



Royal
Geographical
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with IBG

Medieval landscape

A self-guided walk from Burwash in Sussex



Explore the deeply rural landscape of the High Weald

Encounter ancient woodlands and wildflower-rich meadows

Find out about those who first lived and worked in these ancient forests

Learn how to spot archaeological features and local building styles

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the stories of our landscapes
discovered through walks



Created in collaboration with





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Cover image: Field patterns and forests © High Weald AONB Partnership

Wealden landscape

Step back in time and discover the High Weald

“Unless a man understands the Weald, he cannot write about the beginnings of England.”

Hilaire Belloc

The High Weald is something of a miraculous survival. While much of the rest of Britain has witnessed huge change in the past 700 years, this intricately folded landscape has kept its character astonishingly intact in so many ways.



The word ‘weald’ comes from an old word meaning ‘wood’ related to the German word ‘Wald’. Trees are the key to so much here, and you’ll see some splendid examples. From the Neolithic period onwards, farmers brought in pigs to graze in the oak woods, and the first settlers must have had a titanic struggle on their hands clearing the forests to create little fields. The trees were used for timber and fuel, as well as heating furnaces for smelting iron from the local iron ore. The Wealden iron industry lasted for many centuries, and its archaeological relics pepper the countryside.

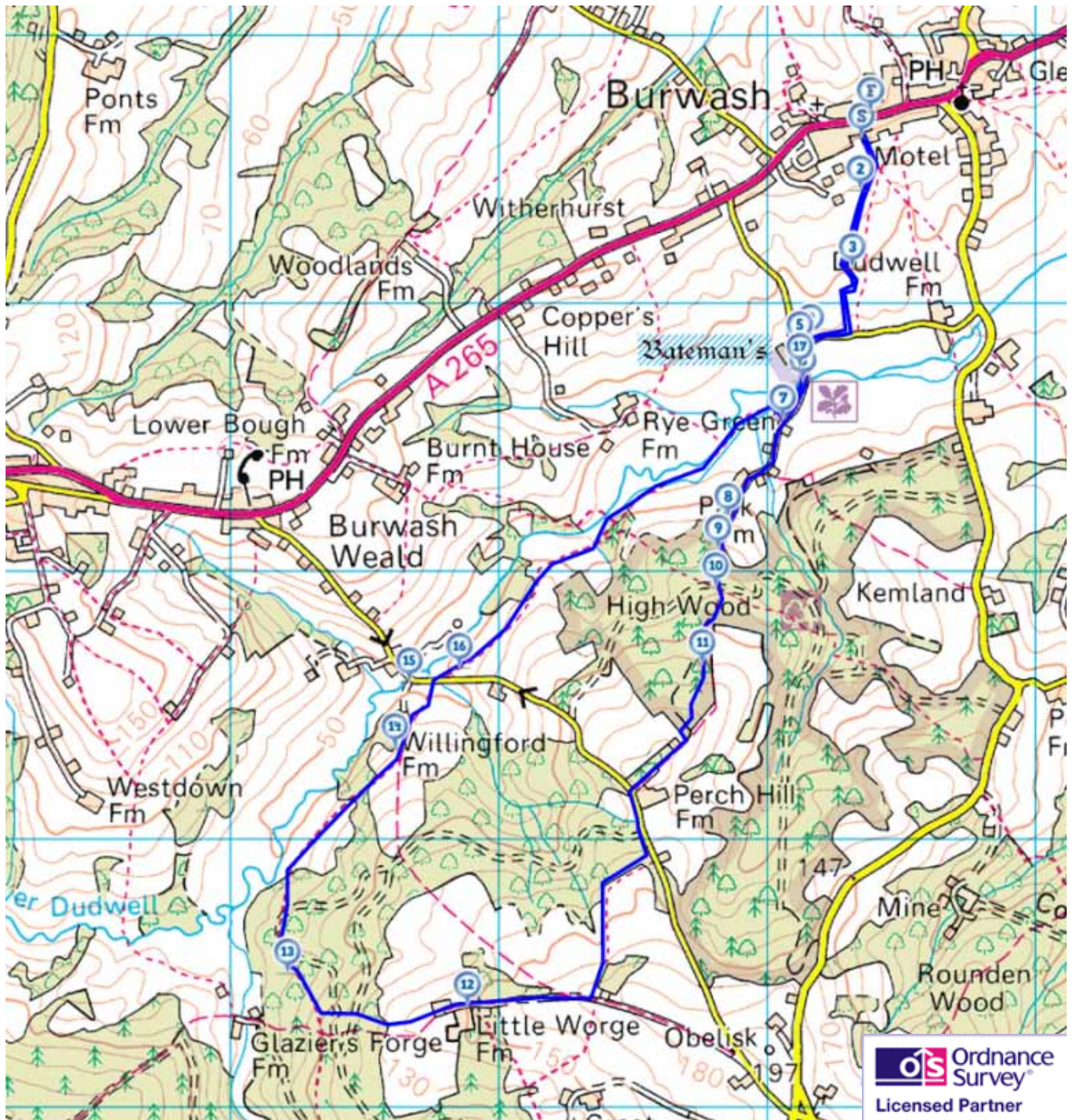


This route reveals many of the classic features of the High Weald, taking you into the picturesque Dudwell Valley, past typical Wealden buildings and through ancient woods, fields and flower meadows.

On the way you’ll find out why this special, evocative landscape has changed so little through the passage of centuries.

Top: Burwash and the Dudwell Valley Bottom: weathervane atop oasthouse © High Weald AONB Partnership

