

High Weald Anvil²⁰⁰³

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



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



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• *Special High Weald AONB Management Plan Edition* •



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Change in the High Weald



Welcome to the fourth edition of The Anvil. This issue is dedicated to the AONB's Management Plan 2004 and the theme of "Change In The High Weald". We've divided this edition into 5 major sections:

- Water Systems and Climate Change
- Land Management
- Leisure, Tourism and Access
- Routeways
- Housing and Settlement

These sections roughly correspond to the themes of the Management Plan.

The five sections have some common features:

Management Plan Summary

The sections each include a summary of the corresponding part of the Management Plan, explaining what we want to work towards and how we think it can be done. This is just a taster – there is much more information in the full draft Management Plan, available on our website or at your library.


Public Survey Facts

Public consultation has been a major feature of the management planning process. In September 2002, we conducted a public survey of High Weald residents. 722 people were interviewed to find out what makes the area important to them, how they use the countryside and how concerned they are about future developments. Each section contains some relevant results from the survey.

What you can do

Most of the sections include ideas about what you can do to get involved in improving the environment of the High Weald for the future: from becoming a phenologist to buying local products or becoming the warden of a nature reserve measuring 100m long by just 1m wide!

Websites for further interest

Feedback from the last edition told us that many of you would like to get more information about particular topics than we have room for in The Anvil. (Yes – we do read the feedback forms, so please keep sending them in! The one for this edition is on page 27.) One of the best sources of information is undoubtedly the Internet, so (as requested) we have given you some ideas for further research by listing websites that we have found useful. (Our website icon  indicates where further information is available from our own new website, featured on page 3.)

The aim of this edition of The Anvil is to get you thinking about the issues that we are dealing with in the Management Plan. So whether you're interested in exploring the countryside and its attractions, local history and archaeology, watching wildlife, food and drink or DIY – we have tried to make sure that there's something in this edition for everyone!

The Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith,
President, High Weald AONB

The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004



Hastings Country Park



In the face of rapid changes in the way land is used and developed in the countryside, positive action is needed to foresee and manage these changes to protect the High Weald for the enjoyment of future generations.

To guide activity in AONBs, new government legislation – The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 – has obliged local authorities to produce new management plans for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The High Weald Joint Advisory Committee has been charged with writing such a plan on behalf of the 15 local authorities with land in the High Weald AONB. The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004 will address the designation's primary purpose of 'Conserving the High Weald's

Natural Beauty' and its secondary purpose of furthering public understanding and enjoyment of the area.

Early consultation shows that we all want to work towards a landscape in which the cultural and natural inheritance of the High Weald – its rolling hills, small, irregular fields, abundant woods and hedges, scattered farmsteads and sunken lanes – is conserved and enhanced; and a landscape where the needs of environmental and socio-economic sustainability and the very real threats to the outstanding natural beauty of the area are recognized.

Our vision is that natural resources, and especially the water systems, will be better protected in a period of climate change; the small and productive fields will be better protected in a period of declining agriculture; ancient woodland will be better managed for ecology and for sustainable timber production in a period of declining forestry; ancient routeways will be better protected in a period of increasing traffic and leisure; and characteristic settlement pattern and vernacular architecture will be better protected in a period of increasing demand for housing.

We also want to work towards a landscape in which leisure, tourism and

access are encouraged in a manner that does not harm the environment, helps to conserve the natural beauty of the High Weald and supports the rural economy.

In writing the Management Plan, we want to take into account the views of people who live or work in the AONB, or who visit during their free time. To do this, we have built into the management planning process various opportunities for you to let us know what you think is important about your AONB and what you think about the priorities and action to be included in the new Management Plan.

From May 2003, we will be seeking your opinions on the first draft of the Management Plan. Copies and feedback forms will be deposited in public libraries and will be available on the High Weald AONB website at www.highweald.org – click on "The High Weald's Future".

Have your say – we need your comments! The deadline for comments on the first draft is Friday 29th August 2003.

Liz Kitchen, Chairman,
High Weald Joint Advisory Committee

In 1993 the **High Weald Forum**, a partnership of over 40 local, regional and national organisations and groups, was set up to promote and co-ordinate the conservation of the High Weald Area of **Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)**.

The work of the Forum is guided by the **High Weald Joint Advisory Committee (JAC)** composed of councillors from 13 local authorities, the Countryside Agency and five individuals drawn from Forum member organisations to represent community, recreation, wildlife and farming interests. The current chairman of the JAC is Councillor Liz Kitchen of Horsham District Council.

The JAC directs the work of the **High Weald AONB Unit**. The Unit is the specialist team that provides advice, expertise and guidance on the care of the area and encourages and enables others to work together to manage the area sustainably.

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

Every effort has been made to ensure the information contained in this publication is accurate. However, the publishers can accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions.

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Introducing our new website

Linocut illustration specially commissioned for website from local artist Charlotte Molesworth

More about the area's wildlife, landscape and history

Find a local producer

Information on the designation

Click here. This takes you to...

Shortcuts

Our online Management Plan

To Management Plan sections

Search the site

Email us from here

Changing view of High Weald landscape

Interactive map showing visitor attractions

Find a walk to do at the weekend

Click here to have your say on how the area is managed

Tell us what you think of the website

Events in the High Weald

We want to know how you use the High Weald landscape

Wherever you see this symbol in an article in this issue of The Anvil, you will be able to find more information about that subject on the website.

www.highweald.org

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Vision for the High Weald

Geology, landform, water systems and climate

The geology of the High Weald is characterized by deeply carved, ridged and faulted bands of clays and sandstone. The ridges run east-west, and from them spring numerous gill streams that form the headwaters of rivers. Wide river valleys dominate the eastern part of the AONB.

We want to work towards a landscape in which the natural resources of geology, soil, landform and water systems are managed in a way that does not damage the natural environment, whilst delivering a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits. The approach to land management will be influenced by climate change and rising sea levels.

Since the entire AONB is an important water catchment, much of this can be achieved through river restoration policies that will reduce the peak flows of floodwaters and restore natural water system characteristics. This will deliver a host of other benefits (see article). Ideally, future management systems will cost less than the current system. Geology and landform will be further protected by limiting large-scale extraction and landfill; and increasing protection for the area's distinctive sandrock outcrops.



Climate change FACTS & FIGURES

A report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) concluded in 2001 "there is now strong evidence that most of the warming over the last 50 years is attributable to human activities". The IPCC also says that the temperature increase in the northern hemisphere is "likely to have been the largest of any century during the last 1,000 years".

It will become warmer all year round; winters will be much wetter and summers much drier. The climate of the South East is already changing. Over the last century, average temperature has risen by 0.5 degree Celcius (with most of the change occurring in the last decade or so) and summer rainfall has decreased. Predictions for the South East are dramatic: some claim that the climate could become Mediterranean in the next 40 years.

By the 2080s, the average annual temperature could rise by as much as 3.4 degrees Celcius while rainfall could decrease by as much as 23% in summer and increase by as much as 22% in winter. Weather extremes – such as severe storm that devastated the South East in 1987, the storms that caused great floods in 2000 and the swelteringly hot summer of 1995 – may occur more frequently in future.



Water systems an

Creative flow: river restoration



Flooded river, Brede Valley

Eve Oatley of the Environment Agency tells us how attempts to tame the rivers of the High Weald have created a legacy that is neither attractive, good for wildlife or even effective in controlling flood waters – and explains what can be done about it.

High Weald gill streams form the headwaters of several rivers: the Rother, which runs from Mayfield to Rye; the Ouse, which runs from Slaugham to Fletching; the Medway, which runs from Forest Row to the North Kent coast; and the Cuckmere which meets the sea at Cuckmere Haven.

Rivers and river valleys are an important part of the High Weald landscape, but the rivers we see today are very far removed from their "natural" state. They have been greatly modified over the years to stop them from flooding land that could be used for agriculture or housing.

How It Is

After many rivers had been straightened for navigation, their floodplain areas – previously grazing marshes – were drained for arable production. Some land was also drained for housing. The river engineers then concentrated their efforts on the efficient movement of floodwaters to the sea, away from the reclaimed agricultural land and built-up areas. Their solutions to flood management often take the form of straightened and deepened channels, with raised banks – flood defences – on either side. This type of river modification is known as hard engineering. The current situation is that we have highly modified rivers and rainfall collection areas or river catchments throughout Sussex and Kent.

However, today's floodwaters on their way to sea often meet points of resistance, such as culverts or bridges. These act as bottlenecks and the resulting build-up forces the water through weak points in the flood defences. This water is then cut off, unable to flow back into the river. Furthermore, building on floodplains exposes houses to flood risk and reduces the area of the flood plain, so decreasing its ability to absorb flood water and increasing the risk of floods elsewhere upstream and downstream.

Past and present catchment management has also affected water resources. There have been increasing amounts of water taken for agricultural use, while pollution from agricultural land, industrial estates and urban areas has led to a decrease in water quality. A build-up of sediment, the result of poor land use, also puts more pressure on the water resource. At the same time there has been a steady loss of the highly valued plants and animals that rely on rivers and wetland habitats in the High Weald.

How It Could Be – The Benefits of Natural Systems

There is a real need for better protection and use of the High Weald's water systems: our floodplains could once again be multi-functional resources: cared-for landscapes delivering a wide range of social, economic and environmental benefits.

One way to achieve this is through River Restoration. Across Europe engineers, ecologists and farmers are taking a new approach towards river management and are working with nature rather than against it. There is less emphasis on hard engineering and more on the river as a living thing. The natural characteristics of a river system – for example meanders and flow patterns – are evaluated in the context of past and present management. Future management then takes account of these natural elements and allows them to do their job as nature intended – rather than using hard engineering solutions such as flood banks (which require expensive maintenance).

River Restoration can achieve a host of benefits. These include:

- Reducing the force of floods – by restoring natural meanders and adding reed beds, floodplain forests and debris dams to slow the water down on its way through the catchment to the sea.
- Flood storage – by increasing the space available for holding water on the floodplain and allowing it to act as a natural

sponge.

- Recharging of water-bearing rock layers (aquifers) due to longer storage of water in the catchment, thus reducing the pressure on our water resources.
- Pollutant filtering and sediment trapping to create clean water sources for domestic and industrial use.
- Productive fisheries (inland, coastal and estuarine) due to increased natural habitats and reduction of pollution.
- Increased leisure and amenity – due to increased productive fisheries and wildlife.
- Local economic benefits – through reduced flood defence and water provision costs and increased opportunities for leisure and amenity.

Positive action is needed to predict and manage changes, in order to protect High Weald water systems for the enjoyment of future generations. But what kind of action? Arguably, agriculture is no longer the principal economic force in the countryside. It is likely that subsidies will disappear during the next decade and farmers will diversify and find other ways to use the land. This means that now is the perfect time to be looking at changes in land-use to provide wider benefits such as flood control. There are already policies in place that allow for these changes. There are also policies in place for imaginative schemes that take land out of production in exchange for environmental payments or compensation. Where applicable, farmers could be paid to use land as floodwater storage, or farm flood plains as grazing marshes – rather than for crop production – and they should also be encouraged to develop farming practices that reduce the rate of polluted flood run-off into rivers.

If you would like to see River Restoration in action, visit the Cuckmere Estuary Restoration Project at Cuckmere Haven, Seven Sisters Country Park – on the A259 near Seaford, East Sussex.

d climate change

An old oak speaks

The Lawn
Whiligh
Wadhurst
East Sussex



At a height of 10 metres and with a trunk diameter of 285 centimetres (the size of a small room) I'm the oldest and largest English oak in Sussex. I've seen many humans come and go, here in the High Weald: William The Conqueror (I was a mere sapling then), Anne Boleyn, Dame Ellen Terry, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling and Rolling Stone Brian Jones – to name but a few.

Being featured in a High Weald publication is nothing new for me, I can tell you! I was shown on a manorial map of 1493 as "ye olde oak". I also have my portrait in "The Sussex Tree Book". This climate change thing is nothing new either – it's certainly been going on for as long as I can remember. The climate cools down, then warms up again and wildlife has always been able to adapt. But this time, it's a new kind of climate change: this time it's down to you lot! And this time things are happening too quickly for us to keep up...

When I was a seedling, my old grandmother used to tell me about the warm spell of weather round about the time of the Roman invasion and occupation of Britain (probably not an unrelated coincidence, knowing the Romans!) and the following cool spell lasting for much of the Dark Ages.

I remember well the 300 years or so of the Medieval Warm Period, when, at its peak, summer temperatures reached 1 to 2 degrees Celcius higher in England than those of the 1960s. Then came the Little Ice Age, which was at its coldest in the 17th century and did not finally end until about 1850.

For about a hundred years, the climate gradually warmed up but then began to cool again, which caused some human "experts" to predict that we had begun to enter a new Ice Age. At the time, this did not seem at all unlikely as the 60s were pretty cool and time-wise, we were due for another glaciation. However, their predictions were proved wrong when the present dramatic "global warming" became obvious about 1975. The extra greenhouse gases that you lot have pumped into the atmosphere are going to result in a warmer, stormier world for us all – and it's already happening.

Luckily, sturdy English oak will grow happily anywhere, from Russia to the Mediterranean, so I won't be daunted by wide temperature fluctuations. But what effect will climate change have on other trees and wildlife in the High Weald?

Take my hypochondriac young friend, a mere 300 year-old beech boy. He's really worried about the droughts and high winds because of his shallow roots. (He can't take up his drink and falls over easily.) I'm fed up of hearing about how the droughts will also make him more susceptible to insect pests: we'll all suffer as they'll be surviving the winter in greater numbers and breeding like mad in the warmer weather. It makes me itch just thinking about it!

The hot, dry, sunny summers will affect the High Weald's gill woodlands too: these miniature ravines are extremely important habitats for ferns and those funny little "lower order" plants which need damp, dark conditions to survive. Woodland plants of damp or wet soils such as the wood anemone and bluebell will also be affected by drought.

Over in the churchyard, I can hear another whingeing tree going on about the other extreme – having too much rain in the wetter winters, leading to waterlogged roots. I tried to cheer her up with a friendly "who loves yew, baby" but she was having none of it. There's no pleasing some evergreens nowadays, I must say.

Higher temperatures and levels of carbon dioxide in the air will mean that we trees will all be able to grow faster,

but of course that won't please certain other plants. Earlier and greater tree canopy coverage (leaf area to you) will reduce the amount of light and water reaching the ground: this may cramp the style of some spring flowers.

Mind you, the warmth will really suit the wild service tree. Its fruit ripens much better in warmer summers. At present, a wild service tree growing in the Weald is only likely to produce fruit every other year but as the climate warms up it might be able to get fruity every year!

Milder winters will also suit the incomers – foreigners like the sweet chestnut and Corsican pine. Come to think of it, the new warm climate will suit some of them much better than some of us. For example, our traditional shallow-rooted flowering plants of damp habitats, such as meadowsweet – at risk from the droughts of long, hot summers – could find themselves being replaced by deep-rooted foreign opportunists such as Canadian fleabane. (Overpaid, over-pollinated and over here.)

Looking on the bright side, warmer weather will also benefit rare heathland creatures such as the Dartford warbler. However, drier summers will also increase the risk of fire on heaths. Now that is worrying!



Me, reliving the Little Ice Age of the 17th century in a rare cold spell, January 2003

Acorns of wisdom

If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen – isn't that what you'd say? Well, it's all right for you humans: if you find yourselves in a hot spot, you can move out of it. Go down to the sea to cool off, take a holiday in the Lake District, invade another continent! But what if you're a plant like me, literally rooted to the spot?

Animals and plants have always responded to climate change, but the new warming we now face will happen so quickly that we won't be able to migrate or adapt fast enough to keep up with it. For a start, plants can only 'move' or migrate slowly, generation by generation. The ones that produce lots of seeds, are good at spreading them around and are not too fussy about where they live can move quite quickly. But others, like betony for example, are not so lucky.

To make matters worse, migration only works if you've got somewhere to go. Unfortunately, the 'wild' countryside today is very patchy. Whether your home is woodland, wild meadow or heath, it's difficult to get from patch A to patch B without coming across houses, a big road or a modern, intensive farm to stop you in your tracks.

Take my little friend the dormouse. It's a woodland animal that hates crossing open ground for fear of being eaten by some sharp-eyed predator. What the dormouse needs is a covered walkway. It already exists – it's called a hedge! As long as there are no gaps in it, a hedge connecting one patch of woodland to another works just fine for dormice and many other animals and plants besides. Technically, this is known as a wildlife corridor. If we are going to get through Climate Change, we will need you to provide many different types of wildlife corridor – to suit all migrating plants and animals and to join our patchy countryside together once more.



I've noticed that, on average, I'm losing my leaves a week later in the autumn than I did, say, 30 years ago. The recording of timings of natural, seasonal events such as this is called phenology.

Scientists have tended to look down on phenology as natural history's equivalent of the trainspotter's notebook, but the climate change debate has changed all that. Natural records compiled by thousands of ordinary people are making a vital contribution to research on global warming.

The UK Phenology Network was launched in 1998 by the Woodland Trust to monitor the changing rhythms of nature's calendar. Almost 18,000 volunteer phenologists have gathered data to show how climate change is affecting seasonal events. The Network is probably one of the soundest ways of demonstrating that change is already happening because of the sheer volume of data behind it.

In the last 30 years, the growing season in the northern hemisphere has extended by 11 days, spring comes earlier, autumn has been put back. Butterflies and other insects that favour warmth have begun to move north. Birds are nesting even earlier. Migrant birds are delaying their departure from the UK and some, such as the chiffchaff, are not now leaving our shores at all in mild winters.

You can become a phenologist: get involved by looking at:
UK Phenology Network: www.phenology.org.uk
or by telephoning 0800 083 7497

Websites

Changing Climate
www.changingclimate.org
English Nature
www.englishnature.org
Conserv@tion (UK Wildlife News)
www.habitat.org.uk/800x600htm
Environment Agency
www.environment-agency.gov.uk
River Restoration Centre
www.therrc.co.uk

Vision for the High Weald

Land Management

Wooded land in the High Weald is characterized by the great number of small ancient woods, gills, and shaws. Non-wooded land in the High Weald is characterized by small, irregularly shaped, productive fields – often bounded by hedgerows and small woodlands and typically used for livestock grazing. Non-wooded land also contains distinctive zones of enclosed river valleys and heaths.

We want to work towards a landscape in which the unique extent of Ancient Woodland and characteristic pattern of small, irregular fields is maintained by skilled land managers and workers. We want to work towards a productive landscape where traditional woodland management is active in supplying high quality timber and other wood products and where grazing animals and crops are bred and grown for food and non-food production.

We want to work towards a landscape in which archaeology and ecology are protected, a network of wildlife corridors is developed and bio-diversity targets are met; and in which responsible access and enjoyment by the non-landowning public is allowed.

Agri-environment schemes will need to be tailored to meet High Weald objectives. Existing policies that seek to protect the countryside from development will need to be refined. New initiatives and policies will need to be developed to maintain and expand traditional land-management skills, support a local infrastructure for productive forestry and farming, provide expert advice to land managers, stimulate markets for local products, co-ordinate new woodland planting and increase understanding and enjoyment of the High Weald's woodland.

Land Man

Adapting to change



Management Plan Public Survey FACTS

When asked how often they bought local countryside products, over 60% of the interviewees in the 35-59 and 60+ age groups said “regularly”, compared to just over 40% in the 16-34 age group. Correspondingly, over 20% of the youngest age group said they “never” bought local countryside products, compared to less than 7% of the older age groups.

The most common reason preventing people from buying local countryside products was “high prices”. Of the 6 factors listed, “unattractive appearance” was considered the least likely to prevent people from buying local countryside products.

Additionally, the ease of supermarket shopping and its convenience was mentioned several times as another reason why people do not buy local countryside products.

When asked what products they associated with the High Weald, over 50% of the interviewees associated apples and pears, soft fruit, dairy products, lamb and wood products. Less than 40% of interviewees associated beef and wool with the area.



We talked to two producers who made big changes in their lives to run land-based businesses in the High Weald. One runs a forestry company producing kiln-dried English Oak timber, the other produces free-range meat. They have found practical knowledge important in running their businesses, but marketing skills even more so...

Both producers acknowledge their role in managing the productive landscape of the High Weald, but when it comes to selling their products, they say that it's quality that counts.

James Andrews runs a forestry company, English Oak Direct, based at Hever. It produces high quality, kiln-dried English Oak to be used as a raw material by local craftsmen.

With a background in industrial engineering, James realised one day that he was becoming more and more involved in the business of making people redundant. He decided that he would rather do something that created jobs instead, and so the idea of starting a forestry business was born. James started working for the business in 1987. It became a limited company in 1996.

English Oak Direct deals with oak at every stage of the plantation cycle: from creating tree nurseries and establishing new woodland to felling the timber trees when they are between 50 and 90 years old. The trees are milled using small-scale, mobile sawmills, which are best for producing high quality timber. The wood is then air-dried and seasoned traditionally. This takes between one and seven years, depending upon thickness. As the process involves such a long time scale, James says that the company has £1/2 million of oak tied up in stock at any one time.

English Oak Direct tries, in general, to source timber locally. Some of the shareholders, together with the company itself, are actually local woodland owners. James says that the majority of the oak is sourced

within a 5-mile radius. But he says that this is not a major selling point. In fact, he doesn't feel that the local provenance has much bearing on the buyers' decision at all: he thinks that they merely find it reassuring. “Local sourcing and Englishness don't preserve sales in place of quality of product or service”, he says.

Sourcing timber locally does, however, make economic sense as the bulk of his customers are within a 20-mile radius. However, he feels that though the High Weald is a rich source of his raw material, the location also brings disadvantages: he has encountered many planning problems since starting his business. And here in the South East, the cost of housing employees also has to be taken into account.

In his previous life, James had been involved in various commercial activities, some of which involved marketing. He does not see his forestry enterprise as being different from any other business: “All businesses require an ability to manage the financial and working environment, with a clear understanding of marketing and sales.” He finds that running English Oak Direct brings together the many strands of his professional experience.

He says it's relatively easy to market a low-volume, quality product with high added value, such as English oak. Far easier, for example, than trying to access some mass market, such as pallet manufacture. Nevertheless, the company initially employed a full-time salesperson – on the road for 2 years – in order to find customers and establish trade. (There was no database

or trade listing of craftsmen working with oak.) The client base today is fairly informal and comprises local joiners, cabinet-makers and builders.

