

**North Kent Woods and Downs  
National Nature Reserve**

**Public Heritage Information Audit**

**Prepared for  
Kent Downs National Landscape Unit**

**Project No. 250050  
Report No. 2025040**

**February 2025**



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<b>Date of Issue:</b>	February 2025	
<b>Version:</b>	1	

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Archaeology South-East (a division of the Institute of Archaeology, UCL) has been commissioned by the Kent Downs National Landscape Unit (KDNLU) to carry out an audit of the public heritage assets in the proposed North Kent Woods and Downs National Nature Reserve. This comprises a large area from Gravesend to the Medway and is being considered by Natural England for the King's Series National Nature Reserve status<sup>1</sup>.
- 1.2 This audit follows on from a draft heritage strategy coordinated by Kent County Council Heritage Conservation Team and includes the research of a number of local historians and archaeologists (KCC 2024). The rich natural environment of the North Kent Woods & Downs National Nature Reserve (abbreviated in this report to NNR) is complemented by a rich historic environment, as reflected in the Kent Historic Environment Record (HER).
- 1.3 The heritage strategy summarises the evidence for the history and archaeology (historic environment) of the NNR area using information about known sites (heritage assets). It provides summaries of the ten characteristic themes for the area, considers archaeological potential and gaps in understanding and suggests over-arching recommendations for future research and management projects. The characteristic cultural heritage themes were identified as:
1. Landscape and Environment
  2. Communication
  3. Settlement
  4. Agriculture
  5. Woodland and Forestry
  6. Industry
  7. Culture, Education and Religion
  8. Leisure, Recreation and Sport
  9. Military and Defence
  10. Events and Information
- 1.4 The heritage strategy implementation plan identified the need to carry out a public heritage information review. This audit represents a first stage of that review, the purpose of which has been to establish what existing public heritage assets (digital or physical) were held by the NNR project partners pertaining to the proposed sites making up the NNR.
- 1.5 The following document provides a summary of the results and considers, as far as possible, the gaps in the current coverage and opportunities and priorities in developing an NNR-wide Heritage Information Strategy. The 2024 KCC Heritage Strategy spreadsheet from their assessment has also been updated as far as practicable.
- 1.6 It should be noted that this audit has been a rapid desk-based exercise and further research may show more information is available elsewhere.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://kentdowns.org.uk/our-projects/nnr/> Accessed February 2025

## 2.0 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 For the purposes of this audit the land parcels considered are those detailed on a spreadsheet provided by the KDNLU (February 2025). As the NNR project has moved forward some additional sites have been added and, at the time of writing, are not yet included in the heritage strategy. Parcels were not included as part of this audit if the landowners were not known or had indicated to the KDNLU that they did not want to be involved. National Highways mitigation/compensation land was also not included.

2.2 This audit considered the following land parcels (Fig. 1)

Site Name	KCC Ref	2025 Ref
Jeskyns Community Woodland	12	12
Ashenbank Wood	5	5
West Park	6	10
Camer Park	7	11
Cobham Hall School	15	15
Cobham Woods	2	2
Ranscombe Farm	4	4
Leisure Plots'	3	3
Shorne Woods Country Park	1	1
Shorne Common Rough	10	8
Shorne Recreation Ground		
School Common		
Crabbles Bottom	9	7
Trosley Country Park		18
Wrotham Water		17
Silverhand Estate	8	6
Holborough Woodlands	11	9
Birling Estate		16

2.3 The above land parcels are owned by 12 landowners:

- Cobham Hall School.
- Forestry England.
- Gravesham Borough Council.
- Kent County Council.
- MDCV UK.
- National Trust.
- Plantlife.
- Shorne Parish Council.
- Tarmac.
- West Kent Downs Countryside Trust.
- Woodland Trust.
- Birling Estate.

2.4 Contacts for each landowner were provided by KDNLU, they were contacted by email, with a reminder sent out in the case of no response. The following information was requested:

*Do you have digital public heritage information relating to the land parcels and if so where? This could, for example be information on heritage on your websites, trails and guides which include heritage elements.*

*Do you have physical interpretation assets on your holdings which relate to heritage or include information on heritage? This could, for example, include information panels and leaflet boxes. If you do could you provide us with the location of these assets and a summary of what topics they cover.*

*Do you have other physical information which includes heritage topics which is available to the public, for example guidebooks? If you do could you let us know where these are available and what topics they cover.*

- 2.5 Responses were received from eight of the landowners. These have been incorporated into the brief summaries of public heritage by land parcel set out in section 3 below.

### 3.0 LAND PARCELS

- 3.1 The following section provides a brief description of each land parcel, a summary of their heritage, derived from the KCC NNR Heritage Strategy Site Data and Implementation Plan and/or other readily available sources, an overview of the existing public heritage information and its format, the themes covered and, where possible, the potential public heritage information.

#### **Jeskyns Community Woodland** (Forestry England) 140.6 ha

- 3.2 Jeskyns is home to 360 acres of newly planted woodlands, meadows and orchards, with a good network of surfaced walking trails, children's play areas and café (<https://www.forestryengland.uk/jeskyns>).
- 3.3 It is understood that there have been previous surveys of the community woodland prior to its establishment but these have not been synthesised. The archaeological information indicated on the spreadsheet suggests a multi-period landscape and a well established baseline, albeit focussed on the northern part of the parcel which lies adjacent to High Speed 1 (formerly known as the Channel Tunnel Rail Link) which was subject to archaeological investigation. The A2 (Watling Street) was a key Roman route which has remained significant, as demonstrated by the presence of the more recent HS1.

#### *Public Heritage Information:*

- 3.4 Forestry England advise there are no existing public heritage information assets in either physical or digital format. Online information and trail guides on the official site are limited in scope; generally identifying a location or colour of trailmarkers and links to the OS Maps mobile app.
- 3.5 The main existing public heritage source is the booklet *Cobham Landscape Detectives. A Community Archaeology Odyssey* (KCC 2019) pertaining to the Cobham Landscape Detectives programme (which was a three year discovery project covering the Cobham landscape. There are occasional mentions of Jeskyns in this, including nearby Owletts.  
<http://shornewoodsarchaeology.co.uk/cobham-landscape-detectives>.
- 3.6 Additionally there is extensive historical information relating to the manor of Henshurst of which this site was a part, which has been prepared by the Shorne Wood Archaeology Group (SWAG):  
(<http://shornewoodsarchaeology.co.uk/cobham-landscape-detectives-research-note-6-manor-henhurst>). There is also some information on the Kent Archaeology Society website:  
(e.g. <https://www.kentarchaeology.org.uk/magazine/68/13-shorne-woods-heritage-project>)
- 3.7 Jeskyns is one of the sites in this area which is included on the Darnley Trail  
([https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0006/37779/Darnley-](https://www.kent.gov.uk/data/assets/pdf_file/0006/37779/Darnley-)

[Trail.pdf](#)), a circular route which provides highlights of the Kent Downs National Landscape (referred to in the leaflet as AONB) and includes a number of the heritage assets in the NNR land parcels.

- 3.8 Moving forward, synthesis of the available existing surveys should provide a basis from which the Forestry Commission could enhance their website pages on this site. There is also the opportunity to integrate heritage into trail guides and possibly create heritage specific trails. A possible key theme that could be explored at this site could be the development of transport in the region given the proximity of both Watling Street and HS1.

