



The Cinque Ports are a unique association of maritime towns in Kent and Sussex dating back 1000 years. It was probably during the 11th Century when Saxon kings first formalised the arrangement under which key coastal towns in Kent and Sussex were offered inducements for them to provide ships and men to meet the military and transportation needs of their royal masters.

The earliest known charter to the Cinque Ports collectively was granted by King Henry III in 1260 but it is clear from other charters and the *Domesday Book* the ports had enjoyed common privileges in return for their service to the Crown since the 11th century and were already known collectively as the Cinque Ports. There was a more formal confederation with common institutions in place by 1150 when the Court of Shepway had been established. Having their own court was one of the privileges granted along with freedom from taxation and it was presided over by the King's representative known as the Lord Warden.

Their heyday was in the 12th and 13th centuries but waned over the next 300 years, as changing patterns of warfare at sea and natural changes to the coastline of south-east England left ship service a heavy burden for relatively small fishing communities. So the five head ports of Hastings, Romney, Hythe, Dover and Sandwich turned to their neighbouring towns and villages which became known as limbs, for help in providing ships and men and in return shared in the privileges. Rye and Winchelsea began as limbs of Hastings and in the 14<sup>th</sup> century were formally recognised as 'antient towns' and henceforth enjoyed equal status to the five original head ports. Of the some 30 other limbs from Seaford in Sussex to Brightlingsea in Essex, 7 remain in the Confederation. Faversham, Margate and Ramsgate are too far apart to include within 100 miles. More historical information on the 11 towns through which the walk does pass is given under Points of Interest.

The Tudor kings established a standing navy so ship service was last called upon in 1588 and few of the ancient rights and privileges survive. The Confederation continues to promote public awareness of the proud history and seafaring traditions of communities which played a key role in the early development of England as a naval power and the Lord Warden now has a ceremonial role in doing that.

"Cinque" should be pronounced as *sink*. Anyone saying *sank* will be severely reprimanded!



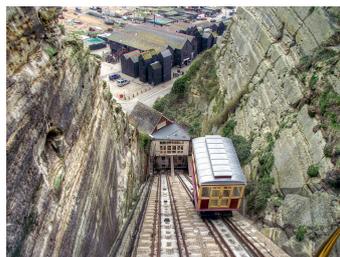
Hastings is inextricably linked with 1066 although the Battle of Hastings took



place at Senlac Hill 8 miles to the north and the Normans actually landed at Pevensey 10 miles to the west. But, between the two events, William the Conqueror is believed to have made camp at Hastings, probably on West Hill where he later built the castle, the ruins of which still stand today. During the Saxon era Hastings was used to describe the area belonging to a sub-tribe rather than a town.

Referred to as a “New Burgh” in the Domesday Book, Hastings’ prosperity was based on fishing but any harbour the Romans might have used to export iron from a nearby mine suffered from encroaching shingle banks. Attempts to build harbour walls were defeated by the sea and Hastings remained a small fishing settlement until seaside holidays became fashionable with the Victorians. The population expanded significantly with the coming of the railways.

The tall black huts are for hanging drying fishing nets and stand on a piece of beach known as The Stade. From here the largest beach launched fishing fleet in the country continues Hastings’ fishing tradition, the boats having worked from this location for centuries.



The East Cliff Railway is the steepest funicular railway in the country with a gradient of 78%. Opened in 1903 with a water balance mechanism it was refurbished in 2010 and is now powered by electricity.

The country park was acquired by the council in stages from 1888. There is an Iron Age fort on top of East Hill. The whole 660 acres fall within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The cliffs are sandstone and suffer from regular falls due to erosion by the sea. The deep dark glens played their part in the great “fern fever” in the 1840s and 50s when country people could earn 6 months’ wages by selling roots of rare ferns collected here to dealers who specialized in them. The Firehills are so called because of the impression given from afar by the dominant gorse bushes here when in flower.



### Fairlight

The parish population of 1700 is concentrated in the bungaloid retirement sprawl of Fairlight Cove but some of the homes nearest the cliff have been abandoned due to erosion. The church was built in 1845 to replace an earlier Norman structure. Richard D’Oyly Carte of Gilbert & Sullivan and Savoy Hotel fame is buried in the churchyard.

Pett Level is a settlement within Pett parish, the church and main village of which lies on the ridge across the Marsham Valley, sometimes called prosaically Cliff End. Pett Level is also used as a name for the reclaimed sea bed behind the 1940s sea wall which stretches east from the cliffs.



### Royal Military Canal

You will first meet the canal at the opposite end to where it was started near Hythe. Rather than being for water transport it was built as a defence against a threatened Napoleonic invasion. The spoil was used to build an embankment on the landward side to protect defenders. Begun in 1804 it wasn't finished until 1809 and after Trafalgar the threat was diminished and wrangling began over the cost and need to complete it. The western end finished up being built much narrower and shallower than the east. The kinks in its alignment were so that artillery could be positioned to fire along the canal at anyone attempting to cross. The canal additionally contributed to the drainage of the marshes it passes and is credited with the elimination of "marsh ague", a malarial infection, that had plagued marsh dwellers for centuries. The limited number of bridges across the canal has dictated parts of the route.



