

## Explore



the local countryside around your school - there's nowhere else quite like it.

## Take care of



your local environment as you walk. Remember to follow the Countryside Code. For more information, visit [www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk)

## Enjoy!



yourself and have fun outdoors whatever the weather.

## Find out about



the habitats you walk through - discover the story behind the landscape. To find out more go to the learning zone on [www.highweald.org](http://www.highweald.org)

## Be proud of



your countryside. Tell other people about the special landscape around your school - even better, take them on your school's welly walk and show them!

[www.highweald.org](http://www.highweald.org)

## Walk Facts



The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a nationally important landscape, protected for its historic character of rolling hills draped with small irregular fields, abundant woods and hedges, scattered farmsteads and sunken lanes. It covers parts of 4 counties: East Sussex, West Sussex, Kent and Surrey and has an area of 570 square miles (1,457 square kilometres).

**Distance:** 3.8 miles/6.2 km.

**Time:** 3 hours (depending on numbers).

**Description:** A walk covering mixed and sometimes hilly terrain, through the Scotney Estate. Includes two road crossings, plus some private driveways, bridges and several stiles. Passing through woodland, parkland and streamside habitats.

### RISK ASSESSMENT - Points to consider

- Wear sturdy footwear or wellingtons.
- Check the weather - waterproofs or hats and sun cream might be needed.
- Taking a drink with you is advisable.
- Adequate staff to student supervision ratios as paths are narrow, the group will spread out and there are roads, bridges and stiles to cross.
- Plants such as nettles and brambles can sting and scratches from plants can cause stomach upsets if eaten.
- There are no toilet facilities, so we recommend that toilet paper and hand wipes are taken as a precaution.
- Everyone must wash their hands before eating.
- A large group of people can be intimidating, especially to animals.

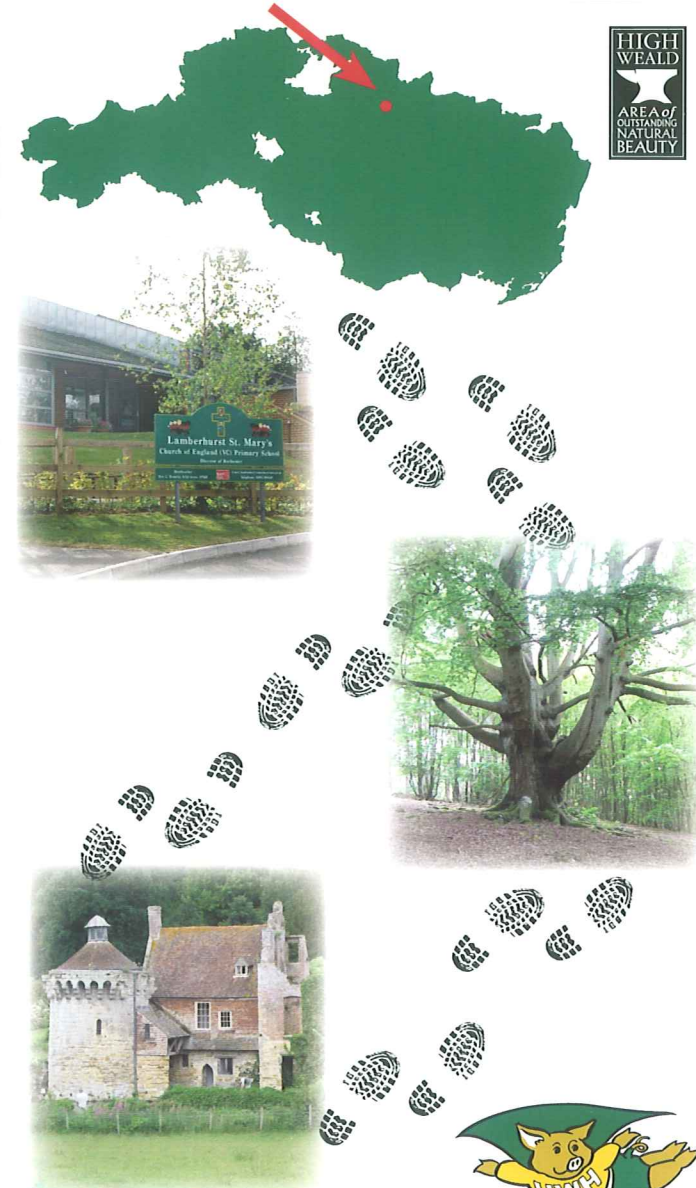
To arrange visits to Little Scotney Farm call Ian Strang on 01580 211404

**Remember to follow the Countryside Code**

Produced by the High Weald AONB Unit, with support from:



# Lamberhurst St. Mary's CE Primary School High Weald Welly Walk



Be a High Weald Hero - You can make a difference!

## Comparing Two Man-Made Landscapes

The High Weald is a historic landscape which means that it is the way it is today because of the interaction of people and nature over time. The locally distinctive features of the High Weald were more or less established by the 14th century and it is now one of the best surviving examples of a medieval landscape in Northern Europe.

Inspired by its owners love of the 'Picturesque', the landscape of the Scotney Estate was extensively altered from the 1820's. Seemingly natural looking, this historic parkland has a more genteel appearance than the surrounding High Weald landscape, which was also created by man, but over many thousands of years and for more purposes than just pleasure.

*Look out for the distinctive estate furniture such as gates and specimen trees - typical features of parkland.*



In more recent years, the traditional features of the High Weald landscape around the Scotney Estate have been altered again, this time to meet the demands of modern society such as better transport links and leisure facilities. This has led to the loss of more traditional field boundaries and ancient woodland.

