

Three Castles and an Ironmaster's House

This talk is an engaging account of a walk between four National Trust properties; Bodiam Castle, Sissinghurst Castle, Scotney Castle and Bateman's, that explores the history and the industrial past of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, in this part of Kent and East Sussex.

Three Castles is an opportunity to take the time to explore the castles and houses and towns and villages along the route. It follows man's ingenuity and progress and a changing industry from agriculture to iron, to sheep, to the woollen trade, smuggling, hopfields and back to agriculture.

There is a soul to the High Weald; one that reflects the passions and industry of man and also the tensions of war and rebellion. It is now a very pastoral picture with only occasional reminders of the noise, smoke and fire of the iron industry. The ironmasters and the rich woollen trade are survived by their architecture at Sissinghurst, Cranbrook and Burwash and Brightling. The derelict hoppickers cottages, next to the River Teise in Lamberhurst, provide a startling contrast to the rich and landed.

And such a varied landscape brings together tales to tell of Mad Jack Fuller and Bloody Baker, Admiral 'Foulweather Jack' Norris, and Captain Swing. There are tales of smugglers and Mechanical riots, Napoleon's horse, aliens in Robertsbridge and, of course, that 'vengeful dragon' in Angley Wood.

Three Castles and an Ironmaster's House will take you on a picturesque and enjoyable tour of the High Weald - without getting mud on your boots.