The High Weald ‘Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty’ (AONB), is one of England’s finest landscapes. Small, irregular fields were created when early farmers made clearances for their crops and livestock, forming boundaries with strips or ‘shaws’ of woodland between fields. Such fields are all around Hawkhurst.

From c.4000-1400 BC, ‘Downs’ and coastal plains’ farmers drove their pigs into the woods to feast on acorns and beech mast. Their annual trek to their ‘demes’ formed tracks, known as droves. Steep sided sunken lanes can be found in North Hill Road, Sopers, Whites & Foxhole Lanes.

The typical timber-framed and weather-boarded buildings of the area are a reminder of the development of smaller settlements. The typical farm buildings were made of local timber and the thatching of the roofs was made of straw, leaves or heather. The typical farm buildings were made of local timber and the thatching of the roofs was made of straw, leaves or heather.

Footpaths & Bridle Paths:

There are locally produced maps of footpaths, bridle paths and walks available for sale in the library, supermarkets, estate agent and at the BP Garage. The High Weald Landscape Trail runs through Goodnestone and Cranbrook to the North of Hawkhurst for more details please visit www.highweald.org

Getting There:

From the A22 at Flimwell, take the A268 to Hawkhurst, from the A23, via Tenterden, turn onto the A268 to Hawkhurst. By train to Etchingham, or to Staplehurst followed by bus to Hawkhurst. For bus information visit www.travelline.org.uk or telephone 0871 200 22 33. National Express, daily service between London and Flimwell or Hurst Green, visit www.nationalexpress.com.

For more information please visit www.highweald.org

Village Events:

St. Laurence Festival: Every year - see the website for exact dates
Village Fete: Bi-annual – see the website for exact dates.
Flix ‘n’ Pix: From 20th to 27th June, 2009 - a week of feature films "with a difference" at Hansfield’s renamed digital cinema, together with creative photographic and art displays in the village.

"Brewing up a Storm" - an event to raise the profile of local accommodation and activities. The village will host a series of events throughout the year - see the website for exact dates.

"A day in the life of a Village" - an event to raise the profile of local accommodation and activities. The village will host a series of events throughout the year - see the website for exact dates.

For more information visit www.hawkhurst-happens.org.uk

Hawkhurst is a rural village located in the rural heart of South East England. It is the fourth largest protected landscape in England & Wales, covering 164 sq.km (64 square miles).

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The High Weald is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty covering 1461 sq.km (564 square miles) in the rural heart of South East England. It is the fourth largest protected landscape in England & Wales, classed as an AONB allowing the stems to grow back. The wood is used to make charcoal hearths, the waste, called “slag”, and some hammer and furnace ponds are all that’s left today. Down Sopers Lane are the remains of the Wealden Smokery and furnace ponds. The typical timber-framed and weather-boarded buildings of the High Weald were home to early farmers who left behind the trackways that we now call the ‘Common’, and the Ashdown Forest. The High Weald is one of the main iron-producing regions in Britain with raw materials up to 26% iron content and furnace ponds. The area is rich in heritage sites, including Bayham Abbey, Battle Abbey & Battlefield, Bodiam Castle, Smallhythe Place, and Sissinghurst Castle Garden. The AONB covers parts of four counties – East Sussex, West Sussex, Kent and Surrey, and is home to such areas as Bexhill, Cranbrook, Hastings and Tonbridge. The High Weald is twinned with Oriolo Romano in Italy and Audruicq in France. Small, attractive towns include Ticehurst, Flimwell, Winchelsea, and Hawkhurst. Hawkhurst is the centre of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The town is located in the Weald of Kent, a region known for its rolling hills and ancient woodland. Hawkhurst is a market town and civil parish in the Wealden district of East Sussex, England. It is situated approximately 30 miles southeast of London and 15 miles west of Hastings. The town was granted a market charter in 1066 AD. Since at least the 12th century, Hawkhurst has been a centre for charcoal and blacksmithing. The town is also home to the Hawkhurst Gang, and other more respectable aspects of our heritage, including the origins of the Rootes Motors Group.

Hawkhurst is home to a variety of attractions and events. The town is known for its annual dastardly smuggling activities of the Hawkshurst Gang, and other more respectable aspects of our heritage, including the origins of the Rootes Motors Group. Hawkhurst’s renowned digital cinema, together with creative photographic and art exhibitions, is a must-visit for film and art lovers.

For accommodation information contact Tourist Information Centres or visit www.hawkhurst-happens.org.uk. For bus information visit www.travelline.org.uk or telephone 0871 200 22 33. National Express, daily service between London and Flimwell or Hurst Green, visit www.nationalexpress.com. For train information, visit www.nationalrail.co.uk or telephone 0845 748 4950. By car, Hawkhurst is located on the A268 and A207 roads. By train, Hawkhurst is served by the East Coast Main Line, with stations at Battle and Hastings. Hawkhurst is a popular destination for walkers and cyclists, with numerous footpaths and bridle paths in the surrounding countryside. The High Weald is a great place to explore, with its rich history and natural beauty. Whether you’re interested in history, nature, or simply enjoying a day in the countryside, Hawkhurst and the surrounding area have something for everyone.
The ancient Wealden village of HAWKHURST is widely known for its beautiful surroundings, long history, and the notorious “Hawkhurst Gang” of ruthless 18th century smugglers. Hawkhurst, today, consists of two districts: The Moor with its beautiful Parish Church and village green, and Highgate with its village shops centred on the attractive, almost two hundred year old, Colonnade. Enjoy the Hawkhurst Heritage Trail, of just under six miles, to discover some of our history.

