside walk (not suitable for buggies/wheelchairs). The High Weald AONB Unit will be in attendance. Entrance Fee: £2.50 adults, children free. Plovers meadow is on the B2102 between Blackboys and Cross in Hand, near Uckfield, East Sussex. No Sunday bus service available. Limited disabled access and no disabled toilets.



5 June

Children's Treasure Trail

Smallhythe Place, near Tenterden, Kent

01580 762334

1100-1600 hours

Come dressed as your favourite pirate and find

the hidden treasure! Entrance Fee: Tickets

£1.50 per child, normal admission applies



7 June

Doing our bit – Summer Exhibition

Eden Valley Museum, Edenbridge, Kent

01732 868102

www.evmt.org.uk

A new exhibition being held until 22

December, looking at how local people lived

during World War 2. Open Tues & Wed 2pm-

4.30pm. Thurs & Sat 10am-4.30pm. Sun to

end Sept, 2pm-4.30pm.



10-12 June

South of England Show

South of England Showground, Ardingly, West

Sussex

01444 892700

0900-1800 hours

This year's show will be bigger and better than

ever – with over 1500 trade stands and craft

exhibitions supporting the many agricultural

events including international show jumping,

the best of British Livestock, farming and

wildlife demonstrations, arena events and mili-

tary bands.



16 June

An Evening with Nightjars

Ashdown Forest, Ashdown Forest Centre,

Wych Cross, East Sussex

Grid Reference: TQ441320

Organised by: Sussex Wildlife Trust,

01273 497561

www.sussexwt.org.uk

enquiries@sussexwt.org.uk

1930 – 2230 hours

Discover more about one of Britain's most

mysterious birds – the nightjar. Starting with

an indoor session at the Ashdown Forest

Centre and then out onto the forest for a 1

mile walk to hear the birds themselves. Please

bring a torch and insect repellent. Sorry, no

dogs. Tea/coffee provided at Centre.

Entrance Fee: £7. Meet at Ashdown Forest

Centre car park, Wych Cross, near Forest Row.

Not suitable for wheelchairs.



18 June

Annual Pelargonium Show

Brede Village Hall, Brede, Rye, East Sussex

01424 853673

1300-1600 hours

A show featuring displays of pelargoniums.

There will also be a tombola and refreshments

will be available.



19 June

Wildlife Ramble

Powdermill Trust Reserve, B2102 at High Cross

between Rotherfield and Argos Hill, East

Sussex

Grid Reference: TQ557289

Organised by: Powdermill Trust for Nature

Conservation

www.powdermilltrust.co.uk

1000-1300 hours

2 – 3 hour wildlife ramble at the reserve. Meet

at the Village Hall.



19 June

Fathers Day

Spa Valley Railway, Tunbridge Wells, Kent

01892 537715

www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk

enquiries@spavalleyrailway.co.uk

Fathers Day at Spa Valley Railway.

July

9 July

A Mothball

Buchan Country Park, Crawley

01293 542088

2030 hours till late

It is National Moth Night and moth hunters

will be out over the whole country – busily

recording the moths that they discover. Buchan

Park is home to more than 200 species of

moth. Find out how ultra-violet lights, wine,

ropes and black treacle are used to get close to

these fascinating creatures. Meet in the

Countryside Centre 8.30pm. Free. Booking

essential.



10 July

Tree & Orchid Walk

Powdermill Trust Reserve, B2102 at High Cross

between Rotherfield and Argos Hill.

Grid Reference: TQ557289

Organised by: Powdermill Trust for Nature

Conservation

www.powdermilltrust.co.uk

Starting at 1400 hours, a one-hour walk

around the reserve looking at trees and orchids.

No dogs please. Meet at the Reserve car park.



12 July

Border Planting – The Grand Design

Scotney Castle Gardens, Lamberhurst, Kent

01892 891081

pip.dodd@nationaltrust.org.uk

1000-1200 hours

Matt Jackson, Head Gardener will be looking at

innovative ways to get the most out of your

borders throughout the seasons and giving

practical advice on how best to implement your

own grand designs. After tea & cakes there will

be a private tour of the garden to view exam-

ples of Grand designs at Scotney Castle.

Entrance Fee: £15 tickets



16 July

Discovering Flatropers Wood

Flatropers Wood, Bixley Lane, near Beckley, East

Sussex, Grid Reference: TQ860231

Organised by: Sussex Wildlife Trust, 01273

492630

www.sussexwt.org.uk

enquiries@sussexwt.org.uk

1000-1300 hours

Explore this little-known Trust nature reserve in

the far east of the County during an especially

good time for woodland butterflies. The walk-

ing is fairly even, with wide and narrow

unsurfaced footpaths and several wooden

bridges. It may be muddy underfoot. Please

wear suitable clothing and footwear. Entrance

Fee: Donations to Sussex Wildlife Trust appreci-

ated. Meet at the track at the southern end of

Flatropers Wood off Bixley Lane, near Beckley.