James says that the bulk of his market is now fairly well established, but admits that changes can still happen quite quickly on the margins. “Any non-subsidised business can only survive by adapting to changes in the market place”, he says.

Steve and Wendy Newman produce and sell high quality, free-range, additive-free meat, which is raised and butchered on their own small farm at Broad Oak, Brede. They work as a team, with Steve doing most of the husbandry and Wendy doing most of the marketing.

The Newmans do not have a farming background, originally running a PR company in Tunbridge Wells for 7 years. When their first child, Maisie, arrived, Steve and Wendy started looking at other lifestyles which would fit better around having children. They considered several options – including buying a boat and sailing around the world – but eventually hit upon the idea of buying a small farm. They looked at Wales and the South West, but then realised that they did not really want to move away from their friends and family in the area. Their well-developed marketing instincts also told them that it would be easier to establish a customer base in the densely populated South East than somewhere like rural Wales where “everyone grows their own food anyway”, as Steve puts it.

agement

They bought Sunbeam Farm in 1997, attended some Small Farm Training Group courses and embarked upon their new life with two pigs, some free-range chickens and another baby (Charlie) on the way. As sales of free-range pork went up at their farm shop and at farmers' markets, they talked to customers and it became clear that they should add lamb to their repertoire. They now run 55 acres, 12 of which they own. They have 60 Romney Marsh ewes, 7 Sussex cattle, 5 Gloucester Old Spot x Large White breeding sows plus chickens.

They started with Suffolk and Mule ewes but Steve says that the heavy Wealden clay did not agree with their dainty feet. They switched to the local Romneys, which he says, "have huge feet like cattle". The pure Sussex steers fatten on the farm. Steve says they "do very well on anything" and are ideally suited to the High Weald environment. He admits that he likes keeping the

local, traditional breeds, but it's clear that he does not keep them out of sentimentality: they are quite simply the best for the job. Steve thinks that tradition is, nevertheless, a selling point, adding value for the customers: but he is quick to point out that they buy the meat first and foremost for its eating quality, not its heritage appeal.

They considered going organic, but by talking to their customers discovered that organic meat was not what they particularly wanted. However, the fact that the animals are all free range is a big selling point. Customers like to see the animals and Steve and Wendy see this as a good marketing opportunity. They even put ads in the local paper at holiday time, inviting the public to visit the farm. Steve says that farmers have had the "Get off my land" image for too long. He likes to be very open with the public. "It's about trust – people want to know where their food is coming from. People don't have trust in the super-

markets any more and even butchers couldn't tell you where some of their meat comes from." Steve considers himself (and the animals) fortunate in the High Weald area in having two small local abattoirs (Heathfield and Tunbridge Wells) within half an hour's drive – just right for small producers, he says. He always takes his animals and unloads them himself.

Steve says that they are not aiming for the top end of the market. He thinks that many of their customers are prepared to pay a bit extra for a quality product, even if it means eating meat less frequently. He feels that they are in an ideal situation for this kind of farming enterprise: they have most of their customers on their doorstep – most business comes from within a 10-mile radius. The farmers' market in their own village hall is a great success and they also attend Lewes, Battle and Rye. "Word of mouth" has worked very well for them: this kind of promotion is free, reduces advertising costs and travelling and means that customers are satisfied.

Steve and Wendy have found their PR and marketing background invaluable, but they strongly believe in talking to their customers. "We provide what the public want. If they stop wanting it, we'll stop producing it. You have to adapt to the market, not try to get the market to adapt to you." For example, they found that Pure Gloucester Old Spots had too much fat for their customers' liking, so they switched to crossbred sows. "Small-scale farmers can adapt better than large ones. In this village alone, two large farms have been sold up since we have been here." Steve says.

Steve says that there are no quick-fix answers and that branding certainly isn't the solution. He is convinced that a quality product must come first. He also says that: "Farmers have to talk to people and have to learn to market their produce. Too many farmers listen to the so-called experts, instead of listening to the customer. No other industry would behave as farming does. Unlike every other industry, farmers don't employ salesmen. They never have a marketing budget. They have no sales ethos at all. Farmers need to learn to sell."

Steve Newman with some of his Sussex steers



Sowing the seeds of success



Agrifactors (Southern) Limited, based at Heathfield, is another rural business that is adapting to meet customer demands. Over the last 5 years, sales of local provenance wildflower seed have increased from 72kg to 435kg, a six-fold increase. The demand is coming from landowners keen to re-create the flowery grasslands that have so dramatically been lost over the last 50 years, often encouraged by government grants that help with the costs.

The majority of wildflower seed sold in the UK is sourced from Eastern

Europe, but in 1993, in partnership with a range of environmental organisations, Agrifactors started to harvest and market Weald Native Origin Wildflower and Grass mix. The seed is unique in that it is harvested from existing Weald wildflower-rich meadows and therefore well suited and adapted to local conditions. Its use also maintains the Weald's genetic plant pool. The venture is not hugely profitable but demand often outstrips supply and with further development of the harvesting process it is hoped that seed supply and profits can increase.



If you go down to the woods tomorrow...

In the past, well-managed woodlands provided rural employment plus fuel and raw materials for both the local community and for wider industry: today we import over 80% of the timber and wood products used in the UK.

Woodlands, being a completely renewable resource, could once again play a major part in providing fuel to heat our buildings. Several schemes have been set up across the South East to support the development of wood fuel projects. For example Weald WoodNet, an East Sussex County Council (ESCC) initiative promoting the sustainable management of local woodlands and the use of local timber in South East England has established a company called Lignatherm. The company has been granted £375,000 in funding from Dti and the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) towards the capital costs of installing modern automated wood heating systems in Sussex, Kent and Surrey.

The company will offer a competitively priced heat sale service, open to all from domestic to large commercial premises. Renewable wood heat will be sold by the Kilowatt Hour. As well as the immediate environmental



benefits, significant fuel cost savings will also be possible for those currently burning oil, LPG or using electricity for heating. Lignatherm will take on the responsibility of installing, maintaining and fuelling the modern, automated equipment – running side-by-side with existing boilers, which would remain as a back-up.

David Saunders, ESCC's Woodland Officer says: "Wood is a renewable source of energy and, unlike oil, gas and electricity, is a 'Carbon-Neutral' heating fuel that doesn't contribute to the build-up of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, which is held to be responsible for global warming." (See pages 4 and 5.)

"In addition to the environmental benefits of renewable energy, the growth of wood heating will also have a positive benefit for the landscape of the High Weald, providing a commercial motivation for woodland management in providing wood fuel chips from neglected coppice woodlands."

For further information, contact Lignatherm on 01580 879700, or email info@lignatherm.co.uk

If you are a community group, association, not for profit trust or a forestry business based in Kent or Surrey and have a good proposal involving wood as fuel then the Croydon, Kent and Surrey Community Renewables Initiative (REACH) may be able to help.

For an information pack ring 020 8683 6671 or for an informal chat call Debbie (Kent) on 01622 221565 or Nigel (Surrey) on 020 8541 9436.

Websites

- Sustain
www.sustainweb.org/index.asp
- Eat The View
www.eat-the-view.org.uk
- Rare Breeds Survival Trust
www.rbst.org.uk
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
www.fwag.org.uk
- Weald WoodNet
www.woodnet.org.uk

Rye Farmers' Market

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Strand Quay
10 to 1pm



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www.ryemarket.org.uk

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Biddenden Vineyards, Little Whatman's,
Gribble Bridge Lane, Biddenden, Kent
www.biddendenvineyards.com

On the horizon for farmers in the High Weald...

Current Government support for farmers in the High Weald and elsewhere is a legacy from the post-war period when farmers were encouraged to increase production to overcome food shortages and improve national self-sufficiency. Inability to reform these policies as conditions changed, however, has resulted in major damage to our landscapes, wildlife and natural resources; huge financial burdens on taxpayers and the failure to build economically viable and environmentally sustainable businesses.

The impacts of the 2001 outbreak of foot and mouth disease graphically demonstrated that an attractive countryside is a huge economic asset upon which a large number of rural and urban businesses depend. In addition, it showed that farming is about more than food production – it is also about providing a beautiful, accessible countryside with its vibrant rural communities.

In the wake of foot and mouth, The

Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food, chaired by farmer Sir Don Curry, was given 5 months to look at "how we can create a sustainable, competitive and diverse farming and food sector." The Commission eventually concluded that the food and farming industry has a future – and a profitable future – with a vital role in the national economy, the nation's health, and the countryside. But sweeping change is needed to bring that vision to life.

The "Curry" Report made over 100 recommendations including:

- Re-targeting of public funds towards environmental and rural development goals instead of subsidising production.
- Establishment of a new "green farming" scheme, accessible to all farmers: rewarding those who deliver an attractive, healthy countryside and making the environment a selling point not a sore point for the industry.
- Increased support for the development of local foods and stronger links between consumers and farmers: for example by the further promotion of farmers' markets.

Building on the recommendations of the Curry Commission, the Government has now launched its Strategy for Sustainable Farming and Food. The strategy sets out how industry, Government and consumers can work together to secure a sustainable future for our farming and food industries and enable them to contribute to a better environment and healthy and prosperous communities.

In the future, some High Weald farmers will remain specialist producers of bulk products, while some will respond directly to growing consumer demands for quality, diversity, safety and traceability (see Adapting To Change article pages 6 & 7). Others will explore alternative forms of land use including energy crops (see page 7), forestry, recreational use and flood control systems (see Creative Flow article on page 4). But one thing is clear: whichever route they choose, they will no longer be rewarded on the basis of how much they produce, but rather for producing a high quality rural environment and enhancing the natural beauty of the High Weald.



© Countryside Agency/Peter Greenhalf

Producers



The following producers are all participants in schemes which contribute to the conservation of landscape and/or wildlife.

Organic Countryside Stewardship Scheme Woodland Grant Scheme

1. ARJ Cyster and Sons

Mr John Cyster
Gate Court Farm, Station Road, Northiam,
Rye, East Sussex, TN31 6QT
Telephone: 01797 252444
Fax: 01797 252757
Milk, yogurt and cream, beers

2. Boathouse Organics Farm Shop

Mr Martin Tebbut
The Orchards, Uckfield Road, Clayhill, Lewes,
East Sussex, BN8 5RX
Telephone: 01273 814188
Email: shop@boathouse.fsbusiness.co.uk
Organic beef, lamb, mutton, flour full range
organic veg and dairy Pr. Vegetable box
scheme

3. Burstye Soays

Mr & Mrs Thomas & Ann Knowles
Burstye Farm, Lindfield, Haywards Heath,
West Sussex, RH16 2QY
Telephone: 01444 483376
Email: ann@burstye.fsnet.co.uk
Soay lamb, a gourmet rare breed lamb, totally
additive free. Coppiced timber

4. Cherry Croft Farm

Mr Derek Venton
Church Road, Herstmonceux, Hailsham, East
Sussex, BN27 1QJ
Telephone: 01323 833710
Fax: 01323 833710
Hay, beef (South Devons)

5. Chun Farm

Mr Roger Couchman
Churn Lane, Horsmonden, Tonbridge, Kent,
TN12 8HL
Telephone: 01892 722577
pak-choi, chinese leaf, strawberries, calabrese,
tomatoes, peppers, salad crops, melon, cob-
nuts, broad beans, French Beans, Courgettes

6. Davenport Vineyard

Mr Will Davenport
Limney Farm, Castle Hill, Rotherfield,
Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 3RR
Telephone: 01892 852380
Fax: 01892 852781
Email: info@davenportvineyards.co.uk
Web: www.davenportvineyards.co.uk
English wines - Horsmonden dry white, rose,
medium dry, Brut sparkling wine from
Rotherfield. All wines made to Organic stan-
dards. In Conversion

7. English Oak Direct Ltd

Mr James Andrews
The Woodlands Industries Centre, Hever,
Edenbridge, Kent, TN8 7LX
Telephone: 01342 850555
Fax: 01342 850555
Email: info@englishoakdirect.co.uk
Web: www.englishoakdirect.co.uk
English Oak kiln dried. Oak flooring, decking
& hardwood chairs & solid oak bespoke furni-
ture. Garden structures and gazebos

8. Finbarr's Wholefoods

Ms Carol Ridge
57 George Street, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 3EE
Telephone: 01424 443025
Fax: 01424 443025
Organic fruit & vegetables, Wines & Beers,
Pulses, Dried fruits. Tinned Products, Cleaning
products, Toiletries

9. Fridays

Mr Andrew Friday
Chequer Tree Farm, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 3PN
Telephone: 01580 710200
Fax: 01580 715679
Email: af@fridays.co.uk
Web: www.fridays.co.uk
Organic free range eggs

10. Gourds Galore

Mrs Jean Cragg
Waspbourne Farm, Sheffield Park, Uckfield,
East Sussex, TN22 3QT
Telephone: 01825 722878
Fax: 01825 722451
Squashes, gourds - 60 varieties, unusual veg,
strawberries

11. Green Woodwork and Coppice Skills

Mr John Waller
2 Redgate Mill Cottages, Sandhill Lane,
Eridge, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN3 9LR
Telephone: 01892 660165
Email: info@underwoodsman.co.uk
Web: www.underwoodsman.co.uk
Coppice - wood products from woodland con-
servation work and sustainable woodland
management - bean poles, pea sticks, hedge-
laying materials, windsor & frame chairs, willow
baskets, hurdles, living willow structures

12. Harpers Plant Nursery

Mr Stephen Wickham
Harpers Farm, Summerhill, Goudhurst,
Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 1JU
Telephone: 01580 211236
Fax: 01580 211440
stephenwickham@harpersfarm.freeserve.co.uk
Shrubs, climbers, grasses, herbaceous contain-
er grown nursery stock

13. Heaven Farm

Mr John Butler
Furners Green, Danehill, Uckfield, East Sussex,
TN22 3RG
Telephone: 01825 790226
Fax: 01825 790881
Email: butler.enterprises@farmline.com
Web: www.heavenfarm.co.uk
Museum, nature trail, caravans, tea-shop, craft
shop, Dairy (organic) beef, arable farming

14. Hidden Spring Vineyard & Orchard

Mrs Sue Mosey
Vines Cross Road, Horam, Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 0HF
Telephone: 01435 812640
Fax: 01435 812640
Email: info@hiddenspring.co.uk
Web: www.hiddenspring.co.uk
Organic fruit, apple wine & award winning grape wines, marmalade, honey, chutneys

15. Higham Farm

Mr & Mrs J H W and S E Hodson
Bells Yew Green, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN3 9AU
Telephone: 01892 750363
Fax: 01892 750363
Email: higham.farm@uk.uuimail.com
Beef, lamb, woodland products

16. Hollypark Organics

Ms Tina Beaney
Hollypark, North Lane, Guestling, East Sussex, TN35 4LX
Telephone: 01424 812229
Fax: 01424 812025
Eggs, vegetables and salads all produced to biodynamic standards. Goat's milk, cheeses and yoghurts.

17. J Tait

White House Farm, Blackdon Hill, Eridge Green, Tunbridge Wells, East Sussex, TN3 9HX
Telephone: 01892 853302
Organic beef & lamb. Rare breed - Longhorn Cattle, Manx Loghtan sheep

18. Jill Webb

The Old Rectory, Plaxdale Green Road, Stansted, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN15 7PB
Telephone: 01732 822904
Fax: 01732 812219
Kent cob nuts, Southdown Lamb, Organic

19. John Lindfield

Iona, 70 Forest Road, Horsham, West Sussex, RH12 4HL
Telephone: 01403 251778
Email: john-lindfield@excite.com
Web: www.chichester.ac.uk/About/campus/john_lindfield.htm
Hazel cut to order, hurdles, pea & bean sticks, advice & mngt on coppice, LANTRA instructor, Rural Craft Training courses available

20. Little Warren Farm

Mr Jim Murray
Fletching Common, Newick, Uckfield, East Sussex, BN8 4JH
Telephone: 01825 722545
Fax: 01825 722545
Email: littlewarrenfarm@talk21.com
Specialist small scale organic veal and beef. Also ready to eat meals

21. Mole End Farms Ltd

Mr Paul Ward
Hartleylands Farm, Swattenden Lane, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 3PS
Telephone: 01580 720319
Fax: 01580 720319
Email: paul@hartleylands.co.uk
Web: www.hartleylands.co.uk
Organic apple & pear juice, fresh fruit

22. Mr Phillip Ashton-Cobb

Hunts Hill Barn, Moons Green, Wittersham, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 7PR
Telephone: 01797 270327
Free Range eggs, organic apple juice, fruit & vegetables in season, honey and pickles

23. Oakwood Farm

Mr M J Wilson
Poppinghole Lane, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, TN32 5BL
Telephone: 01580 830893
Fax: 01580 830201
Apples, apple juice, potatoes, cider

24. Old Plaw Hatch Farm

Ms Jane Thomas
Sharpthorne, East Grinstead, West Sussex, RH19 4JL
Telephone: 01342 810652
Organic milk, cream, cheese and yoghurt, vegetables, meat, eggs, salads, quark, groceries.

25. Old Spot Farm Shop

Ms Ray Gould
Piltown, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 3XN
Telephone: 01825 722894
Fax: 01825 723623
Organic & Additive free dairy products, beef, pork, lamb, chicken, game & dairy products. Home made sausages, bacons, hams cured & smoked on premises. Organic vegetables & lots more.

26. Oliver

Mr & Mrs Robb & Marianne Oliver
Blacklands, Crowhurst, Battle, East Sussex, TN33 9AB
Telephone: 01424 830360
Fax: 01424 830360
Email: architects@mnroliver.fsbusiness.co.uk
Camping, B&B - herd of goats - organic home-made bread, milk, fruit, breakfasts, architects business.

27. Rye Bakery

Mr Croucher
89 High Street, Rye, East Sussex, TN3 7JN
Telephone: 01797 222243
Fax: 01797 227388
Bread

28. Sandhurst Vineyards

Ms Anne Nicholas
Hoads Farm, Crouch Lane, Sandhurst, Cranbrook, Kent, TN18 5PA
Telephone: 01580 850296
Fax: 01580 850296
English Wine

29. Sedlescombe Vineyard

Mr Roy Cook
Hawkhurst Road, Cripps Corner, Sedlescombe, Robertsbridge, East Sussex, TN32 5SA
Telephone: 01580 830715
Fax: 01580 830122
Email: enquiries@englishorganicwine.co.uk
Web: www.englishorganicwine.co.uk
English Wine, Cider, Fruit Juice

30. Sussex High Weald Dairy

Mr Mark & Sarah Hardy
Putlands Farm, Fairwarp, Duddleswell, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 3BJ
Telephone: 01825 712647
Fax: 01825 712474
Email: mhardy@agnet.co.uk
Web: www.speciality-foods.co.uk
Cheeses made from sheep and organic cows' milk

31. Tablehurst Farm

Mr Bernie Jamieson
Tablehurst Farm, Off London Road, Forest Row, East Sussex, RH18 5BJ
Telephone: 01342 823173
Fax: 01342 824873
Email: tablehurst_farm@talk21.com
Organic beef, pork, lamb, vegetables, flour, eggs with own butchers shop with large range of sausages and burgers.

32. The Coppice Trading Post

Mr Richard Hobbs
56 Finians Field, Barns Green, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 0NQ
Telephone: 01403 786283
Email: richard.hobbs@onezone.net
Bentwood furniture, rose arches, trellises, pergolas, planters, charcoal, horse/pony jumps, wattle products, tree roots, hurdles, round house hire (celtic)

33. Thorndean Farm

Ms Sue Watson
Thorndean Farm, Cowbeech, Hailsham, East Sussex, BN27 4JH
Telephone: 01323 833419
Pedigree Limousin Breeding Stock, freezer packs

34. Trespanner Timber

Mr Charles Willment
East Cottage, Dry Hill Farm, Moons Lane, Dormansland, Surrey, RH7 6PD
Telephone: 01342 871529
Email: charles.willment@virgin.net
Web: www.trespanner.co.uk
Oak beams, planks, posts, flooring, doors, skirtings, mouldings & timber from other native hardwoods

35. Wilderness Wood

Mrs Anne Yarrow
Wilderness Lane, Hadlow Down, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 4HJ
Telephone: 01825 830509
Fax: 01825 830977
Email: enquiries@wildernesswood.co.uk
Web: www.wildernesswood.co.uk
Garden furniture, rosearches, trellises, chestnut poles, fencing, xmas trees etc etc. Woodland trail with visitor centre and teasshop

For Producers' location, please see centrefold map of the AONB on pages 14 and 15

Farmers' Markets



Battle Farmers Market
Mrs Jean Dann
Battle, Tel No: 01424 773721

Brede Farmers Market
Mrs Liz Stephens
Brede, Tel No: 01424 882836

Cranbrook Farmers Market
Mrs Coral Kirkaldie
Cranbrook, Tel No: 01892 713112

Crowborough Farmers Market
Mr Roger Hoggins
Crowborough, Tel No: 01892 664064

East Grinstead Farmers Market
Mr Steve Tilbury
Haywards Heath, Tel No: 01444 477324
Email: SteveT@midsussex.gov.uk

Haywards Heath Farmers Market
Mr Steve Tilbury
Haywards Heath, Tel No: 01444 477347
Email: SteveT@midsussex.gov.uk

Heathfield Farmers Market
Cllr Richard Strange
Heathfield, Tel No: 01435 866382

Horsham Farmers Market
Mr Nick Shields
Horsham, Tel No: 01403 733144
Email: ian.jopling@horsham.gov.uk

Rolvenden Farmers Market
Mrs Shelley Mitchell
Rolvenden Layne, Tel No: 01580 240763
Email: marshfrog1@aol.com

Rye Farmers Market
Mr Christopher Strangeways
Rye, Tel No: 01797 280282
Email: reg@ryemarket.org.uk

Tenterden Farmers Market
Mr Bruce Whitehead
Tenterden, Tel No: 01580 765111

Tonbridge Farmers Market
Ms Gill Crebbin
Tonbridge, Tel No: 01732 876077
Email: gill.crebbin@tmbc.gov.uk

Tunbridge Wells Farmers Market
Mrs Lou Milligan
Tunbridge Wells, Tel No: 01892 554177
Email: louise.milligan@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Websites

National Association of Farmers' Markets
www.farmersmarkets.net

Kentish Fare
www.kentishfare.co.uk

Taste of The South East
www.taste-of-the-southeast.co.uk

Soil Association
www.soilassociation.org.uk

DEFRA (For Woodland Grant Scheme and Countryside Stewardship Scheme)
www.defra.gov.uk

AGRIFACTORS

YOUR LOCAL SEED MERCHANT

- We are pleased to be a partner in the Weald Meadow Initiative, supplying the Grass and Wild Flower Seed we harvest from Flower Rich Meadows on the Weald
- SWARMASTER & SWARDSMAN AGRICULTURAL AND EQUESTRIAN GRASS SEED MIXTURES
- AMENITY MIXTURES

Streetfield Farm
Cade Street
Heathfield
East Sussex TN21 9BS
Tel: 01435 863964 Fax: 01435 865980
email: rolandd@agrifactors.co.uk

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Blacklands
Crowhurst, Battle
East Sussex TN33 9AB
Tel/fax 01424 830360

architects@mnroliver.fsbusiness.co.uk

ORGANIC BEEF & LAMB

HIGHAM FARM
Bells Yew Green
01892 750363



LABELLED FREEZER PACKS

Vision for the High Weald

Leisure, Tourism and Access

We want to work towards a landscape that is enjoyed by residents, workers and visitors without increasing traffic or harming the environment in any way, or reducing the comparative tranquillity and remoteness of the area. This could be achieved, for example, through initiatives that channel visitors towards locations with the capacity and infrastructure to enable 'green' tourism; and by supporting non-car transport.