Set in the inspiring landscape of the High Weald, Hawkhurst is within easy reach of the sea, of interesting historical towns like Rye, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Battle and Hastings, and of excellent countryside attractions including Bedgebury National Pinetum, Bewl Water reservoir and world famous houses and gardens. Nearer at hand the village is surrounded by beautiful woodlands, orchards and pasture land, many criss crossed by public footpaths. Relax in a pub garden, sample some local food, come and discover Hawkhurst, the crossroads of the Weald.

Your Guide to the Hawkhurst Heritage Trail

The Laundry plaque is on the last house on Northgrove Road and further along the Rye Road at flats. Keep left at the junction with Church Lane and then turn left into the car park. From here, continue along the High Street to the Moor House. This plaque commemorates William Rootes, a bicycle manufacturer. He later set up what was to become the internationally famous Rootes Group, initially supplying, and then manufacturing, motor vehicles. There was a showroom here with workshops at the rear. His son William and Reginald transformed the business in the 1930s to Madstone. They later bought up Humble Hills Sunbeam and Talbot and became one of the largest car manufacturers in the country.

Gas Works
Continue skirting the green and at the end turn right into Talbot Road. The Gas Works plaque is on the Weald Valley Surgery building on the left side. The Hawkhurst Gas Company was set up, with investments from local people, in 1868. The design of the 3-pounder naval cannon dates from about 1750 and was probably sold to an armed merchant (Royal Navy cannons were heaped) and later purchased by the famous Victorian architect, Sir George Gilbert Scott, who is now redundant.

Private Lunatic Asylum
A further step further along the Northgrove Road, on the right hand side is a pillar marking all that remains of the private lunatic asylum, owned by Dr. William Scott, which is now redundant.

Cottage Hospital
Continue along Talbot Road, turn left at the end and go up Highgate Hill, turning left at the traffic lights. Continue walking along the High Street for about 1 mile towards Firlewell. You will come to the Cottage Hospital. Built on the site of the Bull Inn and given to the village by Mrs. Margaret Adams of Springfield in 1877, at one time this hospital was even equipped with an operating theatre. It is now a community hospital with many facilities.

To return to the car park, retrace your steps along the High Street, past the operating theatre. It is now a community hospital with many facilities. Springfield in 1877, at one time this hospital was even equipped with an operating theatre. It is now a community hospital with many facilities.

Infant School
Turn right into Cranbrook Road, cross the road and look further along the Northgrove Road. You will immediately see the Infant School which was built for the village in 1869 by the Rev. Henry Jeffreys. It has many subsequent uses including a hall for 3rd H meetings, army cadet drill hall and is now converted for residential use.

Street from All Saints’ Car Park, Rye Road. Parking is restricted to two hours but additional car parking is available in Church Lane and Church Road. Continue along the High Street for about ¾ mile towards Flimwell. You will come to the Dunk’s Hall plaque. The original building was the gift of Sir Thomas Dunk, who lived at Tongewood. The plaque commemorates the schoolroom with the master’s accommodation attached. There were originally three almshouses on each side which were converted into 11 flats in 1971. The design of the 3-pounder naval cannon dates from about 1750 and was probably sold to an armed merchant (Royal Navy cannons were heaped) and later purchased by the famous Victorian architect, Sir George Gilbert Scott, who is now redundant.

Dunk’s Hall
Cross the road to Dunk’s Hall and the corner in the small gardens. This 1725 building was the gift of Sir Thomas Dunk, who lived at Tongewood. The centre section was a schoolroom with the master’s accommodation attached. There were originally three almshouses on each side which were converted into 11 flats in 1971. The design of the 3-pounder naval cannon dates from about 1750 and was probably sold to an armed merchant (Royal Navy cannons were heaped) and later purchased by the famous Victorian architect, Sir George Gilbert Scott, who is now redundant.

Colonnade
Continue along Cranbrook Road and turn left. Near the corner of Western Road the plaque commemorates William Rootes, a bicycle manufacturer. He later set up what was to become the internationally famous Rootes Group, initially supplying, and then manufacturing, motor vehicles. There was a showroom here with workshops at the rear. His son William and Reginald transformed the business in the 1930s to Madstone. They later bought up Humble Hills Sunbeam and Talbot and became one of the largest car manufacturers in the country.

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Hawkhurst Railway Station
Continue along Cranbrook Road for about ¾ mile past the Springfield industrial estate. Just after the garage at Gills Green and shortly before the library and police station, the Hawkhurst Railway Station, opened in 1893. Losing trade to nearby mainline stations as well as cars, it was closed in 1941. The original engine shed, goods shed and signal box are still standing.

Collingwood House
Return to Highgate and go straight ahead at the traffic lights. Walk ¾ mile to the Moor and then left onto the Hastings Road. Collingwood House is at the junction with Stream Lane. Sir John Horrell (1792-1871), the eminent astronomer and pioneer of photography lived at Collingwood House from 1845-1871. He is buried in Westminister Abbey. The house was built in 1831 by Mr. Jesse Compton and was, at the time, known as Moor House.

Map Key
- FIRE STATION
- POST OFFICE
- ALPACAS
- CHURCH
- SUPERMARKET
- PARKING
- NATURE RESERVE
- BANK
- PETROL STATION
- PLAYING
- FIELDS
- PLAYING
- FIELDS
- PLAYING
- FIELDS
- PLAYING
- FIELDS