

also look out for

As you return to the car park and across the road from the lych-gate:

Palmeston House: Once home to Arthur Dixon, one of two Cowfold butchers, who ran his business from the premises and had a small abattoir behind the house. He contravened the Rationing regulations at one time during WW2 by selling beef labelled as pork for which he was fined.

White Lined House: The home of James and Olive Farren who ran the garage at that spot.

Across the road:


Olde House: Once the home of Cowfold's other butcher, James Goacher. During WW2 he was the Cowfold Home Guard Lieutenant and the Home Guard used to meet at his house.

ABOUT THE TRAIL

Explore over 800 years of Cowfold's unique heritage on this FREE self-guided walking trail.



HOW TO FIND US

 **Cowfold Village car park.** Playing Field, Fairfield Cottages, Cowfold, RH13 8DZ

By Car: Car park in Cowfold - RH13 8DZ

ACCESS & FACILITIES



Walking grade: Easy

Distance: ¾ mile approx.

Info: In wet weather the flagstones leading to the Church can be slippery and paths around the Church can be muddy. Please use pedestrian crossings to cross the A272 and A281.



Refreshments: The Little Bean Café on Station Road (see trail map)



Toilets: No public toilets



Dogs: Please keep dogs on leads and clean mess up. Please respect the privacy of local residents.

FIND OUT MORE:

cowfoldhistorysociety.org.uk

To learn more about the heritage of the wider district and discover additional trails, please visit www.horshammuseum.org

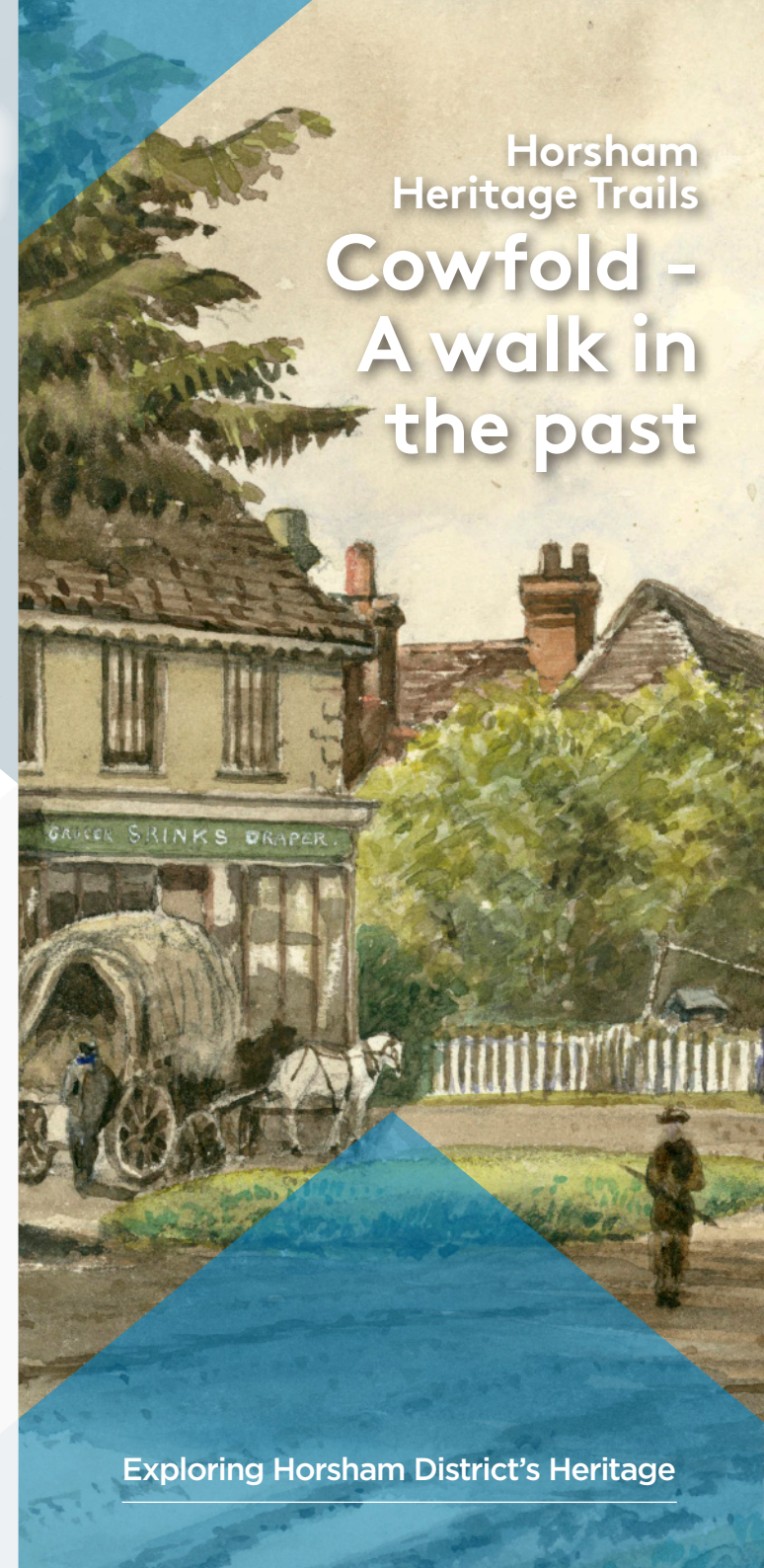
Created by Cowfold History Society supported by Horsham District Community Partnerships Forum and The National Lottery Heritage Fund.



