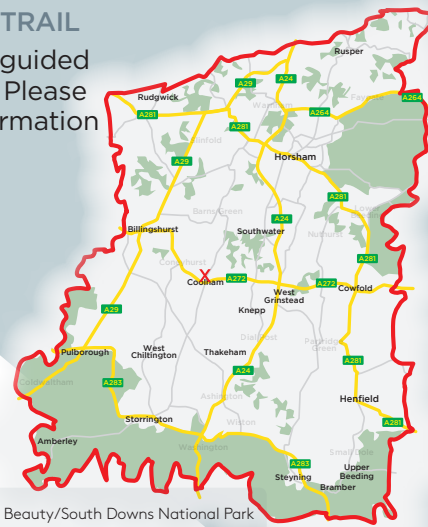




## ABOUT THE TRAIL

This is a self-guided walking trail. Please read the information below.



## HOW TO FIND US



**Start point:** The Selsey Arms RH13 8QJ

**By Car:** Cars may be parked in the pub car park

**By Bus:** There is a bus stop outside the pub

## ACCESS & FACILITIES



**Walking grade:** Easy

**Distance:** 4 miles

**Info:** There are three stiles. Some paths can be muddy.



**Refreshments:** Refreshments are available at The Selsey Arms during opening hours.



**Toilets:** At The Selsey Arms



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

## FIND OUT MORE:

To learn more about the heritage of the wider district and discover additional trails, please visit [www.horshammuseum.org](http://www.horshammuseum.org)

Richard Harris on behalf of the Horsham and Shipley Community Project and The National Lottery Heritage Fund.



Information is correct at time of going to press.

# Horsham Heritage Trails New Beginnings

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Exploring Horsham District's Heritage



# New Beginnings

This is a walk that will give you a brush with history, that spans continents and the centuries. You will be made welcome at the Selsey Arms pub which has stood at Coolham for over 300 years, with links to smugglers and more recently with the allied airmen who served at the Coolham airbase in 1944.