### **Ashenbank Wood (Woodland Trust) 29.93ha**

- 3.9 Ashenbank Wood is a public access site comprising a mix of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) covering around 40% of the site, with wood pasture and parkland over the remainder (<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/woods/ashenbank-wood/>). It lies within the Cobham Hall Registered Historic Park and Garden (Grade II\*: National Heritage List No. 1000182).
- 3.10 The heritage potential of this site is significant; it includes a Scheduled Monument – a bowl barrow which comprises an earthen mound encircled by a quarry ditch (NHLE No. 1011011). A shallow wood bank of medieval age or older also passes through the middle of the wood and the HER records dewponds. The other period well represented in the record is World War II; there were a number of RAF camps in the woods in and around Ashenbank, where personnel from the RAF Gravesend airfield were out stationed. All of the structures were removed in the early 1950's apart from four air raid shelters which remain as a feature of interest, alongside numerous building foundations and remnants of ablutions units. These have recently been the focus of on-site excavation works by SWAG/Cobham Landscape Detectives.
- 3.11 Heritage is incorporated into the Management Plan:  
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/media/50516/4143-ashenbank-wood.pdf>

#### *Public Heritage Information*

- 3.12 Summary digital information pertaining to heritage is provided on the Woodland Trust website pages for the woods ('history' tab). This includes the scheduled barrow and World War II remains:  
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/woods/ashenbank-wood/>
- 3.13 There are interpretation panels on site pertaining to heritage:
- World War II Camps.
  - Bronze Age Barrow.

These are incorporated into the Woodland Trail which also includes information on Ancient Woodland and woodland management (e.g. pollarding).

- 3.14 The woodland is included in the booklet *Cobham Landscape Detectives. A Community Archaeology Odyssey* (KCC 2019) pertaining to the Cobham Landscape Detectives programme. There is also information via SWAG, including oral histories (<http://shornewoodsarchaeology.co.uk/oral-history/>). The woodland is included on the Darnley Trail.
- 3.15 Existing themes for public information are focussed on Religion (the scheduled barrow), Settlement, Military and Defence and Woodland and Forestry.
- 3.16 This land parcel has the potential for future research and for additional/enhanced interpretation; this could for example look at the use of the



area when part of the park for Leisure, Recreation and Sport – particularly hunting; a number of kennels are marked across the site on 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century mapping and the high ground on which The Mount is located overlooks open areas in the wood, perhaps hinting at the presence of a hunting stand.

**West Park** (Gravesham Borough Council) 21.46ha

- 3.17 West Park is part of the wider Cobham Hall Park (RHPG) and includes elements of its landscape identified through geophysical survey as published by Trevor Bent in KAS (Kent Archaeological Society) Magazine, No. 109 (Summer 2018) ([Issue 109 — KAS Magazine — Kent Archaeological Society](#)). There is some public access as it is crossed by public footpaths.
- 3.18 No information was provided as to public heritage information for this site. It is crossed by one of the route options of the Darnley Trail.

**Camer Park (Gravesham Borough Council) 18.1ha**

- 3.19 This is a public park with a mix of woodland and open areas. No information was provided as to public heritage information for this site.
- 3.20 Known heritage information is limited to the non-designated historic, park and garden of 18<sup>th</sup> century date which is recorded on the HER and discussed in *The historic parks and gardens of Kent (Kent Gardens Compendium)* (KCC 1996).

*Public Heritage Information*

- 3.21 Explore Kent provides the following summary information about the park which makes reference to its historical background:

*Situated close to the village of Meopham, Camer Park is made up of 40 acres of open, mature parkland and woods, and is listed as part of an Area of Outstanding Beauty. Originally the country estate of the Smith-Masters family, the site was converted to a country park and opened to the public in the early 1970s. The Grade II listed estate house, which is still in private hands, can be seen from the park (<https://explorekent.org/activities/camer-park/>).*

- 3.22 Whilst the presence or scope of existing public heritage information for this site is undetermined on the basis of the available information it could contribute to the Landscape and Environment theme, as a 'pocket' country house set in a mini-park, which could be compared and contrasted with the higher status country house at Cobham Hall and its landscaped park of the type the rising gentry were seeking to emulate. This could be achieved through additional research and the preparation of information panels/ web based data.
- 3.23 The existing long distance footpath, the Wealdway, links this park to other possible NNR sites to the south; the Silverhand and Birling Estates.

**Cobham Hall School** (Cobham Hall School) 61.7ha

- 3.24 Cobham Hall School sits at the core of the Cobham Hall Park a GII\* Registered Historic Park and Garden (RHPG) summarised as:

*Late C18 and early C19 ornamental gardens and pleasure grounds laid out by Humphry Repton and, later, his sons, partly on the site of C17 terraces, with additional mid C19 exotic tree planting and early C20 formal features by the designer William Goldring, set within a park of probably C16 origin which contains a late C17 avenue and an C18 mausoleum by James Wyatt. (NHLE 1000182). Full details are set out in the list entry <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000182?section=official-list-entry>.*

- 3.25 Additionally it incorporates a number of individual designated heritage assets include the GI Listed Hall (NLHE 1095053), GII\* Dairy (NHLE 13050), GII Temple (NHLE 1095054), GII Aviary (NHLE 1350861) and GII Engine House (NHLE 1262054). A Scheduled Monument includes a minor Romano-British villa and a 19<sup>th</sup> century reservoir situated on the western side of a low ridge of the Kent Downs. Park extends east into what is now the golf course and into West Park on the other side. Non-designated assets also include parkland features and earthworks which predate the park and a Spitfire crash site (Protected Military Remains).

*Public Heritage Information*

- 3.26 No information was provided as to public heritage information for this site. However basic online searches have established that there are number of online sources pertaining to heritage, typically focussed on the hall and gardens:

*The Hall and Grounds*

<https://www.cobhamhall.com/historic-house/>

<https://www.visitkent.co.uk/attractions/cobham-hall-1966/>

*Lord Darnley's Garden and the South Pleasure Grounds*

<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports/116-2003?search=id:15463&searchType=research+report>

*The North Pleasure Grounds*

<https://historicengland.org.uk/research/results/reports?searchType=research+report&search=id:15431>

*Historical Background*

<http://shornewoodsarchaeology.co.uk/cobham-landscape-detectives-research-note-4-manor-cobham-hall>

*The Repton Pond*

<http://shornewoodsarchaeology.co.uk/repton-pond-at-cobham-hall>

- 3.27 The main known physical public heritage source is the booklet *Cobham Landscape Detectives. A Community Archaeology Odyssey* (KCC 2019) pertaining to the Cobham Landscape Detectives programme.

3.28 Whilst named after the Earls of Darnley, the Darnley Trail skirts the boundaries of the school as it is private property. There are however a number of public footpaths across the site and the school does hold open days.

3.29 Key themes for this site are, on the basis of the available information,

*Settlement:*

Roman to post-medieval – the Roman villa, early medieval/medieval manor and post medieval hall.

*Landscape and Environment:*

In this instance the designed landscape by Humphry Repton for which the 'Red Book' of 1790 exists in the Darnley Family Papers (U565), (Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone).

*Culture, Education and Religion:*

Mid-20<sup>th</sup> century establishment of the school to provide a public school education for girls (reflecting changes and developments in society in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century). This includes an association with historic figures; e.g. 1971 building opened by Margaret Thatcher when Education Secretary – the previous year she had withdrawn the proposed comprehensivisation circular put in place by Wilson's Labour government.

*Leisure, Recreation and Sport:*

Ivo Francis Walter Bligh, 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Darnley (Lord of Manor) was the England Cricket Captain on Australian tour in 1882/3 who was presented with the Ashes urn. Early cricket and Kent have a close association; the first county game was held at nearby Dartford and Penshurst was the home of the cricket ball factory where the Duke's ball was first manufactured.

3.30 As the Cobham Hall site (and the adjacent golf course) are essentially private land with limited public access there are likely to be few opportunities to install public interpretation panels on site. Information could therefore be promoted on web-based platforms. Trails could utilise public footpaths, which link to points of interest and signpost more detailed background information.

**Cobham Woods (National Trust) 75.93ha**

- 3.31 This is an area of woodpasture which is part of the wider Cobham Hall Park (RHPG) and includes the restored 18<sup>th</sup> century Mausoleum (Grade I; NHLE 1095055) as a focal point with the remains of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Mausoleum/Park Cottage nearby. The site is included on the Darnley Trail. Thematically the site contributes to Culture, Education and Religion and has the potential to contribute to Landscape and Environment.

