

DOWN ON THE BUNNY FARM



No rabbits were harmed in the making of this picture.

Rabbits were introduced into England by the Normans in the 12th century. They were an excellent source of both meat for food and fur for clothing, so people decided to breed them and started rabbit farms.

At that time rabbits were delicate creatures and not used to the English weather. The rabbit farmers had to dig large warrens for the rabbits to live in, to protect them from the cold and wet. This was easier to do in the sandy soil of heathland in areas like Ashdown Forest.



James Cope

WHERE IN THE WEALD?



You can explore remnants of the High Weald's great Medieval Forests at:

- www.highweald.org/stleonardsforest
- www.highweald.org/broadwater
- www.highweald.org/ashdownforest
- www.highweald.org/bedgeburyforest

Exploring around Winchelsea:

www.eastsussex.gov.uk/environment/conservation/ryebay/download.htm

View medieval buildings at:

Weald and Downland Open Air Museum

Exhibits at:

- Battle Museum; Cranbrook Museum; Eden Valley Museum; Hastings Old Town Hall Museum; Horsham Museum; Rye Castle Museum; Tenterden Museum; Winchelsea Museum**

More online at:

www.highweald.org/Hugh – a commoner of Ashdown Forest telling his story

www.highweald.org/Edith – a medieval farmer telling her story

www.ashdownforest.org/enjoy/history/monuments.php

The farmers made fences around the warrens to keep foxes and other predators away and to keep the rabbits in. You can see lots of these warrens, known as pillow mounds, marked on modern maps.



Beer parks – the latest must-have!

- Impress your friends, annoy your enemies, be the envy of everyone!
- Now you too can have your own hunting ground by royal licence.

New catalogue out NOW

We are expert deer park fitters, established in 1250. We can get your park up and running in no time. Or we can supply the kit for you to fit your own.

Comes complete with spades for digging the ditch and mounding up the earthworks. But it needn't cost the earth! Our customised circular layout gives you maximum space for minimum outlay. Keeps fencing costs down.



Deer not included. Payment on easy terms. Insure your fencing against rabbits. Your home will be at risk if you do not keep up the payments.

How the High Weald iron industry became even more important in Tudor times.



Iron had been produced in the High Weald for centuries, but from the first use of the blast furnace in Coleman's Hatch in 1496 the industry expanded rapidly.

The blast furnace had been used in French ironworks for many years and now began to be used in England. This provided a way of smelting iron at very high temperatures. It meant the iron became liquid and could be poured into moulds, or cast, rather than beaten into shape.

By the 1540s Henry VIII had closed England's monasteries and abbeys. Rich people were able to buy up the lands. In the High Weald, some of these new landowners set up ironworks and were wealthy enough to employ expert French workers to run them.

As the iron could now be cast, it was easier to make certain things. The first cannon was cast in Buxted in 1543 by a French ironmaster. Cannon balls could be made from iron instead of stone.

At this time the town of Calais, although in France, belonged to England. Weapons for the English royal armoury were made there. The French wanted Calais to belong to France, so Henry VIII declared war on them. High Weald foundries were kept busy supplying cannon and shot.

French High Weald iron workers had to swear allegiance to the King and pay a fee, or they would be made to leave the country. By this time these men and their families were quite settled here, so they would not want to lose their jobs and be sent away.

England lost the fight for Calais in 1558, but the iron industry in the High Weald was even busier. Weapons could no longer be made in Calais, and now there were wars to be fought against Spain. The High Weald iron industry was more important than ever.

Fire AND Water

Blast furnaces were powered by a continuous flow of water from fast-flowing gill streams.

Forges needed large supplies of water, but not all the time. Hammerponds were created to store water for when it was needed. Ironworks were sited in valleys where water was easily available.

Ironmasters – the new (old) footballers!

The success of the iron industry led to new wealth for the ironmasters (or to even greater wealth for the ones who were rich already). To show off their wealth and status, some ironmasters built large and rather grand manor houses. These were generally built of stone or, later, of brick.



