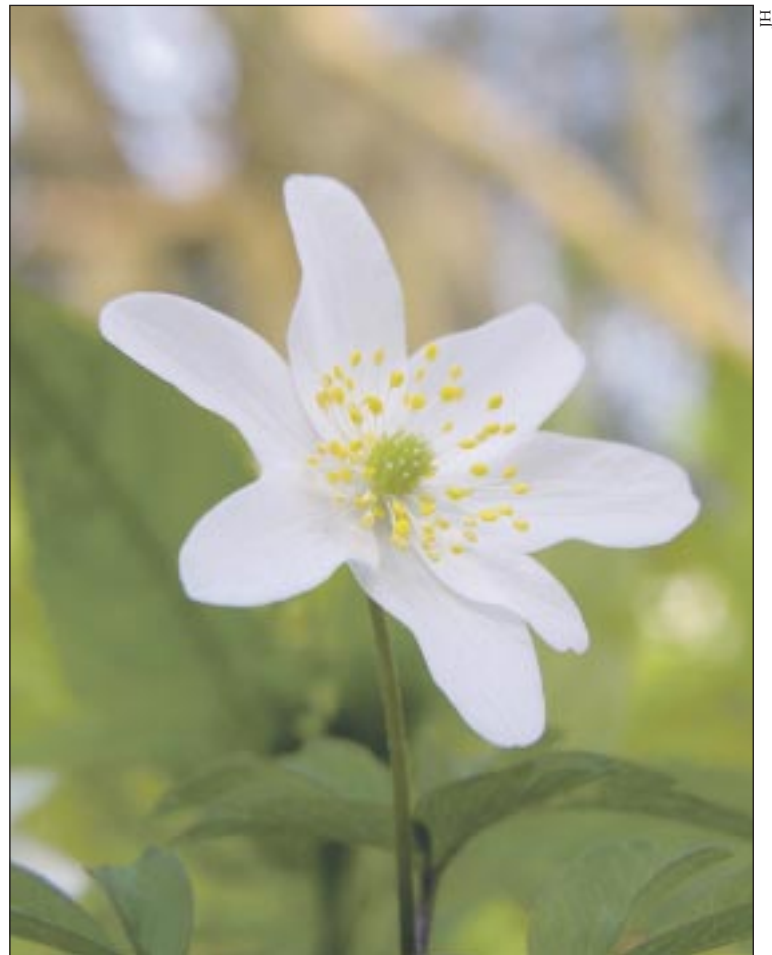


High Weald Anvil ²⁰⁰⁷

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



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



• *Special 'Enjoying the High Weald' Edition* •



Horsham • East Grinstead • Haywards Heath • Crowborough • Heathfield • Battle • Wadhurst • Royal Tunbridge Wells • Cranbrook • Tenterden • Rye

Getting away from it all



If you don't think it's possible to find solitude in what is arguably the busiest corner of Britain – the South East – then think again. In the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) you can walk all day on a Bank Holiday and hardly see a soul! The High

Weald, therefore, offers more solitude than you can find on many a windswept peak in other, more rugged, Protected Landscapes such as the Snowdonia or Lake District National Parks – or the Scottish Highlands!

Furthermore, walking in the High Weald is uncomplicated – requiring minimum planning and equipment. There is no need to give exhaustive safety advice: you will rarely be far from human habitation. And wherever you choose to walk, the High Weald landscape will be outstandingly good for you! Just take a look at the Calorie Charts on our featured circular walks, pages 12 and 13.

Our Country Parks – Buchan and Hastings – are the ideal 'introduction' to the countryside. Easily accessible from the major towns of Crawley and Hastings respectively, they offer many facilities for people of all ages to enjoy and an environment in which you can wander at will. You can read more about them on pages 4 and 5.

Follow a sunken lane in the High Weald and you will be treading in the steps of Saxon drovers and their pigs! Our rich heritage of routeways provides walking for all abilities. For a short, relaxing stroll, choose a promoted path from a train station, village or pub. See www.highweald.org for more details.

For those who still want to head for the hills every weekend, I assure you that the High Weald can be just as challenging – if you want it to be. Choose a strenuous, day-long walk and you will not be disappointed! You'll need to allow for all the ups and downs; climbing many stiles, opening and shutting gates – and for the sticky Wealden clay that quadruples the weight of your boots! Instead of bagging mountain peaks, set yourself the challenge of doing one of the long distance walks that cross the area – such as the 90-mile long High Weald Landscape Trail. What a sense of achievement!

I hope you will enjoy reading this, the eighth edition of the High Weald Anvil and – however you choose to do it – do try to get away from it all right here in the High Weald!

Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith

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 this 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 15 local authorities, Natural England and organisations representing community, recreation, wildlife and farming interests) guides the work of the High Weald AONB Unit.

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

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Funded by members of the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee and INTERREG (see back page).

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Altered

The High Weald was designated as an AONB in 1983, in recognition of its outstanding natural beauty and national landscape importance. However, it has not always been held in such high esteem.

It is hard to imagine that the High Weald was once seen as a no-go area – remote and threatening. But as Peter Brandon says in *The Kent and Sussex Weald*, to the 17th-century visitor, it probably seemed about as welcoming as Afghanistan does today. The High Weald was desperately in need of an image makeover – had there been such a thing then.

In the 17th century, places like the High Weald – with extensive woods and heaths – were despised. The sophistication of an area was generally measured by the state of its agriculture and the condition of its roads: the High Weald was found wanting in both areas – and the judgement was automatically extended to its residents. "Lewd and rude" behaviour was thought to be intrinsically linked to this kind of landscape!

Until the early 19th century, few travellers ventured into the High Weald – and when they did, they had nothing nice to say of the experience. Horace Walpole described the Sussex High Weald as being riddled with barbarism, smuggling and appalling tourist and travelling facilities. In August 1752, he wrote: "We thought ourselves in the northeast part of England; the whole county has a Saxon air and the inhabitants are as savage..."

Edward Hasted, whose *History of Kent* was published between 1778 and 1801, found that the High Weald's dark woodland places and rocky outcrops filled him with gloomy thoughts. He considered the timber-framed houses "mean and old fashioned". The travelling journalist William Cobbett (1763-1835) described Ashdown Forest as "the most villainously ugly spot I ever saw in England". Even Jane Austen had a dig at the area in her unfinished novel *Sanditon*, which begins in the High Weald (and, presumably, quickly leaves it).

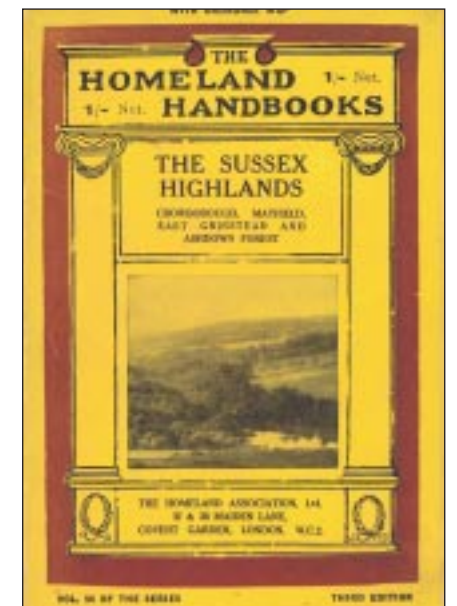
How surprised they would all have

been had they known that, less than 100 years later, the very same area would be likened to the most beloved of landscapes at home and abroad – and that its sandstone outcrops would be attracting almost as many admiring Victorian visitors as Stonehenge!

The marked change in attitude towards the High Weald began sometime in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It was partly due to improvements in roads and the arrival of railways. In short, the formerly inaccessible High Weald became better known – and better liked.

Until the late 18th century, the High Weald had been ignored by artists – and not simply because of the travel difficulties. Wooded and heathy 'untamed' landscapes were just not considered worthy of attention. But the Picturesque and Romantic artists and writers changed all that: they began to see wilder scenery as beautiful. The Grand Tour had opened many well-to-do travellers' eyes to the landscape delights of Europe and, in the Picturesque mind, the High Weald was

Sussex Highlands?



Photos on opposite page:
Heathland on Ashdown Forest;
climbers on Harrison's Rocks;
Bluebell Railway

Introducing Natural England

Natural England has been formed by bringing together English Nature and elements of the Countryside Agency and the Rural Development Service.

Natural England works for people, places and nature to conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas. We conserve and enhance the natural environment for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people, and the economic prosperity it brings. We promote access and recreation and contribute to the sustainable management of our natural resources.

To do this, we support individuals and organisations in actions that will benefit the natural environment, increase opportunities to make it an enriching part of people's everyday lives, and bring together those who influence and shape our environmental future.

NATURAL
ENGLAND

The Ordnance Survey mapping and map data included within this publication is provided by Surrey County Council under licence from the Ordnance Survey in order to fulfil its public function to conserve and promote the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Persons viewing this mapping should contact Ordnance Survey Copyright for advice where they wish to licence Ordnance Survey mapping for their own use.

images



likened to scenic parts of Italy.

As the High Weald gradually revealed itself to visitors, it was found to have some of the wildest natural features of any part of lowland England. No longer seen as unwelcoming, this wildness was now recognised as exciting and beautiful. Previously described as 'scenically tiresome' and 'horrid and frightful', the High Weald's extensive heaths now only served to increase its popularity! Lovers of Scotland's romantic wild moors, rocky outcrops, wooded glens and fast-flowing streams began to see them mirrored in the High Weald.

According to *Highways and Byways in Sussex* by E.V. Lucas (1904): "In the spring of 1903, the walls and fences of Crowborough were covered with the placards of a firm of estate agents describing the neighbourhood ... as Scotland in Sussex". Similarly, *The Sussex Highlands* (essentially a tourist guide to the Ashdown Forest area published by The Homeland Association in 1927) begins: "We shall endeavour to discover to our readers an upland country, with a strong appeal, which has been well termed The Highlands of Sussex".

Italy? Scotland? If the High Weald had needed an image makeover in the 17th century, by the 20th century it was suffering from an identity crisis!

The High Weald's new fan club was not entirely the result of artistic opinion and improved communications. By the

1870s, Victorian society had become largely urban. London was the biggest city on the globe – five times its size a century before. However, the city's peaceful country neighbour was left relatively unscathed by these massive changes. With its green, open spaces and much slower pace of life, any Londoners who could escape saw the area as an antidote to overcrowding, bad housing, poverty, disease, dirt and noise – and it was right on their doorstep. Londoners flocked to the High Weald to find peace and quiet: to forget their frantic city life for a day or so and return to the capital refreshed. As E.V. Lucas noted of Crowborough in 1904: "the more adventurous walker may quickly be in the solitudes".

Today, comparisons with Italy and Scotland are no longer necessary – the High Weald's character is valued for its own sake. So, what other changes would earlier detractors and admirers notice in the AONB?

Horace Walpole might like to visit our three Tourism Cluster areas to see how far tourist facilities have come since his day! Edward Hasted would probably be interested to find that timber framed houses are now considered an important landscape component and are fetching the highest property prices of all. William Cobbett would be surprised to hear Ashdown Forest described by some as the jewel in the High Weald's crown.

Victorian sightseers viewed the san-

drock outcrops as natural wonders. Today, they are still revered, but by climbers – as the only natural, inland rock outcrops in the South East, providing London's nearest rock climbing.

The railways that first brought Victorian visitors to the High Weald suffered a dramatic change of fortunes in the 1960s. However, some steam railways have been preserved as visitor attractions – Bluebell, Kent & East Sussex and Spa Valley (see page 14). Two disused track beds – Forest Way and Cuckoo Trail – now provide safe, level recreational routes.

The High Weald's reservoirs are major landscape features that would be new even to the Victorians. However attractive, they were not built for their aesthetic appeal but out of necessity. They are flooded High Weald valleys, storing water for the dry South East region.

One thing that hasn't changed much is the High Weald's tranquillity. You can still find solitude 40 miles from Central London today – and a great deal more besides!

Further information

www.thesussexweald.org

The Kent & Sussex Weald by Peter Brandon, published by Phillimore (2003). ISBN 1-86077-241-2

See the High Weald first!



In *The Sussex Highlands* (1927), the Homeland Association lamented the fact that British people "leave these islands to try to discover abroad something which is virtually upon their own doorstep..." In some ways, the Association was ahead of its time – global warming wouldn't be an issue for travellers for another 70 years or so! But with so many outstanding things to see and do within the High Weald AONB – why, indeed, go further afield?