### New Gate.

Now obviously old this gate was built at the southern end of Winchelsea's defences in 1330



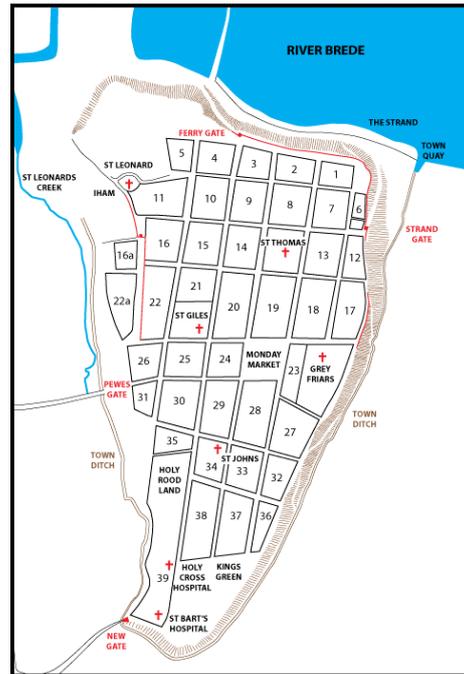
### Winchelsea



By the 13<sup>th</sup> century Winchelsea was exceeded in wealth only by London and Southampton among southern ports. Built on a shingle bank with no easy access to a hinterland, that wealth was based on fishing and transhipments. But that was Old Winchelsea and after a series of

storms had battered the town and breached the shingle bank on which it stood; orders were given by Edward I to relocate the town on its new site. Six years later the great storm of 1287 completely washed away what remained and the old site is submerged under Rye Bay.

The ambitious town plan can be seen in its grid pattern of streets and the town prospered for a while. It still contains numerous vaulted wine cellars around which occasional tours are organised. But French and Castilian raids in 1350 & 1380, the decline of the wine trade during the 100 years war and the silting up of the harbour turned the town into a rotten borough leaving the empty plots within the defences seen today. You will approach the town across Holy Rood Land, turn left at plot 9 and leave past St. Leonards, of which only a field name remains.



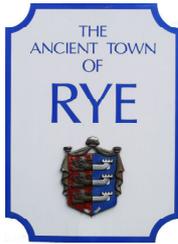
St Thomas's church was built three times its current size with a high spire but as the town declined the rest was taken down and sold in the 16<sup>th</sup> century when the maintenance could no longer be afforded. Spike Milligan is buried in the churchyard where his gravestone bears the epitaph "I told you I was ill" but in Gaelic after being refused by the diocesan authorities.

### River Brede

The first house on the left after leaving the main road is Ferry House built at the end of a causeway, now the road. Until 1657 a ferry left from here to a point upstream below Udimore. By then the estuary had been largely reclaimed and a bridge was built. A footpath follows the approximate route of the ferry. The waterworks 6 miles upstream were still serviced by 40 ton coal barges until 1928 by when the river was only usable 2 days a fortnight. The river is now managed for land drainage rather than navigation.



## Rye



Rye stands on an outcrop at the end of a sandstone ridge reaching out from the Weald where it used to meet the sea. Originally a limb of Hastings it was raised to the status of Ancient Town on a par with the original five ports. After the great storm of 1287 it was left at the confluence of the rivers Brede, Tillingham and Rother. Further storm damage in 1375 destroyed eastern parts of the town after which ships used the river estuary to approach the town and unload at The Strand, below the current main road bridge. Two years later the town was sacked by the French after which Edward III granted murage rights to enclose with walls and crenellate. The Ypres Tower and Land Gate are the most prominent remains of the town's defences. Whilst a fishing fleet still operates, pleasure boats are now more often seen and the town's economy is reliant on tourists.



The Mermaid Inn cellars date from 1156 but the upper parts were rebuilt in the 1420s with further alterations during the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Queen Elizabeth I stayed here. Later it was frequented by the notorious Hawkhurst Gang of smugglers in the 1740s & 50s when they could be seen carousing with their loaded pistols on the tables while no magistrate dared to interfere. There was a tunnel leading to The Old Bell in the street behind, which was disguised by a revolving cupboard. By 1770 the building had ceased to be an inn and only returned to that use after World War II.



For more than 900 years the church of St Mary the Virgin has dominated the skyline of the hill on which the town stands. In 1377 the bells were stolen by the French and fire caused the roof to collapse. The next year men of Rye & Winchelsea sailed to France and stole them back again. One was hung in Watchbell Street to warn of further reprisals.

Rye town hall dates from 1742. The original building on this site was burned by the French in 1377. In an upper room the skull of mayor murderer John Breads can still be seen in the iron gibbet cage in which his body was left to rot.



## HWLT

The High Weald Landscape Trail runs for 90 miles from Rye to Horsham and is designed to pass through the main landscape types of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



### River Tillingham

Before the current sluice was built at Rye the River Tillingham was navigable well beyond the point we leave it.

Peasmarsh has a population of 1200, one of whom is Sir Paul McCartney. Maria "Granny" Smith after whom the apple was named was born here.

### River Rother



Originally known as the Limen in Roman times it flowed east as far as Portus Lemanis. By the mediaeval period it reached the sea at New Romney until the great storm of 1287 diverted it to Rye. Below high tide level for much of its route there have been ongoing management works. In the 1330s flow to the south of the Isle

of Oxney was dammed but in 1635 that was reversed with flow to the north stopped so the river ran where you cross it now.. Small pleasure boats can still use the river up to Bodiam but even in 1802 16 commercial sailing barges were using the river and in the Norman period small boats are recorded reaching as far as Etchingam some 14 miles upstream from here.

### Sussex Border Path

The path closely follows the inland Sussex border but deviates to avoid roads and follow more scenic paths. Where crossed it is actually in Kent. It runs for nearly 150 miles from Rye to Thorney Island in Chichester Harbour.



### Isle of Oxney



4 miles long east to west and over 2 miles wide it is no longer an island in the sea but you still have to cross a bridge to get off. At 200ft the highest point is behind the south facing cliffs.

### Wittersham

With a population of 1100 Wittersham is the largest settlement on the Isle of Oxney. In WW1 there was an airship mooring base here for when Capel, see later, was too windy.



### Reading Sewer

Reading Sewer marks the old course of the River Rother. Until the 16<sup>th</sup> century it could accommodate the largest ships of the day.