We want to encourage forms of leisure, tourism and access that will actively help to conserve the natural beauty of the High Weald, for example by supporting the local economy.

Through leisure, tourism and access, we want to enhance understanding and enjoyment of the High Weald's character and natural beauty; celebrate the area and its icons – major historic events, artistic or literary creations, and famous people; and stimulate leisure activities for residents – such as conservation – that put people back into physical contact with the land.



Management Plan Public Survey FACTS

The interviewees were asked which recreational activities they had undertaken in the month prior to the survey. The most popular activity was walking of some kind (over 80%) with "walking to the shops" being slightly more popular than "walking in the countryside"! Next most popular was bird or nature watching (40%). Less than 20% of the interviewees had participated in running, cycling, horse riding, fishing, hunting or shooting.

Footpaths and bridleways were the most popular free access opportunities, followed by woodland with open access and rural lanes. Long distance trails, picnic sites and cycle routes were the least popular, with over 70% of those surveyed not using cycle routes at all.

The 722 interviewees were asked to list any famous people, historic events, buildings, books, etc that come to mind when thinking of the High Weald. 60% of the interviewees responded to the question and the 2 most popular responses were:

- Rudyard Kipling with over 155 responses
- The Battle of Hastings with over 140 responses

More than 15 interviewees mentioned each of the following:

- Bodiam Castle
- Anne Boleyn
- Sissinghurst
- Arthur Conan Doyle
- A.A. Milne and Winnie the Pooh
- Smuggling and the Hawkhurst Gang
- Jack Fuller



Leisure, Tourism

Not just NT promises!



Bateman's

Within its boundary, the High Weald AONB boasts nine National Trust properties: Nymans Garden, Standen, Wakehurst Place, Bateman's, Bodiam Castle, Smallhythe Place, Sprivers Garden, Scotney Castle Garden, Sheffield Park Garden. Just outside the AONB is Sissinghurst Castle Garden.

The National Trust is a major force in the tourism industry in Britain, welcoming nearly 12 million visitors to its pay-for-entry properties and an estimated 50 million visits to its coast and countryside properties annually. It is also a major landowner.

Realising that it can make a real difference, the Trust has developed a number of policies designed to be beneficial to the countryside and the environment in general. We have been finding out what they are and what some of the Trust properties in the High Weald are doing to deliver them, both indoors and outside.

The National Trust is committed to producing healthy food, caring for the environment and helping local communities. Being at once a major landowner, farmer and environmental organisation, it is in a good position to develop and implement management schemes that protect and enhance the countryside. For example, the Trust has developed a whole farm planning approach – towards environmentally responsible food production. It also provides its tenants with expert advice on organic conversion. The Trust's farms at Sissinghurst and Scotney are in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, which helps pay for work that enhances the area's landscape and wildlife.

The Trust supports the growth of local and regional food economies in many ways. National Trust restaurants and shops stock local produce wherever possible: 60% of

the produce used in Trust restaurants is sourced locally. For example, Bateman's, Bodiam and Sissinghurst all sell juices and wines from Biddenden and Sandhurst Vineyards; organic apple juice from Oakwood farm, Robertsbridge; Turners' cheeses from Stonegate Farm and several products from the Weald Smokery, Flimwell. Even the mineral water is produced in Kent. Bateman's and Bodiam also sell Bateman's Beef and Bodiam Lamb, raised on their own estates: you can't get much more local than that!

Trust caterers in the High Weald make the most of the "Garden of England" and source fruit and vegetables locally. The Tea Room at Bateman's even uses some produce from the property's own gardens: herbs all year round plus lettuce, tomatoes, apples and pears in season. In fact they can't grow enough to keep up with demand!

Like domestic gardeners, the Trust can help to slow the pace of climate change by cutting down on greenhouse gas emissions. For instance, some of its lawns have been allowed to become meadows, reducing the need for mowing, and so for fuel. And, wherever possible, compost heaps are turned so that they rot aerobically rather than producing methane, which is a potent greenhouse gas. (See pages 4 & 5.)

The Trust is phasing out the use of peat, and is encouraging amateur gardeners to use alternatives to peat. (Peat extraction causes irreversible damage to one of the UK's most vulnerable nature conservation habitats: almost 90% of the UK's peat bog habitats have been lost over the last century.) Sheffield Park Garden, for example, are using green waste as their soil conditioner and mulching material.

Meanwhile, staff at Nymans Garden

have introduced new and enlarged compost bins and they compost as much of their waste as possible. For example, all office paper is shredded and composted and cardboard is saved and collected at regular intervals by a recycling company. Nymans Garden has a "Green Team" made up of a non-managerial cross-section of staff from all departments. They try to make sure that as many green practices as possible are used in the running of the property. Their *piece de resistance*, installed in autumn 2002, is a grey water collection reservoir that collects rainwater from the glasshouse roof. The water is then used to irrigate the garden, thus making use of natural resources, saving money for the property and reducing the impact on the environment by using less of the mains water supply. (They previously used a lot of mains water at Nymans to keep the garden watered!)

The Trust is not just focused on its properties and, in order to balance conservation with accessibility, it is actively encouraging alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling, horse riding, travelling by canal and public transport. Increasingly, it is working with bus and rail operators to offer realistic and attractive alternatives to visiting by car. For example, there is a special bus service from East Grinstead station which stops at Standen before going on to the Bluebell Railway. (This service runs at weekends and during the school holidays from April to October.) Sissinghurst runs a minibus service from the station 2 days a week in the summer.

For details of National Trust properties in the High Weald, please see the location map and events listings. To receive an NT events leaflet for the entire South East region, please call 01372 453401.

m and Access

Back to the land

People choose different ways to benefit from the outstanding countryside of the High Weald and in turn they help to enrich and conserve it. Brigid Chapman talked to just a few of the people who have returned to the land to put something back, either for work or pleasure...

Former farrier Tim Mann's approach is a practical one. He had back trouble and left his roadside forge to practice the centuries old woodland crafts of hedge laying, coppicing and charcoal burning in Turner's Wood and the countryside around it. He and his wife, Angela, started Mannswood Coppice Products and, through specialist shops and farmers' markets, supply customers with some of the 60,000 tons of charcoal that is used every year on barbecues in Britain's back gardens.

"The coppice poles need to be cut back and harvested on a regular basis for a wood and its wildlife to flourish – and it is from this coppiced wood that charcoal is made," said Tim Mann. "We import 90 per cent of the amount we use yet that made from British trees has a higher carbon content and is easier to light. We could easily produce all we need in this country if we made the effort."

Riding a horse is the traditional way of travelling along the networks of trackways that link the villages of the Weald – trackways made by Saxon and Norman herdsmen driving their pigs to pannage. It is still one of the best ways of enjoying the land at first hand and getting some healthy exercise at the same time.

However, riders now have to take into account the changing conditions on the roads and Rights Of Way network – for example, they now have to share bridle paths with mountain bikers who are not always aware that horses are nervous creatures and are likely to behave errati-



Left: The Mann family; below left: horseriding in Ashdown Forest; below; coppice poles growing from stumps or "coppice stools"



cally if startled by a group of colourful machines coming up behind them silently and at speed. "The British Horse Society is writing to all local cycling clubs suggesting that their members ring their bells when they see horses some distance ahead so the riders are not caught unawares", said Jane Bramwell, past chairman and now vice chairman of the High Weald Bridleways Group.

Jane also sees a way of working round the problem of increased traffic on country lanes: "When the rules on set aside are changed, we hope toll rides can be organised and farmers paid so much a mile for allowing riders to cross their land – all of which interconnects with the bridleways."

By working with other users and developing new opportunities, the British Horse Society is keeping the area attractive for riders and this in turn benefits the AONB. "We asked 70 to 80 owners how much they spend a year on keeping a horse and came up with an average figure of £35 a week – quite a significant contribution to the local economy" said Jane.

An interest in an industry that changed the scenery of the area has brought together the 150 or so members of the Wealden Iron Research Group. They have, since 1968, identified a total of 800 working sites – 600 of them pre-dating the fifteenth century when water-powered bloomery forges and blast furnaces were introduced from the Continent. "We dig our own iron at Sharpthorne and have our own furnaces at Turners Hill where we conduct scientific experi-

ments in iron production processes," said Jeremy Hodkinson, a teacher from Crawley who has found himself much in demand as a lecturer of this aspect of the history of the area.

The easy way for anyone living in a town to get back to the land without a change of job or spending time and money on a particular sport or interest is to be a countryside volunteer. That is what Helen Clifford, a mature student who lives in Cranbrook does. Every Wednesday since July she has been part of the Kent High Weald Project team of volunteers working to conserve the rare habitat of Barratts Wood. "I am taking a second degree, this time in conservation, and as a countryside volunteer I have been getting hands-on experience of coppicing, fencing, building stiles and clearing heathland," she said.

The High Weald has thousands of other visitors who are not in organised groups or pursuing a particular pastime or interest. Yesterday's Mums and Dads in their Morrisies out for a Sunday run to Ashdown Forest have not given up their regular jaunts into the countryside now they are older, have grandchildren and drive a car with central locking, electric windows and automatic gears. They, too, can put something back into the High Weald – by taking home some local produce. Perhaps it will be a bag of Tim Mann's barbecue charcoal!

Which all goes to show that people need the land as much as the land needs the people. It has always been so...

Outstanding!

A hidden gem set in the heart of South East England, the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is a diverse, intricate landscape and one that is full of surprises.

The word 'Weald' means wilderness or forest: the High Weald was once an untamed, wooded area, with patches of wild grassland and heathland. By Domesday (1086) the High Weald remained the most densely wooded area of England – and even now boasts the highest proportion of ancient woodland in the country.

Today, the High Weald is a historic countryside of abundant woods and hedges, small, irregular fields, scattered farmsteads and sunken lanes, all draped over rolling hills. A closer look reveals flower-rich meadows, patches of heathland, hop gardens, orchards, sandstone outcrops; steep, wooded ravines (called gills) with their secret streams and 'hammer'ponds – remnants of the Wealden iron industry.

The constantly changing height and terrain give an ever-changing view of this patchwork countryside, created and maintained by traditional farming. Incredibly, the picture has remained almost the same through the last five centuries: the High Weald is, essentially, still a medieval landscape. This can be said of few other places in the country.

One resident is obviously so taken with the High Weald that he has summed up the enjoyment offered by the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in verse...

Recipe For Happiness

*We moved to Sussex, chose Heathfield,
Surrounded by the vast High Weald
Five-sixty square miles in extent,
It runs through Sussex, Surrey, Kent.
One of its gems is Leonardslee,
So colourful it is to see
If you can go sometime in May
Azaleas give a fine display.
There's Ashdown Forest nearer home,
For miles on it one can roam,
Should gorse or heather then be out
The beauty you will talk about.
A must is Hastings Country Park,
About the scenes most do remark,
The cliffs near Dover gleaming white
And Beachy Head sometimes in sight.
Those Wealden scenes are also grand
As near to here as Cross in Hand,
Then further north is Penshurst Place –
They make Heathfield a perfect base.
It also is one of those towns
Where one can look towards the Downs,
Surrounded, too, by all those trees,
Such scenes just cannot fail to please.*

John Hardingham



Websites

The National Trust
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
English Heritage
www.english-heritage.org.uk
South East England Tourist board
www.seetb.org.uk
The Ramblers' Association
www.ramblers.org.uk
South East Walks Partnership
www.southeastwalks.com

A day in the life of...

David Munn is a Senior Rights of Way Officer, employed by East Sussex County Council in this profession since 1986, "having stumbled into the job through the Youth Training Scheme". He takes us with him on a typical day...



The High Weald's rich heritage of Rights of Way is an invaluable resource for walkers, horse riders and cyclists alike – but keeping them usable is no easy task.

It's 6.45am, still dark and bed is far too inviting, but it's time to get up and go to work.

As a Rights of Way Officer it's not compulsory to get up early, but it makes getting into Lewes easy. The day usually starts with a cheerful good morning from Sophie, who's always in first and is too cheerful by half, but we have to make allowances as she's relatively new to the job.

First job of the day is to check the diary and then to finish of the letter that was half

written yesterday. Tea doesn't happen until eight thirty, by which time there are usually several people in.

At this time of year it's time to start gathering data for our Best Value Performance Indicators, a sort of league table for council services. A series of randomly selected circular routes has been prepared and the day's activities will be based around one of these routes.

Today's survey will take about two and half hours and is in the Danehill area. I have a quick look through the pile of reported problems in the Danehill, Forest Row and Maresfield areas, and select a few that need to be dealt with urgently.

By half past nine, having highlighted a couple of letters that need a response later, it's out on site armed with clipboard and camera, thankfully in the dry -or all the survey forms stick together.

The surveys themselves are a relaxing break from the usual job of dealing with obstructions, as we are only gathering information – no landowners to speak to, no problems to solve.

The surveys reveal the usual mix of good and bad paths, but overall this batch are better than average and should raise our performance statistics slightly.

The surveys finished, it's time for a quick sandwich and then back to the proper job – sorting out obstructions. Today there are four problems to look at, a broken stile, a dangerous bridge, a fallen tree and an alleged dangerous dog.

It takes about two hours to inspect these paths. The owner of the stile proves elusive, but I've got a name and address, so they will be written to in the next few days. It's always

better to see someone in person, but unfortunately not always possible.

The dangerous bridge is just that, but not too bad if you're sure footed and don't mind missing deckboards. A warning notice is in order and our maintenance team will be asked to replace it as soon as possible. This can mean anything between a week and six months. The timing of maintenance jobs depends on urgency – dangerous stuff gets dealt with first – or luck: if a newly reported job happens to be near where our team are already working it sometimes gets done a bit quicker.

The fallen tree is fortunately a small one across a bridleway, it stops riders but is easily dealt with using the trusty folding pruning saw – another red dot on the list of complaints turned green. If only they were all that easy!

The final problem, the dog, proves inconclusive. The person reporting the incident is adamant that the dog is aggressive. I speak to the owner who insists that the dog – a Labrador – wouldn't hurt a fly and all I am able to do is to advise that if there is any question of the dog being dangerous, then it should be kept away from the path.

It's now time to return to the office. There's just time left to input the data from the surveys, download the photographs from the camera and return a few telephone calls before going home.

Tomorrow it's a day out installing a cycle barrier on a footpath in Crowborough and the day after dealing with the next few complaints – oh, and writing that letter about the stile, preparing the bridge warning notice and preparing the job sheet, sorting out those two urgent letters that I picked out this morning...



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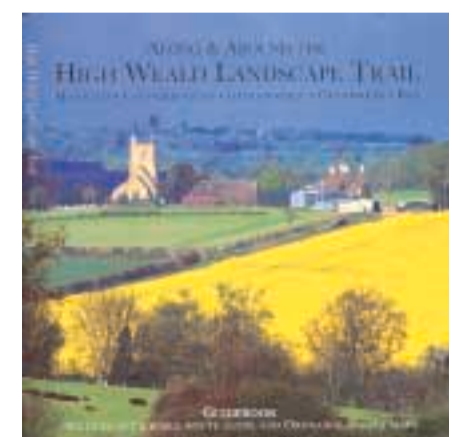
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Alex's books are delightful! I made myself wait to read them and then gobbled them up!

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The High Weald Landscape Trail



Explore the area's countryside and villages by foot, or from your armchair, using the High Weald Landscape Trail guidebook. 112 pages of colour photographs and artwork, historical facts, wildlife notes, local stories and including a detachable route guide for the 90-mile route.

SPECIAL OFFER Reduced from £8 to £5 for Spring 2003

Published by the High Weald AONB Unit and available from www.kent.gov.uk/countrysideaccess
env.publications@kent.gov.uk
or 01622 221524 (credit cards taken)



Houses & gardens

The countryside of the High Weald remains largely undiscovered and there are many excellent opportunities for exploring it: cycling and walking routes to suit all ages and abilities, from the long-distance High Weald Landscape Trail, 1006 Walk and Weald Way to the many convenient short, circular village and countryside trails. This diverse landscape also offers fishing, sailing, climbing and wildlife watching opportunities.

Many well-known attractions are located within the High Weald AONB including famous houses and gardens – Batemans, Wakehurst Place, Sissinghurst and Great Dixter; historic towns – Battle, Rye and Winchelsea; castles – Bodiam, Scotney, Chiddingstone; and reservoirs – Bewl, Darwell, Weirwood and Ardingly.

Exploring THE HIGH WEALD

Planning your visit

Travelling around the High Weald AONB

Wherever possible, the routes have been planned to link with public transport. Information on the frequency of the services is provided but, for exact times, please call the relevant travel line (see page 13). If you do choose to travel by car, please use the car parks indicated on the maps. If car parking spaces are not available, please park in a sensible location that will not damage road verges or cause obstruction. Leave your car securely locked with any valuables out of sight.

Following the rights of way

The routes largely follow public rights of way that cross private land and minor roads. Most landowners welcome people on their land, provided that they do not stray from the rights of way and that they abide by the visitors' code. Following the routes should not be a problem, given the detailed maps, directions and extensive waymarking and signposting (see below).

Where rights of way leave the road, metal or wooden finger posts, or a stone plinth indicate the

way. At other points, such as field boundaries or path junctions, footpaths are marked with short posts or taller finger posts. In addition to the posts, public rights of way in Kent and East Sussex are usually marked with small coloured arrows to show the status of the path and direction. In West Sussex the classification of the rights of way is carved in words in the finger post. If the status of a path changes along its length, so does the colour of the arrows or the wording on the finger post. Where a right of way is a promoted path, the arrows are used in conjunction with the route's own symbol.

Be prepared

Paths can be muddy at all times of year so waterproof boots are recommended. Be prepared for changeable weather by carrying waterproofs. Trousers can be useful in providing protection against high or prickly vegetation or rain-drenched or dewy crops. For an up-to-date weather forecast, contact Weathercall on 0891 772 272.



Local produce

Maps

The following Ordnance Survey maps are applicable in the High Weald:

Landranger Series, scale 1:50,000, 1 1/4 inches to 1 mile (2cm to 1km)

- 187 Dorking, Reigate and Crawley
- 188 Maidstone and the Weald of Kent
- 189 Ashford and Romney Marsh
- 198 Brighton and the Downs
- 199 Eastbourne, Hastings

Explorer Series, scale 1:25,000, 2 1/2 inches to 1 mile (4cm to 1km)

- 123 South Downs Way
- 124 Hastings and Bexhill
- 125 Romney Marsh
- 134 Crawley and Horsham
- 135 Ashdown Forest
- 136 The Weald
- 147 Sevenoaks and Tonbridge



Advice and further information

If you have any queries or comments about rights of way in the area, or would like further information on access to the High Weald countryside, contact:

West Sussex

West Sussex High Weald Countryside Management Service
01243 777620

East Sussex

Rights of Way and Countryside Management Service
01273 481654

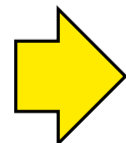
Kent

Kent High Weald Project
01580 715918

Industrial heritage



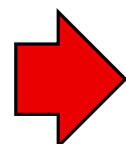
Waymarking information



Footpaths, for use by pedestrians only, are marked using yellow arrows



Bridleways, for use by horses, cyclists, and pedestrians, are marked with blue arrows



Byways, paths open to all traffic, are marked with red arrow

Hidden countryside



VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

Houses, gardens and castles

- 1. The Almonry**
Battle, East Sussex
01424 772210
Open daily, except Sun, 1000-1630
Closed 24 - 26, 31 Dec, 1 Jan
- 2. Bateman's**
The National Trust, Burwash, East Sussex
01435 882302
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
House open 28 Mar-29 Sep, Sat & Wed, 1100-1700
Last admission 1630.
Mill grinds corn most Sats 1400 - 1600
- 3. Battle Abbey**
Battle, East Sussex
01424 773792
www.english-heritage.org.uk
Open 29 Mar-30 Sep, daily, 1000-1800; 1-31 Oct, daily, 1000-1700; 1 Nov-23 Dec, daily, 1000-1600.
Closed 24 - 26 Dec, 1 Jan
- 4. Bayham Abbey**
Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890381
www.english-heritage.org.uk
Open 29 Mar-30 Sep, daily, 1000-1800; 1-31 Oct, 1000-1700; 1 Nov-31 Dec, Sat, Sun 1000-1600
- 5. Bedgebury Pinetum**
Goudhurst, Kent
01580 211044
Open daily, 1000-1900, or dusk if earlier
Closed 25, 26 Dec, 1 Jan
- 6. Bodiam Castle**
Bodiam, East Sussex
01580 830436
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
8 Feb-31 Oct, daily, 1000-1800; 3 Nov-31 Dec, Sat, Sun, 1000-1600.
Last admission 1 hour before closing. Closed 24-26 Dec
- 7. Borde Hill Gardens**
Haywards Heath, West Sussex
01444 450326
www.bordehill.co.uk
Open all year, daily, 1000-1800, or dusk if earlier
- 8. Brickwall House and Gardens**
Northiam, East Sussex
01797 223329
Open Jul-Aug, Wed 1400 - 1700
- 9. Cabbages and Kings Garden**
Hadlow Down, Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 830552
www.ckings.co.uk
Open 13 Apr-29 Oct, Mon, Thu-Sun, 1030-1730
- 10. Chiddingstone Castle**
Chiddingstone, Edenbridge, Kent
01892 870347
Open Spring Bank Holidays, 1130-1730. Jun-Sep, Wed-Fri, 1400-1730
Sun, Bank Hols, 1130-1730; Last admission, 1700.
- 11. Finchcocks**
Goudhurst, Kent
01580 211702 www.finchcocks.co.uk
Open 31 Mar-28 Jul, Sun Bank Hol Mon, 1400-1800
1-31 Aug, Wed, Thu, Sun, Bank Hol Mon, 1400-1800
2-29 Sep, Sun, 1400-1800
- 12. Great Dixter**
Northiam, East Sussex
01797 252878
Open Apr-Oct daily except Mon (open Bank Hol Mon)
1400-1730. Gardens only open Sun & Mon of Bank Hol weekends
- 13. Great Maytham Hall**
Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent
01580 241346 www.cha.org.uk
Open 1 May-26 Sept, Wed, Thur, 1400-1700
- 14. Groombridge Place Gardens & the Enchanted Forest**
Groombridge, Tunbridge Wells, East Sussex
01892 863999
www.groombridge.co.uk
Open 29 Mar-27 Oct, daily, 0900-1800.
- 15. Hever Castle & Gardens**
Hever, Edenbridge, Kent
01732 865224
www.hevercastle.co.uk
Open 1 Apr-31 Oct, daily, gardens: 1100-1800, castle: 1200-1800; last admission, 1700; 1-30 Nov, daily, 1100-1600.

