

High Weald Anvil ²⁰⁰⁸

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



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Welcome to the latest edition of the Anvil – the annual newspaper for both the residents of, and visitors to, the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Complaining about the activities and attitudes of young people is something that has gone on since time immemorial but in recent years it has become a matter of more general concern and has aroused, in some quarters, a particular antipathy towards the children and youth of today.

Looking back over the last year's newspaper articles, radio programmes and television documentaries one could be forgiven for thinking that the children of today are a lost cause. But all too often the young suffer from a bad press.

This issue of the Anvil puts forward a different view. It features the younger generation as the main theme, not to criticise but to draw attention to the often positive and occasionally innovative role that young people are playing within the High Weald.

Look at page 5. Here is an account of that exciting and successful High Weald Heroes project. It describes what school children in the area are doing to learn about, explore, enjoy and take care of our nationally important landscape.

If you are a budding explorer, wanting to step into David Attenborough's shoes, then the article on page 10 is for you. It tells you how to track down and identify the small beasts that inhabit the parks of Tunbridge Wells and also how to pursue your environmental interests further with help from the Woodland Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

Turn to page 12 and spend some time with shepherd Louise Amos, and her dogs, in a close-herding project on Ashdown Forest. This is a wonderful example of how a traditional method of working can be used to tackle land management issues in the twenty-first century.

That is not all. Pages 1-4 give a detailed account of how local residents, businesses and communities across the High Weald are working towards 'sustainable living' and, in doing so, are benefiting us all.

Sylvia Tidy

Councillor Sylvia Tidy,
Chairman: High Weald Joint Advisory Committee

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.

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Living sustainably

Jennifer Stuart-Smith looks at the issues...

Sustainable living. It's hardly a term that sells itself. For many people the concept sounds highly unappealing, or they've heard the term so often, from politicians and the like, they're fed up to the back teeth with it. But, what a shame, when it's such a brilliant concept.

Brilliant, logical, economical, enjoyable even, and a whole lot of adjectives besides; the main issue is getting this message across. And making it clear how sustainable living is relevant to each and every one of us. Literally, 'sustainable living' means thinking about our own, and others' current and long-term needs, improving our quality of life whilst leaving the environment as we would hope to find it. It's all very positive stuff.

However, constant messages of doom and gloom in the media can easily leave us feeling powerless and apathetic. With such a mountain to climb, where on earth do we start? But take heart, and inspiration, from those around you. People in the High Weald of Kent, Sussex and Surrey are stepping up to the mark – and

making a difference.

And that's what it's all about. As David Brower, founder of Friends of the Earth said, the key is to "think global, act local". If we can keep our own house in order, i.e. the High Weald, then it will go some way towards maintaining the English landscape we know and love, as well as contributing to the overall wellbeing of the planet.

Our location, in a beautiful rural environment, puts us in a prime position for positive change. Peter Madden, Chief Executive of Forum for the Future, explains why: "Villages are some of the strongest communities we have. They are already responding creatively to environmental and social challenges, and could provide a strong example to the rest of the country of how to live sustainably."

Spreading the message is also key. It's not about preaching or chastising. Rather it's a case of inspiring and leading by example. Work carried out by Green Alliance over the past three years, alongside Defra, has reinforced the theory that individual choices determine environmen-

tal impact, public attitudes – and government policy. How we choose to live influences not only those around us, but also 'the powers that be'.

So, what can we do, and where do we look for inspiration? The National Trust's 'Small Steps, Big Change' campaign is a good place to start. Here they outline the little changes you can make to your everyday routine which, collectively, will make a huge difference. These include: buying local, seasonal food; making your home more energy efficient; using fuels from renewable sources and cutting down on car use.

Another great organization, for advice and tips on living a 'greener' more sustainable lifestyle is the Low Impact Living Initiative. It's reassuring to hear that you don't have to be super-human to be a small-time eco-warrior: "First of all, take a deep breath – there are so many things you could do, but you can't do them all at once. Doing things slowly, one at a time, until you get used to them will probably increase your chance of success, and help you stay sane."



PROFILE • Edward and Fiona Hume, Furnace Farm –

Furnace Farm is a typical traditional farmstead nestled in the heart of the High Weald. It is also noted historically as the only furnace in Cranbrook parish. What the Humes are doing there, is far less typical. At least these days it is.

Although they are already known for their high quality free range geese, they have recently started producing home-cured ham and bacon. But they can't do this alone. At last, six Large Black sows are now

due on the farm and, before long, their piglets.

The Humes had reared 'Iron Age' pigs – a Tamworth/wild boar hybrid created in the 1970s for a BBC documentary on Iron Age living – and are now turning to Large Blacks. The Iron Age pigs ended up as home-cured ham, as their meat gives a certain 'gamey' flavour, and just the right amount of fat. The Large Black has always been a favourite for making bacon. Although it lost popularity

after the war, when European pigs gained favour, this rare breed is starting to make a comeback with smallholders.

So what makes these pigs, and the pork they become, so different? "Our pigs have a lovely lifestyle," says Fiona. "They're able to root around naturally, and they get a little supplementary food as well. After the apple harvest we go and gather the dropped apples, from nearby orchards, and bring them back for the pigs."

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in the High Weald



EATING LOCAL

Let's start with the tastiest thing on the List; eating local. No other subject so neatly sums up that living sustainably is not about suffering for the cause. Nothing could be further from the truth when it comes to indulging in local delicacies. And, here in the High Weald, we are spoilt for choice.

A trip to any local farmers' market will give you an idea of the fabulous food on offer - and also the entrepreneurial talents of local growers and producers. The fruit and vegetables on sale are usually fresher than supermarket produce - making it tastier and more nutritious - and every penny you spend goes directly to the farmer and the local economy. It's also clocked-up far fewer food miles.

Wherever you live in the High Weald, there is a farmers' market within a few miles (see pages 8 and 9). Having found your preferred market, it's just a case of

deciding what fantastic produce you're going to take home. At Tunbridge Wells farmers' market you can buy: Asparagus, honey, cheese, lamb, wooden garden products, and various fruit and veg. Other markets may have an entirely different selection of produce.

If you find it difficult to plan around a monthly or weekly farmers' market, then there's always your local farm shop. As local authorities encourage farmers to set up their own shops so we get a greater choice of excellent outlets. Amongst the better-known farm shops in the area are: Hartley Dyke Farm Shop, Cranbrook, Hen on the Gate Farm Shop in Mayfield, and Carpenter's Barn Farm Shop at Sedlescombe, but there are many more to be spotted when you're out and about.

In response to consumer demand, more and more farmers are diversifying into direct sales, either at farmers' mar-

kets or farm shops. They're also branching out into specialist 'deli' or 'artisan food' production, which is great news for the foodies amongst us. Now, does this sound like puritan living?

Even the most decadent gourmand can find something to their taste in the High Weald. Wine? Well, there's Biddenden Vineyards or Chapel Down. Smoked salmon? The Weald Smokery do several kinds, several of which have won gold Great Taste Awards. How about some Channel Island cream to go on your apple crumble? Hinxden Farm Dairy can help you there. And the apples for the crumble...Where do we start?

Back in the nineties, it was a small minority hailing the social, economic and health benefits of local food. Now it is an ever-increasing body, of both consumers and producers and, luckily for us, we're in the midst of the action.

Caring for the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty A charter for residents and visitors

The following are actions that all residents, visitors and businesses can take to help care for the area.