No toilets available. No dogs. No disabled

access.



16 July

Twilight Zone

Buchan Country Park, Crawley

01293 542088

2000-2200 hours

Come and discover more about weird and

wonderful crepuscular creatures. Experience

the sights, sounds and smell of wild Buchan as

we enter the Twilight Zone. Fun for all ages.

Meet at the Countryside Centre at 8pm.

Booking essential.



17 July

Battle Abbey Classic Car & Motorcycle Show

Battle Abbey, Battle, East Sussex

01424 211334

Displays of historic and classic cars and a caval-

cade of vehicles through the town to the

Abbey. Other attractions include a country craft

fayre, beer tent, children's attractions plus

music and dancing from guest entertainers.



17-28 July

Falconry Displays

Penshurst Place and Gardens, Penshurst, nr

Tonbridge, Kent

01892 870307

1200-1600 hours

There will be a handling and a flying display of

magnificent birds of prey with Huxleys

Experience every Sunday throughout this peri-

od.



23-24 July

Bird Boffins

Wilderness Wood, Hadlow Down, nr Uckfield,

East Sussex

01825 830509

www.wildernesswood.co.uk

Join a leader from the RSPB investigating owls

and owl pellets (Saturday) and learning about

nesting and next boxes (Sunday).



28 July

Summer Spinning Demonstration

Ashdown Forest Llama Park, Wych Cross,

Forest Row, East Sussex

01825 712040

www.llamapark.co.uk

1100-1600 hours

At the park with the East Grinstead Spinners.

August

3 August

Family Fun Day

Bodiam Castle, Bodiam, East Sussex

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/bodiamcastle

1030-1700 hours

Face painting, coconut shy, tractor rides, corn

dolly workshop, badge making and lots lots

more. Small charge for the activities.



6 August

Moths by Moonlight

Wilderness Wood, Hadlow Down, nr Uckfield,

East Sussex

01825 830509

www.wildernesswood.co.uk

1945-2130 hours

Meet the night creatures of the wood.

Including 'sugaring' tree trunks and identifying

visitors to moth light traps. Bring a torch.

Includes a hot drink in the barn. With Simon

Curson. Please book.



6 August

Summer Flower Show

Town Croft, Hartfield, East Sussex

01892 770871

An event held in a marquee with flowers, veg-

etables, cooking and children's exhibits. There

are also outside sideshows, craft stalls, raffles, a

tombola and plants. Refreshments, ice creams

and a beer tent.



6 August

Annual Fuchsia Show

Brede Village Hall, Brede, Rye, East Sussex

01424 853673

1300-1600 hours

A show featuring displays of fuchsias. There

will also be a tombola and refreshments will be

available.



21 August

Silver Jubilee Open Day

Powdermill Trust Reserve, B2102 at High Cross

between Rotherfield and Argos Hill, East Sussex

Grid Reference: TQ557289

Organised by: Powdermill Trust for Nature

Conservation

www.powdermilltrust.co.uk

1100-1600 hours

Open Day with walks, raffle, refreshments and

exhibitions. No dogs please.



21 August

Heavy Horses at High Beeches

High Beeches Gardens, Handcross, West Sussex

01444 400589

www.highbeeches.com

gardens@highbeeches.com

Heavy Horses from the Working Horse Trust will

be at work on the meadow. There will be craft

stalls and demonstrations in the Coach House.



27-29 August

Ashdown Forest Woodturners Exhibition

Ashdown Forest Llama Park, Wych Cross,

Forest Row, East Sussex

www.llamapark.co.uk

Demonstrations and sale of produce from

Woodturners.



29 August

Le Marche

Town Centre, Heathfield, East Sussex

01435 866400

0930-1530 hours

An Anglo-French street market with food and

street entertainment including jazz, street the-

atre, circus skills and a petanque challenge.

September

2 Sept-2 October

Finchcocks Festival

Finchcocks, Goudhurst, Kent

01580 211702

The festival presents classical music on period

instruments by leading performers in the

Museum. It features chamber music, solo

recitals and programmes of words and music.

There is also a concert given by young people

under 18 years. Weekends only during this

period.

October

23-30 October

Ashdown Forest Food Fair

Ashdown Forest Llama Park, Wych Cross,

Forest Row, East Sussex

01825 712040

www.llamapark.co.uk

Events include an Anglo-French Farmers' mar-

ket on 23rd.

News in brief**Ashdown Forest Food Festival
23 to 30 October 2005**

In October 2005, the Ashdown Forest Tourism Association is holding a Food Festival to celebrate the wonderful range of food and drink available in Sussex. The idea is to encourage both local residents and visitors to the area to taste the wide range of local produce available.

