

PIGS AND DRAGONS

Many of the roads, lanes, footpaths and tracks we use today in the High Weald were created over a thousand years ago.

These routeways were established by people bringing herds of pigs from the downs to the woodlands. This activity would take place in the late summer and autumn. People and pigs would return year after year to the same places, following the same routes.

The tracks, known as droves, were trodden by so many feet and trotters over such a long period of time that they became permanent. They run north and south because the animals were being driven from the North Downs and the South Downs into the High Weald, which lies between both.

Pigs were brought to the woods to feed on acorns. This grazing of woodland is called pannage.

Same old place year after year.

Can't complain, at least the grub's good here.

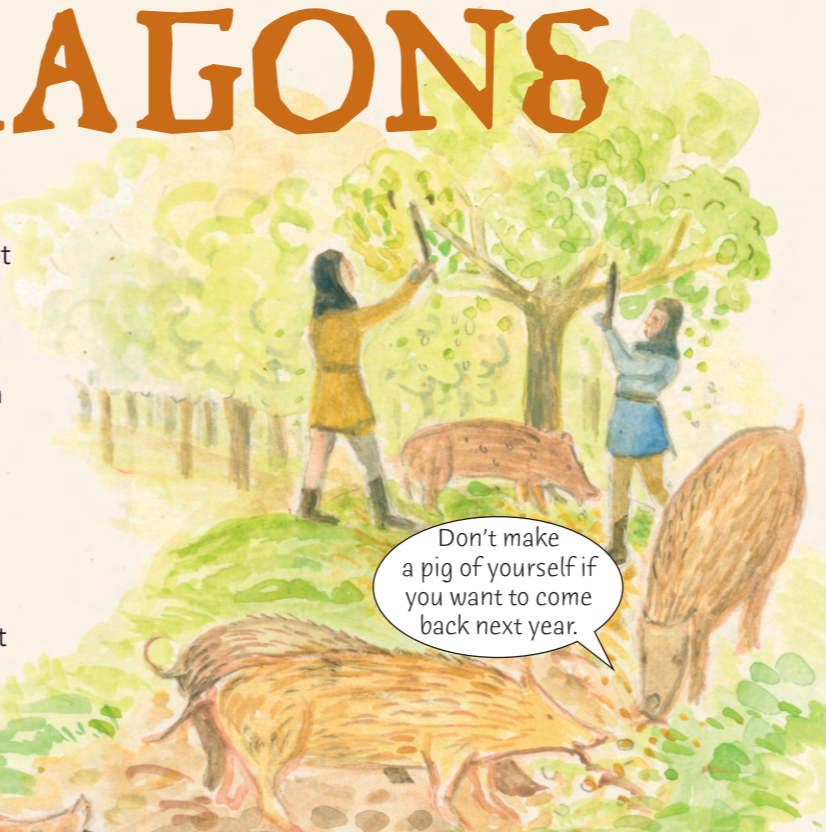
Den is an old English word meaning woodland pasture. There are old fields, woodlands and isolated farms with **den** in their names in the High Weald. Some of our villages also have names which contain the word, and give a clue to their past. Can you think of any?

The swineherds would knock the acorns off the oak trees with sticks. Where woodlands were managed, some oaks were cut and kept low especially for pannage. Acorns grew earlier on these and were easier to reach.

The pigs would make pigs of themselves on the acorns, (and on other woodland fruits, insects and worms) so would get very fat, which was the idea. They would provide good meat for the swineherd and his family during the winter months.

After the pigs had been slaughtered the meat was salted. This was a way of preserving it so that it didn't go off and could be eaten over a long period.

Don't make a pig of yourself if you want to come back next year.



NOTICE ST LEONARD'S FOREST

NO SNAKES (TOO SLIMY)
NO NIGHTINGALES (TOO NOISY)
ABOVE ALL, NO DRAGONS (TOO DANGEROUS)

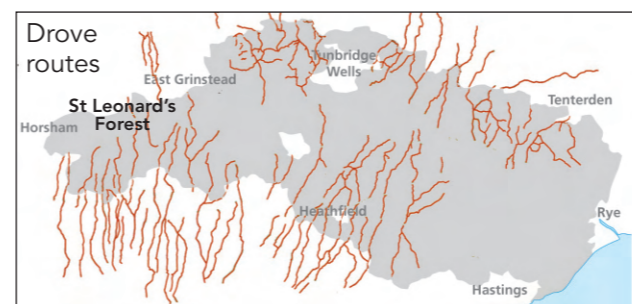
BY ORDER OF ST LEONARD HIMSELF.

NEWSFLASH • NEWSFLASH • NEWSFLASH

Popular local saint, Leonard, is recovering in hospital tonight after what is thought to have been a ferocious attack by the last dragon in England.

The saint, known locally as Len, fought bravely to overcome the serpent-like monster, which subsequently died of its injuries. Unconfirmed reports say Lily of the Valley is already springing up from the spot where drops of Leonard's blood fell. We will bring you more on that story as it comes in. St Leonard's condition is said to be stable. He has requested that no nightingales disturb his prayers.

WHERE IN THE WEALD?

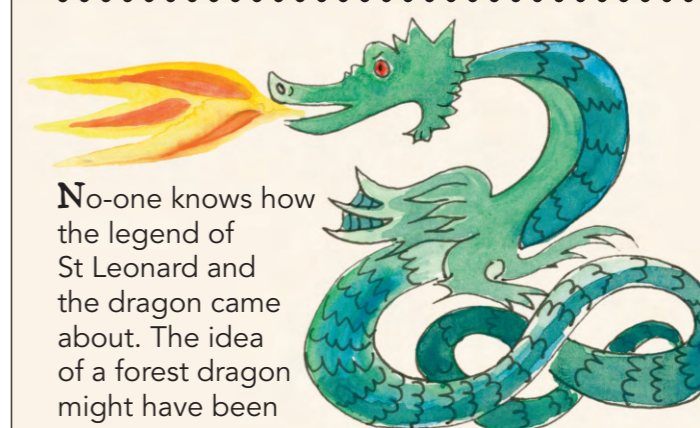


Many of the High Weald's lanes, footpaths and bridleways are ancient routeways. As you travel around the area you will often be treading in the footsteps of drovers and their pigs.

Routeways you can explore at:
www.highweald.org/explore/walking-and-cycling.html

Exhibits at:
East Grinstead Museum; Hastings Old Town Hall Museum; Tenterden Museum

More online at:
www.highweald.org/Edmund - video of a drover telling his story
www.highweald.org/learn/about-the-high-weald/the-routeways-story.html



No-one knows how the legend of St Leonard and the dragon came about. The idea of a forest dragon might have been used to explain the fires and roaring sounds when ironworking was taking place. Or later still, the story could have been spread by smugglers who hid their contraband goods in the forest and wanted to scare people away. The Anglo Saxon Chronicle records serpent-like creatures here in the 8th century.

High Weald

465 Battle between Saxons and British
471 Pevensey taken by the Saxons

600s Early dens developed in the High Weald – the Jutish Forest was captured by the West Saxons

765 Earliest droving evidence in the High Weald, from the Stanmer Estate

830 Alfred the Great built fort at Newenden

960 Dunstan, Archbishop of Canterbury, founded Mayfield village

Saltworking became common in and around Rye

EVENTS

World

410

500

600

700

800

900

1000

1066

500 The legendary King Arthur was supposed to have fought against the Saxons at this time

570 Mohammed born

597 Augustine founded Christianity in England

787 First Viking attack on Britain

868 A Chinese printed roll, the earliest surviving work in print, dates from this time

1014 Canute became king