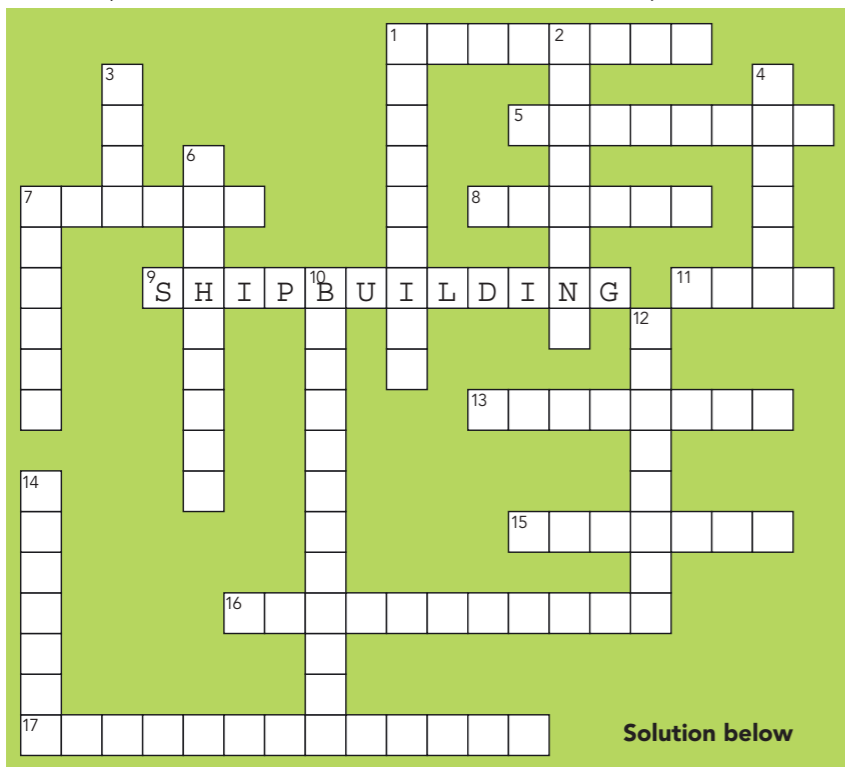
Woodland Worries in the Weald – The Great Debate

The expansion of the iron industry meant a large amount of High Weald woodland was being used to fire the furnaces. But there were other demands on the woodland too ...



Iron and Wood Crossword

Read this page, "It's a Blast" and the Roman iron story to help find the answers.



Solution below

Across

- Slow-burning fuel made from wood.
- Flowery-sounding place where Romans made iron.
- French town where weapons were made for England.
- Wooden houses were - - - - - framed.
- Thick boughs and trunks were needed for this.
- People gathered this for heating and cooking.
- The word for heating iron.
- Woodland was - - - - - to make space for agriculture.
- Religious houses closed by Henry VIII.
- Tree introduced by the Romans.

Down

- Cutting trees close to ground level so they produce several thin trunks is called - - - - -.
- - - - - Hatch, where the first blast furnace was used.
- A fast-flowing stream in the High Weald.
- Where expert iron workers came from.
- Area where all of these stories happened.
- First cast in Buxted.
- Continental invention that changed the iron industry.
- Ironmaster's house with six brick chimneys.
- Workers who made wool into cloth.

ON THE THRONE

From our royal correspondent

The word in the woods is that High Weald timber could be used to create the highest seat in the land, by Royal Command!

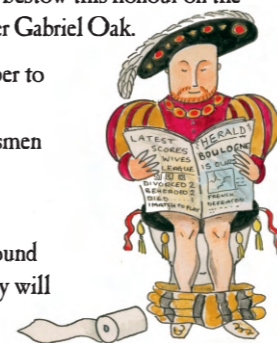
His Royal Highness King Henry VIII has ordered a 'close stool' for his exclusive use. It is to be made by William Grene, coffer-maker, and, being a water closet, will be the first of its kind in the world.

The seat, back and elbows will be made of stout wood (which it is hoped will be sourced from High Weald woodlands). It will be padded with 3lbs (1.36kg) of down covered in black velvet and will be decorated with silk fringes and ribbons, all tacked down with gilt nails. It is believed the final cost will be around £6.41*

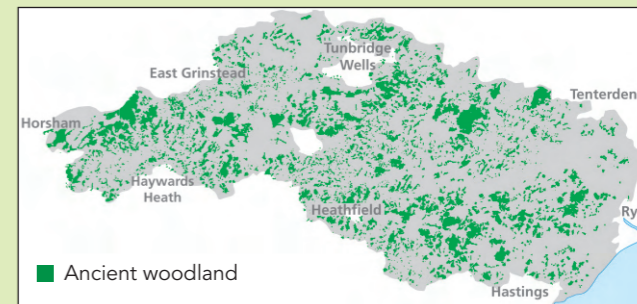
"We are all hoping that the King will bestow this honour on the High Weald," said woodland manager Gabriel Oak.