- 16. High Beeches Gardens**
Handcross, West Sussex
01444 400589
www.highbeeches.com
Open 17 Mar-30 Jun, daily except Wed, 1300-1700, Bank Hol Mon, 1030-1700; 1 Jul-31 Aug, Mon, Tue, Sun, 1300-1700. 1 Sep-31 Oct, daily, except Wed, 1300-1700
- 17. Lamb House**
Rye, East Sussex
01892 890651
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Open 3 Apr - 2 Nov, Wed, Sat 1400-1800
Last admission 1730
- 18. Leonardslee Gardens**
Lower Beeding, Horsham, West Sussex
01403 891212
www.leonardslee.com
Open 1 Apr-31 Oct, daily, 0930-1800. Closed Christmas period.
- 19. Marle Place Gardens**
Marle Place Road, Brechley, Kent
01892 722304
Open 29 Mar-7 Oct, daily, 1000-1730
- 20. Merriments Garden**
Hurst Green, East Sussex
01580 860666
www.merriments.co.uk
Open 1 Apr-31 Oct, Mon-Sat, 0930-1700. Sun, 1030-1700
- 21. Nymans Garden**
Handcross, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
01444 400321
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Open 1 Mar-3 Nov, Wed-Sun, Bank Hols, 1100-1800, or sunset if earlier. 4 Nov-31 Dec, Sat, Sun, 100-1600. Closed 28, 29 Dec
House open from 27 Mar-3 Nov
- 22. Owl House & Gardens**
Mount Pleasant, Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890230
Open all year, daily, 1100-1800
Closed 25 Dec, 1 Jan
- 23. Pashley Manor Gardens**
Ticehurst, Wadhurst, East Sussex
01580 200888
www.pashleymanorgardens.com
Open 13 Apr-28 Sept, Tue-Thu, Sat, Bank Hol Mon, 1100-1700
- 24. Penshurst Place**
Penshurst, Tonbridge, Kent
01892 870307
www.penshurstplace.com
Open 29 Mar-31 Oct, daily, gardens & venture playground: 1030-1800, house, 1200-1730; last admission 1700. House closes 1600, Sat.
- 25. Priest House**
North Lane, West Hoathly, West Sussex
01342 810479
www.sussexpast.co.uk
Open 1 Mar-31 Oct, Mon-Sat, 1100-1730, Sun, 1400-1730
- 26. Sackville College**
East Grinstead, West Sussex
01342 326561
Open Jun-Aug, Wed-Sun, 1400-1700
- 27. Scotney Castle Garden**
Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 891081
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Open 31 Mar-4 Nov, Wed-Fri, 1100-1800, Sat, Sun 1400-1800 or sunset if earlier, Bank Hol Mon, 1200-1800. Last admission 1 hour before closing.
Old Castle open May -17 Sep.
- 28. Sheffield Park Garden**
Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 790231
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Open Mar-Oct, daily, except Mon, 1030-1800; last admission, 1700; Nov, Dec, daily, except Mon, 1030-1600, or dusk, if earlier. Open Bank Hol Mons
- 29. Sissinghurst Castle Garden**
Sissinghurst, nr Cranbrook, Kent
01580 710701
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Open 29 Mar-15 Oct, Tue-Fri, 1300-1830, Sat, Sun 1000-1830; last admission, 1 hour before closing. Woodland walks open all year.
- 30. Smallhythe Place**
Small Hythe, Tenterden, Kent
01580 762334 www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Open 23 Mar-3 Nov, Sat-Wed, 1100-1700
Last admission 1630



- 31. Sprivers Garden**
The National Trust, Horsmonden, Kent
01892 890651
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Open 25 May, 8, 16 Jun, 1400-1800. Last admission 1730
- 32. Standen**
Standen, East Grinstead, West Sussex
01342 323029
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Open 23 Mar-3 Nov, Wed-Sun, Bank Hol Mon; House: 1100-1700, Gardens: 1100-1800.
- 34. Wakehurst Place**
Ardingly, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
01444 894066
www.kew.org
Open Apr-Sep, daily, 1000-1900; Oct, daily, 1000-1800; Nov, Dec, daily, 1000-1600.
Closed 25 Dec, 1 Jan

Vineyards

- 35. Barnsgate Manor Vineyard**
Herons Ghyll, Crowborough, East Sussex
01825 713366
www.barnsgate.co.uk
Open all year, daily, 1000-1700, or dusk, if earlier
- 36. Carr Taylor Vineyards**
Westfield, Hastings, East Sussex
01424 752501
www.carr-taylor.com
Open Mar-Dec, daily, 1000-1700.
Closed 24-31 Dec, 1 Jan
- 37. Davenport Vineyards**
Rotherfield, Crowborough, E Sussex
01892 852380
www.davenportvineyards.co.uk
Open 1 Apr-30 Sept, Mon, Fri, Sat. Please phone for exact times.
- 38. Penshurst Vineyards**
Penshurst, Tonbridge, Kent
01892 870255
www.penshurst.co.uk
1 Mar-23 Dec, daily, 1000-1700.
Closed 24 Dec - 1 Jan
- 39. Sandhurst Vineyards**
Sandhurst, Cranbrook, Kent
01580 850296
Open for self-guided tours all year, Mon-Fri, 1400-1730 Sat, 1100-1730, Sun, 1200-1500
- 40. Sedlescombe Vineyard**
Cripps Corner, Robertsbridge, East Sussex
01580 830715
www.englishorganicwine.co.uk
Open 1 Apr-31 Dec, daily, 1000-1800. Closed 24, 25 Dec
- 41. Tenterden Vineyard Park**
Small Hythe, Tenterden, Kent
01580 763033
www.chapeldownwines.co.uk/tenterdenvineyardpark
Open all year, daily, 1000-1700
Closed 24-31 Dec, 1, 2 Jan



This map is to be used as a guide only. It is not an accurate representation.

Farms and woods open to the public

42. Ashdown Forest Llama Park
Wych Cross, Forest Row, East Sussex
01825 712040
www.llamapark.co.uk
Open daily. (ex 25-26 Dec)
1000 - 1700

43. Farm World
Great Knelle, Beckley, East Sussex
01797 260250
Open 21 Mar-31 Oct, daily, except Sunday, 1200-1730
School hols, daily, 1030-1730

44. Heaven Farm
Furners Green, Danehill, Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 790226
www.heavenfarm.co.uk
Open 1 Mar-31 Oct, daily, 1000-1730, 1-30 Nov, Sun, 1030-1700

45. Mount Farm
Wadhurst, East Sussex
01892 783152
Open 4 Mar-31 Oct, Sat, Sun, daily during Sussex school hols, 1000-1645

46. Wilderness Wood
Hadlow Down, Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 830509
www.wildernesswood.co.uk
Open all year, daily, 1000-1730 (summer) 1000-1630 (winter)
Closed 25, 26 Dec

Steam railways

47. Bluebell Railway
Sheffield Park Station, Uckfield, East Sussex
01825 722370
www.bluebell-railway.co.uk
Open all year, Phone for exact train times.
Closed 25 Dec

48. Kent & East Sussex Railway
Tenterden Station, Station Road, Tenterden, Kent
01580 765155
www.ksr.org.uk
Please phone for opening times and exact train times

49. Spa Valley Railway
West Station, Tunbridge Wells, Kent
01892 537715
www.spavalleyrailway.co.uk
Open Mar-Oct, Sat, Sun, Bank Hols, some weekdays during school hols. Please phone for exact train times

Windmills

50. Cranbrook Union Windmill
The Hill, Cranbrook, Kent
01580 712256
www.argonet.co.uk/users/tonysing/union
Open 30 Mar-14 Jul, Sat, Bank Hol Mon, 1430-1700;
15 July-26 Aug, Sat, Sun, 1430-1700; 1-30 Sep, Sat 1430-1700

51. Nutley Windmill
Nutley, Uckfield, East Sussex
01435 873367
Open Mar-Sept, last Sun of each month

52. Stocks Mill
Rye Road, Wittersham, Kent
01797 270295
6 May-30 Sept, Sun, Bank Hol
Mons, 1430-1700

Museums

53. Battle Museum of Local History
Battle, East Sussex
01424 775955
Open Easter-30 Sept, Mon-Sat, 1030-1630, Sun 1400-1700

54. Buckleys Yesterday's World
Battle, East Sussex
01424 775378
www.yesterdaysworld.co.uk
Open winter months, daily, 1000-1700, summer - daily, 0930-1800. Closed 25-26 Dec

55. C M Booth Collection of Historic Vehicles
Rolvenden, Kent
01580 241234
Open all year, Mon-Sat, 1000-1800. Closed 25, 26 Dec

56. Court Hall Museum
Winchelsea, East Sussex
01797 226382
Open 1 May-30 Sept, Tues-Sat, Bank Holidays, 1030-1230
Sunday 1400-1700

57. Cranbrook Museum
Cranbrook, Kent
01580 712069
Open 1 Apr-31 Oct, Tues-Sat 1400-1630, plus Bank Hols

58. East Grinstead Town Museum
East Grinstead, West Sussex
01342 323636
Open all year, Wed, Sat, 1400-1800

59. Horsham Museum
Horsham, West Sussex
01403 254959
Open all year, daily except Sun, 1000-1700.
Closed Bank Holidays

60. Tenterden and District Museum
Tenterden, Kent
01580 764310
www.ukpages.net/kent/museum.htm
Open Apr-Jun, daily, 1400-1630;
Jul-Sep, daily, 100-1630;
1-31 Oct, daily, 1400-1630

61. The Story of Rye
Rye, East Sussex
01797 226696
www.rye.org.uk/heritage
Open Mar-Oct, daily, 0900-1730;
Nov, Dec, daily, 1000-1600.
Closed 25, 26 Dec, 1 Jan
(check for opening times)

62. Tunbridge Wells Museum
Tunbridge Wells, Kent
01892 554171
www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/museum
Open all year, daily except Sun, 0930-1700
Closed Bank Hol Mon, Easter Sat (30 Mar)

63. Ypres Tower and Rye Museum
Rye, East Sussex
01797 226728
Open 1 Apr-31 Oct, Mon, Thu, Sun, 1030-1300, 1400-1700;
1 Nov-31 Dec, Sat, Sun, 1030-1530. Closed Christmas period.

Country parks

64. Bewl Water
Lamberhurst, Kent
01892 890661
www.bewl.co.uk
Open all year, daily, 0900-sunset.
Closed 25 Dec.

65. Buchan CP
Crawley, West Sussex
01293 542088

66. Hastings CP
Fairlight, East Sussex
01424 813225

67. Forest Way CP
East Grinstead, West Sussex
01273 482670

Nature reserves

68. Rye Harbour NR
Rye, East Sussex
01797 223862

69. Weirwood NR
Saint Hill, West Sussex
01273 481654

Regional public transport information

Kent Traveline
0345 696996

East Sussex
01273 474747

West Sussex
0345 959099

Special bus services have been set up in the area to improve access to visitor attractions at weekends and Bank Holidays. Adult fare for all day unlimited travel is typically £2.50.

National travel information

National Rail enquiries
0345 484950

National Express (coach)
0990 808080

Journeycall (rail & coach)
0906 550000

Accommodation

South East England Tourist Board
01892 540766 or local tourist information centres.

Horsham TIC
01403 211661

East Grinstead TIC
01342 410121

Tunbridge Wells TIC
01892 515675

Cranbrook TIC
01580 712538

Tenterden TIC
01580 763572

Rye TIC
01797 226696

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.southeastengland.uk.com
- www.sussex-country-tourism.co.uk
- www.1066country.co.uk
- www.sussexlive.com
- www.village-net.com



Fly Agaric



Start/finish point: Roosthole car park for both walks (TQ207298)

Distance and time: Approx 1 mile (1.6 km) walk one, approx 2.75 miles (4 km) walk two

Times: approximately half an hour – walk one, 1 hour – walk two

Terrain: Undulating

Waymarking: Walk 1 blue way marker posts, Walk 2 green waymarker posts

Maps: OS Explorer 134 Crawley & Horsham

Guides: St Leonards Forest Walks – leaflet of 2 circular walks. Available from West Sussex County Council on 01243 777100, tourism@westsussex.gov.uk

Circular Walk One – Sheepwash Gill

This walk encompasses a variety of habitats. Sheepwash Gill is a stream ravine set in the Tunbridge Wells sandstone beds. The gill is rich in mosses and liverworts including some rare species. Damp loving Alder trees grow along the gill banks, their cone like seeds are eaten by Siskins and Redpolls. The drier slopes are cloaked with oak woodland.

In summer, White Admiral butterflies fly through sunlit glades. In spring, Redstarts return from Africa, look out for their quivering red tails. A damp autumn will provide a rich display of fungi including the edible Penny Bun.

Beyond the stream, Silver Birch dominates the woodland. The lines of Western Hemlock were planted. Birch is an important food plant for the caterpillars of moths. Over 300 moth species have been recorded in the forest.

Scattered clumps of heather grow beneath the birch providing a clue to the area's heathland past when this acid loving plant would have been widespread. Even today some paths are flanked with a ribbon of purple heather flowers in August. Also beneath the birch, in autumn, lurk the white spotted orange caps of Fly Agaric toadstools commonly associated with gnomes and fairies.

Circular Walk Two – Micks Cross

This route extends further down Sheepwash Gill and into the wider forest. The contrast between the native woodland cloaking the bank of the gill and the commercial softwood plantations is dramatic. Another visually striking contrast is that between the large open areas that have been clearfelled and the

blocks of standing conifers. It is this variety that encourages the diverse range of wildlife.

On warm spring days Adders bask in the sun after a winter spent in hibernation. Lizards also soak up the sun on old tree stumps and patches of bare earth. In summer, the night air carries the strange “churring” call of the Nightjar. Overhead at dusk Woodcocks perform their courtship or ‘roding’ flights repeatedly patrolling their territory on slow beating wings, uttering a deep throaty call.

Roe deer, which first colonized the site in 1965 are often seen in the open areas. The larger Fallow deer may also be seen grazing the sides of the forest rides. These wide grassy rides

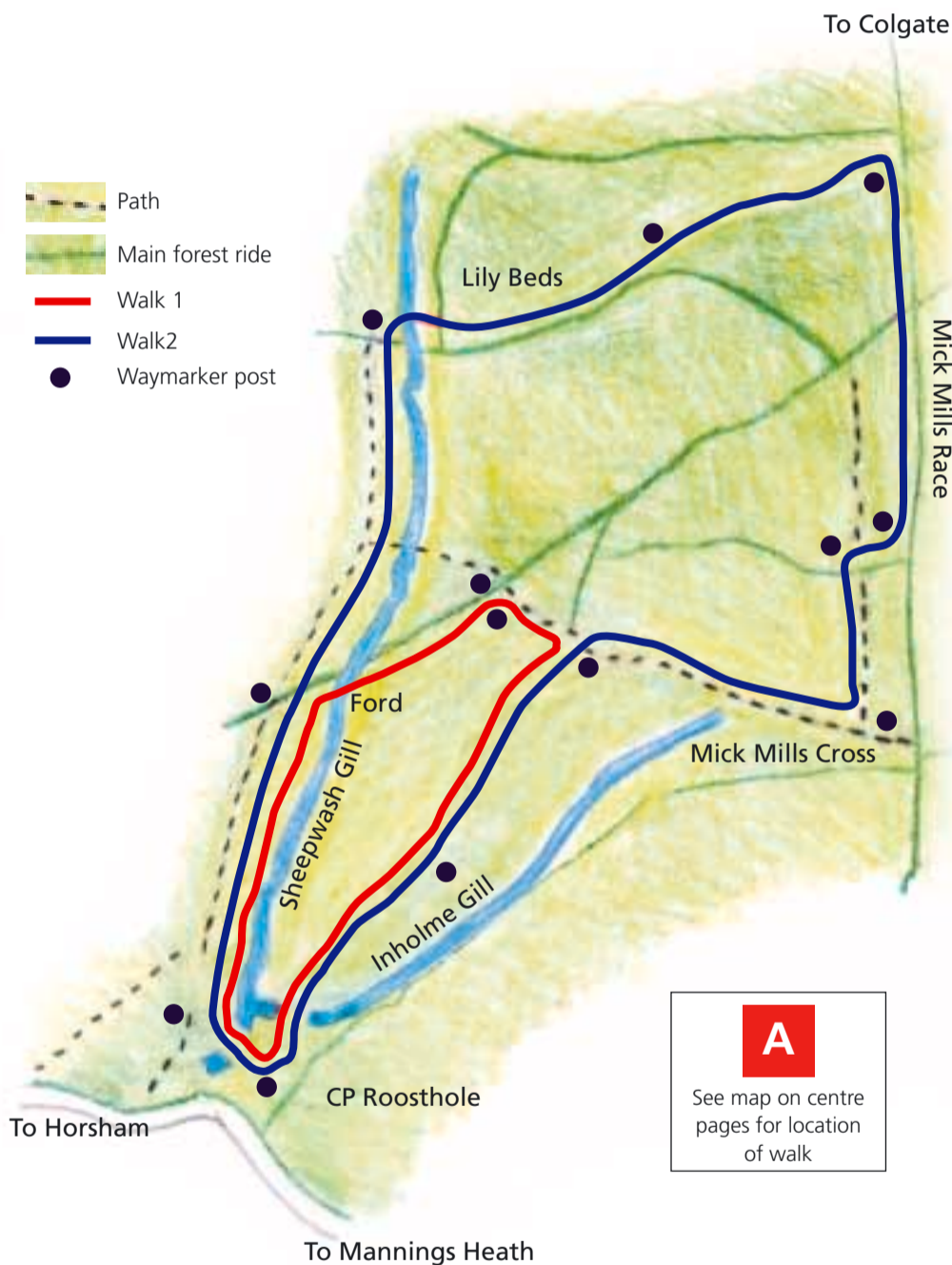
which act as fire breaks are also home to butterflies like the Meadow Brown and several species of grasshopper and cricket.

Along Mick Mills Race there are large heaps of pine needles. These are the nests of Wood Ants. In warm weather many thousands of ants can be seen sprawling all over the next, radiating out in columns that can stretch for tens of metres. At Mick Mills Cross the forest remains much as it was in the Middle Ages: mature Oaks and Beech trees and much dead and fallen timber. The Great Storm of October 1987 blew down many of the larger trees yet already dozens of saplings are in competition to become the next generation of forest giants.

Explore St Leonards

Ambling alongside forest wildlife in West Sussex

St Leonards was once part of the Great Forest of Anderida that stretched from east to west for 100 miles between the North and South Downs. Today the area covers 12 square miles and is part of the High Weald AONB. Parts of the forest such as Sheepwash Gill and Mick Mills Cross are notified Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) in recognition of their wildlife importance.



Fact Pack

Local producers based in and around Horsham

David Meed
01403 710974
Wooden house signs

John Lindfield
01403 251778
john-lindfield@excite.com
Wooden hurdles, advice & management on coppicing

The Coppice Trading Post
01403 786283
richard.hobbs@one2one.net
Wooden furniture and charcoal

King & Barnes
01403 270870 - beers, lagers, ales

Shelley's Woodlanders
01403 247412
dpshw@christs-hospital.org.uk
Charcoal

Attractions

Horsham Museum 01403 254959
Holmbush Farm World 01293 851110
Huxleys Experience 01403 273458
Leonardslee Gardens 01403 891212
See page 14/15 for details

Services

Colgate – The Dragon Pub
Mannings Heath – Dun Horse Inn, 2 miles from car park. Also shops, bus stop and public telephone available
Lower Beeding – The Plough, 3 miles from car park

Public Transport

Train: Horsham and Crawley stations on the Horsham to London line. Two hourly service Monday to Sunday.
Bus: No 107, hourly service between Brighton and Henfield via Mannings Heath. Sunday Service, two hourly.

Accommodation

Cisswood House Hotel, Mr R Terry, Sandygate Lane, Lower Beeding, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 6NF Tel: 01403 891216
The Dun Horse, Brighton Road, Mannings Heath, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 6HZ Tel: 01403 265783
The Old Post House, Dr Crisp, Handcross Road, Lower Beeding, West Sussex, RH13 6NU Tel: 01403 891776
Black Cottage (self-catering), Vicky Storey, Newells Farm, Newells Lane, Lower Beeding, Horsham, West Sussex, RH13 6LN Tel: 01403 891326



Flowering heather

Discover Winchelsea

Military manoeuvres round an inland port in East Sussex

This walk features the ancient town of Winchelsea; the Royal Military Canal with its unusual history and thriving wildlife; Icklesham Windmill, views of the English Channel and beautiful Brede valley.

Start/Finish Points: Winchelsea Station (TQ899183)

Distance: 7 miles (11km) or 5 miles (8 km) if the short cut is used.

Time: Up to 4 hours, up to 3 hours if short cut is used.