A number of events will be taking place over the period of the Festival: producers will be having special events and tastings – and local restaurants, pubs, hotels and B&Bs will also be featuring special local produce menus. The Festival starts with an Anglo-French Farmers' Market on Sunday 23 October at Ashdown Forest Llama Park. A Festival Programme detailing all the producers taking part, and events taking place, will be available in early June. Visit www.ashdownforest.com for more details.

If you have any recipes that have been handed down through your family, or have any old recipe books with traditional Sussex recipes, please do contact AFTA c/o Ashdown Forest Llama Park, Wych Cross, Forest Row, East Sussex RH18 5JN, or info@ashdownforest.com

Maynards Fruit Farm

Maynards Fruit Farm at Ticehurst is situated at the heart of the High Weald AONB, on the watershed between the Rother and the Medway. Since 1963 the Maynard family have specialised in Pick Your Own fruit, growing a wide range of crops starting in the strawberry season, through raspberries, cherries and plums, and closing at the end of the apple season.

A visit to the farm combines well with

News in brief

Fields of expertise

Staff working at Great Dixter House and Gardens will be undertaking a research project that will determine whether it is economically and practically viable to sow and harvest crops of single species wildflower seed as a form of farm diversification in the High Weald AONB.

The team's expertise in research and horticulture and their ability to promote the work through links with other horticultural establishments were factors that enabled them to secure the contract offered by the High Weald AONB Unit's Weald Meadows Initiative. The project is being implemented with financial support from Leader+.



© Countryside Agency/Peter Greenhalf

High Weald Landscape Trust awarded charitable status

The first ever trust dedicated to the conservation of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) has been granted charitable status by the Charities Commission.

The Trust aims to fundraise for projects that tackle some of the land management issues arising from the decline in farming and woodland management in the area such as a lack of, or inappropriate, management of rare habitats and landscape features. In its first year it will focus on fundraising for conservation projects that provide practical support to landowners.

For further information visit www.highweald.org



Help save local wildflower meadows



Alive with colourful flowers and buzzing insects, wildflower meadows are grasslands that have never been ploughed but managed for decades as pasture or for hay. They are one of the features that have led to the High Weald being designated a nationally important landscape. Though rare, they are still under threat from development and a lack of management.

The High Weald Landscape Trust is launching an urgent appeal to raise £15,000 to support a conservation project, the Weald Meadows Initiative. The project will seek to save local wildflower meadows by offering landowners practical assistance with the management of their special grasslands.

To help with a donation telephone 01580 879500 or visit www.highweald.org

On the High Weald Landscape Trail

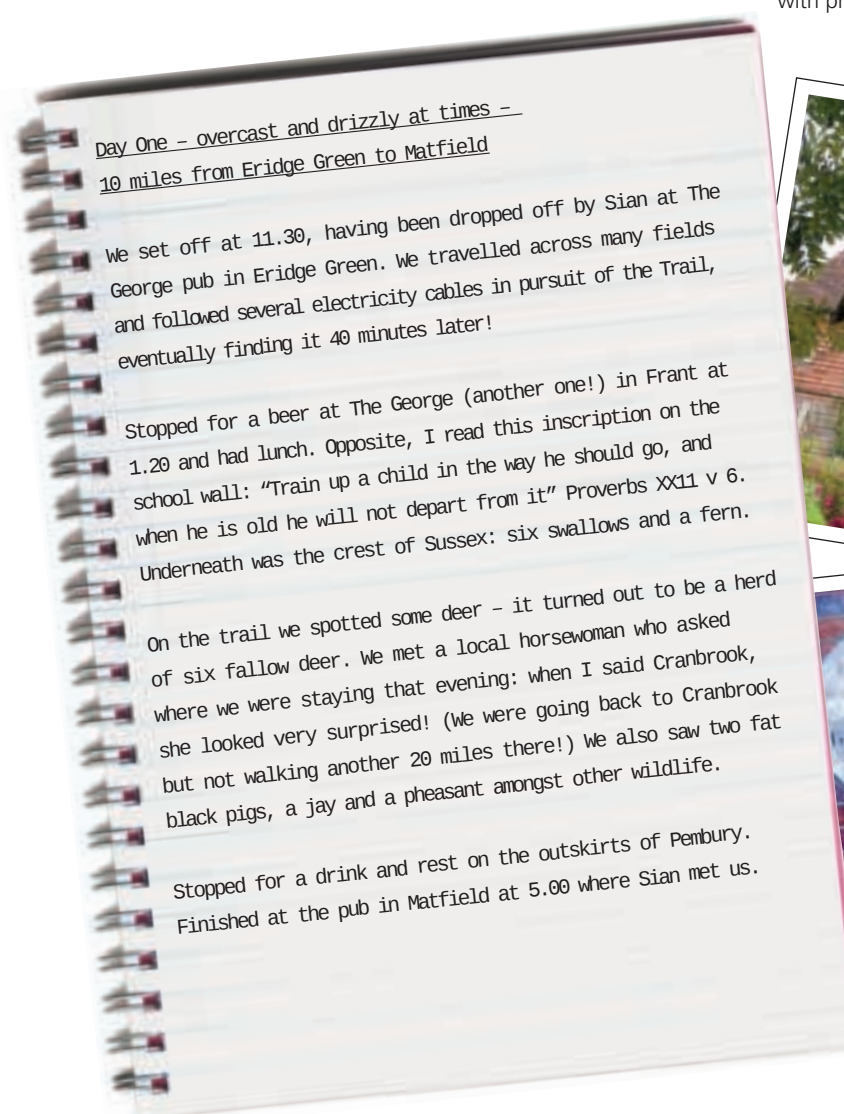
The diary of a cross-country walker (and his big sister!) Eridge Green to Rye – 45 miles in four days, July 12-15, 2004

