

High Weald Anvil ²⁰⁰⁶

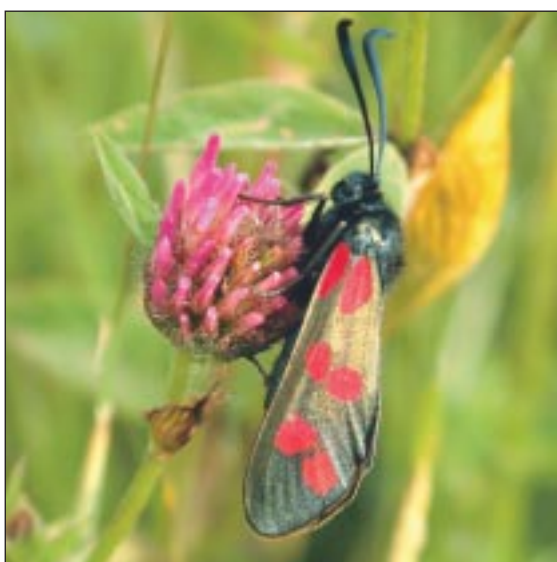
A **free** guide to the Area of **Outstanding** Natural Beauty



Local Products • Exploring • Heritage • Events • Wildlife • Attractions • Map



• *Special 'Homes and Villages' Edition* •



What's so special about the High Weald's homes and villages?



Long ago, as the wild woods covering Britain were being cleared, settled and farmed by village communities, the High Weald remained wooded. We know that by Domesday – in 1066 – it was the most densely wooded place in England.

It was eventually settled by individual farmers rather than communities: our area was the stronghold of pannage in Britain – and this practice of feeding pigs on acorns left a distinctive legacy of scattered, isolated, individual farmsteads. (See page 6.) Unlike the agricultural villages in much of England, our villages developed relatively late – not until medieval times – and many of these sprang up around trading points on the high, dry ridge top routes. Our featured walks on pages 12 and 13 explore two High Weald villages.

If you have visited Herefordshire or Devon, you will have seen landscapes that look similar to ours – with small fields, thick hedges, patches of woodland, scattered farmsteads and hamlets and sunken lanes. What makes the High Weald different from these? The answer is that the traditional building materials and building styles of the High Weald are also an essential part of our landscape's distinctive character. The building materials have come, in fact, from that very landscape – so it is hardly surprising that they blend in so well. Links with the area's wooded past are evident in the number of timber-framed and weather-boarded buildings, whilst the widespread use of sandstone, bricks and tiles is testimony to the High Weald's underlying geology of sandstone and clay. Caring for the High Weald – A Charter for Residents and Visitors asks us to "Maintain the rural nature of our properties": sadly, inappropriate materials and features – often associated with urban areas – are leading to the gradual loss of the AONB's valued rural feel.

In the High Weald, we have a particularly rich heritage of distinctive farm buildings. These buildings add character both to farms and to the landscape – and hold memories of agricultural times and traditions long passed. You can read more about them on pages 4 and 5.

In this, the seventh edition of the High Weald Anvil, I hope you will also enjoy reading about the history of a country estate and garden design – and do try our Buildings Quiz on page 9!

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.

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Sustainable living in the High Weald AONB

Villages green



One feature of the High Weald AONB landscape that is often forgotten is the role of villages, hamlets and farmsteads. The AONB Management Plan recognises that our historic pattern of settlement – scattered farmsteads and hamlets with late medieval villages – is fundamental to AONB character. So how can we help to keep our hamlets and villages vibrant – and at the same time conserve their distinctive character?

Nowadays, we continually hear the word "sustainable". The broad definition of this word can be summarised by the phrase "act locally, think globally". Caring for the High Weald – A Charter for Residents and Visitors asks us to purchase local products – particularly those from farmers and woodland owners who actively manage their land to

benefit the environment. This is an investment in the local economy and, ultimately, AONB landscape conservation – as well as being of benefit to the global environment. Using and buying local produce, using local wood fuel for heating, and, in wider terms, using local materials for building better quality homes that meet environmental standards: all relate to sustainability.

The final task of our Sustainable Rural Settlements study (see page 6) is to translate all of these "sustainability" issues into planning policy, which can be used by the local Councils in developing their new Local Development Framework policy documents. By encouraging and directing new development in the High Weald to the right places – and by building it in the right way, with the right materials, designed for the people who need it – we can help to safeguard the sus-

tainable future of the High Weald AONB.

Opposite, you can read about the role of village shops in selling local produce and keeping villages vibrant. On page 8, a local furniture maker explains how his product helps to conserve High Weald woodlands and their wildlife. But everyone – from gardeners with the smallest garden, right up to landowners with many acres – can manage land to benefit the environment: on pages 16 and 17, read about sustainable ways to garden and on page 18, pick up some tips from our High Weald Land Management Agony Aunts.

Councillor Sylvia Tidy,
Chairman: High Weald
Joint Advisory Committee

AONBs reach 50

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) were created by the legislation of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949. Since the Act was passed, 50 AONBs have been designated for their landscape quality – the first being Gower, designated in 1956. The 50 are diverse in character. They contain this country's finest landscapes and countryside and are home to exquisite and unusual wildlife species. The largest AONB is The Cotswolds at 2038 sq. km and the smallest The Isles of Scilly at just 16 sq. km. The High Weald, at 1,457 sq. km, is the fourth largest.

The 50th anniversary of the first designation offers a superb opportunity to raise awareness of the AONB designation and the work of the 50 AONBs in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The High Weald AONB – a relative youngster aged 23 – will be joining in the celebrations!



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John and Elaine Maxwell Jones are the joint owners of Burgess Stores in Goudhurst. They met while John was a student in Manchester. Both passionate about good quality food, John explains how they first became 'foodies': "Elaine's grandfather, F.F. Brumme, established the first delicatessen in Manchester and her father added a salmon smokery in the heart of the city. During our courting days, I helped my future father-in-law to make deliveries and we'd often have smoked salmon on barm cakes for lunch – an extraordinarily unique northern delicacy!"

After distinguished careers in sales and marketing – combined with raising a family – John and Elaine were looking for a new challenge. They had the idea of buying a business that would support local food producers. After a long search for the right business, John and Elaine became the proud owners of Burgess Stores on 15 January 1995. John already knew the village quite well: "I got to know it while working in the South East, avoiding the busy route through Maidstone. I often stopped here for lunch, but Burgess Stores was always closed for lunch so I never went in." Little did he know he would end up buying it!

The previous owners, the Johnsons, had bought the shop in 1974: Josie, who worked in the shop then, still works in the shop today! Prior to that, the shop was owned by six generations of the Burgess Family – the name first appearing on the store 175 years ago in 1831. At one time, Burgess Stores took up the whole length of the row of buildings that is today occupied by several small shops. It was, in fact, a small Department Store – today's shop forming the grocery, provisions, drapery, haberdashery, clothing, boots and furniture departments.

Goudhurst was very prosperous during the 19th century. "You could do all your shopping in the village and anyway you had to, because there was no real transport system until the 1870s, with the arrival of the railway," says John. (Goudhurst had its own station – though by 1961 it was gone again.) "In those days, villages were pretty much self-sufficient – but Goudhurst is still quite well endowed even today. Several new shops have opened in recent years."

One thing that the railway did bring to Goudhurst was the annual influx of hop-pickers, arriving from London for their working holiday in the country. Whether the fear was founded or not, an interesting old photo from the 1950s shows the shop counter fitted with an "Anti-pilfering grille" to stop the Hoppers from shoplifting! Under the Maxwell Joneses, Burgess Stores has continued to adapt and develop with the times. In 1996, soon after their arrival, the Nat West Bank in Goudhurst closed. It had served Goudhurst since 1902. As soon as the announcement was made, John set about raising a petition with 600 signatures, but to no avail – and John says he "made a point" of being the bank's last customer. However, Burgess Stores partly filled the gap left by the bank by installing a cash machine. Likewise, the village Post Office has been based at the Stores since 2001, with Elaine as Postmaster. "It closed one week in West Road and opened the next at Burgess Stores!" They also act as agent for some local services – dry cleaning and shoe repairs – and they have become a fax and photocopying bureau, too.

When John and Elaine bought the shop it

When Napoleon described the English as a "Nation of Shopkeepers" he wasn't being complimentary – rather, expressing his contempt for all who live by the laws of reality. However, today's village shopkeepers may need the ability to "think outside the box" in order to keep up with changing times – and there may be much more to your local village shop than meets the eye!

We went to...

Burgess Stores



Benenden



Winchelsea



www.highweald.org

More local product outlets

was already selling a few locally-produced items, for example bread and sausages. John attended the Kentish Fare trade show that April. This was an opportunity to meet many more producers. "We were – and still are – proactive in seeking out new Local Producers," he says. Burgess Stores now stocks about 200 local food and drink products – the number varies with the time of year, depending upon what's in season. There are varying degrees of success: "If there's no longer a market for a product, it has to be dropped." But John adds: "Village shops give Local Producers a very fair deal. They don't haggle over prices. Furthermore, they know their stock and will tell you where everything comes from – and what's special about it." John and Elaine have also branched out into local non-food items – postcards, greetings cards, prints and plants.

Though John and Elaine came to Goudhurst to champion local food, they also wanted to purchase a business in an area where there would be a fair proportion of visitors: Goudhurst is not only in the High Weald AONB, but also within the area known as the 'Garden of England'. "By mid-March 1995, I had personally served people from 22 different nationalities in the shop – all visitors from overseas." John says. "We were very forward-thinking in making the link between what we do and tourism. Now I want to make local and national tourism organisations recognise the importance of village shops."

Burgess Stores has been successful in several Kent Tourism and Hospitality awards and in the 2004 Taste of Kent Awards, it won Best Village Shop – through customer nominations.

John thinks that a village shop is a sign of an active community. He adds: "It's generally reckoned that property prices are 10-15% higher in villages with shops." Apart from selling goods, village shops provide lots of intangible things: for example, a meeting place and a place for local "news" (though John says the shopkeeper must be very diplomatic and, to some extent, remain aloof!). "You become aware of people's circumstances," he says, knowingly.

Village shops arrange home deliveries for people including the housebound; they support local organisations; they act as box office for village events; they usually have a community notice/advertising board. If your need cannot be met by their wide range of services, they usually know of someone who can help ("No, but I know someone who does"). They frequently give directions to lost travellers – and act as unofficial Tourist Information Centres!

But John and Elaine are under no illusions and stress that village shops have to keep on adapting and changing in order to thrive. "If you have a business, it's up to you to make it work. You're in charge. You may be influenced by external factors, but it's still up to you to make your business attractive to customers." John doesn't like the expression "use it or lose it" being applied to village shops – as is often the case. He feels it's very negative – saying that a lot of other retailers share this view – and prefers the National Independents' Day slogan: My shop is your shop. "Far more positive!"

Websites

www.rural-shops-alliance.co.uk
www.producedinkent.co.uk

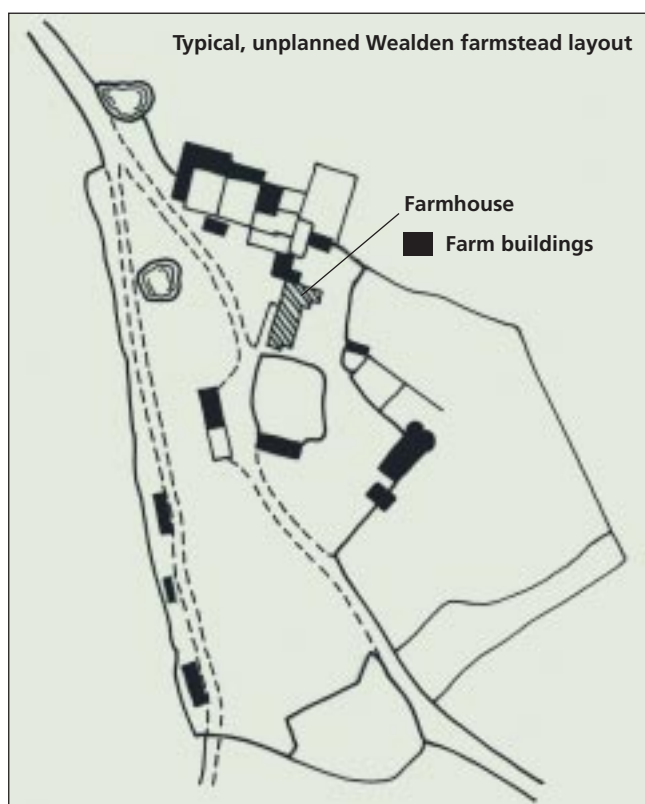
Farmstead layout in the High Weald

Recent research on farmsteads has looked more closely at layout as a way of describing their local character. A project in the High Weald AONB has mapped farmstead plans, as shown on late 19th century maps. **Bob Edwards** explains....

Nationally, there is a great diversity in farmstead plans – both in terms of form and scale – which often reflect the variations in farming practice that occurred over time and from place to place. In upland areas of northern England *linear plans*, with farm buildings attached to the farmhouse, suited the generally small farms and the terrain. In coastal areas of Northumberland, huge estates built large *regular courtyard* farms in the 19th century where cattle were intensively reared. Across the chalk areas of the south, *loose courtyard* plans dominated by large detached barns, granaries and stables set around a yard are characteristic.

In the small-scale landscape of the High Weald there was often no attempt at planning or creating a formal yard area. Instead, the house and barn (often the only buildings of the farmstead) were usually set fairly close together – though sometimes there is no clear relationship between the two. This unplanned, or dispersed, character of farmsteads is also seen on larger farms, where a number of buildings scattered around the farmhouse – with or without individual yards and sometimes including small regular L- and U-plan groups – were commonplace. Individual buildings lining a wide trackway leading to the farm were also typical. Such plans persisted in the Weald until the mid-19th century, from which time there is increasing evidence of more formal layouts – usually on estate-owned farms.

The informal, unplanned farmsteads with their loose clusters of buildings, often including a medieval farmhouse and barn, an oast house and a labourers cottage, remain a highly characteristic and important feature of the High Weald landscape. Where oasts and barns have been converted to residential use, these single farmsteads – often sited at a junction of routeways – can now have the feel of hamlets. It is important that when conversions are undertaken, it is not only the character of the individual buildings that are considered, but also the impact of development on the whole of the farmstead group in the landscape.