## Smallhythe



Small Hythe was once a major shipbuilding centre making use of the plentiful timber and iron from the surrounding Weald. From the 13<sup>th</sup> century ships were built on both sides of the modern road including the 1000 ton Jesus commissioned by Henry V. The last large ship was built here in 1546. In 1999 a Time Team broadcast showed excavations that revealed shipbreaking, blacksmithing and brick making as well as shipbuilding docks and slipways here. Smallhythe Place is open to the public by the National Trust and contains a theatrical museum as well as exhibitions on shipbuilding.

## Tilder Gill

Tilder Gill is popular with those energetic enough to stray this far from Tenterden. It is renowned for its seasonal display of bluebells and wild garlic. The marshals' walk might catch it but the main walk will be too late. Gill is the name used locally for a stream cut narrow wooded valley.



## Tenterden



You may realise from its topography that Tenterden itself was never a seaport. In fact it is the town and hundred of Tenterden that joined the Cinque Ports Confederation in 1449 as a limb of Rye. Hundreds were ancient administrative divisions of Kent that usually included several parishes but in this case was almost contiguous with the parish of Tenterden but with the mainland part of Ebony parish. Thus the hundred included Smallhythe and Reading Street, where port activities as well as shipbuilding enabled the requisite ship service to be performed. Tenterden itself began as a pig pasture in the Wealden woods belonging to the men of Thanet from which its name originates. The town's early prosperity was derived from the wool trade for the surrounding area and today the picturesque tree-lined main street remains a shopping destination for the surrounding villages as well as tourists. The main visitor attraction is The Kent & East Sussex Railway steam heritage line which runs to Bodiam Castle from its base at Tenterden Town station. You may hear the distant whistles of its engines. The pinnacled tower of St. Mildred's Church, which has 12<sup>th</sup> century origins, can be seen from afar. Tenterden town hall was built in 1790. The Georgian Assembly Room is on the first floor.



### Ebony Church

Hasted 1799: "That part of this parish, northward of the Rother, contains the hamlet of Reading-street, adjoining to the parish of Tenterden, in which there are ten houses, and five more within the island. It lies very low and is a very unhealthy situation, being enveloped with vast quantities of wet and swampy marshes, the gross vapours rising from which subject it to continual fogs" By 1858 the population had long deserted the island for the healthier and more accessible hamlet of Reading Street, the nearest house was three quarters of a mile away and the fabric of the church was in bad need of repair. With great initiative, the new Vicar and his Churchwarden decided to pull the old building down, to move the stone work by horse and cart over a mile of rough track, and to build it anew.



In 1486, the building of The Regent, a 600-ton 4-masted ship, began here. The main mast measured 35m and had a circumference of over 3m and was referred to as "the great tree amidships". The Regent was lost in the Battle of Saint-Mathieu in 1512 (in which the Mary Rose also took part) when the Breton flagship blew up and took The Regent with it. Henry VIII commissioned as her replacement one of the largest ships to be built in England at this time, the 1400-ton Henry Grâce à Dieu, also known as The Great Harry.



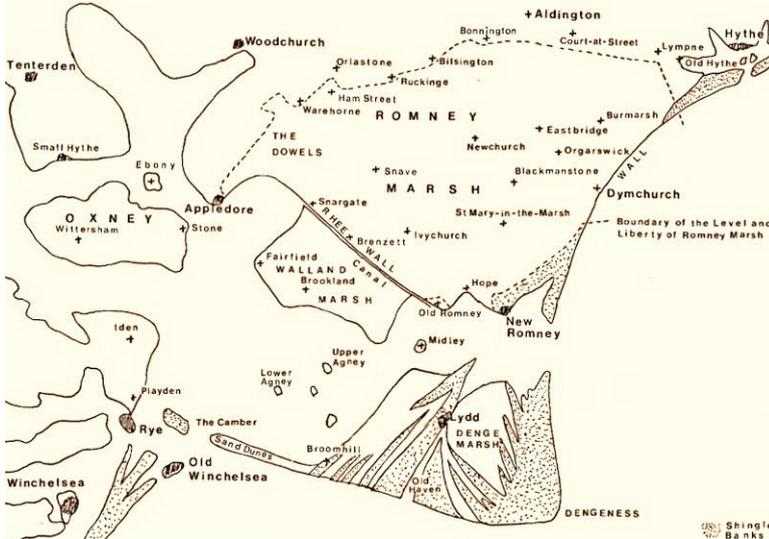
### Reading Street

Chapel Bank is the original Isle of Ebony, surrounded by the sea. Only the graveyard and church foundations now remain. They are larger than the than the current church after lightning started a fire in Elizabeth I's reign and it was rebuilt smaller to match the declining population. Not even the rough track used to remove the church survives. A population of 351 in 1801 had fallen to just 59 by 1841

Saxon Shore Way  
This long distance path runs for 163 miles from Gravesend to Hastings following the coastline, as it would have been at the end of the Roman era. Saxon Shore is from the name given to the series of forts the Romans built against incursions by the Saxons. The route here is cheating to avoid the historic Rother estuary detour.