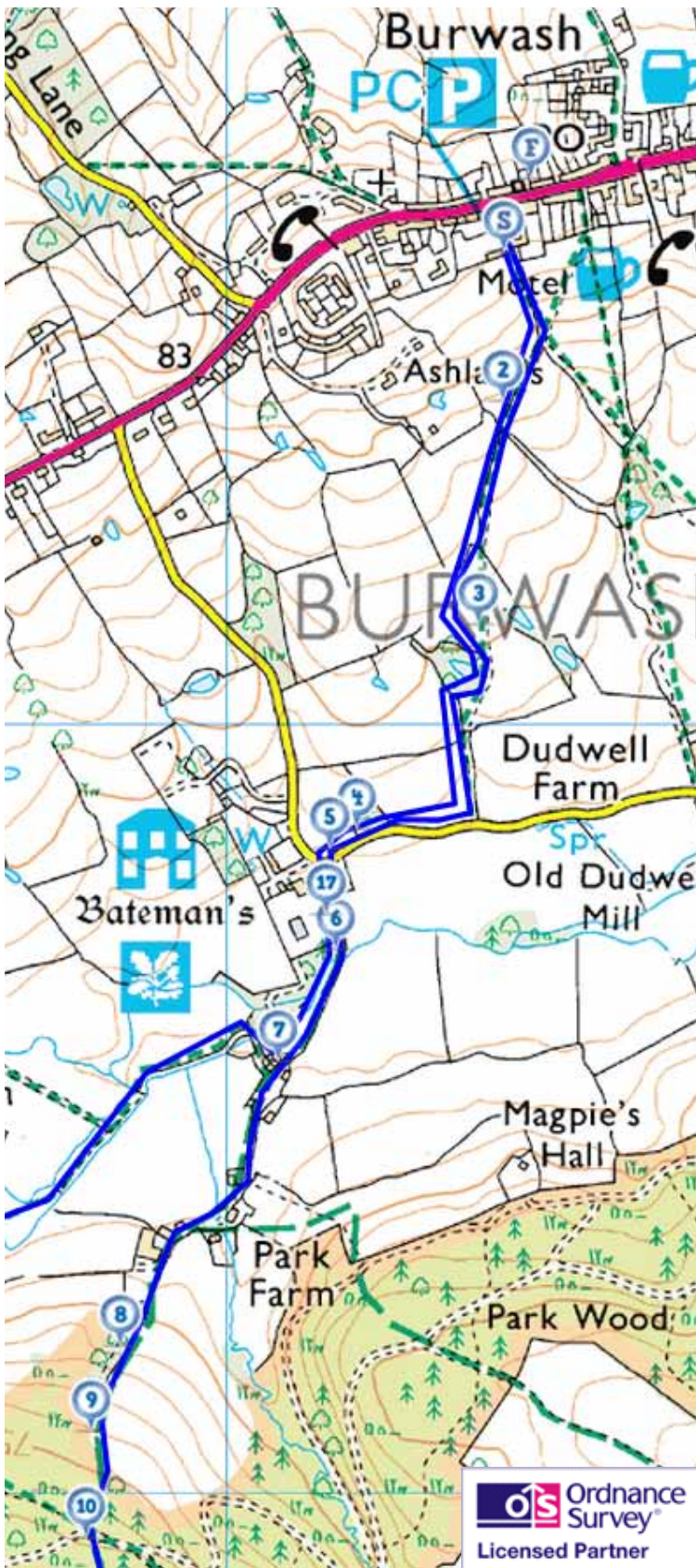
Route map



Practical information

Location	Burwash, East Sussex, Southeast England
Getting there	<p>Car – Burwash is on the A265 between Heathfield and the A21 at Hurst Green.</p> <p>Bus – Burwash is served by Compass Buses service 318 (Heathfield to Hurst Green), 6 services a day on weekdays, 5 services on Saturdays; no Sunday service.</p> <p>Train – The nearest station is Etchingham, 3 miles northeast, from where you can take bus 318 to Burwash.</p>
Start and finish	Footpath behind The Bear Inn, High Street, Burwash TN19 7EX
Walk distance	6 miles
Level	Moderate – some ascents and descents
Terrain	Fields, woodland tracks and paths, quiet lanes and farm tracks
Conditions	Woodland can be muddy after wet weather
Best time to visit	Late spring and early summer are the best times for the wildflower meadow; spring is the best time for bluebells and wood anenomes. Avoid trying the walk in wet weather, especially in winter, when the route can be very muddy.
Suitable for	Families; the climbs are fairly gentle but the walk is quite tiring and there are a few stiles
Refreshments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– The Bear Inn (start and end)– Rose and Crown (near start and end of route)– The Lime Tree Tearooms (near start and end of route)– Cafe at Bateman's (Stop 17)
Toilets	Car park by Bear Inn (start and end of route)
Places to visit	Bateman's (Rudyard Kipling's house) is owned by the National Trust and is open seasonally (free for National Trust members); Bateman's Lane, TN19 7DS tel: 01435 882302, www.nationaltrust.org.uk/batemans .
Tourist information	Yesterday's World, 89-90 High Street, Battle TN33 0AQ tel: 01797 229049