Traditional farm buildings are typically simple, straightforward buildings constructed by local workmen. They were built to be functional – designed above all to shelter and protect – though often with great inventiveness and attention to detail. They were not built to be charming or characterful: these are attributes that we have attached to them in modern times.

Traditional farm buildings are locally distinctive. They reflect the building materials available nearby – in the case of the High Weald, wood, brick and sandstone – and they allow us a glimpse of past local farming practices.

In the South East, due to the variety of the underlying geology (and, therefore, soils) some areas practising very different forms of agriculture lie right next to each other. This is appar-

Our historic farm

The High Weald was settled by individual farmers – leading to a historic patchwork rich heritage of distinctive buildings: structures that add a human dimension

Barns

The largest building in most farmyards is the barn. Very few farm buildings other than barns survive from the medieval period. One of the reasons for this may be that barns were built by professional builders and carpenters, while many other buildings would have been constructed more cheaply, perhaps by the farmers themselves.

In arable areas, barns were used solely for the storage and threshing of arable crops. Such barns are often very large. However, the High Weald was an area of relatively small-scale, mainly livestock farming, where the farmer often had other part-time employment – and this is reflected in the size and type of barns found here. High Weald barns are generally small and multi-purpose and would have been used for the storage of all kinds of things – as well as for housing some livestock.

Barns that have been used for threshing arable crops often have a large entrance door to accommodate a full cart and a much smaller one opposite for the empty cart to leave.

Granaries

Once the hard work of threshing had been done, the grain was too precious to leave in the barn for any length of time. In South and East England, small, detached granaries held grain for seed and animal feed as well as any surplus for sale.

Often, all that's left of the old granary are the mushroom-shaped "staddle" stones on which the building rested – designed to keep damp and vermin out. A two foot high stem plus a cap overhang of six inches was required to defeat the brown rat, introduced to Britain in the 1720s.

Oasts

Oasts come in many shapes and sizes, but the basic principle is the same: the hops are first placed on a slotted floor over a heat source in the drying kiln. In many cases, this takes the form of the familiar "roundel". Kilns are topped by a protective wooden cowl, ingeniously designed to automatically turn the flue away from the wind. When dry, the hops are laid out on the adjoining upper barn floor to cool and finally scooped up and packed into sacks – hop pockets – suspended below this floor. The lower floor



of the barn acts as convenient storage for the full pockets. Thus, no oast is complete without both hop kiln and barn.

Cattle sheds

Every farmer knows that cold animals eat more and fatten less: "A cold beast is a skinny beast." Unlike sheep, most cattle do not have warm, waterproof coats and need a warm and dry place in which to shelter if they are to do well.

In the High Weald, open-fronted sheds provided shelter for cattle in winter. These "shelter sheds" – best placed facing south – were arranged around a yard, together with other buildings. The sheds usually contained feeding racks but the cattle were not tethered – as they were in some other forms of cow house. The agricultural improvements of the 18th century emphasised the importance of farmyard manure to maintain the fertility of the soil: when cattle were kept in yards, their manure was easily collected.

Cartsheds

These buildings are associated with crop growing – their size proportional to the arable acreage of a farm. They are most commonly open fronted and similar to cattle sheds, but often face away from the farmyard, perhaps opening onto the drive – giving direct access to the fields.

Metal parts obviously needed protection

Places to visit

Heaven Farm, Danehill, East Sussex
www.heavenfarm.co.uk
01825 790226

The farm buildings were erected between 1820 and 1830 by a rich landowner as the Home Farm to the Danehurst Estate. For their day, they represented the last word in modern planning and their remarkable state of preservation recaptures a picture of a typical Victorian farm. Today, useless for modern farming, they house a collection of farming and domestic by-gones in a unique country museum.

The Weald and Downland Museum
Singleton, Chichester, West Sussex
www.wealddown.co.uk
01243 811348

More than 500 years of architectural heritage including the recreated Bayleaf medieval Wealden farmstead; barns, cattle sheds and farmhouses.

The Museum of Kent Life
Cobtree, Maidstone, Kent
www.museum-kentlife.co.uk
01622 763936

A collection of historic buildings, depicting the changes in life in Kent during the 19th and 20th centuries. These include an oast house, granary barn, hoppers' huts and farmhouse.

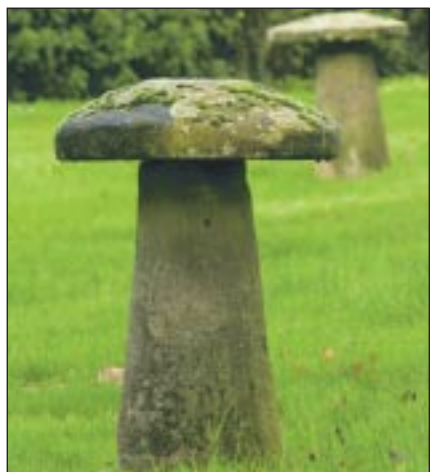
ent in the form of the farm buildings. For example, on the Downs, large barns stored arable crops and sheds sheltered animals producing manure for the fields – while in the adjoining Weald, large numbers of cattle houses and yards reflected the importance of cattle breeding and fattening.

Today, many farm buildings are no longer used for their original purpose. However, it is not always easy to convert them to homes or work places whilst at the same time retaining those features which give the buildings their distinctive agricultural identity. It is hoped that a knowledge of how the farm buildings were originally used and how farm building form relates to function – combined with a greater understanding of the distinctiveness of local farmstead layout – will lead to more sensitive development in future.



farmstead heritage

tern of scattered, isolated farmsteads. Today, these holdings still contain a to the landscape and provide clues about farming traditions long passed.



Top of page left: farmstead near Burwash; right: a view of the stone barn.

Large photos above, left: barn again! Restored – not converted – barn on the Beech Estate; right: cattle shed, Weald and Downland Museum.

Small photos (clockwise from bottom): staddle stone; oast kiln or 'roundel', Sissinghurst Castle; Victorian pigsty, Heaven Farm.

from rain; but carts and other farm implements were largely made of wood and therefore also needed protection from the sun – so cartsheds often face north.

Dairies

The liquid milk trade was very restricted before the late 19th century: in the dairy, milk was converted to butter and cheese – products with much better keeping qualities. The dairy on a small farm was often within the farmhouse in a rear room. Some were separate buildings but, as the women of the household managed the dairy, they were normally close to the house. The dairy needed to be cool and well ventilated, so it was usually situated to the north of the house, shaded by trees and partly sunk into the ground. It had thick, cool flagstones on the floor and thick stone shelves on which the dairy produce was stored. Windows were shuttered, not glazed.

Pigsties

By medieval times, pigs were no longer being driven into the High Weald's woods to feed on acorns. But pigs were still valued for their ability to fatten quickly and for eating what would otherwise be wasted. They were normally fed on kitchen scraps and whey (a by-product of dairying) and so pigsties were often placed near both house and dairy for ease of feeding. They often have a chute through the front wall leading straight into the feeding trough.

Pigsties have low entrances – reflecting the height of the pigs. Sometimes a hen loft was put above the pigsty, helping to keep both pigs and hens warm and making the sties more suitable for raising litters. It was also thought that the pigs would frighten foxes away!

Dovecotes

Pigeons were originally kept to provide fresh meat – also eggs and manure. During the medieval period the keeping of pigeons was usually restricted as a manorial right – and the construction of a dovecote indicated the high status of its owner.

Dovecotes can be free standing or in lofts – or built into the outside of a building, for example in the gable end.

The nest best thing

The loss of old farm buildings leads to a loss of nesting sites for some birds. However, we can provide alternative arrangements as **Kerry Baldwin** explains.

Traditional farm barns in the High Weald have provided homes for various species of mammals and birds, such as Barn Owls and Swallows. Not only did the traditional design provide plenty of nooks and crannies suitable for nesting and roosting places, but there was also a plentiful supply of food: rodents for the Barn Owl and insects for the Swallow. Barn Owls, in particular, were welcomed by the farmer as they hunted rodents that were attracted to grain stores.

Both species are in decline. This is due to various factors: for example, climatic changes in the Swallow's African winter quarters mean that they return to breeding areas in poor condition, therefore laying fewer eggs. The reasons for the Barn Owl's decline are complex: agricultural change is seen as the main cause – for example the disappearance of hunting habitats, such as field margins.

These problems are, no doubt, exacerbated by the loss of traditional nesting and roosting sites – as old buildings are demolished, modernised or converted for other uses. New farm buildings built with non-traditional materials, such as



metal-framed steel-clad constructions, either exclude the entry of birds or do not provide the nooks and crannies needed for nesting and roosting sites. Improved hygiene regulations mean birds are excluded from buildings used for food storage.

However, there are simple measures that can be taken to help. Indeed, within the last ten years in Sussex – due to more favourable habitat management including increased provision of nest boxes – the decline may have been halted.

Providing nest boxes is the easiest way of alleviating the problem. Specially designed Swallow houses can be fixed under eaves, inside or outside farm buildings. Barn Owl boxes can either be put inside barns or in large trees around the farm to provide alternative nesting places.

Where development of buildings might impact on Barn Owls, expert advice should be sought at the planning stage to make provision for the owls, either by retaining access or by erecting and maintaining nest boxes. Before any work is carried out, the barn should be checked for the presence of owls: droppings, pellets and feathers. If owls are present, they should be protected during the work by providing alternative nesting and roosting sites – and the work should not be carried out during the breeding or nesting season.

Further advice can be sought either from English Nature, the RSPB or other organisations such as the Barn Owl Trust.

Websites

www.english-nature.org.uk
www.rspb.org.uk
www.barnowl.co.uk
www.birdbox.co.uk

Sustainable Rural Settlements

Andrew Shaw, Policy and Research Officer at the High Weald AONB Unit, looks at a project researching sustainability in our communities...

The AONB Management Plan seeks to find out how we can encourage and support sustainable communities in villages, hamlets and farmsteads. Over the last year a major research project, Sustainable Rural Settlements, has been working towards an understanding of what makes a village or farmstead more sustainable. The research has included a detailed doorstep survey of residents, which asked about people's lives and activities and their use of services such as schools, shops and work in three case study areas – Balcombe, Wadhurst and Sedlescombe.

The results show that rural settlements are generally becoming less rather than more sustainable. Planning policy has used the concept of 'local service centres' to try to keep rural residents working and shopping locally, but transport policy has given them greater mobility through use of the private car – which they have used to travel more widely, making modern rural life unsustainable. As a consequence, planning needs to shift up a gear if it is to bring about greater sustainability.

The research has also shown some interesting differences in the lives of people who live in the very remote hamlets and farmsteads. These people seem to be much more 'connected' to the countryside and are more likely to use local services and buy local produce. Additionally, the results show that, although a high proportion of people are commuting to London for work, a very high proportion (up to 40% in some cases) are working at or from their home in the countryside.

Though current policy focuses on the larger settlements and villages to act as 'service centres', the survey suggests that people may be living more 'local' lives based around clusters of hamlets and farms. The results also suggest that farmsteads and hamlets could be grouped together in wider networks that rely on each other for particular aspects of their lives, especially in the open countryside. As the report concludes:

“Forging a relationship between the communities and landscape is likely to require 'exceptional' development, led by exceptional policies and exceptional controls to resist reversion to more 'general' unsustainable development. Specifically in the AONB context, exceptional development means development where beneficial management of the landscape is a guaranteed output of the development – development that will allow people to live in an intimate and mutually beneficial relationship with the environment and landscape of the AONB.”

(Planning for Sustainable Settlements in AONBs, Land Use Consultants 2005)



© Countryside Agency/Peter Greenhalf

Dens of Benenden

“Den” names – as in Rolvenden, Tenterden, Iden Green and Benenden – tell us we are in the Kent High Weald. But what is the origin of these names? And how does this explain how some High Weald villages evolved? **Ernie Pollard** and **Hazel Strouts** of Benenden explain, using their own village as a model...



Landscape is more than the distant view. It includes ancient place names, old routeways, special marker trees (such as holly and yew), field names and much more. The High Weald landscape is a living history book and the more we understand of the origins of our landscape, the more it means to us and the more likely we are to appreciate and conserve it.

The origin of the dens

Bronze Age objects have been found in Benenden; Celtic iron smelters worked here and Roman roads cross the parish. It has a long history, but perhaps most striking is the story of its early beginnings as a woodland swine pasture.

The Saxons first settled in Kent in the north and east, on the Downs and coastal plains – where they had landed and where the soils were easily cultivated. From the 5th century AD, they used the Weald (both High and Low) mainly for pannage, the seasonal feeding of pigs. They drove their pigs into the woods to fatten on acorns and other woodland foods. Family groups returned each year

to their own special areas – and in this way the Weald was parcelled out into small areas known as “dens”, or “wood pastures”.

Pannage largely came to an end by the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, but the dens and their distant ownership did not cease to exist. The early Saxon settlements outside the Weald became manors and their remote dens in the Weald were settled and became farmsteads. The pattern of manors, pig driving routes and dens survived as a “ghost” of the pannage system long after pannage itself had been forgotten.

In deeds and documents, until the 16th century and beyond, land was frequently identified by its den, listed as “in the den of...”. As the manorial system weakened, awareness of dens declined, but even in the 19th century, farmers in Standen, Dingleton, Iden and Hinksden – all in Benenden parish – paid rents to Aldington Manor on the edge of Romney Marsh.

Benenden dens

We recorded all the dens in Benenden parish that we could find. We looked in old wills, deeds, manorial records and many other sources. Because we concentrated on a small

area, we were able to add ten dens to the 22 recorded in Benenden parish by earlier historians. The names of some, such as Dingleton, Standen, Walkhurst (by no means all have “den” in the name), Bishopsden and the den of Benenden itself, are still familiar names today – whilst others such as Osenden, Folkenden and Holnhurst have entirely disappeared. (Many of the Kentish manors outside the Weald belonged to the Dean and Chapter of Canterbury or to the Archbishop: Bishopsden must have been an early personal possession of the Archbishop.)