*Public Heritage Information*

- 3.32 No information was provided as to public heritage information for this site. However it has been established that there are web based materials on the National Trust website which have the potential to be enhanced:  
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/kent/cobham-wood-and-mausoleum>  
<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/visit/kent/cobham-wood-and-mausoleum/our-work-at-cobham-wood-and-mausoleum>
- 3.33 In addition, the archaeological data for the property is accessible through the National Trust Heritage Online website:  
<https://heritagerecords.nationaltrust.org.uk/home>
- 3.34 The main known existing public heritage source is the booklet *Cobham landscape Detectives. A Community Archaeology Odyssey* (KCC 2019) pertaining to the Cobham Landscape Detectives programme.
- 3.35 It is not known if there are any physical assets on site, such as information panels.

**Ranscombe Farm Country Park/Nature Reserve (Plantlife) 275.13ha**

- 3.36 Ranscombe Farm is a large nature reserve on the slopes of the Kent Downs (<https://www.plantlife.org.uk/our-work/ranscombe-farm-nature-reserve/#the-reserve>). It is made up of a mix of agricultural land and woodland. It is understood that this is an area of multi-period remains with a particular emphasis on the Mesolithic and possibly the Palaeolithic.

*Public Heritage Information:*

- 3.37 Plantlife have advised that an information board at one of the entrances accessible via a public footpath from Whiteleaves Rise in Cuxton includes some general heritage information (including a photo of a flint tool). Heritage information was included on two main entrance signs as well, but these have now been damaged beyond repair, and not replaced since 'we are due a complete renewal of all our signage and interpretation on the site'. This renewal of signage could provide an opportunity to enhance the heritage offering.
- 3.38 Published information includes the booklet *Cobham Landscape Detectives. A Community Archaeology Odyssey* (KCC 2019) in which the prehistoric discoveries at Ransome are covered. The site is included on the Darnley Trail.
- 3.39 Plantlife have advised that the book below (though focussing predominantly on the nature conservation aspects to the site) contains background info on Ranscombe's heritage, from the prehistoric to the recent past. A copy is available for public reference in the Kent History and Library Centre, Maidstone and is in print for purchase:

Richard Moyse (2023). *Ranscombe: Stories from a Nature Reserve and what They Say about Plants, Conservation and Us*. Kent Field Club

- 3.40 Heritage is not covered on the Plantlife website for the reserve and this offering could be enhanced.

**'Leisure Plots'** (West Kent Downs Countryside Trust) 46.93

- 3.41 This site sits between Cobham Wood and Ranscombe Farm. Known heritage assets are limited to a shaft in one of the plots and a memorial erected for Lord Darnley's Toe which is referenced on various websites:  
<http://shornewoodsarchaeology.co.uk/cobham-woods-walk-and-monument-find>  
<https://geofframbler.blog/2020/07/13/memorial-to-lord-darnleys-toe-1835/>  
<http://shornewoodsarchaeology.co.uk/cobham-woods-walk-and-monument-find/darnley-toe-memorial-feb-2022>
- 3.42 The West Kent Downs Countryside Trust has advised that they do not have any public heritage information.
- 3.43 The Darnley Trail skirts the northern boundary of the site and could potentially have a spur into these plots.



**Shorne Woods Country Park** Kent County Council 120.69ha

- 3.44 Shorne Woods Country Park is situated on the north side of the A2 and includes a visitor centre and café, a volunteer garden, orienteering, fishing lakes, a trim trail and picnic and play areas set in rolling woodlands, wetlands and meadows that can be explored via a variety of waymarked trails<sup>2</sup>. Historically part of the pleasure grounds of the Cobham Hall Estate, the area was used for clay extraction for the local cement industry from the 1920s to the 1970s.
- 3.45 As a public open space Shorne Woods effectively acts as a hub for the public access sites in this area. It is the starting point for the Darnley Trail, and parking for the adjacent Cobham Wood.

*Public Heritage Information:*

- 3.46 As the home of the Shorne Woods Archaeology Group there is extensive public heritage information for Shorne Woods. The Shorne visitor centre has a whole section of interpretation dedicated to heritage within the park including finds display, Lidar board and touchscreen.
- 3.47 The main panels at the park talk about the heritage trail. Trails are mapped on a leaflet which is available online (<https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/kent-country-parks/find-a-kent-country-park/shorne-woods-country-park/getting-around-the-park>). These include a Waymarked Heritage Trail including onsite heritage panels, and covering the following topics:
- Clayworks.
  - Mesolithic sculpture (The Knoll).
  - Randall Manor (medieval manor).
  - Hollow Way (medieval track).
  - Carriage drive.
  - WWII RAF Camp.
  - WWII Army Camp (no information board).
- 3.48 A Waymarked Sculpture Trail also incorporates heritage including the spider tickling a worm sculpture (made of clayworks machinery), the Shorne pony (made of clayworks engine parts), and the Hand On The Heath (representing the Mesolithic Flint scatters). The leaflet for this trail is not available online.
- 3.49 The Explorer Trail includes views to the Darnley Mausoleum and the various landscapes and habitats on the site include Ancient Woodland and Coppice Woodland reflecting historic woodland landscape and its management.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/kent-country-parks/find-a-kent-country-park/shorne-woods-country-park/about-shorne-woods-country-park>

- 3.50 A Shorne booklet is in preparation, to be published by the end of March, digitally and in print, as a sister to the Cobham booklet.
- 3.51 The KCC Country Parks website provides a history of the key periods of the park, as per the heritage trail (<https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/kent-country-parks/find-a-kent-country-park/shorne-woods-country-park/about-shorne-woods-country-park/shorne-woods-history>.) Hyperlinks take you to the 'Archaeology in Kent' Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ArchaeologyinKent/>.
- 3.52 Explore Kent website (a KCC led partnership) also references Shorne Woods Country Park:  
<https://explorekent.org/activities/shorne-woods-country-park/>
- 3.53 Shorne Woods Archaeology Group maintain the Shorne Woods archaeology website <http://shorne woods archaeology.co.uk/>. They featured in a Kent online special in 2024 (<https://www.kentonline.co.uk/kmtv/video/kent-tonight-special-beneath-shorne-woods-61539/>) and there are various talks and dig videos on YouTube, for example <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mude8zWOlug>.
- 3.54 Moving forward, a public heritage strategy should continue to support the work of SWAG's ongoing fieldwork, post-excavation work and archiving, thus contributing to the Events and Information theme.

**Shorne Common Rough, Shorne Recreation Ground & School Common  
Crabbles Bottom (Shorne Parish Council) 1.95ha, 1.01ha, 1.04ha & 11.64ha**

- 3.55 This group of sites are owned by the Parish Council and most are small sites. Shorne Common Rough lies adjacent to Shorne Woods but there has not been SWAG work in this area. It is the site of an historic sand pit (late 19<sup>th</sup> century) and now woodland. The recreation ground with sports pavilion lies on the south side opposite the Rough, hornbeams along its boundary with Brewers Road hint at the possibility of woodland banks.
- 3.56 School Common is situated on Shorne Hill and was the site of a World War II Antio Aircraft/Spigot Mortar emplacement and a gravel pit. It is now grassland public open space fringed with woodland.
- 3.57 Crabbles Bottom is an area of woodland and grassland; the woodland was established in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards (initially orchard) and further developed after junction works.

*Public Heritage Information*

- 3.58 The parish council have advised that there is limited public heritage information available. The history of the parish is summarised on the Parish Council website [About Shorne Parish – Shorne Parish Council](#). Parish council website does link to Shorne Woods website.
- 3.59 Physical public heritage information comprises a display case opposite Shorne Common, at the top of Butchers Hill, which shows the local footpaths as well as some information on the history of the area. The Parish Council advise that the display case is in need of repair and they are currently in discussion with KCC. This could provide the opportunity to promote heritage, perhaps signposting the extensive heritage offering at the nearby country park.
- 3.60 A book was published in 1987 which includes the history of the common land: A.F. Allen (1987). *Shorne: The History of a Kentish Village*. Meresborough Books. This is readily available in local public libraries.
- 3.61 Local organisations include a local history group, but they do not appear to have a web presence (<https://shorneparishcouncil.org/local-history-group/>).

