

Introduction

Worth Way is a seven mile (11 kilometre) route from Three Bridges to East Grinstead. Officially opened on the 10th July 1979, it forms a valuable wildlife corridor and shared-use route for pedestrians, horse-riders and cyclists. Part of Worth Way is a Country Park (bylaws apply). The National Cycle Network (Route 21) from London to Eastbourne passes along Worth Way.

Worth Way from Three Bridges to M23 lies within Crawley Borough. West Sussex County Council manages the remainder of Worth Way.

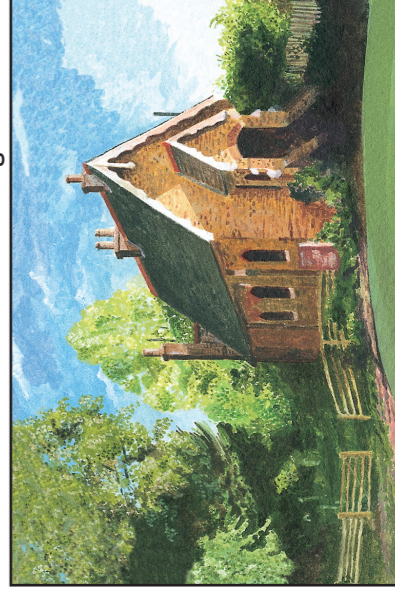
Finding Your Way

This leaflet is only a guide. Inset maps are provided at difficult points but you are recommended to use the following OS maps in conjunction with this guide.

1:50 000 Landranger Series Sheet 187 Dorking & Reigate
1:25 000 Explorer Series 134 Crawley & Horsham
135 Ashdown Forest

History

For much of its length Worth Way follows the railway line which ran from East Grinstead to Three Bridges. Opened on 9th July 1855, Rowfant and subsequently Grange Road (Crawley Down) were the only stations along the route. In 1866 the railway was extended from East Grinstead to Tunbridge Wells most of which is now Forest Way Country Park. A century later the whole line was closed as part of the line closures proposed by the then British Rail Chairman, Dr Beeching, in the 1960's.



Rowfant Station

Rowfant Station, although not open to the public, still survives. Grange Road station no longer exists. The site, to the west of the Royal Oak public house, is now a terrace of shops and the railway line from Grange Road to Cob Close has been built over.

Little remains of another section of the railway line between the M23 motorway and Keepers Crossing as the cutting was used as a landfill site in the 1970s. A line of trees indicates the route of the former railway line.

Wildlife

Worth Way supports a diverse variety of wildlife and much of the route has been designated a Site of Nature Conservation Importance. Since the closure of the railway much of its length has been colonised by trees such as Ash and Silver Birch, and shrubs including Hazel and Sallow.

Where chalk was used in the construction of the railway, chalk loving plants such as Common Spotted Orchid and Wild Strawberry flourish.

The range of habitats attracts a variety of birds. Nuthatch and Chiffchaff can be heard in the trees while the elusive Kingfisher may be glimpsed at Crawley Down Pond.



Speckled Wood Butterfly

Butterflies too are seen in good weather. The most notable is the White Admiral which flies in June whilst Speckled Wood Butterflies can often be seen defending their territories in sunny glades.

Mammals and reptiles are elusive but a quiet approach can provide a glimpse of Roe Deer and Fox on surrounding farmland. Bats can sometimes be seen at dusk.

Management of Worth Way aims to maintain a mosaic of differently aged trees and shrubs together with open areas. Some of the trees and shrubs are coppiced in rotation. Coppicing is a traditional form of management whereby trees and shrubs, notably Hazel, are cut down to the base. This benefits plants such as Primroses, and a variety of insects, which thrive with the increased light and warmth. The dense regrowth of stems in turn provides valuable nesting sites for birds.

Elsewhere open areas are regularly cut. This prevents scrub from invading and allows species that like open conditions to survive.

Ditches help to keep the route dry but are also important for wildlife. A relatively large pond exists at Crawley Down (Crawley Down Pond). This is managed with the assistance of a local voluntary group, the Pond Environmental Group.

Other routes of interest

Worth Way links through East Grinstead to Forest Way Country Park. This 10 mile/16km route ends near Groombridge, East Sussex, and similarly to Worth Way, follows the old railway line. The route is accessible to pedestrians, cyclists and horse-riders. West Sussex and East Sussex County Councils manage Forest Way.

