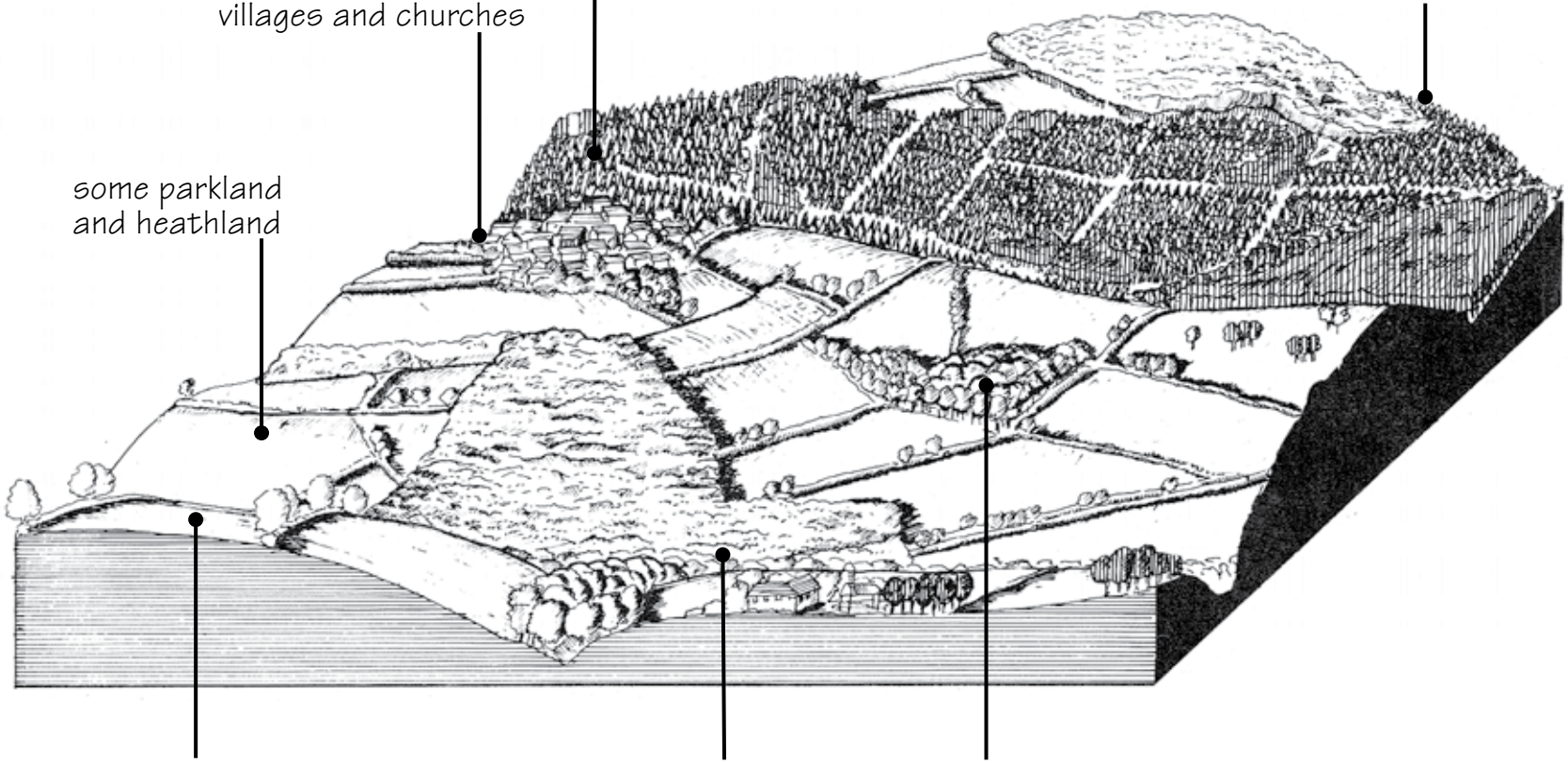
The Central High Weald



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Central High Weald



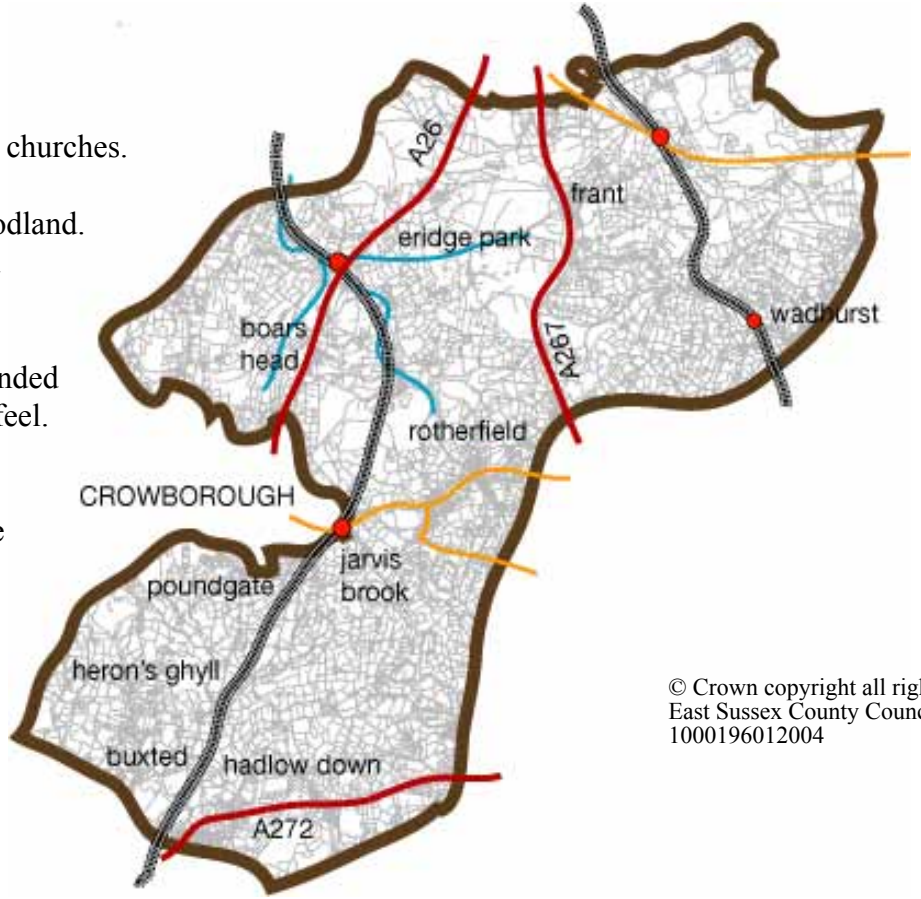
The Central High Weald lies south of Tunbridge Wells and east of Crowborough. These urban areas exert a strong influence on the neighbouring countryside. It is a landscape of high ground with outstanding views from the ridge tops, across the heart of the High Weald.

Characteristics

- Bold, broad ridges, often crowned by villages and churches.
- Narrow deep, often wooded ghyll valleys.
- Rolling, heavily-wooded landscape with 30% woodland.
- Large woodland blocks with chestnut coppice and substantial coniferous plantations; also pine, birch and beech.
- Close network of winding, sunken and hedge-bounded lanes with cottages and farms giving well-settled feel.
- Some remote areas, mainly in valleys and larger woods.
- Occasional 'surprise' views over rolling landscape to the Downs.
- Significant historic designed landscapes.
- Significant areas of heathland

Special features

- Sandstone outcrops: Eridge Rocks and Harrisons Rocks.
- Eridge Park
- Many estate cottages bear decorative crests or plaques of the Abergavenny Estate



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The High Weald

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Central High Weald

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The High Weald

Problems, pressures, detracting features

- Rather 'gentrified' character, with suburban details, hobby farms, and horse paddocks.
- Urban fringe pressures, particularly around Crowborough, but also Rotherfield, Wadhurst and Royal Tunbridge Wells.
- Neglect and coniferisation of some estate woods and parklands.
- Traffic on some lanes detracting from recreational use or remoteness.
- Recreational pressure, with some golf course development.
- Development pressure in villages.
- Rhododendron invasion in broadleaved woodland a problem.
- Pressure from recreational rock climbing, leading to severe erosion of outcrop footings especially at Harrisons Rock. Concreting of rock faces, removal of overhanging trees and unstable rock.