The High Weald is one of England's Finest Landscapes – a historic countryside with a surprise around each corner. One of the best ways to discover this special area is to walk through it. Ninety miles long, the High Weald Landscape trail crosses the AONB from east to west – from Horsham to Rye – and passes through varied scenery.

Walkers can make a real contribution to the local economy by purchasing local products and using local businesses, for example pubs, along the way – as this diary shows!

Jeremy Knott walked a section of the High Weald Landscape Trail last summer – accompanied by his sister, who was visiting from the USA. They thoroughly enjoyed walking the Trail and found it to be well waymarked (apart from getting rather lost at their starting point of Eridge Green). They also thought the guidebook was "inspirational".

Only meeting one other hiker and a few local dog walkers, they found the High Weald countryside to be both beautiful and peaceful. Jeremy was inspired to write a diary of their journey, illustrated with photographs taken along the way.



Day Two – very warm and sunny – 11 miles from Matfield to Cranbrook

Started earlier today at 10.00 after a long chat with one of the locals who mistook us for walk officials! He told us all about the big house in the village where we parked. Apparently it's owned by Lord and Lady someone-or-other who sends the gardener to our local chappie with messages, rather than call round in person!

Had a coffee (and Jaffa cakes) at The Bull in Brenchley after visiting the church next door. Beautiful painted trusses on the roof. Couldn't find the trail for a

moment, then off we went: passing through fantastic orchards, vineyards and hop fields. Spotted a fox and several green woodpeckers.

Sat on the bench at Sprivers for lunch at 12.15, after passing Furnace Pond – where we saw grebe as well as ducks and geese – and Shirrenden House, a very large white house with an odd, very large hole in the ground in the front "garden".

Arrived at Horsmonden church at 1.30. There's a beautiful house next to the church, alongside a four-oast conversion with elaborate balustrade (converted by

a French architect, Mr Cordier).

Then a long climb up to Goudhurst, where we stopped for a (paper) cup of tea and a Bakewell tart. After a quick trip to the antique shop, we visited St Mary's Church where the Culpeppers are "preserved" as wooden statues.

The last leg took us through Angley Wood and into Cranbrook at 5.00ish where we had a beer at Tiffin's before returning home. After a glass or two of Pimm's in the garden, we recovered enough to set off to collect the car and go over to Sian's for a lovely supper.



Cottage, Benenden



Plaque, Frant School

Day Three – cloudy and damp – 11 miles from Cranbrook to Tenterden

Set off from home at 9.40 and walked down the High Street, past the windmill and across the fields by Coursehorn Farm. We came across a beautiful cottage by a pond in the middle of the countryside (near Crabtree farm). Libby fell in love with it!

Saw a heron before we passed by Benenden School, then we took a coffee at The Bull in Benenden at midday. Set off into the misty drizzle and stopped for lunch as the clouds disappeared briefly at 1.00.

Stopped at Rolvenden Church at 2.00 and had tea for two (outside of course!) at The Ewe and Lamb in Rolvenden Layne an hour later – looked a very nice menu!

As the sun came out, we crossed endless wheat fields where we saw a fox carrying its supper (a rabbit) in its mouth. Unfortunately, we were downwind and it heard (or smelt) us and disappeared. Lots of Reed Buntings. And a steam train – The Kent and East Sussex Railway.

Finally finished for the day at 4.30 and had a beer at the Woolpack in Tenterden, where Sian joined us. Taking our boots off and sitting in the High Street with our socks on full display got us noticed – but it was worth it!

Day Four – very warm and very humid – 12 miles from Tenterden to Rye

Set off at 9.15 after parking the car outside the Indian restaurant at the bottom of the High Street. Today I felt very tired (I didn't want to get out of bed) – every step was tiring and the grass was very wet. Saw loads of ducks at the pond at Coneyboro' Wood (but not as many as we saw on day two!). Passed the vineyard and stopped to admire two swans with 4 cygnets at Smallhythe Bridge, just after Ellen Terry's cottage.

After a climb up Oxney hill (Oxney was once an island) we stopped for a cup of coffee at The Swan in Wittersham. Not sure whether it was the removal of the boots or the two Jaffa cakes, but I felt a lot better after this rest.