A number of public footpaths and public bridleways link with Worth and Forest Ways. Other promoted routes include four Worth Way circular walks, the Sussex Border Path and the High Weald Landscape Trail. Ordnance Survey Explorer Map 135 shows details, or alternatively contact one of the sources listed on the back of this leaflet.

Worth Way Code

- Take your Litter home
- Leave flowers and fungi for others to enjoy
- Respect other users by:

Cyclists

- Slow down, give way and leave plenty of room for walkers, horses and people with disabilities.
- Cycle responsibly and carefully.
- Do not surprise people – they might not have heard or seen you.
- Use a bell or give a yell.

Walkers

- Do not obstruct cyclists.
- Keep dogs under proper control (bylaws apply).
- Clear up after your dog.

Horse Riders

- Walk past other users.
- Do not canter or gallop.



Further contacts

For further information on Worth Way and the West Sussex section of Forest Way contact West Sussex County Council, Countryside Services, Northern area Countryside Team.

Email: countryside@westsussex.gov.uk
www.westsussex.gov.uk

For further information on walking and other countryside activities in East Sussex and for a copy of the Forest Way leaflet contact East Sussex County Council.

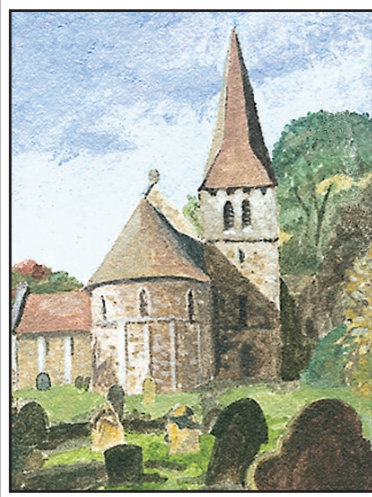
Tel 01345 6980193.
Email: countryside@eastsussex.gov.uk

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St Nicholas Church, Worth

A fine Saxon Church dating from the tenth century. It is an early example of a cruciform plan which later became the general layout throughout England. A Norman-looking northeast tower was added in 1871.



Rowfant Station

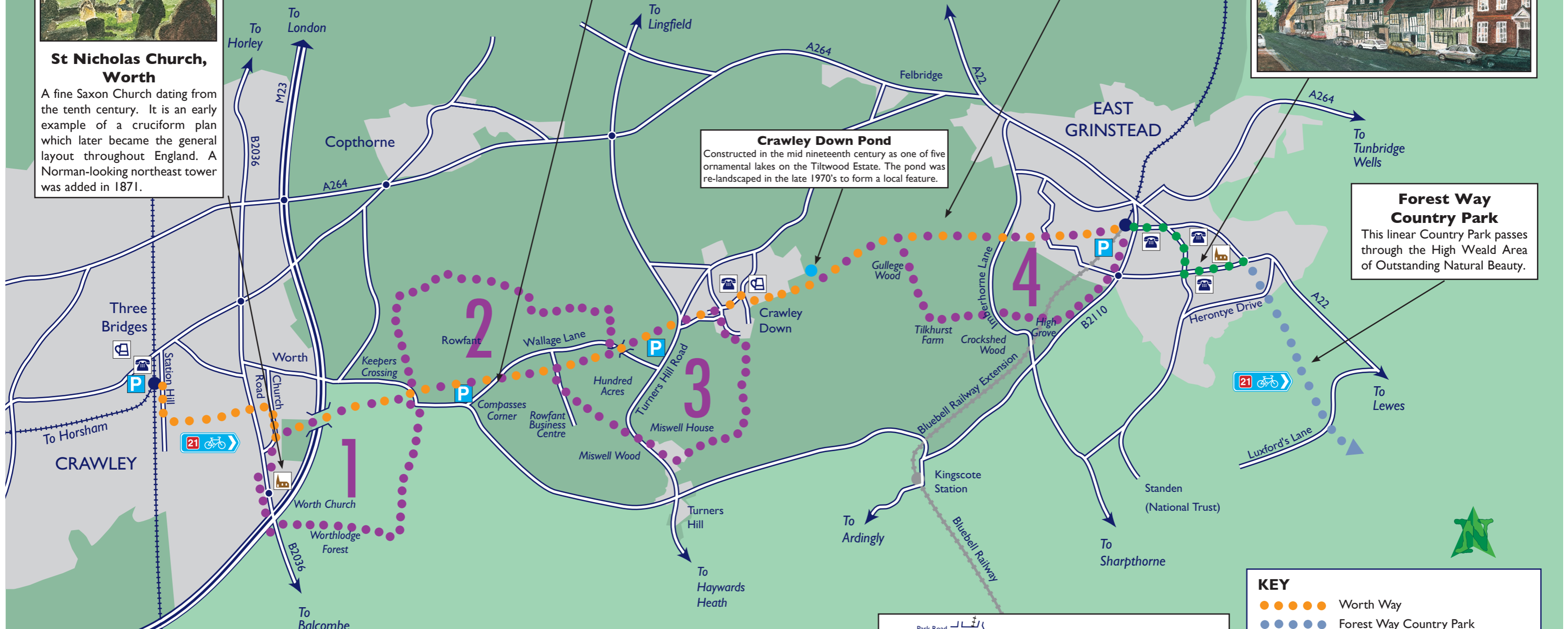
The station included a passing loop, level crossing and signal box. The old station still survives.