Terrain: Undulating

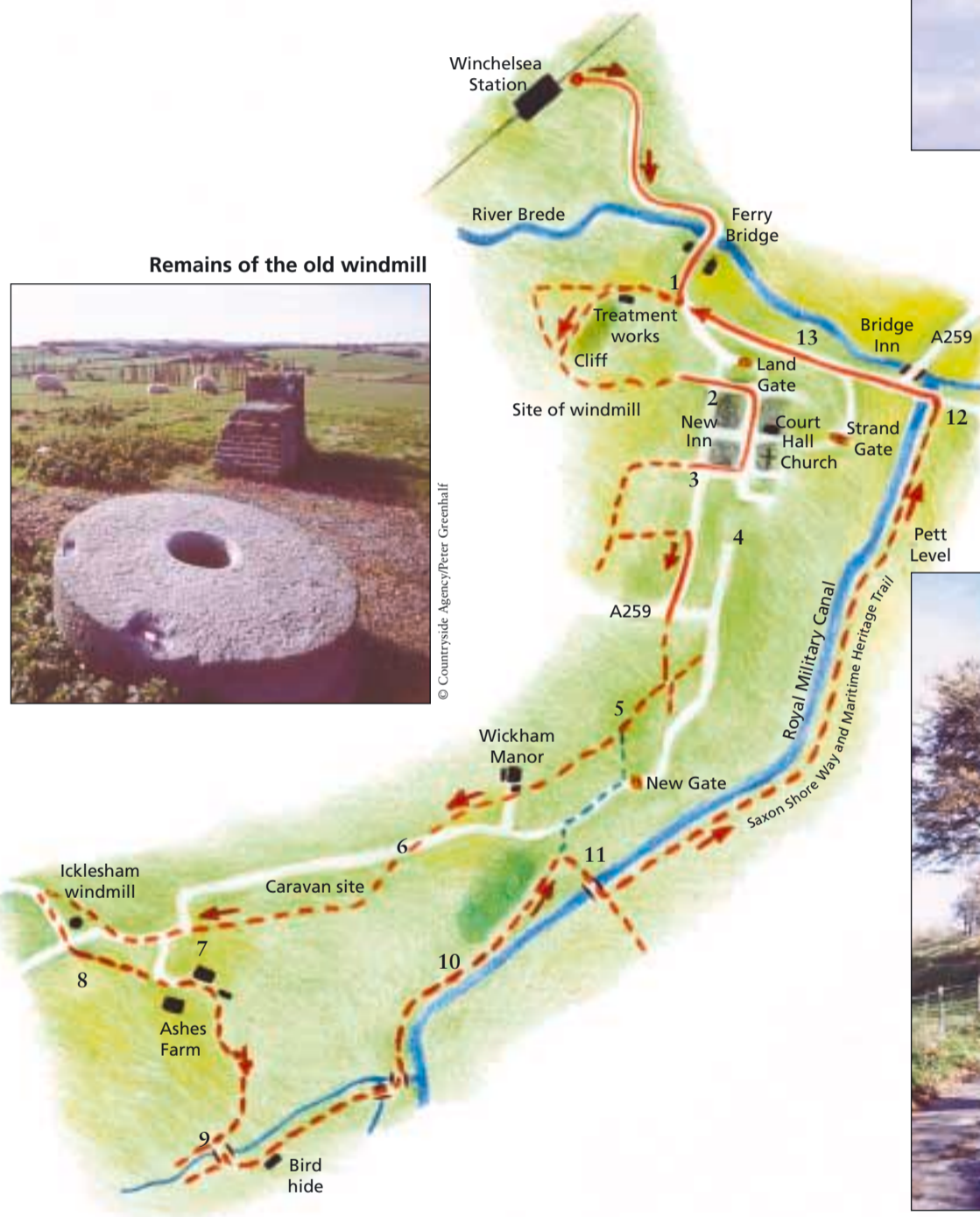
Waymarking: Standard waymarking discs – see page 13

OS Maps: Explorer 125 and 124 or Landranger 199

Guide: Free Trails by Rail leaflet available from East Sussex Countryside Management Services – Rye Bay Office (01797 226488) simon@ryebay.demon.co.uk

Winchelsea Royal Military Canal Walk

From station, turn **R** along road – at junction with A259 on hairpin bend **1**. turn **R** along path which is part of 1066 Country Walk – follow this round to **L** next to wooded cliff and then between grassy banks, with beautiful views over the Brede Valley. Pass site of old windmill (swept away in gales of 1987) and continue on lane to main road **2**. where you go straight across on road into town – take first turning **R**, then over crossroads past church on **L** – take next road on **R** and then straight across main road **3**. and through kissing gate. Cross recreation ground to stile and very shortly, turn **L** down another path between banks. Beyond next kissing gate, turn **L** up sunken path to main road. **4**. turn **R** on footway alongside road and where main road veers right, cross side road and go straight ahead on track downhill. At cross paths turn **R** over stile and follow another stretch of 1066 Country Walk. At next stile **5**. bear right across field or for a short cut bear left alongside town ditch to New Gate, where you turn right along road until you reach footpath on left – follow this along edge of wood until turn left in front of gate and rejoin full walk directions (go to **11**). Go over **2** stiles to **L** of barn near Wickham Manor, across field and **2** more stiles to lane **6**. where cross diagonally. Follow path past shelter belt on right, with superb views of the channel coast and towards Fairlight, and out to road **7**. Go straight ahead and shortly **R** through gate and uphill on grass path to pass to **R** of Icklesham Windmill (another fine viewpoint). Cross stile and leave 1066 Country Walk by turning **L** up lane – TAKE GREAT CARE HERE! – at road junction **8**. turn **R**, then almost immediately left over stile – bear **L** along path which leads to Ashes farm – go straight ahead between buildings along track which later bears **R** before house and heads downhill and cross Pannel Valley Nature Reserve – follow track between reeds to cross footbridge. **9**. Turn **L** past public bird hide and then across **2** footbridges just before Royal Military Canal – now follow grass path bearing **L** to stile **10**. and across field at foot of wooded cliff, through gate and then turn **R** **11**. Go straight ahead next to ditch to cross bridge over canal and then turn **L** and follow path alongside canal for over a mile to road **12**. Turn **L** to main road, where you continue straight ahead (on footway) past Bridge Inn. Shortly after road turning on **L**, access of foot back into Winchelsea is possible via steps up cliff on **L** **13**. but to complete walk continue to hairpin bend where you turn **R** and retrace steps back to station.



Fact Pack

Local products

The Little Shop, High Street, Winchelsea
Wickhams Family Butchers, Castle Street, Winchelsea
Suttons Fish and Local Produce, Winchelsea Beach (just down the hill from Winchelsea)
Windmill Farm Shop, Icklesham

Attractions

Court Hall Museum
Winchelsea 01797 226382
St. Thomas' Church, Winchelsea
Carr Taylor Vineyard, 01424 892826
Sedlescombe Vineyard, 01580 830715
See page 14/15 for details

Services

Pubs: Icklesham - Queens Head (Parsonage Lane) and the Robin Hood (Main Road). Winchelsea - Bridge Inn (The Strand), Winchelsea Motel. Winchelsea Beach - Ships Inn (Sea Road).
Pett Level – Smugglers.

There are village shops in Winchelsea and Icklesham and the award winning Tea Tree Tea Rooms on the High Street is a member of the Tea Council Guild of Tea Shops. There are public toilets in Winchelsea.

Public transport

Bus: The 711 (hourly off-peak, two hourly on Sundays) links Rye, Winchelsea, Icklesham and Hastings.
For further information phone 0870 6082 608 or

www.showbus.co.uk/timetables/index.html

Train: Winchelsea station is on the Hastings to Ashford line. For further information phone 08457 484950 or www.railtrack.co.uk/travel

Accommodation

Strand House, Mr & Mrs Woods, Tanyards Lane, Winchelsea, East Sussex, TN36 4JT
Tel: 01797 226276
Manor Farm Oast, Kate Mylrea, Workhouse Lane, Icklesham, East Sussex TN36 4AJ
Tel: 01424 813787

For more accommodation go to: www.1066country.com



Start/finish point: Benenden village (TQ807330)

Distance: 7.5 miles, 12 kilometres

Time: 2-3 hours depending on stops

Terrain: Flat

Waymarking: None

OS Maps: Explorer 137

Guide: Parish Pedals – a series of leaflets available from Kent High Weald Project on 01580 715918 kenthighweald@kent.gov.uk Cost £2.

The route takes in a section of bridleway running through Hemsted Forest, which during the winter months can get muddy. You can expect to meet horses within the forest so please take extra care when approaching as your appearance could easily startle a horse.

Background to the ride

Benenden takes its name from Bynning Denn, which in old English translates to “Bynna’s woodland pasture.” There are several Roman roads in the locality and these were probably associated with early workings of iron ore deposits. There are also many ponds in the area, the flooded remains of marl pits. Marl, a clay containing lime, was important for improving the heavy clay soils of the Weald. Under a statute of Henry VIII, every man was allowed to dig a pit for marl on his own land, and a look at a large-scale 1:25 000 map shows how the yeomen of Benenden responded!

Kitty Fisher, famed in a nursery rhyme as the one who found Lucy Locket’s pocket, was once the mistress of Hemsted. Kitty was a milliner, a local girl who had worked her way round society via various bedchambers. Casanova himself claimed to have courted her and she modelled for Sir Joshua Reynolds. When she died, she was buried in the local churchyard, dressed in her best ball gown – according to her own wishes. Today, Hemsted is the home of the famous Benenden School, which numbers the Princess Royal among its old girls.

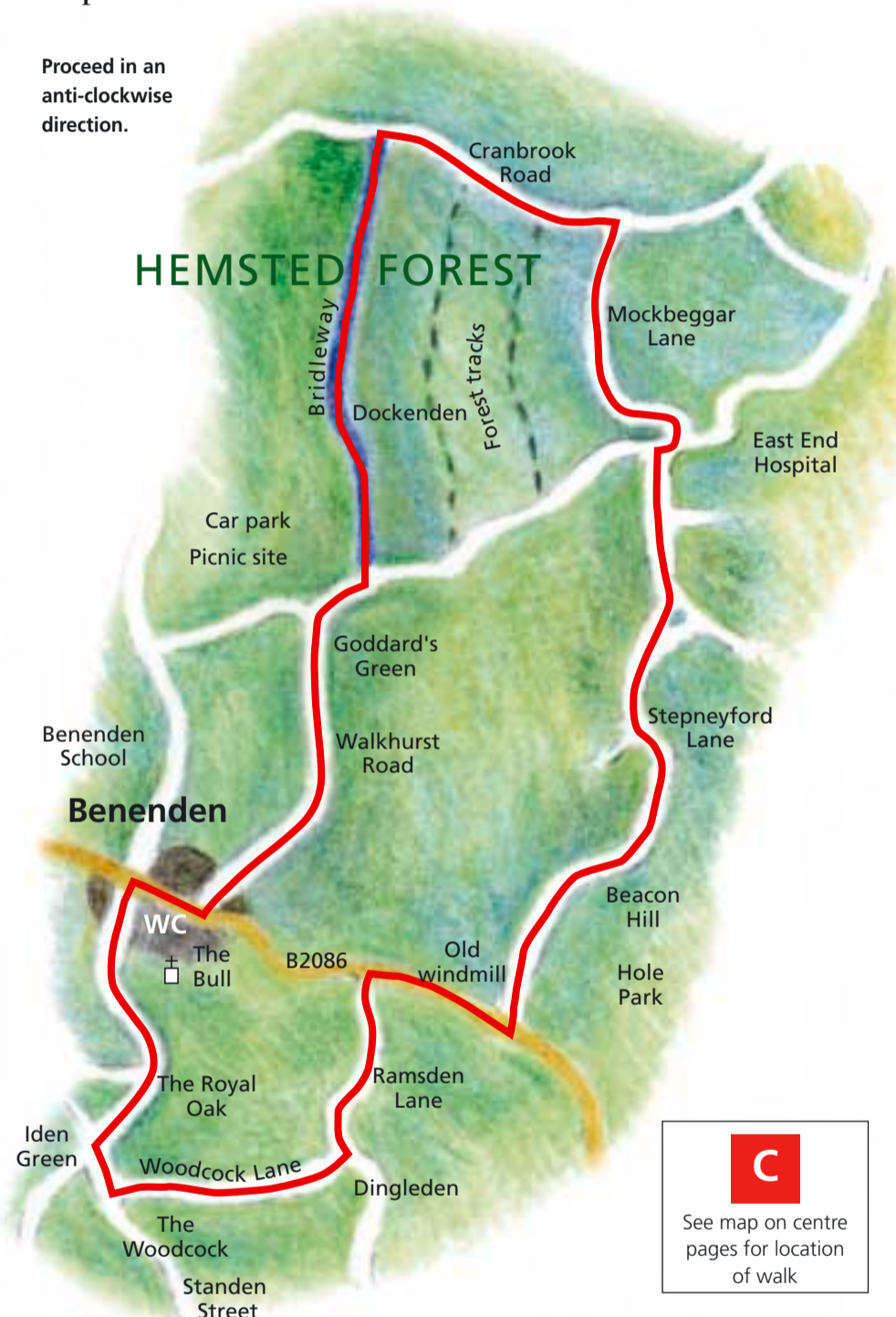
In 1905, the Post office established a chest hospital at East End, Benenden to provide free treatment for tuberculosis victims among its staff. After 1933, the hospital was opened to all Civil Service members and their families. As TB declined, the range of treatments expanded and today the enlarged hospital caters for a wide variety of illnesses.

Discover Benenden

Pedalling through the past in Kent

Cycling is the ideal way to explore the pretty country lanes around the village of Benenden. The route takes in the large village green where cricket is played in summer, an old windmill, part of Hemsted Forest and several pubs.

Proceed in an anti-clockwise direction.



See map on centre pages for location of walk



Hemsted Forest



Old windmill



Benenden village

Fact Pack

Local producers

Bexhill Nurseries 01580 291768 - native hedging plants
Benenden Vineyard 01580 240976 - wine, apples
Hinxden Farm Dairy 01580 240685 - milk, cream yoghurt
Harrington Foods 01580 240203 - dressings, sauce
William Cyster 01580 240677 - apples, cherries

Attractions

Cranbrook Union Windmill 01580 712256

Cranbrook Museum 01580 715542
See page 14/15 for details

Services

Pubs: The Bull in Benenden and The Royal Oak and The Woodcock on the route south of the village. There is a village shop and toilets in Benenden and a picnic site in Hemsted Forest.

Public Transport

Train: Stations nearby at Staplehurst (7.5 miles from Benenden), Headcorn (9.5 miles from Benenden) on the London to Ashford International line. Two hourly service Monday to

Saturday. Hourly service on Sundays. Phone 08457 484950 for further details or www.railtrack.co.uk/travel

Bus services: 297, two hourly service, Mon – Fri, Tunbridge Wells to Leigh Green via Benenden. Saturday service. No Sunday service. Phone traveline for information on 0870 6082 608.

Accommodation

Scullgate Oast, Mr & Mrs Whitmore, Coldharbour Road, Benenden, Cranbrook, Kent, TN17 4LD Tel: 01580 240870

Events



- Antique Craft & Book Fairs
- Displays, Exhibitions and Talks
- Family Fun, Sports & Outdoor Activities
- Guided Walks
- Kids Activities
- Music, Drama & Dance
- Wildlife & Gardening

● 5 April – 27 September

Sculpture at Pashley

Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex, 01580 200888

Email: info@pashleymanorgardens.com
1100 – 1700 hours

Pashley's Gardens, with their lawns, verdant walks, glades and pools make an ideal setting for Sculpture. Each year the work of many eminent sculptors are displayed. All exhibits are for sale.

●

15 April – 27 September

Botanical Art Exhibition

Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex, 01580 200888

Email: info@pashleymanorgardens.com
1100 – 1700 hours

An exhibition of Botanical drawings and paintings with leading artists many of whom have been awarded Gold Silver Gilt medals by the RHS. All these works are for sale and are hung in the 17th century oak panelled Great Hall and Study.

●

1-5 May

Tulip Festival

Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex, 01580 200888

Email: info@pashleymanorgardens.com
1100 – 1700 hours

Spectacular displays of massed tulips from Chelsea Gold Medal winning growers, Blooms. 12,500 bulbs of more than 65 different varieties have been planted in the Gardens.

●

3 May

Standen Spring Nature Walk

Standen, East Grinstead, West Sussex; 01342 323029

Email: standen@ntrust.org.uk
www.nationaltrust.org.uk
0900 – 1030 hours

A walk round the Standen estate including Hollybush Wood and down to Weirwood Reservoir. Bring binoculars, wear suitable clothing and footwear. Booking essential.

●

3- 5 May

Railways: Weekend at War

Kent and East Sussex Railway, Tenterden, Kent, 01580 765155

Email: enquiries@kesr.org.uk,
www.kesr.org.uk
1000 – 1700 hours

Take an unusual trip back in time to occupied France during World War II. Board the train at Tenterden and visit allied and enemy territory at Northiam and Bodiam. Please phone for details of prices. Booking - credit/debit card facility - 01580 766428

●

3 – 5 May

Bonsai Weekend at Leonardslee

Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens, Horsham, West Sussex, 01403 891212

Email: gardens@leonardslee.com,
www.leonardslee.com
0930 – 1800 hours

Demonstrations and advice on the art of growing and styling bonsai. Please phone for details of prices. Dates are yet to be confirmed.

●

3 – 5 May

May Day Festivities

Hever Castle and Gardens, Hever, Kent, 01732 861700

Email: amcritchley@hevercastle.co.uk,
www.hevercastle.co.uk

Entertainment by period costumed musicians and dancers. Please phone for details of prices. Times to be confirmed.

●

5 May

Bluebell Time

High Beeches Gardens, Handcross, West Sussex, 01444 400589

Email: office@highbeeches.com
www.highbeeches.com

1100 – 1700 hours

The woodland areas at High Beeches will be carpeted in blue. A new tea room and tea lawn will be available to visitors. Entrance Fee: £5.00

●

10 – 11 May

The Sussex Garden Show

Borde Hill Gardens, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, 01795 474660

Email: wmh@gardenshows.com
www.gardenshows.com/sussex

0930 – 1700 hours

Set in the stunning grounds of Borde Hill, the show will feature floral displays and sales stands for nurseries and allied gardening trades, craft marquees, demonstrations, talks, children rides and a brass band. Entrance Fee: £5.50 Adults, £3.00 Children

●

10 – 11 May

Tenterden Country Fair & Working Machinery

Tenterden Vineyard, 01580 763033

Email: tourism@newwavewines.com,
www.englishwines.co.uk

1000 – 1700 hours

A collection of vintage vehicles and machinery. Children's fun rides, birds of prey display and craft stalls. Entrance Fee: £2.50 Adults

●

11 May

Standen Spring Nature Walk

Standen, East Grinstead, West Sussex

01342 323029

Email: standen@ntrust.org.uk
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

0900 – 1030 hours

A walk round the Standen estate including Hollybush Wood and down to Weirwood Reservoir.

Entrance Fee: No charge but donation to the Nat Trust, Sorry no dogs. Meet at Entrance Gate to property. Bring binoculars, wear suitable clothing and footwear. Booking is essential.

●

18 May

Spring Plant Fair

Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex, 01580 200888

Email: info@pashleymanorgardens.com
1100 – 1700 hours

Plant fair offering keen gardeners the chance to buy from approximately 30 first-class Nurseries specialising in unusual, rare, herbaceous and alpine plants and shrubs.

●

24 May

HW AONB Unit & WMI at Heathfield Show

Heathfield Showground, Little Tottingworth Farm, Broad Oak.

For more details 01323 832231

Email: info@highweald.org
www.highweald.org

0800 – 1800 hours

The High Weald AONB Unit will be at Heathfield Show with a display and some hands-on activities to promote the new Management Plan.

The Weald Meadows Initiative (WMI) will also have a display, featuring the developments of the initiative, local seed and a family feature on discovering meadows in the Weald through interactive games.

Entrance Fee: £9 Adults, £3 Children, £20 Family

●

24 – 26 May

Merrie England

Hever Castle and Gardens, Kent

01732 865224

Email: mail@hevercastle.co.uk
www.hevercastle.co.uk

A celebration of Tudor and Elizabethan times. Please phone for further details.

●

25 – 26 May

Battle Medieval Fair

Battle Abbey Green, Battle, East Sussex, 01424 774447

Email: chpsmith@lineone.net

1000 – 1700 hours

A medieval fair with participants in period costume, maypole dancing. May Queen crowning and entertainment throughout the day. There are food stalls and many other catering outlets.

●

26 May

Azalea Time

High Beeches Gardens, 01444 400589

Email: office@highbeeches.com
www.highbeeches.com

1100 – 1700 hours

The azaleas and rhododendrons will be at their most colourful in the gardens. A WI handicraft and produce stall. Entrance Fee: £5.00

●

27 May

A Walk with the Warden

Sissinghurst Castle Gardens, 08701 555585

Email: sissinghurst@ntrust.org.uk,
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

1400 – 1600 hours

Join guide Peter Dear for this gentle walk of the estate surrounding the garden.

Entrance Fee: £4 Adults & Children, Sorry no dogs. Meet outside ticket office. Garden admission not included. Booking essential.

●

31 May – 1 June

Bewl Water Garden Show

Bewl Water, Lamberhurst, Kent, 01892 890661

Email: bewl@southernwater.co.uk,
www.bewl.co.uk

1000 – 1700 hours

A show especially for exhibiting and selling all kinds of plants, garden ornaments, outdoor furniture and all garden related products. Children's entertainment and refreshments available. Entrance Fee: £5.00 per vehicle

●

4 – 17 June

Standen Art Exhibition

Standen, East Grinstead, West Sussex, 01342 323029

Email: standen@ntrust.org.uk
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

An exhibition of pastel paintings, by local artist Juliet Murray, inspired by the garden at Standen and the surrounding Sussex countryside. Entrance Fee: £5.70 Adults, £2.85 Children, The Property/Exhibition is closed on Monday 9 June.

●

10 June

Behind the Scenes

Standen, East Grinstead, West Sussex, 01342 323029

Email: standen@ntrust.org.uk
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

A chance to see parts of the house not normally open to the public. Entrance Fee: £6.50 Adults, £3.25 Children

●

11 June

Tutored Paint in the Garden

Sissinghurst Castle Gardens, near Cranbrook, Kent, 08701 555585 Ticketmaster

Email: sissinghurst@ntrust.org.uk,
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

1000 – 1600 hours

A workshop with a professional artist Liam Thompson. An opportunity to paint the gardens on a day we are closed to the public. Entrance Fee: £35, Please bring a packed lunch. Booking essential.