Ploughed through a black bean field and got covered in black ourselves, then stopped for lunch on the stile at 1.00. Very hot. (Hottest day by far).

After taking a picture of some Highland cattle, we stopped at a big lake at 2.00ish to watch a fly fisherman (and have a rest!). It was here we met our first (and only) fellow hiker, heading in the opposite direction.

Then we came across an oasis – the Flackley Ash hotel that serves the best cup of tea in Sussex! After a longish stop, we set off on the last leg – a long walk across the flats – until the sight of Rye in the distance lifted our spirits. Huzzah! Disturbed a heron as we trundled along the riverbank.

Arrived in Rye at 4.30 and had two very welcome pints at The Walkers pub before proceeding to explore Rye streets. An hour later, we were climbing the tower at St Mary's Church for a fantastic 360 degree view of the surrounding area. Did we really walk all that way?

Then down to the bus station to catch the last bus back to Tenterden, which took only 25 minutes and cost £1! As we sat waiting in the sun for the bus, the feet were a bit sore but the smile on our faces said it all!

P.S. The odd thing was that the next day we both felt ready for more walking and we were disappointed it was all over. Next time we will set our sights higher!

The George, Matfield



Culpepper's tomb in St Mary's Church, Goudhurst



Matfield



Horsmonden Church



Brenchley Post Office in the High Street

All photos by Jeremy Knott except where otherwise indicated

News in brief

New group to promote the High Weald

A new sustainable tourism group, The Seven Wonders of the Weald, has been established to develop sustainable rural tourism in the High Weald AONB. Focusing on the area around Lamberhurst, the new group aims to work together to provide a more enjoyable experience for visitors of all ages, interests and abilities.

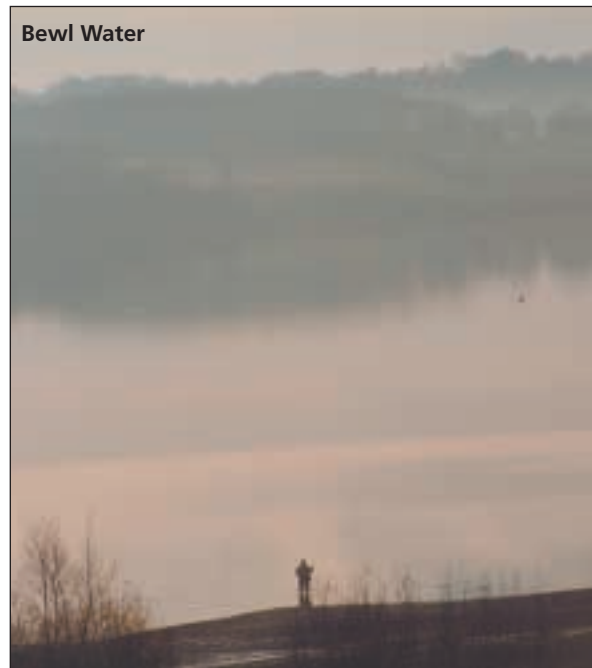
Its focus will be on increasing visitor knowledge of the area and developing a better 'offer', for example through developing new events and walking and cycling routes. It will also encourage visitors to take actions that benefit the area's environment, for example buying local products and using local transport. It hopes to gain the support of local traders, as the spin-off should benefit their businesses.

The Seven Wonders Group includes Bewl Water (the largest inland water in the South of England), Bedgebury Pinetum (the world's largest conifer collection), Scotney Castle, Bayham Abbey, Marle Place Gardens, Lamberhurst Vineyards and representatives of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty itself, the High Weald AONB Unit.

Similar groups have already been formed in the Ashdown Forest and Winchelsea areas. Further details: www.highweald.org

See the Anvil's centre pages for information on the Seven Wonders attractions.

Bewl Water



The High Weald Landscape Trail

A 93 mile, way-marked walking route crossing the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



Special Offer
Reduced from
£8 to £5

Starting in Horsham, and finishing in Rye, the route passes through the villages of Cuckfield, Ardingly, East Grinstead, Hartfield, Groombridge, Cranbrook, Rolvenden and Tenterden.

For copies of the 112 page guidebook including colour photographs, historical facts, wildlife notes and local stories telephone 08458 247 600 to order by credit card, or visit www.kent.gov.uk/sp/countrysideaccess/pubs/GuidebooksResources.html to place an online order.

Caring for the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

A charter for residents & visitors

The following are actions that all residents, visitors and businesses can take to help care for this nationally important landscape.