Across the High Weald, there are ancient towns and unspoilt, picturesque villages just waiting to be explored. The rolling hills and woodland conceal a wealth of heritage – historic properties, beautiful gardens and steam railways. Some of the High Weald's characteristic, natural features lend themselves to more adventurous outdoor recreation: rock climbing on its unique sandstone outcrops and exciting off-road cycling in its woodlands. (See our feature on Bedgebury's new developments on page 17.) Some countryside leisure activities – such as voluntary conservation work – actually put something back into the landscape. Read about some of the ways in which High Weald people enjoy their countryside on pages 6 & 7.

Visitors don't have to harm the environment – or reduce the comparative tranquillity and remoteness of an area. In some parts of the High Weald, the tourism businesses and attractions are sufficiently concentrated to enable the development and promotion of 'tourism clusters'. We now have three such clusters: Ashdown Forest, Winchelsea and the 'Seven Wonders' or Lamberhurst area. These locations all have the capacity and infrastructure to enable 'green' tourism. You can read about the three Tourism Cluster Groups on page 16.

It used to be said of visiting the countryside that you should "Leave only footprints and take only photographs". The first bit still holds true, of course. But today we want visitors to take home much more than just photographs. Call at one of the area's many farm shops or vineyards and buy some local produce as a souvenir of your visit! And choose to eat at a pub or restaurant that sources food locally. You'll be supporting the local economy and actively helping to conserve the natural beauty of the High Weald. Read about a very unusual use for some of our local products on page 8.

Sylvia Tidy

Councillor Sylvia Tidy,

Chairman: High Weald Joint Advisory Committee

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PARK

Hastings Country Park

Andy Phillips



Wheatear



Andy Phillips

Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve is one of the most stunning and ecologically important landscape features on the South Coast of England. Magnificent vistas of the rugged sandstone coastline and an abundance of wildlife delight both regular walkers and the many visitors to the Reserve.

The Country Park is owned and managed by Hastings Borough Council. At 345 hectares (850 acres), it is the largest and most accessible area of countryside in the Borough. Most of it is officially recognised as being of special biological or geological interest and, of course, recreational value. There are a number of separate but complimentary designations: Country Park, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The Park also includes an area of mixed farmland.

In 2001, problems with pollution of the designated areas by the then intensively managed dairy farm prompted the Council to take action. To safeguard the SSSI, it regained control of the farm and put in place a long term management plan for the Park. A forum of Elected Members, statutory agencies and Volunteer Rangers was set up to oversee what has become known as the Hastings Country Park Restoration project.

The Borough Council put in place a significant financial and management recovery package. Under the new management plan, the site is now showing real improvement. Conflicting agricultural issues have been resolved: grazing has been reinstated and arable crops rotated to attract wild birds. Partnership

funding has been secured through Countryside Stewardship and nationally scarce habitats are being managed to secure their long term survival.

We know that reversing the decline in such a major landscape is a long term commitment, but we are moving in the right direction. The Park received a prestigious Green Flag award in 2006 – the same year it was designated a Local Nature Reserve. Many rare species are thriving. Barn owls bred on the farm for the first time in 2005. Five pairs of black redstarts are resident on the cliffs. Nationally rare bees and wasps are found on the soft sandstone outcrops and a new species of bush cricket to Britain was found breeding in the Reserve in 2006. Rare and important species continue to be found.

The introduction of Highland cattle has been very popular with visitors as well as being a valuable management tool on the steep coastal slopes.

Interpretation posters around the site update visitors and regular walkers on current management activities and Volunteer and full time Rangers undertake patrols, management tasks and events throughout the year.

Councillor Finch, Chair of the Hastings Country Park Management Forum, says: “Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve is the most significant and valued open space in the Borough, attracting thousands of visitors every year. Its strategic importance to the region means that the Council is committed to its management and securing its long term future as one of the most valued assets for the people of Hastings and visitors alike”.

To find out more about Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve and its management and keep in touch with the latest nature conservation news from all the nature reserves in Hastings, check out www.wildhastings.org.uk

Useful information

- Pedestrian access via the East Hill Cliff Railway in Hastings Old Town; or from Barley Lane or Fairlight Road.
- Parking at Rock-a-Nore, Barley Lane, Fairlight Road picnic site and the Visitor Centre car park off Fairlight Road, just before Fairlight Church.
- ‘Access For All’ trail within the Firehills area of the Park.
- The Visitor Centre has displays on the Park’s history, geology and wildlife. It is open every weekend and most weekdays during the summer from 10am-4pm (except Thursdays). Check opening times on 01424 812140.
- Murray Davidson, Borough Ecologist; Martin Jenks, Parks and Open Spaces Manager; Andy Phillips, Nature Reserves Officer and Country Park Rangers can be contacted on 0845 2741050. More information at www.hastings.gov.uk/hcp

See also pages 10 and 11

The High Weald’s Country Parks

We all need a wide, open space in which to exercise, play or just take a break from the stresses of our hectic lives. When you are in a busy town, it’s hard to believe that the peace and tranquillity of the countryside is so near to you. Yet Buchan and Hastings – the two Country Parks within the AONB – are easily accessible from the major towns of Crawley and Hastings respectively.

Country parks have been described as ‘countryside belonging to the people’. They offer many facilities to help people of all ages and abilities experience nature and the great outdoors, in an environment where you can wander freely – enjoying peace, quiet and beautiful landscapes.

Buchan and Hastings Country Parks provide the ideal ‘introduction’ to the outstanding High Weald countryside. Within each can be found examples of our characteristic natural landscape components: ancient woodland, heathland and acid grassland. They may be near to urban areas, but the two Country Parks are teeming with wildlife – and in fact contain areas that have been designated for their wildlife importance. They are also showcases for habitat conservation work. Find out at the Parks how you can get involved with helping their wildlife!



JH

LIFE



John Lynch

Buchan Country Park

Buchan Country Park really is **Countryside on the Doorstep**. As the **Crawley crow flies**, it's only two miles from the town centre.

Now owned and managed by West Sussex County Council, in the late 19th century the Park was part of the Buchan Hill estate owned by Mr Philip Saillard. A Frenchman, he made his fortune from ostrich feathers for the fashion trade. Although wealthy, the family were not popular with everyone in the upper class Sussex set! Nerina Shute, who grew up nearby, recalls family visits to Buchan Hill in a 1950s book 'Come into the Sunlight':

"A call on Mrs Saillard was done only at rare intervals, with chilly politeness, and usually on a rainy day, for although the Prince of Wales might stay at Buchan Hill, nothing could alter the fact that Mrs Saillard was not considered by grandmother to be a lady".

Today, the Park attracts more than 100,000 visitors a year. Many people are surprised at the wildlife and scenery so close to an urban area. The authors of 'Best Birdwatching Sites in Sussex' were certainly surprised:

"...there were several places that we

never expected to make the final text. This was one of them, but how wrong we were. The woods around the ornamental lakes are stuffed with birds".

It is so stuffed with birds – like nightjar and lesser-spotted woodpecker – that the Park is designated a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI). Large-scale removal of a 'blooming' problem – the alien shrub *Rhododendron ponticum* – has been a huge task over the past fifteen years. But it has paid off and heathland wildlife is flourishing. Heather now flowers over several acres and adders are multiplying. For a few months, visitors are able to enjoy

Dartford warblers, perhaps holidaying from Ashdown Forest!

The naturally acidic waters of the Park's two lakes are more what you would expect to find in the uplands rather than the South East. This has not put the dragonflies off. With more than 20 species regularly seen, the lakes are designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

With its variety of habitats, tree-filled views, lakes and wildlife – Buchan Country Park is the High Weald in miniature. It's well worth a visit!

Robin Edwards
Senior Countryside Ranger

Useful information

- Open 365 days a year.
- Free admission.
- Car park open 8am–9pm in summer; 8am–6pm in winter.
- The network of hard surfaced paths ensures easy walking in all weather conditions. The main trail around the lake is wheelchair friendly.
- The Countryside Centre provides information and displays about the Park and the countryside in general.
- Lots of events – see www.westsussex.gov.uk/buchanpark
- Fishing is leased to Crawley Angling Society – see www.crawleyanglingsociety.gov.uk. Sorry, no day tickets.

See also pages 10 and 11

The High Weald Landscape Trust

The High Weald Landscape Trust, formed in 2004, has been active in securing funding for the continuation of the Weald Meadows Initiative (WMI). This flagship project provides a land management advisory service to landowners throughout the High Weald to help conserve wildflower meadows – an historic and important High Weald character feature and wildlife habitat. The Trust has secured £250,000 to fund the project over three years with the Tubney Charitable Trust as the main contributor and match funding from various public sector organisations.

The Trust has also secured funding for an annual prize of £1,000 available to the High Weald school able to show the best and most innovative conservation project. Trustee Keith Datchler said: "I am looking forward enormously to seeing the exciting ideas that schools come up with".

The Trust has developed The High Weald Landscape Trust Grant Scheme to support conservation and land management projects in the AONB. The scheme is open to local organisations, businesses, community groups and individuals who wish to develop practical projects that protect and improve the landscape of the High Weald. You can learn more about the grant scheme by visiting www.highweald.org and clicking on 'High Weald Landscape Trust'.

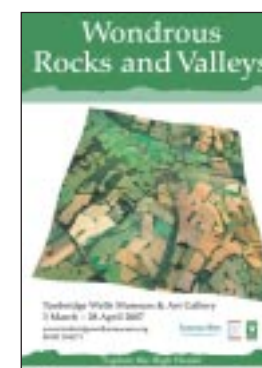
Over the next few months, the Trust also plans to award its first educational grant to support training in land management techniques. This will take the form of sponsoring an individual on a land management training course.

The Trust has received welcome contributions from the public, particularly those who have joined Friends of the High Weald. Continued public donations will help to fund the grant schemes and we will continue to seek other funding.

Those willing to make a donation can do so by sending a cheque payable to 'High Weald Landscape Trust' to: Woodland Enterprise Centre, Hastings Road, Flimwell, East Sussex TN5 7PR.

For more information on joining Friends of the High Weald, see page 6.

A first for the High Weald



Wondrous Rocks and Valleys – the very first major exhibition about the High Weald AONB – opened at Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery in March 2007.

The exhibition explores this fascinating area through historical and contemporary objects and images. In particular, it aims to illustrate how the underlying fabric of the High Weald has influenced its wildlife and people.

Highlights include an installation by local artist Nicholette Goff (see page 8), a multi-media presentation on the history of the area and an insight into the AONB – today and in the future.

The exhibition runs from 3 March – 28 April 2007. For more information, phone 01892 554171 or visit www.tunbridgewellsmuseum.org

Details of other exhibitions about the High Weald on page 8.



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 2008 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.

Please tick if you do not wish to receive any information from High Weald Land Management Projects

Please tick if you do not wish to receive any information from third parties

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

How we enjo

You may have a favourite place in the High Weald that you return to again and again – a village, historic property or peaceful spot; or you may be new to the area – with a lot of exploring still to do. You may be passionate about one particular outdoor pursuit; or you may like to do a range of activities. Alternatively, you may be one of the thousands of people who are not pursuing a particular pastime or interest, but simply enjoy touring around and enjoying the views. The AONB has something for everyone, as these High Weald residents tell us...



State of independence

Have you ever thought about helping those who are less able to enjoy our beautiful countryside?

Ali Remmen is Group Instructor for the Eridge Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA) Group, based in the Ashdown Forest area. She first got involved with RDA aged 17, inspired by her riding teacher. As Group Instructor, her main duties include Health and Safety and choosing the right pony for each child. The ponies have to be totally trustworthy. "Safety comes first – then the enjoyment and learning can begin!" she says.

Children with a whole range of disabilities attend Ali's weekly RDA sessions. She still finds the initial meeting of disabled rider and pony very moving. "When you see a child being lifted from a wheelchair onto a pony – and see that child being given back the freedom and independence that come from being up there, at the same height as other riders – it gives you goosebumps."

Ali explains that there are physical benefits for the children, too. "The transformation can be amazing. For example, we've had Down's syndrome children who have not wanted to sit still for a second. Somehow, the horse's rhythm calms them into moving in harmony with the animal."

Each disabled rider needs three adult helpers: two 'side walkers' and someone to lead the pony. But help is needed with everything, including cleaning tack and putting hats on – so there is an activity to suit everyone.