●

13 – 22 June

Battle Festival

various venues, Battle, East Sussex

01424 772210

Email: battle.festival@virgin.net

www.battlefestival.com

The Battle Festival is a mixed arts and community event featuring classical and contemporary music, drama, arena literary events, children's activities and other outdoor events. Entrance Fee: £3.00 - £12.00



Glorious gardens with rare trees and shrubs introduced in the 1890s from around the world. Spring magnolias, rhododendrons and azaleas, summer roses and herbaceous plants, developing into autumn borders before winter's architectural splendour. Magical woodland and parkland walks. Tea Rooms, Plant Centre and Gift Shop.



Adventure Playground, Fishing & Woodland Walks. Special Events

Open all year daily 10am – 6pm (or dusk)

Oct-Mid March Adult £3.50, Child £3.00

Mid March–end Sept Adult £5.50, Child £3.50

Balcombe Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 1XP

Tel 01444 450326 Fax 01444 440427

email: info@bordehill.co.uk web: www.bordehill.co.uk

THE NATIONAL TRUST

BODIAM CASTLE

Sussex Family Attraction of the Year 2003*



The best example of a late medieval castle in the South East, with a year-round event programme for all the family, tea room and gift shop.

For more information please contact: 01580 830436 or visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk/bodiamcastle

*as chosen by The Good Britain Guide 2003

FINCHCOCKS

Living Museum of Music



House • Garden • Music

Demonstration/recitals by professional musicians on period keyboard instruments

Finchcocks, Goudhurst, Kent TN17 1HH

Tel: 01580 211702 Fax: 01580 211007

Email: katrina@finchcocks.co.uk

Web: www.finchcocks.co.uk

Heaven Farm



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

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

Open March to November inclusive, 10am to 5.30pm

Furners Green, Uckfield, Sussex, TN22 3RG

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

Pashley Manor Gardens

Winner of HHA / Christie's Garden of the Year.
Ticehurst, East Sussex.

Offers a sumptuous blend of romantic landscaping, imaginative plantings and fine old trees, fountains, springs and large ponds.

This is a quintessentially English Garden of a very individual character.

Special events including Tulip & Summer Flower Festivals, Opera in the Park, Sculpture and Botanical Art Exhibitions. See events listings for full details.

Licensed terrace restaurant, plants sales and gift shop.

Open 5th April – 27th Sept.
Tues-Thurs, Sat & BH Mons
11am – 5pm.

Tel: 01580 200888

www.pashleymanorgardens.com



14 June

Open-air concert

Jools Holland & his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra
Bedgebury National Pinetum, Goudhurst, Kent, 01580 211044

Email: elspeth.hill@forestry.gsi.gov.uk,
www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk

An open-air concert in the grounds of Bedgebury Pinetum with Jools Holland & his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra. Gates open from 1600. The arena opens at 1800. Entrance Fee: £24.00

Credit/Debit Card booking facility - 01842 814612

14 – 15 June

Thomas the Tank Engine A Day Out with Thomas

Kent & East Sussex Railway, Tenterden, Kent,
01580 765155

Email: enquiries@kesr.org.uk,
www.kesr.org.uk

1000 – 1700 hours

Come and join Thomas, every child's favourite steam engine who will be visiting Tenterden with the Fat Controller and some of his friends. Special children's entertainment is also provided.

Entrance Fee: £4.00 - £12.00 Adults, £4.00 - £8.00 Children, Credit/Debit Card Booking Facility - 01580 765155

15 June

Bewl Vintage Car Rally

Bewl Water, Lamberhurst, Kent, 01892 890661

Email: bewl@southernwater.co.uk,
www.bewl.co.uk

1000 – 1700 hours

A car rally with over 200 exhibits of cars and motorcycles. There will be a period dress competition, games and stalls. A restaurant will be available or bring your own picnic.

Entrance Fee: £5.00 per car

15 June

Open-air concert: Status Quo

Bedgebury National Pinetum, Goudhurst, Kent, 01580 211044

Email: elspeth.hill@forestry.gsi.gov.uk,
www.bedgeburypinetum.org.uk

An open-air concert in the grounds of Bedgebury Pinetum with Status Quo. Gates open from 1600. The arena opens at 1800. Entrance Fee: £26.00, Credit/Debit card booking facility - 01842 814612

17 June & 8 July

Meadows in the High Weald Landscape (Weald Meadows Initiative)

Rotherfield and Sedlescombe, for more details
01580 879500

Email: info@highweald.org
www.highweald.org

6pm start

Two 3-4 mile guided walks, exploring High Weald flower meadows in the wider landscape. A trip to the pub is planned, following the walks.

Entrance Fee: £ Free

18 June

Head Gardener's Historical Tour

Penshurst Place and Gardens

Penshurst, Kent, 01892 870307

Email: enquiries@penshurstplace.com,
www.penshurstplace.com

1400 – 1530 hours

Take a walk through the timeless beauty of Penshurst's historic garden with the Head Gardener, followed by a cream tea in the Garden Tea Room. Entrance Fee: £15.00

18 June

Rose Evening

Sissinghurst Castle Gardens, near Cranbrook, Kent, 08701 555585 Ticketmaster

Email: sissinghurst@ntrust.org.uk,
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Start Time: 1930 hours

An exclusive evening opening of the gardens with the gardeners on hand to share their knowledge.

Entrance Fee: £10 Adults & Children, Booking essential.

19 – 22 June

Summer Flower Festival

Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex, 01580 200888

Email: info@pashleymanorgardens.com

1100 – 1700 hours

Stunning flower arrangements by the members of the Wadhurst & District Flower Club will be displayed in the beautiful Great Hall and Study of the Manor, complemented by an exhibition of botanical paintings and drawings by leading artists. Displays of roses in the Gardens and other displays of annual and perennial flowering plants.

20 – 26 June

Rose Week

Hever Castle and Gardens, 01732 861700

Email: amcritchley@hevercastle.co.uk,
www.hevercastle.co.uk

The castle will be decked with roses, with tours of the garden plus talks and demonstrations relating to roses and gardening topics. Please phone for further details. Times to be confirmed.

21 – 22 June

Thomas the Tank Engine A Day Out with Thomas

Kent & East Sussex Railway, Tenterden, Kent,
01580 765155

Email: enquiries@kesr.org.uk,
www.kesr.org.uk

1000 – 1700 hours

Come and join Thomas, every child's favourite steam engine who will be visiting Tenterden with the Fat Controller and some of his friends. Special children's entertainment is provided.

Entrance Fee: £4.00 - £12.00 Adults, £4.00 - £8.00 Children. Credit/Debit Card Booking facility - 01580 765155

23 – 29 June

Rose Celebration Week

Borde Hill Garden, Haywards Heath, West Sussex

Email: info@bordehill.co.uk,
www.bordehill.co.uk

1000 – 1800 hours

Borde Hill has a celebrated Rose Garden with over 450 rose plants. During the week, visitors have been invited to enter Borde Hill House to see the grandeur and beauty of the room which will be filled with the fragrance, colour and beauty of freshly picked roses. Entrance Fee: £5.50 Adult, £3.50 Children Credit/Debit Card Booking Facility - 01444 450326

27 – 29 June

Wadhurst Charter Weekend

Wadhurst, East Sussex

In 2003 Wadhurst celebrates the 750th Anniversary of the granting of its charter to make it a market town. There are various events from 8pm on Friday 27th June - Concert of Music through the Ages in the Parish Church, a Mediaeval Fair and Market - 28/29 June with street markets and parade on Saturday. The Mediaeval Fair and Market will be of authentic activities and displays. Hawks and birds of prey will be flying (weather permitting), wandering sellers, acrobats and giants, Knight Templars and so on.

28 – 29 June

14th West Sussex Craft Show

Leonardslee Lakes and Gardens

01283 820548

1000 – 1800 hours

A large quality craft show with working craft demonstrations and many unusual arena demonstrations. Fun for all the family to enjoy. Entrance Fee: £6.00 Adults, £4.00 Children

29 June

Family Wildlife Event

Plover's Meadow on the B2102 between Blackboys and Cross-in-Hand. 2 until 5 pm.

01273 492630

Sussex Wildlife Trust's annual event. An afternoon out for the family with wagon rides, woodland and lakeside walk, children's activities, conservation and environmental groups. Attractions include bats, reptiles and amphibians. Adults £2.50, children free.

1-31 July

Eridge Summer Fair

Eridge Park, Eridge Green, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, 01892 864641

A summer fair in the grounds of Eridge Park to raise funds for the church, village hall and Hospice in the Weald. The event includes stalls and side shows, pony rides, rural crafts, teas and entertainers.

Times to be confirmed.

6 July

Borde Hill Plant Sale

Borde Hill Garden, Haywards Heath, West Sussex,

Email: info@bordehill.co.uk,
www.bordehill.co.uk

1000 – 1800 hours

The Plant Show will enable visitors to purchase a wide variety of plants, shrubs and trees from over 20 specialist nurseries based in the South East. Entrance Fee: £5.50 Adults, £3.50 Children. Credit/Debit card booking facility - 01444 450326

6 July

Waving the Flag Day

Penshurst Place and Gardens, Penshurst, Kent,
01892 870307

Email: enquiries@penshurstplace.com,
www.penshurstplace.com

1030 – 1800 hours

The event will celebrate 202 years of the Union Flag. Come and see the Union Flag Garden at its most beautiful with fragrant Lavender and red and white roses. Military band and afternoon tea. Please phone for details of prices.

12 July

Bewl Water Firework and Laser Symphony Concert

Bewl Water, Lamberhurst, Kent

01892 890661

Email: bewl@southernwater.co.uk,
www.bewl.co.uk

1500 – 2300 hours

An outdoor classical concert accompanied by stunning 1 hour long fireworks and laser finale.

Entrance Fee: £21.00 Adults, £11.00 Children. Credit/Debit Card Booking facility - 01892 890661

19 – 26 July

Jousting Tournament

Hever Castle and Gardens, Hever, Kent,
01732 861700

Email: amcritchley@hevercastle.co.uk,
www.hevercastle.co.uk

King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn arrive in front of the castle and proceed to the meadow to watch the Knights of Royal England compete for the hand of a fair maiden. Includes full gallop jousts at the tilt, riding the quintain and spearing rings and heads. Please phone for details of prices.

19 – 20 July

Steam and Country Fair

Kent & East Sussex Railway, Tenterden, Kent,
01580 765155

Email: enquiries@kesr.org.uk,
www.kesr.org.uk

This popular family festival returns with historic trains, vehicles and machinery. Country craftsmen will be exhibiting age old skills with the chance to purchase local produce and have a go yourself. Please phone for details of prices.

20 July

Borde Hill: Family Fun Day

Borde Hill Garden, Haywards Heath, West Sussex

Email: info@bordehill.co.uk,
www.bordehill.co.uk

1000 – 1700 hours

A family fun day providing a host of activities for the younger visitor including bouncy tunnel maze, mega slide, and bungee run. Entertainers including jugglers, Punch and Judy and Morris dancing.

Please phone for details of prices. Credit/Debit Card Booking facility - 01444 450326

● 20 – 27 July
Tudor Archery
 Hever Castle and Gardens, Hever, Kent, 01732 861700
 Email: amcritchley@hevercastle.co.uk, www.hevercastle.co.uk
 The bowmen of the 'Company of 1415' will be called to arms on the forecourt of Hever Castle and then proceed to the battle site. They will demonstrate the effectiveness of the longbow as a military weapon, as the bowmen defend themselves against attack by a band of heavily armed foot soldiers. Please phone for details of prices.

● 23 July
Bat Walk
 Sheffield Park Garden, near East Grinstead, 01825 790231
 Email: sheffieldpark@ntrust.org.uk, www.nationaltrust.org.uk
 2000 – 2230 hours
 Learn more about these elusive creatures as they emerge for their nocturnal forays. Entrance Fee: £7. Sorry no dogs. Booking is essential. Children free of charge but must be accompanied by an adult

● 26 July
An Evening of Opera in the Garden
 Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex, 01580 200888
 Email: info@pashleymanorgardens.com, The romantic atmosphere of Pashley's Gardens makes them an idyllic setting for opera. Champagne Reception. Bring your own picnic. The performance is in a large marquee. Dress: Black Tie.

● 1 – 31 August
Kids' Activities
 Borde Hill Garden, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
 Email: info@bordehill.co.uk, www.bordehill.co.uk
 1400 – 1700 hours
 Children's activities will be held in the glorious setting of Borde Hill Garden each weekday afternoon during August and will include pond dipping, painting, juggling, Punch and Judy, fishing and children's trail tractor rides. Entrance Fee: £5.50 Adults, £3.50 Children. Closed Bank Hol

● 2 August
Music from the Movies
 Batemans, Burwash, East Sussex
 1930 – 2230 hours
 Open air Orchestral concert with fabulous fireworks finale. Entrance Fee: £18. Doors open at 1800 hours

● 2 – 30 August
Jousting Tournament
 Hever Castle and Gardens, Hever, Kent, 01732 861700
 Email: amcritchley@hevercastle.co.uk, www.hevercastle.co.uk
 King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn arrive in front of the castle and proceed to the meadow to watch the Knights of Royal England compete for the hand of a fair maiden. The contest will include full gallop jousts at the tilt, riding the quintain and spearing rings and heads. Please phone for details of prices. Times to be confirmed. Closed Bank Hol, 4-8 Aug, 11-15 Aug, 18-22 Aug and 24-29 Aug

● 2 August
CSMA Night at the Proms
 Borde Hill Garden, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, 01273 744758
 Email: sue.angell@csma.uk.com, www.csma.uk.com
 1700 – 2230 hours
 CSMA Night at the Proms - featuring the English Symphony Orchestra with support band and compered by BBC Radio 2's Frank Renton. Entrance Fee: £16.00 - £25.00, Adults, £5.00 Children

● 2 August
CSMA Night at the Proms
 Borde Hill Garden, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, 01273 744758
 Email: sue.angell@csma.uk.com, www.csma.uk.com
 1700 – 2230 hours
 CSMA Night at the Proms - featuring the English Symphony Orchestra with support band and compered by BBC Radio 2's Frank Renton. Entrance Fee: £16.00 - £25.00, Adults, £5.00 Children

● 3 August
Fuchsia Show
 Borde Hill Garden, Haywards Heath, West Sussex,
 Email: info@bordehill.co.uk, www.bordehill.co.uk
 1100 – 1700 hours
 Fuchsia displays and sales from specialist nurseries, together with information and talks on growing and how to care for fuchsias. There will be tours of the fuchsias within Borde Hill Garden. Entrance Fee: £5.50 Adults, £3.00 Children. Credit/Debit Card Booking Facility - 01444 450326

● 4 August
Teddy Bear's Picnic
 Sheffield Park Gardens near East Grinstead, 01825 790231
 Email: sheffieldpark@ntrust.org.uk, www.nationaltrust.org.uk
 An opportunity to join in the family fun as we give you the chance to picnic in the garden. Children's activities like storytelling, Magic Man, Mini tree trail provide a lively afternoon's entertainment. Entrance Fee: £3 Adults £1.50 Children. Under 3 years and teddies free.

● 4 August
Countryside Capers
 Sissinghurst Castle Gardens, near Cranbrook, Kent, 08701 555585
 Email: sissinghurst@ntrust.org.uk, www.nationaltrust.org.uk
 1400 – 1600 hours
 Pond-dipping and other activities for children - suitable for approx 4 to 11 year olds. Entrance Fee: £4 Adults & Children. Sorry no dogs. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Booking is essential.

● 8 August
The Barber of Seville
 Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex, 01580 200888
 Email: info@pashleymanorgardens.com
 Enjoy open-air performances of innovative Opera for everyone with Pashley Manor as the beautiful backdrop. Bring your own picnic and seating.

● 9 August
The Impresario
 Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex, 01580 200888
 Email: info@pashleymanorgardens.com
 Enjoy open-air performances of innovative Opera for everyone with Pashley Manor as the beautiful backdrop. Bring your own picnic and seating.

● 10 August
Battle Abbey Classic and Motorcycle Show
 Battle Abbey and Battlefield, Battle, East Sussex
 1000 – 1700 hours
 Displays of historic and classic cars and a cavalcade of vehicles through the town to the Abbey. Other attractions include a country craft fayre, beer tent, children's attractions plus music and dancing from guest entertainers. Entrance Fee: £5.00 Adults, £2.50 Children

● 16 August
Making Whoopee
 Sheffield Park Garden, East Grinstead, Ticketmaster on 08701 555585
 Email: sheffieldpark@ntrust.org.uk, www.nationaltrust.org.uk
 1930 – 2300 hours
 Jazz spectacular - featuring three of Britain's brightest jazz bands; the Pete Allen Band, Bob Kerr's Whoopee Band, and Max Collie's Rhythm Aces. Entrance Fee: £18. Doors open 1830 hours. Booking is essential. For further information phone 01825 790231.

● 17 August
Summer Plant Fair
 Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex, 01580 200888
 Email: info@pashleymanorgardens.com
 1100 – 1700 hours
 Plant Fair offering keen gardeners the chance to buy from approximately 30 first-class Nurseries specialising in unusual, rare, herbaceous and alpine plants and shrubs.

● 23 – 25 August
Robin Hood Themed Craft Fayre
 Wakehurst Place Gardens, Haywards Heath, West Sussex, 01926 812529
 www.fourseasonscraftfayres.co.uk
 1000 – 1800 hours
 A Robin Hood themed craft fayre with over 150 crafts, demonstrations, refreshments, bar and Robin Hood entertainment including living history displays, puppets, magic and musicians. Entrance Fee: £4.00 Adults, £1.50 Children

● 24 – 31 August
Tudor Archery
 Hever Castle and Gardens, Hever, Kent, 01732 861700
 Email: amcritchley@hevercastle.co.uk, www.hevercastle.co.uk
 The bowmen of the 'Company of 1415' will be called to arms on the forecourt of Hever Castle and then proceed to the battle site. They will demonstrate the effectiveness of the longbow as a military weapon. Please phone for details of prices and times to be confirmed.

● 25 August
Le Marche
 Town Centre, Heathfield, East Sussex
 01435 866400
 0930 – 1530 hours
 An Anglo-French street market with food, craft stalls and street entertainment including jazz and silver bands, street theatre, face painting, children's fancy dress, circus skills and a petanque challenge.

● 26 August
Countryside Capers
 Sissinghurst Castle Gardens, near Cranbrook, Kent, 08701 555585 Ticketmaster
 Email: sissinghurst@ntrust.org.uk, www.nationaltrust.org.uk
 1400 – 1600 hours
 Pond-dipping and other activities for children - suitable for approx 4 to 11 year olds. Entrance Fee: £4 Adults & Children. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Sorry no dogs. Booking is essential.

● 30 – 31 August
Sussex Guild Craft Show
 Pashley Manor Gardens, Ticehurst, East Sussex, 01580 200888
 Email: info@pashleymanorgardens.com
 1000 – 1700 hours
 The Sussex Guild is a selected group of professional designer makers from Sussex and adjoining counties, whose aim is to promote the highest quality in both contemporary and traditional craftsmanship. Works on show include: Glass, ceramics, jewellery, furniture, textile arts, metalwork, quilting, bookbinding, lettercutting and carving.

● 31 August
Horses and Crafts
 High Beeches Gardens, Handcross, West Sussex, 01444 400589
 Email: office@highbeeches.com, www.highbeeches.com
 1100 – 1700 hours
 The heavy horses from the Working Horse Trust will be at work on the meadow, and there will also be craft stalls and demonstrations. The new tea room and garden will be open to visitors. Entrance Fee: £5.00

● 31 August
Kids' Animal Fair
 Borde Hill Gardens, Haywards Heath, West Sussex
 Email: info@bordehill.co.uk, www.bordehill.co.uk
 1000 – 1700 hours
 There will be a wide variety of animals at this event including falcons, llamas, snakes, rare rabbits and chickens. There will also be a dog agility show, craft and gift marquee, children's entertainers, donkey and tractor rides, children's fishing and a children's adventure playground. Entrance Fee: £5.50 Adults, £3.50 Children. Credit/Debit Card Booking Facility - 01444 450326

Please come along and support our local farmers, food and wine producers, timber growers and wood-users at:

FoodFair 2003
 Saturday 28 - Sunday 29 June
29th English Wine & Regional Food Festival
 Saturday 6 - Sunday 7 September
WoodFair 2003
 Friday 19 - Sunday 21 September
Bentley Wildfowl & Motor Museum
 Halland, nr Lewes, East Sussex

Contact:
 Jane Stevens
 Local Products Officer
 Tel: 01825 840870



ASHDOWN FOREST
LLAMA PARK

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 Llamas + Alpacas
 Museum + Farm Trail + Coffee Shop
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 Alpaca Knitwear + South American Craft Shop
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 (on A22, four miles south of East Grinstead)
 Tel: 01825 712040
 Web: www.llamapark.co.uk

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 Kent, TN3 8JH
 01892 890716
 bewl.water@kent.gov.uk
 www.bewlwater.org



Vision for the High Weald

Routeways

Characterized in the High Weald by ancient routes on ridge-top roads and radiating droveways.

We want to work towards a landscape in which the character of the distinctive lanes and Rights of Way is protected. The way this will be done will take into account various changes in use: increasing road traffic, increased leisure activities (riding, cycling, walking and off-road driving) under-use of many Rights of Way and expanding development.

Existing policies and designations that seek to protect archaeology and ecology; and which prevent ribbon development, will need to be refined. New policies will need to be developed to protect the character of lanes and Rights of Way by encouraging use of sympathetic surfacing materials and boundary types; reducing unnecessary use of signage; and by promoting appropriate walking, cycling and riding routes.



Management Plan Public Survey FACTS

The interviewees were asked to select, from a list of 8 issues of potential threat to the High Weald countryside, those that they considered to be a major threat. The issue that caused the greatest concern was that of the impact of traffic on the lanes (selected by nearly 90%). However, many of the interviewees recognised that they themselves were contributing to the problem.

Many also believed that improvements to major highways may reduce the impact of traffic on minor roads.

Given a list of 14 possible issues affecting enjoyment of the High Weald Countryside, interviewees were asked to say whether each issue affected their enjoyment "A lot", "A little" or "Not at all". It was only the issues of "too much traffic on minor roads" and "rubbish" that the majority felt affected their enjoyment a lot. Most of the negative issues listed were felt by the majority to be unimportant factors in spoiling enjoyment the High Weald.

However 15% or more felt that "lack of non-car transport", "lack of suitable parking", "excessive noise" and "poorly maintained paths" affected their enjoyment of the countryside a lot.



Routeways

On the verge of extinction?

There's a lot of wildlife on some roads in the High Weald – and not all of it's squashed!