- 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 - slow down for people, horses and wildlife
- 7 Avoid using the car and use renewable energy in your home where possible
- 8 Take pride in the High Weald - promote its special features and places to family, friends and visitors
- 9 Have a say and influence the future of the landscape
- 10 Get involved - support local conservation organisations

For further information on how following these actions can benefit the High Weald visit www.highweald.org

News in brief

A is for apple juice

In March 2003, children from Colliers Green Primary School planted fifteen apple trees, with help from the Kent High Weald Project. Since then, the trees have thrived and now, every autumn, the branches are heavy with apples. So teaching assistant Chris Moorhouse came up with the idea of turning the apples into the school's own bottled apple juice.

"Making apple juice was a special project we did with ten of our older pupils," said Chris. "The orchard contains several varieties of apples, including Blenheim Orange, Fiesta, Falstaff and Greensleeves. We also collected apples from the school hedgerow, and several of our pupils brought apples in from their own gardens or orchards."

"We live in Kent, in the Garden of England, and we want the children to value the area, and what it produces. It also makes the children think about where their food comes from, and if it is really necessary to fly it in from the other side of the world."

The project has been helpful in teaching more everyday subjects too: "We used maths to calculate how many apples we would need to fill 16 bushels and what we need to charge for the juice in order to make a profit. The children learnt some science when they added Vitamin C to the juice to maintain its clarity, and then there was the design of the labels, and the marketing of the product."

free range pigs for home-cured ham and bacon

Research has long shown that it is not only a pig's diet which affects the quality of the meat, but also its stress levels. "Our pigs have luxuriously large compounds to nose around in, lovely big troughs, and on warmer days the kids spray them with water, and the pigs make their own muddy wallow," adds Fiona. "The Iron age pigs absolutely love Rosebay Willow Herb, so we go and gather that too."

This kind of low intensity farming is a

great example of sustainability. It's all about making the most of the land, but making sure that the land is in good, or better condition in following years: "We only stock on a seasonal basis, so the pigs are not on the land all year round," Explains Fiona. "The land can easily become 'pig sick' with damage to flora and fauna, as pigs can have quite an impact on sensitive land in certain seasons, with all their rooting and foraging."

"Our business is constrained by the amount of land we have. If we overstock, we damage the land, and we're out of business." Despite a desire to expand the business - they're only replacing the three iron age sows with six Blacks - the Humes have no intention of becoming a large, industrialized farm. "We're what you might call an artisan producer," says Fiona, with justified pride.

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Visit www.highweald.org for further information on living sustainably in the High Weald

LOCAL MATERIALS

Food is not the only thing we have in abundance. Those with a knowledge of the Saxon language may guess that timber is an important part of the High Weald landscape – with ‘Weald’ meaning wilderness or forest. Even today, the area has three times the national average for ancient woodland, in fact is the highest density of ancient woodland in the country. However, it’s not a limitless supply... unless it is managed properly.

And there you have it; a truly renewable and sustainable building material and fuel. Not only that, but by using wood from sustainable or coppiced woodland, you are also helping to create the perfect wildlife haven. High Weald woodlands were managed for centuries by skilled workers, using a rotational coppice system which ensured a constant supply of wood.



Traditional coppicing is an important woodland management technique, creating a unique habitat and biodiversity. Many British flowering plants, mammals and insects thrive under this rotational system – and some rare species are now only found in working coppice. Why import wood from half-way around the world, when we’re got our own rich supply of wood on our doorstep?

One use for local wood, and oak in particular – is timber-frame building. It’s hardly a new idea – just look at the magnificent vernacular buildings dotted around the southeast – but it’s still a great way to build a house. Those still standing strong after 500 years are evidence enough. They certainly inspire more confidence than some cheaply-built modern houses.



English oak is still very expensive, but makes a truly authentic material for repairing traditional Wealden houses.

If a whole house of Kentish wood is out for your budget, then there are plenty of other, smaller jobs which utilize local wood. One company which does just this is Paul Reed Conservation and sister company Chalk Down

Living sustainably...



PROFILE • Jason Monk, plumber and heating engineer, Hastings

According to Jason Monk, of Lond Monk Plumbers and Heating Engineers, more and more people are asking if they can use wood to heat their homes and their hot water. “People are putting in wood stoves, and don’t just want it to look pretty and put out heat, they want ‘free’ hot water as well.” Now, thanks to advances in technology, this is entirely possible.

“We’re definitely starting to see a trend,” says Jason. “Mostly I think it’s people’s awareness of environmental issues, but it’s also an issue of cost.” Although a wood-stove heating system may cost a few hundred pounds extra to install, homeowners will make a saving over time.

It’s also an obvious choice of fuel. “With timber so readily available locally it makes sense to use it to heat your hot water,” says Jason.

And it’s not just conventional heating systems you can run off your wood-burning stove: “I recently fitted a house in Cranbrook with underfloor heating. It may seem like a large initial outlay, but long-term it’s by far the most economic way of heating a house.”

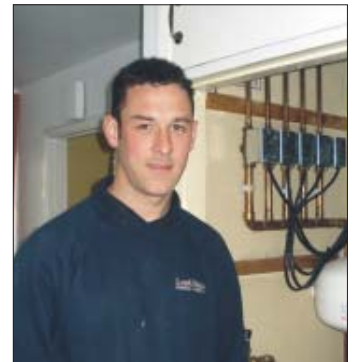
Although Jason’s own house does not lend itself to a wood-fuel system, he is certainly converted to the idea: “I would definitely recommend it to family and friends.” Not only does underfloor heating feel luxurious, but the smell of woodsmoke and the aesthetic appeal of a woodstove is obvious. “In Winter, with the woodstove alight, and doing all your heating, it’s absolutely great,” says Jason.

Lime. They use English oak, usually sourced from the Ashburnham Estate near Battle, for repairs and larger jobs on timber frame buildings.

They also offer specialist conservation work using almost entirely local materials. These include lime mortar, chestnut lathes cut from coppiced trees, Wealden Sandstone, bricks made from local clay and even horse and cow hair.

Or, you can get your materials direct. Suppliers of local building materials include Lambs Philpots Quarry, near East Grinstead which sells Sussex Sandstone and Chartwell Bricks, at Bore Place, near Edenbridge, who make handmade bricks using local clay.

Another, more everyday use for local wood, is as fuel – either for domestic use, or in new-generation woodchip boilers. According to local plumber, and aspiring wood-fuel specialist, Jason Monk (see panel and below), more and more people are seeing the appeal of local firewood – and a roaring wood-burning stove.



Not only is there a plentiful supply of local hornbeam, hazel and sweet chestnut, as well as left-over apple wood in the High Weald but, unlike fossil fuels such as oil and gas, this is a truly renewable energy supply. It also travels a much shorter distance to your home.

Romantic woodstoves are one thing, but another concept which is taking hold is the use of woodchip or biomass heating. This is a great way of heating buildings or water on a larger scale. And it is also totally sustainable. One example of a successful woodchip scheme is at the Hoathly Hill Community.

The Community was established in 1972 and there are 27 units, ranging from single person flats to 4-bedroom detached family houses lived in by around 65 people. There are also three larger community buildings used by adults and children for artistic, training and educational purposes. All the buildings are now heated by a wood chip boiler.

Wood chip is delivered once a week by a tractor and trailer and travels between 5 and 7 miles. Apart from the fuel used by the tractor, and the carbon dioxide produced when constructing the system, this heating method is virtually ‘carbon neutral’. Burning anything releases carbon dioxide, but this is cancelled out by the new tree growth in the surrounding woodland.

So, whilst living sustainably, you can live in a beautiful house, made or repaired with local materials, enjoy the heat from local wood as well as saving a penny or two on heating bills. Then, you can open the door, and go for a walk in one of the many local pieces of coppiced woodland which, if the reports are true, will be bustling with wildlife. How brilliant is that?