The helpers are all volunteers. They have regular meetings and get proper training, which is ongoing – for example in the correct way to hold a child on a pony. "It's all very sociable and we go on outings such as RDA dressage competitions," Ali says. She is always looking for new helpers. "You don't have to be horsey," she explains; "Just enjoy the company of children and

animals and have time to make a regular commitment. Without helpers, there wouldn't be a group!"

If the weather is good, they go out on Ashdown Forest for a short ride. "The concentration of the children goes up 100% when they go out," Ali says. "The Forest entertains and educates them. We look at colours, flowers, trees and leaves and we listen to bird song. The children feel the sun and wind on their faces – things the rest of us may take for granted. On the days we go out, everything seems calmer, more relaxed. The Forest slows your life right down. It's a completely different world. It's physiotherapy and psychotherapy all at once."

If you would like to help at Ali's RDA sessions, please contact Group Secretary Sally Grainger on **01892 870226** or email sally@graingers.org.uk

For more information about RDA, go to www.rda.org.uk

y the High Weald

When voluntary duty's to be done...



Some countryside leisure activities – such as voluntary conservation work – actually put something back into the landscape. Tim Christian works for the Kent High Weald Project as a Volunteer Field Officer...

The Kent High Weald project works in the borough of Tunbridge Wells, aiming to 'link the local community and the countryside, by raising awareness and encouraging action'. This is done through a range of schemes – including teaching environmental education in schools, running a weekly conservation volunteer task day and offering advice to landowners.

I started as a conservation volunteer after becoming unemployed and I quickly decided to pursue a career in environmental conservation. In October last year, I became a Volunteer Field Officer for the project – and my job is now to assist the other members of staff in delivering their schemes. In return, I receive training so that I can develop my skills and knowledge. Hopefully, I'll

get a paid job in this field one day.

Every Wednesday, I help to run the weekly volunteer task day – where an eager group of volunteers go out into the High Weald countryside and help to manage it for the benefit of wildlife and members of the public. Tasks range from installing boardwalks and kissing gates on footpaths, to coppicing hazel woodlands and clearing Birch from our heathland sites. The tasks are always enjoyable and are a great way to meet new people and get fit. At the end of the day, you feel relaxed and happy – knowing that you have helped to conserve the special High Weald landscape.

Conservation volunteering is fun and rewarding and there are conservation organisations scattered across the High Weald AONB. For details, go to www.highweald.org If you are interested in volunteering for the Kent High Weald Project then visit www.khwp.org.uk, email me at tim.christian@khwp.org.uk or phone **01580 715918**.

Keep on running

Friends of The High Weald member Dr Ted Lankester is passionate about cross-country running on Ashdown Forest – but there have been some ups and downs...

21st August 1996

I am 50 and I've made a resolution: a weekly run on Ashdown Forest, the jewel in the crown of the High Weald AONB (in my opinion) and just 10 minutes' drive – a small carbon footprint – from our house.

December 2000

Life is so much richer for putting on those running shoes each weekend. But today I develop a pain in the left shoulder – just after reaching a lone pine tree on one of my normal running routes. I seem to remember the same thing happening last week.

The year 2001

Not a good start to the millennium. An angiogram shows a blocked coronary artery – and I have a cardiac arrest (i.e. my heart stops beating for 30 seconds). Three weeks later, I precipitate a heart attack by overdoing a treadmill ECG. Two spells in intensive care, followed 6 months later by a coronary bypass operation. "Obviously my running days are over," I whinge at my hospital follow-up. "Nonsense," says the Consultant.

April 2003

One of those magic spring mornings when

the gorse is in full flower and its pervasive sweetness gives a natural high as I run the paths – warm air wafting, endorphins flowing, first Willow Warblers singing, everything right with the world.

Driving home I see a dutiful road-plodder turning back just before he sights Ashdown. Does he realize that the soft paths and intoxicating breezes just round the corner are in a different league from tarmac and road fumes?

June 2006

Hot and cloudless, the run even better than normal as two scythe-winged Hobbies chase each other round the gorse at Bushy Willow. Today I've planned to do a 10 kilometre non-stop run from one side of the Forest to the other. I make it, the longest cross-country since leaving school. I must write and tell my cardiologist!

January 2007

The Gulf of Aqaba and a gentle run along the coral laden waters of the one of the world's best snorkelling sites. As the sun sets I think of the beaches I have run along since making that resolution 10 years ago: The Cota Donana in southern Spain; the Kenyan coast; Cape Tribulation, Queensland; Rossili, Wales; Morocco's southern Atlantic coast. All magical and highlights of the years. But Ashdown is still in pole position!

Are you tempted to give it a go?

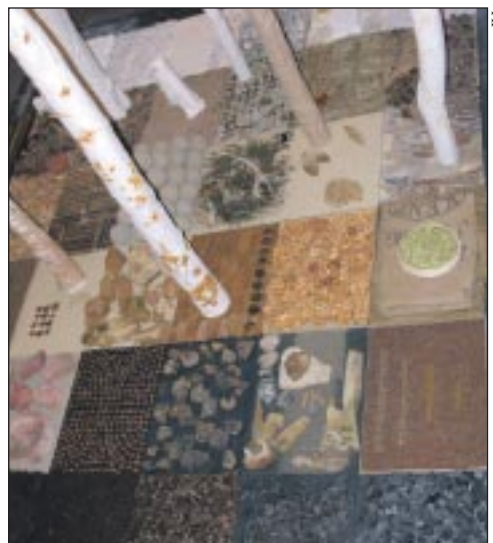


'Wondrous Rocks and Valleys' – the very first major exhibition about the High Weald – opened at Tunbridge Wells Museum in March 2007. As a focal point, the Museum commissioned a special installation by local artist Nicholette Goff. The High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee's Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) contributed 50% towards the cost of this artwork.

Nicholette works in the landscape using mud, plants, sticks and stones to make sculptures and prints. Her brief was to create a bold and striking three-dimensional installation from natural materials that are characteristic of the High Weald. Nicholette decided to construct a huge 'artist's palette' – filled with the many colours and textures of High Weald substances.

There were 36 palette compartments to fill. After collecting twigs, nuts, leaves, soil, clay and stones, Nicholette realised that she also wanted to include materials such as iron slag, bricks, sandstone, timber, wool, honey, hops, fruit, grains, wildflower seeds and hay – to illustrate that the High Weald is a productive, working landscape.

Nicholette enlisted the help of some High Weald producers. She was not necessarily asking for prime produce: out of date substances and



waste from the production process might be just as attractive to the artist's eye. It was an interesting promotional opportunity: in return for providing something for the palette, the donors would have their produce (or raw material) on display and their business listed alongside the installation.

Nicholette sees parallels between her work and that of farmers and growers: "In many ways, I imitate the activity of those who work on the land: methodical, systematic, repetitive and cyclical".

As woodlands and their products are such a dominant part of the landscape, the palette was interspersed with vertical prints of High Weald trees: three-dimensional and free standing – like the trees themselves.

Nicholette explains her unique printing methods: "I soak large sheets of handmade paper in ponds and streams, then place them on the ground to make prints of plants in their natural environment. I have used garden rollers, logs –

WRAP



ARTIST

The purpose of the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee's Sustainable Development Fund (SDF) is to support projects that will look after the High Weald's landscape, both now and in the future. Since September 2005 when the Fund started, over £170,000 has been awarded in grants to 67 diverse projects including farmers' markets, community gardens, school activities and training schemes. In total, these projects have delivered over £750,000 of environmental, social and economic benefits to the High Weald AONB.

All SDF projects need to demonstrate that they:

- Help to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the High Weald AONB
- Increase the understanding and enjoyment of the High Weald's special qualities
- Bring environmental, social and economic benefits to the High Weald AONB
- Support or involve local communities.

For more information on the High Weald Sustainable Development Fund, please visit our website www.highweald.org or telephone 01580 879500.

Where to see more of Nicholette's work

Mud, Sticks and Stones

Land Art workshops in the tranquil woodland corner of Marle Place Gardens and Gallery, Brenchley. www.marleplace.co.uk

You may find yourself stitching leaves, binding twigs, stacking logs or mixing mud. On Family days, we have poems and stories to help our imagination flourish. On Adult days, we look at the work of other artists who work in the landscape, then make something in response to the beautiful setting of Marle Place.

21 June Adults workshop 10am-6pm £20

24 August Family workshop 10am-4pm £25

For more information contact Nicholette Goff on **07952 663978** n.goff@virgin.net

and even my car – to drive over the paper, which picks up colour, texture and embossing unique to that plant, site and season".

The High Weald tree prints, however, are a first for Nicholette. She took the prints from upright, living trees by wrapping the wet paper around



them and binding it on tightly until dry. As each print is moulded around an actual tree, it not only carries its colouring, but also its shape and form.

"The tree prints that are part of this installation are a metaphor for all trees in the High Weald landscape – and their importance in our history," she says. "Similarly, the 'artist's palette' is a metaphor for the range of indigenous materials that have shaped industries, lives and, of course, our landscape across the centuries."

'Wondrous Rocks and Valleys' runs from 3 March to 28 April 2007. More details from www.tunbridgewellsmuseum.org or phone **01892 554171**. Also see Museum advertisement on page 14.

Details of High Weald producers can be found at www.highweald.org

Other AONB exhibitions

'Ashdown Animals'

3 March – 3 June, East Grinstead Museum **01342 302233**

www.eastgrinsteadmuseum.org.uk

Exploring the relationship between animals and people on Ashdown Forest, from Norman times to the present day. Free admission.

'Ashdown Forest – Past and Present'

5 – 20 May, Ashdown Forest Llama Park **01825 712040**

www.llamapark.co.uk

A 'now and then' exhibition of local photographers' work, plus paintings by 'Forest' artist, Juliet Murray. Free admission.

Exploring the High Weald

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

Enjoying the High Weald – responsibly

We can all use and enjoy the High Weald countryside without damaging the enjoyment or livelihoods of others. The following are actions that we can take to help care for this nationally valued landscape whilst out and about.

The full version of 'Caring for the High Weald – a Charter for Visitors and Residents' can be found at www.highweald.org. A summary is on page 6.

- Dispose of all litter responsibly. If there is no bin nearby, please take your litter home with you and recycle it if possible.

Litter spoils others' enjoyment of the countryside and can be dangerous for wild animals.

- Respect other users – follow the Countryside Code.

For more information, go to

www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

- Slow down for people, horses and wildlife – and park considerately.

Speeding cars kill people, horses, badgers, deer and foxes. Inconsiderate driving and parking damage our ancient routeways and their rare plants.

- Avoid using the car where possible.

Emissions from petrol contribute to climate change and lead to degradation of valuable habitats such as sandrock and gradual loss of wildlife such as bluebells.

- Why not take some local produce home as a reminder of your day out?

The landscape and wildlife value of the area's woodlands, hedges, meadows, heathlands and field margins are dependent on traditional management. Money invested in products that help support this management is money invested in conserving the AONB and its local economy.

- Take pride in the High Weald – promote its special features. If you are visiting and have enjoyed your visit, please tell others about the High Weald and take a copy of The Anvil home for your friends.

Promoting what you find special about the High Weald is the best way of encouraging commitment and action by others to benefit the area.

Sign up and save lives



Parish Councils in the Ashdown Forest area have joined forces with the Conservators of Ashdown Forest, East Sussex County Council, East Sussex Fire and Rescue and Sussex Police to create the Ashdown Forest Villages Road Safety Partnership. The Partnership aims to encourage drivers to slow down and give space to walkers, cyclists, horse riders, sheep and deer. In 2006, 346 deer were known to have been killed on the Forest's roads.

As part of a long-term Forest road safety strategy, a special campaign has now been launched – asking drivers to make a personal commitment to drive at safe and appropriate speeds within the speed limit on the Forest and in its villages. Drivers sign a pledge to “slow down and give space” – in return receiving a special tax disc holder or rear window sticker. 237 drivers have signed up so far. More information and pledge forms can be obtained from the Forest Centre, Parish Councils or by phoning the Road Safety Team on 01273 482150.

Other access opportunities

Public Rights of Way are not the only means of exploring the countryside. Here are some more ideas. These other public access areas often link up with the Rights of Way network to provide you with even more variety on your walks.