Imagine a nature reserve a hundred metres long by just one metre wide, where early purple, common spotted and green-winged orchids thrive alongside pepper saxifrage, ragged robin, greater bird's-foot-trefoil and lady's smock. You don't even have to get out of your car to appreciate its delights: this wildlife site is a road verge.

These unlikely places can be havens for all kinds of wildlife. The loss of more than 95% of Britain's wildflower meadows to intensive agriculture in the last century means that many once-familiar wildflowers are now a rare sight. Take a walk down an old country lane in the High Weald, however, and you may well be lucky enough to see some survivors from the adjacent ancient meadowlands thriving at the roadside.

These species-rich verges – remnants of unimproved grassland – also provide food and cover for a wide range of other wildlife, such as butterflies and other insects, small mammals, birds and amphibians. By contrast, the verges of newly built roads are not species-rich, having no historic link with native vegetation. However, they still have some potential for wildlife. There cannot be many people who are not familiar with the sight of a kestrel hovering at the side of the road, hunting for mice and voles in the long grass beneath. Careful management can enhance the nature conservation value of new verges: in the future, road verges may become important as wildlife corridors to help species move in response to climate change. (See page 5.)

Until the last war, verges were an important and functional feature of the countryside. Ownership may be with the parish or farmer so wide verges were often grazed by the owner (or, rather, the owner's animals) or by passing herds of livestock. Alternatively hay crops were taken. A local "lengthsman" was often employed by the Parish Council to keep vegetation under control. This traditional management paid more attention to local circumstances and encouraged a richer, more varied habitat.

During the 1950s some County Council Highway Authorities experimented with selective weedkillers and growth-retarding chemicals on road verges to reduce the need for mowing. In the 1970s, they tried to reduce mowing to the minimum needed for road safety. This proved too little to maintain the diverse flower-rich habitats and led to a change in the structure and composition of roadside verges. Coarse grasses and large plants like cow parsley and hogweed became dominant.

Today, verges are often cut during the summer months before wildflowers have had chance to bloom and set seed. They are at risk from road widening and other 'improvements'. The size, shape and loca-



© Countryside Agency/Peter Greenhalf

tion of roadside verges also mean that they are easily damaged by car parking, road works, salt dumping, pollution from traffic and herbicide drift from nearby farmland.

Wildlife rich verges – remnants of a threatened habitat – can be protected by being designated as Roadside Verge Nature Reserves. Such a designation scheme has operated in East Sussex in the past and you can identify the designated verges by their distinctive marker posts. West Sussex County Council run a Notable Road Verge Project to identify verges of particular ecological value and have been developing a Road Verge Habitat Action Plan. They are intending to find funding for future work on the project.

The Kent Road Verge Project was set up in 1994 by the County Council and is managed by Kent Wildlife Trust (KWT), who employ a Road Verge Project Officer to coordinate it. Over the past few years, the KWT has undertaken a detailed district-by-district survey of road verges in Kent. From this, up to ten verges have been selected for each district and designated as Roadside Nature Reserves (RNRs). A brief management plan is compiled for each RNR, in liaison with the relevant County Council Highway Unit. This sets out the optimum mowing regime that will conserve or enhance the nature conservation value the

habitat without compromising road safety.

Currently there are over 130 RNRs across Kent – that's over 55 miles of roadside verge! This is where you come in: the wildlife rich verges need to be "adopted" by volunteers – Road Verge Wardens. Being a warden involves keeping an eye on a designated verge and alerting the KWT to any management problems or significant issues, such as cutting at the wrong time of year. Wardens also fill in a yearly report form on the state of the road verge. Many regularly provide the Trust with up-dated species lists and also monitor populations of interesting species.

Pat Hoare looks after a verge on the A229, between Cranbrook and Hawkhurst. The most notable thing about her verge, she says, is the early purple orchids that flower there in spring. She is very protective of them, always keeping an eye out for roadworks and other potential threats. Since she has been looking after the verge, the orchids have spread. Last year, she counted 70 plants. She has noticed that quite a few are of the more unusual, white colour variation. There are also lots of primroses and, in the summer, the verge is good for knapweed, which attracts butterflies.

Pat used to liaise directly with the Highways Department when it came to cutting the verge. Now she doesn't need to – "we have an understanding" she says. The verge is usually cut in June, but Pat says that fits in perfectly with the orchids as they have finished flowering well before then. She is keen to emphasise the need for mowing as an important part of managing the reserve for the orchids and says that if the contractor has to mow early, he carefully avoids the primroses!

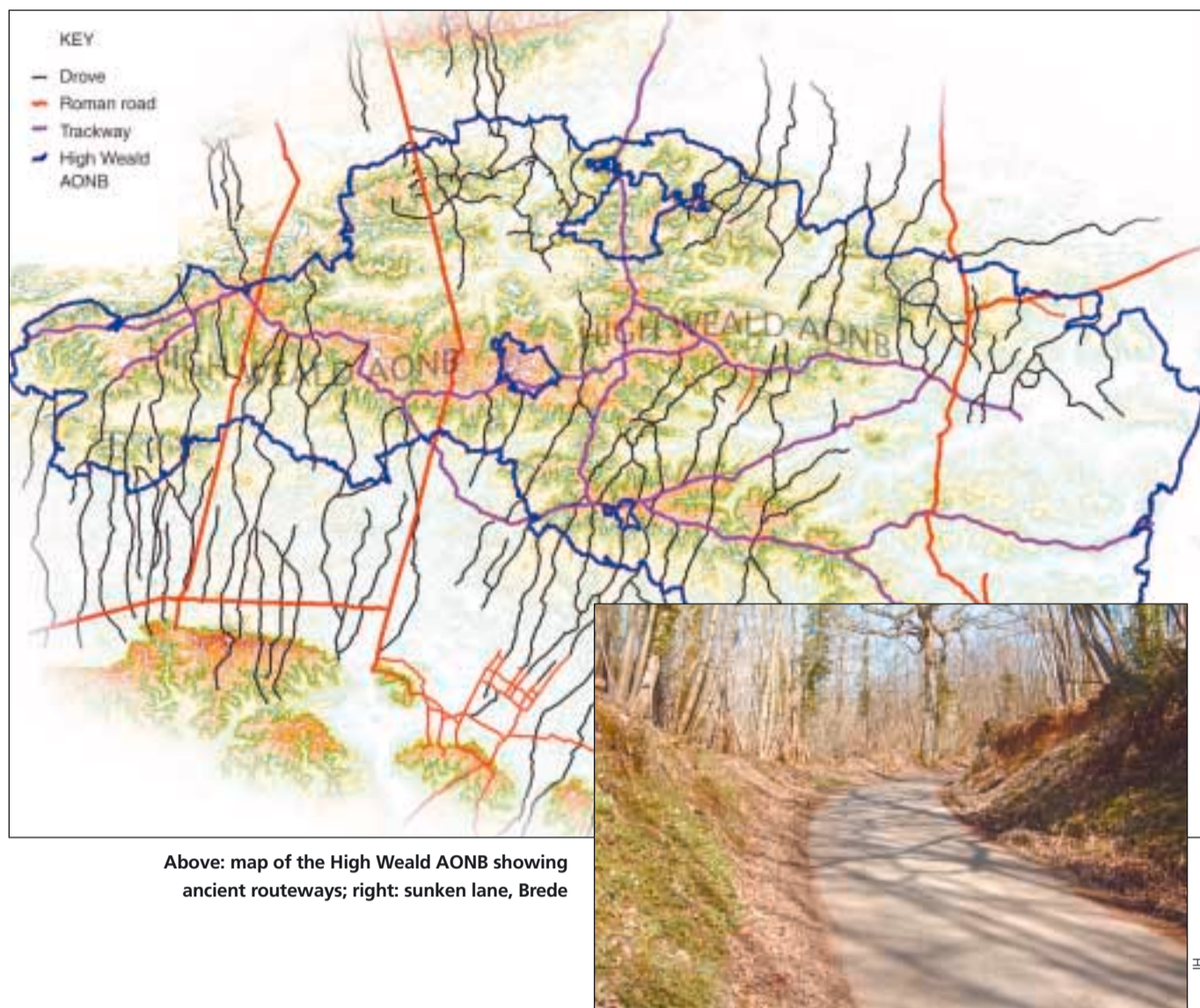
You can get even more involved in practical conservation work on the verges: John Hunt, who looks after a verge in Slip Mill Road, Hawkhurst, is a Kent High Weald Project volunteer and helps them with scrub clearance on his verge in the autumn. Volunteer input is vital to the success of the project and the Wildlife Trust aims to eventually have wardens for every Roadside Nature Reserve in Kent.

For further information about the Road Verge Project, contact Gill Tysoe, Project Officer on 01622 662012 or email gill.tysoe@kentwildlife.org.uk

For information about the Notable Road Verge Project in West Sussex, contact Simon Curson, Ecological Support Officer, West Sussex County Council Environment Group on 01243 756853

or email simon.curson@westsussex.gov.uk

In general, if you are concerned about a wildlife-rich verge near you: for example, if you think it is being cut at the wrong time of year, contact your County Council's Highways Department.



Above: map of the High Weald AONB showing ancient routeways; right: sunken lane, Brede

Making tracks



Have you ever wondered why lots of the roads in the High Weald seem to be aligned north-south rather than east-west? Then read on...

Getting from A to B by road in the High Weald is relatively easy in a north-south direction, but it can be quite a different story when travelling in an east-west direction because it is often difficult to find a direct route. (In fact it can turn out to be quite a pig of a journey!)

The High Weald held many riches for our ancestors. It was an important source of raw materials and the iron, brickmaking and forestry industries have all left their mark on the landscape. However, the woodlands of the High Weald were also used by early farmers as a seasonal source of food for their livestock: during the early autumn months, they would drive their animals (usually pigs) from their settlements on the South Downs, North Downs and coastal plains into the woods to feed on acorns and beech mast.

This method of feeding pigs is known as pannage and the scattered woodland pastures that the activity created were called dens. We now know that dens are the key to understanding how the High Weald first became colonized by human settlers – and why it has such a distinctive, dispersed pattern of settlement today. The annual acorn pilgrimage also accounts for many of the north-south routes in the High Weald!

We do not know when farmers first

began driving their pigs into the woodland to feed. Existing research shows that the practice might have started as far back as the Neolithic period (about 4,300 – 1,400BC) or even the Mesolithic (8,000 – 4,300BC). However, evidence of dramatic population changes in the Late Iron Age may indicate that this was when it really started to catch on.

Farmers from a particular village returned with their pigs to the same den year after year. These Wealden wood pastures were some distance away from their downland and coastal plain homes – often 20 miles or more: the frequent passage of pigs being driven to and from the dens formed tracks known as droves, connecting the dens to their parent villages.

As dens were mostly used during the colder, autumn months the farmers – drovers – would have built shelters in which to keep warm while watching their pigs. In time, dens became permanent places of settlement in their own right, separate from their parent downland and coastal villages but still connected to them by the droves. The droves, therefore, formed the original links between down and coastal lands and the Weald. A Sussex charter of about AD765 shows clearly the pattern of links between parent coastal villages and their associated Wealden dens.

Some Wealden droves are probably extremely ancient: droves in Kent are even seen to cross the prehistoric Pilgrim's way without faltering, possibly showing that they were there first. Research has also shown that Roman roads were built around an already existing network of droves. It seems likely that the droves actually continued to be in use at the same time as the new Roman roads were being used to transport iron from the High Weald. Roman drovers and their pigs, it was probably business as usual!

The primary ridges of the High Weald run roughly east-west. It is on these few high and dry ridges that the main east-west routes in the High Weald run – linking the villages, which developed as centres for trade on the routes.

North-south routes in the High Weald are more numerous: the ancient droves originally made by pigs hurrying from the downs and coastal plains to their acorn feasts still exist today, but they are now transformed into roads, bridleways and footpaths. To give an example, there was a well-used route between the Archbishop's manor at Bishopstone, near Newhaven, and its Wealden centre at Old Heathfield; the route can still be traced in the footpath network today.

Do you live on or near a drove route?

Would pigs have been marching past your door if your home had existed all those years ago? Do you follow in drovers' footsteps on your favourite walk? How can you tell if a road running roughly north-south is a drove route or not? We asked Martin Brown, Assistant County Archaeologist for East Sussex to give us some clues...

A good indicator of age is the sunken nature of the lane. Over the centuries hooves, trotters and feet (and, later, wheels) have worn away soil and stone to create a sunken lane with steep sides. Wealden clay is soft and easily worn away – think how quickly footpaths become muddy after rain and how easily ruts form in farm gateways. You can just imagine what it must have been like, trudging along in the mud behind a herd of excited pigs!

You might also want to look out for remains of banks flanking the path: old, worn earthworks give a sense of age. Often these banks may be topped with twisted trees, some with right-angled bends in their trunks. These are the remains of old hedges. Once they were bushes – they were cut and laid to form hedges – but years of neglect have allowed them to grow out and become trees. The bends are traces of the ancient hedging techniques.

The banks and hedges were important because the droveways needed boundaries to stop the animals escaping while they were being moved. (Pigs are not easy to drive along in a straight line – they would much rather wander off to investigate all the interesting things they can smell on the way.)

Finally, you can use maps to explore the roads and paths near your home. Perhaps your suspected droveway has a public bridleway or footpath running along it? It may be that the footpath preserves this ancient route. However, a footpath is not, of itself, a droveway and you need to also look out for the hedge and banks. In some places these boundaries may have been removed but as you track the route they may reappear. The linear nature of the paths is also useful as a check; does your route go in a broadly straight line from one place to another? Were these places connected in the middle ages? Did they even exist then?

When you have walked the route and looked at modern maps you might want to visit your County Record Office to look at ancient maps of the area. You won't find Roman or medieval maps but you might find a Tudor map that might help. You might even want to look at old estate maps to see who owned what land in the past; it might show your path and tell you what uses the land had.

Happy droving!



Websites

Kent Wildlife Trust
www.kentwildlife.org.uk
 East Sussex County Council
www.eastsussexcc.gov.uk
 West Sussex County Council
www.westsussex.gov.uk
 Kent County Council
www.kent.gov.uk
 Surrey County Council
www.surreycc.gov.uk

Vision for the High Weald

Housing and Settlement

Settlement in the High Weald is characterized by dispersed historic farmsteads and hamlets and late medieval non-agricultural villages

We want to work towards a landscape in which the distinctive and historic dispersed pattern of settlement of the High Weald is protected. The settlements will have a distinct identity, expressed in the traditional form; well-conserved individual historic buildings and conservation areas; and by good modern, locally-distinct and 'green' building.

This can be done through the refinement of existing policies that seek to protect historic buildings and conservation areas and through the development of new policies that will need to respect the distinctive size and form of High Weald villages. New policies will also need to recognize the difference between ancient dispersed settlements (many farms and hamlets) and modern non-village development that may erode the character of the area (housing estates outside villages, ribbon development and isolated settlement outside farmsteads).

It will also be important to provide affordable housing that allows local people – especially those whose skills maintain the landscape – to stay in the area.



Management Plan Public Survey FACTS

From a list of 18, interviewees were asked to select 5 features that best characterise the High Weald.

The top five were:

- Oast houses
- Network of small woods
- Mosaic of small fields
- Tile-hung buildings
- Rural feel

Oast houses were by far the most popular of all the features listed, being chosen by over 55% of the interviewees. It is interesting that oast houses are seen as being so characteristic, since they are not common features of the Western High Weald.

The interviewees were asked to select, from a list of 8 issues of potential threat to the High Weald countryside, those that they considered to be a major threat. 70% of the interviewees selected impact of development. However, many of the interviewees recognised that they themselves were contributing to the problem.

Many also believed that development should be allowed to continue but must be carefully regulated. A lack of affordable housing was also cited by several interviewees as an additional threat to the High Weald Character.



Housing and

Seeing the wood for the trees

Steve Johnson was Project Architect for the new Conservation Workshop at the Weald and Downland Museum (pictured right) and has just established his own firm



Something wonderful is happening around Britain. Work on sustainable housing has moved from the garages of 1960s and 70s boffins to the universities of the 1980s and on to government in the late 90s. It has since taken a leap into the corporate world with many big companies jumping on the bandwagon of the environmental movement. Trouble still exists in the fact that, while people talk about sustainable housing, surprisingly little of it actually gets beyond promotional one-offs by a few volume house builders. Regardless, I am optimistic due to the good work I see done by groups of normal people, usually against the odds.

In the early 21st century, a growing number of people are commissioning truly green buildings. This is good for development and the art of architecture for two reasons. Number one: many of these people don't have large amounts of money to spend but have seen past the myth that architects, by definition, mean expensive. Number two: these same people seem aware that good environmental design is part and parcel of good design – a properly designed building in this new century will be one that is beautiful, well made, and genuinely sustainable. The groundwork is set – we have stacks of information about how to design and build green. There is also a large and growing market in eco-gadgets with some being effective while others create their own environmental problems.

One way of looking at the world is an

approach called localism. Localism is a way of thinking that recognises the importance of world trade but promises the use of locally found materials, products, and skills whenever possible. It recognises that each place has varying environmental, historical, and cultural strengths and weaknesses. We in Britain have become very dependent, even fat, on imports and are now suffering for it with a smaller skilled work force and

As part of the plan to conserve the settlement character of the High Weald and protect the natural environment at the same time, we want to encourage the practice of sustainable or 'green' building. When designing a building from scratch today, it is possible to use methods and materials that have minimum impact on the environment, and may even have the potential to regenerate it by using locally sourced materials.

manufacturing sector. We must begin to get used to the idea that, if we can provide goods and services ourselves, we shouldn't import.

Companies are competing over who produces the true sustainable material. Brick and block is sustainable, as there is plenty of clay and sand about. Metals are sustainable, as some can be recycled. Plastics are green because they are lightweight. Concrete and glass are sustainable, being made from common materials like sand. Amongst all of this

confusion, I choose wood as, with it, comes a local renewable material that holds carbon dioxide, requires healthy forests, and comes with a tradition that most of us know from childhood. For me, it is also the most exciting material for designing and building. The other of my rules of thumb is to avoid petroleum-based materials when possible because they are toxic to make, use, and get rid of.

On the scary side, the world is becoming drastically more polluted with an ever-increasing cocktail of pollutants being shoved into land, sea, air, and now space. The real danger as I see it is that, even though we are apparently becoming better educated and more aware of the dangers in living our currently wasteful lifestyles, we are carrying on as though there are no limits to what the Earth and its life can give and take. This is the behaviour that we have to overcome and I believe that it could be possible if we can get the right arguments across.

On the happier side, there are many people who are sticking their heads above the parapet and seeing a different world that is much healthier, freer, more interesting, and even more fun. I find great challenge in trying to show people that we don't have to live in the wasteful, boring, and downright ugly buildings that developers tell us we want to be living in. A good building should be beautiful, interesting, healthy to build and live in, and bought for a price that people can afford. This is not beyond us.

Settlement

Settlement in the High Weald

The origins of settlement in the High Weald have been much misunderstood, yet an understanding is essential if we are to protect the distinctive cultural landscape that is the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Dr Roland B Harris of the AONB Unit explains...

The human colonization of the Weald took place between the Late Iron Age and the Anglo-Saxon period, largely through driving pigs into its woodland in the early autumn to fatten on acorns (pannage).

The swineherds driving the pigs returned to the same Wealden places (dens) year after year. By the time of the Battle of Hastings, these dens had become legal landholdings and, as pannage had given way to cultivation, farms. As a result, the Weald was marked by an absence of what we often think of as typically English villages of the Middle Ages, an agricultural settlement surrounded by communally-farmed open fields. Instead, the Weald had a dispersed settlement pattern of farmsteads located within discrete, or enclosed, holdings. The small scale of the holdings owed its origins to dens and to later medieval cultivation of small areas of wasteland (assart), and ensured that the density of farmsteads was high.

By the early 14th century larger nucleated settlements, or villages, had emerged, but often in response to opportunity for trade. The hilltop villages of Ticehurst and Wadhurst are typical in their formation: they began with a market place on a major route, followed (by c.1100) by a church (attracted to such busy locations, and serving the dispersed settlement), and finally gained permanent houses around the markets. Such a trade-based origin for High Weald villages explains their comparative rarity near the dominating commercial ports of Winchelsea and Rye.

Survival into modern times

The pattern of villages of the fourteenth century survives today as, more distinctively, does the dispersed settlement. While indus-

trial revolution wrought changes on much of the country, the High Weald didn't experience significant erosion of its unusual settlement pattern during the nineteenth century. Even today, 42% of the households in the AONB remain outside the built-up nuclei of towns and villages. The dense scatter of ancient farmsteads still has a strong imprint on the landscape and socio-economic structure of the AONB.

Threat, loss and change

The survival of the pre-Conquest dispersed settlement pattern should be no cause for complacency, for in recent decades it has been under threat as never before. Three trends stand out above all others:

- the rural population, and the number of households, has grown sharply since the last war. [Table 1]
- new building has been concentrated in the villages, so that they have expanded – and sprawled – almost out of recognition, [Fig. 1] and have changed the settlement pattern so that villages now dominate. [Table 2]
- new building has occurred outside the villages. This has not focused on the traditional farmsteads and hamlets, but on isolated development in hitherto open countryside and, especially, in ribbon development.

What has caused the changes?

The main causes of change are quite clear. The advent of the private motor car has allowed rural living and urban working in a way that was not possible in the High Weald before the second half of the twentieth century. The siting of the new housing has been very much the result of planning, with the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act trying to prevent uncontrolled sprawl across open

countryside. Since then it has been argued that concentrating settlement into ever-larger villages maintains the character of settlement, failing to differentiate between Weald and downs, or coastal plain.

However ancient and distinctive, character is not all there is to settlement, and recent planning policy has redefined the rationale for locating more housing in previously small villages on the grounds of sustainability: more residents in villages will maintain the fragile rural services. This has proved less than entirely successful in the villages of the High Weald – and much of the country – as services such as banks, schools, and shops have sharply declined over the same period. Of course, new housing might have slowed this decline in services, but a recent government report has confirmed what seems obvious: expanding the housing doesn't produce sustainable villages.

What future?

The choices are difficult. Clearly we can no longer suggest that by expanding villages, letting them degenerate into suburbia, and by allowing ribbon development to link settlement to settlement, that we are protecting the character of settlement in the AONB. Equally, there are serious doubts as to whether we should accept that we are losing character to the greater cause of sustainable rural development. But the alternatives of a complete freeze on development, or the dangerous game of trying to encourage dispersed settlement (which could erode more open country and overload narrow and quiet lanes) are hardly attractive. The High Weald AONB Management Plan 2004 will define a new vision for settlement supported by clear objectives that try to move us forward.