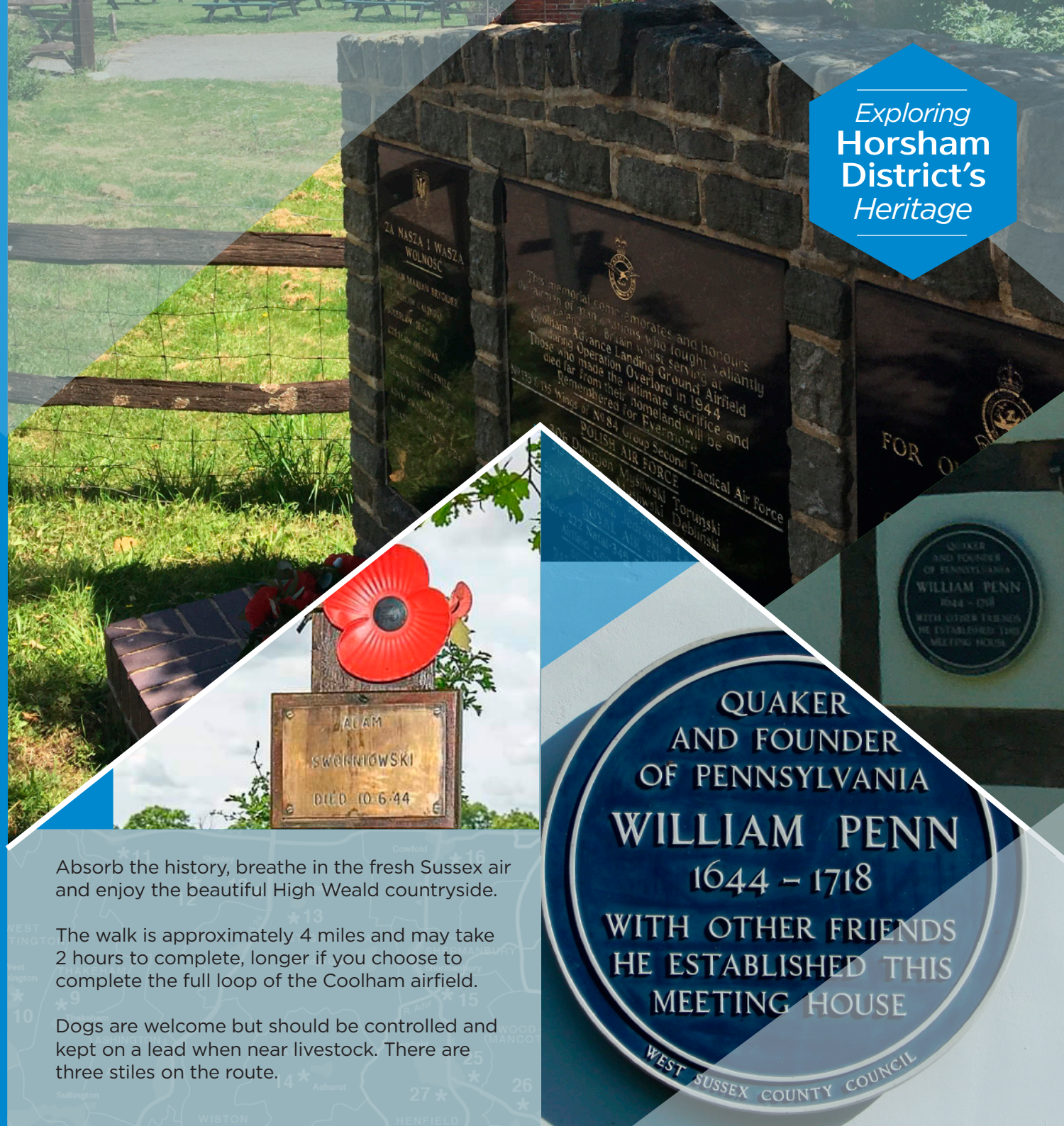
In the late 1820's the road from Cuckfield to Billingshurst was pegged out by Sir Charles Burrell of Knepp and your walk will start on the straight section of road from Coolham towards Billingshurst. At the first bend, you will follow the signs to the Blue Idol, the Quaker Meeting House founded by William Penn. Penn's legacy went on to include the founding of Philadelphia and the colony that became the State of Pennsylvania. The garden is always open in daylight hours, and visitors are welcome to the Meeting House on Fridays between March and November.

A stroll through Sussex countryside down old lanes and footpaths will lead the walker to a long series of pigsties that became a Second World War prison camp for Italian Prisoners of War, and to the Coolham airfield that provided vital air support to the Allied troops before, during and after the Normandy Landings throughout the Spring and Summer of 1944.

Visitors will find information to tell the story of the airfield along the way, but in particular, at the fifteen oak trees, an information board to inform of the ultimate sacrifice made by the fifteen servicemen who died while serving at the airfield.

A circuit of the airfield along the perimeter track is optional but will give an opportunity to consider the importance of sites such as this that helped secure the allied foothold in France, ultimately leading to the end of Nazi tyranny and to peace in Europe.

Exploring  
Horsham  
District's  
Heritage



Absorb the history, breathe in the fresh Sussex air and enjoy the beautiful High Weald countryside.

The walk is approximately 4 miles and may take 2 hours to complete, longer if you choose to complete the full loop of the Coolham airfield.

Dogs are welcome but should be controlled and kept on a lead when near livestock. There are three stiles on the route.



## 1 Start Point... 7 End Point... Selsey Arms.

The car park of the Selsey Arms, Coolham, RH13 8QJ  
The pub was built in the 17th Century and extended in 1830.

Initially known as the Kings of Prussia, then The Duke's Head, the public house became The Selsey Arms in 1847.

More of the pub later.

*From the pub cross the crossroads and follow the footpath on the A272 the mile to the first corner. Turn left and follow the signs to the Blue Idol.*

**2 Waypoint 2 The Blue Idol Quaker Meeting House**  
Built around 1580 and originally called Little Slatters, the house and land was purchased by William Penn and others to establish a Quaker Meeting House more than 300 years ago.

Why the Blue Idol?.....possibly because it was once painted with a blue wash and left empty or 'idle' from 1793 to 1869.