Information is correct at time of going to press.

Designed and Printed by Treetop Design and Print. Tel: 01293 863131

Horsham Heritage Trails Cowfold – A walk in the past



Exploring Horsham District's Heritage

Cowfold Heritage Trail

Lying on the edge of St Leonard's Forest which was once a tract of woodland covering 30 square miles but was diminished and then re-born in the 19th century, Cowfold has a rich and fascinating past out of character with "a place for holding cattle".

Today it is cut by roads; the A272 runs east to west taking cars across the heartland of Sussex and inspiring a Dutchman to write a popular book 'The Ode to the 272', whilst the A281 takes traffic south to the coast, or north to Horsham and beyond. As this trail will reveal, this village has over 800 years of heritage awaiting discovery as you either step out of your car and walk, or just walk, around a village once known locally as "Fowlerfold" after a prominent local building company.

In its earliest days, Cowfold seems to have been a place for woodland pasture and hunting. Livestock was penned here, taken seasonally from the coastal areas up into the High Weald for feasting on the rich woodland undergrowth, before being taken to market. In the 1250s AD the eastern side of the parish of Cowfold became a hunting park or chase, owned by the Bishop of Chichester. Such activities took place alongside the usual agricultural and farming practices including cheese and cider making. There are a number of local farmhouses of note.

It is out of this medieval woodland economy that Cowfold grew, and woodland has dominated the parish ever since. Today the woodland covers a similar amount as it did over 150 years ago. By the 17th century, farming and agriculture had become the main lifeblood of the village. Thanks to the vagaries of history, St Peter's Church has become a casket of wonderful items from early medieval stained glass to a stunning brass. A bowling alley once stood next to the churchyard in 1635.



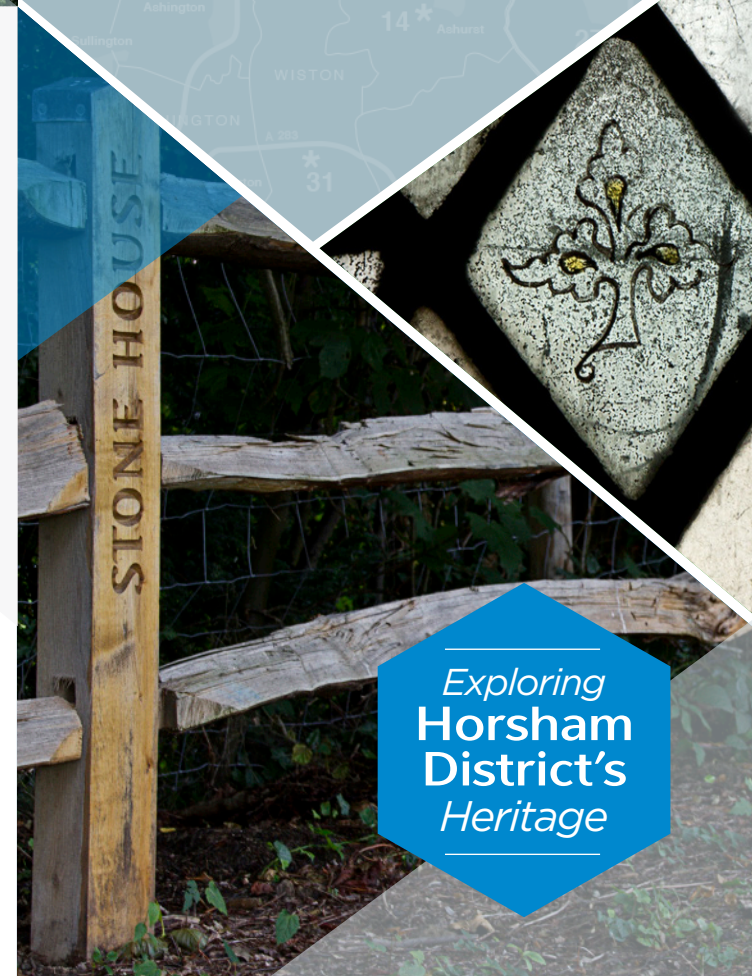
The village flourished in the late 19th century and up to 1912 even had its own grammar school attracting mainly farmers' sons, some of whom boarded at the school. This followed a long tradition of education in Cowfold, with the earliest record of a school master in 1587.