Forestry Commission sites



The Forestry Commission is the largest land manager in Britain and the biggest provider of outdoor recreation. With few exceptions, all of the woodlands they look after are free for you to enjoy. Many Forestry Commission woodlands also offer opportunities for access for disabled people.

www.forestry.gov.uk

See also page 17

Woodland Trust woods



The Woodland Trust is the UK's leading charity dedicated solely to the protection of our native woodland heritage. The majority of Trust woods are open free of charge for the public to enjoy and you can find details on their online directory.

www.woodland-trust.org.uk

Wildlife Trust Reserves



The Trusts welcome visitors to their nature reserves and operate a policy of open access wherever possible. There are a few exceptions, however,

where the conservation of particularly sensitive wildlife is underway – or where access can only be gained through other land under private ownership.

www.wildlifetrusts.org

www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk

www.sussexwt.org.uk



Countryside Stewardship Scheme access

Many farmers with land in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme have provided new permissive footpaths, rides or open access areas. The sites are marked with special map boards, giving details of the site and the type of access. On the website below, you can find details – and maps – for all these new access sites. There are 58 sites in East Sussex alone, many of these being in the High Weald.

<http://countrywalks.defra.gov.uk>

Ashdown Forest



You are entitled to walk anywhere on the common land of Ashdown Forest at any time. The 'common land' is that area managed by the Forest Conservators and is shown on OS 'Explorer' map 135, Ashdown Forest, or the Forest Map and Guide – which can be obtained from the Forest Information Centre or from local bookshops. If you don't have a map, it is generally safe to

assume that if you walk out from any Forest car park, you will remain on the Forest until you come to a boundary fence. A notable exception is the grazing enclosure fence but it is usually clear that the land on the other side of the fence is a continuation of the common land.

www.ashdownforest.org

National Trust properties



Some National Trust properties in the High Weald – particularly those with estates or woods – offer country walks on their land. Some walks are free and available all year round. Walk leaflets can be obtained from the properties, when open.

www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Some open access areas are shown on the new edition OS 'Explorer' maps – marked with the brown, circular 'walker' logo. Open access mapping can also be viewed at www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk

Much more information for visitors – including promoted walks and cycle rides – is on the High Weald website

www.highweald.org



VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

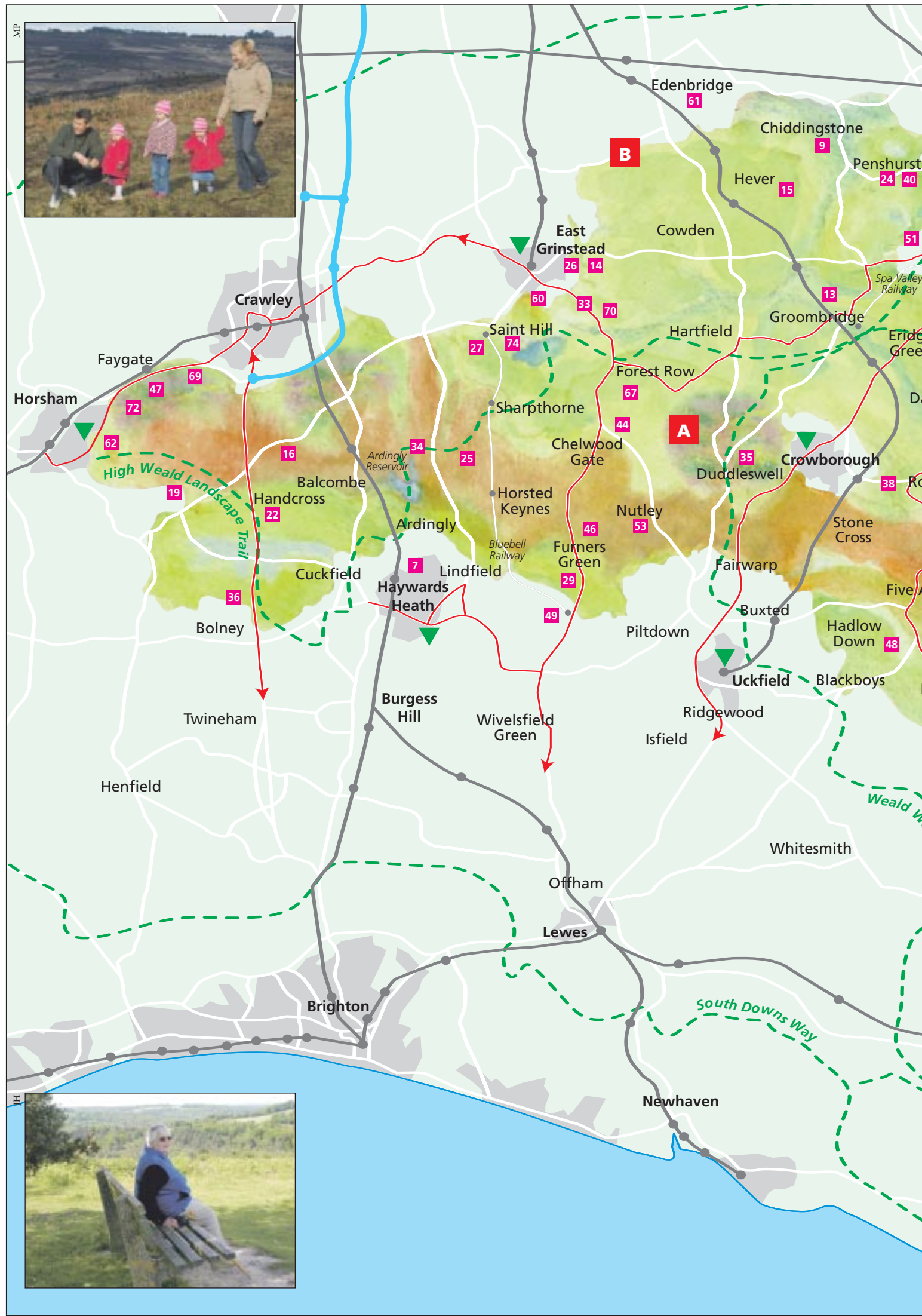
Houses, gardens and castles

- 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: House, 17 Mar-29 Oct, 11am-5pm, Sat-Wed. Garden, shop & tea-room 31 Oct-22 Dec, 11am-4pm, Wed-Sun.
- 3. Battle Abbey**
Battle, East Sussex
01424 773792
www.english-heritage.org.uk
- 4. Bayham Abbey**
Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890381
www.english-heritage.org.uk
- 5. Bedgebury Pinetum**
Park Lane, Goudhurst, Kent
01580 211781
www.forestry.gov.uk/bedgebury
Open: daily, 8am-dusk
- 6. Bodiam Castle**
Bodiam, Robertsbridge, E. Sussex
01580 830436
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/places/bodiamcastle
Open: Daily 1 Jan - 9 Feb, 10am-4pm, 10 Feb - 31 Oct, 10.30am-6pm and 3 Nov - 17 Feb 2008, 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, 1 April - 31 October, 10am-6pm
- 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 31 March - 28 October on Tues and Sun and BH Mondays, House 2pm-5pm, Gardens 11am-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
- 14. Hammerwood Park**
East Grinstead, East Sussex
01342 850594
- 15. Hever Castle & Gardens**
Hever, Edenbridge, Kent
01732 865224
www.hevercastle.co.uk
- 16. High Beeches Gardens**
High Beeches, Handcross, West Sussex
01444 400589
www.highbeeches.com
Open: 17 Mar - 31 Oct, every day except Weds. 1pm-5pm.
- 17. Hole Park Gardens**
Hole Park, Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent
01580 241344
www.holepark.com
Open: Sun, 1 Apr to 1 July inc Weds & Thurs, Apr to end Oct. Autumn Sun 30 Sept, 7, 14 & 21 Oct.

- 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
Open: 1 Apr-8 Oct.
- 20. Marle Place Gardens**
Brenchley, Nr Tonbridge, Kent
01892 722304
www.marleplace.co.uk
Open: 1 Apr-8 Oct.
- 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. Pashley Manor Gardens**
Ticehurst, East Sussex
01580 200888
www.pashleymanorgardens.com
Open: 3 Apr - 29 Sept, Tues, Wed, Thurs & Sat & BH Mon, 11am-5pm
- 24. Penshurst Place**
Penshurst, Tonbridge, Kent
01892 870307
www.penshurstplace.com
- 25. Priest House**
North Lane, West Hoathly, West Sussex
01342 810479
www.sussexpast.co.uk
- 26. Sackville College**
East Grinstead, West Sussex
01342 326561
- 27. Saint Hill Manor**
Saint Hill Road, East Grinstead, West Sussex
01342 326711
- 28. Scotney Castle Garden & Estate**
Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 891081
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/scotneycastle
- 29. Sheffield Park Garden**
Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 790231
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
- 30. Sissinghurst Castle Garden**
Biddenden Road, Cranbrook, Kent
01580 710700
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/places
Open: 17 Mar - 28 Oct, 11am-6.30pm (or dusk if earlier).
- 31. Smallhythe Place**
Smallhythe, nr Tenterden, Kent
01580 762334
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
- 32. Sprivers Garden**
Horsmonden, Kent
01892 890651
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
- 33. Standen**
East Grinstead, West Sussex
01342 323029
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/standen
Open: 17 Mar - 15 July, Weds - Sun & BH Mon, 11am-4.30pm. 16 Jul - 2 Sept, Mon, Wed - Sun & BH Mon, 11am-4.30pm.
- 34. Wakehurst Place**
Ardingly, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
01444 894066
www.kew.org

Vineyards

- 35. Barnsgate Manor Vineyard**
Herons Ghyll, Crowborough, East Sussex
01825 713366
www.barnsgate.co.uk
- 36. Bookers Vineyard**
Bolney, West Sussex
01444 881575
www.bookersvineyard.co.uk



- 37. Carr Taylor Vineyards**
Westfield, Hastings, East Sussex
01424 752501
www.carr-taylor.com
- 38. Davenport Vineyards**
Limney Farm, Castle Hill, Rotherfield, East Sussex
01892 852380
www.davenportvineyards.co.uk
- 39. Lamberhurst Vineyards**
The Down, Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890412

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

- 43. Tenterden Vineyard Park**
Small Hythe, Tenterden, Kent
01580 763033
www.chapeldownwines.co.uk
- Farms and woods open to the public**
- 44. Ashdown Forest Llama Park**
Wych Cross, Forest Row, East Sussex
01825 712040
www.llamapark.co.uk
Open: Every day except 25/26 Dec, daily 9am-5pm

- 45. Farm World**
Great Knelle, Beckley, E. Sussex
01797 260250
- 46. Heaven Farm**
Furners Green, Uckfield, E. Sussex
01825 790226
www.heavenfarm.co.uk
Open: Daily, Mar - Oct, 10am-5.30pm
- 47. Holmbush Farmworld**
Faygate, Horsham, West Sussex
01293 851110
www.holmbushfarm.co.uk
Open: Daily 15 Feb - 28 Oct, 10am-5.30pm

- 48. Wilderness Wood**
Hadlow Down, Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 830509
www.wildernesswood.co.uk
Open: Every day, 10am-5.30pm (or dusk if earlier)
- Steam Railways**
- 49. Bluebell Railway**
Sheffield Park Station, Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 722370
www.bluebell-railway.co.uk



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

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

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

66. Tunbridge Wells Museum
Tunbridge Wells, Kent
01892 554171
www.tunbridgewellsmuseum.org
Open: Mon – Sat, 9.30am–5pm, Sun 10am–4pm, Closed BH Mon.

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

68. Bewl Water
Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890661
www.bewl.co.uk
Open: 9am–half hour before sunset except Christmas Day

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

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

71. Hastings Country Park
Fairlight, East Sussex
01424 813225

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

Nature Reserves

73. Rye Harbour NR
Rye, East Sussex
01797 223862

74. 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



50. Kent & East Sussex Railway
Tenterden Town Station, Tenterden, Kent
0870 6006074
www.ksr.org.uk

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

Windmills

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

53. Nutley Windmill
Nutley, Uckfield, East Sussex
01435 873367

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

Museums

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

56. Yesterday's World
89-90 High Street, Battle, East Sussex
01424 774269
www.yesterdayworld.co.uk

57. CM Booth Collection of Historic Vehicles
Falstaff Antiques, 63 High Street, Rolvenden, Kent
01580 241234
www.morganmuseum.co.uk

58. Court Hall Museum
Winchelsea, East Sussex
01797 226382

59. Cranbrook Museum
Carriers Road, Cranbrook, Kent
01580 712516
www.cranbrookmuseum.org

60. East Grinstead Town Museum
Old Market Yard, Cantelupe Road, East Grinstead, W. Sussex
01342 302233
www.eastgrinsteadmuseum.org.uk

61. Eden Valley Museum
Church House, 72 High Street, Edenbridge, Kent
01732 868102
www.evmt.org.uk

62. Horsham Museum
9 Causeway, Horsham, W. Sussex
01403 254959

Start and end: Ashdown Forest Centre car park. (Grid Reference TQ 433323).

