



Lindfield is a flourishing, active, modern community, famed for its rich historic and architectural heritage. The ancient High Street, lined with lime trees, has many individual shops which are well worth exploring. It is regarded as one of the finest in Sussex with over forty medieval and post medieval timber-framed houses.

The village stands on high ground above the upper reaches of the River Ouse. It is ideally situated, being close to both the unspoilt natural beauty of the High Weald and to Haywards Heath town with its amenities and station on the main London-Brighton railway line.

At the bottom of the High Street is the natural spring-fed pond with its fish, ducks, visiting swans and the occasional heron. Beyond lies the Common which, over the centuries, has witnessed many events - fairs, festivals, bonfire celebrations and sporting activities - cricket has been played here since 1747. Today, it is still central to village celebrations and leisure activities.



In addition to the Common there is the Hickmans Lane recreation ground providing pitches for cricket, football, stoolball and a children's play area.

King Edward Hall often hosts exhibitions and other events. The many clubs, groups and societies together with the strong church memberships con-

HISTORY

In walking the High Street you are following an ancient north-south track that has existed for thousands of years, long before the Romans built their major road a mile west of the village.

Lindfield first appeared as Lindefeldia, 'open land with lime trees', in a Saxon charter of 765 AD, in which King Ealdwulf granted lands for the building of a Minster church. By Domesday the lands were held by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

King Edward III recognised the importance of medieval Lindfield and in 1343 granted the town a royal charter to hold a market every Thursday and two annual eight day fairs. For centuries the fairs continued each April and August with the summer fair becoming one of the largest sheep sales in Sussex.

Picture the High Street full of sheep as shepherds arrived for the sales, traders came from far and wide and horse dealers gathered at the White Horse Inn before they galloped their horses to the Common. The ale houses soon filled to overflowing with many a deal being struck noisily amongst much merriment.



High Street



'Look away!', as the villagers must have done, when the smugglers journeyed through Lindfield - there are tales of 300 horses carrying contraband being led up the High Street on a dark night in 1782. It is said that there are smugglers' tunnels near All Saints' Church but if they do exist, they remain hidden to this day!

Contrast this with the excitement in the 18th century caused by the London-Brighton stage coach arriving at the Red Lion with passengers enjoying refreshments while the horses were being changed.

In 1841 the London-Brighton railway opened, passing to the west of the parish with a 'Station for Cuckfield and Lindfield Towns' on open land that was to become the town of Haywards Heath. The construction of the Ouse Valley branch line reached Lindfield in 1866 with a proposed station to the north of All Saints' Church but the line was abandoned for financial reasons. However since the 1850s the railway provided the catalyst for the wider development of Mid Sussex.



Old Place