**Trosley Country Park (Kent County Council) 66.45ha**

- 3.61 Situated at the southern end of the NNR this site was not included on the original list provided by KCC. This country park was once part of the Trosley Towers Estate, and is a mixture of woodland and open chalk grassland slopes.  
<https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/kent-country-parks/find-a-kent-country-park/trosley-country-park>

- 3.62 Available information on known heritage assets is limited to World War II sites as it was a training camp. Mapped features include former quarrying and a historic trackway. Given the undeveloped nature of the site it is anticipated that there is little other extant information at the present time.

*Public Heritage Information*

- 3.63 An on-site panel at Trosley was installed in 2022 on the World War II training camp at the top of Quarry Field. Historical background is provided on the website:

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/kent-country-parks/find-a-kent-country-park/trosley-country-park/about-trosley-country-park/history-of-trosley-country-park>

- 3.64 More baseline information is needed to better define the potential public heritage information relating to this site but can be anticipated to contribute to themes such as Woodland and Forestry; Leisure, Recreation and Sport; Culture Education and Religion (the Pilgrims Way is close by) and Communication.
- 3.65 As a public space at the southern end of the NNR it has the potential to act as a hub in a similar way to Shorne Woods in the north. It is well served by existing footpaths/bridleways; the North Downs Way crosses through the park, running into the adjacent Birling Estate, the Holbrough Woods, Silverhand Estate and into Ranscombe Farm County Park. The Wealdway crosses the North Downs Way in the Birling Estate and moving north runs through the Holbrough Woods, Silverhand Estate and also skirts Camer Park.

**Wrotham Water** (National Trust) 21.28ha

- 3.66 No information was provided as to public heritage information for this site which lies to the south-west of Trosley Country Park. It was not included on the original KCC list. It is a historic farm owned by the National Trust ([https://nationaltrusthbsmr.esdm.co.uk/LLWS/LLFiles/54809/original\\_54809.pdf](https://nationaltrusthbsmr.esdm.co.uk/LLWS/LLFiles/54809/original_54809.pdf)). Controlled metal detector survey, with multi-period finds, has been undertaken on the farm, but not within those parcels proposed as part of the NNR<sup>3</sup>.
- 3.67 More baseline information is needed to better define the potential public heritage information relating to this site

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<sup>3</sup> Michael Lewis, Finds Liaison Officer, Kent, 2001, *A Controlled Metal Detector Survey at Wrotham Water Farm, Kent: Survey Report* (Unpublished document). SKE7825.

**Silverhand Estate (Core and affiliated) (MDCV UK) 198.72 ha & 461.46 ha**

- 3.68 Situated around Luddesdown, the Silverhand Estate is a landscape of agricultural land and vineyard with some woodland. It includes the small historic settlement at Luddesdown which includes the Grade I Listed Luddesdown Court, a 13<sup>th</sup> century house (NHLE 1096343). Some parts of the estate lay within the Cobham Hall RHPG. This is an area with limited previous fieldwork, with the exception of fieldwalking which is not yet integrated onto the HER, but with multi-period potential with findspots and cropmarks. As with other areas in the NNR there are entries relating to World War II.

*Public Heritage Information*

- 3.69 MCDV UK advise that they have little public heritage information on their website and no physical heritage information. They own Luddesdown Court but do not have anything digital for the public.
- 3.70 More information is needed to better define the potential public heritage information relating to this site but can be anticipated to contribute to themes such as Agriculture, Settlement; and Industry. A rapid scan of historic mapping indicates Rabbit Warrens off Warren Road, and Hop Gardens on the tithe north of Luddesdown. The tithe notes a Brick Kiln Field in the vicinity of 'Bowling Alley' – itself a curious placename.
- 3.71 The estate is crossed by a number of footpaths including North Downs Way and the Wealdway which provides the opportunity for the development of heritage trails which do not intrude onto the private land, perhaps with occasional open days onto the wider estate.

**Holborough Woodlands** (Tarmac) 590.46 ha

- 3.72 No information was provided as to public heritage information for this site. The area is one with extensive woodland, a significant amount of which is Ancient Woodland. The HER records multi-period sites, with a particular focus on industrial heritage. In this instance this comprises chalk quarries and their associated infrastructure which are frequently found in this area. The site is crossed by the Pilgrims Way.

*Public Heritage Information*

- 3.73 More information is needed to better define the potential public heritage information which could be produced relating to this site. The preparation of baseline surveys would be beneficial, if they do not yet exist perhaps developed as a public engagement project. This site can be anticipated to contribute to themes such as Woodland and Forestry; Communications; Culture, Heritage and Religion; and Industry.
- 3.74 The HER notes that Houlder Quarry (Lees Pit) may have a number of surviving structures<sup>4</sup>. This could potentially be a focus for information pertaining to the quarrying of chalk, in contrast to the clay extracted at Shorne. Roman remains were also found during quarrying.

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<sup>4</sup> CgMs Consulting, 2002, *Buildings And Structures in Lee's Pit Holborough, Kent* (Unpublished document). SKE16355.

**Birling Estate (private) 155.38**

- 3.75 The Birling Estate is a family owned estate which encompasses a range of landscape types. The proposed NNR site is an area of woodland, now known as Whitehorse Wood.

*Public Heritage Information*

- 3.76 The estate website hosts basic information on the history of the estate and some of the more unusual ancestors (<https://birlingestate.co.uk/news/our-history/>).
- 3.77 The Birling Estate has hosted a landscape archaeology day (Bannister and Pittman 2010) and been subject to an Historic Landscape Assessment (Bannister 2009) and an Archaeological Assessment for Whitehorse Wood (Bannister 2010). As a result there is a robust baseline relating to the historic landscape of the woodland which is summarised below with due acknowledgement.
- 3.78 Whitehorse Wood is an area of sweet chestnut plantations; ancient yew, oak and hornbeam woods and some small areas of conifer plantations. It originally comprised a number of enclosed woodlands, such as Great and Little Park Woods, Knowles Wood, Great Badsells Wood and Hawsdown Wood, which had different owners. Historic landscape features recorded on the estate include parish banks topped with stubbed hornbeams where Birling, Ryarsh and Addington on the south side meet with Luddesdown on the north. There are also internal woodbanks. Parts of the estate were also medieval deer parks and field evidence for the Park Pale survive, some as very large earthworks, whilst others are much reduced.
- 3.79 There are two main hollow ways, banked to each side, which bound two sides of Whitehorse Wood. On the west is Wrangling Lane which links to the Pilgrims Way. On the east Commonory Road, which if followed down the scarp to the valley runs past the Neolithic long barrow of Coldrum Stones. Both are likely to be of prehistoric origin developed as droveways.
- 3.80 Part of Whitehorse Woods was used as a World War II Officer Training Camp (see also Trosley Country Park & [History of Vigo - Vigo Parish Council](#)). Physical remains are reported include concrete and rubble paths and drives, brick and concrete foundations to numerous buildings linked by the paths, concrete tanks, remains of gun positions and spigot mortars and numerous other earthworks. There is also c.1km of trench/stop line which may date to World War I where Andrew Mayfield of KCC Archaeology ran a young archaeologists' dig. The estate run a campsite in one corner of the woods which is based around the site infrastructure from the camp (<https://www.badgellswoodcamping.co.uk/ourstory>). The site is featured on a number of general military websites.
- 3.81 Given the range of remains present this site has high potential in terms of public heritage. Whilst private land the landowners have allowed public archaeology



days and invite community volunteering on conservation projects. <https://birlingestate.co.uk/visit/> so may be amenable to community archaeology projects. Additionally the site is crossed by numerous public footpaths. Public information, such as heritage trails could be established on themes such as Landscape and Environment; Woodland and Forestry; and Military and Defence.