Distance: 2.5 miles/4km. **Time:** Approx. 1 hour.

Terrain: Undulating countryside, may be muddy in places.

OS Map: Explorer 135, Ashdown Forest.

Waymarking: some yellow footpath arrow discs at start. The route directions below follow the route in a clockwise direction.

Calorie Burning Chart – Broadstone Walk.

Approx. calories burned	Your approximate weight					
	50 kg 7st 12lb	59 kg 9st 3lb	68 kg 10st 10lb	77 kg 12st 2lb	86 kg 13st 8lb	100 kg 15st 10lb
	165	195	225	255	285	330

These figures are for walking 2.5 miles in about 1.25 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

A walk in the Broadstone area of Ashdown Forest Stone country

Situated on the highest ridge-top in the AONB, Ashdown Forest has the largest and best-preserved area of heathland in the South East. The rock that lies under Ashdown Forest is sandstone – and this walk passes an abandoned sandstone quarry. The Forest is peppered with small quarries because the bad roads made it very difficult to move the sandstone long distances. Quarrying sandstone by hand was back breaking work. Quarrymen hammered wedges and spikes into the stone to split it into manageable pieces.

Many local houses and churches were built with sandstone, because it was so readily available.

Today all the quarries on the Forest lie silent, reclaimed by nature once more. There is only one commercial sandstone quarry left in the area – Lambs, at West Hoathly. It supplies stone for building extensions to existing sandstone houses, for church repairs and for garden rockeries. More details at www.lambstone.com



Directions

- Starting at the Ashdown Forest Centre car park, walk downhill with an earth bank on your left. You will be walking on a narrow path between silver birch, oak, beech and sweet chestnut trees.
- After about 150 metres, turn right at the next way marker and follow the ride out on to the open heath (3).
- At the next post, turn left and head downhill on a narrow path towards a clump of trees.
- At the trees, the path turns right and goes around the top of an old quarry.
- At the trees, the path turns right and goes around the top of an old quarry.
- The path then winds its way through the heather down to the main ride.
- At the main ride, turn left and walk down the hill.
- At the bottom of the hill, turn right into the woods again, walking along the path with a stream on your left.
- Cross the first of two bridges before the path begins to climb uphill again.
- Carry on following this ride to the top of the hill, where it bears left up to a bench, then bears right into some trees (11).
- As you come around the corner out of the trees, the main road will be on your left.

- Emerge from the woods and continue following the ride, which stretches out in front of you, heading back towards the Forest Centre car park.

- Turn left towards the Forest Centre and car park before the path you are walking on heads down towards the woods again.

Fact Pack

Services

Ashdown Park Hotel,
Wych Cross
01342 824988
Roebuck Hotel, Wych Cross
01342 823811
The Hatch Inn, Coleman's
Hatch 01342 822363
Also shops and pubs in nearby
Forest Row and Nutley.

Public Toilets

Ashdown Forest Centre

Public Transport

There are twice hourly trains from London Victoria to East Grinstead (6 miles away). Take the 54 bus from East Grinstead Station to Wych Cross (28 minutes). More information from Traveline 0870 6082608 www.traveline.org.uk

Local Attractions

Ashdown Forest Centre
01342 823583
Ashdown Forest Llama Park
01825 712040
Nutley Windmill
01435 873367
Also at
www.ashdownforest.com

Local Producers

Wych Cross Nursery
01342 822705 *Roses and other plants*

Old Plaw Hatch Farm Shop
01342 810201 *Organic dairy products, vegetables*
Seasons Forest Row Ltd
01342 824673 *Fruit, vegetables, meat and groceries*

Accommodation

Gospel Oak B&B
01342 823840
Holly House B&B
01825 740484
Also at
www.ashdownforest.com

A walk in the Surrey High Weald

Corner of four counties

The High Weald AONB is the UK's fourth largest AONB. It covers parts of East Sussex, West Sussex and Kent – plus a very small piece of Surrey. This tranquil walk is in the Surrey High Weald, passing close to the other three counties. Along the way are a number of farms and woods and an Iron Age fort. There are extensive views to the North Downs – and the Weald to the south. Part of the route follows the Vanguard Way, a long distance footpath linking the London suburbs to the south coast.

Directions

- 1 Walk along Ford Manor Road. At the 3-way junction, take the right-hand tarmac road (a bridleway) towards Greathed Manor. Continue, ignoring a crossing path, for 700m to pass the turning to the Manor on the right. 40m beyond this, fork left through a gateway.
- 2 Shortly after, at the next fork, bear left over a stream by a barn at Home Farm. Then turn left, and follow the track around the field. Keep ahead through woods. Go through a bridle gate and ahead along a track between fields. Pass Littleworth Cottage on the left. 60m beyond this, turn right through a metal field gate, joining the Vanguard Way. Follow the path uphill between hedges – the one on the left newly planted. From the top of the rise, there are views across Kent to the North Downs.
- 3 Follow the path through Spring Wood, then left around the edge of fields to reach a track by houses. Turn right on the track past houses for 70m, then at a junction turn left and follow the track uphill for 400m to reach the overgrown boundary banks – ramparts – of an Iron Age fort.
- 4 Continue along the track, which swings left through a gap in the ramparts, then right along a field edge, parallel to the ramparts. After 200m, the track drops down and re-crosses the ramparts.
- 5 Follow the track downhill between fields, with views of the West Sussex Weald to the right and East Sussex to the left. Keep ahead through a metal bridle gate to reach Beeches Farm buildings. Turn left and then right onto a concrete drive and follow this through the farmyard for 80m. There are extensive views ahead across the rolling, wooded hills of the East Sussex High Weald.
- 6 At the end of the farmyard, go through a metal field gate, then immediately turn right (leaving the Vanguard Way) to go through another metal field gate by Beeches Cottage. Pass stables, then bear left through a small gate into a field. Keep ahead along the field edge with a fence on your right and go through a gate into the next field. Continue downhill across the field to go through a small gate in the hedge ahead, emerging onto a drive at Lower Stonehurst Farm.
- 7 Bear right along the drive, past a bungalow and stables on your right. At the end of the concrete drive, go through a metal field gate and keep ahead on a grassy track with a stream to your left. Go through a second metal field gate and keep to the right hand side of the field to reach another gate in the top right hand corner. Keep to the right in the next field to go through a gate by Upper Stonehurst Farm buildings.
- 8 Pass between the farm buildings and house and turn left along the concrete drive. After 90m, at the bottom of the dip, turn right by a stile into a field. Keep right, along the field edge, to cross a stile into the woods ahead. Follow the path ahead and, where the woodland ends, bear slightly left to follow a narrow path between a fence on the left and a hedge on the right. At a track, keep ahead between house and stables and go over a stile at the lane. Turn left. The ridge of the North Downs can be seen to the right and the Sussex Weald to the left.
- 9 Go along the lane for 360m. At Burnt Pit Farm, turn right through a wooden field gate and keep ahead, with a barn on your right. Go through a metal bridle gate and follow the path through woods. Join a track coming in from the right and keep ahead to once more reach the buildings of Home Farm. Now keep left on the track to return to the start.

Start and end: The Plough Inn, Plough Road, Dormansland (Grid Reference TQ 406428). If not using the pub, there is limited parking in Ford Manor Road.

Distance: 5 miles/8km **Time:** 2.5 hours

Terrain: Undulating countryside, muddy in places. Very few stiles.

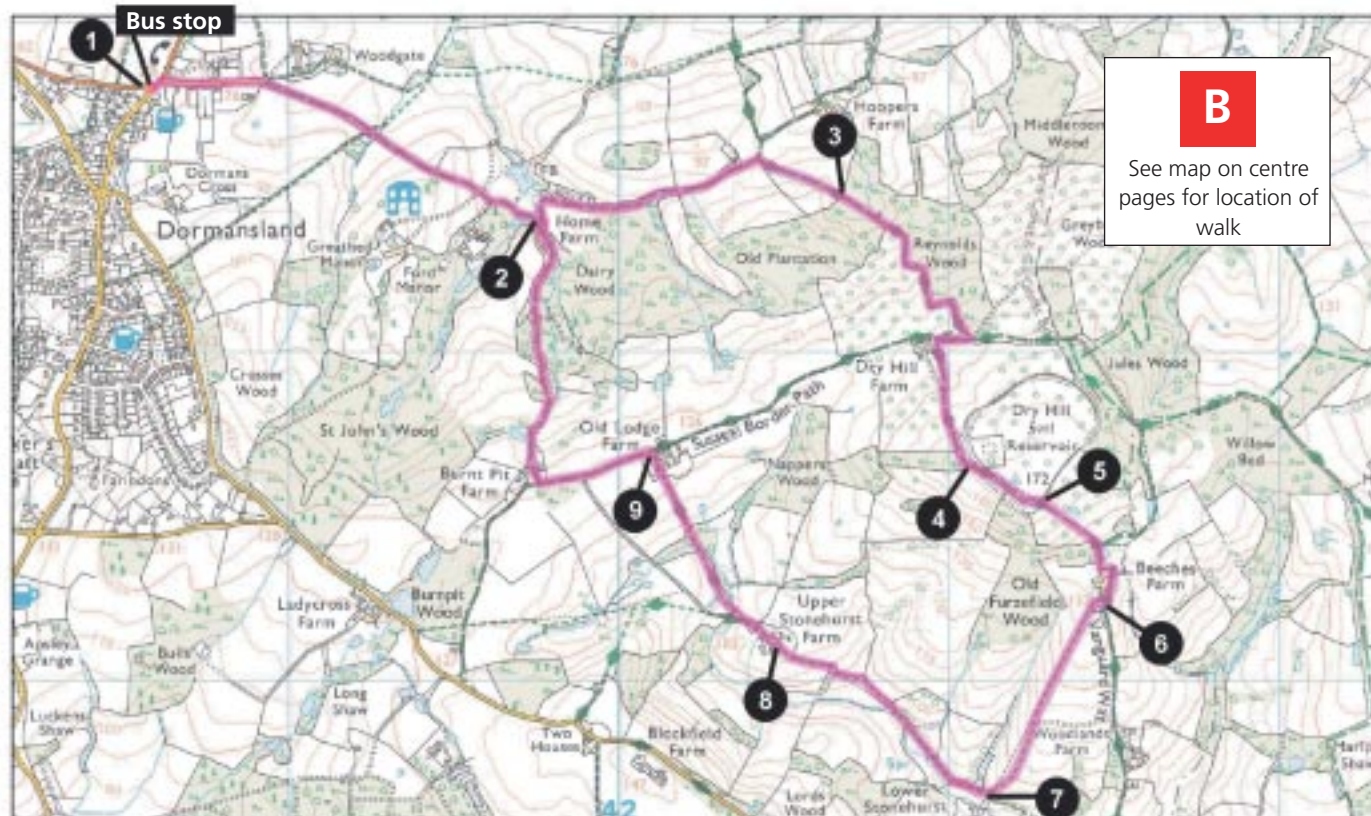
OS Map: Explorer 147, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge

Waymarking: yellow arrow footpath discs and blue arrow or horseshoe bridleway discs, in conjunction with Vanguard Way markers on one section. The route directions below follow the route in a clockwise direction.

Calorie Burning Chart Four Counties Walk.

Approx. calories burned	Your approximate weight					
	50 kg 7st 12lb	59 kg 9st 3lb	68 kg 10st 10lb	77 kg 12st 2lb	86 kg 13st 8lb	100 kg 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



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Littleworth Cottage



View to the North Downs

Fact Pack

Services

The Plough Inn, Plough Road, Dormansland 01342 832933, where you can park if combining this walk with a visit to the pub (ring for opening times). There are other pubs in Dormansland village, half a mile from the start of the walk.

Potters Store (village shop and Post Office) 01342 832361

Public Toilets

Centre of village, near garage and village shop.