The den of Benenden (probably the den of the people of Bionna, an early Saxon leader) was an important den. It was large and lay either side of the drove route to Rolvenden – leading on to Bilsington Manor, its early owner. By Domesday, Benenden den had become an independent manor with its own church, which became the parish church. Later still, it gave its name to the whole parish. In similar ways, Frittenden, Tenterden, Biddenden and other Wealden parishes took their name from dens. However, hundreds of other den names survive in the names of hamlets, farms, woods or roads. Every name has a meaning and a history.

We looked at patterns of ownership of the Benenden dens. Those in the north of the parish were owned by manors around Ashford, served by the drove route now called Goddards Green road. The dens in the south were owned by manors along the edge of Romney Marsh and beyond, with today's Rolvenden Road acting as their drove route. This leads us to the exciting suggestion that an ancient lathe boundary (lathes being administrative divisions of Kent and unique to our county) crossed Benenden parish, between the northern and southern dens, following streams and old roads for much of its length.

Much more detail can be found in the full article in *Archaeologia Cantiana* 2005, published by the Kent Archaeological Society.

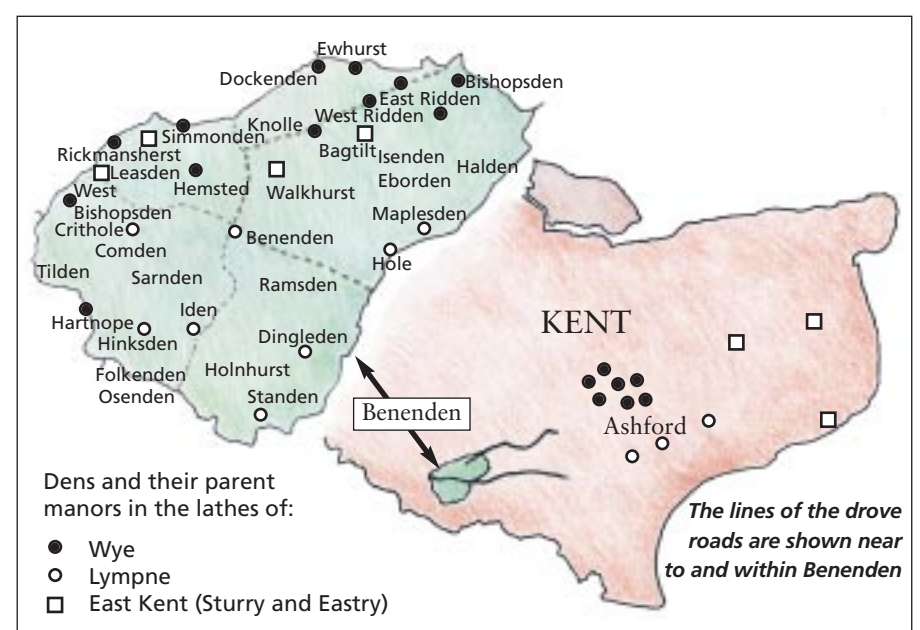
Explanatory note

Pannage was practiced across the whole of the Kent and Sussex Weald, perhaps starting as long ago as 8,000 BC. In 1086 – when pannage was already past its peak – Domesday records indicate that around 150,000 pigs would have been driven to and from the woods of the Weald.

What were dens like?

Until they were settled, dens were not clearings in the woods: trees were needed to provide the acorns on which the pigs were fed. However, there would probably have been little in the way of scrub and brambles under the mature trees: the pigs would have grubbed this “understorey” up each autumn whilst searching for acorns on the ground – thus preventing regeneration.

Why not explore Benenden by doing our featured short walk on page 12?



High Weald House History

The story of Snape

Brian Yates has lived at Snape, near Wadhurst, for almost half a century – since 1956. When he started investigating the history of the estate and its previous owners, he found that it had some interesting stories to tell...

When David Barham inherited Snape in the 1590s – whilst still a ward of his uncle, William Courthorpe of Whiligh – it had been in the care of his family for almost three hundred years. In 1617, he built a new house. However, David's great grandson sold Snape in 1721 – and it passed out of Barham ownership for some 160 years.

The man who returned Snape to the Barham family was Victorian entrepreneur Sir George Barham, the grandson of a dairy farmer from Battle. George's father had moved to London to set up his own dairy shop in London at 272 Strand. George was apprenticed to a London cabinet-maker, but he delivered milk for his father in the evenings. In 1858 he opened his own shop in Dean Street, employed others to do the deliveries and began to import milk by rail from outside London. He called his firm Express Dairies.

Victorian London had little appreciation of the causes of infection. Unclean habits were common in shops and in food production. Dairies diluted milk with water, used dirty containers and bound and thickened cream with slime derived from slugs and snails! This was not acceptable to George Barham. For over half a century he worked tirelessly for the health of Londoners, raising public awareness of the importance of cleanliness and supporting improvements in drainage and the supply of clean water. In recognition of his achievements, he was knighted in 1904.

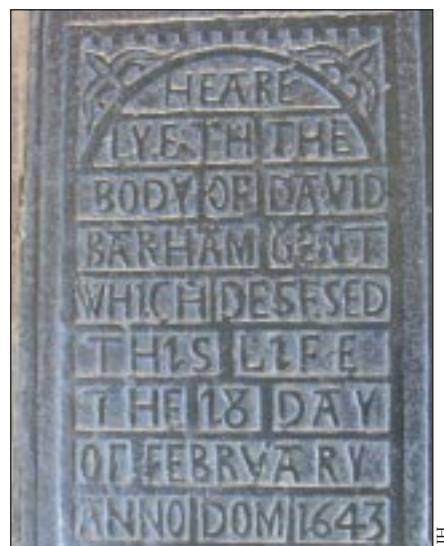
As his family was native to this part of Sussex, he looked for a farm in the area. He bought Snape Farm in 1887. The main buildings then were the 1617 Farmhouse of David Barham and the much older Battle Abbey tithe barn. He felt he was returning home.

Sketches and notes on the architect's drawings dated between 1892 and 1903 indicate how he planned and developed the estate in several stages. His conception was remarkable, reflecting the experience he had acquired building Express depots, offices, dairies and teashops. Much of the work was carried out by his estate workers, the estate itself providing the



Above: Snape

Below, left: Cast iron Barham grave slab, Wadhurst Church; right: Stone bear at entrance holding the Barham coat of arms.



materials. The gardens and terracing, drives, stone walls, coach house, stables and the extensions of the house itself required immense quantities of sandstone, which was quarried near the house.

Sir George also provided new choir stalls and pews for Wadhurst Church, where Barham ancestors – some of them Ironmasters – are among those named on the thirty two cast iron grave slabs in the nave.

When the central buildings were completed, he began to develop the paddocks and woods. A brochure prepared for letting the estate details some of the landscaping work that had been carried out: Snape Shaw and Snape Wood were planted with hornbeam and oak; paths and rides were laid out and footbridges made over the streams; and a waterfall

and two weirs were constructed with a hydraulic ram pumping water up to the house. All are still here.

Though Sir George used local stone for the walls round the old Tithe Barn – his 'Baronial Hall' – Snape's gates and railings were purchased from St Paul's Cathedral in 1896 for ten pounds! These railings were the first to be made of cast iron: they were produced to the orders of Sir Christopher Wren by Gloucester Forge, our most famous local ironworks. So in a way, the railings were coming home, too!

Sir George was something of a Victorian Romantic. Over the east porch of the Barn he put a painted sign reading: "This Sussex Barn, Built by David Barham in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, was restored to its present use by Sir George Barham in the reign of Queen Victoria".

AONB Unit news in brief

Sustainable funding

The Sustainable Development Fund is a new grant scheme that is coordinated by the Countryside Agency on behalf of Defra. All 50 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty have been given a Sustainable Development Fund to deliver locally on projects that bring social, environmental and economic benefits to these protected areas.

The High Weald Sustainable Development Fund is a competitive fund with a total of £90,000 each year for two years between 2006 – 2008 to fund projects that look after the High Weald landscape and promote a more sustainable way of life. Please note that grants are normally between £500 and £25,000. Our aim is to support small projects.

For further information, please refer to www.highweald.org or telephone 01580 879500.

PAWS for thought

The High Weald AONB, Woodland Trust and the Forestry Commission are jointly funding a project focusing on returning ancient woodland plantations to native, broadleaved tree cover. The AONB contains some 7% of England's ancient woodlands, with over a third of this area classified as Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS). These are woods that have been planted up in the past with trees which would not naturally grow on the site, particularly conifers. Many of these plantations have been abandoned – and are often of poor value for wildlife.

The project officer, Mike Chapman, is keen to work with woodland owners and will be providing free advice on how they can restore their sites. He can be contacted at the High Weald AONB Unit on 01580 879964, or by email: m.chapman@highweald.org

Return of the pigs

Pigs returned to a High Weald sunken routeway near Wadhurst in the autumn to be filmed for the High Weald Unit's Digital Media Project. The aim of the project is to produce a digital film archive covering many aspects of the AONB, ready for use in future projects and in TV features. Other subjects include wildflower seed harvesting, conservation grazing, woodland management and heathland restoration.

It was a historic occasion – pigs may not have used the route for hundreds of years. The specially trained, free-range Tamworth pigs were provided by Osney Lodge Farm in Surrey. The Tamworth breed was chosen, since it closely resembles the domestic pigs kept in Saxon times. Farmer Sally Page dressed in Saxon costume for the "drove" and, after all her hard work and patience, the pigs behaved perfectly. Whoever said you shouldn't do film and TV work with animals? (See photo on page 6.)

www.osneylodgefarm.com

Our first corporate friend!

In November 2005, Edenbridge Town Council passed the following resolution: "To pledge continuing support for the High Weald AONB and the aims of the Charter for Residents and Visitors by becoming a Corporate Friend of the High Weald."

This is not the only first for Edenbridge. In 2004, it was the first town in Kent to gain Quality Council status and in 2005 it became the first Fairtrade Town in Kent. The Council tries to manage its various amenity areas to benefit wildlife and recycles and re-uses materials as much as possible. It has also launched a drive against littering. A monthly Farmers' Market supports local producers.

Read more about the Charter and Friends of the High Weald on page 8.

The earliest reference to Snape is in the Battle Abbey cartulary (register book) of about 1200, recording the gift of 'all my lands of Snape in the parish of Wadehurst' to the Abbot and convent of Battle. The Abbey owned Snape until Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries (1536-1540). Then it became part of the Glynde Lands, in the care of the Barham family.

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):

Email: _____

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 (below). 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 2007 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.

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

Furniture maker with a mission

Bums on seats

In recent times, the word “designer” has been associated with everything from sofas to unshaven chins! But with true design, before aesthetics come problem solving and functionality – and an understanding of the limitations of the material. **Dave Green** is a local furniture maker who designs with the natural idiosyncrasies of the raw material very much in mind. That material is local wood.



In 1993, just after graduating from his 3D Design course, Dave answered an unusual job advertisement in an Artists' Newsletter. A project called High Weald Design was looking for furniture makers who could design using local wood. The project had been set up by the High Weald Unit to seek practical solutions to the problem of under-utilised woodlands in the AONB. With woodland cover of around 25%, nearly three quarters of which is ancient, a key challenge for the High Weald is to generate new markets for this material: to help maintain the ecological diversity and landscape of the area, whilst providing a positive benefit to the rural economy.

In the High Weald, there is the additional problem that much of the timber is unsuitable for conventional use. “Once a tree gets over 12 inches in diameter and is tall and straight there is a good market for such timber. The challenge is to design products that can be made from the small diameter and irregularly-shaped, lower-grade timber.” Dave explains. “The Project wanted to find ways of improving financial returns to woodland owners by using ‘low value’ timber in high value products, so providing an incentive to manage their woods.”

The furniture that Dave designed was practical, durable and simple – not one-off sculptural pieces, but intended for batch production to use as much wood as possible and minimise costs. He met with timber growers to get a feel for the optimum-sized components to be cut from the trees growing locally. The sketches and models of his ideas were greeted with much enthusiasm from local organisations that had wanted to use outdoor furniture made from local timber, but none had been available.

Local hardwoods – Oak, Ash and Sweet Chestnut – are both beautiful and naturally durable. By harvesting them, we can keep our woods properly managed and thus benefit wildlife. Dave's mission is to make functional items out of “imperfect” grades of timber – and use as much of it as possible to maximise the benefits to local woodlands.

Along with another local furniture maker, Michael Rigg, Dave began to manufacture the furniture, using local timber. The demand increased and so it was felt that a non-profit making company should be set up to continue the exciting work started by the High Weald Design Project – in an attempt to prove that a company manufacturing furniture solely using local timber could be sustainable. Demand increased still more and, in 2000, Dave and Michael were able to “go it alone” and set up their own company – High Weald Furniture Ltd.

Twelve years on from answering that job advert, Dave now has a new business partner – Adam Wharton. But the company's aims are still exactly the same – to use local, sustainably grown timber to manufacture interior and exterior furniture. They rent their workshop from their main timber supplier. This reduces transportation to a minimum and maintains the important links between timber growers and users.

Local wood can have more refined uses. Although not really set up to produce interiors, Dave and Adam have made kitchens for friends and family when business was quiet. Aren't they tempted to branch out into designer homes? Dave explains why it

wouldn't really fit in with their philosophy: “The wood has to be of a much higher grade than for exterior work, making it hard to source locally. There's also a lot of wastage: you're only using about 20-30% of the original tree. Imported oak is a more uniform product, but you might as well buy plastic for all the good it's going to do to the local environment!”

Also, it's clear that Dave and Adam enjoy installing their products – which they always do themselves – out in the fresh air, providing a break from the workshop. As well as the challenge of the raw material, Dave enjoys the whole organisational challenge of running his business. “Anyone could make this stuff,” he says, modestly, “but they might not be able to cope with juggling five projects at once or meeting the deadlines, which are often very tight to meet funding targets.”

Forty percent of High Weald Furniture's work is now for the Woodland Trust – furniture made using the Trust's own wood! Other clients have included The National Trust, Kew Gardens, the RHS and many local Councils. So the next time you sit on a country park bench, you may be sitting on one of Dave's creations!

