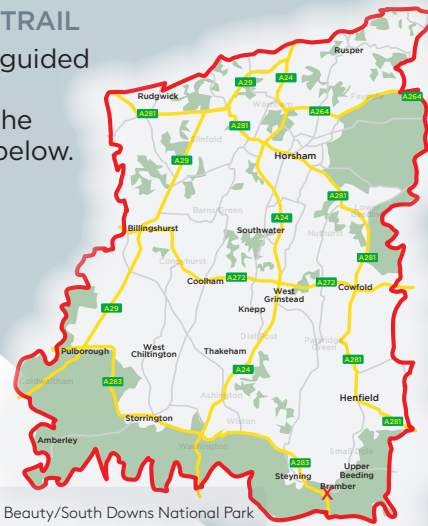




ABOUT THE TRAIL

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



HOW TO FIND US

Start point: Bramber car park.



ACCESS & FACILITIES

Info: A walk of approximately 4 miles, on the flat, with one stile. Bramber Brooks area may be boggy in parts during the winter.



Refreshments: There are pubs in Bramber and Beeding for refreshments.



Toilets: Bramber Car park.



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

Supported by Horsham District Community Partnerships Forum and The National Lottery Heritage Fund.

St Peters & Sele Priory, Beeding Court, Beeding bridge, Cement works, South Downs Footbridge, St Mary's Bramber from street, The Street Bramber by Frank Bull photography.



Information is correct at time of going to press.

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Horsham Heritage Trails A walk in the Adur valley

Exploring Horsham District's Heritage

A walk in the Adur valley

This trail explores the fascinating story of how the communities around the village of Bramber exploited the River Adur that flows down to the sea and the surrounding lands for medieval salt making and the more recent cement industry. The valley cuts through the chalk downs of the South Downs, now a National Park and this trail opens up a number of interesting views from ancient buildings to post-industrial landscapes and to tranquil riversides with waterfowl gliding past.

During the Middle Ages, the River Adur was a wide estuary, spreading out across the valley floor, enabling Bramber to become a port in competition with nearby Steyning, which had its own port as well as being a major religious site. Bramber port lay on what is today the Causeway, a raised footpath that links the villages of Bramber and Upper Beeding, near St. Mary's House, which we will pass on our trail.

After the Norman Conquest in 1066, William the Conqueror gave Bramber to the Norman knight, William de Braose, along with other lands in Sussex. William de Braose needed to create a base in the newly conquered land; where else but overlooking the River Adur and the ports of Steyning and Bramber. Therefore, around 1070, he built his castle, Bramber Castle, whose ruins you can see today as they overlook the village nestling at its foot. He used Bramber port to import the French Caen stone, for the building of Bramber Castle and its church, St Nicholas. Today St Nicholas is the only building of the castle that remains; the rest is ruins.

In 1086, William the Conqueror, after taking over England, undertook an audit of the wealth of his newly acquired land. Known as the Domesday Book, the survey reveals that the Adur valley had a thriving salt industry as 78 salterns were recorded. A saltern is a mound of silt left after salt making. Our trail will take us past these important remains of a lost industry.



Late Victorian romantic views of Bramber

The Adur river is tidal, so seawater flows over the land, making the silt left behind along the river edge rich in salt. This salt was dug up and put into wooden troughs, with more water poured over. Using rushes or straw as a sieve, the salt was washed out, producing a brine, which was boiled in lead pans to remove the scum. By the 1300s the industry was in decline as the estuary was silting up and better quality salt was more easily available.

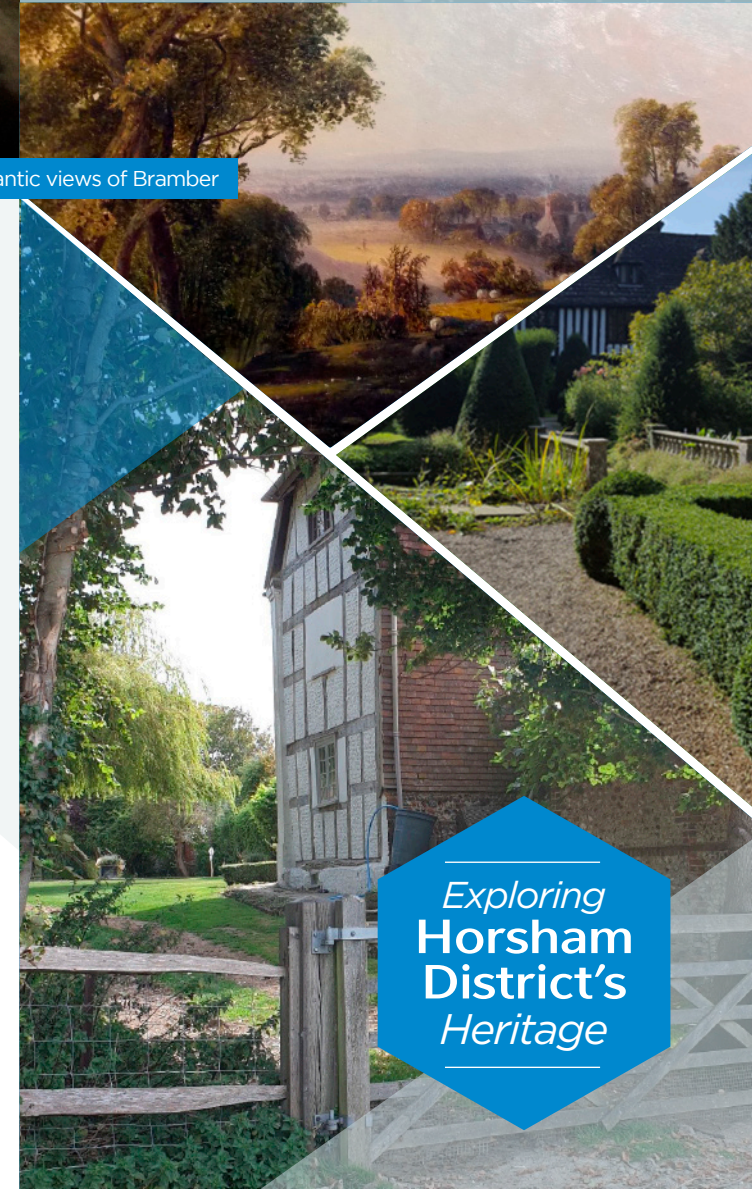
Some 550 years later the area saw the rise of another industry; cement making. Its ruins dominate the landscape, with the quarry and cement works that lie out of the village, further down the valley towards the coast. As an industry along the Adur it lasted 110 years from 1882 to 1991.