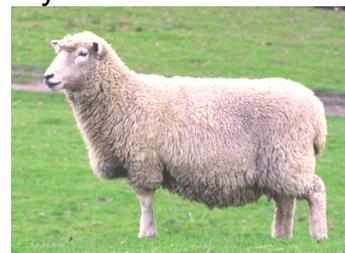


## Romney Marsh



Strictly Romney Marsh is only the older eastern sector of the area now commonly referred to as Romney Marsh which includes areas properly known, for example, as Walland Marsh and East Guldeford Level. At the end of the ice age rising sea levels formed a bay between Rye and

Hythe containing large quantities of flint prised out of the chalk by glaciers. From Roman times, through the process of longshore drift, this began to build up into banks of shingle creating lagoons behind them. The rivers running into the bay deposited silt creating extensive salt marshes. By the Saxon period there was enough land for fishing harbours to develop and sheep were grazed on the marshes. A great storm in 1287 threw up so much silt that the coastline of the Marsh was changed overnight. The River Rother now flowed out past Rye instead of New Romney, which found itself a mile from the sea. Winchelsea was washed away completely. Human interventions then speeded the land creation process by the construction of innings (throwing up an embankment round a section of salt marsh) and the drainage channels seen today. The Romney breed of sheep was developed. Able to graze on the wet grass without succumbing to foot rot it was prized for its wool and became the dominant form of farming. At night you will get some feeling of the remoteness of the open marsh landscape which smugglers found to their advantage together with the proximity of France. (An order has been placed with the weather gods for a smuggler's mist to evoke the right atmosphere) Early smuggling in the 14<sup>th</sup> century began with restrictions on the export of wool and the men involved were known as Owlars from their use of night time signals. After 1700 the importation of heavily taxed luxuries (Brandy for the Parson ... laces for a lady) became a more organised illicit operation. Notorious among them the Hawkhurst Gang and later the Aldington Gang on whose activities the fictional Dr Syn stories set around Dymchurch were based. Changing market conditions and agricultural techniques after WW2 saw potato cultivation flourish but that in turn has given way to fields of combinable arable crops, a fair few of which you will walk through. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were nearly  $\frac{1}{4}$  million sheep on the marsh. Now you might not even see a sheep for several miles.



### Appledore

A Viking army in 280 longships overwintered here in 892-893 before invading Wessex. A French raid in 1380 burnt the church. 500 walkers passing through might be the biggest event here since.



### Marshlink Line

The Ashford to Hastings railway is serviced hourly by two-carriage diesel railcars in each direction.



### Fairfield Church

St Thomas a Becket is the iconic marsh church standing in splendid isolation surrounded only by drainage ditches and sheep. It was used in the filming of



Great Expectations both for the BBC series in 2011 and the 2012 film. The 13th century timber frame was encased in brickwork in the 18th century. The interior retains its Georgian white and black box pews and three-decker pulpit.

### Brookland



Before the bypass was built the village had 5 shops, a tea room, garage, blacksmith, abattoir and 2 pubs for a population of 400. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century one shop even minted its own coins. Only one pub and the church remain.

St Augustine's is best known for its odd, detached bell tower with spire, made entirely from wood, sitting alongside. The tower is octagonal, and has a conical roof of three diminishing flounces. It was built separate from the church because it was felt that the marshy ground could not take the weight of both the church building and its six bells.



### Dungeness branch line



This is an active railway and the usual precautions should be taken although it only carries one train a week and has a 20mph speed limit. If you see one it is likely to be carrying nuclear waste from Dungeness power station.

You will cross it twice more later.

### Midley Church

This was once a small island in the Rother between the larger ones of Romney and Lydd, and the name means, "Middle Island". In the 8th century there was a village on this site, and 23 people still lived here in 1801. Now, only the ruined west wall of the church remains



### Lydd



The name Hlyda, which derives from the Latin word for "shore", was found in a Saxon charter dating from the 8th century. The settlement grew on an isolated shingle bank facing the sea.

All Saints is the longest parish church in Kent at 199 feet and has been able to seat 1000 people at a time. Some of the fabric/foundations are thought to be Roman.

The Rype is an ancient common dating back perhaps 1000 years. It is now a registered village green controlled by the town council.

### Lydd Airport

Built in 1954 to operate an air ferry service for vehicles to Le Touquet in France Lydd Airport, now called London Ashford Airport, is a small local airport located just over a mile from Lydd. It mainly operates private flights but does have commercial flights to Le Touquet every weekend.



## New Romney



The relationship between New Romney and Old Romney is not well understood, both appearing to be of a similar age. Early mentions, including membership of the Cinque Ports, refer only to Romney. Some argue that there was a long waterside settlement the inland end of which was gradually abandoned as the area silted up. The Rhee Wall, a 7½ mile long drainage ditch between two embankments designed with sluices to flush out silt from the harbour was extended from Old Romney to New Romney in 1258 by which time the

prefixes had been in use for about a century. Rhee Wall forms the demarcation of Romney Marsh proper and Walland Marsh and now carries the Appledore to New Romney Road after being dry since the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It was blocked by the Great Storm of 1287 which inundated New Romney. So much silt and shingle was left in the town



that the floor of St. Nicholas is well below the new ground level. The churchyard still has mooring rings in its wall from when boats could unload on the adjacent beach. The sea is now 1½ miles away. The lumpy ground over which walkers will enter the town are the result of ancient salt panning with some evidence of activity as far back as the Roman period. Despite the loss of its harbour function New Romney is the largest population centre on the Marsh with some 7000 inhabitants. The main tourist attraction is the 15<sup>th</sup> Romney Hythe and Dymchurch light railway. The station includes a museum, model railway, cafe and the steam engine shed can be viewed. As well as running tourists between Hythe and Dungeness it functions as the local “school bus”.

Dymchurch is best known as the location for the Russell Thorndyke novels about smuggler Dr. Syn whose gang rode the marshes disguised as scarecrows. They are celebrated by the biannual Day of Syn pageant. New Hall was the court room of the Leveller of the Marsh Scotts who collected a local tax to maintain the sea wall.



## Burmarsh



The name originates from the burghers of Canterbury who owned the local marshland. The Norman All Saints church is thought to have the remnants of a Saxon chapel in the chancel. The 15<sup>th</sup> century Shepherd and Crook is, behind the render, built of the same stone as the church.