William Penn was himself famous for founding and establishing the city of Philadelphia and the colony that became the State of Pennsylvania.

The democratic principles he wrote at Warminghurst, near Ashington, for the Pennsylvania Frame of Government in 1682, served as inspiration for the Constitution of the United States signed in 1787.

*Continue south to follow Oldhouse Lane, and pass by Oldhouse Farm.*

*At Oldhouse Farm the tarmac gives way to a track, which was once a paved, well trodden road, north to south.*

*After a few hundred yards, turn left off Oldhouse Lane, through the woods and into a field. It can get overgrown at times and can be easily missed. Cross the fields, pass through Sprouts Farm and follow the lane to the crossroads, and cross to Saucelands Lane.*

**3 Waypoint 3** The gate on your left is at the southernmost point of the north/south runway of the Coolham Airfield Advanced Landing Ground (ALG) built specifically for D-Day in June 1944. The 'Defence building' on the left within the field, sits above the airfield's fuel tanks, still buried underground. As a result, the farmer chooses not to farm this strip of land.

*Follow Saucelands lane a few hundred yards then turn left following the footpath signs up the drive to Barnhouse Farm. As you approach the farm you encounter three stiles in quick succession. The first is to the right before the entrance to the farm, then walk across the field for 50yds and the second stile is on the left. The third stile is then ahead.*

**4 Waypoint 4** These buildings, now homes, were an early 20th century piggery, a row of pigsties. During WW2 the string of low pigsties were converted for use as a Prisoner of War camp, housing Italian prisoners who worked on nearby farms.

The tall building with the large industrial chimney was the factory and during WW2 had a gun emplacement on the roof.

Many Italian prisoners were willing workers and after the war known to have stayed. As a result, there is a significant Italian population locally.

*Follow the path behind and then through the buildings. Then follow the driveway just beyond the bend and follow the brideway signs to the left, edging the field to the gate in the corner, and cross the small bridge to the edge of the Coolham airfield.*

**5 Waypoint 5 The Coolham Advanced Landing Ground (ALG)**

The Coolham airfield was a temporary structure, built during 1943 and operational from 1 April 1944, in the build up to D-Day, and thereafter to 4 July 1944.

700 personnel served here providing crucial air support to the Normandy Invasion, which eventually led to the retreat of German forces from France and ultimately the end of the Second World War.

Over 70 pilots flew thirty-six P51 Mustang fighter bombers. Each loaded with two 500lb bombs the Mustangs took off from these fields on numerous missions to bomb and strafe the defensive positions in German occupied France, to escort bombers and the Horsa Gliders packed full of troops, and to chase down enemy aircraft and V1 flying bombs (the infamous doodlebugs).

**6 Waypoint 6** You will pass the fifteen oak trees, planted to commemorate the fifteen servicemen who died while serving here. An opportunity to consider the ultimate sacrifice of eight Polish, six British, and one Canadian servicemen.

Please take time to stop, look and listen.

Then read the information board positioned amongst the trees.

*If you wish to extend your walk, follow the perimeter road to the end then, within a hundred yards of the end of the lane, turn left at the small gate. This semicircular path has been designated a footpath and will take you all the way round the east/west runway, and back again to this point.*

*Otherwise, walk to the end of the lane, and turn right and carefully walk the 100 yards up the lane to the Selsey Arms.*

**7 Waypoint 7 End Point... The Selsey Arms**

The Selsey Arms was a popular watering hole for the airforce staff stationed at the airbase and contains a