Public Transport

Bus 409 (Metrobus) runs between East Grinstead, Dormansland, Lingfield, Godstone and Croydon. Get off at the Plough Inn. More information from Traveline 0870 6082608 www.traveline.org.uk

Local Attractions

Eden Valley Museum
01732 868102
East Grinstead Museum
01342 302233
Forest Way Country Park

Local Producers

Osney Lodge Farm 01342 892216 *Free range pork produced on the farm, lamb, poultry and sausages*

Basings 01342 850251 *Free range dairy goat products*
Treespanner Timber 01342 871529 *Oak beam, flooring and other items made from native hardwoods*

Accommodation

East Grinstead TIC
01342 410121
Cranston House B&B
01342 323609



If you enjoy...
adventure play, beautiful trees, family cycling, mountain biking, country walking and horse riding, then Bedgebury National Pinetum and Forest in the High Weald of Kent is the place to visit.

For an admission fee of only £6 per car, you can create your own adventure in a world of trees.


Open 365 days a year
Signposted from the A21 between Lamberhurst and Filmwell, 10 miles from Tunbridge Wells and 12 miles from Hastings.

Telephone: 01580 879820
www.forestry.gov.uk/bedgebury



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Discover the High Weald



Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery
Sharing the history and natural history of the High Weald with everyone - indoors and out!

Discover more about your local area
Enjoy our wonderful collections
Visit our major exhibitions
Take part in our exciting programme of free events

To find out more, contact us for a leaflet on 01892 554171 or visit www.tunbridgewellsmuseum.org

admission FREE!

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

March

- 3 March – 28 April
Explore the High Weald – Wondrous rocks and valleys

Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
01892 554171
The borough of Tunbridge Wells lies at the heart of the AONB. Using historical and contemporary objects and images and newly commissioned art work, this first major exhibition reveals how the underlying fabric of the High Weald has influenced its wildlife and people.

- 3 March – 3 June
Ashdown Animals

East Grinstead Museum, East Grinstead, West Sussex
01342 302233
An exhibition that explores the relationship between animals and people on the Ashdown Forest, dating from Norman times to the present day. Also including mythical and fictional animals such as Winnie the Pooh and his friends.

- 31 March onwards
The Magic of Ashdown Forest

Ashdown Forest Centre, Wych Cross, East Sussex
01342 823583
2.00pm – 5.00pm
Exhibition of paintings of views and wildlife by Valerie Baines FLS, FSBA held at the Centre.

- 31 March - 3 June
RSPB's Aren't Birds Brilliant!

Bewl Water, Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890661
This year the RSPB's Aren't Birds Brilliant! team will be at Bewl Water daily, 31 March - 3 June. They will have their telescopes for free use again and will be showing and teaching people about Bewl's birds. The star of the show will be the magnificent great crested grebe! Including special 45min Grebe cruises which will run twice daily throughout the event, at 1:00pm and 4:00pm. Entrance Fee - weekdays: Adults £4.00, Kids (3-15) £2.50. Weekends & Bank Hols: Adults £4.50, Kids £2.50. Pre-booking to avoid disappointment on 01892 890171.

April

- 7 April
Robertsbridge Ramble

Robertsbridge, East Sussex
Organised by: Simon Fathers, ESCC Rye Bay Countryside Office
9.30am – 12.30pm
Meet at Robertsbridge Railway Station, Map Ref: TQ734235
6 mile circular walk from Robertsbridge along waterways and quiet lanes. During the walk we will enjoy views across the Rother Valley and High Weald AONB. Please wear suitable footwear. Pre-booking advisable.

- 9 April
Easter Event

Barnetts Wood LNR, Southborough, Kent
Organised by: Kent High Weald Project
01580 715918
www.khwp.org.uk
10.30am - 1.00pm
Come and have some Easter fun at Barnett's Wood Local Nature Reserve. Booking essential.

- 9 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 stalls selling plants and other goodies! Lots to see and buy! Admission free.

- 14 - 15 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, camelias & magnolias. Nurseries selling a wide variety of plants. Entrance Fee: £6.50 for adults, £3.50 for children.

- 21 April
A Northiam springtime stroll

Northiam, East Sussex
Organised by: Andrew Whitnall, ESCC
10.30am – 2.30pm
Meet at Northiam church (car park nearby off Fullers Lane) (Map Ref: TQ829245)
7.5 mile springtime stroll around Northiam and Ewhurst Green. Lunch stop at the 'White Dog' pub before returning to Northiam via Great Dixter enjoying views of Bodiam castle on the way. Donations appreciated, free for non car users.

- 22 April
High Weald Safari

Cinderhill Wood, Brenchley, Kent
Organised by: Ian Beavis, Tunbridge Wells Museum & Art Gallery
01892 554171
www.tunbridgewellsmuseum.org
11.00am - 12.30pm
A family nature walk around Cinderhill Wood. Discover the insects, animals and plants that live in this typical High Weald woodland habitat. Event open to everyone over the age of six, but booking essential in advance.

- 28 April
Powdermill Wood

Powdermill Wood, Powdermill Lane, Battle, East Sussex
01424 772235
www.powdermilltrust.co.uk
Meet at 2.30pm at reserve car park (Map Ref: TQ735144)
A guided walk around this wet habitat to see ladies-smock, golden saxifrage, twayblade and other spring flowers. Also orange tip and brimstone butterflies, greater spotted woodpecker, nuthatch and treecreeper.

May

- 5 May
Rotherfield Reserve

Rotherfield Reserve, Rotherfield, East Sussex
01424 772235
www.powdermilltrust.co.uk
Meet at 2.30pm at the reserve at High Cross between Mayfield and Rotherfield, Map Ref: TQ557289
A guided walk to see the bluebells and other spring flowers, birds, butterflies and other insects. No dogs please.

- 5 May
Dawn Chorus

Barnett's Wood LNR, Southborough, Kent
Organised by: Kent High Weald Project
01580 715918
www.khwp.org.uk
4.30am - 6.30am
Rise with the birds and come and listen to the magical morning song at Barnett's Wood. Booking essential.

- 5 - 20 May
Ashdown Forest, past and present

Ashdown Forest Llama Park, Wych Cross, East Sussex
01825 712040
www.llamapark.co.uk
11.00am – 4.30pm
Historic and contemporary photographs and paintings capture Ashdown Forest's unique landscape.

- 6 May
Dawn Chorus

Cinderhill Wood, Matfield, Kent
Organised by: Kent High Weald Project
01580 715918
www.khwp.org.uk
Rise with the birds and come and listen to the magical morning song at Cinderhill Wood. Booking essential.

- 6 May
Bluebells & Rolls Royce Enthusiasts Club Rally

Hole Park Gardens, Rolvenden, Kent
01580 241344
11.00am – 6.00pm
40 vintage and veteran Rolls Royce cars will be paraded in front of the house by their owners and the bluebells will be in flower.

- 14 May
Meadow Gardening

Great Dixter, Northiam, East Sussex
01797 252878
10.00am – 4.30pm
Fergus Garrett will take you through the process of creating your own meadow and maintaining it. The day will include slides and talks in The Great Hall and practical sessions in the meadows. Refreshments and lunch included. We are offering a 10% discount on all plant sales in the nursery on the day. Entrance Fee: £80. Please book.

- 16 May
Glory of Spring

Sissinghurst Castle Garden, Sissinghurst, Kent
01580 710700
2.00pm
Part of our 40th Anniversary Celebrations! Take in the Nuttery and Lime Walk and the splendour of the orchard. Alexis Datta, Head Gardener will give a tour and be on hand to answer questions and talk about the plants and planting. Numbers limited - book early!
Entrance Fee: £15. We can also offer a pre-prepared picnic to eat in the orchard - £10.

- 25 – 28 May
Wildlife Weekend

Various venues at Rye, East Sussex
01273 482660
www.wildrye.info
Four days of local discoveries, outdoor activities, creative workshops and nature games around Rye and Winchelsea.

- 26 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.

- 26 May – 3 June
Smugglers' Treasure Trail

Bateman's, Burwash, East Sussex
01435 882302
(excluding Thurs and Fri)
What did smugglers smuggle and why? Find out the answers at Bateman's as well as finding the smuggled goods. Entrance Fee: Normal admission + £2 per trail.

June

- 1 June
Survive in the Wild

Wilderness Wood, Hadlow Down, East Sussex
01825 830509
www.wildernesswood.co.uk
10.00am - 12.00pm
What are the four things you need to survive? Find them in the woods! Hands-on activities to test your survival skills. Entrance Fee: Child (8-13) £6.80 Adult £3.25. Booking essential.

- 2 - 3 June
Bewl Garden Show

Bewl Water, Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890661
The 8th Garden Show with many top growers, both local and from further afield bringing along their quality plants. Craft stalls, artists with work for sale, garden products, children's entertainment and fun stalls all make for a great family day out. The main water companies bring along exhibits to demonstrate how to conserve water. This charity fund raising event is organised by the Kent & Sussex Border Lions who support local needs. Car park ticket includes free entry to show.

- 3 June
Creature Crafts – Watch Family Event

Ashdown Forest Centre, East Sussex
01273 497561
Come and explore the Ashdown Forest in search of colourful creatures. Discover how Mother Nature uses her palette and find inspiration to create some creature crafts of your own. Disabled access to Centre, but reserve not suitable for wheelchairs. Donations appreciated.

9 June
Midnight Moths
 Buchan Country Park, Crawley, West Sussex
 01293 542088
 9.00pm
 Discover how wine and treacle attract moths. Have a mug of cocoa as we wait for special guests to arrive. Entrance Fee: £2 per adult/child free.

9 June
Plants of Bedgebury
 Bedgebury Pinetum, Goudhurst, Kent
 01580 211781
www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk
 10.30am - 12.30pm
 Sue Buckingham can guide you through the Pinetum looking at the different types of wild flowers that thrive in Bedgebury's diverse habitats. At this time of year the wild orchids should still be in evidence. Entrance Fee: £8.00 adults, £7.00 concessions, £6.00 child. Make sure you wear suitable clothing and footwear. Booking essential on 01580 879820.

14 June
An Evening with Nightjars on Ashdown Forest
 01273 497561
 7.30pm - 10.30pm
 Meet at Ashdown Forest Centre car park, Wych Cross, Forest Row, Map Ref: TQ441320
 A Sussex Wildlife Trust event. Discover more about the nightjar, one of Britain's most mysterious birds. Starting with an indoor session followed by a mile long walk in the forest to hear the birds themselves. Please bring a torch and insect repellent. Sorry no dogs. Booking is essential. Entrance Fee: SWT members, concessions & children £6, non-members £8.

16 - 17 June
Special Rose Weekend
 Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex
 01580 200888
www.pashleymanorgardens.com
 11.00am - 5.00pm
 The gardens are spectacular throughout summer and it is in June that the fragrant, colour themed plantings of roses throughout the garden come into bloom. A representative from Peter Beales will be leading walks around the gardens throughout the weekend.

17 June
Tree and Orchid Walk
 Rotherfield Reserve, Rotherfield, East Sussex
 01424 772235
www.powdermilltrust.co.uk
 Meet at 2.30pm at the reserve, Map Ref: TQ557289. Leader: Dr Owen Johnson, author of 'The Tree Guide' - the most comprehensive book on trees in Britain and Europe ever published.

30 June - 1 July
Children's Weekend
 Spa Valley Railway, Tunbridge Wells
 01892 537715
www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk
 Fun and games for younger children, plus the thrill of a steam train ride.

July

5 July
Bat Walk
 Nymans Gardens, Handcross, West Sussex
 01444 400321
 7.30pm - 10.00pm
 Meet outside the Restaurant for hot chocolate before walking down to the woods with the Head Gardener and a Weald Countryside Ranger on the look out for bats in Nymans Woods. Booking essential. Entrance Fee: Adult £7, Child £3.50, Family £18.

7 July
Fairwarp Annual Village Fete
 Fairwarp, East Sussex
 2.00pm - 5.00pm
 A very traditional village fete with arts and crafts, side stalls etc.

21 July
Discovering Flatoppers Wood
 Off Bixley Lane, Beckley, East Sussex
 01273 497561
 10.00am - 1.00pm
 Explore this little known Sussex Wildlife Trust nature reserve in the east of the county which, at this time of year, is especially good for butterflies. The walk is fairly even with wide and narrow unsurfaced footpaths and several wooden bridges. Please wear suitable clothing and footwear. Meet at the entrance to the reserve at the southern end of the wood, off Bixley Lane. Donations to Sussex Wildlife Trust appreciated.

21, 22, 28, 29 July
 4, 5, 18, 19, 25 August
Jousting
 Hever Castle, Hever, Edenbridge, Kent
 01732 865224
www.hever-castle.co.uk
 Thrilling entertainment with full gallop performed by the 'Knights of Royal England'.