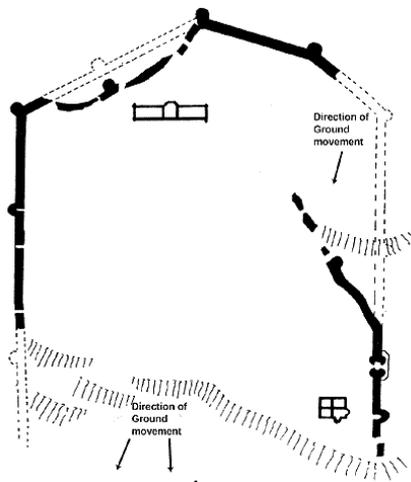
## Port Lympne



The mansion was built for Sir Philip Sassoon in 1914. The extravagant interior decorations were badly damaged while the house was commandeered for use by Czech pilots during WW2 and the building left unoccupied until bought by John Aspinall to expand his collection of endangered species kept at his other zoo, Howletts near Canterbury. The new zoo opened in 1976 and houses over 650 animals spread over 50 species. You

may see, or hear, some of the larger beasts as you walk past its boundary fences.

## Studfall Castle

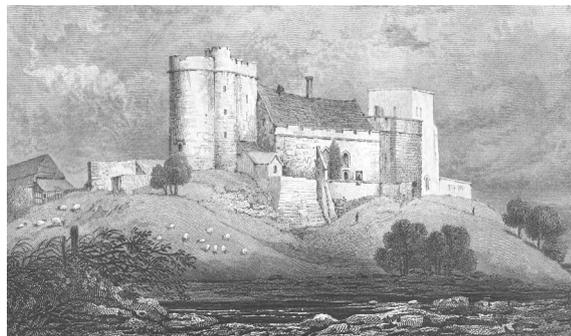


The masonry walls in the field to the right of the footpath climbing up from the canal are the remains of a Roman Saxon Shore fort. Roman forts were almost invariably built to a square format but it seems that rather having been distorted by subsequent land slips this one may have had an irregular shape. Rebuilt in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century as one of a chain of forts to protect the south east coast against Saxon raids it sits on top of an earlier Classis Britannica (British fleet) fort. The location of Portus Lemanis they were built to protect has never been accurately identified but is most likely to have been to the south and east

towards West Hythe. The River Rother was known as the Limen until the 16<sup>th</sup> century and it is possible one channel of a delta flowed along the cliff base to enter the sea near here.

## Lympne Castle

Although 13<sup>th</sup> century in origin much of what you see today is the result of Edwardian alterations and additions compared to this 1830 image. It is not open to the public for tours but specialises in weddings if you meet someone nice on route.



## Shepway Cross



The Cinque Ports Court of Shepway was presided over by the Lord Warden to decide disputes between ports such as over ship service as well as civil and criminal cases. In existence by 1150 it reputedly used to meet on Lympne Hill, and the site is marked by the Shepway Cross. Erected by the then Lord Warden, Earl Beauchamp in 1923, the Cross was dedicated to the memory of the 'historic deeds of the Cinque Ports';

## Pedlinge

The church is a chapel of ease to Saltwood. Unlike most churches in east Kent, which are built of flint, this is brick built and only the small cross on top confirms its purpose.



## Hythe



As a harbour Hythe was probably the successor to Portus Lemanis with the Brockhill and Mill streams keeping access to the sea open.

But like other Cinque Port towns it succumbed to silting and

longshore drift. Its waterfront would have been in the vicinity of where the Royal Military Canal was built. The town hall was built in 1794 on the site of a covered market. The main chamber is on the first floor.



St Leonard's church building dates from the Normans but there is some evidence of an earlier structure. It is best known for its ossuary in the amulatory containing 2000 skulls and 8000 thighbones. They date from the mediaeval period.

### Martello towers

A Martello is a fortified 2-3 storey tower of thick masonry on which a single heavy cannon was mounted. Beginning in 1804, 74 were built from Folkestone westwards as part of invasion defences against Napoleon. They were inspired after a tower of similar design at Mortella Point in Corsica resisted a two day bombardment by two Royal Navy frigates. It only surrendered to a land assault because its main guns couldn't fire inland. British Martello guns could traverse 360°. You will pass some converted to houses and others so derelict as to be barely recognisable.



### Shorncliffe

At the start of the French Revolutionary Wars in 1794 the army purchased 229 acres to provide accommodation for a defensive garrison. It became the training base for the Light Division. In WW1 it was a major staging post for troops heading for the Western Front. The cemetery contains over 600 Commonwealth War Graves, mostly from WW1 when the camp contained a military hospital to which wounded soldiers were repatriated but not all survived. Three graves are those of Victoria Cross winners. The current barracks are home to the Brigade of Gurkhas



### Sandgate Castle

Sandgate Castle was built 1539-40 at a cost to Henry VIII of £5,584.7s.2d. Originally it was similar in pattern to Walmer Castle, to be seen later, but much altered for defence against Napoleon, partly lost to the sea and altered several times since in shape and use; house, museum, restaurant and now house again.



### Lower Leas



A major landslip in 1784 created the narrow strip of land between cliff and beach. At first only a toll road was built across it but by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a large switchback railway, pleasure pier and other beach amusements accessed by cliff paths. These were superseded by the Rotunda amusement park with boating lake and a large lido open-air swimming pool. All have now gone. The Zigzag Path was added in 1921 but the rocks and grottoes are all made of an artificial landscaping material called

Pulhamite. Since 2000, millions have been spent improving the area with new children's adventure playgrounds, flowerbeds and picnic furniture.

## Folkestone



The name first appears as *Folcanstan* in the 7<sup>th</sup> century while the Jutes of Kent were still distinguishable from their related Saxons. Always a fishing port at the mouth of the Pent stream it became a limb of Hythe within the Cinque Ports at about the time it received its town charter in 1313. Only when seaside holidays became fashionable with the Victorians did the nature of the town change. The local landowner the Earl of Radnor laid out The Leas with its grand hotels and houses looking out over the cliffs to the sea. Trees have encroached on the view but the bandstand remains in use. The water balanced lift to the beach has just succumbed to health & safety demands. In 2007 a 4.3 earthquake damaged 474 properties in the town.