## **4.0 DISCUSSION**

- 4.1 While information has not been provided by all the landowners of the prospective NNR sites this audit of public heritage information has provided a reasonable baseline from which some general observations can be made.
- 4.2 The public heritage information for the northern parcels of the NNR, that is those to the north of Cobhambury Road, Warren Road and the railway line, is far more extensive than that to the south. This reflects a number of factors such as the focus of archaeological and heritage work undertaken in the area in relation to large infrastructure schemes (for example HS1 and the Lower Thames Crossing) and the community archaeology work which has been carried out by the Cobham Landscape Detectives/SWAG, supported by a professional Community Archaeologist sitting within KCC. The results of this community archaeology work have been fed into public outreach in extensive areas of landscape which are publically owned and /or open to the public, particularly at Shorne Woods Country Park (KCC) which acts as a hub.
- 4.3 In contrast, the public heritage information in the southern proposed NNR sites appears limited. This could simply reflect the lack of information provided in response to this audit but it would seem most likely that it is a reality given that these areas have a different pattern of landholding in that they are largely private rather than publically owned and /or open to the public. Addressing this imbalance should be a priority but will be dependent on the available heritage information from which it can be developed. At the current time the available information is most extensive for Trosley Country Park and the Birling Estate (Whitehorse Wood) and this area could perhaps be a starting point. As a public space at the southern end of the NNR the country park has the potential to act as a hub in a similar way to Shorne Woods in the north.
- 4.4 Whilst much of the southern part of the NNR is private it is crossed by a number of footpaths which provides the opportunity for the development of heritage trails which do not intrude onto the private land. If it is not possible to install waymarkers/information panels other options could include physical/digital leaflets such as those which have been produced for the Darnley Trail. Trails could be created on a thematic basis.
- 4.5 Smartphone apps could also be used, some of which enable the creation of self-guided trails which use the phone GPS to trigger content as you travel along the route. These have a great deal of potential as that content can include audio and video as well as the static text and images – in the case of the heritage of the NNR this could be an effective way of integrating oral history. The Council for British Archaeology (CBA) has promoted the use of Geovey (<https://www.archaeologyuk.org/resource/create-an-interactive-online-walk-or-trail-with-geovey.html>) and other similar apps are available.
- 4.6 Trails also have the potential to link across the NNR as a whole. Established long distance routes are present. The North Downs Way runs through Trosley Country Park, linking to a section of the Pilgrims Way (a cultural heritage asset),

through the Holborough Woods (close to the chalk quarries) and on to Ranscombe Farm Country Park. Heritage could perhaps be included/enhanced on the National Trail website (existing guidebooks may include heritage information but are not free) which also promotes circular and shorter walks, one of which takes in Trosley Country Park and Whitehorse Wood. Online information on the North Downs Trail can be found here:

[https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en\\_GB/trails/north-downs-way/trail-information/](https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/north-downs-way/trail-information/)  
[https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en\\_GB/trails/north-downs-way/circular-and-linear-walks/](https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/trails/north-downs-way/circular-and-linear-walks/)  
[https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en\\_GB/short-routes/explore-kent-harvel-hike/](https://www.nationaltrail.co.uk/en_GB/short-routes/explore-kent-harvel-hike/)

- 4.7 Part of the Wealdway long distance route runs from the Coldrum Stones, across the Pilgrims Way and through Whitehorse Wood (Birling Estate), north to Luddesdown with its medieval house and from there to Camer Park. It is promoted on the Explore Kent website (<https://explorekent.org/activities/wealdway/>). Heritage could perhaps be included/enhanced on this.
- 4.8 In terms of themes this audit suggests that most are covered in some way, even if only represented by a single site or monument. The themes which are most covered are Military and Defence (particularly in relation to World War II), and Landscape and Environment. Whilst Woodland and Forestry is covered the available information tends to focus on ecology and arboriculture rather than heritage. The heritage element could be enhanced, particularly given the inclusion of sites like Whitehorse Wood (Birling Estate) with its hollow ways, parish and wood banks. Similarly Agriculture is not well represented but the inclusion of areas of agricultural land (e.g. the Silverhand Estate) have the potential to redress this balance.
- 4.9 The digital offering pertaining to public heritage information can be seen to be quite extensive but it is rather scattered, it would benefit from having an 'official' dashboard site (or part of a site) which provides links to the existing data. The Kent Downs National Landscape website could be a possible location as it already has a basic historical and cultural heritage page (<https://kentdowns.org.uk/about-us/special-characteristics/historic-and-cultural-heritage/>).

## REFERENCES

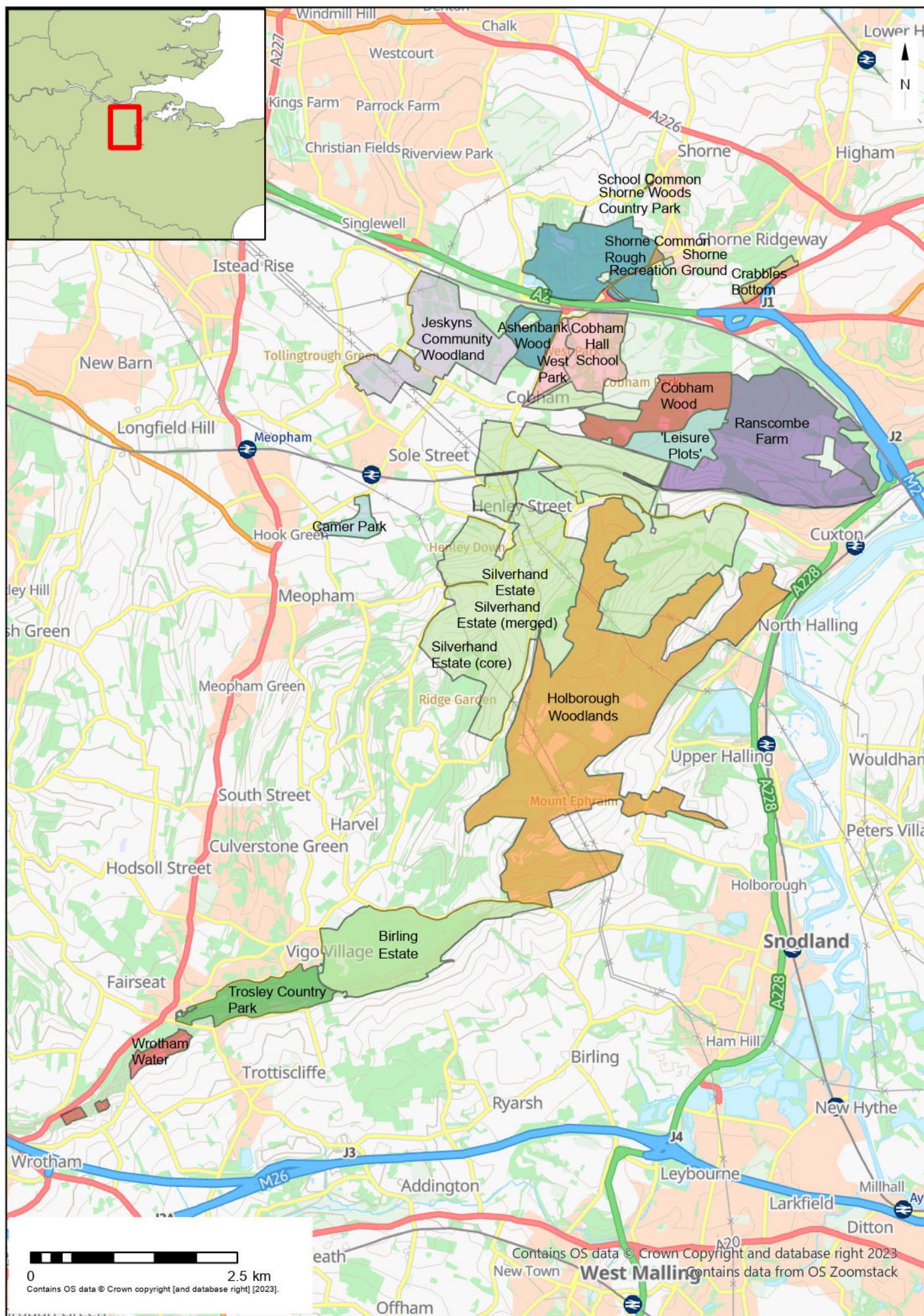
Bannister, N. 2009 *Historic Environment Assessment for the Birling Estate*