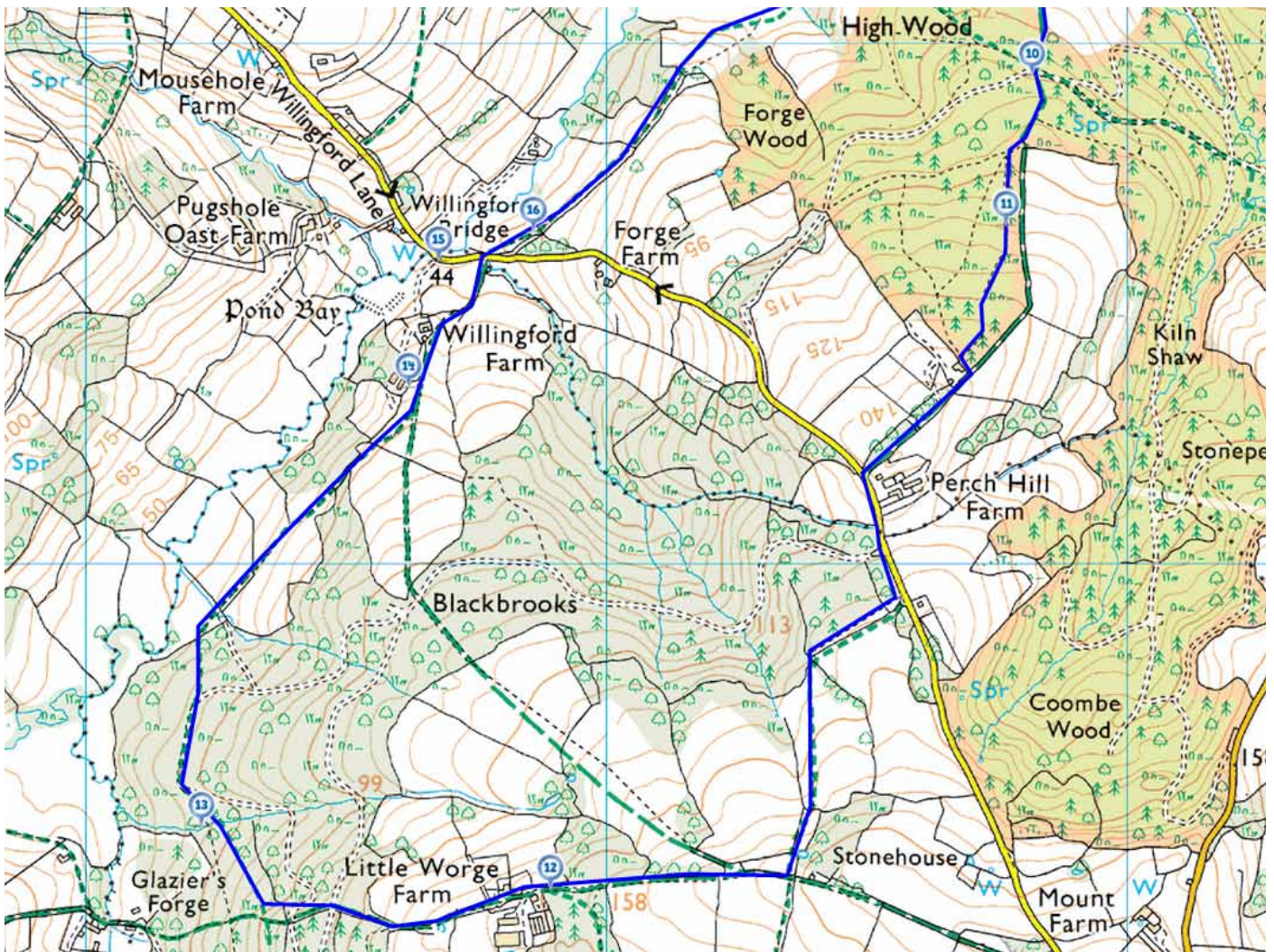
Start and end sections of the route



Stopping points and grid references

- Start.** Car park near The Bear Inn, Burwash (TQ675247)
- 2.** Stile into the third field (TQ674244)
 - 3.** Fields near Burwash (TQ673241)
 - 4.** Sandstone quarry near Bateman's (TQ672238)
 - 5.** Oak tree opposite Bateman's (TQ671238)
 - 6.** Bridge over River Dudwell (TQ671237)
 - 7.** Group of buildings just after Bateman's (TQ670235)
 - 8.** Woodland shaw after Park Farm (TQ668232)
 - 9.** Second area of woodland after Park Farm (TQ668230)
 -
 - 17.** Bateman's, Bateman's Lane (TQ671238)
- Finish.** Burwash High Street (TQ675247)

Middle section of the route



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Stopping points and grid references

- 10.** Sunken woodland track (TQ668227)
- 11** Raised bank inside the woodland (TQ668226)
- 12.** Sugarloaf Oast at Little Worge Farm (TQ658213)
- 13.** Wooden footbridge over gill (TQ653214)
- 14.** Solitary red tiled house (TQ653219)
- 15.** Entrance to Willingford Farm (TQ656226)
- 16** First meadow from the road (TQ658226)

Directions

These directions are for use with the audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

Directions to the start of the walk

From The Bear Inn car park, follow the path to the left of the scout hut. Enter the field for a view of the secluded Wealden landscape with the Dudwell Valley below.

1. Welcome to Burwash and the High Weald

Footpath behind The Bear Inn, Burwash (TQ675247)

Directions 1

Continue down the right edge of the field towards a line of trees. At a path junction halfway down the field go right across a plank bridge and through a gate. Carry on along the top edge of two fields and stop at a wooden stile into the third field. Listen to Track 2.

2. Unchanged landscape

Stile into the third field (TQ674244)

Directions 2

Descend the next field diagonally to a signpost in the far corner. Listen to Track 3.

3. Sussex cattle

Fields near Burwash (TQ673241)