The 14 metre high stainless steel memorial arch was unveiled by Prince Harry on the centenary of Britain entering WW1. The fundraising campaign was called Step Short after the order given to soldiers marching down Slope Road at it was then known on their way to the harbour and France, so that their boots didn't slip on the steep cobbles. The war further affected Folkestone with the influx of 64,000 Belgian refugees and an air raid by 21 Gotha bombers which killed 95 people in 1917.



St. Eanswythe was a granddaughter of Bertha, a Christian Merovingian princess of Paris and King Aethelbeht of Kent. It was he who received St Augustine's mission to convert England back to Christianity in 597. In 630 her father built the Benedictine



Folkestone Convent for her, the first nunnery in England. The original buildings were sacked by the Danes and later fell into the sea. The current church is a replacement dating from 1137 but again the rest of the buildings have been lost to cliff erosion. In 1885 during restoration work a 12<sup>th</sup> century reliquary was discovered containing

the bones of a young woman (Eanswythe died young born c614 died c640) which led to the conclusion that they were her relicts translated to the new church in 1138 and hidden at the time of the dissolution after which the church

became the parish church of Folkestone. The niche where they were found and the contents can be seen in the church today.



Folkestone's first significant harbour was built in 1820 but the need to continually dredge silt from the Pent bankrupted the operators. It was bought by the South Eastern Railway who built a line down to and across the harbour on a viaduct to their new Horn Pier. The town soon became their principle packet station for continental traffic to Boulogne. 44,000 Dunkirk evacuees were brought through the harbour in 1940.

A roll on roll off ramp was built in 1971 and services to Boulogne, Calais and Ostend prospered for a while but the popularity and capacity of Dover caused operations to cease in 2001. Commercial fishing boats still operate from the outer half of the old harbour at high tides and use the quayside handling facilities that you'll smell, while the inner half is the preserve of pleasure boats.

East Cliff is the coast end of the Greensand ridge stretching from Surrey along the northern edge of The Weald. An extensive Iron Age oppidum used the rock to produce quern stones on an industrial scale. It was superseded by a Roman villa, excavated after it was revealed by a landslide in 1924.



The Warren was created by a series of landslips, the last major one of which was in 1915 since when the sea defences to protect the Dover-Folkestone railway line, have stabilised the coast. All the trees have grown since then and the area is managed as a country park.

### Capel le Ferne

St. Mary's church, c1100, has for long stood some way from the bulk of the village after 700 building plots were auctioned off near the cliff top in the early 1900s, although they were not all built on straight away. It is now further separated by the new A20. During WW1 the main naval airship base for anti submarine operations was to the east of the village using airships built at Wormwood Scrubs. At the west end of the village is the Battle of Britain Memorial. It is formed of a large propeller-shaped base, with the carved figure of a seated pilot at the centre. The



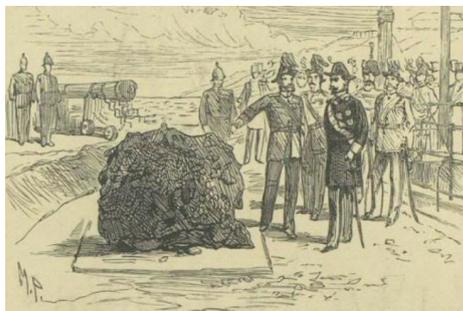
Memorial Wall, carries the names of the almost 3,000 fighter aircrew who flew in the Battle. Michael Fish's 1987 hurricane caused havoc among the village's caravan sites.

### Western Heights

Earthworks were first dug on the hills to the west of Dover in 1779 as a defence against French involvement in the American War of Independence. They were greatly enlarged and built in stone during the Napoleonic Wars. The fortifications were further upgraded in the 1850s to suit the needs of modern artillery. Works included the Grand Shaft, a triple spiral staircase through the cliffs to speed access of troops from the barracks to defend the harbour.



Construction obliterated remains of the Roman lighthouse, twin to the one still to be seen in the grounds of Dover Castle on the opposite hill, and known as the Bredenstone where Lord Wardens of the Cinque Ports were ceremonially installed from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Rediscovered during further works in 1861 a lump of its foundation masonry was repositioned on top of the inner ramparts where installations ceremonies continued until 1914.



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### Dover



Of all the Cinque Ports towns and limbs visited, only Dover is today an operating port of comparable significance. In fact it is the busiest international passenger port in the world with ferry services to Calais and less frequently Dunkerque. The discovery of the 3600-year-old Bronze Age Boat in 1992 and a wreck of similar age with a cargo of scrap bronze outside the harbour evidences how long Dover has been used as a port. The Romans invaded through Richborough to the north but soon there were lighthouses on either side of the estuary here and the Roman Quay pub in the town centre stands where the old waterfront was found during post war reconstruction. When building their Saxon Shore fort in Dover the Romans partly demolished a mansio, a lodging house for travelling officials, but inadvertently preserved the remains. They were uncovered in the 1970s and are now open to the public as the Roman Painted House. The early Jutes/Saxons avoided old Roman towns but by 640 King Eadbald of Kent (father of Eanswythe) founded a priory of 22 canons "within the castle", meaning the Roman fort. In the Domesday Book the mill of Odo, Bishop of Bayeaux is said to disturb the waters to the endangerment of shipping. This may have exacerbated the silting of the estuary and by the 13<sup>th</sup> century the river was divided in two. The eastern arm and adjacent beach were used by small fishing boats until it was blocked by a cliff fall. Over the ensuing years numerous schemes of piers and sluices were built on the western side but all

suffered from storm damage and the build up of shingle until the government paid for the harbour walls seen today which were completed in 1909 enclosing a square mile of water, sufficient to shelter a sizeable naval fleet. There has since been substantial land reclamation within the harbour to provide space for the current ferry operations. Dover was often bombed in WW1 by Zeppelins but in WW2 it was known as Hellfire Corner and significantly damaged by both bombing and cross channel shelling, pockets of which have yet to be rebuilt. The town has never regained its pre-war population.