Websites

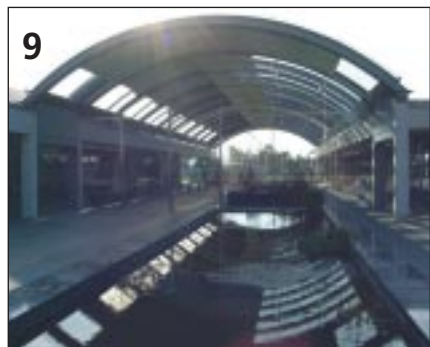
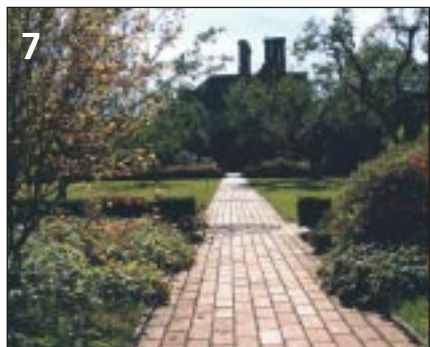
For more information, go to www.highwealdfurniture.com
For details of other local furniture designers see www.highweald.org

By choosing furniture made from home-grown hardwoods you can help to conserve woodlands and give valuable support to traditional, rural industries.

Exploring the High Weald

House of fun

How well do you know the buildings of the High Weald? Can you guess what and where these structures are? Answers below.



Answers: 1. Standen. 2. A reservoir tower. 3. Bewl. 4. Brightling Pyramid. 5. Balcombe Viaduct. 6. Tank Traps, Brede. 7. Battle Abbey. 8. Bateman's. 9. Wakerhurst Seedbank.

Planning your visit

Travelling around the High Weald AONB

Wherever possible, use public transport. For details please call Traveline 0870 6082608 or visit 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.

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 right 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

News in brief

Winchelsea E-Guide Project

You may already have come across hand-held electronic audio-visual guides at museums and historic sites. In a world first, the Winchelsea E-Guide will use this technology not merely to show visitors images of the town's historic buildings and sites today – but to overlay contemporary photographs with reconstructions of what these places looked like several hundred years ago. An example is shown below: this is of the Strand Gate as it is today and as it would have been in 1305.

The reconstructions are being executed by professional archaeologist Dominic Andrews, with the assistance of the Winchelsea Archaeological Society. The tour as a whole is being produced by a partnership of local organisations and managed by the Winchelsea Community Office. The project is being funded by the Local Heritage Initiative, INTERREG and Defra, with assistance from Hidden Britain, the High Weald AONB Unit and Action in Rural Sussex. The E-Guide will be launched in spring 2006.



Winchelsea

ANCIENT TOWN AND PORT OF STRANDED PRIDE



On a hilltop at the tip of one of the sandstone ridges that stretch like fingers from the High Weald into Romney Marsh and towards the sea sleeps the picturesque Sussex village of Winchelsea.

For those who have ventured off the A259 and discovered Winchelsea, it is a place of peace and tranquillity, somewhere to wander round, have tea or take lunch.

However, the village is full of echoes of a grander past, not least, the great church of St Thomas and the medieval gates. Seven hundred years ago, Winchelsea was one of the great ports of the kingdom and an 'Ancient Town' of the Cinque Ports Confederation. Today, it lies over a mile from the sea and is one of Kipling's 'ports of stranded pride'.

Winchelsea is a hidden gem, well worth a visit. For more information, consult www.winchelsea.net

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
Open: Jan - Mar, 10am-4pm; Apr - Sept, 10am-6pm; Oct, 10am-4pm.
- 4. Bayham Abbey**
Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890381
www.english-heritage.org.uk
- 5. Bedebury Pinetum**
Park Lane, Goudhurst, Kent
01580 211781
www.forestry.gov.uk/bedebury
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 1 Jan - 10 Feb, 10am-4pm; 11 Feb - 31 Oct, 10.30am-6pm and 4 Nov - 23 Dec, 10.30am-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
Open: 1 Mar - 30 Nov, 11am-5pm, castle opens at 12 noon. 1 Dec - 28 Feb, 11am-4pm.
- 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: 31 Mar-2 Oct. Fri-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**
Titchhurst, 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: 18 Mar - 29 Oct, Wed - Sun, 11am-6pm, last entry at 5pm or dusk if earlier. Old Castle, 29 Apr - 1 Oct, Wed - Sun, 11am-5.30pm. Garden and Castle closed Good Friday.
- 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: 25 Mar - 29 Oct, Sat - Wed, 11am-5pm; weekends in March 11am-5pm.
- 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: 25 Mar - 29 Oct, Wed - Sun & BH Mon, House 11am-5pm (last entry 4.30pm). Shop & Restaurant 11am-5pm & Garden 11am-6pm
- 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. Bookers Vineyard**
Bolney, West Sussex
01444 881575
www.bookersvineyard.co.uk
- 39. Davenport Vineyards**
Limney Farm, Castle Hill, Rotherfield, East Sussex
01892 852380
www.davenportvineyards.co.uk
Open: all year by appointment, please phone for details
- 40. Lamberhurst Vineyards**
The Down, Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890412
Open: every day, 9.30am-5.00pm

- 41. Penshurst Vineyards**
Penshurst, Tonbridge, Kent
01892 870255
www.penshurst.co.uk
- 42. Sandhurst Vineyards**
Hoads Farm, Crouch Lane, Sandhurst, Cranbrook, Kent
01580 850296
www.sandhurstvineyards.co.uk
Open all year, phone to check.
- 43. Sedlescombe Vineyard**
Cripps Corner, Robertsbridge, East Sussex
0800 9802884
www.englishorganicwine.co.uk

- Farms and woods**
- 44. Tenterden Vineyard Park**
Small Hythe, Tenterden, Kent
01580 763033
www.chapeldownwines.co.uk
 - 45. 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



This map is to be used as a guide only. It is not an accurate representation.

46. Farm World
Great Knelle
Beckley
East Sussex
01797 260250

47. 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

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

49. 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

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

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

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

Windmills

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

54. Nutley Windmill
Nutley, Uckfield
East Sussex
01435 873367

55. Stocks Mill
Rye Road, Wittersham, Kent
01797 270295

Museums

**56. Battle Museum of Local
History**
Battle,
East Sussex
01424 775955

57. Yesterday's World
89-90 High Street, Battle
East Sussex
01424 774269
www.yesterdaysworld.co.uk
Open: Daily except 25 Dec &
1 Jan, 9.30am

**58. 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

59. Court Hall Museum
Winchelsea, East Sussex
01797 226382

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

**61. East Grinstead Town
Museum**
Old Market Yard, Cantelupe
Road, East Grinstead, W. Sussex
01342 302233
www.hodgers.com/
eastgrinsteadmuseum/
Open: Weds - Sun, 10am-4pm.

62. Eden Valley Museum
Church House, 72 High Street,
Edenbridge, Kent
01732 868102
www.evmt.org.uk
Open: From 1 Feb, Wed & Fri,
2pm-4.30pm, Thurs & Sat 10am-
4.30pm & summer Sundays
2pm-4.30pm

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

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

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

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

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

**68. Ashdown Forest Visitor
Centre**
Wych Cross, Forest Row
01342 823583

69. Bowl Water
Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890661
www.bowl.co.uk
Open: 9am-half hour before
sunset except Christmas Day

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

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

72. Hastings Country Park
Fairlight, East Sussex
01424 813225

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

Nature Reserves

74. Rye Harbour NR
Rye, East Sussex
01797 223862

75. 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
- Weald Information
Centre, Cranbrook**
01580 715686

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



Cerry Sherwin

Start and end: Benenden village car park next to the new Village Hall (Grid Reference: TQ 810328).

Distance: short walk 2 miles/3km; longer option 3.5 miles/5.5km.

Times: 1 hour and 1 hour 45 minutes respectively.

Terrain: undulating countryside, several stiles, muddy in places.

OS Map: Explorer 125, Romney Marsh.

Waymarking: High Weald Landscape Trail waymarks, in conjunction with ordinary yellow arrow footpath discs. The route directions below follow the walk in an anti-clockwise direction.

Village walk option for wheelchair users and those who do not wish to walk far or over rough ground, hills and stiles: through the village to see the famous school – with wide pavement on the flat all the way. (1.25 miles/2km including return.)

Directions

From the car park, turn left to reach The Bull pub. Here, cross to the wide pavement on the other side of the road. Continue to walk in the same direction (west) passing the village green, King William IV pub and village shops.

After 500m, when you reach Benenden crossroads and the Queen's Well, continue in the same direction, still on the pavement on the north side of the road, for another 500m. At South Lodge, turn right into the drive of Benenden School marked High Weald Landscape Trail (HWLT). Proceed up the drive as far as next HWLT finger post, where the Trail leaves the drive and goes left. From here, you have a good view of the house. Retrace your steps down the school drive.

Village walk: at this point retrace your steps back along the street to explore the village centre.

Turn right out of the school drive and walk to the National Speed Limit sign. Cross the road with care to a gate and HWLT finger post opposite. Proceed south along the HWLT – here following the route of the Roman Road. After 150m, go through a gate with stile on the left. Now with a deeply sunken track (an ancient pig-droving route) on your right, continue in the same direction along the right-hand edge of 3 fields – crossing 2 stiles and passing to the right of a pond – to reach a field gate by Stream Farm.

Bear left here to reach a white gate on the drive to join footpath WC320. Go uphill along a slightly sunken green lane with a hedge on the right, to emerge on the road via a stile. Cross the road with care to another HWLT finger post and stile in the hedge opposite.

Proceed uphill, bearing slightly right to a stile and gate in the field corner next to a pond. After climbing the stile, turn left and walk up the narrow field to a stile in the centre of the hedge ahead. Cross the next small paddock in the same direction to arrive at a stile on a drive.

For the shorter walk option, go forward up the surfaced drive to the church and village centre.

For the longer option, you leave the HWLT here and turn sharp right onto a surfaced path running alongside the small paddock, with a hedge on your left. Continue downhill, through 2 gates, turning left through a gap (marked WC324) just before the gate onto the road.

Proceed east, crossing a drive – after which you will have an orchard on your right. At a second drive, turn right and follow the drive for 100m. At a bend in the drive, turn left through a bridle gate by a cattle grid (marked WC331). Follow the track ahead for 100m – to the first tree in a row of Oak trees on your left. Here, leave the track and go gently uphill, aiming for a metal field gate slightly to your right in a corner at the edge of a wood.

Turn right through the gate and follow the path as it skirts Bluebell Cottage, eventually bearing round to the right and descending gently. After 75m, where paths join from the right, turn left and follow a clear track, becoming sunken and muddy as it goes downhill through Moor Wood. (Ignore turnings to the right.) Where the track ends at a stile at the edge of the wood, continue in roughly the same direction along a field edge, with woodland on your right.

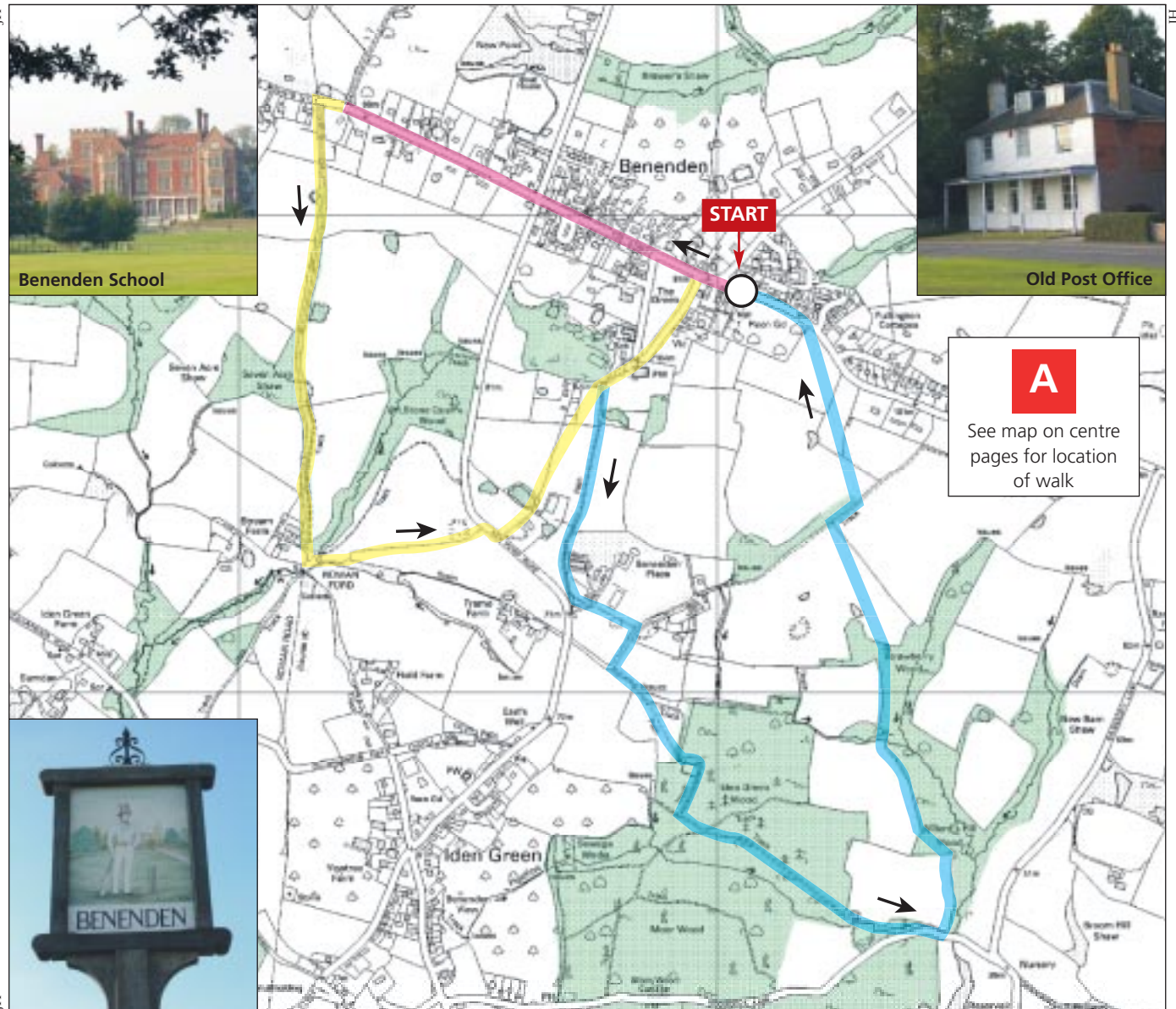
On reaching a stile at a lane, turn left along the lane. After a few metres, turn left again at a waymark post to once again rejoin the HWLT (now WC330). Climb to a stile up on your left, cross and turn right to follow the edge of the field with woodland on your right. At the field corner, cross a stile and turn left, entering woodland for a short while to leave it at another stile.