- 1 Purchase local products and services sold by land managers who actively manage their land to benefit the environment
- 2 Manage your land for wildlife and maintain the rural nature of your property
- 3 Help prevent the spread of invasive and harmful plant and animal species
- 4 Use less water
- 5 Reduce, reuse and recycle, and dispose of all litter responsibly
- 6 Respect other users – follow the Countryside Code
- 7 Slow down for people, horses and wildlife and avoid using the car where possible
- 8 Take pride in the High Weald – promote its special features and places to family, friends and visitors
- 9 Have a say
- 10 Get involved – support local conservation organisations

Friends of the High Weald Registration form

First name: _____

Surname: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone: _____

In order to save paper and postage we would prefer to send you information by e-mail.

To give us permission to e-mail you, please tick here ☐ and give us your e-mail address (for our use only):

E-mail: _____

Your age: ☐ under 30 ☐ 30 – 44
☐ 45 – 64 ☐ 65 and over ☐

Do you live in the High Weald AONB? Yes ☐ No ☐

Do you own land in the High Weald AONB? Yes ☐ No ☐

Reduced-rate admission to a High Weald attraction.

As a new member we can offer you savings on visiting a High Weald attraction. You can select a 2-for-1 offer for one of the following attractions. Please indicate which one you prefer, and we will send you the appropriate voucher:

I select the 2-for-1 offer for

- ☐ High Beeches Gardens ☐ Wilderness Wood
☐ Great Dixter (April or Oct. only) ☐ Marle Place

Your Commitment to Caring for the High Weald

In return for membership we would ask you to show your commitment to caring for the High Weald by signing up to the charter (above). In addition to your general commitment, would you also – as your annual subscription – name a particular action you intend to take over the next year, e.g. create a meadow, take part in a volunteering scheme, or not use the car every other Sunday. See the full charter at www.highweald.org

Please complete, sign and date the following declaration:

"I would like to become a Friend of the High Weald. As a Friend I choose to have regard to the charter 'Caring for the High Weald' in my day-to-day actions, and for the year ending 31st March 2006 I pledge to

Signature _____ Date _____

Voluntary donation

There is no membership fee, however if you would like to make a donation to support conservation work in the High Weald, please make your cheque payable to the 'High Weald Landscape Trust'. Many thanks.

I enclose a donation of £ _____
 (We apologize for being unable to accept credit card donations.)

Please return this form to Friends of the High Weald, High Weald AONB Unit, Woodland Enterprise Centre, Hastings Road, Flimwell, East Sussex TN5 7PR.

Find out more about local wood products...

Watch out for the WoodFair



Friday 23 – Sunday 25 September

Trees, woodland and everything related to wood and timber, takes centre stage later in September with East Sussex County Council's annual Weald WoodFair. The event will be celebrating its 10th anniversary on Friday 23 – Sunday 25 at Bentley Wildfowl and Motor Museum, Halland, near Lewes.

This increasingly popular show aims to celebrate and promote the vital importance of the region's wood resource to the environment and local economy. It offers a wonderful opportunity to follow the whole tree cycle from the growing of trees to the extraction of timber and the many, varied uses of wood and timber in our every day – and to meet the designers, demonstrators and other wood enthusiasts in a woodland setting. Judging by the 60,000 or more visitors who have flocked to the WoodFair since it first began, wood has never been more in demand, with both young and old alike appreciating its versatility, and the touch, smell and feel of something real and long-lasting.

The WoodFair will include working horses and machinery, tools and equipment, timber-framing, furniture and wood products, wood-burning stoves, hedgelaying and arboricultural demonstrations, prehistoric woodworking and traditional woodland crafts. There are also plenty of wood-related activities, such as longbow archery to join in, local produce barbecues and other family entertainment. Further information can be obtained from:

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/woodfair



East Sussex Wood Season 2005

East Sussex County Council is once again putting together an exciting packed programme of woodland and timber related events for the autumn. The Wood Season programme covers events taking place between September 23 and Saturday 12 November. A free copy can be obtained from July from libraries and tourist information centres in East Sussex or from ESCC on 01273 481441. It will also be available at the WoodFair.



Bad Dog Day Diary

9am (much too early) Mum and Dad are off to visit Auntie Wendy who lives in a forest in Sussex. They don't trust us to behave at home on our own, so we have to go with them. Gnash!

10am Gnuh! What a rubbish forest! We were looking forward to something dark and scary so we could hide behind trees and frighten ramblers with horrible howling noises. Instead, it's covered in sissy pink heather. Never mind, we'll think of another menacing thing to do.

10.30am The grownups have gone to look round a stately home. Boring!! We're going for a menacing walk instead. My lead is safely stored in a pocket - best place for it! Gnee heel!

10.45am Gnoops! So excited I've had a "little accident" outside someone's front gate!

11am Now for some menacing. Funny little bird perched on a spiky bush (a bit like our hair). I'm going to creep up on it. Gnash! It flew away just in time. Scared it though. Gneh heh.

11.30am Gnuh! The countryside is littered with bossy signs - do this, do that. Well they can close their own gates. We're supposed to be enjoying ourselves, not doing farmers' work for them.