TRANSPORT

Buying or sourcing products locally, whether it's food, or other local products, immediately addresses some transport issues. And this, specifically car use, is probably the biggest hurdle facing country-dwellers who want to live a more 'sustainable' lifestyle. So, by popping to your local shop, and buying local products, you've already made a difference. If you walk, go on your bike, or use public transport, you'll have had an even greater effect.

Besides shopping trips, probably two of the most common reasons for travel are going to work, and going to school. We may not have a choice as to whether we go or not, but we do have a choice of how we get there, and what we drive.

Firstly, if you want to find out what are the most economical and environmentally friendly cars to drive, visit: www.dft.gov.uk/ActOnCO2 No one likes being dictated to, and it's a contentious issue, but the information is there if you want it.

Next, could you walk or cycle? Not only will you be creating 'zero emissions', at least not ones to discuss here, you'll feel great for it too. Modern, sedentary lifestyles do nothing for our mental or physical health... and here's a cheap and easy solution. Visit www.sustrans.org.uk, to find the best cycle routes in your area or, get an ordinary OS map to find out about local footpaths.

Many schools in the area have introduced 'walking buses'. A walking bus is the name given to a line of children walking to or from school together, along an approved route. Children are supervised and escorted by at



least two trained, police-checked volunteer adults acting as 'driver' and 'conductor'. Pre-registered children join the 'bus' at set places along the way.

Schemes already in place include: Pembury County Primary School and Hawkhurst Primary School in Kent, Holy Cross School and Plumpton Primary, in East Sussex, and St Mary's Primary, Horsham and Balcombe School in West Sussex. These are only a few of the hundreds of walking bus schemes that have sprung up across the region in the past few years.

For adults, it's work rather than school which requires their attendance. Or does it? With the advent of the internet, then broadband and the accompanying technologies, people have begun to realize that they can do their job from home. Either that, or they can arrange to work a certain number of days at

PROFILE • Philip Ayers and the Cuckmere Community Bus

The Cuckmere Community Bus is a real success story and an example of a truly sustainable and adaptive service. The service does not operate in the High Weald but is a model for services that could be developed in future. It was set up by Action in Rural Sussex, East Sussex County Council and the Southdown Bus Company after pressure from the WI following the withdrawal of many conventional bus services in 1971. It started running in October 1976.

In recent months, with the support of Philip Ayers, the Accessibility and Community Transport Officer at Action in Rural Sussex the team has converted one of the buses to run on pure plant oil. By working with a group of 5 local farmers, who will supply the raw materials, they soon hope to have the same bus running on rape seed oil.

"We'll pay the farmers a commercial price for their product, so they could easily choose to sell it elsewhere, but they would refer it to be used locally," says Philip. One of the farmers has offered to set up an oil press on his farm, so that they can carry out the entire process within the Cuckmere Valley. So, rather than using a fossil fuel, that has been shipped half-way around the globe, the bus will soon be running on Sussex biofuel.

"The mush which is left, after the seeds are crushed, is then used in animal feed, so nothing is wasted," says Philip. Unfortunately there are down sides. "At the moment, biofuels are costing us more than diesel, because of taxes. We need the government to reduce tax on vegetable oil."

The bus service is a truly vibrant and sustainable community operation thanks to the volunteers who run it, the local farmers who supply the oil, the local garage – Berwick Service Station, near Polegate, who converted one of its pumps to vegetable oil – and thanks to the forward-thinking of Philip Ayers.



home each week.

According to the UK Statistics agency, the region with the highest levels of home working is the South-East. A key reason may be the high costs of property – as working from home or running a 'micro-business' avoids the need to own or rent a separate business premises. A further reason may be that it is in the South-East that broadband technologies were first put in place. The stress of commuting is also an incentive to work from home... But, perhaps most importantly, it makes a huge difference to your carbon footprint.

If you do need to travel, at least think



about the alternatives to driving. Could you get a lift and share petrol costs? It's a great way to get to know your neighbours. If you commute up to London, what about cycling to the train station? Not only will it set you up for the day ahead, save you the cost of going to the gym and parking your car, it'll de-stress you at the end of the day too.

Everyone's circumstances are different, and what suits a fit 20-something, may not suit an elderly person with shopping to carry, or a mother with children. The important thing to remember, whoever you are, is that there are easy and convenient ways to cut your car use. It just takes a little thought and planning.

SUMMING UP

And there you have it; three key ways to sustainable living. Eat local, buy local, and cut down on your car travel. All of a sudden it seems like far less of a mountain to climb. Or, if you look at it another way, there may still be a small mountain to climb, but if we do it together, and enjoy the journey, then where's the hardship? Think of yourself as a mountaineer or, if that's too much of a leap of the imagination, a gentle Rambler.

"Being surrounded by such a sumptuous diversity of history and beauty is a delight and a privilege, of course, but it is also a great danger. When you have such an abundance of great things, it is easy to think of it as essentially inexhaustible and to persuade yourself that it can be nibbled away at without serious loss." Bill Bryson, President of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

...in the High Weald

Visit www.highweald.org for further information on living sustainably in the High Weald



The High Weald Landscape Trust

Small Grant Scheme 2008

The High Weald Landscape Trust (HWLT) small grants scheme has been created to support conservation and land management projects in the High Weald, and is open to organisations, businesses, community groups and individuals who wish to develop practical projects that conserve and improve the landscape of the High Weald. Grants can contribute towards the cost of practical work, capital investment, such as fencing, tools or machinery, or professional support.

You don't have to live or work in the High Weald to apply but you must demonstrate that your project will have a positive impact upon the High Weald and surrounding area and satisfy the core criteria of the grant.

The HWLT continues to support the High Weald Meadows Initiative, High Weald Heroes Schools Award along with fund raising and lobbying activities.

For more information on the HWLT Small Grant Scheme, or to find out how you can support the Trust, please go to

www.highwealdlandscapestrust.org
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HIGH WEALD



Like all protected landscapes the High Weald needs its heroes but what does it take to be one? First of all you need to want to make a difference, and then you have to take action. To be a true High Weald Hero you need to find out about the area, explore it, take care of it, enjoy it and take pride in it. Luckily for the High Weald there are schools all across the area that are prepared to do just that and have demonstrated their commitment to their local landscape by joining the High Weald Hero partnership.

Pig story captures young imaginations

Find out about

Dallington Church of England Primary School



Throughout the time Miss Swallow has been teaching us about the High Weald I have learnt a lot and enjoyed the different activities we have done.

What interested me most was that all the sunken roads and lanes we usually pass on our way to school, and around the High Weald, were created by pigs being taken into the forest to be fattened on acorns.

Rhona Moody

The High Weald with its green, rolling hills, and nestling villages, is not only a stunningly beautiful place, it is a fascinating one as well. Since Miss Swallow came to talk to us and show us presentations about it, we have all become more interested in our surroundings. I have found out that most of our sunken paths were created hundreds of years ago by farmers taking their pigs to the forest to be fattened. Also all of the children in Key Stage 2 recently went on a 'Welly Walk' around the High Weald. Some of the views were mesmerising. It is a place we are all proud to live in. However, if we do not look after it, its beauty will be diminished and we don't want that. . .

James Coyle

Heroes and proud of it

Be proud of



Julia Armstrong, Headteacher, Peshurst Church of England Primary School

I am delighted to have been introduced to the High Weald Heroes Partnership.