Fig. 1. The changing face of the typical High Weald village: the development of Ticehurst village centre between 1839 and 2000. In addition to the expansion of area (most notably since the 1930s), the density of development is also increasing. Green represents the new housing built since the date of the previous map.

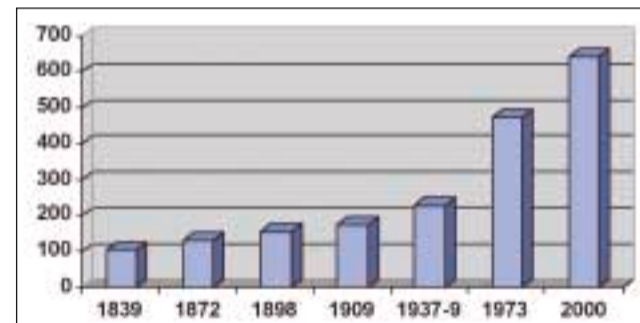
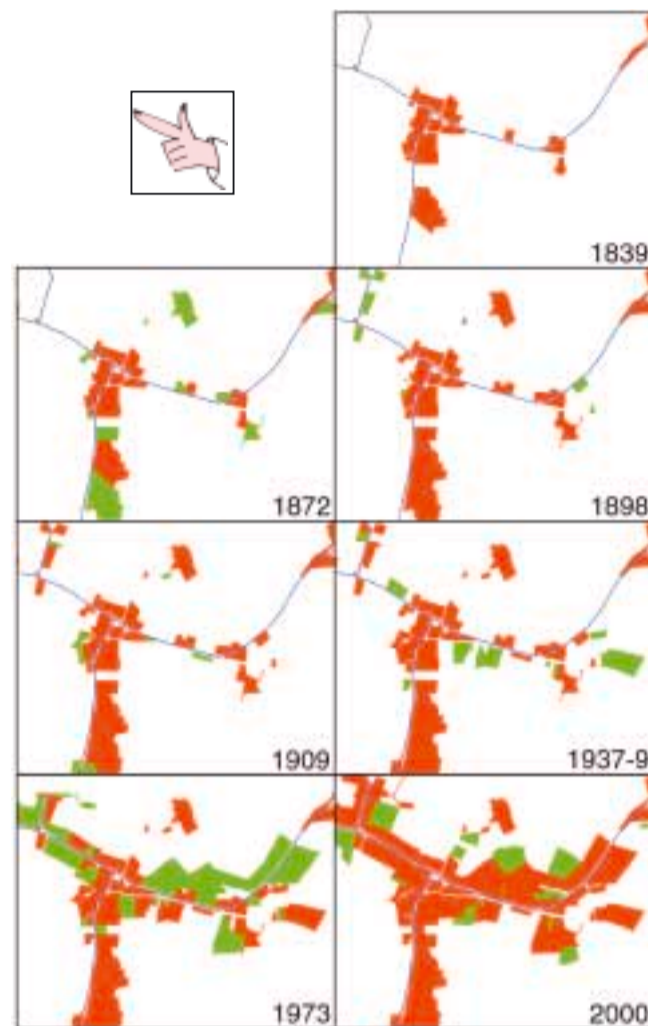


Table 1. Expansion of households in the AONB: figures for a typical parish (Ticehurst).

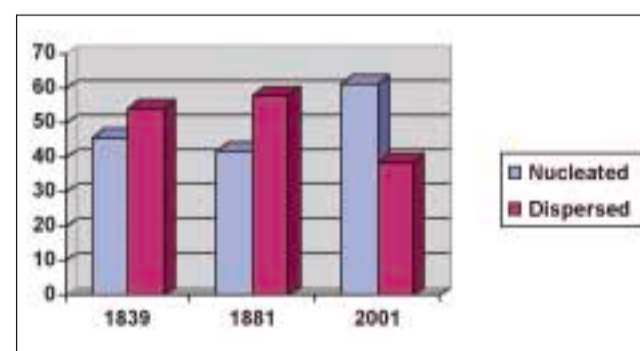


Table 2. Shift from dispersed to nucleated settlement in the 20th century: figures for a typical parish (Ticehurst).

Websites

Centre For Alternative Technology
www.cat.org.uk
 Walter Segal Self Build Trust
www.segalselfbuild.co.uk
 Ecological and Sustainable Architecture
 and Building Design
www.architype.co.uk
 Global Ecovillage Network
<http://gen.ecovillage.org>
 Woodland Enterprise Centre
www.woodnet.org.uk/wec/building.htm



Changing oasts

Oast houses are very much a part of the High Weald landscape, both real and imagined. (See our Public Survey Facts on page 24.) Only a few of these distinctive buildings are now used for their original purpose – the drying of hops used for brewing. Some are now derelict and in danger of being lost to future generations, but many have been saved by being converted into residential or business accommodation. However, oast dwellers are presented with some unusual building and interior design problems....

Philip and Elizabeth Fermor, of Owlsbury Oast, say that they did not especially seek to live in an oast, but as Philip manages the farm, it was an ideal place for him to be in order to keep an eye on his cattle at all times.

While many oasts are situated within yards, Owlsbury is unusual as it stands alone and has wonderful views across the surrounding High Weald countryside. However, this exposed position was to cause the first of many conversion headaches for the Fermors: when the old barn blew down in a high wind, they had to re-apply for permission to construct a new barn, to be re-attached to the still standing oast tower or roundel.

It may have survived the wind, but the roundel is leaning 5 inches out of plumb – testimony to the properties of Weald clay. To protect it from further subsidence, the entire building had to be underpinned with piles driven 22ft into the ground. The roundel alone has 9 of these piles to stop it from becoming Jarvis Brook's answer to the leaning tower of Pisa.

Friends and family were not short of interior design ideas for the roundel. One suggestion was to put a mirror in the cowl to reflect a different view each day, depending upon wind direction. Another idea was to fit a spiral staircase. Elizabeth considered having a round kitchen, but they eventually decided upon a round dining room – complete with round dining table – and a conical bedroom above.

The roundness of oast towers creates many unique design problems. How, for example, do you heat a round room when you can't get curved radiators? Thinking about this problem led the Fermors to the solution of an under floor heating system for the whole building, with a wood burner providing all the heat in winter. The new barn was completely designed around this system and very well insulated, so it is very energy efficient. Philip says that starting the barn from scratch offered many building design opportunities that conversion alone would not have offered. One of his few regrets is that he didn't incorporate some form of solar heating system.

The roundel has dry-lined walls and Philip and Elizabeth are justifiably proud of their DIY achievement in plasterboarding the cone (now the master bedroom) which they did all by themselves. Their plasterer said he'd rise to the challenge of skimming if they managed to fix the boards in place. This they did, by carefully cutting triangular shapes and dampening them so that they could then be curved to fit.

Eight years after first considering the project, the Fermors were finally able to move in. What Philip and Elizabeth had wanted most of all was a house that was designed to be lived in: their oast has turned out to be just that – a real family



From top:
Owlsbury Oast before and after.
Sid stripping wallpaper at Manor Farm Oast.

home with the bonus of being a piece of High Weald agricultural and architectural heritage as well.

Kate and Sid Mylrea run a Bed and Breakfast business from their home at Manor Farm Oast, Icklesham. Kate says that she had always wanted to live in an oast, but that Sid, originally from the Isle of Man, didn't know what an oast was until he met her!

Built around 1864, the Mylreas' oast has three towers and multiple round rooms, including a round kitchen. It was converted to a dwelling in 1987. They are the third owners since conversion, buying in 1997 to run as a B&B. They also hold wedding receptions and have recently acquired a licence as a wedding venue.

One of the old cowls has been placed in the garden as an unusual seat. It's deceptively large – 9ft tall and 6ft across with an 18ft wind vane. Guests like to be photographed sitting in it – “Especially brides and grooms and American visitors” smiles Kate.

The solid brick walls means that the building is cool in summer and warm in winter. But, as Kate points out, oasts were never designed to be lived in and are not like normal houses. She says the round rooms have very strange acoustics – standing dead centre is like “putting your head in a biscuit tin”.

Kate and Sid have done all the decorating themselves and have picked up a few special oast DIY tips over the years. For example, she says that wallpapering a round room is especially difficult as the slightest deviation from the vertical shows up much worse than it would normally. She warns against the use of striped wallpaper: “it's a nightmare!” They have found, though, that it is possible to put up wooden dado rails in the round rooms if they soak them first to make them pliable. They hired a steamer to remove wallpaper, but then found that the flat plate, not fitting flush against the wall, let more steam out around the edges than it directed

at the paper! So they gave up with it. “You live and learn”, says Kate.

Kate says that, in order not to take the eye away from the rooms' unique feature – their roundness – it's important not to have dominating pieces of furniture in the centre of the rooms. For this reason, they decided against a four-poster bed for the main round bedroom. She says that adding an en-suite would also have ruined it.

Kate and Sid have retained many references to the oast's former life, dotted around the house. Kate points out the peg holes and slots in the low upstairs beams, originally used to secure the sacks or “pockets” while they were being filled with hops. They were told that the local white witches held a coven in the oast when it was dilapidated, so twin witches on broomsticks now adorn the wind vanes.

Kate is very proud of her oast home and likes to show people around – sometimes even curious walkers passing by ask to see inside and they are made welcome! Kate feels that the building should be enjoyed by as many people as possible. She says that she and Sid are, after all, only its custodians.

Maynards Fruit Farm



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

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

**Windmill Hill, Ticehurst, nr Wadhurst,
Sussex TN5 7HQ**

01580 200394

Contacts

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE HIGH WEALD AONB

High Weald AONB Unit
Information packs on the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
Contact: Kerry Baldwin
01580 879500
email: info@highweald.org
www.highweald.org

GENERAL INFORMATION ON WILDLIFE

Sussex Conservation Careline
01273 494777

ADVICE AND HELP WITH WILDLIFE, LANDSCAPE AND ACCESS PROJECTS

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
A national charity which provides practical and confidential advice to farmers and landowners on activities which can be undertaken to enhance land holdings over 10 acres for wildlife. The organisation also provides assistance with drawing up management plans and grant applications.
www.fwag.org.uk

West Sussex & East Sussex Downs
Paul Ling 01273 891190
email: paul.holmes-ling@fwag.org.uk

Kent & East Sussex Weald
Alex Harper 01580 879399
email: alex.harper@fwag.org.uk

Kent
Paul Cobb 01233 813186
email: paul.cobb@fwag.org.uk

Surrey
Jane Atkinson 01483 404255
email: jane.atkinson@fwag.org.uk

The following are the first point of contact for individuals and community groups who are seeking assistance with landscape, wildlife and access projects.

Kent High Weald Project
A countryside management project operating within the Borough of Tunbridge Wells, most of which lies within the High Weald AONB.
Contact: Will Farmer 01580 715918
email: kenthighwealdproject@kent.gov.uk
www.kenthighwealdproject.org.uk

West Sussex County Council
A countryside management service dedicated to the conservation of the High Weald AONB and surrounding area within West Sussex.
Contact: Jackie Lewis 01243 756888
email: jackie.lewis@westsussex.gov.uk
www.westsussex.gov.uk

East Sussex County Council (ESCC)
A countryside management service responsible for the management of Weirwood Reservoir, Chailey Common and Forest the Way.
Contact: Sandra Williamson 01273 482670
email: sandra.williamson@eastsussexcc.gov.uk
www.eastsussexcc.gov.uk

Rye Bay Office
A satellite of ESCC, the office is dedicated to the conservation of the Rye Bay and Rother area of the High Weald.
Contact: Simon Fathers 01797 226488
email: simon@ryebay.demon.co.uk
www.ryebay.demon.co.uk

Surrey County Council
Contact: Nick Baxter, Head of Countryside Management 01483 517591
www.countryside-management.org.uk

Weald Meadows Initiative
The Initiative provides advice on the management and creation of traditional meadows.
Contact: Dawn Brickwood 01580 879500
email: meadows@highweald.org
www.highweald.org

Weald Heathlands Initiative
The Initiative provides advice on the restoration and management of heathlands.
Contact: Caroline Fitzgerald 01580 720851 or Richard Allum 01293 544118
email: r.allum@highweald.org
c.fitzgerald@highweald.org

South of England Hedge-laying Society
The Society can provide details of professional hedge layers. Contact: John Blake, Coppicing Officer 01444 483999

VOLUNTEERING

British Trust For Conservation Volunteers (BTCV)

A national charity that involves volunteers in practical conservation work. It provides training, insurance and other support for members of the public wishing to set up local conservation groups and can also organise small teams of volunteers to assist landowners with conservation work at a modest cost.
www.btcv.org

West Sussex
Dee Christensen 01243 756861
email: West-Sussex@btcv.org.uk
Kent
Mike Cook 01233 812033
email: Kent@btcv.org.uk
East Sussex
Dean Morrison 01424 446395
email: East-Sussex@btcv.org.uk
Surrey
01372 374707
email: Surrey@btcv.org.uk

PRESSURE GROUPS

The following county-based groups are involved with lobbying for the conservation of the High Weald.

Sussex Wildlife Trust
01273 492630 enquiries@sussexwt.org.uk
www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/sussex

Kent Wildlife Trust
01622 662012 kentwildlife@cix.co.uk
www.kentwildlife.org.uk

CPRE (Sussex branch)
01825 890975 cpresussex@aol.com
www.cpre.org.uk

CPRE (Kent branch)
01233 813172 info@cprekent.org.uk
www.cprekent.org.uk

Weald of Kent Preservation Society
Freepost, Hawkenbury, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 0BR

SPECIALIST GROUPS

The following local and national groups offer specialist advice.

WILDLIFE

Butterfly Conservation Society Sussex Branch
01273 492279
www.butterfly-conservation.org

Butterfly Conservation Society Kent Branch
57 Westfield Rd, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA7 6LR
01322 526888
www.butterfly-conservation.org

Sussex Reptile & Amphibian Group
01986 873733

Sussex Botanical Recording Society
email: rhemsley@53hdt.freeseerve.co.uk

Young Herpetologist Club
01202 692378

East Sussex Herpetological Society
01424 730433

Ashdown Forest Conservators
01342 823583

Sussex Ornithological Society
01424 813722
www.susos.org.uk

Kent Ornithological Society
Membership: 61 Alpha Road, Birchington, Kent, CT7 9ED
www.kentos.org.uk

RSPCA Headquarters
0870 5555 999
www.rspca.org.uk

Sussex Moth Group
01273 551216

The Sussex Mammal Group
01243 554018

The Kent Mammal Group
01892 529110

Sussex Bat Group
01903 810119
www.batbox.com/sbg

Kent Bat Group
01277 275439 info@kentbatgroup.org.uk
www.kentbatgroup.org.uk

West Sussex Deer Management Society
01730 825241

East Grinstead Natural History Society
01342 321294

Horsham Natural History Society
01403 864414

RSPB South East England Office
01273 775333 www.rspb.org.uk

RSPB Youth
01767 680551

British Dragonfly Society
thewains@ukonline.co.uk
www.dragonflysoc.org.uk

RAMSAK Ltd
01580 241349
www.ramsak.farming.co.uk
Contracting and hire of agricultural machinery in East Sussex and Kent

British Deer Society
01425 655434 h.q@bds.org.uk
www.bds.org.uk

Powdermill Trust for Nature Conservation
01424 772235

LEISURE

Ramblers Association
For details of local groups 020 7339 8500
www.ramblers.org.uk
ramblers@london.ramblers.org.uk

Sussex Gardens Trust/Kent Gardens Trust
c/o Association of Gardens Trusts
0207 251 2610
agt@gardenstrusts.org.uk
www.gardenstrusts.org.uk

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

Wealden Iron Research Group
01293 886278

Sussex Archaeological Society
01273 405737 www.sussexpast.co.uk

BUILDINGS

English Heritage
020 7973 3000
www.English-heritage.org.uk

Weald & Downland Open Air Museum
01243 811348 www.wealddown.co.uk

Royal Institute of British Architects
South East Region 01892 515878

The Society for the Protections of Ancient Buildings (SPAB)
020 7377 1644 www.spab.org.uk

The Georgian Group
020 7387 1720 www.georgiangroup.org.uk

The Victorian Society
020 8994 1019
www.Victorian-society.org.uk

The Churches Conservation Trust
020 7936 2285 www.visitchurches.org.uk

The above is not a comprehensive list. We will gladly receive suggestions for other groups which could be included in the next edition of the High Weald Anvil.

Have your say on the Anvil



You can also contact us via the website

Your views are important in deciding whether another copy of the High Weald Anvil is produced. If you are able to find time to fill in and return this questionnaire, using the freepost address at the bottom of the form, we would be grateful. All respondents will be sent an AONB coaster made from local wood.

1. Where did you get your copy of this guide?

- Library
- Visitor Attraction
- Village Shop
- Doctor/Dentist Surgery
- Bus/Rail Station
- Council Offices
- Tourist Information Centre
- Direct Mail
- Other (please state)

.....

2. What do you like about the guide?

.....
.....
.....

3. Is there anything you dislike about the guide?

.....
.....
.....

4. Which aspects of the guide do you find most interesting/useful, least interesting/useful?

(1 = least interesting/useful and 5 = most interesting/useful)

- Website
- Climate Change
- Land Management
- Leisure, Tourism and Access
- Routeways
- Housing and Settlement
- Exploring the High Weald
- Walks/cycle ride
- AONB Map & Visitor Attractions
- Producer listings
- Events listings
- Contact lists
- Other (please state)

5. Is there any subject you would like covered in the next issue?

.....
.....

6. Does the guide encourage you to do any of the following?

- Purchase local products
- Go for a walk or cycle ride
- Visit an attraction or event
- Approach any of the contacts listed
- Manage your garden/land for wildlife
- Other (please state)

.....

7. Are there any other comments you would like to make about the guide?

.....
.....

8. Had you heard of the High Weald AONB before receiving this guide?

9. Are you a member of any of the following organisations?

- RSPB
- National Trust
- Ramblers Association
- Kent or Sussex Wildlife Trust
- CPRE
- Weald of Kent Preservation Society
- Friends of the Earth and/or Greenpeace

10. Please name the village or town where you live.

.....

11. What is your age category?

- 0-9
- 10-15
- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65 & over

Thank you for your help

If you would like a free AONB coaster please fill in the following information:

Name

Address

.....

.....

Postcode

- Tick the box if you do not wish to receive information about the High Weald AONB in future.

Please return this form to:

**Transport and Environment (GS),
FREEPOST LW43, Lewes, BN7 1BR**

Postcards from the High Weald



OCTOBER 3RD AD765

DEAR MOTHER,
 (WELL, HERE I AM AT THE DEN IT TOOK
 AGES TO MOVE THE PIGS THIS MORNING, NOT
 LIKE LAST AUTUMN. THE TRACK WAS VERY
 WET AND I'VE LOST BOTH OF MY SHOES IN
 THE MUD. THE ROOF OF THE TEMPORARY
 SHELTER WE MADE LAST YEAR LEAKS, SO
 WE WILL HAVE TO MEND IT BEFORE IT RAINS
 AGAIN. DAD SAYS WE SHOULD THINK ABOUT
 BUILDING SOMETHING MORE PERMANENT,
 SINCE WE COME BACK HERE YEAR AFTER
 YEAR.
 I'D SEND THIS BACK WITH BIG BROTHER
 JOHN. HE ISN'T HANGING AROUND TO WATCH
 PIGS EAT ACORNS THIS YEAR, HE SAYS.
 LOVE TO ALL MY 14 LITTLE BROTHERS
 AND SISTERS,
 MARTIN

MISTRESS BROWN
 The Hovel
 DOWNHURST VILLAGE
 SOUTH DOWNS
 SUSSEX



January 28, 2003

Whose stupid idea was it to do oasts? It's an
 absolute nightmare! Andy's given himself a
 hernia struggling to get an MDF fire
 surround to fit against the wall and Linda's got
 a migraine after trying to hang striped
 wallpaper. Meanwhile, my Louis XV
 bedroom, complete with four posters, isn't
 working at all.
 I want a raise. My agent will be in touch.
 Fondest love,
 Laurence

The Controller of BBC1
 Broadcasting House
 London



April 1st 2003

Dear Ruth & David,
 I'm spending a few days in the
 High Weald AONB getting some
 marketing ideas for our Hasset
 Hills Lamb. Pat and Tony would
 like it here. So would Tommy -
 they seem very keen on pigs for
 some reason. But Roy, Hayley
 and Phoebe would find it just as
 hard to find affordable housing
 here as in Ambridge. I must tell
 Mum to look at the AONB's new
 website - I hear Lynda Snell is
 already talking about doing a
 village!
 See you soon, Debbie

D & R Archer
 Brookfield Farm
 Ambridge
 Borsetshire



August 12th 2003
 Dear Dad, Mos Big & Little, Zoe and
 Lynne,
 What's going on in Walford? It's very
 quiet here. Anthony would like it. Not a
 club in sight - well, I haven't found one
 yet. Missing Angie's Den. Tranquil, that's
 what they call it - and I'm not sure how
 much more of it I can stand. Mind you,
 looking around, I can see why it's an
 official Area of Outstanding Natural
 Beauty... Get an eyeful of all those fit
 farmers and woodworkers toiling away
 on the land!!
 Think I'll stay on a bit longer!
 Lots of Love, Kat
 XXXX

The Slater family
 23 Albert Square
 Walford
 London E20



CAPTAIN'S LEAVE LOG. STARDATE 3141.9
 (23 JUNE 2269)

DEAR SPOCK,
 EARTH SURE LOOKS DIFFERENT! GLOBAL WARMING
 HAS TAKEN ITS TOLL. I'VE BEAMED OVER TO THE
 HIGH WEALD AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL
 BEAUTY TO BUY SOME FRESH FRUIT. THIS IS NOW
 THE UK'S MOST IMPORTANT BANANA GROWING
 REGION. I REALLY MISS BANANAS ON LONG SPACE
 VOYAGES. DON'T YOU? (DO BANANAS GROW ON
 VULCAN?) WELL, WHILE I'M HERE, I'LL PICK UP
 SOME ORANGES AND FIGS AS WELL. THIS AREA'S
 NOT CALLED THE GARDEN OF ENGLAND FOR
 NOTHING!
 REGARDS, JIM

THE SCIENCE OFFICER
 STARSHIP ENTERPRISE
 GAMMA QUADRANT

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