Another "industry" that has left its impact on the village is tourism/heritage, as the village of Bramber played host to tourists from the booming resorts of Victorian Brighton, Shoreham and Worthing, all lying between 5 and 10 miles from here. Today those attractions still appeal to today's visitor, whilst this trail explores a richer heritage of the valley for those interested in seeing the Adur known to the locals.

Our trail starts in the car park opposite The Castle Inn.

Turn left, cross the road, passing The Castle Inn, and on reaching St Mary's House, cross the road to pass through a gate, adjacent to "The Coots", into the ① Bramber Brooks Nature reserve, designated a site of Nature Conservation interest, with part of the land being a Scheduled ancient monument. The area covers some 40 acres, and is home to wild birds, mammals and a resident population of Roe deer.

Riversong Limited, purchased the land in 2015, and is committed to improving the diversity of the reserve.



Exploring
**Horsham
District's**
Heritage

A path leads to a wooden seat on the left, passing a small orchard on the right, which has been planted with Heritage varieties of Sussex apple trees.

Turn left at the seat, to pass through a gate. At this point DOGS ARE NOT ALLOWED in this area. Take the first left turn, and follow the clockwise route, noting the salterns, characteristic raised areas, and red and white markers. These are some of the only remaining undisturbed Salterns in southern England. Cross over bridges, which pass over old drainage systems. On completion of the circuit return to the entrance, turn left, and walk up to the river bank.

Turn left at the bank, and cross a stile, to walk around to the bridge to cross the river.

This was probably on an ancient routeway, between St Peter's Church and Kings Barn. Recorded as The New Bridge in 1724 and 1806, and then known as The White Bridge when rebuilt in 1951. Turn right to walk alongside the river, noting over to the left, 2 Sele Priory and St Peter's Church. Sele Priory was established in 1080, by the Norman lord of Bramber Castle, William de Braose.

The Priory is now a private residence Continuing to a small building on the left, take a left turn on a path leading to a small field area and pass through a gate, where an information board and a 3 4 Millennium Plaque will be found which mentions salt making.

From the Plaque, return through the gate, and follow the left-hand path to the river, turn left, to reach Beeding bridge.

5 Beeding Bridge was constructed in 1765, built on the site of an earlier one, to link with a causeway to The Street in Bramber. The Adur Navigation act of 1807 enabled banks to be raised to make the river navigable as far as West Grinstead. This was known as The Baybridge canal linking the south coast to the London area, the main traffic being import of slate from North Wales, and coal from Newcastle. There were wharves and coal yards on both sides of the river at Beeding Bridge. The canal closed in 1875, with the opening of the railway.

Cross the road, which is a section of the Monarchs way, a route of some six hundred and forty miles from Worcester to Shoreham-by-Sea, depicting the escape of Charles 2nd after his defeat at The Battle of Worcester in 1651. On the corner of the road, stands The Bridge Inn, noted in the census of 1891.

Follow the footpath on the left of the river passing the gardens of The Kings Head Inn, first noted in 1788, but dates back to the late 15th century. Further along the flint walls of Beeding Court can be seen, and a short diversion around a newly constructed slipway. After the Norman Conquest, King William redistributed the land to his supporters and 6 Beeding Court was given to William de Braose, later passing to the Mowbray and Howard families, eventually passing to a Harry Bridger in 1764, where it stayed within the family until 1951. During the 2nd World War it was requisitioned and Canadian soldiers were billeted there. The river was still fordable at low tide here in 1981.

Continue down the river bank, passing under the Steyning bypass bridge, to reach the bridge over the river. From here, Lancing College can be seen and the remaining tall chimneys of Beeding Cement Works. On the left stand a row of cottages, Dacre Gardens which were constructed for the Cement workforce in the early 1900s. In 1914, three of these cottages were sold for between £230 and £290. The cement works are now within the boundary of The South Downs National Park, which has posed serious constraints on any further developments of the site.

Take a right turn over the bridge, where the route joins The South Downs Way, a one hundred-mile route from Winchester to Eastbourne. Take the first right hand turn to continue to walk alongside the river. On this stretch can be seen remnants of salterns in the left-hand fields, and remains of Bramber Castle. Just before Beeding Bridge take a marked left-hand turn to walk along to reach a mobile home site. Turn right and walk to the road, passing 7 St Mary's House on the left. St. Mary's was built around 1470 by William of Waynflete, Bishop of Winchester and founder of Magdalen College, Oxford, as an inn for pilgrims on their way to the tomb of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

Carry on to The Castle Inn to finish the trail