In 2007, we received our shield and have used it to highlight children who are seen behaving as heroes. This has included children

who have been responsible for recycling, picking up litter and being aware of the nature in their environment. I have found the DVDs provided a wonderful resource and the visits by High Weald Education Officers have enlightened our knowledge of the area we live in.



Lamberhurst CEP School

Paul Cox, Assistant Headteacher, Dallington Church of England Primary School

At Dallington we are so lucky to be situated in an area of not only stunning beauty but an area rich in history. Through our links with the High Weald Hero partnership, the children have been fortunate enough to explore, investigate and better understand how and why the past has shaped their surroundings. They became so interested in the locality that we had to introduce a wide range of activities to ensure that we covered and answered all their questions. We have organised walks, held history weeks and parents' evenings, taken part in competitions, started a Conservation Club... Whether they know it or not, the children of today are walking on and shaping the history of their surroundings. Through our link with the High Weald Partnership we have been able to give them a detailed picture of that history.

Welly Walk wonders

Explore



Burwash Church of England Primary School

On 19 October 2007, Burwash School went on a massive Welly Walk all over the High Weald. Luckily for us it was a beautiful and extremely hot day, the best day we could have chosen for a fascinating walk around our local area. It was great from the start, and could only get better.

We came out of school and walked for roughly half an hour until we arrived at a lovely coppice. The trees arched over us like giants bending down to grab us and take us away. But not in a evil and threatening way but in a caring loving way. The sun was creeping through the trees – wanting attention. The lady talked to us about the High Weald and how it had evolved and changed. After that we walked for a couple of miles and then stopped for lunch. Everyone ate, played and then had to leave. It was a shame. People thought that the place was wonderful. The emerald green grass came up to our knees. The sun in the clear blue sky seemed to be smiling down on us.

On the way back we saw a herd of deer racing through a field like bolts of lightning. Then the baby deer came running past and they were out of breath. It was really sweet. Eventually we came back into Burwash and to the school. Everyone was shattered. Some were nearly asleep. All in all, it was a great day in the local countryside.

Joshua Ingram-Chorley

Solar panels light up Hever

Take care of



Hever Church of England Primary School

At Hever we think it is really important to look after the environment particularly as we are in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). We do this in lots of different ways such as picking up litter, saving water, and recording wildlife. By installing solar panels we are now trying to look after the air.

Solar panels do not produce carbon dioxide and so we are being more eco-friendly. Unlike coal or oil it is a renewable source of energy and by not polluting the atmosphere we are helping reduce possible global warming.

We hope that our panels will reduce our electricity consumption by approximately one sixteenth but we will keep looking for other sustainable ways to conserve our natural world.

It's good fun to see how much energy our panels are producing and how much carbon dioxide they are saving. We also hope we can share our experiences with other schools so that we can all work together.

This project would not have been possible without funding from High Weald Sustainable Development Fund, Kent County Council and the Low Carbons Building Grant.

Melanie Culpin (Joint Head Eco Committee) and Anna St Pierre (Eco Committee member)

High Weald makes a happy classroom

Enjoy



Turners Hill Church of England Primary School

I love walking round the High Weald because I sort of feel free, and the view is indescribable.

Henry Grub

Turners Hill does lots of outside things but the best thing is the gardening because it's so good planting the seeds and watching them grow.

Chloe Fry

I enjoy going out to Butchers Wood with the school and making camp. We always have so much fun because we stay in the camps we make and it feels as if we are the only ones in the wood'.

Ella Barton

I enjoy watching wildlife, going for walks, cycling or just looking at the scenery from the comfort of my own garden. The fruitful variety of British wildlife is more than enough to occupy me on a stressful day.

James Richard McClusky

I like gardening and enjoy planting seeds of carrots, strawberry plants and flowers and watching them grow. I like watching nature and seeing how things change in the countryside.

Imogen Woodman

I love living in the countryside because the views are amazing. I love to play in my tree house. It is the best.

Harley



Hever CEP School

Turners Hill CEP School



Taking action the High Weald Hero Way

To find out more about what these and other High Weald Hero Schools have been up to visit the learning zone at www.highweald.org

HEROES

Are you a High Weald Hero? Let us know about your project by post or email: info@highweald.org

Further Information

The High Weald Heroes scheme aims to make children more aware of the local environment, in particular the features that give the High Weald its special character.

It provides schools with a landscape-focused package of; assemblies, interactive plays, DVDs of historical characters (see page 15), map packs, Welly Walks, countryside site exploration packs, newsletters, education forums and teacher training. The scheme is run by the High Weald AONB Unit in partnership with the Kent High Weald Project.

There are currently 26 schools signed up as High Weald Hero schools. Additional schools are welcome to join the scheme (but note that membership is on a first come first served basis as only 10 schools can join the scheme per year) and are invited to contact Gemma Swallow on 01580 879954 or email g.swallow@highweald.org.

Membership is not required to access some of the resources offered by the programme which are available at www.highweald.org/learning-zone.

Wittersham CEP School



News in brief

High Weald Heroes award

Netherfield Church of England Primary School was named by judges from the High Weald Landscape Trust as the first winner of the High Weald Heroes award in July 2007. They said that it was the prompt action the school had taken to remove the results of fly tipping from the surrounding woodland which made it stand out from the other six entries.

When staff and pupils went on an exploratory walk to find out more about the wooded area around their school they were shocked at the amount of rubbish that had been dumped there and they successfully petitioned local landowners and the council to get it cleared away.

They also wrote and performed a short play about the consequences of dropping litter in the woods and recited a poem pledging their commitment to keep on 'making a difference' as High Weald Heroes

The £1,000 prize was presented by BBC weather reporter, Kaddy Lee-Preston, who said she was delighted to hear that the winners planned to spend the money on setting up a weather station in the school grounds.



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
- 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. Bedebury National Pinetum and Forest**
Park Lane, Goudhurst, Kent
01580 879820
www.forestry.gov.uk/bedgebury
Open: daily, 8am-dusk
- 6. Bodiam Castle**
Bodiam, Robertsbridge, East Sussex
01580 830196
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/
bodiamcastle
Open: daily until 31 October
- 7. Borde Hill Gardens**
Balcombe Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
01444 450326
www.bordehill.co.uk
Open: daily, 21 March to 3 September, 10am-6pm
- 8. Brickwall House and Gardens**
Northiam, East Sussex
01797 223329
- 9. Chiddingstone Castle**
Chiddingstone, Edenbridge, Kent
01892 870347
- 10. Finchcocks Musical Museum**
Goudhurst, Kent
01580 211702
www.finchcocks.co.uk
- 11. Great Dixter House and Gardens**
Northiam, Rye, East Sussex
01797 252878
www.greatdixter.co.uk
Open: From 21 March - 26 October on Tues to 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 and 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 and 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: 20 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, 23 Mar to 29 June inc Weds and Thurs, Mar to end Oct. Autumn: Sun, 5, 12, 19 and 26 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
- 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**
Handcross, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
01444 405250
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
- 23. Pashley Manor Gardens**
Ticehurst, East Sussex
01580 200888
www.pashleymanorgardens.com
Open: 3 Apr - 30 Sept. Tues, Wed, Thurs and Sat and 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**
Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 893820
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 710701
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/places
Open: 15 Mar - 2 Nov, Mon, Tues and Fri 11am-6.30pm (or dusk if earlier). Sat and Sun 10am-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: 15 March - 20 July: Weds-Sun and Bank Hols; 21 July - 31 Aug: Mon, Weds-Sun and Bank Hols; 3 Sept to 2 Nov: Weds-Sun 11am-4.30pm
- 34. Wakehurst Place**
Ardingly, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
01444 894066
www.kew.org
- 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
- 44. Ashdown Forest Llama Park**
Wyck Cross, Forest Row, East Sussex
01825 712040
www.llamapark.co.uk
Open: Every day, except 25/26 Dec and 1 Jan, from 10am-5pm
- 45. Farm World**
Great Knelle, Beckley, East Sussex
01797 260250
- 46. Heaven Farm**
Furners Green, Danehill, Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 790226
www.heavenfarm.co.uk
Open: Daily, through most of the year, 10am-5pm
- 47. Holmbush Farmworld**
Faygate, Horsham, West Sussex
01293 851110
www.holmbushfarm.co.uk
Open: Daily till 2 Nov, 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)
- 49. Bluebell Railway**
Sheffield Park Station, Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 722370
www.bluebell-railway.co.uk



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Great Knelle, Beckley, East Sussex
01797 260250
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- 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



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.ryemuseum.co.uk

66. Tunbridge Wells Museum
Tunbridge Wells, Kent
01892 554171
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/
museum
Open: Mon – Sat, 9.30am-5pm,
Sun 10am-4pm,
Closed Bank Holidays.