On the High Weald Landscape Trail

Explore Benenden

This walk follows part of the Roman road from Rochester to Hastings – where it runs alongside an ancient, sunken pig-droving route. The Roman road was used to carry iron out of the High Weald.

Benenden's lovely village centre – with its large green, interesting houses and churchyard managed for wildlife – offers extra opportunities to explore. To find out how Benenden evolved from an area of woodland used for feeding pigs, see page 6.



Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey Mapping with the permission of the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office. Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Kent County Council - 100019238, 2004

Turn right and follow the next field edge – again with woodland on your right – eventually going downhill to another stile in a corner and once again entering woodland. Proceed uphill with a spectacularly deep gill (wooded ravine) on your right and an ancient woodland boundary bank on your left.

At the edge of the wood, cross a stile and bear left across a field (ignoring another path going straight ahead). Pass near a pond on your left and gradually converge with the hedge on

your right to reach a stile in the field corner. Turn right on the track for 50m, then turn left over a stile by a gate (WC 327). Bear slightly right, cutting off the field corner to another stile. Go steeply uphill in the same direction (with another pond on your left) to reach a stile.

Continue in the same direction diagonally downhill across the field ahead – to reach a stile and metal HWLT sign by a gate on the road. Here, turn left to reach the village car park.



Calorie Burning Chart Benenden (short, 2 mile) walk. The longer option nearly doubles the calorie burn.

		Your approximate weight					
		50 kg	59 kg	68 kg	77 kg	86 kg	100 kg
		7st 12lb	9st 3lb	10st 10lb	12st 2lb	13st 8lb	15st 10lb
Approx. calories burned		132	156	180	204	228	264

These figures are for walking 2 miles in about 1 hour (i.e. at 2 mph) on level ground. Like most walks in the High Weald, the route is actually moderately hilly: walking up hills burns at least a third more calories than walking on the level and soft surfaces like mud use more energy than hard surfaces. (Walking downhill expends about as much energy as walking on the flat.) Figures from the British Heart Foundation www.bhfactive.org.uk

Fact Pack

Services

The Bull at Benenden
01580 240054
King William IV
01580 240636
The Village Shop
01580 240508
Baldwin's General Stores
01580 240564

Public Toilets

Village Hall car park.

Public Transport

Phone Traveline
0870 6082608

Local Producers

The Laurels Nursery
01580 240463
hardy trees and shrubs
Woodside Farm
01580 240027
frozen half and whole lamb – by appointment

Accommodation

Weald Information Centre,
Cranbrook
01580 715686

www.villagenet.co.uk
www.benendenvillage.org.uk

Start and end: Robertsbridge public car park in Station Road (Grid Reference: TQ 737235).

Distance: 5 miles/8km

Time: 2.5 hours

Terrain: undulating countryside, several stiles, muddy in places.

OS Map: Explorer 124, Hastings & Bexhill.

Waymarking: Yellow footpath arrow discs and blue bridleway arrow discs. The route directions below follow the walk in a clockwise direction.

Directions:

Starting from the public car park in Station Road, Robertsbridge village centre, turn right to head uphill towards the High Street. Turn left at the junction to follow the High Street for a short distance before turning right into Fair Lane, beside the Seven Stars public house. Follow the lane for a distance of approximately 160 metres (175 yds.) before turning right to follow the enclosed section of path around the school playing fields. Cross the stile at the end of the enclosed path, and cross the field to another stile, leading onto the main A21. Cross the main road and continue along the signposted footpath crossing the next field in the direction indicated to reach the woodland.

Follow the waymarked path through the wood until you reach a five-way junction. Take the right-hand signposted footpath, to leave the wood. Turn left over a stile, before turning right to follow the field edge path, keeping the hedge to your right. Continue to follow this path to reach a junction with a bridleway. Turn left and follow the bridleway downhill, through a gate and into woodland. On reaching the path junction at Stone Cottage, turn right and follow the footpath initially downhill, then over a hill to reach Poppinghole Lane. Turn right to follow the road for a few metres, before turning left over a stile onto the signposted footpath. The route now crosses a number of fields: continue to follow the waymarked path, over the stiles, before reaching a kissing gate, leading to the main A21 at Johns Cross.

Turn left along the main road, crossing in front of the pub, and then continue on the footpath opposite, signposted along the lane. Follow the lane for approximately 950 metres (600 yds.) passing to the side of Mountfield Court. Turn right at the path junction to follow the track to the rear of Mountfield Court. After passing through two gates, continue to follow the waymarked path across the next field. After crossing the stile next to the field gate, continue to follow the route through the next field to reach a tunnel under the railway.

After going under the railway, turn right through the gate and follow for short distance to the footbridge. Continue along the waymarked path, bearing left, through the small woodland to reach another footbridge. Continue across the next field to a further footbridge. Turn right at the signposted footpath junction, crossing a stile, and follow the watercourse keeping it to your right. Follow the route turning right across the footbridge, and then immediately left along the enclosed section between the stream and railway line.

At the end of the enclosed path, turn right and cross a stile and follow the path beside the railway line, crossing a large footbridge and on to reach path junction at the lane. Turn right onto the lane and follow under the railway bridge. Turn right at the road junction and follow the road up hill and turn left at the road junction to follow George Hill back to Robertsbridge High Street and the end of the walk.

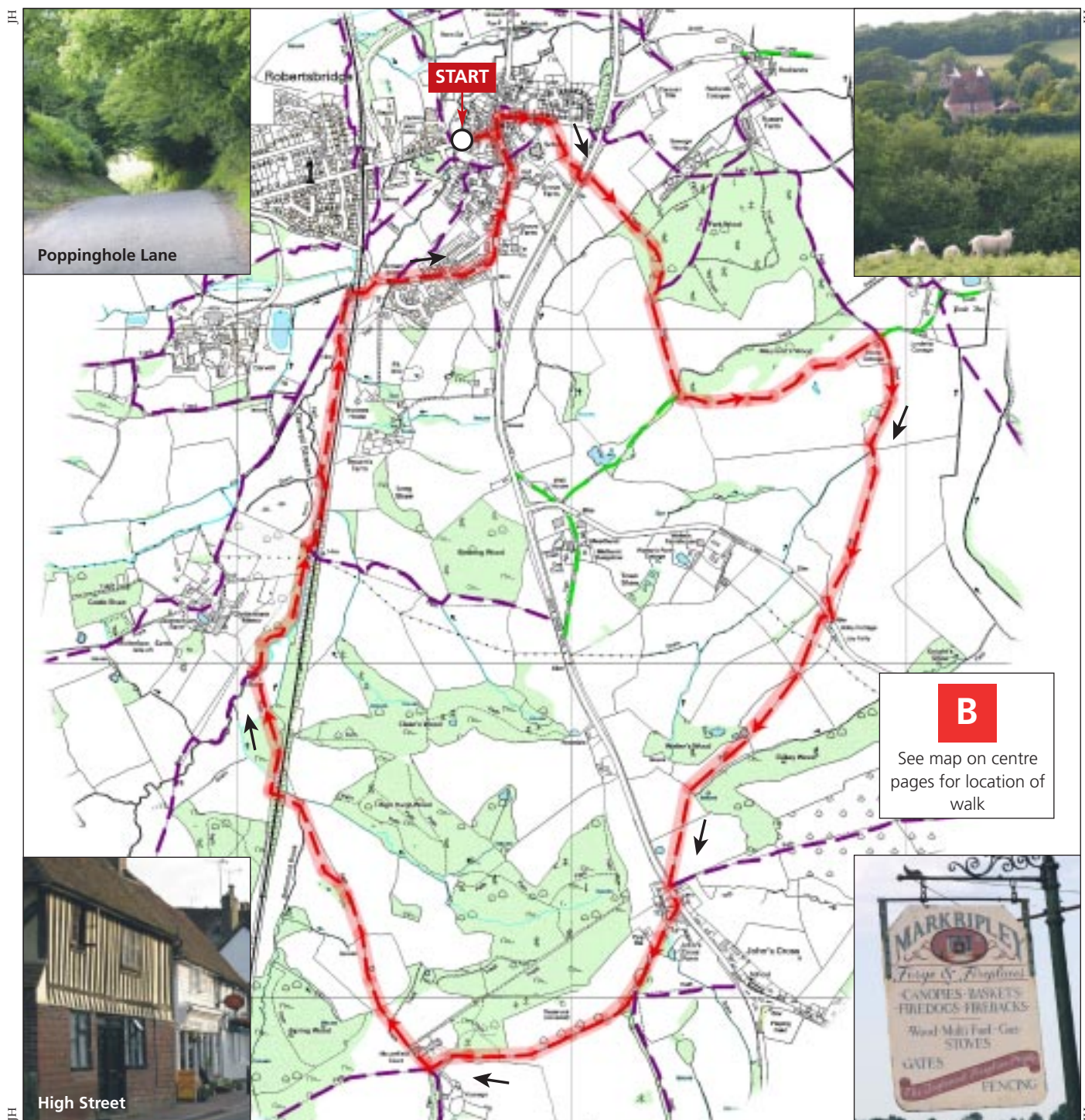
Bridge over the River Rother

Explore Robertsbridge

Robertsbridge was probably founded in about 1176, when the Cistercian Abbey was built on the site of the current War Memorial. Remnants of the old chapel cellar from the monastery can still be seen in the basement of one of the houses in the high street. The village remained when the abbey was moved about 1 mile to the East to the village of Salehurst in 1210. It is believed that the name of the village was derived from the bridge over the Rother built by the first abbot – Robert de St Martin. Abbey

records show it as “Pons Roberti” which translates from Latin to “The Bridge of Robert”.

The main focus for the village of Robertsbridge was as a resting point for people travelling between London and Hastings and the number of Wealden Hall Houses in the village shows that it was a wealthy place in the 14th and 15th centuries. By the 19th century the village had become renowned for the manufacture of cricket bats, which are still made in the village today.



B

See map on centre pages for location of walk

Calorie Burning Chart Robertsbridge walk.

Approx. calories burned	Your approximate weight					
	50 kg	59 kg	68 kg	77 kg	86 kg	100 kg
	7st 12lb	9st 3lb	10st 10lb	12st 2lb	13st 8lb	15st 10lb
	330	390	450	510	570	660

These figures are for walking 5 miles in about 2.5 hours (i.e. at 2 mph) on level ground. Like most walks in the High Weald, the route is actually moderately hilly; walking up hills burns at least a third more calories than walking on the level and soft surfaces like mud use more energy than hard surfaces. (Walking downhill expends about as much energy as walking on the flat.) Figures from the British Heart Foundation www.bhfactive.org.uk

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

Fact Pack

Services

Seven Stars Inn
01580 880333
Ostrich Hotel
01580 881737

Public Toilets

Robertsbridge public car park in Station Road

Public Transport

Regular train service stopping at Robertsbridge Station on the London-Hastings line. More information: Traveline 0870 6082608

Local Attractions

Bodiam Castle
01580 830436
Sedlescombe Organic Vineyard
0800 9802884

Local Producers

Bodiam Nursery
01580 830811
garden plants
Michaelmas Farm
01580 830041
seasonal vegetables - farm gate sales
Mark Ripley's Forge
01580 880324
cast iron firebricks, fireplaces etc

Accommodation

Hastings TIC
01424 781111
Tudor Cottage self-catering
01732 369168
Glenferness B&B
01580 881841
Ostrich Hotel B&B
01580 881737

www.villagenet.co.uk
www.salehurst-pc.org.uk

East Sussex County Council's
premier environmental event

Weald WoodFair '06

The leading woodland, wood-use and woodcraft event in the South East

Friday 15, Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 September
9.30am - 5.00pm

Bentley Wildfowl & Motor Museum
Halland, near Lewes

Tel: 01825 840573



For more information phone 01273 482920
www.eastsussex.gov.uk/woodfair

Wilderness Wood

"What a fantastic place" – Relax and have fun in this unique family-run working Wealden woodland, eye-opening for adults and excellent fun for children.

Woodland trails and bluebell walk, play area, picnic places and BBQs, tearoom and tea garden with local produce, gift shop.

Wood products and garden furniture 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





Bewl Water Outdoor Centre



- Sailing, Canoeing, Climbing, Teambuilding and Development Training.
- Courses for Individuals and Groups, Children and Adults, Beginners to Advanced.
- Caring, friendly and professional staff.
- A truly outstanding location in the Heart of the High Weald.

Bewl Water Outdoor Centre
Bewl Water, Lamberhurst
Kent, TN3 8JH
01892 890716
bewl.water@kent.gov.uk
www.bewlwater.org

Events

www.highweald.org

More events

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

April

- 17 April
Go wild in the Garden!
Buchan Country Park, Crawley, West Sussex
01293 542088
11.00am – 4.00pm
Discover how you can turn your garden into a nature reserve. Visit the wild garden and browse the stall selling wild flowers, nest boxes and mammal homes plus you can pick up information on how to make your back yard 'greener'. Admission free.
- 17 April
Kipling Country
Burwash, East Sussex
01424 773998
2.00pm – 5.00pm
Meet Burwash Village car park (Map ref TQ673246)
A walk of about 6 miles around the village and countryside associated with the famous author, Rudyard Kipling, to commemorate the 70th anniversary of his death earlier this year.

- 21 April
Queen and Country
Robertsbridge, East Sussex
Organised by: ESCC Countryside Management
9.30am – 5.30pm
Meet Robertsbridge Station (Map Ref TQ734235)
13 mile challenging and patriotic walk to Burwash for lunch at the Rose & Crown on Queen Elizabeth's 80th birthday. After raising a glass of Harvey's to Her Majesty we'll return via Brightling. Bring an afternoon snack.