### Dover Castle



After his victory at Hastings, William the Conqueror marched on Dover and when it didn't immediately surrender he burnt the town and then began work on a castle. There were probably already Iron Age earthworks on the hill. The castle was transformed by Henry II to its present form of concentric rings of defence around a central keep. The French siege of 1216 brought down the

north gate and wall but didn't take the castle. However the main entrance was afterwards moved to the new stronger Constable's Tower. The castle fell into disuse but, for the Napoleonic wars, the keep was strengthened with brick vaulting and new bastions added so that artillery could be mounted. Miles of tunnels were dug into the chalk to provide accommodation for the enlarged garrison. The tunnels were improved and reused during WW2 and it was from here that the Dunkerque evacuation was co-ordinated. They remained secret after the war and were to act as a bunker for local government in the case of nuclear war. After they were no longer required for that, they were opened to visitors to the castle which is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the country with 350,000 visitors a year. It would be easy to spend 6 hours here without seeing everything there is to see.

### Bleriot Memorial

Louis Bleriot was the first man to fly across the Channel in 1909. Using an aeroplane of his own design he won the £1000 prize offered by the Daily Mail. At the time, his landing site was a clear grazing meadow. For the centenary, some of the scrub was cleared and the memorial refurbished and improved. A re-



enactment in 2009 included a flight by a replica plane, which landed at our HQ, Duke of York's Royal Military School, but a day late because of high winds.

### Langdon Cliffs

The terracing clearly evident is the result of previous uses of this area. The level ones used for car parking were previously a Victorian prison and then barracks. The sloping ones are where railways were used to bring materials to the cliff edge for construction of the harbour below from 1898. During WW2 the railways were extended to service cross channel guns behind the cliffs.



The most famous, "Winnie" and "Pooh", were the other side of St. Margaret's. The area is dotted with ancillary buildings and tunnels, some of which the National Trust open to the public. On one occasion when Winston Churchill was visiting, it is rumoured that "Winnie" was fired and the officer-in-charge saluted and reported: "A direct hit, Sir". "On what?" enquired Winston, "Er – France, Sir".

### South Foreland Lighthouse

Replacing an earlier version, two lighthouses were built on this headland in 1840. The smaller one is closer to the cliff and now in a private garden. It is unclear how the lights combined to aid navigation. The larger lighthouse was the first in the country to show an electric light in 1875. It was here that Marconi received the first ship to shore wireless message from the East Goodwin Lightship and then the first international transmission from Wimereaux in 1899. The National Trust now opens it to the public for views from the top.



### St. Margaret's at Cliffe



With its height and longitude the sunrise in England is first seen here each day. Beware, at the closest point to Europe, mobile phones can switch to a French service.

### Kingsdown

Although then only a small beach fishing community in the parish of Ringwould centred a mile inland it was a Cinque Ports limb of Dover. Kingsdown got its own church in 1848 and is now much more populous than Ringwould. It is located at the northern end of the White Cliffs of Dover.



## Walmer Castle

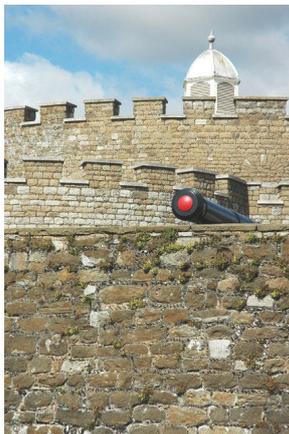


The southernmost of the three Henrician forts constructed to defend The Downs, Walmer Castle was built in 1539-40. In 1708 it became the official residence of the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. Successive Wardens developed the castle into a comfortable country home and garden. William Pitt the Younger directed the Napoleonic War from here. The Duke of

Wellington died here. The previous Lord Warden, Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, stayed one weekend each summer. English Heritage open the gardens and castle to the public where an original pair of Wellington's boots can be seen.

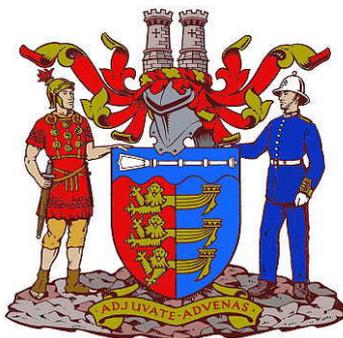
## Walmer

In 1989 the IRA exploded a time bomb in the nearby barracks killing 11 Royal Marine bandmen. The Marines had been present in Walmer since 1869 and at the time the base was used as their School of Music. The school moved to Portsmouth in 1996 but the band comes back each year to play a concert at the bandstand built in memory of those killed.



Deal Castle is the central and largest of the three artillery forts built to protect The Downs anchorage by Henry VIII after he had upset the continentals by divorcing Catherine of Aragon and feared invasion in retribution. It has a three storey central keep with two sets of 6 offset semi circular bastions projecting from it, set in a stone revetted dry moat. From above the pattern looks like a Tudor rose. The later addition of a house for the Captain was removed by a German bomb in 1942. English Heritage open the castle to the public with the large cannons facing the sea being a favourite photo opportunity.