Bannister, N. 2010 *Whitehorse Wood. Birling Place Estate, Kent. Archaeological Assessment*

Bannister, N. and Pittman, S. 2010 *Birling Place Near Snodland Kent. Valley Of Visions Landscape Archaeology Day On Saturday 12th June 2010*

KCC September 2024 *Heritage Strategy – North Kent Woods and Downs - Candidate National Nature Reserve (NNR). Draft.*





© Archaeology South-East		North Kent Woods and Downs NNR, Public Heritage Audit	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 250050	Feb 2025	Location of possible NNR Land Parcels	
Report Ref: DBA	Drawn by: EMH		



**NetworkRail**

Network Rail (CTRL) is committed to a policy of sustainability development and is proud to be sponsoring The Darnley Trail Leaflet. The green space surrounding the railway is often referred to as a green corridor because it is an area for wildlife to either live in or pass through. The design and operation of High Speed 1 includes features that protect natural resources and conserve and enhance biodiversity along the route.

## Useful Information

**Shorne Woods Country Park** (Kent County Council)  
Tel: 01474 823800  
E-mail: [country.parks@kent.gov.uk](mailto:country.parks@kent.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent](http://www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent)

**Jeskyns Community Woodland** (Forestry Commission)  
Tel: 01474 825118  
E-mail: [jeskynsranger@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:jeskynsranger@forestry.gsi.gov.uk)  
Web: [www.forestry.gov.uk/jeskyns](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/jeskyns)

**Ashenbank Wood** (Woodland Trust)  
Tel: 01476 581111  
E-mail: [enquiries@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@woodlandtrust.org.uk)  
Web: [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

**Darnley Mausoleum** (National Trust)  
Tel: 01304 207326  
Web: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

**Cobham Hall**  
Tel: 01474 823371  
Web: [www.cobhamhall.com](http://www.cobhamhall.com)

**Ranscombe Farm Reserve** (Plantlife International)  
Tel: 01722 342730  
E-mail: [enquiries@plantlife.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@plantlife.org.uk)  
Web: [www.plantlife.org.uk](http://www.plantlife.org.uk)

## How to get there



### By car

Signposted off the A2 between Gravesend and Rochester at the Cobham/Shorne junction (DA12 3HX).



### By bus

Red Route 416/417 service between Meopham, Sole Street, Higham and Gravesend runs Monday to Saturday four times daily return. Bus stops at the park entrance. Enquiries to KCC travel service telephone 0871 2002233 or telephone Red Route directly on 01474 353896.



### By train

Regular services from London and Kent to Meopham, Gravesend and Higham. All stations served by taxis and Red Route 416/417 buses, which also stop in Cobham. For rail enquiries telephone 0845 7484950.



### By foot

Shorne Woods Country Park is located on Brewers Road adjacent to the A2 between Gravesend and Rochester. It is a short stroll from Shorne Village.

Produced by the Cobham & Shorne Countryside Partnership



THE NATIONAL TRUST



**Plantlife**



Print managed by County Print & Design

Explore the

# Darnley Trail





# Explore Cobham & Shorne's Countryside

The Cobham and Shorne area contains some of the most stunning countryside that you will find in North Kent. With most of the countryside within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, you will be able to discover richly diverse landscapes throughout the area. Experience ancient woodland, over 400 years old and home to some of Kent's biggest trees; open grassland with towering veteran trees scattered along the horizon; acres of coppice woodland, filled with bluebells in the springtime; and newly planted orchards and grazed meadows.

## The Darnley Trail

Named after the Earls of Darnley, who previously owned Cobham Hall and much of the land that you will see en route, the Darnley Trail is an excellent way to see the highlights of this area. This is a circular route for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians that links Shorne Woods Country Park with the gently undulating countryside on the other side of the A2, over a distance of approximately 10km. From the Country Park, the Darnley Trail takes in Cobham Park, Ranscombe Farm Reserve, Ashenbank Wood and Jeskyns Community Woodland, with several entry points and various short cuts that make up a varied and interesting route. Horse box parking is available at Shorne Woods Country Park by arrangement (tel: 01474 823800).



# Shorne Woods Country Park

Shorne Woods Country Park is the ideal place to base yourself when planning to explore the area. With plenty of parking, a dramatic, eco-friendly visitor centre full of useful information, toilets and a café, it provides all the facilities you need to set you up for your day of discovery.

Within the park itself, there are seven waymarked trails of varying lengths and difficulty to help you make the most of all that the park has to offer. With 288 acres of woodland, heathland and wetland, you will find ponds and lakes rich with

reeds and teeming with colourful dragonflies. The medieval remains of Randall Manor, the original seat of the De Cobham family, are hidden in the woods. Or simply relax in the picnic area while the children let off steam in one of the two play areas on site.





# Cobham Park

Cobham Hall, a grand Elizabethan mansion, was the home of the Earls of Darnley from the 1730s to the 1950s. The Hall is at the heart of Cobham Park, originally a medieval deer park and redesigned by the renowned landscape designer Humphry Repton in the early 19th century.



Within the park are picturesque pleasure gardens, rolling parkland, and scenic woodland. Almost hidden in a quiet corner of the park is the famous Darnley Mausoleum, an internationally important building completed in 1786.



The Park now has several owners. The largest area open to the public, Cobham Wood, belongs to the National Trust. The wood, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, is open all year but the Darnley Mausoleum is open only on certain days.

Now an independent school, Cobham Hall and its colourful gardens are open to visitors on certain days throughout the year.

Please keep to the waymarked trails and keep dogs under control at all times.



# Ashenbank Wood

The Woodland Trust owns 29.5ha of Ashenbank Wood, the majority of which was bought in 1984. Ashenbank Wood is part ancient woodland where it was traditionally managed as coppice, and part wood pasture where historically the wood was grazed by livestock. There are many examples of veteran trees and pollards to see as well as relics from Ashenbank's social history - a Bronze Age Barrow and structures from the Second World War when the RAF accommodated personnel from the Gravesend Airfield in the wood. Interpretation panels are placed along two waymarked routes, which are passable with sensible footwear.





# Jeskyns

Opened to the public in 2007, Jeskyns is 360 acres of greenspace that has been specially created by the Forestry Commission.

Land that was previously under intensive agriculture has been converted to a mixture of traditional habitats. Over time the key historic landscape features of North Kent will reappear.



There will be traditional orchards of apples, cherries and cobnuts, open parkland, grass and wildflower meadows and native woodlands.



Almost seven kilometres of fully accessible hard trails and grass paths across the site have been created for pedestrians, wheelchair users, buggy pushers, cyclists and horse riders.

Extensive circular trails take in all of the most interesting features on site. Children will enjoy the innovative natural play features that have been designed to stimulate the imagination including a fun tree house. A range of newly created habitats including four new ponds provide the opportunity for wildlife to flourish.



# Ranscombe Farm

Ranscombe Farm is a botanical gem, described by experts as a 'very unique place'. It is a square mile in total and it has been a favourite haunt of wild plant enthusiasts for hundreds of years.

Managed by the charity Plantlife International in partnership with the tenant farmer, Ranscombe is now a country park. It combines a place for quiet walks in attractive countryside with a fascinating flora on the slopes of the North Downs.

There is a five-year plan to restore coppicing, an ancient Kentish trade, to the woodland and to improve conditions for wildlife. These woodlands are best in spring with early-purple orchids and bluebells.

The excellent work begun by local volunteers in 2005 will be continued. Plantlife is organising volunteer workdays, talks, free guided walks and other events throughout the year.