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

68. Bewl Water
Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890661
www.bewl.co.uk

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 0871 200 22 33
National Rail enquiries 08457 48 49 50
National Express (coach) 08717 818181

Accommodation

Tourism South East 023 8062 5400 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.villagenet.co.uk

50. Kent and East Sussex Railway
Tenterden Town Station,
Tenterden,
Kent
0870 6006074
www.kesr.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 Mus'm of Local History
Battle, East Sussex
01424 775955

56. Yesterday's World
89-90 High Street, Battle, E. Sussex
01424 893938
www.yesterdaysworld.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,
West Sussex
01342 302233
www.eastgrinsteadmuseum.org.uk

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

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

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

The High Weald was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) by the Government in 1983 to conserve and enhance its natural beauty.



This historic countryside of rolling hills covered with small, irregular fields, abundant woods and hedges, scattered farmsteads and sunken lanes, stretches over parts of four counties – East Sussex, West Sussex, Kent and Surrey. It covers an area of 563 square miles (1,457 sq km) and it is South East England's largest AONB, and the fourth largest in England and Wales.

Heaven Farm



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

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

Open March to November inclusive, 10am to 5pm

Furners Green, Uckfield, Sussex, TN22 3RG

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

Kent and Sussex Apple Juice and Cider Centre



Free cider and apple juice tasting

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

Craft centre and tea rooms

Opening soon

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

Wilderness Wood

"Welcoming and magical" – 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



Inspiring tomorrow's naturalists...

ON SAFARI

in Tunbridge Wells

Put on your pith helmet and join **Dr Ian Beavis** of Tunbridge Wells Museum and for exotic creatures right in the middle of Tunbridge Wells. But don't bring your magnifying glass instead...

As we stalk quietly through the vegetation in Dunorlan Park our first encounter is with the remarkable Wasp Spider. This is a large and impressive creature with bright yellow and black stripes on its body. It is quite harmless and gets its name from its wasp-like stripes, not because it bites or stings. It spins a circular web, decorated with zigzag bands of silvery white silk.



Wasp spider

Until recently, the Wasp Spider was found in only a few places on the south coast, but it has started to spread inland. It is a widespread Continental species and is expanding its range northwards as a result of climate change.



Purple hairstreak

On Tunbridge Wells Common, we find an example of the elusive Purple Hairstreak butterfly, which has reflective purple markings on its wings.

The Purple Hairstreak is rarely seen as it spends most of its life high up in the branches of oak trees, where its caterpillars feed on buds and young leaves. However, we were lucky enough to see a

female Purple Hairstreak make one of its rare visits to ground level and settle on a patch of heather near Wellington Rocks. Unlike most butterflies, the adult Purple Hairstreak does not feed from flowers but gets its nourishment from honeydew, a sticky substance left behind by aphids feeding on oak leaves.



Common blue

Among other butterfly residents of Tunbridge Wells are the Speckled Wood, Small Copper, and the beautiful Common Blue. Sadly, because of the widespread loss of flower-rich grasslands, the Common Blue is not as common as it used to be.

Also around the Rocks are various kinds of mining bees and digger wasps. These dig nest burrows in bare ground, and the sandy soil of the Common is ideal for them, providing a home for many species that are rare in this country. Mining bees stock their burrows with nectar and pollen, which they gather from flowers as food for their young. Digger wasps feed their young on other



Tawny mining bee

insects, which they hunt down and then paralyse with their sting so that they stay alive – and fresh – while the wasp grubs are eating them.

These urban mini-beast encounters are starting to make stalking Africa's big cats look like a walk in the park and we wonder what Hilbert Recreation Ground has in store for us.

We are not disappointed. In no time at all we come face to face with another wasp – the impressively large Ichneumon



Death's-head hawk-moth caterpillar

wasp, with its deep yellow body and clear yellow wings. Not to be outdone by the table manners of the Digger wasp, Ichneumon wasps inject their eggs into the living bodies of caterpillars. The eggs hatch, and the resulting grubs eat the caterpillar from the inside, avoiding the vital organs so that the caterpillar stays alive while the wasp grub is growing.

There are many different Ichneumon wasps, each specialising in a different



Tunbridge Wells Museum

ARI

Art Gallery in his quest
binoculars – bring a

type of caterpillar. The largest live on the bulky caterpillars of Hawk moths, including the Death's Head Hawk which is the biggest British moth.

On Rusthall Common, we encounter some real rarities. The first is the elusive Green Jewel Beetle that belongs to a family more common in the tropics where they grow to a large size and have spectacular metallic colours. The British species are much smaller, but still attractively coloured when looked at closely.

A sound like the humming of electricity cables leads us to a rare Roesel's Bush-cricket, with its bright yellow markings on a greenish background. Crickets and grasshoppers have their own special songs, which the two sexes use to find each other while they remain hidden in the grass to avoid predators.



Roesel's
bush-cricket

Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery organises mini-beast safaris for families in spring and summer. Often the most interesting examples are found by the children, rather than by museum staff leading the walk.

'It's great to have the opportunity to introduce children to species of wildlife that can be found on their doorstep, but is so often unnoticed,' said Ian. 'Every year we discover more about the hidden wildlife that is flourishing in Tunbridge Wells. One safari at Hilbert Recreation Ground produced eighty-two species – an amazing amount for an urban park'.
www.tunbridgewellsmuseum.org

Wildlife parks

Tunbridge Wells is completely encircled by the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The town is noted for its historic parks and commons, which are deservedly popular with residents and visitors. Today these urban green spaces are also increasingly important as wildlife refuges.

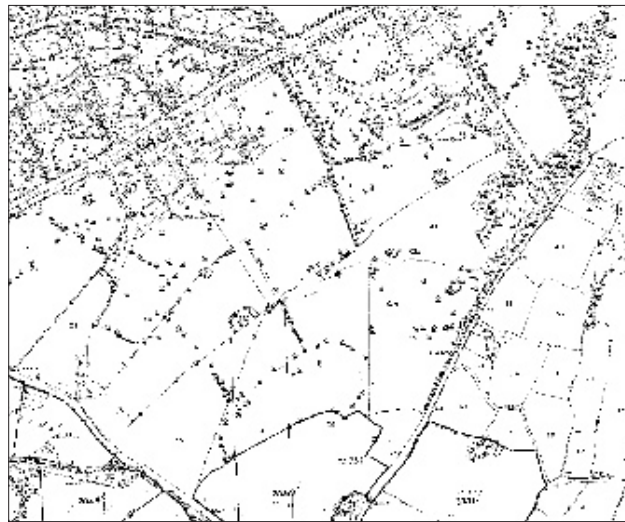
Many of the parks and commons contain remnants of characteristic High Weald habitats – wildflower-rich grassland, woodland, heathland and sandrock – all teeming with wildlife, even though they are right in the middle of a busy town.

