

Headley, Down by the Riverside



HAMPSHIRE
COUNTRYSIDE
SERVICE

Distance: 5 miles

Start: Headley High Street

Introduction

The village of Headley (meaning 'clearing in the heath') stands on high ground above a loop of the Southern River Wey. It is mentioned in the Domesday Book as 'Hallege'. The parish borders on Surrey and comprises a number of hamlets as well as the village itself.

By the River

Headley Mill still grinds corn using the power of the river on a site where a watermill has stood since Saxon times. The mills along the Wey were used for different purposes: some grinding corn, others making paper, fulling cloth or smelting iron. Standford, a hamlet of Headley parish, straddles the river – its stony (or sandy) ford still exists. A little upstream of the ford is an aqueduct, restored by the River Wey Trust, which once took water across the river to feed watermeadows.

The Heart of the Village

At the heart of the parish is All Saints' Church. There has been a Church on the present site since the 12th century, possibly succeeding a Saxon Church of timber, but the nave and chancel were largely reconstructed in the late 1850s. The tower is dated at around 1380, and had a shingled spire until 1836 when it burnt down and was replaced by the present battlements and pinnacles. The clock on the tower was added in 1900 in memory of the son of Sir Robert Wright. On a grass triangle in the High Street stands a chestnut tree which was planted in 1891 on the site of the old stocks. Around its base is a circular metal seat, and on this are inscribed six of the old ways of spelling Headley.

Headley Down

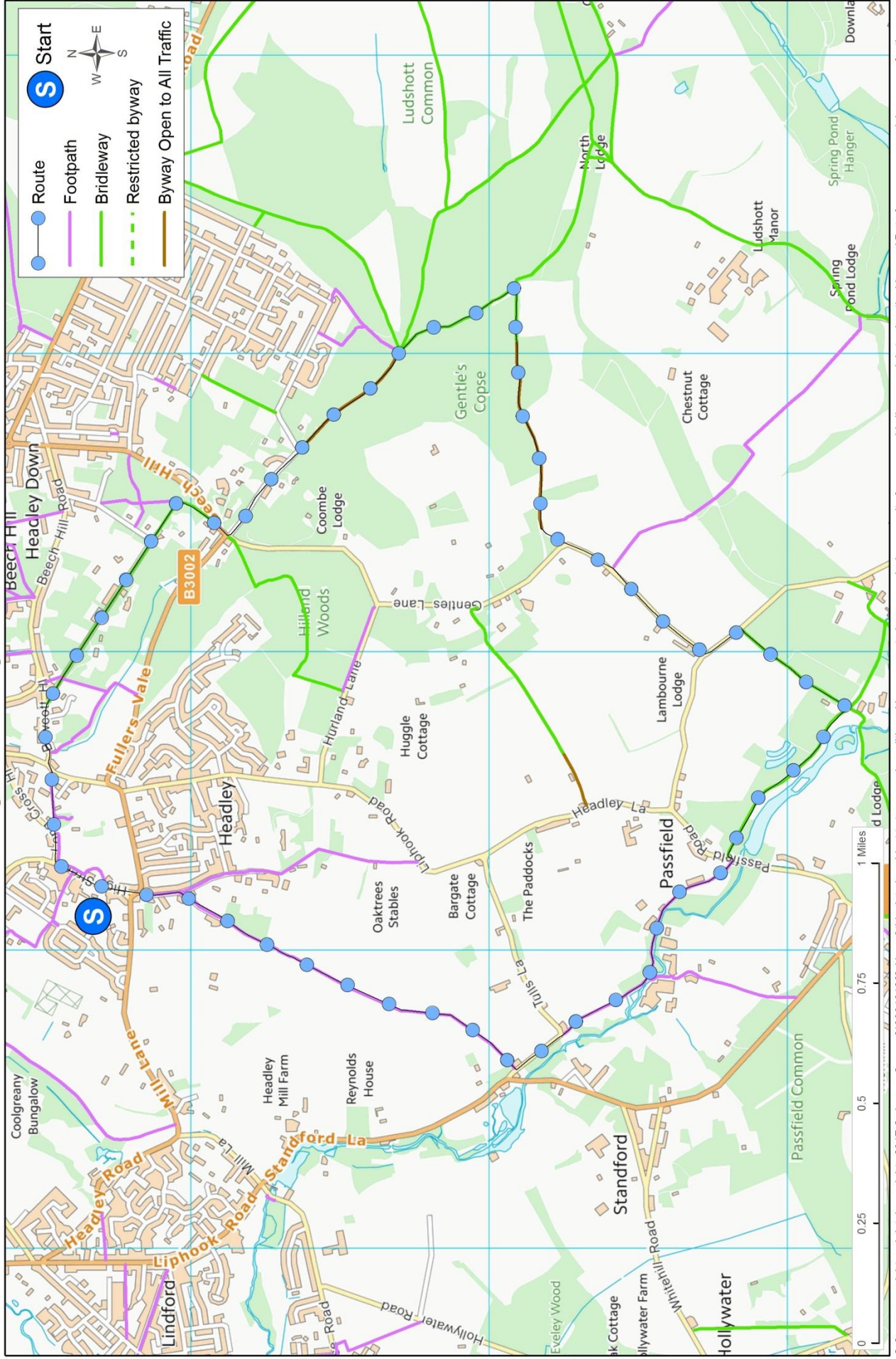
These days the area known as Headley Down, standing on high ground in the direction of Grayshott, forms a second centre to the parish. Once heathland, the Down was developed gradually from the early 1900s onwards – originally as a place for people to build small, country retreats in the healthy air near to Hindhead, known then as the English Switzerland. During the Second World War an Army camp was built by the Canadians on heathland at the top of Beech Hill.

Directions: Down by the Riverside

Largely on rights of way, but may be muddy, with two difficult road crossings

Starts/ends in Headley High Street, visiting Standford, following the River Wey upstream through Passfield to Waterside, then via High Hurlands and Ludshott Common to Fullers Vale returning over Headley Hill to the High Street.

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