The village houses span around four centuries of architecture, a number of which have roofs made from the iconic Horsham Stone. A good many of the houses date from the 1930s and were built by one local firm, Fowlers, who established the business in the 1850s and continue to build in the village; the firm erected the new Allmond Centre at the start of this trail, which opened in 2018.

For much of the 19th century and for around half of the 20th, Cowfold was largely self-sufficient. All at the same time, it had two butchers, two bakers, two general stores, a saddler, a blacksmith, Fowler's building and timber yards and carpentry shop (and they were also the village undertakers), two inns, two garages, an electrical shop, a post office and a number of other business. The railway arrived at near-by West Grinstead in 1861.

Cowfold attracted a number of families who had made their fortune in the City or in industry. Prominent among those was the Godman family, whose wealth came from brewing. Frederick Du Cane, his wife Alice and daughters Eva and Edith, created South Lodge, some 3 miles from Cowfold, and he and Charles his brother, were great benefactors of the village and have left their legacy in the Village Hall, the school and in St Peter's Church.

Today Cowfold continues to thrive, with 117 companies operating in and around the prosperous village with its many clubs and activities serving a population of around 1,800.



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1 Start Point: Village car park and Allmond Centre.
This is a free long stay car park. Next to it is the newly opened Allmond Centre, home to various village clubs. The fields surrounding the centre were given to the village by the Godman family.

2 The Smithy

The 19th century smithy, owned by Fowlers, was operated by Charlie Belton for many years up to the 1960s, and was one of a number of key local industries that made Cowfold self-sustainable for much of its life. Charlie was one of a very few blacksmiths in the country specialising in making replica Iron Age tools.

3 Village Hall

In 1896 the village hall was given to the community by Frederick Du Cane Godman and in return the village gave him a beautifully illuminated scroll and a ceremonial key to the front door. Built by Fowler Brothers the hall has been the centre of village life and at one time had a library and reading room for the villagers.

4 The Stores (currently closed)

This late 17th century building was the village General Stores from 1887 until 2014; the latter years run as a Co-op. From 1887 to the early 1940s it was owned and run by Billy Sprinks and sold just about every household and haberdashery item required.

5 St Peter's restaurant

Now a restaurant, this 15th century building was part of a block that might have been the earliest set of shops in the village. The well in the cottage's front garden would have been a main source of water. Piped water arrived in the village only in 1938 to supplement a sewage system that had been built in the 1890s.

6 St Peter's Church

Dating from the 13th century the church was probably constructed on the site of an older wooden structure. A nave and tower were added in the 15th century; bells have been in use from the 1440s and the south aisle was added during the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547). Rectors of the parish include Robert Scott (1603-1609) who served as King's embalmer. The outstanding treasures in the church are the 13th century stained glass windows near the altar, the 15th century Nelond brass (covered for safety), the 15th century font and stained-glass windows dedicated by Charles Godman to his two wives, Adelaide and Maud, and another dedicated to Frederick Du Cane Godman. Cowfold church is therefore a Sussex ecclesiastical jewel box.

7 The Pannells and graveyards

The post and fence enclosure- the Pannells or Church Marks- dates from the 17th century; it has recently been restored. The posts record the houses and farms whose owners at the time were responsible for the enclosure's upkeep, and are an important heritage legacy. A second graveyard reached by a path behind the church tower, includes the graves of Frederick Du Cane Godman, Lord de Clifford, the last peer to be tried in the House of Lords, and two WW1 and two WW2 headstones tended by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. From this graveyard there is a fine view of St Hugh's Monastery, the only Carthusian house in the country. (see website www.parkminster.org.uk)

8 St Peter's School

Built in 1870 the original school was, by the early 20th century, the only educational establishment remaining in the village. It became a Church of England school in 1901. Almost completely rebuilt in 1962, the only part of the original building remaining is the Assembly hall.

9 Margaret Cottages

Named after Margaret Norris who, in 1926, bought and renovated the building, renting it out to the village elderly. Originally this 18th century building was the village Poor House.