Vision

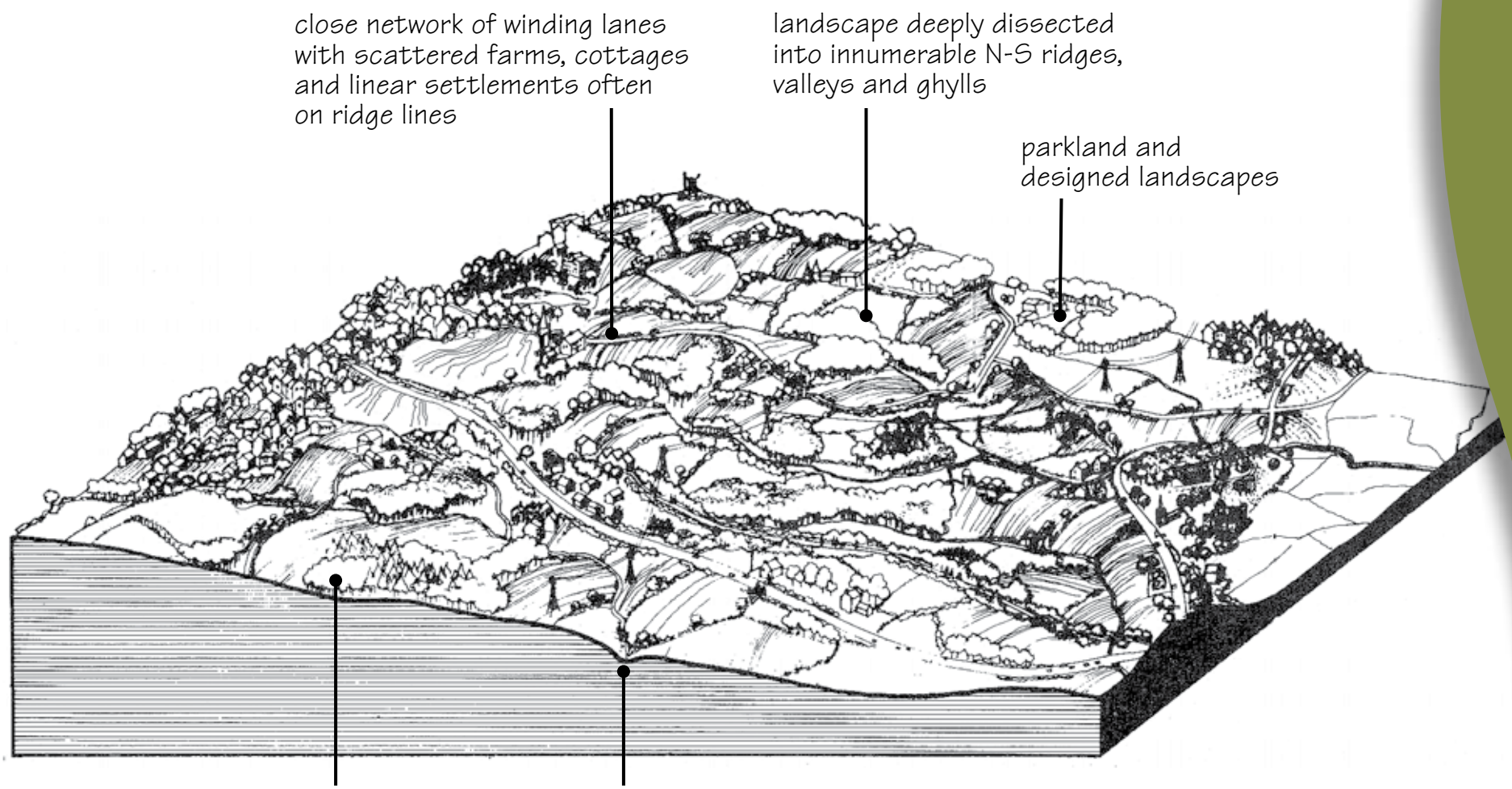
A rich, rolling landscape with abundant woods and parklands creating scope to enjoy remoteness and seclusion close to the attractive, boldly-sited villages, with strong local architectural detail and materials.

Landscape action priorities

- Encourage conservation and promotion of local materials, styles and details in both existing and new development, by increasing awareness of them.
- Conserve and restore woods and parklands with the help of advice and grants.
- Encourage village tree conservation plans.
- Resist further golf course and other organised recreational development.
- Control and manage traffic on lanes.
- Protect and enhance designed landscapes and features of archaeological significance.