These habitats have been preserved because the parks and commons were taken out of the farmed landscape and therefore not subjected to the damaging agricultural changes of the last fifty years.

Calverley Grounds, for example, was

once an expanse of flower-rich grassland with scattered trees. When it was landscaped into its present form in the 1920s, pockets of that original habitat remained. Hilbert Recreation Ground, given to the town in the 1930s, was once part of Charity Farm. Much of the park has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve, in recognition of its great variety of wildlife habitats. Its two areas of ancient woodland, called Roundabout Wood and Folly Shaw, are typical High Weald bluebell woods.

The grounds of Dunorlan Park (below) were laid out in the late 1850s and early 1860s by Robert Marnock. The firm of James Pulham and Son provided the rock-work. Tunbridge Wells purchased the site in 1945, making only a few changes to adapt the park to its new role as a public amenity.



Areas highlighted orange indicate trees and hedges marked on the historic map (1843 – 1893) that are still visible on the modern aerial photograph. It is clear that many have been preserved unlike the field boundaries in the bottom right of the historic map which have since disappeared.



Other Exploring opportunities for young people

RSPB

Wildlife Explorers is the RSPB's club for young people. It enthuses and educates them about the birds, the wildlife and the environment around them. They can join local groups to explore the local wildlife; visit local bird reserves for free and join in activities such as bird surveys. Wildlife Explorers are aged 4-13 years and RSPB Phoenix covers the 13-19 year age group.
www.rspb.org.uk/youth/index.asp • 01767 693680

Wildlife Trusts

The Wildlife Trusts aim to encourage children to engage in their environment and the issues affecting it. They can join a local group which will give them opportunities not only to make friends but also to discover their local wildlife through practical and fun activities from environmental artwork to barn owl surveys.

There are three Wildlife Trusts within the High Weald and all have groups for young people. They are:

Kent Wildlife Watch – 5-15 years

www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk • 01622 662012

Surrey Wildlife Watch – 5-15 years

www.surreywildlifetrust.co.uk • 01483 795445

Sussex Wildlife Watch – 6-12 years

www.sussexwt.org.uk/education • 01273 492630

Woodland Trust

The Nature Detectives Club aims to help under 18s learn about wildlife through weekly challenges and an interactive website. Spotter sheets, nature diaries and taking part in BBC's Springwatch and Autumnwatch are all part of the club's activities.

www.naturedetectives.org.uk • 0800 026 9650

There are also a number of visitor attractions across the High Weald that hold events for children covering a range of subjects such as spending a night cast away in the woods; cooking sausages over an open fire; and learning about the history of our castles and medieval knights.

For further information on these, and a map of the High Weald, see the centre pages.

News in brief

Butterfly Conservation's Rother Woods Project

An exciting and ambitious project to encourage the management of woodland and its resident wildlife, in particular butterflies, is under way in the Rother area between Robertsbridge and Rye. It is supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and other important funding agencies, including the Forestry Commission.

To take part in the programme just book on any or all of the events listed below:

26 April and 10 May • Identifying and recording woodland butterflies

7 and 8 June • National Moth Night – and morning

20 June • Garden Moths Count

19 July • Identifying and recording farmland butterflies

16 August • Woodland butterfly walk and picnic

There are more events planned and the Project Officer, Steve Wheatley, is keen to hear from anyone who would like to get involved.

Contact him on swheatley@butterfly-conservation.org or telephone 01580 879958.

News in brief

National Future of Farming Awards – High Weald winner

Keith Datchler, a farm manager from the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), was awarded the top honour in Natural England's prestigious Future of Farming Awards in December 2007.

This was the inaugural year of an award scheme that sets out to show that first-rate environmental land management and sound farm businesses can go hand in hand.

Keith, of Beech Estate, near Battle, narrowly beat the fifteen other regional finalists to take the national title. The award recognises his work in protecting a precious, yet threatened, habitat that supports a rich mix of native wildlife, including wildflowers, butterflies and rare insects.



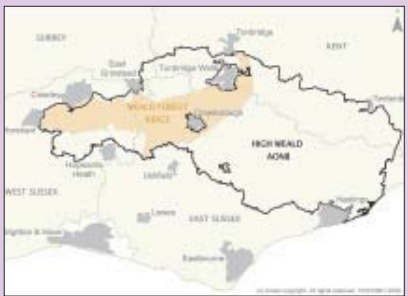
Heritage Lottery success

The Heritage Lottery Fund announced in May 2007 that it had earmarked £2 million to restore the Weald Forest Ridge's medieval landscape and reveal its hidden heritage.

It is the highest ridge in the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and runs east to west in an almost unbroken line from Tonbridge to Horsham. On it are remnants of the four ancient forests – once the hunting grounds of kings – that Michael Drayton (1563-1631) in Poly-obion, his poetic survey of England, called 'the four daughters of the Weald'.

They include the breezy, treeless heights of Ashdown Forest, renowned for its rare heathland and known the world over as the home of that famous bear, Winnie the Pooh; St Leonard's Forest with its springtime carpet of lilies-of-the-valley marking the spot where the blood of St Leonard was spilt in his fight with its resident dragon; and the not so nationally-known forests of Waterdown and Worth.

Today they cover 40 per cent of the Forest Ridge, contain a significant amount of the nation's ancient woodland, and are accessible countryside sites for everyone to visit.



Ashdown Forest Shepherd

A sustainable future for two of the High Weald's rare habitats – wildflower meadows and heathlands – is one in which grazing animals play an important part.

The Conservators of Ashdown Forest have set themselves the challenge of re-introducing grazing to a wider area of the forest without erecting additional fencing. The chosen solution is close-shepherding of the animals to prevent them wandering on to the roads.

For this purpose the Ashdown Forest shepherd, Louise Amos, 74 Hebridean sheep; and four dogs – Rose, Coire, Harry and Sally – have been recruited and set to work.

Here is Louise's description of the work she does – headings, dates and all – taken from her blog at www.ashdownforest.org

Hello, my name is Louise Amos and I am the Ashdown Forest Shepherd, aka the Close-herded Shepherding Project Officer – but that's something of a mouthful, so we'll stick to shepherd shall we?

Well, this job is something of a dream come true for me. In such beautiful surroundings, working with my dogs all day, doing something that is really interesting and innovative, which is rare nowadays, I think.

Before I got this job I was training my dogs in my spare time and working in an office in Peterborough. What more motivation could I need to apply for this job? The term close-shepherding describes the grazing of sheep, or other grazing animals, with a shepherd in attendance. The sheep are enclosed at night in either a barn, fields next to the common, or in a temporary enclosure on the common.



Steppin' out • 30 August 2007



Well, it was a lot of fuff and it may hardly seem worth it for a couple of hours, but I got the sheep out on the forest for the first time today. I am really pleased. It was quite a scary moment to undo the hurdle and let them go. I didn't know what they would do.

They didn't move very fast, just as a very tight flock across the heathland, grazing as they went. They had a go at some birch and oak saplings, and I think I saw them eat just about every different sort of plant out there, except heather.

One dog came near, but I stood in front of the flock and banged my stick on the ground and he turned away and went back to his owner who put him on the lead. I thanked him and we had a short chat, but although I saw several other people in the distance, looking at the sheep, no one else came near enough to talk to.