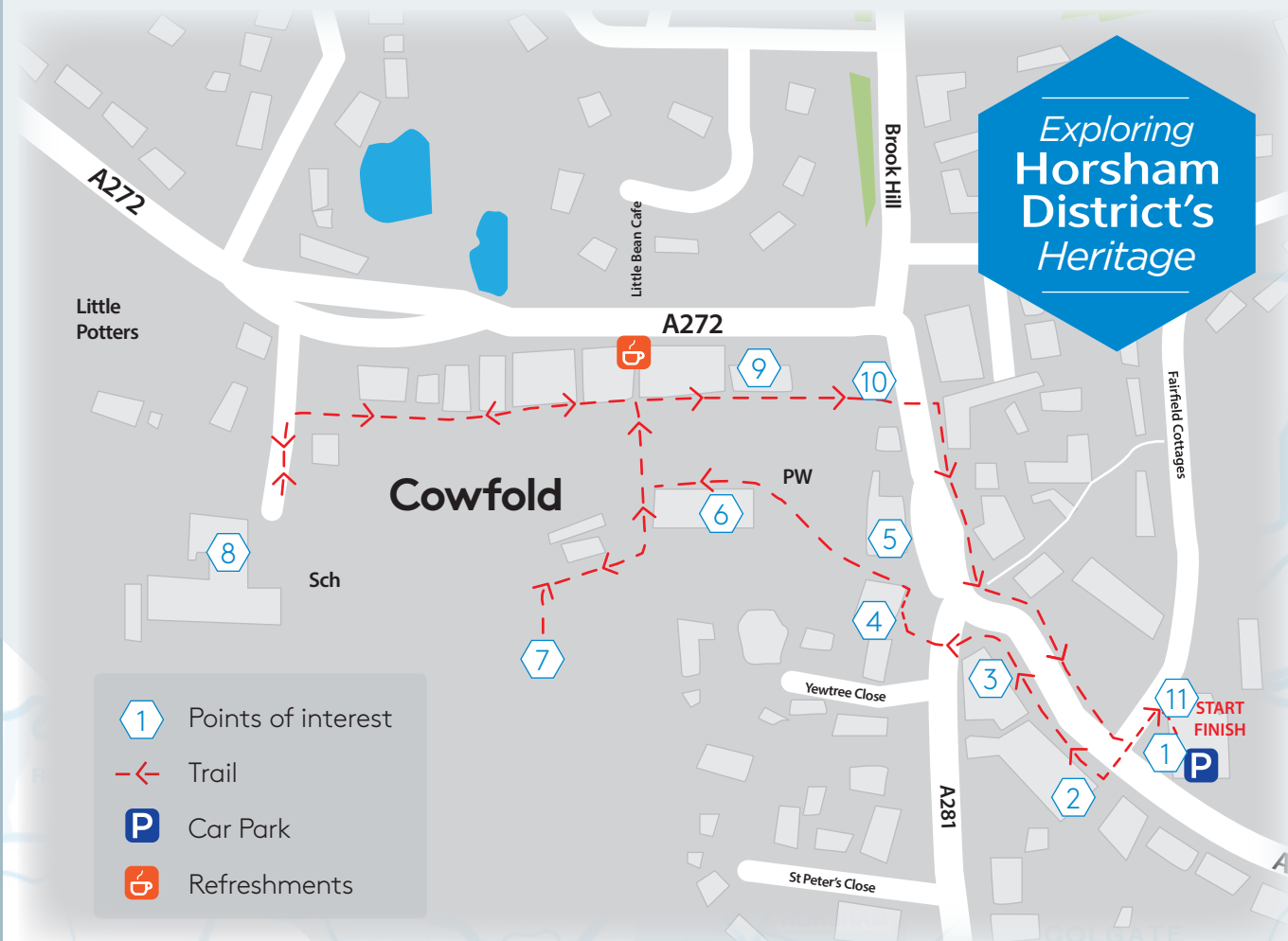
The Poor Laws ensured that parishioners who were unable to provide for themselves would be accommodated in return for work. Margaret Cottages is referred to in the parish registers for 1773. In that year eight of its inmates died from an outbreak of putrid fever (probably typhus). Look for the Fire Mark on the wall of the house, one of only two in the village. Fire Marks are metal plaques carrying the emblem of an insurance company which had insured the building, and fixed to the front of the building as a guide to the insurance company's fire brigade.

10 Lych-gate

Built on the site of the old village forge, designed and funded by the Godman family. It has a map of the Pannells by local artist Penny Hopkins, and to the right is the village's Millennium plaque. Across the road are the old Red Lion hotel (now the Coop), originally established in the 1650s but subsequently rebuilt - a fireback dated 1657 was relocated from there to St Peters Cottage and Farren Court, the site of Farren's garage, for a time in the 1930s the only garage in the village. To the left of the lychgate is Sussex House, a white house which was the home of Frederick and Dorothy Farren and their son Bob, very well-known Cowfold residents, who ran an electrical business from the premises. To the left of the Co-op is the site of Peacock's, the village's second general store until after WW2.

11 Finish point

Return to the car park via the village green passing the Village Hall.



Cowfold has a rich
and fascinating
past