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South Slopes of the High Weald



5 The High Weald

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South Slopes of the High Weald

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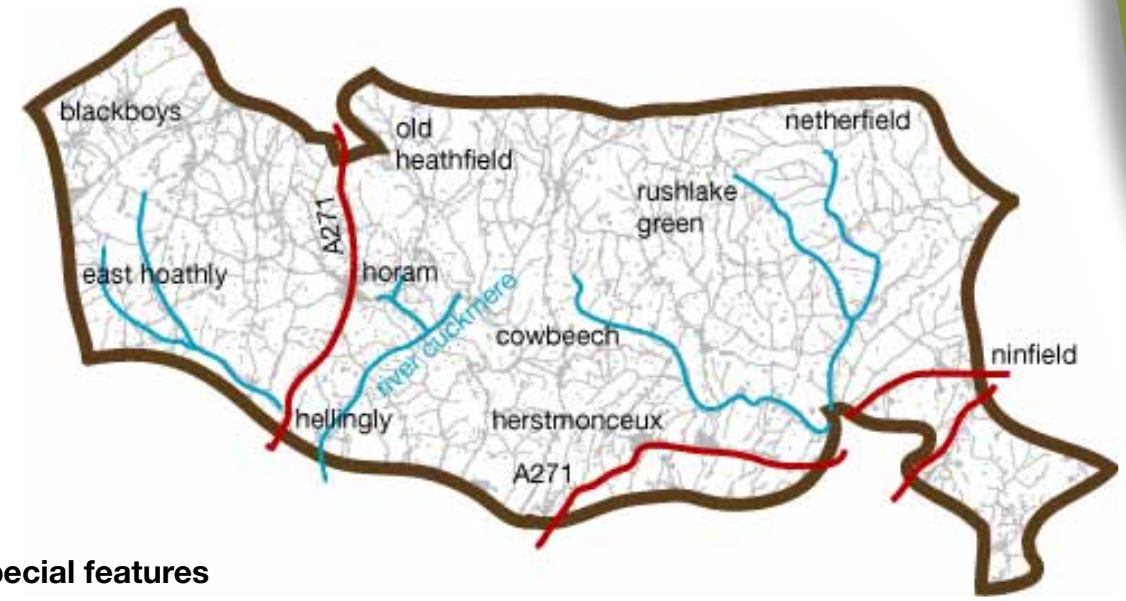
The High Weald

This is an intricate, small scale landscape with a strong pattern of hedgerows, falling southward from the Heathfield to Battle ridge towards the Low Weald and Pevensey Levels. This landscape of gentle valleys and slopes affords good views of the Downs.



Characteristics

- High Weald landscape at its most intricate; a very detailed landscape.
- Deeply dissected into innumerable north-south ridges, valleys and ghylls.
- Streams drain mainly into River Cuckmere or Pevensey Levels waterway systems.
- Close network of ghyll woodland, small woods, shaws and hedges; 15% woodland. An abundance of hornbeam ('horebeech').
- Close network of winding lanes with scattered farms, cottages and linear settlements, often on ridges.
- Varied villages, most with remote rural character and on ridges.
- Secluded, often shady valleys with remote feel.
- Substantial remote areas in east.
- Parkland and designed landscapes.
- Numerous hammer ponds and other iron industry relics.
- Chestnut post and rail fencing is characteristic of this area.



Special features

- Notable large village green at Rushlake Green.
- Capability Brown parkland vestiges at Ashburnham and Repton at Heathfield Park.
- Herstmonceux Castle and telescope domes with a fine avenue of Sweet Chestnuts.
- Mediaeval field patterns at Hadlow Down and Netherfield.

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South Slopes of the High Weald

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The High Weald

Problems, pressures, detracting features

- Suburbanisation, ribbon development and roadside clutter in some places.
- Clay extraction for bricks in Horam area.
- Excessive concentration of golf course development around Horam.
- Highly visible power lines.
- Some large modern farm groups, especially visible on ridges.
- Neglect and decline of many small ghyll and coppice woods.
- Area around Ninfield dominated by large conspicuous Water Authority Complex.
- Arable 'prairies' appearing especially around Ashburnam Park.
- Urban fringe problems around Bexhill and South Heathfield.
- Widespread horsiculture.

Vision

A landscape retaining a strong 'rural backwater' feel, with quiet, secluded valleys and ghylls, remote areas and unspoilt rural villages set in a strong indigenous tree and hedge structure.

Landscape action priorities

- Encourage management and restoration of small woods and ghylls, with the help of advice and grants.
- Farm and village conservation plans, including screening of farm buildings with new woodland planting.
- Resist further golf course development, and protect remote areas.
- Protect and enhance designed landscapes and features of archaeological significance.

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