I am tremendously relieved it all went so well. The sheep and dogs and I had a great day. I will write some more tomorrow, because it is late and I still have to jetwash the trailer, but here is a photograph of Harry rounding up the girls at the end of the day.

Visit www.ashdownforest.org to find out more about the management of Ashdown Forest

Busy day • 5 September

Today we did our longest stint of grazing in the Forest. We got there at 10am eventually, as I had a few things to attend to in the office, and we stayed out until 5.30pm. I took my wool with me so I could get around to sorting it, and it was really great. The sheep did not stray far and Rose and Sally were on hand to bring them back when they did roam off.

I sorted the wool into five bags and labelled them 'best shearing', 'next best shearing', 'best of the rest', 'next best of the rest' and 'seriously felted'. I haven't had a chance to weigh them but hopefully there is enough for some Ashdown Hebridean wool to be spun and I have been in touch with the spinners who are going to process all our wool.

The shearing fleece is lovely and soft anyway and can be processed alone. The older ewes' fleece is slightly coarser and the spinner recommended blending it with Alpaca wool. We have been lucky enough to acquire some suitably-coloured Alpaca fleece from the Ashdown Forest Llama Park just down the road.

I had a lot of visitors today. Only two before lunch, plus a dog walker who did not stop to chat, then I had company almost all afternoon. It was great, but very tiring as I was talking all the time. Rose is very canny and thinks I cannot possibly be paying enough attention to what the sheep are doing if I am talking, so she goes into action mode and rounds them up rather aggressively. They are so quiet and peaceful in this long vegetation that it does not have too much effect on them, but Rose tires herself out.

To ring the changes I don't have a photo of a dog or a sheep or a view today, but here is a picture of a common lizard I spotted sunning itself on some gorse.



Ram-ble • 29 September

We were invited to join the class from Michael Hall School on a ten mile circular sponsored walk in the forest to raise money to buy a ram for us. I joined them at one of the forest's car parks for their lunch. The car parks here all have names and this one was called Friends. I got there at about midday and looked around for the walkers. Harry trotted off down the track and was soon besieged by children shouting his name and running up the hill towards him. He was in his element for he loves romping about with kids...

It was a lovely walk, on a ride I had not been on before, past Nutley windmill and across the Mill Brook where Harry enjoyed a paddle. Some of the children went quite far ahead and Harry stayed with them until they came across some sheep and he decided to move them around a bit. I had my whistle with me and called him back fairly quickly.

On the way the children were telling me how much money they had raised. We will certainly be able to buy a very nice ram and, in fact, there will be some left over, so we will have to think of some other use it for...

We got to the forest car park called Millbrook and we all had an ice cream. Then we waved goodbye to the walkers and headed back to Friends, leaving them to cover the last few miles back to the Forest Centre. It was an amazing achievement for such young children and we are extremely grateful to them.



Ram-tastic • 13 October



I went to fetch our new ram today. He is very handsome and is looking forward to meeting all the shearlings.

Change for the better • 21 Nov

I took some photographs today of the change in the part of the forest where the sheep have been grazing. Although it is a large area they have made a good impact, particularly on the Purple Moor Grass, both by trampling on it and grazing.



The picture above shows how tall the grass can grow, shading the heather and preventing its growth.

Below, the sheep have flattened the tall grass and dark green clumps of heather are beginning to emerge.



Spot the hen harrier • 20 Dec

There is a hen harrier in this picture somewhere. Can you see it? She came past twice yesterday at lunchtime. If you want to see these birds in real life, come and have a walk around Ashdown Forest this summer.



Ashdown Forest • Grazing facts and figures

- There are up to 800 sheep and 100 cattle grazing from April to October on the 500 hectares of Ashdown Forest that have been fenced.
- Outside the fenced area there will be all-the-year-round grazing with close-shepherding on 1,000 hectares, using 200 plus sheep.
- At night the close-shepherded sheep go into in-bye meadows or into temporary enclosures on the forest. In the fenced area the sheep are left on the forest at night.
- Annually there are up to twenty road traffic accidents involving grazing sheep and around a dozen reported incidents of dogs hassling the sheep.



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: _____

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 saving 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 (see page 3). 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 2009 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

Friends of the High Weald Summer Events

Date: **Saturday 5 July 2008**
 Venue: Hastings Country Park, Fairlight
 Time: 6-9pm
 Activities: Meadows Talk/Ragwort Pulling/Barbecue

Date: **Saturday 12 July 2008**
 Venue: Buchan Country Park, Crawley
 Time: 3-6pm
 Activities: Woodland Talk/Guided Woodland Walk/Barbecue

Cost: A charge will be made for food/refreshments

Further details from www.highwealdlandscapetrust.org



Land management AGONY

Our High Weald Agony Aunt Hazel answers a query

Dear Hazel,

When walking through the woodlands of the High Weald I often come across ponds, hollows, mounds and banks. I haven't noticed so many lumps and bumps in the ground in woodlands elsewhere. Can you tell me what they are?

More than 68 per cent of the woodlands of the High Weald have been there since 1600 and are classified as 'ancient'. As they are relatively undisturbed, unlike cultivated farmland, they retain features created by human activity over centuries. The remains of Iron Age hill forts, Roman bloomeries, medieval deer parks and the iron industry that flourished here in the seventeenth century, can all be found in the area. In some instances the presence or absence of many of these features can be used to determine whether a particular woodland is, in fact, ancient.

Mounds and hollows are a feature of numerous activities and how they originated is not always clear. They could be Neolithic or Bronze Age burial chambers; the pillow mounds used in medieval times as artificial rabbit warrens; or the site of a former building such as a post mill. Smaller mounds bordering hollows may be the remains of waste heaps and the hollows caused by digging for iron ore, marl, sand and clay.

Banks surrounding and dividing ancient woodland have been built up over centuries to mark landowners' boundaries and protect areas from grazing animals. Some that exist today were created before the woodlands became established. Banks can range in size from a subtle change in soil profile to substantial embankments topped with mature trees. The trees may be pollards (trees cut at a height of 3 metres above ground level to harvest timber) or stubs (trees cut at a height of 1 metre to produce multiple stems). The form and position of banks within, and around, a wood may give a clue to their original purpose.

Ponds, whether natural or man-made, have always been an important source of water for farm workers and their animals. Some were created as part of a drainage system designed to prevent the flooding of agricultural land. Deep ponds are usually water-filled extraction pits and many of the larger ponds were made by damming small streams to provide a head of water to power the mills, forges and furnaces of the Wealden iron industry.

Two features that are harder to spot are:

Sawpits. The remains of a pit between two to five metres long and about a metre deep, with a built up mound of earth on the downhill side. These pits would have been used for sawing timber that was too heavy to move out of the wood in one piece. It would be laid lengthways over the pit and cut into sections by men operating a two-handed saw, one from above and the other from below.

Charcoal hearths. A flattened circular area within a wood, of about three to five metres in diameter. Scratching away the leaves and soil from the surface often reveals a layer of charcoal. This material was used in the iron industry for smelting. It was produced on these hearths by stacking up piles of logs and covering them with sods of earth so they would burn slowly when set alight.

A major problem in respect of the remains of our cultural heritage in woodlands is our lack of awareness of it. As a consequence it is poorly protected and liable to physical damage by forestry machinery, 4x4s, garden extensions and even mountain bikes. This can be avoided once landowners have a clear idea of what they need to protect.