Directions 3

Keeping a hedge on your left, drop down through the next field to emerge by a stile onto a road. Turn right to walk along the road. When the hedge on the right ends and Bateman's manor house comes into view, stop by a wooden gate on the right which contains a small quarry. Listen to Track 4.

4. The rocks beneath the surface

Sandstone quarry near Bateman's (TQ672238)

Directions 4

Carry on a few paces along the road then listen to Track 5.

5. The Sussex weed

Oak tree opposite Bateman's (TQ671238)

Directions 5

At the junction in front of the ornate gates of Bateman's, turn left. The line of trees ahead indicates a river in the bottom of the valley. Cross the river at the road bridge and go through a small gap in the hedge to stand on the river bank. Listen here to Track 6.

6. Power to the Weald

Banks of River Dudwell (TQ671237)

Directions 6

Continue ahead until you reach an interesting looking group of buildings on your right. Listen to Track 7.

7. Wealden building styles

Group of buildings just after Bateman's (TQ670235)

Directions 7

Carry straight on through a wooden gate towards Park Farm (ignoring a left turn just before a converted oasthouse). At Park Farm (look out for a fine old set of old ploughs outside, relics of the horse-and-plough era of farming) continue ahead on the main track past the farm buildings, after which continue on the waymarked track slightly left, up to a woodland strip. Listen to Track 8.

8. A shaw between the fields

Woodland shaw after Park Farm (TQ668232)

Directions 8

Leave the wooded area by a gate, then carry on up the field edge with woodland on your right, which you soon enter via a gate at a bridleway marker post. Listen to Track 9.

9. Coppice

Second area of woodland after Park Farm (TQ668230)

Directions 9

At a T-junction with a broad woodland track, (note the splendid mature beech tree ahead, carved with centuries-old graffiti) turn left along it then immediately right on a narrower track. Listen here to Track 10.