"As major suppliers of the finest timber to His Majesty's Navy Royal, we feel it would be a fitting tribute. The woodsmen are giving it their best shot and their efforts are not to be pooh-poohed."

* The court astrologer says that in around 465 years time, this amount of money will be worth £1,285.00



WHERE IN THE WEALD?



The High Weald has many 'ancient' woodlands because the timber they produce has been valued by people for centuries. There were over 80 ironworks sites across the area; their remnants hidden in the woodlands. Find out about places where you can explore woods at: www.visitwoods.org.uk

Exhibits at:
Anne of Cleves House, Lewes; Battle Museum; East Grinstead Museum; Eden Valley Museum; Hastings Old Town Hall Museum; Priest House, West Hoathly; Rye Castle Museum, Tenterden Museum; Tunbridge Wells Museum; Weald and Downland Open Air Museum
 More online at:
www.highweald.org/jane - video of an ironmaster's wife
www.highweald.org/jacob - video of a woodland worker
www.highweald.org/learn/about-the-high-weald/
www.ashdownforest.org/enjoy/history/IronWorking.php
www.wealdeniron.org.uk www.hammerpond.org.uk

Across 1 Charcoal, 5 Bloomery, 7 France, 8 Timber, 9 Shipbuilding, 11 Fuel, 13 Smelting, 15 Cleared, 16 Monasteries, 17 Sweet chestnut.

High Weald	1496 First blast furnace used at Coleman's Hatch	Anne Boleyn spent childhood at Hever Castle	1543 First cast iron cannon made in Buxted	1573 Elizabeth I visited Rye	1634 Iron master, John Brittan built Batemans	1710 First turnpike road in Kent, Tunbridge Wells to Sevenoaks						
EVENTS	1485	1500	1550	1600	1603	1700	1714					
World	1485 Henry VII became first Tudor king	1509 Henry VIII became king	1538 Henry VIII abolished monasteries	1558 Elizabeth I became queen	1564 Shakespeare born	1603 Elizabeth I died, last Tudor monarch. James I became first Stuart king	1642 English Civil War	1649 Charles I beheaded	1660 Monarchy restored	1665 The Plague	1666 Fire of London	1685 Composers Bach and Handel born

HOPPING DOWN TO THE HIGH WEALD

From the late 17th century road networks improved. Stagecoaches ran between London and the south coast passing through the High Weald...

People from London came to the High Weald for pleasure...

Tunbridge Wells was a very fashionable place to visit. Daniel Defoe, who wrote *Robinson Crusoe*, said it was a place where "rich clothes, jewels and beauty" dazzled the eye and that "without money a man is no-body at Tunbridge".

Although the road network had improved, the road surfaces of High Weald clay were as bad as ever. They were sometimes too muddy for a vehicle to use, and were generally full of ruts and holes. There were often accidents. Visitors to Tunbridge Wells took their personal bonesetters with them just in case! These were specially trained people who could put dislocated bones back in place.



People from London came to the High Weald to live...

Rich people from London moved to the High Weald and bought land and built large country mansions. Others bought old manor houses and modernised them to their own tastes. Some new landowners started farms.

IRON BREW

– it's what the TOP BRASS is drinking!

Members of the aristocracy have been *beating a path* to our *CHALYBEATE SPRINGS* since their chance discovery by Lord North in 1606. Here's what those top-notch tourists are saying:

"Forget the expense and inconvenience of travelling to the Belgian spa, or to Bath. This is just 35 miles from London."

"I just know it must be doing me *GOOD* because it tastes so *AWFUL!*"

"Great place to relax, catch up with friends and get healthy at the same time!"

"My doctor recommended spa water for my palsy, and now I feel a million ducats!"

JUST SOME OF THE MANY *CAST IRON* REASONS TO VISIT **TUNBRIDGE WELLS.**

Dear Susannah,

I love our new home in Newenden but I miss all my old friends, especially you.