Change is inevitable but needs to be carefully managed to preserve the locally distinctive character features that make the High Weald so special.

*If you stand on the bridge over the bypass, what recent changes to the High Weald landscape can you see? How do you think they have affected the landscape?*

## Ancient Woodland

Trees and woodland cover over one-third of the High Weald and are a key landscape feature.

The woods of the High Weald were relatively slow to be cleared because they were a valuable resource: providing timber for building, fuel for heating and charcoal for iron smelting, as well as animal feed - acorns and beech mast for pigs. Even when agricultural clearance did begin in the High Weald, much woodland was retained and continued to provide valuable resources, particularly for the iron industry.

Today 70% of the High Weald's woodland is classed as ancient - having existed continuously since at least 1600AD. They have been maintained for centuries by skilled workers using a rotational coppicing system.



Coppicing is the name for when trees are cut down low to the ground in such a way that the stems grow back afterwards. The trees are cut once every 10-15 years. The harvested wood is used to make products such as fencing stakes, charcoal, hurdles and trugs.

*Listen out for the laughing call of the Green Woodpecker. How many different bird songs can you hear?*

When the trees are coppiced, the light can reach right down to the ground as the branches and leaves are no longer shading the floor. This means lots of wild plants can grow; including bluebells, wood anemones and wild garlic. These plants can attract insects to feed on the nectar and birds and small mammals to eat the fruits and seeds. Often, the rarer species are now only found in working coppice.

Woodlands have been managed in this way for hundreds of years and it is important for the plants and the wildlife that we continue to manage them in this way. Buying local wood products helps to ensure that these woodlands are managed in a way that supports a wide variety of wildlife.

## The High Weald Iron Industry

For two periods - in the first two centuries of the Roman occupation, and during Tudor and early-Stuart times - the Weald was the main iron-producing region in Britain.

It is hard to picture the former iron industry in today's countryside of small fields, woodlands and steep, narrow, gill valleys, but in this landscape existed all the necessary raw materials that allowed iron to be smelted for over 2,000 years.

The Wealden geology of sands and clays yielded the iron ore, as well as the stone and brick to build the furnaces; the coppiced woodland provided charcoal for fuel; and the numerous small streams and valleys ensured water power for the bellows and hammers of the forges and furnaces.

Charcoal was traditionally produced by burning wood on a circular levelled hearth, or pit, in a cleared area of the woodland. The wood was assembled to form a domed kiln which was covered with turves to prevent air entering or smoke escaping. The men who made the charcoal were called **colliers** and during a charcoal burn they would live in the woods, in temporary shelters, to tend the kiln. See if you can spot any evidence of their activity in Collier's Wood.

So, where are the remains of iron production? Building stone was too valuable in the Weald to be left unused, so the works were dismantled, and the woods grew back over the former sites. Only place names; the remains of pits and charcoal hearths (flattened circular areas with blackened soil beneath the leaf litter); the tell tale waste, called slag, from the smelting process; and some hammer and furnace ponds are left to remind us of this once great Wealden industry.

Created from text by Jeremy Hodgkinson, Wealden Iron Research Group



*Look at a map to see how many place names you can find related to the local iron industry.*



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10



11



12

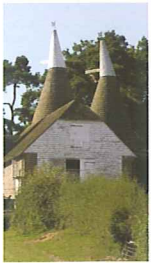
*For guidance only, actual conditions may be different from that shown, depending on the weather and time of year.*

## Photo guide and route description

Walk down Pearce Place and turn right down road with private parking sign, follow path through to Spray Hill. Cross over the road and continue straight **1** on along tarmac road to playing fields. Turn left at waymarker **2** onto sports field and walk diagonally across two fields towards the right hand corner of the second field. You are now entering the golf course. Continue in a straight line, beware of golf balls coming first from the right at the end of the hedge and then from your left at the end of the next hedge. Continue over the stile towards the A21, once on tarmac road turn left and cross over the bridge, with views of Lamberhurst Church **3**. Turn right at the private gate. At the end of the field cross a stile, continue forwards and cross a second stile to your left, continue straight on following waymarker to Kilndown **4**. (Infants can turn right here and walk down to the Scotney Estate following the marked footpath crossing over the Scotney driveway). From here you can see good views of the High Weald over to Goudhurst **5**. Follow the path and cross over at the next stile, **6** beware of the electric fence. When you reach the farm road turn left then right at the kissing gate to Kilndown. If you continue on the road you can get to Little Scotney Farm. Follow the path along the edge of the field and cross the bridge over the River Bewl.

Continue straight on crossing a stile into Kilndown Wood ⑦. Walk up the hill through the coppice with mature standard trees, look out for the ancient beech tree, which is in a clearing up a small path to your right, the main path veers to the left at this junction ⑧. Return back down the path to the parkland by the same route. Before the footbridge turn left following the National Trust path with the River Bewl on your right, follow the green arrows. Along this path there are beautiful glimpses of the River Bewl ⑨ and Scotney Castle ⑩. At the T-junction turn right following the yellow arrow ⑪ along the old carriage drive. Cross over two bridges and take the left fork following the path uphill away from the main pedestrian entrance to the castle grounds. When you reach the gate at the top go straight on crossing the driveway up the steps and over the stile ⑫. Follow the path through the woods and a field until you reach the waymarker. Turn left taking your original route back to Lamberhurst.

### Look out for...



Oast Houses



Parkland features



Coppice Woodland