12.30pm Had a share of Coke and crisps for lunch. Target practice - missed the bin by miles. Who cares? It's just a bit of litter. Anyway, I did say this was a rubbish forest! Still hungry... those sheep look tasty! Gnee hee.

1pm Gnash! Didn't realise sheep could run so fast! Had great fun trying to catch them though. Gneh heh! - you should have seen the looks on their faces! I'm going off on my own to find some slower sheep!

3pm He's finally caught up with me. Slowcoach! Oo-er, now we're in trouble! He's torn his shirt!

4pm Gnash! That's put a stop to our fun. Those pesky kids and their softie dog! If they hadn't caught up with us, we'd still be having a great time, menacing the Forest!

6pm Home in disgrace. Mum and Dad say we've got to brush up on the new Countryside Code at www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk before our next visit to the countryside.

Now, where's that cat?

Good Dog Day Diary

11.30am We're in the Mystery Machine, on our way to investigate Ashdown Forest, near Crowborough - the hometown of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle who wrote "Hound of the Baskervilles". There have been spooky sightings of a horrible, menacing, black hound on the Forest. Seems it's leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. Rikes!

Velma says Ashdown Forest is an area of heathland at the heart of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Despite what the name suggests, the forest is not thickly covered in trees. The word forest actually comes from the Latin "foris", a term meaning "outside the common law" - in this case an area of land set aside for Royal hunting.

12.15pm Row! What a mysterious place. It looks a bit like the moor where the "Hound" is set. I feel quite safe with my lead on, though.

12.30pm Rikes! Watch where you're stepping! That should have been cleaned up by the owner and disposed of responsibly. Roo!

12.45pm Row! A Dartford Warbler perched on a gorse bush. We're lucky to see it - they're very rare and only live on heathland. We'll move quietly to avoid disturbing it. It's very important not to disturb birds and other wildlife, particularly during the breeding season as eggs and young will soon die without protection from their parents.

1pm Ruh roh! This sign says the gate should be closed but someone's left it open - so the sheep and cattle could escape onto the road. We'll close it behind us. You should always follow instructions on gates or leave them as you find them if there are no instructions.

1.15pm Ruh roh! Some litter - now the trail is getting warmer. We'll pick the litter up and put it in the bin. If there wasn't a bin, we'd take litter home with us. Litter doesn't seem like a big deal but it can be dangerous to wildlife and farm animals.

1.30pm Rikes! Those sheep are all bunched up in a field corner - they look really spooked. I'm sure it's not me they're scared of because I'm on my lead. Something menacing has chased them! It's really bad for sheep to be chased, especially if they have young lambs or are pregnant - during autumn and winter. (Even so-called "playful" chasing may make them miscarry.)

3pm Rook! - A clue to the menace's identity - a piece of black and red striped material caught on a gorse spike! Hey! That's no canine ghost... More like the Hound of the Gnashkervilles! Not so fast, you two!

5pm Back in the Mystery Machine, on our way to our next mystery. Someone's spotted the ghost of a big, round man in a red coat and top hat at Brightling! Rikes!!! To find out who it is, turn the page upside down! *

If you'd like a cool leaflet about how to enjoy the countryside responsibly, together with a leaflet about things to do in the Ashdown Forest area, email info@highweald.org or phone 01580 879500.

* Squire John "Mad Jack" Fuller, buried in Brightling churchyard in a pyramid tomb, supposedly upright at a table and with a bottle of port at arm's length!!!

The New Countryside Code

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

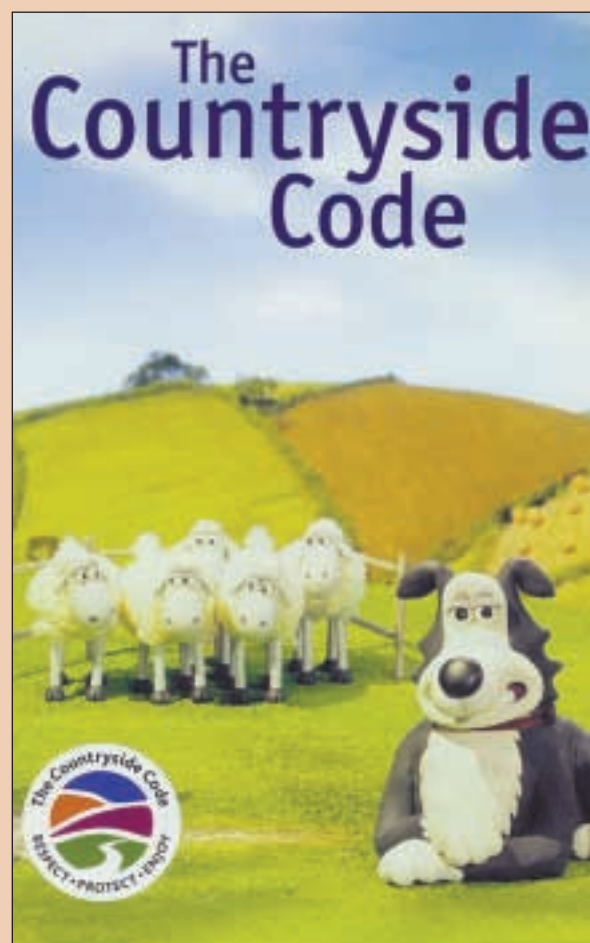
The countryside is a great place to exercise dogs, but it's every owner's duty to make sure their dog is not a danger or nuisance to farm animals, wildlife or other people.