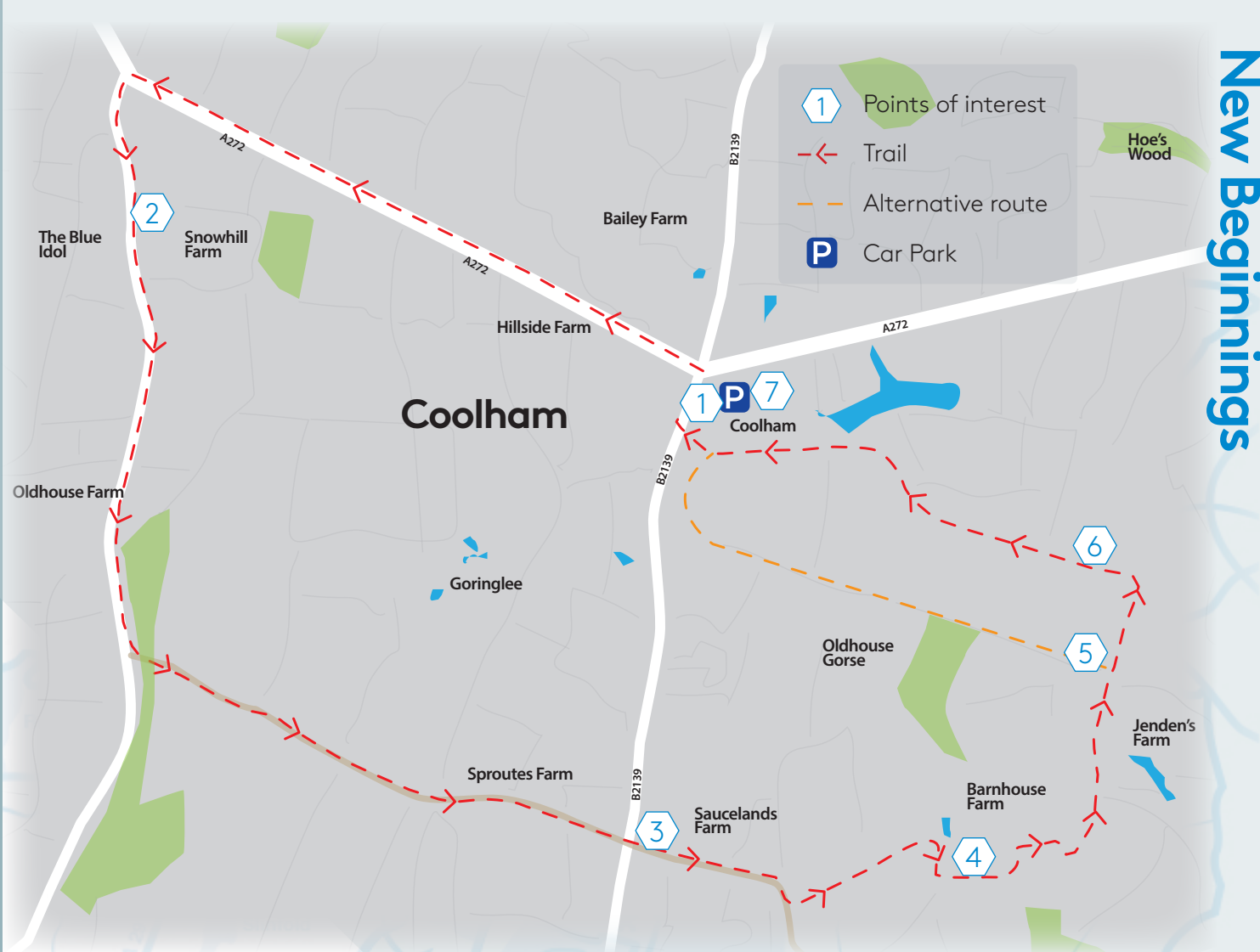


Photo: The Selsey Arms



Photo: Coolham Airfield information board



Photo: Pig Stys and Prison Camp



Photo: The Smugglers spinner



Photo: The Blue idol



Photo: Coolham Airfield



Photo: The Turnspit Wheel



Photo: In Memory

collection of interesting memorabilia. See the memorial in the garden and ask the bar staff for more information. Stepping further back the pub was thought to be used by smugglers. Look for the spinner (or twister or twizzler) on the ceiling. Was this used by smugglers to divide contraband? or more likely a 'wheel of fortune' to gamble their ill-gotten gains?

Above the inglenook fireplace is a rare survivor, a wooden dog wheel, mounted within a nook above the door. The wheel was attached to a chain which ran down to the spit. The Turnspit Dog placed in the wheel would run, like a hamster, and the spit turned.

It is understood William Penn's wife Hannah, wrote to England from Pennsylvania requesting a dogwheel for her turnspits.

This is a walk that will give you a brush with history