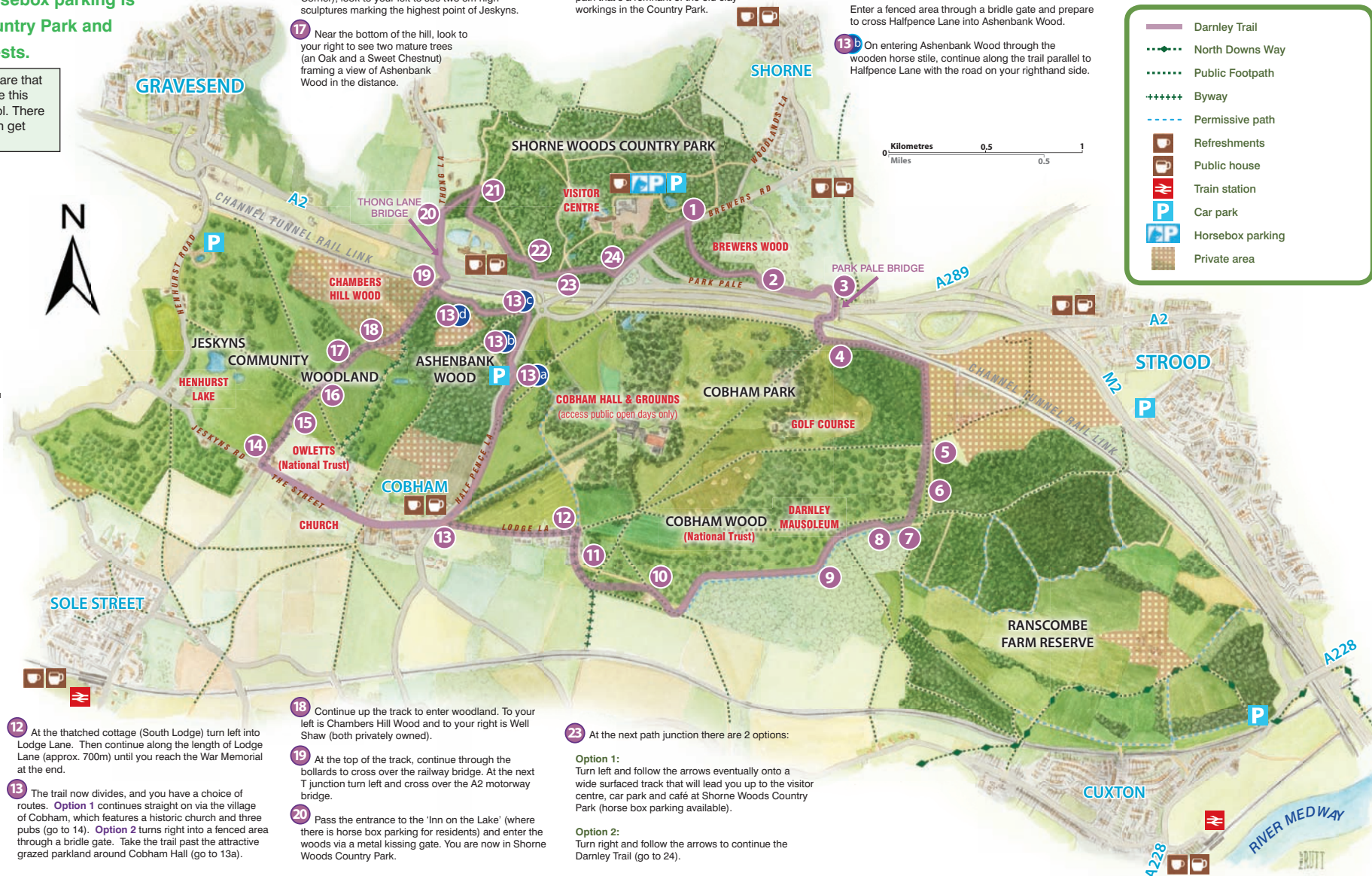
# FINDING YOUR WAY

## ...around the Darnley Trail

Our trail description starts at the main entrance to Shorne Woods Country Park on Brewers Road and takes you in a clockwise direction, so you can start and finish wherever you like and you can travel in either direction. There are lots of entrances and some other places to park. Horsebox parking is available at Shorne Woods Country Park and at 'The Inn on the Lake' for guests.

This is a shared user route so please be aware that cyclists, horse riders and pedestrians all use this path, dogs must be kept under close control. There are steep slopes and in the winter areas can get very muddy so take care.

- 1 Taking great care, use the Pegasus crossing over the road and enter Brewers Wood, following the wide track through the coppice woodland. At the next main crossroads turn right following the trail that meanders through the woods for some distance. Continue heading downhill through an area rich with wildflowers in the spring until you eventually reach the Shorne Woods Country Park boundary next to Park Pale Road.
- 2 Exit through the gate then turn left along Park Pale Road.
- 3 Following the signs to Cobham Golf Course, take the first left road turning that takes you up over the A2 across Park Pale Bridge.
- 4 Go under the railway and turn left through the swing gate, following the footpath with the railway on the left, and the golf course over to the right. Continue until you reach the point where the Darnley Trail forks right near the boundary fence with the open fields.
- 5 Continue keeping the fields on your left and woodland on your right until you reach a narrow grassland area between two fences, cross this, then bear right just after the kissing gate keeping the wire fence immediately on your right.
- 6 Continue up the steep slope for approx. 300m until you reach the top.
- 7 At the top of the slope, you will see a field gate and large cattle grid on your right. Continue forward, crossing the track, and entering the more dense woodland.
- 8 Bear right and follow the undulating and winding trail for the next 800m, keeping the post and wire fence on your right at all times. Pass three kissing gates, and look out for the Darnley Mausoleum, visible through the trees on your right. Descend a steep slope, partially along some wide steps and take the right hand track at bottom of the steps.
- 9 Continue, passing a small gate and cattle grid on the right. Carry on for another 650m and pass a small clearing of beech trees where a public footpath joins from the left. Keep right next to wire fence, and then on past an abandoned quarry to your left.
- 10 Reaching a kissing gate, do not go through but turn left where the trail continues through coppice woodland for approx. 300m.
- 11 Pass through a bridge gate and horse stile (adjacent to a field gate), bear right along the track, heading toward the collection of buildings.



### 14 Option 1: via Cobham Village

Continue through the village for approx. 1km and at 'Owletts' (a National Trust Property) turn right up the public byway entering to the left of the house drive, before the small cottage. You are entering Jeskyns Community Woodland. Please note vehicles may be present on this track.

15 To your left in the distance, you can see the tree house and the newly created Henhurst Lake with its wooden boardwalk.

16 At the brow of the hill (locally known as Hollybush Corner), look to your left to see two 6m high sculptures marking the highest point of Jeskyns.

17 Near the bottom of the hill, look to your right to see two mature trees (an Oak and a Sweet Chestnut) framing a view of Ashenbank Wood in the distance.

21 Follow the path through the woodland, passing fields on your left, until you rise up the hill to a path junction. (This junction connects the Darnley Trail with additional waymarked routes through the country park, for which a separate leaflet is available). At the junction, turn right and up hill, and follow this path through Shorne's ancient woodland. Look out for views of the QE2 Bridge through clearings on your right.

22 At the next major path junction turn right, where the route doubles up as the Explorer and Heritage Trails, and follow this route bearing left along a concrete path that's a remnant of the old clay workings in the Country Park.

24 Continue on the trail bearing right and following the waymarkers until you reach the park boundary. Do not leave the park, but turn left just in front of a kissing gate onto a path that weaves through the woodland running parallel to the road for a short distance, and eventually crosses the main country park entrance drive. Cross the drive carefully and follow the path to the traffic lights (Pegasus crossing) and point number 1.

### 13 Option 2: via Ashenbank Woods

13a Keeping left (not down tree lined avenue) continue along the route for approx. 900m, with the post and wire fence on your right, and hedge and road on your left.

Enter a fenced area through a bridge gate and prepare to cross Halfpence Lane into Ashenbank Wood.

13b On entering Ashenbank Wood through the wooden horse stile, continue along the trail parallel to Halfpence Lane with the road on your righthand side.