- 22 - 23 April
Spring Plant Fair
Borde Hill Gardens, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
01444 450326 www.bordehill.co.uk
10.00am – 5.30pm
Magnificent exhibits of Rhododendrons, Camellias & Magnolias. Nurseries selling a wide variety of plants. Entrance Fee: £6 for adults, £3.50 for children.

- 23 April
Hunting for Dragons
Buchan Country Park, Crawley, West Sussex
01293 542088
10.30am – 12.30pm
Meet at the Countryside Centre
Celebrate St George's Day by joining the trail of the dragon hunters. Discover more about the famous dragons that used to live in the dark woods and murky waters of Sussex. Hunt for clues of past and present dragons living in and around the waters of Buchan Park. Entrance Fee: £2.50 per child, accompanying adults free. An adult must accompany children. Booking essential.

- 23 April
Woods Corner Walk
Woods Corner, East Sussex
Organised by: ESCC Countryside Management
10.00am – 12.30pm
Meet at The Swan Inn, Woods Corner (Map Ref TQ666194)
3.5 mile walk from Woods Corner passing both Dallington Church and the Sugar Loaf. We will also look out for signs of spring wildlife.

- 30 April
Plant Power
Buchan Country Park, Crawley, West Sussex
01293 542088
11.00am – 1.00pm
On the eve of Mayday, celebrate the first summer festival by joining our journey of discovery into the power of wild plants. Discover the colours, smells and textures of our natural heritage and their hidden secrets. Create your own flower with arts and crafts. Entrance Fee: £2.50 per child, accompanying adults free. An adult must accompany children. Booking essential.

- 30 April – 1 May
Bluebell Weekend
Hole Park Gardens, Kent
01580 241344 www.holepark.com
Visitors can experience the beautiful woodland walk with its spectacular bluebell vista which is much admired and can also enjoy the best of the spring flowers. Open from 11.00am this weekend only with afternoon teas and plant stall.

May

- 6 May
Explore with map and compass
Battle (details given when booking is made)
01424 773998
10.00am – 4.00pm
A basic course to acquire skills and confidence in using a map and compass, whilst enjoying friendship and fun in the countryside. Pre-booking, at least a week in advance is essential. Full details with information pack are sent when booking is confirmed. Charge: £9.

- 7 May
International Dawn Chorus Day
Buchan Country Park, Crawley, West Sussex
01293 542088
4.45am – 7.30am
Meet in the Countryside Centre 4.40am
Experience the magic of the "choral symphony" performed by the awakening wildlife of the woods and heaths of the Sussex Weald. Then break your fast with some early morning refreshments. Entrance Fee: £3 per adult (includes light refreshment) accompanied children Free. An adult must accompany children. Booking essential.

- 8 May
Rock & Quarry Gardens Lecture Morning
Scotney Castle Gardens, Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 891081
10.00am – 8.00pm
Join Head Gardener Matt Jackson for this informative lecture morning on rock & quarry gardens looking at a range of subjects including the rock garden's place in history, garden design and how to create your own rock garden at home. For those who have wondered how you go about restoring a rock or quarry garden there will also be a presentation on the 2003/2004 Quarry Garden Restoration Project. After tea & cakes you can view the recently restored quarry first-hand during a private tour of the garden. Entrance Fee: £18 each. Pre-booking is essential.

- 13 & 20 May
Container Planting Workshops
Nymans Gardens, Handcross, West Sussex
01444 400321
11.30am – 1.00pm & 2.00pm – 3.30pm
Plant your choice of 'classic' or 'contemporary' container to take home to flower throughout the summer – decorate your pots too! Selection of kits available, including pot, plants and soil – prices vary (none above £10). Open to all – no booking required.

- 18 May
Evening Garden Walk
Standen House and Gardens, East Grinstead, West Sussex
01342 323029
6.30pm
An exclusive look at the garden at Standen, escorted by a member of the National Trust's gardening staff. Entrance Fee: £6 Adults, £3 Child, including hot drinks. Pre-booking essential.

- 27 May
Heathfield & District Agricultural Show
Little Tottingworth Farm, Broad Oak, Heathfield, East Sussex
www.heathfieldshow.org
The premier one-day Agricultural Show in the South East. Show animals, parades, rural attractions, competitions and many other stands. The High Weald AONB Unit will be in attendance once again and we hope to meet you there.

- 27 May
Beginners' Bird Watching Guide
Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, Rye Harbour, East Sussex
01797 227784
www.naturereserve.ryeharbour.org
11.00am – 1.00pm
Come down to the reserve to learn how to identify a variety of breeding terns and gulls. Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet at the Rye Harbour car park. Donations appreciated.

- 27 May – 4 June
Pirates' Treasure Trail
Bateman's, Burwash, East Sussex
01435 882302
(excluding Thurs and Fri) 11.00am – 5.00pm
Some scurvy, no-good pirates have hidden their treasure in the garden at Bateman's. Find all the clues and some of the treasure could be yours! Entrance Fee: Normal admission + £1.50 for children.

- 30 May – 2 June
Wake up to Birds
Buchan Country Park, Crawley, West Sussex
01293 542088
10.30am – 12.30pm
Enjoy half term holidays by entering the world of birds. Activities include birdwatching for beginners, nest-building, making bird music, hunting for bird food, creating your own colourful pictures. Fun for all the family! Entrance Fee: £2.50 per child. Accompanying adults free. An adult must accompany children. Booking essential.

- 31 May
Teddy Bears' Picnic
Yesterday's World, Battle, East Sussex
01424 775378
www.yesterdaysworld.co.uk
Teddy Bears' Picnic at Yesterday's World.

June

- 3 – 4 June
Bewl Garden Show
Bewl Water, Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890661
The 7th show, including plant and craft stalls, garden produce, refreshments, and children's entertainment. Car park ticket of £5.00 includes free entry to show and recreation area. All profits made by the show are donated to charity.

- 9 June
Bat Watch and Barbeque
Marle Place, Marle Place Road, Brenchley, Kent
01892 722304
Come and watch the bats at dusk and enjoy a barbeque from 7.00pm in the evening.

- 11 June
High Weald Woodland Walk
Meet at Battle Rail Station, Battle East Sussex
01424 773998
10.30am – 1.00pm
A leisurely walk of about 4 miles to discover what is to be found in the High Weald woodland around Battle, with the help of the local Tree Warden.

- 11 June
Plovers Meadow – Family Wildlife Event
Plovers Meadow on B2102, Blackboys, East Sussex (Map Ref TQ536212)
01825 852470
Sussex Wildlife Trust event with live wildlife exhibits, environmental and conservation stalls. Picnic area, serving light refreshments. Children's games and competitions, face painting and clay sculpting. Woodland and lakeside walk (not suitable for buggies/wheelchairs). No Sunday bus service available. Limited disabled access. No disabled toilets. Minimum donation: Adults £2.50, children free.

- 18 June
Identifying Wild Flowers
St Dunstan's Farm, Heathfield, East Sussex
01273 497561
www.sussexwt.org.uk
Organised by: Sussex Wildlife Trust, Tutor Neil Fletcher
10.00am – 4.00pm
Do you long to know your Speedwells from your Forget-me-nots, or your Buttercups from your Cinquefoils? With a huge number of wild flower species out there and a bewildering array of field guides available, this day course helps to make sense of it all, with sessions in the classroom and in the field. We'll be looking at how 'getting to know the family' can offer a faster approach to tracking down that plant, and learning some fascinating facts about our native flora along the way. Pre-booking essential. Cost: SWT members/concessions £17.50, non-members £25.00.

- 18 June
Local Food and Produce Fair
Buchan Country Park, Crawley, East Sussex
01293 542088
10.30am – 4.30pm
Discover and experience a range of local products and meet producers – for example charcoal makers and beekeepers. Fun for all the family, with a chance to try and buy a wide range of products, including wine, beer, tasty food, woodland crafts, children's activities, and much more! Free entry.

- 17 – 18 June
Special Rose Weekend
Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex
01580 200888
www.pashleymanorgardens.com
Magnificent displays of fragrant and colour-themed roses throughout the garden with over 50 different varieties. The garden is also at its very best with fine displays of annual and perennial flowering plants. The renowned firm of rose growers, Peter Beales Roses, will be leading walks around the garden. Large stocks of Peter Beales roses for sale.

● 23 June
Discover the secrets of the Crane Valley
 Crane Valley Local Nature Reserve, Cranbrook, Kent
 01580 715918
 www.khwp.org.uk
 7.00pm – 10.00pm
 Explore the wildflowers of the marsh and enjoy a local produce BBQ before finding bats and moths with our experts. Suggested donation to the Kent Bat Group £1 per person.

● 25 June
Barbecue at Hen on the Gate
 Hen on the Gate, Clayton Farm, Mayfield, East Sussex
 01435 874849
 10.00am - 5.00pm
 Seasonal open day including a barbecue and farm trail to riverside picnic site. Guided farm walk starts at 2.30pm.

● 29 June
An evening with Nightjars on Ashdown Forest
 Ashdown Forest, East Sussex
 Meet at Ashdown Forest Centre Car Park, Wych Cross, Forest Row (Map Ref TQ441320)
 7.30pm - 10.30pm
 Sussex Wildlife Trust event. An evening to find out about one of Britain's most mysterious birds, the Nightjar. Starting with an indoor session at the Ashdown Forest Centre, followed by a walk around the forest to hear the birds themselves. Please bring a torch and insect repellent. Sorry no dogs. Booking is essential. Members, concessions & children, £5.50, non-members £7.50.

● 30 June
Use Your Paths Challenge
 Meet at car park adjacent to school at John's Cross (Map Ref TQ745210)
 A walk of about 6 miles during 'Use your paths week' to ensure that previously blocked or difficult paths around Mountfield and Robertsbridge are now clear and easy to use.

July

● 1 July
Fly by Nights
 Buchan Country Park, Crawley, West Sussex
 01293 542088
 8.00pm - late
 Come and discover more about weird and wonderful creatures of the night. Experience the sights, sounds, and smells of wild Buchan as we enter the twilight zone. Fun for all ages. Entrance Fee: £1 per child, £2 per adult. An adult must accompany children. Booking essential.

● 1 - 2 July
A Day out with Thomas
 Bluebell Railway, Sheffield Park, West Sussex
 01825 720825
 www.bluebell-railway.co.uk
 Come and see 'Thomas', 'Percy' and 'Stepney' as well as a whole host of other activities. A great family day out. Advance booking is recommended.

● 15 July
Discovering Flatropers Wood
 Flatropers Wood, Off Bixley Lane, Beckley, East Sussex
 10.00am - 1.00pm
 Meet at the track at the southern end of Flatropers Wood off Bixley Lane, near Beckley. Explore this little-known Sussex Wildlife Trust nature reserve in the far east of the county. July at Flatropers is an especially good time for woodland butterflies. The walking is fairly even with wide and narrow unsurfaced footpaths and several wooden bridges. It may be muddy underfoot. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear. No toilets available. No dogs. No disabled access. Donations to Sussex Wildlife Trust appreciated.

● 20 - 23 July
Summer Theatre Company - Merry Wives of Windsor
 Smallhythe Place, near Tenterden, Kent
 01580 762334
 Start 7.00pm, Gates open at 6.00pm.
 Evening of theatre entertainment.

● 22, 29, 30 July
 5, 6, 13, 19, 20, 26 August
Jousting
 Hever Castle, Hever, Edenbridge, Kent
 01732 865224
 www.hever-castle.co.uk
 The Knights of Royal England will entertain King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn with a jousting tournament at 2.00pm. The contest will include full gallop jousts and entertainment by foot soldiers using medieval-style weapons. Come and cheer on your favourite knight!

● 29 July
Bat Walk
 Hilbert's Wood, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
 01580 715918
 www.khwp.org.uk
 Come and find the bats of Hilbert's Wood with an expert. From 8.00pm. Suggested donation to the Kent Bat Group £1 per person.

● 29 July
Dormouse Awareness
 Bedgebury Pinetum, Goudhurst, Kent
 01580 211781
 www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk
 Come out into the forest with Ranger Steve Peters and look for dormice as they wake from their long winter hibernation. Free event but donations welcome for further research. Booking is essential.

● 30 July
Beastly Bugs Walk
 Barnett's Wood Local Nature Reserve, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
 01580 715918
 www.khwp.org.uk
 2.00pm - 4.00pm
 With Dr Ian Beavis. Join us in our search for creepy crawlies that are lurking in the undergrowth.

August

● 3 August
Survival Skills Day
 Cinderhill Community Woodland, Matfield, Kent
 01580 715918
 www.khwp.org.uk
 10.30am - 3.30pm
 Learn to survive in the wild Weald as people did a thousand years ago. Suitable for young people over 11 yrs.

● 8 - 11 August
Buchan Bushcraft
 Buchan Country Park, Crawley, West Sussex
 01293 542088
 10.00am - 3.00pm
 A chance for 8-16 year olds to learn practical survival skills in the wild outback of Buchan Park. Practice green woodworking, shelter building and fire lighting using only the natural resources the land has to offer. Then cook an afternoon snack on the fire. Charge £7 for unaccompanied child. Aged 8 years and over only. Pre-booking essential, please, for any days. Call for more information, a booking and consent form.

● 9 August
Importance of Being Earnest
 Bodiam Castle, Bodiam, East Sussex
 01580 830436
 A production by the Heartbreak Production Company.
 Entrance Fee: £15.

● 19 August
Family Fun
 Barnett's Wood Local Nature Reserve, Tunbridge Wells
 01580 715918
 www.khwp.org.uk
 12.00pm - 4.00pm
 Enjoy an afternoon of storytelling, pond dipping and environmental games. Bring a picnic.

● 19 - 26 August
Ashdown Forest Woodturners Exhibition
 Ashdown Forest Llama Park, Wych Cross, Forest Row
 01825 712040
 www.llamapark.co.uk
 Demonstrations of woodturning and goods for sale.

● 20 August
Reserve Open Day
 Powdermill Trust Reserve, Rotherfield, East Sussex
 01892 852120
 www.powdermilltrust.co.uk
 2.30pm
 All will be leisurely and guided walks around the Reserve taking roughly 1 hour. The ground is rough in parts and may be muddy. Ample opportunities to ask questions. TQ557289.