10. Sunken tracks and pannage

Sunken woodland track (TQ668227)

Directions 10

Keep left at the fork, as indicated. Ignore a gate into the field on your left but keep in the woodland. Listen to Track 11.

11. Protecting the woodland

Raised bank inside the woodland (TQ668226)

Directions 11

Continue along the woodland track. There are wide views out of the forest into the countryside and pastures to the left. The bridleway eventually passes a lone cottage built of local sandstone (with another view of The Needle to the left), and continues as a broad track to the road. Turn left on the road. Almost immediately on the left you'll see Sarah Raven's Cutting Garden at Perch Hill Farm. Carry on along the road.

Opposite the next house, turn right over a stile by a metal gate. Soon carry on along a grassy strip between fences, then on entering a field go diagonally left up to the top, to an obvious break in the hedgerow trees, to find a gate. Carry on up to reach a concrete farm track and turn right on it. There are magnificent views all round from here, notably to the left across to Dallington Church visible on a ridge and the South Downs curving along the horizon in the distance. Carry on to reach Sugarloaf Oast at Little Worge Farm. Listen to Track 12.

12. Oasthouses and hops

Sugarloaf Oast at Little Worge Farm (TQ658213)

Directions 12

Go downhill through the gate into Little Worge Barn. Go past the car port, out through a metal gate and along the path straight ahead to descend into woodlands. In the woods pass two sets of gates on either side of the path, then turn right at a signposted four-way path junction by a barrier and follow the woodland path, across a semi-open strip with power lines, to stop on a wooden bridge over a ravine. Listen to Track 13.

13. Ancient woodland and gills

Wooden footbridge over gill (TQ653214)

Directions 13

Eventually the path exits the woodland. Follow the marker arrows across the top edge of two small fields then carry on keeping just to the left of power lines through the next field to continue on a track, then forward along the left field edge. Stop when you reach a red tiled house on the left. Listen to Track 14.

14. Classic Wealden field patterns

Solitary red tiled house (TQ653219)

Directions 14

Emerge on to the road. Turn left and follow the road to the sign for Willingford Farm. Listen to Track 15.

15. A tale of Wealden iron

Entrance to Willingford Farm (TQ656226)

Directions 15

Retrace your steps back along the road until you reach a stile on the left. Cross it into a meadow, bearing half right. Listen to Track 16.

16. Wildflower meadow

First meadow from the road (TQ658226)

Directions 16

Over the next stile enter the left-hand field ahead as waymarked, and follow the top edge, soon into woodland by a stile, and leave by a kissing gate. Go forward over grassland (with Burwash church now in view ahead), dropping down the slope to continue along the valley floor. Keep the stream on your left, ignoring a path through a gateway to the left, then go through a gateway to a signpost avoiding a path to the right. Barns appear ahead.

Take a bridge on the left as indicated by arrows (no route ahead), and proceed across a field between strips of trees to enter a woodland, avoiding a wooden footbridge to the left. Cross a sluice by a brick bridge and follow the path curving right round the millpond. If you have a National Trust card, you can visit Bateman's and its watermill from this side, through the first gate on the left; otherwise (to continue the route or to purchase an entrance ticket), carry on along the pond past the watermill then left. Either turn left and left again to take the entrance into Bateman's car park, or to continue the walk turn right on the lane. Listen to Track 17.

17. Kipling's manor

Bateman's, Bateman's Lane (TQ671238)

Directions 17

Retrace your steps along the road past the oak tree and the quarry then left over the signposted stile up to Burwash village car park (up the right edge of the first field, then along the left edge of three more fields). Listen to Track 18.

18. A Sussex street

Burwash High Street (TQ675247)

Directions 18

You have now reached the end of the walk. Do take time to explore Burwash's high street before returning to the car park.

Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people for their assistance in producing this Discovering Britain walk:

Tim Locke for script writing, audio commentary and providing photographs

Gerry Sherwin for suggesting the walk, script assistance and providing photographs

Caroline Millar for editing the walk resources and audio files, and providing photographs

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Rory Walsh for assistance editing the walk resources

William Alexander, Arkive, N Chadwick, Mike Codd and **James Cope** for additional images



Haymaking in the High Weald
© Caroline Millar

Further information

High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership

www.highweald.org

Landscapes for Life

www.landscapesforlife.org.uk/high-weald-aonb.html

Natural England

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designations/aonb/highweald.aspx

Visit Sussex

www.visitsussex.org

Bateman's

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/batemans



Patchwork field patterns of the High Weald
© High Weald AONB Partnership

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