

Where is Cuckfield

Cuckfield

is a village situated 12 miles from the south coast at Brighton and 38 miles from London, set high on the Weald of Sussex. It is surrounded by beautiful countryside with famous gardens and National Trust properties nearby. There is easy access to the A23/M23 motorway and the mainline railway station at Haywards Heath. To the northeast lies the wild moorland of the Ashdown Forest and to the south is the beauty of the South Downs.

Cuckfield still keeps plenty of its small country-town character. It is built on the side of a hill with a steep High Street running down to old houses and shops behind which the tall spire of the nine hundred year old Holy Trinity Church rises high above.

The bones of an iguanodon were found on the northern edge and to the south there was a bronze/iron age settlement.

William

I divided Sussex into six parts, called "rapes". The rapes were strips of land running from forest land in the north, cultivated and habitable land nearer the Downs and a port upon the coast. Cuckfield fell with the Rape of Lewes, which stretched from Lower Beeding in the west to Horsted Keynes in the east. It was dominated by the castle at Lewes and stretched down to Seaford as the seaport. The Rape of Lewes was granted to William de Warenne who enjoyed the popular sport of hunting. Part of the forest was cleared and enclosed as a "park". It was in this park that he had built a hunting lodge and a chapel. The settlement was called Kukefeld and it was given by William as an endowment to the Cluniac Priory of St Pancras at Lewes. In 1091 their son, William, second Earl of Warenne, confirmed by charter the gift his parents had made.

Pronounced Cookfield, it dates back to Saxon times. It was first written Kukefeld in 1092, followed by Cucufeld in 1121. Cuckoos were called cuc or cuccu by the Normans so it is thought the name could mean "a clearing full of cuckoos". An alternative, but less poetic, meaning is "land surrounded by a quickset hedge". On the outskirts is a sign showing a cuckoo on a tree.

Cuckfield

has experienced periods of importance and decline and was once the

market town and key administrative centre in the district. The High Street is lined with attractive 16th century houses. In the 16th century it was a thriving centre of the local iron industry that thrived in the forests. Wealden clay was rich in ironstone and there was a plentiful supply of water to power equipment and trees for fuel. It went into decline when the industry moved to the north of England, but a great deal of money had been made by the iron men and the wealth was invested in local properties. It flourished again in the late 18th century and prior to the construction of the Turnpike Road in 1807 there was a major staging post at the King's Head (now a residential mews) on the main route from London to Brighton. Cuckfield lost its importance with the advent of the railway line which by passed the town.

The population in 1991 was 2,845