● 26 August
Moths by Moonlight
 Wilderness Wood, Hadlow Down, nr Uckfield, East Sussex
 8.00pm - 9.45pm
 01825 830509
 www.wildernesswood.co.uk
 Meet the night creatures of the wood: includes "sugaring" tree trunks and identifying visitors to moth light traps. Bring a torch. Includes a hot drink in the barn. With Simon Curson. Entrance Fee: Adults £6.50, Children (6-15) £4.00, OAPs £5.25.

September

● 2 September
An afternoon at Old Lodge
 Old Lodge Nature Reserve, Ashdown Forest, East Sussex
 01273 497561
 www.sussexwt.org.uk
 Organised by: Sussex Wildlife Trust
 Early September can see heathlands at their best so this is a good time to explore the SWT reserve at Old Lodge. The afternoon will begin with an introduction to the reserve at the Ashdown Forest Centre at Wych Cross, near Forest Row, then a short drive to the reserve at Nutley. The walk around the reserve involves one steep incline. Pre-booking essential. Cost: Members/concessions £7.50; Non-members £10.00.

● 2 - 3 September
Sussex Guild Craft Show
 Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex
 01580 200888
 www.pashleymanorgardens.com
 10.00am - 5.00pm
 The Sussex Guild is a selected group of professional designer-makers from Sussex and adjoining counties, whose aim is to promote the highest quality in both contemporary and traditional craftsmanship. This highly successful and well-attended show will be in its sixth year at Pashley. Works on display and for sale will include: Glass, ceramics, jewellery, quilting and carving.

● 23 September
Barbecue at Hen on the Gate
 Hen on the Gate, Clayton Farm, Mayfield, East Sussex
 01435 874849
 10.00am - 4.00pm
 Seasonal open day including a barbecue and farm trail, featuring ancient woodlands and pond. Guided farm walk starts at 2.30pm.

October

● 15 October
Hay Making
 Powdermill Trust Reserve, Rotherfield, East Sussex
 01892 852120
 www.powdermilltrust.co.uk
 TQ557289
 This is a normal working Sunday on the reserve but we would welcome volunteer visitors to assist us. After the last wild flowers have seeded we cut down the vegetation in the meadow areas with our mechanical scythe, rake it up and stack off the meadows, thus creating winter habitats for many creatures. This is always a good social event with plenty of cider as an encouragement to 'keep going'. We would love to have more help, please. Come anytime after 10.30am and bring a packed lunch.

● 21 - 29 October
Ashdown Forest Food Festival
 A whole range of events and activities across the Ashdown Forest area.
 See www.ashdownforest.com for more details.

● 22 October
Anglo/French Farmers' Market
 Ashdown Forest Llama Park, Wych Cross, Forest Row
 9.00am - 4.00pm
 01825 712040
 www.llamapark.co.uk
 Meet food and drink producers from Sussex and from the Somme area of France. Free admission to the Market.

● 21 - 29 October
Chestnut Celebration
 Wilderness Wood, Hadlow Down, near Uckfield, East Sussex
 01825 830509
 www.wildernesswood.co.uk
 Walk through ancient coppice woodland and gather sweet chestnuts along the way. A special trail takes you around the wood with information about the history and uses of sweet chestnut wood and nuts. When you get back to the timber-framed barn, enjoy roast chestnuts, chestnut cake and ice cream. There are also demonstrations on cleaving sweet chestnut - have a go yourself! Entrance Fee: Usual admission prices of £3.15 adults, £2.65 concessions, £1.90 children.





- specialising in the finest meats, all produced here on our Soil Association certified farm. Pedigree Sussex beef, lamb, pork, chicken, bacon, sausages
- free range organic eggs from our hens
- vegetable and fruit box scheme, the freshest seasonal local and home produce, lots of variety and great value, our deliveries cover most of the High Weald
- wide range of groceries, many local specialities: cheeses, yoghurts, breads, honeys, wines and ciders
- relax and enjoy your shopping in our art cafe: featuring landscape themed works
- farm open days, walks and summer art workshops for children and adults, please phone for details
- our farm shop is open every day

we look forward to seeing you!

Clayton Organic Farm
Newick Lane
Mayfield East Sussex TN20 6RE
Tel & Fax: 01435 874852
claytonfarm@btinternet.com



GARDEN DESIGN
Charlotte Molesworth

Charlotte Molesworth works as a one-man band - designing gardens of every size & shape; for every requirement & budget.

She favours organic, wildlife-friendly methods of creating varied environments to suit all inhabitants: human, winged & other.

Charlotte has a wide knowledge of plan - from herbaceous to trees, meadows and topiary. She likes to meld the design to suit its relationship to the land.

01580 240887
charlottemolesworth@tiscali.co.uk
www.charlottemolesworth.co.uk

Kent and Sussex Apple Juice and Cider Centre



Free cider and apple juice tasting

Farm shop and PYO centre with over 40 varieties of cider and apple juice. Large selection of fresh fruit and vegetables, home-made cakes, biscuits, honey, jams, chutney, dried fruits and nuts

Craft centre and craft workshops
 Showcasing High Weald crafts and tea rooms
 Opening 2006

Open Tue-Sun 10am-5pm
1 mile north of Hartfield on B2026
Tel 01892 770595



Gardening with nature in mind

Greener fingers

Gardeners have left their mark on the High Weald landscape. Many of the area's inspirational gardens are open to the public: one of these is Marle Place, near Brenchley – owned by artist Lindel Williams.

The gardens at Marle Place were first created in 1890. Lindel has lived there since her parents bought the property in 1949. The garden had been abandoned during wartime and Lindel remembers that some parts had become overgrown: "What we now call the Scented Garden had to be completely re-discovered!" Lindel's mother was a particularly keen gardener who did a lot of planting. "She did a huge amount of research to find the right plants for the right place."

The soil at Marle Place is very difficult to work – solid Weald clay. But it does at least give the garden its name and explains much of its history. "Marl" is the nutrient rich, bluish clay that, in past times, was dug out of the ground and spread to make the fields more fertile – leaving marl pits. The original marl extraction site – still an actual pit when the family moved here – is now a pond. (Lindel admits that the addition of an 'e' on the end of marl is probably her fault, because she once wrongly thought that to be the correct spelling.)

The ground here yielded clay for other uses, too: Next door is a house called Clay Pits adjoining a field called Brick Field. Lindel makes good use of the clay herself even today – when Marle Place runs "Mud, Sticks & Stones" Land Art courses!

There were no borders when the family arrived. Gradually, the heavy clay was enriched for planting and now boasts 4-5 inches of decent topsoil. This was achieved simply by incorporating organic matter, year upon year. Nowadays, Lindel uses hop waste as a soil-enricher. "It's local and makes a good mulch on top of the soil. When we get it, it's probably already about two years old. The only problems are the occasional bits of string and baby hop plants appearing in the borders!" Lindel's tip about mulch: "Put it on to retain moisture after the ground is waterlogged – otherwise rain will not be able to get through it". Marle Place also composts all its garden waste. Lindel is justifiably proud of her giant compost heaps: "You'd practically need climbing ropes to get to the top!"

The Victorian garden's original yew trees – planted seemingly at random – are the basis of

Escaped and on the run!

Our "Caring for The High Weald – Charter for Residents and Visitors" asks that you "Help prevent the spread of invasive and harmful plant species". But exactly what are those invaders and what harm do they do?

Many invasive plants were originally introduced to the British Isles as ornamentals. Unfortunately, however attractive they may be, some introduced species are a real threat to British wildlife. Once they have escaped into the wild, so-called invasive plants are highly competitive against British species – depriving them of nutrients, light and space. See also page 18.

Websites

www.environment-agency.gov.uk
www.english-nature.org.uk
www.plantlife.org.uk
www.rhs.org.uk
www.countrysideinfo.co.uk

Rhododendron ponticum



Wanted for: invading and, ultimately, destroying important wildlife habitats such as acid woodland and heathland – on whose poor, acid soils it grows best.

Originally from: the Mediterranean. Introduced in 1763.

Latin name: *Rhododendron ponticum* (Other *Rhododendron* species are not invasive. *R.* 'Purple Splendour' – similar to *R. ponticum* – is a good substitute.)

Distinguishing features: beautiful but deadly. Big pink flowers and shiny, evergreen leaves. Grows up to 3m high.

Super Invasive Powers: tolerates shade: can get to parts other plants cannot reach. Evergreen and casts a dense shade itself. Unpalatable and toxic – nothing eats it. One flower head produces 3-7,000 seeds, thus a large bush may produce several million tiny seeds per year: these are dispersed widely by wind. Can also regenerate by vegetative means (without flowers and seeds). Cut stumps regenerate vigorously unless chemically treated.

Giant Hogweed



Wanted for: bullying British wild plants by invading wasteland and riverbanks, forming dense colonies. This goliath among plants leaves the Brits standing in the shade!

Originally from: Caucasus Mountains, South West Asia. Introduced as an ornamental in 1893.

Latin name: *Heraclium mantegazzianum*

Distinguishing features: this giant umbellifer can grow up to 5m tall with lower leaves up to 1.5m long and flower heads up to 0.5m across. It has purple blotches on its stem. Danger! If sighted, do not touch – can cause painful blistering, leading to eventual scarring.

Super Invasive Powers: each flower head produces up to 50,000 seeds that are dispersed rapidly along water-courses. Seeds may remain viable for up to 15 years!

the substantial yew hedges that now define the different “rooms” of the formal garden. Lindel says that she can't think of a better way to describe the garden's structure. “It is like walking through a house and going into different rooms, each with its own character.”

The informal gardens at Marle Place are extensive and, by their very nature, wildlife-friendly. Large, natural areas of grass are left to go to seed and there are woods both ancient and modern. The woodland along the stream is decorated in spring with ancient woodland “indicators” such as Wood Anemone, Yellow Archangel and Early Purple Orchid – of the latter Lindel says: “Masses, with more every year”. In addition, Lindel and her family have planted new trees in their thousands. “It's a passion and obsession!”

In recognition of its wildlife-friendliness, Marle Place has won a “Gardening for Wildlife Gold Award” from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council two years running. Lindel explains that the award is not just for large gardens. “Anyone in the Borough can enter.” (See below.)

Even in the formal areas, Lindel gardens with wildlife in mind: she emphasises that it's important not to be too ‘tidy’ as untidiness creates good “lurking areas” for wildlife. She leaves seed heads and cuts hedges at the right time of year – after birds have nested.

Lindel has drawn inspiration from the gardens at Marle Place all her life. She sees gardening as the least static art form. “Every single day, something is different.” When designing new areas for the garden, she believes in working with nature, rather than against it. “The lie of the land very much dictates what you can and can't do with it. If you like what you see – for example a low-lying, damp area – then you encourage it and, of course, this instantly creates a new habitat for wildlife in your garden.” The Marle Place bog garden is such an area – the gardens are on a slope and this is where water run-off from the gardens and surrounding fields ends up.

Working with nature does, however, have one main drawback: “You have to keep alert and keep on the ball before potential disaster strikes!”



Photos:

Far left: Yew archway, Marle Place
Above: Bird box, Marle Place
Left: Early Purple Orchid

Websites

www.marleplace.co.uk
www.sevenwonders.org.uk
www.english-nature.org.uk
www.rspb.org.uk
www.charlottemolesworth.co.uk
See advert on page 15

Every year the Kent Wildlife Trust runs a **Gardening for Wildlife Scheme**, with the aim of encouraging people to garden in a wildlife-friendly manner. Kent Borough Councils are encouraged to sign up to the scheme and the Kent High Weald Project coordinates the scheme on behalf of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The scheme is open to gardeners, individuals, allotment holders, schools and community groups.

The scheme will be launched on the first day of spring, 20 March and the closing date for entries is 31 May. To receive a free information pack crammed full of tips and an entry form contact Rebekah Bibby at the Kent High Weald Project, Council Offices, High Street, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 3EN. www.khwp.org Tel: 01580 715918. Email: Rebekah.bibby@KHWP.org or download the fact sheets from www.kentwildlife.org.uk

Climate change and your garden

Incredibly, the average temperature in Britain is increasing so fast that, in climate terms, gardens are moving south at the rate of 12 metres a day! This may mean exciting opportunities for growing “exotic” plants. However, our more traditional, cool-loving plants such as Lupins and Primulas will struggle to survive.

With our spring arriving earlier and summer getting hotter, gardens are likely to become more important parts of the home. But there will be trouble ahead if gardeners can't adapt to hotter, drier summers by using less, rather than more water. Per person, the South East has the highest water consumption of all areas in Britain and this is partly due to high demands for summer garden watering.

How can you adapt your garden to cope with climate change?

1. Garden more successfully by changing species composition – favouring plants that can cope with warm, wet winters and dry summers.
2. Make a difference to the environment by more careful use of water. (Our “Caring for The High Weald – Charter for Residents and Visitors” asks that you use less water.) In 2005, Bewl Water reached its lowest ever level. Increased demand will create pressure for new reservoirs within the AONB.

- Use water butts to collect winter rainfall from roofs. Almost every plant and vegetable prefers natural rainwater!
- Use watering cans and drip irrigation rather than sprinklers that can waste large amounts of water.
- Water lawns less regularly or give up and replace them with something much more resistant to drought such as gravel, paving or decking!
- If you need to water plants make sure they get the best from it: minimise evaporation by watering in the evening and water directly onto the soil around the roots.
- Place plants with similar water requirements in the same part of the garden, perhaps sheltering “thirsty” plants from direct sunlight and the high winds that promote increased water loss from leaves.
- Incorporate organic matter to improve the water holding capacity of soils and stop them baking hard. (On heavy Wealden clay, add sharp sand or grit, too!)
- Use surface mulches to prevent excess evaporation. Gravel shingle, bark or recycled, crushed glass are all good mulches.

Statistics show that we use 55% more water than we did 25 years ago. This is one of the reasons why Southern Water decided to plant an inspirational water efficient garden next to the visitor centre at Bewl Water, near Lamberhurst. With over 80 flowers, shrubs and grasses planted around a dry river bed feature, the picture changes according to the season – but there is something new to see all year round. For details telephone 01892 890661.

The Southern water website has an excellent feature on water-saving gardening, including a clever plant selector. www.southernwater.co.uk



Parrot's Feather



Wanted for: escaping from garden ponds and invading field ponds, reservoirs, gravel pits, streams, canals and ditches – drowning out our weedy, native waterweeds.