Daddy is growing hops on our farm as he says the brewing industry is on the rise. Here, close to the river Rother, we have the right type of soil for hops to grow well. The fields they grow in are called hop gardens. That sounds lovely doesn't it? The gardens are full of rows of poles made from sweet chestnut. Daddy says this makes the best poles, good and straight and it doesn't rot.

Farmers need a lot of people to help with the growing and picking of hops. Whole families from nearby work on the hop farms and in the picking season people come from London too. We had very special helpers this year. A travelling circus was passing through and the circus folk helped us to wrap the hop bines around the poles. The clowns are all stilt walkers so they could reach to the very top, but kept pretending to fall off! They have given lessons to some of Daddy's workers so now we'll have our own stilt-walkers (unless they run away and join the circus!)

Love Anabelle XXX

Round or square, which is best?

In the early days of growing, hops were dried in converted barns. Later, specially designed oast houses were built.

The first oast houses had square towers. But then people started to think that round oast houses were better as the heat could rise more evenly, so circular buildings with conical roofs were built. The white "cow" on top would turn as the wind changed and open and close to let the air in.

Later still, it was decided that square oasts were best after all, and were also easier and cheaper to build! You can see both types around the High Weald.

Oast houses were built using brick, tile or weatherboard, all local materials.

Hop-picker's cake

This old Kentish recipe tells you to bake the cake for one and a half hours. Ovens cook more quickly now, so your cake might be ready in an hour or so.

275g self-raising flour
1 teaspoon ground ginger
1 teaspoon mixed spice
175g margarine cut into pieces
100g soft brown sugar
100g sultanas
100g currants
50g mixed peel
425ml milk
1 tablespoon black treacle
1 level teaspoon cream of tartar
½ level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

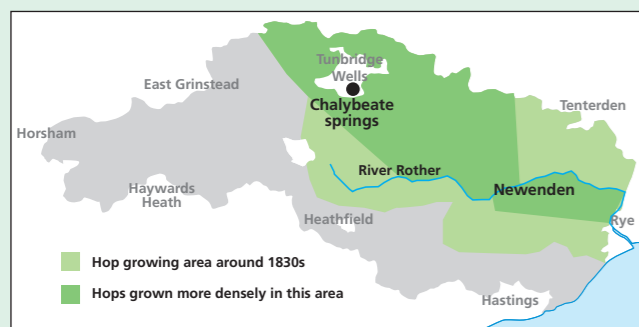
2lb (900gm) tin greased and lined with baking paper

Please be sure to ask an adult to help with warming the milk and using the oven.

Wash your hands. Set the oven at 160°C gas mark 3 with the shelf in the centre.

Sift the flour, ginger and mixed spice into a bowl. Lightly rub the margarine into the flour using your fingertips. Add the sugar and fruit. Dip a tablespoon into very hot water and spoon your treacle into a saucepan with the milk. Have another spoon handy to help get the treacle off. Warm the milk gently, stirring in the cream of tartar and bicarbonate of soda. Pour into the dry mixture and stir with a wooden spoon. Pour into tin and bake for 1 to 1½ hours. When it is ready, it will feel firm on top.

WHERE IN THE WEALD?



Visit the **Weald and Downland Open Air Museum** www.wealddown.co.uk to find out more about historic rural life.

Exhibits at:
Bexhill Museum; Cranbrook Museum; East Grinstead Museum; Hastings Old Town Hall Museum; Horsham Museum; Rye Castle Museum; Tenterden Museum; Tunbridge Wells Museum; Yesterday's World, Battle

More online at:
www.highweald.org/Ruby – video of a hop picker
www.highweald.org/learn/local-products/how-products-are-made/611-from-hops-to-beer.html
www.hoppingdowninkent.org.uk
www.kentlife.org.uk

High Weald

1724/25 Daniel Defoe travelled through the High Weald

1756-63 Iron industry supplied equipment for the Seven Years War

1787 New Rye Harbour built but abandoned soon after

1805-1809 Royal Military Canal and Martello Towers built to defend the coast

1822 World's first dinosaur remains found at Cuckfield

1828 JMW Turner painted in the area

1830 Riots against poverty of farm workers

EVENTS

1714

1714 Queen Anne, the last Stuart, died. George I became king

1721 Sir Robert Walpole became first prime minister

1750

1756 Mozart born

1768 Captain Cook sailed on his first voyage of discovery

1789 French Revolution

1799 Napoleonic Wars

1800

1812 Charles Dickens born

1835 Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales published

1837