## Deal

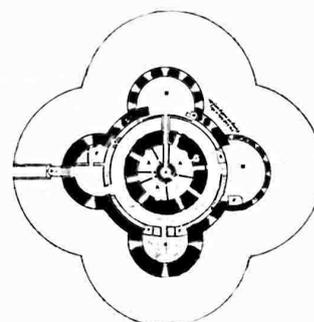


The first recorded event in British history occurred at Deal when Julius Caesar landed on the beach in 55BC then wrote about his exploits in propaganda pieces sent back to Rome. The town sits on and behind a shingle spit created by longshore drift. At first only a few fishermen's huts were built on the beach with the main settlement a mile inland. But

with Dover and Sandwich becoming less accessible, ships increasingly made use of The Downs, a large anchorage protected by the Goodwin Sands six miles offshore from all but the worst storms, while they waited for a favourable wind to continue round into the Thames Estuary or down the Channel. Provisioning of these ships became more profitable than fishing and a town grew up around this trade. By 1699 it gained independence from Sandwich with a charter of its own but remained a limb of Sandwich for Cinque Ports purposes. A naval yard was built near the castle to service Royal Navy ships including a mechanical semaphore tower used during the Napoleonic Wars to send messages to the Admiralty via a series of repeater stations across Kent. Later it became the Timeball Tower still seen today which was used to send time signals to ships offshore so that they could set their navigation chronometers accurately. The signal was telegraphed from the Royal Observatory, Greenwich and a long distance path, the Timeball and Telegraph Trail, has been devised between the two passing over each of the hills the previous semaphore towers stood on. With the advent of steamships the town fell into decline. Unlike other coastal towns It never succeeded in becoming a major seaside resort but from the 1920s to 1980s it was a coal mining town with many of the 2000 men working at nearby Betteshanger Colliery moving in. The pier is the only post war pleasure pier in the country, replacing an earlier one destroyed by a drifting mined ship in WW2.



Sandown Castle was a smaller version of Deal castle having only four bastions. None of the castles saw action in the purpose they were designed for but when the Civil War resumed in 1648 they declared for the king and were besieged by Parliamentarian forces falling one by one over the summer. After the restoration Colonel John Hutchinson was imprisoned here for signing Charles I's death warrant. In 1786 storm seas broke into the moat and it became increasingly derelict. The remains have been concreted into the sea defences at the northern end of the promenade.



Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club has held The Open twice in 1909 and 1920. It remains of the required standard but accessibility for the large crowds now attending is considered inadequate.

### Stour Valley Walk

Running from the coast across St. George's golf course then from Sandwich it roughly follows the course the river to its source near Lenham; a total of 51 miles



## St. George's Golf Club



One of England's premier golf courses it first hosted The Open in 1894, has done 13 times since and will do so again in 2020. You'll be crossing the footsteps of Walter Hagen, Greg Norman, Tiger Woods and other great golfers. A bunker on the 4<sup>th</sup> hole is the deepest in championship golf.

## Sandwich



When the Romans came back in 43AD they used the wide Wansum channel that separated the Isle of Thanet from the mainland to land at Richborough, north of Sandwich. The shingle spit continued to grow north from Deal while another developed south from Thanet creating a U shaped haven at the bottom of which a sandbank grew and Sandwich was founded; it is first mentioned in 664. By the time the Domesday Book was written it appears as the fourth most valuable port in England. It was pillaged by the French in 1457 and the mayor killed, since when the Sandwich mayor has worn a black robe instead of the red that the other Cinque Port mayors have. The French came from Honfleur which is now twinned with Sandwich. The haven continued to narrow and Sandwich was reduced to a less functional river port. Development almost ceased leaving it to be described by researchers as the "completest mediaeval town in England" with 160 houses dating before 1600 including considerable architectural evidence of Flemish and Huguenot refugees from the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The line of the town defences survives in the form of a moat and bank. It probably never had a complete stone wall away from The Quay where, of the gates, only Fisher Gate and the Barbican, which later served as a tollbooth for the 1892 swing bridge across the river Stour, survive. The Guildhall dates from 1579 but the rear portion was added in the 1980s.



## St. Bartholomew's Hospital



Built with the loot captured during the naval Battle of Sandwich in 1217 when the French, led by the notorious Channel pirate Eustace the Monk, supporting English barons rebelling against the infant Henry III, were defeated by a Cinque Ports fleet led by the Lord Warden Hubert de Burgh. The hospital soon became almshouses. On 24<sup>th</sup> August, St. Bartholomew's Day, local children run round the chapel and on completion are rewarded with a bun.

## Worth



The duck pond was anciently the head of a reach from the sea. The village has long relied on agriculture and more recently market gardening. The Crispin was built in 1420 as a farmhouse; it became an inn in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

## Ham

The route passes by the most often stolen road sign in the country.



## Betteshanger Colliery



One of four commercial coal mines in Kent this large colliery was opened in 1927. It acquired a militant reputation being the only one to strike during WW2 and the last to return to work after the 1984/5 national strike. Betteshanger is on the LDWA's Four Pits anytime challenge and the council promoted Miner's Way Trail. The site is being redeveloped as part of Hadlow Agricultural College.

## Northbourne

Lord Northbourne is one of the few hereditary peers to retain his seat in the House of Lords. The ancestral seat burnt down but the walled garden remains listed. Many of his surrounding fields are used for market gardening; salad crops that will end up in M&S.



## North Downs Way

The first parts were opened in 1969. After 36 miles of new public rights of way were created it was fully opened in 1976 in the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury and some LDWA Kent group members. It runs 153 miles from Farnham in Surrey to Dover.



## The Duke of York's Royal Military School



Founded in 1803 as the Royal Military Asylum in Chelsea for the orphans of soldiers killed in the Napoleonic Wars it was moved to the new site and buildings in Guston in 1909 and renamed. Part of the Ministry of Defence, entry



was restricted to sons of military families. Girls were admitted in 1994 and after it became an academy in 2010 entry restrictions were lifted but military traditions retained including a large marching band. Although a boarding school, the education element is state funded with parents only paying for accommodation.