24 July - 4 August
Lily Time
 Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex
 01580 200888
www.pashleymanorgardens.com
 An exciting new event. Over 40 fascinating varieties of lilies have been planted throughout the Gardens and in the woodland area. Orders for lilies from Bloms Bulbs (Chelsea Gold Medal Winners 56 times) taken at Pashley at the event.

28 July
Dormouse Awareness
 Bedgebury Pinetum, Goudhurst, Kent
 01580 211781
www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk
 10.00am - 11.30am
 Come out into the forest with the Ranger and look for dormice. Limited number so booking is essential.

29 July
Beastly Bugs
 Barnetts Wood LNR, Southborough, Kent
 Organised by: Kent High Weald Project
 01580 715918
www.khwp.org.uk
 2.00pm - 4.00pm
 Come and discover the creepy crawlies living in the undergrowth at Barnetts Wood. Booking essential.

4 August
Family Fun Day
 Barnetts Wood LNR, Southborough, Kent
 Organised by: Kent High Weald Project
 01580 715918
www.khwp.org.uk
 10.00am - 4.00pm
 There's fun for all the family at this exciting event. For more information please phone Kent High Weald Project.

11 August
An Introduction to Insects
 St Dunstan's Farm, Heathfield, East Sussex
 01273 497561
 10.00am - 4.00pm
 A Sussex Wildlife Trust Training event led by Dr Patrick Roper. This general course is for those who would like to find out about this fascinating and diverse group. The course will cover how to identify, photograph, record and study the insects of the Sussex countryside. Entrance Fee: SWT members/concessions £22.50, non members £30.00

15 August
Teddy Bears' Picnic
 Holmbush Farm, Faygate, Horsham, West Sussex
 01293 851110
www.holmbushfarm.co.uk
 Picnic with your teddy bear (bring your own favourite).

16 August
Explore the Undergrowth
 Wilderness Wood, Hadlow Down, East Sussex
 01825 830509
www.wildernesswood.co.uk
 10.30am - 3.30pm
 A day of exploration, identification and art, with Lyn Merrick. Hunting for creatures, identifying them using keys and computer software and finding out what is special about them. Dissecting owl pellets, making casts of animal prints and creating graphs, paintings and models of your discoveries to take home. Entrance Fee: Child (6-15) £16 (under 7s accompanied), Adult £16. Booking essential.

18 - 19 August
Meet the Miller and Help the Cook
 Bodiam Castle, Bodiam, East Sussex
 01580 830436
 11.00am - 4.00pm
 Find out with 'Discovering Medieval' how corn was ground into flour and what would have been cooked in the kitchen. Have a go at making butter in the churn. Part of a series of medieval costumed interpretation weekends through the summer. Normal admission only.

18 August
Heavy Horses at High Beeches
 High Beeches Gardens, Handcross, West Sussex
 01444 400589
www.highbeeches.com
 The Working Horse Trust will be harrowing the wild flower meadow and the stunning blue woodland gentians will also be in flower.

19 August
Annual Open Day
 Rotherfield Reserve, Rotherfield, East Sussex
 01424 772235
www.powdermilltrust.co.uk
 11.00am - 4.00pm
 Guided walks, exhibitions and refreshments. The Rotherfield Reserve is at High Cross between Mayfield and Rotherfield. Map Ref: TQ557289. No dogs please.

26 - 27 August
10th Anniversary of Groombridge Reopening
 Spa Valley Railway, Tunbridge Wells
 01892 537715
www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk
 Celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Spa Valley Railway restoring train services to Groombridge.

27 August
Birds, Bats and Bugs!
 Rye Harbour Nature Reserve, Sussex
 01797 227784
www.naturereserve.ryeharbour.org
 A 2 mile evening stroll to Ternery Pool followed by a closer look at some nocturnal creatures with the help of bat detectors and moth traps. Meet at Rye Harbour car park at 6.30pm. Donations appreciated.

September

1 September
Explore Old Lodge Nature Reserve
 Old Lodge Nature Reserve, Ashdown Forest, East Sussex
 01273 497561
www.sussexwt.org.uk
 Organised by: Sussex Wildlife Trust
 Join us for a walk around Old Lodge Nature Reserve in the middle of the Ashdown Forest when the heather should be in full bloom. Meet in the reserve car park. The walk is on a fairly even surface although there is one steep incline. No dogs. Donations appreciated.

8 - 23 September
The Sculpture Show
 Marle Place, Marle Place Road, Brenchley, Kent
 01892 722304
 Sculptures in the beautiful setting of Marle Place Gardens

October

21 October
Hay Making
 Rotherfield Reserve, Rotherfield, East Sussex
 01424 772235
www.powdermilltrust.co.uk
 Cutting back all vegetation in the meadow areas after the last annual - devil's bit scabious - has dropped seeds. Extra volunteers are always welcome. The Rotherfield reserve is at High Cross between Mayfield and Rotherfield. Map Ref: TQ557289. No dogs please.

21 - 28 October
Ashdown Forest Food Festival
 A whole range of events and activities across the Ashdown Forest area.
 See www.ashdownforest.com for more details.

21 October
Anglo/French Farmers' Market
 Ashdown Forest Llama Park, Wych Cross, East Sussex
 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.



Heaven Farm



Stable tea rooms
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*170 years of farming
 in the heart of the
 Sussex Weald*

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Furners Green, Uckfield, Sussex, TN22 3RG

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

ASHDOWN FOREST LLAMA PARK



Open daily 10.00am-5.00pm

Llamas • Alpacas
 Museum • Farm Trail • Coffee Shop
 Picnic Area • Adventure Play Area
 Alpaca Knitwear & South American Craft Shop

WYCH CROSS, FOREST ROW
 (on A22, four miles south of East Grinstead)
 Tel: 01825 712040
 Web: www.llamapark.co.uk

Wilderness Wood

*"What a fantastic place" -
 Relax and have fun in this unique
 family-run working woodland park,
 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 workshop.**

**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



Getting together

Ashdown Forest

Linda Johnson of Ashdown Forest Llama Park – Chair of the Ashdown Forest Tourism Association – explains how the group began and continues to flourish.

Following the disastrous foot and mouth disease outbreak in 2001, the South East Tourist Board set up a Sustainable Tourism project to help regenerate the rural economy. The Ashdown Forest Tourism Association (AFTA) evolved out of the interest generated by that project and to continue the good work that it had begun. Launched in June 2004, AFTA now has 135 members and is growing all the time. Our members include B&Bs, hotels, local food producers, visitor attractions and specialist retailers.

Ashdown Forest is a very special and protected area of about 6,500 acres of heathland and woodland in the heart of the High Weald AONB. It is the largest area of heathland in the South East, with wonderful wildlife, views, peace and tranquillity – and a chance to chill out. All this so close to London!

AFTA wants to see visitors coming to the area, but managed in a sustainable way – so that the very special nature of the landscape is protected. Sustainability is a key message for the group. Currently, we are preparing a marketing strategy for the whole Ashdown Forest area. One of our main achievements has been the establishment of the annual Ashdown Forest Food Festival, which hosts a whole series of food events across the area in late October – promoting locally produced food and drink.

AFTA member benefits include a free listing on our website, regular newsletters, access to free and subsidised training opportunities, networking and social events and promotional opportunities in our publications, such as the Food Festival brochure.

For more information on AFTA plus details of the Forest's visitor attractions, accommodation and places to eat, go to www.ashdownforest.com

For more information on the Forest's landscape and wildlife, visit:

www.ashdownforest.org

Winchelsea

Richard Comotto has been involved with the Winchelsea Tourism Cluster from the word go.

The cluster was formed about five years ago with the assistance of Tourism South East. It initially brought together all the local businesses and has been supported by external organisations including Action in Rural Sussex, the District and County Councils and, most recently, Hidden Britain – an initiative to assist local communities in promoting tourism in lesser known areas of the country.

The group's aim is to attract more visitors, as well as encouraging those who do visit to spend a little more time (and money) here. There is every reason to visit Winchelsea. It is not only rather pretty, but it has a fascinating heritage as one of Edward I's new towns and a member of the Cinque Port Confederation.

Unfortunately, much of Winchelsea's heritage is hidden. Our group has therefore been trying to make our heritage more accessible. The latest developments include a website, (discreet) information and interpretation boards, and the

innovative Winchelsea E-Guide – an audio-visual tour delivered on handheld computers. This includes some amazing reconstructions of our historic buildings. We hope to launch it in July and are keen to provide assistance to other local tourism initiatives seeking to use similar new technology.

The projects we have been pursuing are all aimed at promoting sustainable tourism which, for us, means avoiding intrusive visitor facilities and attracting visitors who are interested in (and respectful of) the heritage of Winchelsea. Though we do want more visitors, the town is simply too small to cope with mass tourism, which would soon alienate the community. The cluster has instead proved invaluable in getting the community on board, working in partnership to promote the town and its attractions.

For more information, visit:
www.winchelsea.net



Seven Wonders of the Weald

Concentrating on the area around the Lamberhurst to Hurst Green section of the A21, the Seven Wonders of the Weald group was formed to encourage local people and short stay visitors to discover and explore this part of the High Weald and the attractions it holds.

The core partners of Bewl Water, Bedgebury Pinetum and Forest, Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst Vineyard, Bayham Old Abbey, Marle Place Gardens and Finchcocks are all family friendly, quality attractions within stunning locations.

There's a diverse range of leisure ideas on offer, for all ages and interests. Choose from forest or countryside walks, water-based activities, garden visits, historic houses and sampling local produce. The wealth of attractions within such a localised area makes for an ideal rural sustainable tourism destination, where visitors give something back to the area and its economy. By promoting local attractions, accommodation, produce, pubs and restaurants, it is hoped that visitors will stay local and use more sustainable methods of transport, whilst enjoying, learning about and respecting the surrounding environment.

The group has been an immense success, with press articles in over 100 newspapers and magazines, an attractive combined website www.sevenwonders.org.uk and leaflet for all the attractions. Ideas have been developed and shared between what were previously competing businesses, proving the benefits of local tourism partnerships.

Future plans include exhibiting at local and national tourism events, discount admission schemes and taking part in community events such as the Farmers' Market at Lamberhurst Vineyard.

**Josephine Melville-Smith,
Forestry Commission**

For more information on the Seven Wonders, visit: www.sevenwonders.org.uk or email info@sevenwonders.org.uk

Photos from top: Ashdown Forest; Bewl Water and Finchcocks (Seven Wonders of the Weald); Winchelsea church.



Forestry Commission



Forestry Commission

If you go down to the woods today...

...you're sure of a big surprise if you haven't ventured into Bedgebury Forest lately.

With its undulating High Weald terrain and beautiful woodland setting, Bedgebury is ideally suited to providing exciting yet safe, adventurous fun. Now there's a new visitor centre with bike hire and refreshments, walking and riding trails, and miles of cycle tracks round the two thousand acre forest. From gentle family cycle rides to top-speed mountain biking on challenging routes, the choice is yours.

Bedgebury is also home to the National Pinetum and its world famous collection of conifers. A specially designed play area reflects some of the challenges faced by the intrepid plant-hunters who brought back these exotic trees and shrubs from the farthest corners of the world. So now you can re-live their adventures!

Samantha Nicholas from Lamberhurst took her family along to test drive Bedgebury's new facilities:

"We particularly wanted to tackle the 10km surfaced family cycle track, which turned out to be a real revelation. First of all, it allowed our seven year old to develop her riding skills – without the fear of her being crushed by traffic. In addition, as we made our way through the wood-

land canopy, our elder child could sail ahead and wait for us at appropriate stops. It was very evident that this gave her a real sense of freedom which, for a nine-year-old in today's society, is a limited commodity.

The well-placed adventure play features on the inner walk even inspired a sense of community spirit! The huge rope swing – our favourite – attracted fathers, grandparents, mothers and children to all join together to see how high they could go. Be warned – it did eventually leave many with a feeling of motion sickness, but it was a great talking point for all who dared to join the team!

There's also a friendly shipwreck play area for younger and older children alike. The boat shaped climbing frames and sand pits were fun for all and the giant tubular bells allowed the girls to practice their knowledge of music. Once we had exhausted this route, we stopped for drinks overlooking the lake – and indulged in a moment of peace before reloading the car.

Most rewarding was that we had managed to achieve a few of hours of 'family quality time' without even realising it."