- By law you must control your dog so that it does not disturb or scare farm animals or wildlife. You must keep your dog on a short lead on most areas of open country and common land between 1 March and 31 July, and at all times near farm animals.
- You do not have to put your dog on a lead on public paths, as long as it is under close control. But as a general rule, keep your dog on a lead if you cannot rely on its obedience. By law, farmers are entitled to destroy a dog that injures or worries their animals.
- If a farm animal chases you and your dog, it is safer to let your dog off the lead - don't risk getting hurt by trying to protect it.
- Take particular care that your dog doesn't scare sheep and lambs or wander where it might disturb birds that nest on the ground and other wildlife - eggs and young will soon die without protection from their parents.
- Everyone knows how unpleasant dog mess is and it can cause infections, so always clean up after your dog and get rid of the mess responsibly. Also, make sure your dog is wormed regularly.
- At certain times, dogs may not be allowed on some areas of open land or may need to be kept on a lead. Please follow any signs. You can also find out more about these rules from

www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

or email openaccess@countryside.gov.uk

or telephone 0845 1003298.



Look closer...

to see what makes the High Weald so special

Geology

Distinctive sandstone outcrops and deep, shady ravines called gills – carved into the hillsides by fast-flowing streams.

The porous, moisture-holding sandstones and sheltered, damp gills provide ideal living conditions for ferns, mosses, liverworts and lichens. Many of these species are more characteristic of the mild and humid oceanic climate of Wales and Cornwall than that of the South East. Most famous is the tiny – and extremely rare – Tunbridge Filmy-fern.

Micro climates

Meadows

Small, irregular fields and flower-rich grassland buzzing with wildlife.

Nationally, around 95% of our wildflower meadows have been lost to intensive agriculture. However, with their heavy clay soils and steep slopes, many High Weald fields have never been ploughed up to grow crops: compared to many areas of Britain, the AONB still has a relatively large number of ancient, undisturbed, wildflower-rich hay meadows and pastures. These unimproved grasslands are some of our most important habitats for wildlife conservation, supporting up to 100 kinds of grasses and wildflowers – which in turn support a great variety of insects and other creatures.

Wildflower haven

Settlement

A characteristic, dispersed pattern with a unique heritage: it is the result of gradual colonization through seasonal use of the woodland for fattening pigs on acorns (pannage).

In Kent, the seasonal swine pastures – used by farmers from the Downs and coastal plains – were known as dens. Over time, these became small, isolated farmsteads and today, the Kent High Weald still has many place names ending in “den”. Most dens have remained small – but a few have expanded to become larger settlements. Tenterden, for example, means “The den of the men of Thanet”.

Unique farmstead heritage

Heathland

Colourful landscapes with patches of purple heather and yellow gorse. In much of England, heaths have disappeared, but the High Weald area is an important stronghold for this dramatic type of landscape.

Ashdown Forest is the largest and best-preserved area of heathland in the South East. Once the hunting playground of kings; today it is an area of open access where you can wander freely – as are St Leonard’s and Bedgebury Forests, former heathlands now mainly covered in woodland. Find out where the High Weald’s other open access areas are at www.countryside.gov.uk/access/ or buy the new edition OS “Explorer” maps.

Open access

Routeways

A unique, radiating network – created by early farmers moving their pigs to and from the woodland in autumn.

These drove routes are now preserved as footpaths, bridleways and roads – and are often deeply sunken from centuries of use. In 1086 – when the practice was already past its peak – Domesday records indicate that around 150,000 pigs would have been driven to and from the woods of the High and Low Weald. That’s twice as many pigs as there were people at the 1985 Live Aid concert – and 30,000 more than the total human population of the High Weald today!

Made by pigs

Woodland

A distinctive pattern of small woods, gills (wooded ravines) and shaws (copses) separating the fields.

Trees and woodland form a very important part of this distinctive landscape: only about 10% of Britain is covered by woodland whereas in the High Weald, the woodland cover is 25%. The High Weald also boasts the greatest proportion of Ancient Woodland in the country. Nationally, only about 19% of woods are Ancient (in other words, having existed continuously since AD 1600) whereas a stunning 68% of the High Weald’s woodland is classed as Ancient – and therefore of great importance to wildlife. How do you tell if a wood is ancient? See pages 6 and 7.

68% ancient