Our latest publication, *The Cultural Heritage of Woodlands in the South East*, provides an introduction to woodland archaeology and describes how to recognise and protect this resource. Copies can be downloaded from www.highweald.org or are available from the High Weald AONB Unit info@highweald.org



Woodland activities in the seventeenth century



A High Weald woodbank



Charcoal hearth with animal earth



Saw pit



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welcome to the High Weald website

About the High Weald

This is the section that answers your What is it? Where is it? Do I live in it? Why is it so special? questions. It talks about the area's unique features and the story behind them. Have you ever wondered why it is easy to go north to south in the High Weald but not east to west? All is revealed in Edmund – an Anglo-Saxon Drover's story.

High Weald Community

Photos of village signs illustrate this section which gives brief, historical information on most of the High Weald's villages and links to community websites. The signs illustrate, in paint or ironwork, either the name or something of the history or features of the parish in which they stand. You will notice that not all the villages listed are pictured. If one of them is yours we would welcome a photograph of its sign, if it has one, or of any interesting local feature.

Visitor Information

Planning a day out for yourself or for visiting friends and family? Walking is one of the best ways of exploring the area's intimate landscape and this section lists sixty-three fascinating routes to follow. However, if going for walks sounds a bit too strenuous take a look at the visitor attractions details. There you will find many historic houses with formal gardens developed by the Victorians who found the area's sandy and iron-rich soils and steep-sided gills ideal for growing exotic acid-loving plants such as rhododendrons and azaleas.

Local Products

Buying local products helps to conserve the area's special landscape. If, for instance, you buy BBQ charcoal made from local wood, you are helping to conserve woodland wildlife such as bluebells and butterflies. In this section you will find out what the area's local products are, how they are made and, most importantly, where you can buy them.

Learning Zone

This section has been set up to enable schools to be High Weald Heroes (see page 6). Search this zone for educational resources and to find out if your school has signed up to become a High Weald Hero.

Your Involvement

Everyone can help to care for the area. This section provides ideas of what you can do. Be inspired by other people's projects and use the website listings to get further advice. You can join the Friends of the High Weald online – if that is easier for you than completing and sending in the form opposite. Membership of the Friends guarantees annual delivery of the Anvil.

About Us and Our Work

This section answers the Who are you? What do you do? How are you funded? questions. It includes our multi media library and publications where you will find all eight previous editions of the Anvil.

AONB Policy

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a duty on government, local planning and other relevant authorities, among them public utilities, community and parish councils and holders of public office – to have regard to the purpose of AONBs. The AONB management plan sets out policy for the AONB as a means of enabling and assessing the delivery of this duty.

Guidance

Have you ever wondered about the lumps and bumps in your woodland? Are you keen to make your grassland more wildlife rich? Confused about your building's hips and half hips? Do you own or manage land or a historic building in the High Weald and want advice on how to care for it? If so this is the section for you.

www.highweald.org

There are over 30 webclips on the website.



About the High Weald webclips – stunning aerial filming and stories of how the High Weald landscape was created.



Learning zone webclips – historical characters talk about their lives, comparing the countryside they lived in with the countryside as it is now.



Guidance webclips – how to create and manage grasslands for colour, variety and wildlife.



Guidance webclips – the origins and character of High Weald farmsteads



Your involvement webclips – be inspired by actions others are taking to care for the area.

Do you like this publication? Send us your views by email: info@highweald.org

The High Weald's Greatest Hits

The High Weald's rich heritage of trackways is user-friendly for walkers of all abilities. Promoted paths – the ones with guides and special waymarking – offer short walks from train stations, villages and pubs.

For the energetic and adventurous there are a number of long-distance walks that cross the area, among them the High Weald Landscape Trail, Weald Way and 1066 Walk.

Countryside sites, such as Hastings and Buchan Country Parks and Ashdown Forest, allow walkers to wander at will.

So take a walk in the High Weald. You will find there is a surprise around each corner. There are ever-changing views as the route goes from ridge-top to secluded valley; through shady woods and fields of grazing animals; passing isolated farms and cottages along the way...

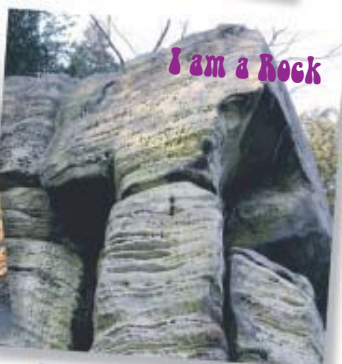
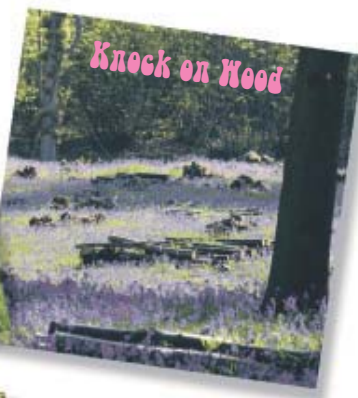
The High Weald has a unique network of narrow, winding roads created by the Saxon and Norman farmers who, in the autumn, drove their pigs into the dense forest that covered the region to fatten them on acorns. This practice of pannage was already past its peak in 1086 when the Domesday survey recorded that some 150,000 pigs were being driven to and from the oak woods of the High and Low Weald.

You can follow these ancient paths today in the steps of the Saxon drovers seeking pasture for their pigs. They are preserved as footpaths, bridleways and lanes, deep-sunken between high, wooded banks that in spring and summer are transformed into 'tree tunnels' with wildflower-rich grassy verges.

Small, irregular fields containing flower-rich grassland, buzzing with wildlife, are a feature of the High Weald.

Nationally, around 95 per cent of our wildflower meadows have been lost to intensive agriculture. However, because of their heavy clay soils and steep gradients, many of the fields in the High Weald have never been ploughed and had cereal crops grown on them.

In consequence, compared with many other areas of Britain, the AONB still has a relatively large number of ancient, undisturbed, wildflower-rich hay meadows and pastures. These unimproved grasslands are some of our most important habitats for wildlife conservation. They support up to 100 kinds of grasses and wildflowers which, in turn, support an even greater variety of insects and other creatures.



Trees and woodland cover more than a third of the distinctive landscape of the High Weald with its pattern of wooded gills, small woods and copses separating the fields.

An amazing 68 per cent of it is classed as ancient, having existed continuously since AD1600. These woodlands support many rare species and contain much of archaeological and historical interest, including the remains of the iron industry that flourished from Roman times to the end of the eighteenth century. The High Weald woodlands have been skillfully managed over the years under a rotational coppice system. This has ensured that a renewable supply of timber is always available, especially for fuel and building materials, however high the demand.

Bands of sandstone – geologically speaking the Hastings Beds – run east to west to form the high ridges of the High Weald. Steep-sided ravines, called gills, have been carved out of these ridges by fast flowing-streams.

These gills provide ideal living conditions for the ferns, mosses, liverworts and lichens that are more characteristic of the mild and humid oceanic climate of the west coast of the British Isles. Rarest of them all is the tiny Tunbridge Filmy-fern, *Hymenophyllum Tunbrigense*, which, in spite of its name, is mostly found on the Isle of Skye.

Windmills, like so many machines overtaken by the advances of technology, have been greatly reduced in numbers all over the country. Of the 41 mills existing in the High Weald in 1870, only 14 survive – and only a few of those are still able to grind corn.

However, there may be a revival of this form of harnessing the power of the wind as the need for a 'clean' form of renewable energy increases.

It is unlikely that large-scale wind farms will be proposed or permitted in the High Weald AONB, but as part of creating a modern, sustainable future there may be a role for small-scale, carefully-sited wind turbines serving individual buildings, such as schools, or building complexes.



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