0 0.5 1  
Kilometres  
Miles

13c Turn left onto the public right of way as way marked for about 50 metres and then at the wooden 'squeeze gap' fence turn right off the public right of way following the woodland track and way marked direction.

13d Pass through the horse stile turning right onto a surfaced vehicle track and walk on towards point 19. At the T-junction (point 19) turn right and cross over the railway bridge. At the next T-junction turn left and cross over the A2 bridge towards the Inn on the Lake and Shorne Woods Country Park (point 20).

Darnley Trail

North Downs Way

Public Footpath

Byway

Permissive path

Refreshments

Public house

Train station

Car park

Horsebox parking

Private area

23 At the next path junction there are 2 options:

Option 1:  
Turn left and follow the arrows eventually onto a wide surfaced track that will lead you up to the visitor centre, car park and café at Shorne Woods Country Park (horse box parking available).

Option 2:  
Turn right and follow the arrows to continue the Darnley Trail (go to 24).





This walk takes in the countryside between the village of Harvel and the North Downs Way.

You will walk along Wrangling Lane. This name probably derives from the use of the route in times past, by local people taking their grievances (wrangles) to the Lord of the Manor at Luddesdown Court.

# HARVEL HIKE

6.6 MILES (10.6KM)  
FROM TROSLEY COUNTRY PARK

EK

## HOW TO GET THERE - DA13 0SG

**By Car:** Signposted off the A227 between Meopham and Wrotham, near Vigo Village.

**Pay and display parking:** Available at Trosley Country Park.

**Train:** Nearest station: Snodland (3 miles). National Rail Enquiries: 08457 484950

**Bus:** 308 (Bluewater – Sevenoaks) hourly, Mon-Sat. 5 journeys Sun.

**Traveline:** 0870 6082608

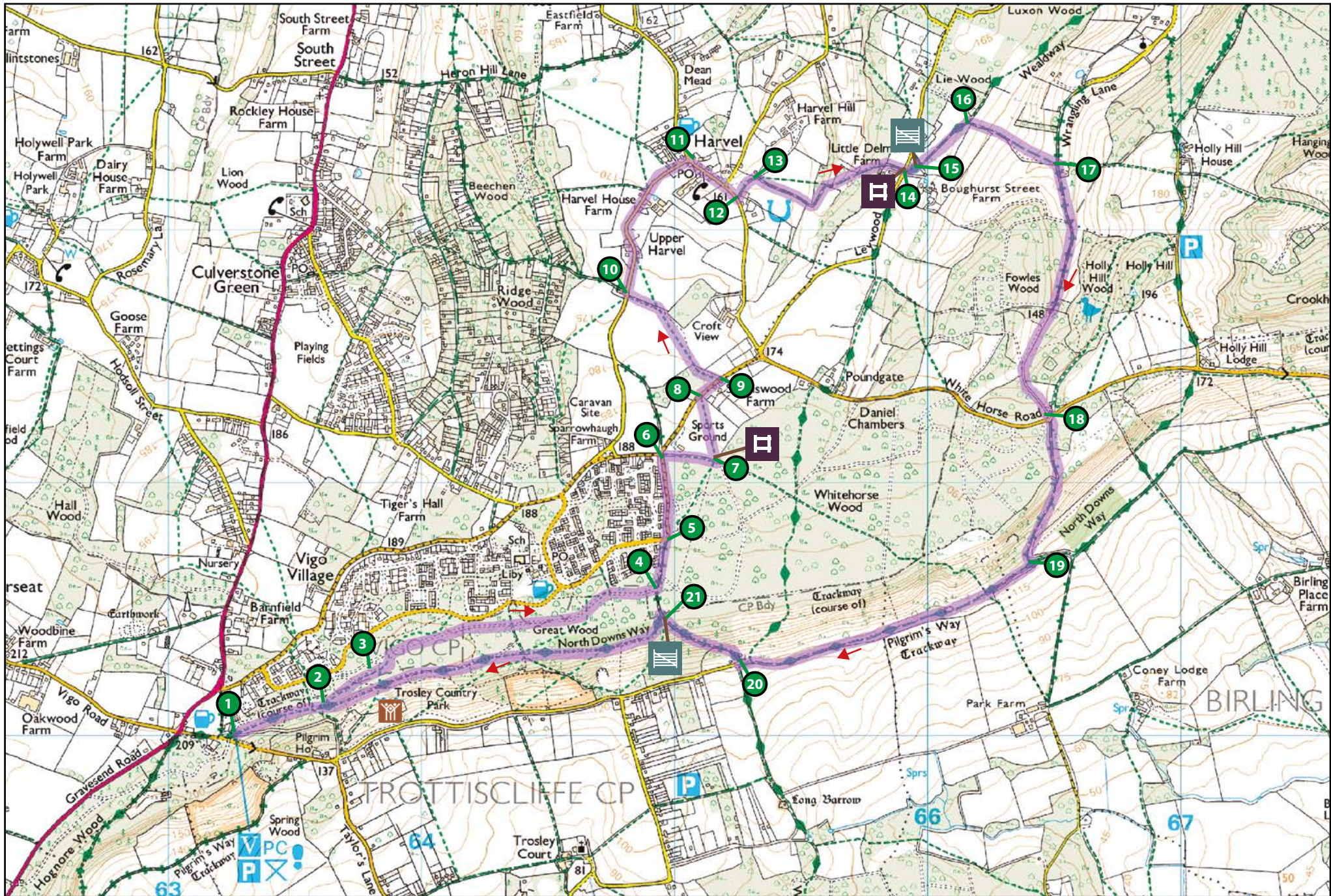
	Start/Finish	Trosley Country Park
	Stiles	4
	Gates	2
	Terrain	Some steep slopes and steps
	Views	Some good views
	Toilets	At Trosley Country Park
	Refreshments	At Trosley Country Park

## ROUTE DESCRIPTION



- 1 From the car park, head down the sloped path, past the notice board. Turn left and follow the path (North Downs Way) through the trees.
- 2 Turn left at the way mark post, following the signs for Walk A
- 3 At the T junction in the path, turn left
- 4 Cross the stile next to the gate to leave the park and turn left.
- 5 The track becomes an asphalt road. Follow this to the next road junction.
- 6 Turn right, past gate and along path next to Vigo Rugby Club.
- 7 At the boundary of the sports field with the woodland, turn left over the stile. Cross the rugby pitches diagonally to the opposite corner.
- 8 Cross the stile and turn right along the road. **Beware of traffic.**
- 9 Turn left opposite Well House, to join a footpath through a small woodland. From the woodland, cross the open field to the corner of another small woodland to the right. Follow the fence line towards the road in front of a bungalow.
- 10 Turn right onto the road (**beware of traffic**) and follow it to the centre of Harvel Village.
- 11 You will reach a T junction with the Amazon and Tiger public house opposite. Turn right and follow the road through the village.
- 12 At the end of the green turn left, following the way mark sign for a bridle path.
- 13 Turn right off the concrete track, following the bridle path towards woodland.
- 14 Cross the road and then the stile into the field.
- 15 Following the Wealdway signs, go through the gate and the hedge beyond.
- 16 As the path opens to a large field, leave the Wealdway, following the hedge line at the right of the field and downhill.
- 17 At the bottom of the hill, turn right along Wrangling Lane.
- 18 As the track emerges to the road (**beware of traffic**), go straight across to the track opposite. This track passes through woodland then down a steep slope to the North Downs Way. **The surface here can be slippery when wet.**
- 19 Turn right at the wooden bollards and follow the North Downs Way.
- 20 The path meets an asphalt road with a house on your right. Turn right and climb the hill. This section is a steep climb up steps.
- 21 As the slope flattens out, turn left to re-enter the park. Follow the North Downs Way through the park to return to the visitor centre.





Also use Ordnance Survey Map: **Explorer 148**  
Trosley Country Park [www.explorekent.org](http://www.explorekent.org)





## Institute of Archaeology

[www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology-south-east](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology-south-east)

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