Originally from: lowland central South America; first found in Britain in 1960

Latin name: *Myriophyllum aquaticum*

Distinguishing features: feathery, bright green waterweed, with some shoots emerging from the water. No flowers.

Super Invasive Powers: unstoppable – can even continue to grow when a pond dries out! Only female plants are found in the UK and so it spreads by vegetative means only (without flowers and seeds) – from stem fragments carried in water.

Himalayan Balsam



Wanted for: escaping from gardens and invading river-banks, ditches and damp ground. British wildflowers don't stand a chance against this giant annual – the tallest in Britain.

Originally from: the Western Himalayas in 1839

Latin name: *Impatiens glandulifera*

Distinguishing features: up to 3m high, with thick, hollow, reddish stems and spear-shaped leaves. The pink flowers (up to 4cm long) have an unmistakable, sickly sweet smell.

Super Invasive Powers: spreads by seeds explosively propelled from ripened pods. These can be carried some distance by water.

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

Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) Project

The Project Officer offers expert advice on returning ancient woodland plantations to native, broadleaved tree cover.

www.highweald.org

Mike Chapman 01580 879964

Email m.chapman@highweald.org

Weald Grazing Network

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

Dawn Brickwood 01580 879957

Email meadows@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

01580 715918

Email info@khwp.org.uk

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 simon.fathers@eastsussex.gov.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.

www.highweald.org

More on land management

Land management AGONY

Our High Weald Agony Aunts Daisy and Hazel will attempt to answer some Land Management and Wildlife queries.



Dear Daisy,

I have a very small plot of wildflower grassland. I haven't been able to find anyone willing to bring their sheep to graze it – I suppose it's a lot of hassle for very little grass! I'm worried that if I can't provide traditional management, the wildflowers will suffer. What do you advise?

If you can't get your fields grazed, then annual cutting can be just as good. Make sure you cut after the flowers and grasses have seeded usually mid July and you'll ensure a good show of wildflowers next year. Leave areas of long grass uncut for invertebrates and small mammals, vital if you want barn owls to visit your meadow. If you haven't used a baler and you're feeling really energetic then rake off as much of the cut grass as you can and make a compost heap for the garden. Taking the cut grass off keeps the fertility of your meadow down and the number of wildflower species up.

You might find a grazier through the Weald Grazing Network – contact the High Weald AONB Unit on 01580 879500 or visit www.highweald.org and click on 'Contact us' on the front page.

For further information on meadow management visit www.highweald.org and click on 'Conserving', then 'Guidance' and select 'Wildflower grassland'.

For a copy of Weald Meadows Leaflet phone 01580 879500 or visit www.highweald.org and click on 'Contact us'



Dear Hazel,

I have noticed that an increasing number of trees in the High Weald are becoming covered in ivy. I am concerned that these ivy-covered trees may be more prone to damage from winter gales and also, presumably, disease. What is to be done?

The question "Does Ivy kill trees?" has been debated for centuries! There is considerable prejudice against Ivy, but no real evidence to back up claims that it damages healthy trees. Let's dispel some of the commonest myths:

- Ivy is not parasitic. The root-like structures along its shoots do not penetrate into the host tree – and therefore cannot absorb moisture and nutrients from it, nor introduce disease-causing organisms.
- If confined to the trunk of a tree, Ivy does not significantly compete for moisture and nutrients. By the time a tree is sturdy enough to support Ivy, its roots will have extended well away from its base, where the Ivy roots will be.
- Ivy cannot normally spread upwards to swamp the crown of a healthy tree because the crown would not let sufficient light through for the Ivy to grow strongly.

However, the weight of a dense mass of Ivy in the crown may "finish off" an old, dying tree with rotting roots – by causing it to topple over in the wind. Dense Ivy growth may also make a tree more likely to snap in a heavy gale by preventing it from flexing, but there is no scientific evidence that removing Ivy from a tree can actually save it.

Ivy does have several proven conservation benefits. As ground cover, it protects the woodland floor from frost and enables ground foraging birds to continue to feed in winter weather; it provides a habitat for small mammals and nesting opportunities for many birds – plus a safe hibernation place for insects; and the nutritious berries – ripe in March – provide food at a time of year when it is most scarce.

www.treecouncil.org.uk
www.trees.org.uk

Dear Daisy,

I've heard that Japanese Knotweed is an absolute pest. Why, then, are local authorities just letting it flower and set seed? Surely they should be chopping the flower heads off before they mature!

Sadly, removal of the plant's seeds before they can be dispersed would have absolutely no effect: only female plants have been recorded in the UK and there is no record to date of viable Knotweed seeds here – it regenerates solely by vegetative means. As little as 0.7g of the root material (the size of your little fingernail) can grow into a new plant!

You're right about it being a pest: it spreads extremely aggressively via extensive underground stems, invading road verges, river and stream banks and waste places – often vandalising property. Introduced as garden plant in 1825, Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) is now on the Environment Agency's "Most Wanted" list of invasive plants. Other plants on the run from the Environment Agency are Himalayan Balsam, Giant Hogweed and Parrot's Feather. More about these escaped villains on pages 16 and 17!

Our "Caring for The High Weald – Charter for Residents and Visitors" asks that you "Help prevent the spread of invasive and harmful plant and animal species".

www.environment-agency.gov.uk



Action for meadows

A year in the life of a...

January 20

I have a light covering of pristine, white snow today. Well, this is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and I have to maintain standards, even in the depths of winter.

The new owner, Jerry, is just my cup of tea – not a single paperback on the bookshelf; hails from W8 and what's more, he has a ceramic umbrella stand in the hallway. His tractor is shiny and new – and he doesn't bring mud in through my gate on its wheels.

Next door, things are much the same as ever. The way Tom, the farmer, treats my neighbour! Honestly, I don't know how she puts up with it. However, one can't help thinking one is a better class of meadow altogether. I'm 'improved', after all, whereas she's most definitely 'unimproved'!

February 17

Tom's been out next door, peering at the ground. Presumably looking for weeds. Why doesn't he spray them or pull them up? Sheer laziness: indicative of the depths to which standards have fallen. Next Door is really letting the side down.

Why can't they just get a little man in with a plough? I have no weeds: I've been sprayed, ploughed up and re-seeded with a high-yielding Rye-grass mixture. A complete makeover!

March 10

Jerry's sniggering because Tom made some vulgar, debased and thoroughly nasty comment whilst I was having my nitrogen applied. Something about me being fertilised! It's all smut, smut, smut as usual next door! Tom is a thoroughly bad influence.

My poor neighbour doesn't get this kind of care and attention. Her fertility is very low indeed. And her roots are showing!

April 28

I'm looking gorgeous in uniform, simple, elegant, emerald green – though I do say so myself. (Emerald Green is the new black.) Next Door is a patchy mix of colours! It pains me to see her like that. Most unbecoming.

May 8

All my lovely emerald green has gone into the first silage crop. Ah well – probably in need of new look anyway. One can tire of emerald. I do wish Jerry would hurry up and take these ugly, black plastic-covered bales away, though.

Meanwhile next door, some of the weeds are starting to flower and I must admit they are looking quite pretty – in a rustic sort of way. It doesn't alter the fact that they are weeds, though.

**Weald Meadows Initiative (WMI) Officer, Dawn Brickwood says...**

"Jerry contacted me to order Weald Native Origin wildflower Seed because he wanted to know if he could turn his intensively-farmed, agriculturally 'improved' field back into a wildflower meadow.

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 – like Tom's. These 'unimproved' grasslands are some of our most important habitats for wildlife conservation, supporting up to 50 kinds of grasses and wildflowers – which in turn support a great variety of insects and other creatures.

The Weald Meadows Initiative promotes the traditional management of ancient, unimproved meadows and encourages the re-creation of new wildflower meadows in the High and Low Weald – to replace those lost to intensive agriculture.

Weald Native Origin Wildflower Seed is harvested by the WMI from species-rich sites, such as Tom's and sold to landowners like Jerry, who wish to increase the wildlife value of their fields. This

provides Tom with a small income from his meadow, on top of the hay crop he would already get from it."

To see if your grassland might be suitable for wildflower meadow re-creation please visit www.highweald.org and go to the 'Conserving' section; then 'Guidance' and then select 'Wildflower grassland' and follow the links to the relevant pages.



I think I heard Tom say that Dawn Brickwood from the WI is going to call round to see the flowers. Well – she won't get a decent table top decoration out of that wild, disorganised patch of weeds!

June 15

My second silage crop has been cut – this time destined for the "clamp". Just when I thought the emerald green was looking quite elegant again, too.

Lots of flowers next door – but they are starting to attract insects! Have Environmental Health been alerted?

July 18

Next Door's vulgarity is in full swing. What a disorganised riot of colours! How can she live like that, all covered in insects? The buzzing is driving me mad! The insects are attracting other animals, too. I don't attract any infestations of wildlife, of course.

August 8

For heaven's sake! What is Tom doing now? There's some strange, rumbling machinery next door. Looks rather like a combine harvester. Still, about time she had a trim! She really is going to seed: you can take the natural look too far, I think.

Meanwhile, my lovely emerald green is showing through again.

September 10

Animals! I thought that sort of thing only went on next door!

At least my visitors are high-yielding, pedigree Belgian Blue cattle! So cosmopolitan! Next Door's regrowth is being grazed by an un-exotic, local breed. How typically blinkered and parochial of Tom.

October 14

Would it be churlish of me to say that my Belgian visitors are slightly out-staying their welcome? I'm starting to look a bit unkempt and muddy. What will Mrs Doooms-Patterson say?

Tom, on the other hand, took the Sussex cattle away from Next Door as soon as the heavy rains came. Perhaps I have misjudged him.

November 9

Jerry's been talking to Tom over the hedge: this makes me nervous. Tom is a thoroughly bad influence with all his crackpot ideas. Harvesting wildflower seed to sell, indeed! Whatever next?

December 6

Oh no! I've just overheard Jerry on his mobile talking to someone about ordering wildflower seed to 'enhance' or even 're-create' me! Well, thank you very much, Jerry!!

Six villages on the High Weald Landscape Trail

Rolvenden, Kent

'Woodland pasture ('den') associated with a man called Hrothwulf'



JH

In the Kent High Weald, seasonal woodland swine pastures – used by farmers from the Downs and coastal plains – were known as dens. Over time, these remote places were settled and became farmsteads. Today, the area still has many place names ending in "den". Most dens have remained small – but a few have expanded to become larger settlements, such as Rolvenden. (See also page 6.)

Rolvenden Church is a landmark for many miles. The oldest parts of the church date from the 12th century, but were added-to many times.

Attractions: CM Booth Collection of Historic vehicles; Hole Park Gardens

Eating and drinking: The Star; The Bull

www.villagenet.co.uk

Goudhurst, Kent

'Wooded hill ('hurst') of a man called Gutha'



JH

As an example of a typical High Weald ridge-top village, which probably developed at a trading point, Goudhurst occupies a spectacular position. The Church tower is open most weekend afternoons during the summer and views from the top are impressive!

The people of Goudhurst suffered particularly badly at the hands of the notorious Hawkhurst smuggling gang. The Star and Eagle Pub was a regular haunt of the gang and Spyways, overlooking the main Street, was their sentry house.

Attractions: Finchcocks and the other Seven Wonders of the Weald

Eating and drinking: The Star and Eagle; The Vine Hotel

www.goudhurst.co.uk

Frant, East Sussex

'Place overgrown with ferns or bracken'



JH

The High Weald provides ideal growing conditions for many rare ferns, mosses, liverworts and lichens. In the 12th century, this Saxon place name is spelt Fernet. In the 13th century it appears as Ferneth, Farneth and Farnth. By the Tudor period this had become Farnt – a pronunciation still in use until recently.

Early commuters created a gracious village of Victorian and neo-Georgian houses around Frant's triangular green. Surprisingly, this pretty village was once a hub of industrial activity: in the year 1600 there were more than 20 ironworks in the surrounding area.

Specialist shop: Mary Ensor Interiors

Eating and drinking: The George Inn; The Abergavenny Arms

www.frant.info

Hartfield, East Sussex

'Open land frequented by harts or stags'



JH

Harts are young male deer: Hartfield lies on the outskirts of Ashdown Forest, once a Royal hunting Forest where deer provided the entertainment. The Forest was surrounded by a pale – a bank and ditch system – that allowed deer to enter but not leave.

Though it has – mistakenly – become associated with dense woodland, the word forest actually comes from the Latin word *foris*, meaning "outside the common law" – in this case an area of land set aside as the playground of kings.

Attractions: Ashdown Forest Area Attractions

Eating and drinking: The Hay Waggon Inn; The Anchor Inn

www.villagenet.co.uk

West Hoathly, West Sussex

'Heathy woodland clearing ('lea') or 'Woodland clearing ('lea') where heather grows'



© Countryside Agency/Peter Greenhalf

The name reminds us of the High Weald's once widespread heaths. Set on the edge of Ashdown Forest – where its lofty location made it a prime site for a warning beacon – West Hoathly is a picturesque village with several important buildings.

The Saxon Church has a rare terraced churchyard – evidence of a former vineyard; the 17th century manor house is believed to have been part of the divorce settlement made by Henry VIII to Anne of Cleves; and the Priest House allows you a close look at the inside and out of a 15th century house.

Attraction: The Priest House

Eating and drinking: The Cat Inn; The Vinols Cross

www.westhoathly.gov.uk

Bolney, West Sussex

'Island, or dry ground in marsh, of a man called Bola'



JH

In Medieval times, Bolney was noted for its iron-smelting and its Cherry Fair. From the 19th century, changes in the route of the nearby London-South Coast road split the village into three, even four parts.

The Church was built around 1100. The tower, erected in 1536, carries a peal of eight bells – hence the name of the pub opposite! At the entrance to the churchyard, the lych gate is a celebration of local building materials – stone and oak timber – while Margaret Hodgson's memorial window celebrates the High Weald countryside.

Local Producer/Attraction: Bookers Vineyard (Tours by arrangement)

Eating and drinking: The Eight Bells; Bluebeckers at the Bolney Stage

www.bolney.com

For more details of attractions, see pages 10 and 11



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