What you can do at Bedgebury

Cycling and mountain biking

- 10km of newly surfaced family cycle track
- Over 12km of single-track mountain biking
- Professionally designed 'Freeride' area with challenging jumps and stunts
- Cycle hire, purchase and repair – including bikes for the disabled
- Showers for both riders and their bikes

Walking

New all-ability scenic walking routes promoting healthy living – including challenging health walks, calorie mapped trails and orienteering routes.

Running

Newly surfaced tracks and way markers have now opened up previously uncharted areas of the forest for runners.

Riding

Horse riders with Toll Rides (Off Road) Trust (TROT) permits will find new dedicated way-marked trails linking with existing bridlepaths, creating a network of horse-friendly routes around the forest. For more information please call TROT on 01622 735599.

Wheelchairs

For wheelchair users, new surfaces and gentle gradients allow access to new parts of the Pinetum and Forest. Some manual wheelchair users may need assistance.

Create your own adventure in a world of trees at Bedgebury for just £6 per car per day. Bedgebury's entrance is located on the B2079, half a mile from the A21, 10 miles south east of Tunbridge Wells.

www.forestry.gov.uk/bedgebury
01580 879820

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



01580 211206

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Tel: 01580 200888 (quoting Ref HWA2007) Fax: 01580 200102
Email: info@pashleymanorgardens.com
Website: www.pashleymanorgardens.com

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.uk

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.khwp.org.uk

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/Neil Vigar 01293 542088

Email jackie.lewis@westsussex.gov.uk

or neil.vigar@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

Surrey CC Contact Centre: 08456 009009

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
Weald Meadows Officer
meadows@highweald.org



Land management AGONY

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



Dear Daisy,

I've just bought a new field to put my horses out on, but my neighbour tells me it's a species rich wildflower meadow. Is it OK to graze horses on wildflower meadows?

First of all, congratulations on owning a historic part of the High Weald landscape and taking the time to seek advice on best practice management! Providing you are careful, horse grazing can be a good way to conserve this nationally important habitat. Your horses' selective grazing habits can create a diverse structure that is good for wildlife – whilst providing them with the varied diet that they need.

How can you check that you do have a species rich or 'unimproved' meadow?



There are three basic types of meadow. 1. 'Unimproved': very species rich with some rare and scarce species. 2. 'Semi-improved': may have been ploughed or fertilised, but still has a good number of wildflowers or grasses – though tending to have a dominance of a couple of species. 3. 'Improved': has been fertilised or re-seeded; only a few different grasses and wildflower species present and therefore of little conservation value. Find out about the site's history and consider getting some expert advice from FWAG or the Weald Meadows Initiative (see Land Management Contacts).

There are some important guidelines you need to follow when grazing your species rich meadow. First of all, don't over- or under-graze, so that wildflowers are still able to set seed. Avoid any kind of fertiliser and do not plough and reseed or the wildflowers will disappear. Ideal management would include cross grazing with sheep or cattle and/or topping any un-grazed areas in September. Avoid treading-up or creation of bare ground caused by supplementary feeding or turning out when the ground is very wet: this will destroy the turf and encourage weeds such as thistles to spread. Where weed control is necessary, spot spray or use mechanical methods. Finally, pick up droppings as often as possible.

Dear Daisy,

A farmer friend tells me that Ragwort is a poisonous, invasive pest that must be eradicated at all cost. Yet I have noticed that some brightly coloured caterpillars seem to like eating it – so presumably they would suffer if it disappeared. Please help to settle this argument!

The Ragwort issue often evokes strong reactions. The plant contains a poison, which can be lethal to domestic livestock. The poison remains active when the plant is dry and withered and this is when it is most likely to be eaten by animals. It also spreads quickly by wind-borne seed. So you can understand why it is a worry for livestock owners!

However, Ragwort is a native plant and is actually utilised by at least seventy species of insect. Your brightly coloured caterpillars are probably those of the equally colourful Cinnabar moth. These caterpillars are immune to the Ragwort's poison and in fact store it in their bodies to make themselves unpalatable to predators!

Common Ragwort is only one of a number of Ragwort species, some of which are rare. Perhaps the best policy is to remove it where it poses a genuine risk to grazing animals, but otherwise leave it to fulfil its role in the environment.

(With thanks to Steve Prosser, Hastings Country Park.)



Dear Hazel,

I own a conifer plantation. I have heard that the area is an ancient woodland site, but how can it be ancient when the conifers are only forty years old? Am I allowed to fell the conifers? They create such a dense shade: the small patches of bluebells and wood anemones that flower along some of the rides each spring seem to be shrinking year by year. Will the woodland ever be full of bluebells again?

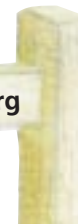
Ancient woodland sites are those that have been continuously wooded since 1600. Many of the ancient woodland sites in the High Weald were replanted with conifers following the Second World War. These are called Plantations On Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS).

You can fell the conifers. However, before felling living trees you should seek advice from the Forestry Commission. For felling a volume greater than 5 cubic metres per calendar quarter, a felling licence is required. The Forestry Commission also administers the grants for restocking felled areas. The grant for replanting a PAWS with native broadleaved trees is £1,760 per hectare.

Many woodland wildflowers rely on the light conditions in springtime before the leaves are on the trees. The evergreen, year-long conifer canopy reduces light levels, with devastating consequences for the flowers. The build up of acidic conifer needles compounds the effect.

It is possible to restore conifer plantations to broadleaved woodland and bring back the bluebells. Carefully recording any remnant woodland features is a start. Then by gradually removing the conifers through selective felling, sensitive plants can adjust to increased light levels without suffering from shock or allowing an invasion of brambles or bracken. For specialist restoration advice contact Mike Chapman, the High Weald Unit's PAWS Officer (see Land Management Contacts).

www.highweald.org

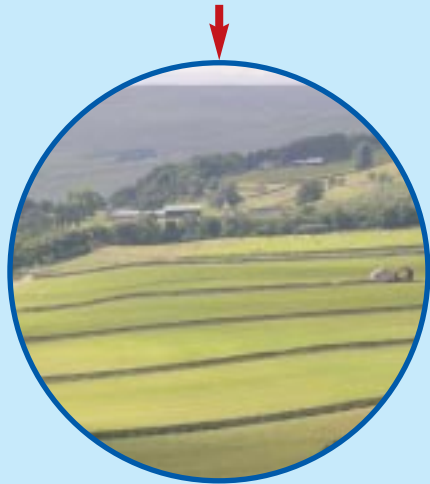


The Extraterrestrial's Guide to the High Weald

1 When you are coming in to land, the ground should look like this.



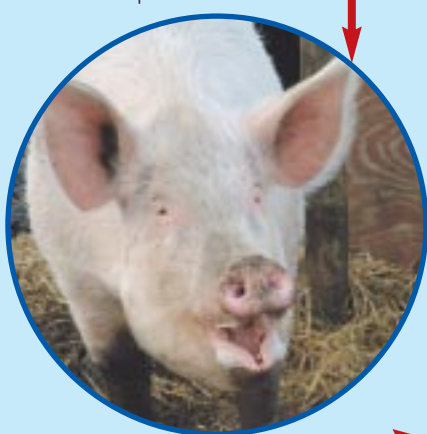
If you see **straight lines** like this instead, you are definitely not in the High Weald. In fact, you may be 300 Earth miles too far north! Apply reverse thrusters **immediately!**



2 The High Weald has been designated an **EAONB** (Earth Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). OK, it's not as beautiful as, say, the Blue Desert of Eeek or the Purple Woods of Urrgg but try not to be too judgemental. It's not bad for Earth.



3 Many hundreds of Earth years ago, a race of **supreme beings** took over and changed the High Weald landscape for ever.



4 You will easily recognise **Earthlings**. They mostly still move around on two primitive legs. They haven't yet become refined, **inactive, boneless blobs** of super-intelligent, telepathic **jelly**. But they're getting there. If only they wouldn't insist on using their legs so much.



They created features like this sunken lane. Nice isn't it? Please manoeuvre and park your landing craft considerably, so as not to damage the verges.



5 Remember! **You may not be the first** extraterrestrial visitors!

6 For lots more helpful **extraterrestrial visitor information** – attractions, events, accommodation and local producers – connect to **www.highweald.org** It's primitive, but considering it was done by Earthlings – it's quite a good effort.

7 Finally, don't leave behind any cosmic litter and

ENJOY YOUR VISIT!



- specialising in the finest meats, all produced here on our Soil Association certified farm. Pedigree Sussex beef, lamb, pork, chicken, bacon, sausages
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 - 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

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1 mile north of Hartfield on B2026
Tel 01892 770595

Maynards Fruit Farm



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

A visit to the farm combines well with other local attractions such as Bewl Water, Bedgebury Pinetum or Pashley Manor Gardens, and there is delicious fruit to eat at the end of the day.

Windmill Hill, Ticehurst, nr Wadhurst,
Sussex TN5 7HQ
01580 200394

Five historical characters in search of enjoyment

We caught up with some past residents of the High Weald. How would they enjoy themselves in the AONB today?

Jane, a Tudor Iron Master's Wife

Iron. That's how my husband made his money. Making iron is just like making a cake – you need the right ingredients. And they were all to be found right here in the gorgeous High Weald!

I used to spend all my time running the household and entertaining the other Iron Masters and their wives. Today, I'd love to hold High Weald Local Produce banquets. I think cooking for banquets often freaks people out because they want to do something elaborate. My advice is: keep it simple. You know, it really isn't any harder having 350 people for a banquet than it is having 35!



Jane

Edmond, an Anglo Saxon Pig Drover

The High Weald owes a lot to us drovers and our pigs. Your road system, your scattered farms and your den place names. All down to us.

But our primitive pigs were slow. No acceleration. I'd like to have a go at droving some of your more modern breeds. The Gloucester Old Spots: 0-2mph in 10 seconds! What a beast! But 2mph is really at the limit of what pigs can do. Once you go past 2mph you start to lose your steering. Getting a pig to behave itself in conditions like that is tough. If pushed, the Gloucester can actually do 2.52mph – and that's just mad! OK, you might point out that the Saddleback can top 2.4mph, but at that speed it's pretty much out of control. And anyway it really isn't in the same league. The Gloucester is way, way faster than anything else the droves have seen.



Tarneg

Edith, a medieval farmer

The land, with its little fields, looks the same as it did in my day. But life was much harder then. It was all about survival – making enough to pay our rent to the Lord of the Manor, feed the family and stay out of trouble. While tending our livestock and crops and cooking and cleaning for my husband Edward and father-in-law Joseph, I tried to keep the peace between my feuding sons William and Edward Junior. I also worked in his Lordship's dairy and, in the evenings, behind the bar at the local Hostelry!

Today – it would be nice to escape to one of the High Weald's beautiful gardens. Just for an afternoon!



Edith

Hugh, a medieval Commoner of Ashdown Forest

As a Commoner, I was allowed to do certain things on the Forest – such as grazing my animals. Big deal! Everything we Commoners did helped to keep the Forest a good hunting ground for His Majesty. Good for hunting maybe, but not so good for scratching a living. Mind you, at least I could earn the odd coin flushing the deer out – so the rich, privileged toffs got their sport.

As leader of 'Ashdown Popular Front', nothing gives me greater enjoyment today than seeing how my 'Freedom for Ashdown' campaign has finally achieved its goal. Power to the people!



Hugh



Edmond

Tarneg, a Mesolithic hunter

My tribe were hunter-gatherers – but I always found the hunting a lot more exciting than the gathering. Yee hah! When I wasn't hunting the mighty Aurochs, I used to hang out here under these rocks with my mates and talk about... hunting the mighty Aurochs. So, where have all the Aurochs gone? Surely you haven't hunted them to extinction! Oh, you have! So what do you do for excitement around here now there are no Aurochs?

Hey – how did that guy get up there? Ah – rock climbing! Now that looks more like it!

If you have broadband, you can meet these people on the High Weald AONB website Learning Zone at www.highweald.org



Produced by the High Weald AONB Unit with funding from members of the High Weald Joint Advisory Committee: Natural England; West Sussex County Council; East Sussex County Council; Kent County Council; Surrey County Council; Horsham District Council; Tandridge District Council; Mid Sussex District Council; Wealden District Council; Sevenoaks District Council; Tunbridge Wells Borough Council; Rother District Council; Ashford Borough Council; Crawley Borough Council; Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council; Hastings Borough Council and with financial support from the INTERREG III B programme Lifescape Your Landscape.

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