Gullege A private house

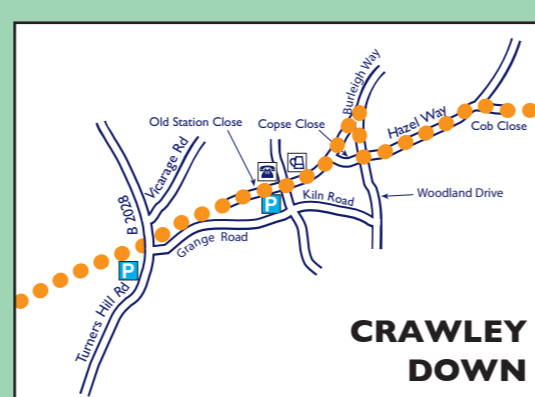
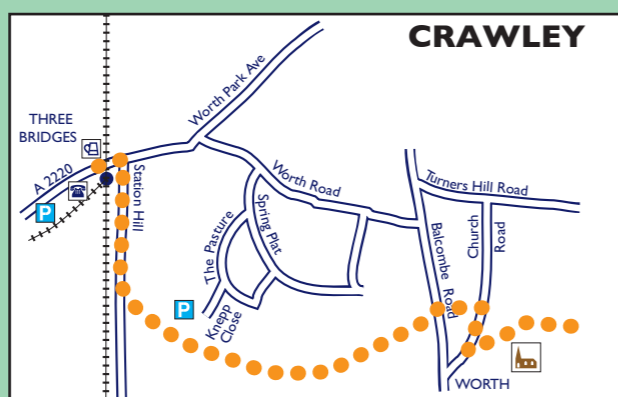
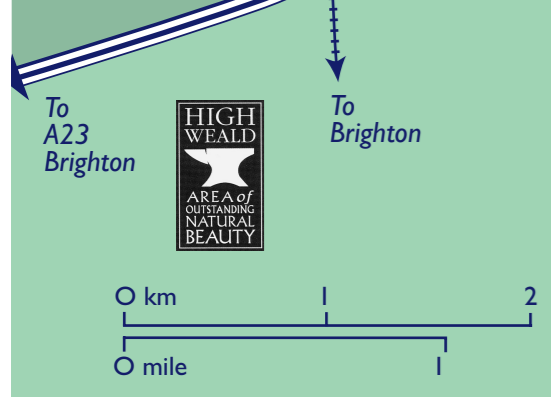
East Grinstead High Street

A very old and previously important market town boasting the longest line of medieval buildings in the country. There are many interesting buildings including St Swithun's Church, a very prominent landmark, and Sackville College.



Crawley Down Pond
Constructed in the mid nineteenth century as one of five ornamental lakes on the Tiltwood Estate. The pond was re-landscaped in the late 1970's to form a local feature.

Forest Way Country Park
This linear Country Park passes through the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.



KEY

- ● ● ● ● Worth Way
- ● ● ● ● Forest Way Country Park
- ● ● ● ● Worth Way - Forest Way link
- ● ● ● ● Worth Way Circular Walks
- 21 National Cycle Network Route
- High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Parking
- Public Telephone
- Public House
- Railway Station
- Church

