

Walk 20: The Drover

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Description: A glorious but challenging circular walk from Shipbourne to Underriver via Ightham Mote and One Tree Hill.

Length: 6 miles / 9.6 km (approximately 2-3 hours, longer if stopping at Ightham Mote and/or The White Rock en-route)

Grade: A little challenging

Good for: Historic houses, beautiful views, and stunning woodland.

1. Begin your walk at The Chaser Inn, Shipbourne. Turn left into the church car park and then walk through the gate and past the church. Walk through the second gate and then turn right before climbing the stile and following the path between the staked trees.
2. After 100 metres climb two more stiles and then follow the path between the fences. Go through the gate and then climb another stile before following the track to the right, towards the cricket pavilion. Cross the stream and then continue straight on as the track merges into the field. At this point stay left and follow this uphill as you walk besides a large field.
3. Climb the stile at the top of the field and then continue straight on, crossing a driveway and then passing through the wooden gate. Continue straight on and then after 150 metres turn left through a large five bar gate.
4. Follow the lane for around 650 metres. At the end you will emerge into the National Trust property, Ightham Mote. Do not be swayed by their signage, follow the blue bridgeway arrow and continue straight ahead as you walk downhill and past the manor House.

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5. Follow the driveway round to the left and out to the right of the large iron gates. Turn right and then walk along Mote Road with care for 15 metres before turning left into Mote Farm, then follow the gravel track as it curves round to the right and continues uphill.

6. After 600 metres you come to a fork in the track. At this point continue straight on following the track down towards the woods. Walk on for another 500 metres and you will come to the Wilmot Cottage.

7. Continue straight on past the brick shed/well and then round to the right and up the steps. Then turn left and follow the path besides the fence. When you reach the info. board continue straight on as the path leads uphill. Watch your step for the many tree roots that protrude from the ground.

8. Go through the little wooden gate and then continue along the path as you now walk downhill. At the end of this path, you will reach a metal kissing gate that opens onto a quiet lane.

10. Turn right and walk uphill for 100 metres before turning left and walking up the steep steps.

11. Having climbed these steps, follow the path for 400 metres until you reach an open stile and a signpost for One Tree Hill, another National Trust site. Walk past this and then turn left before following the path straight for 100 metres before taking the left-hand fork.

12. Follow the path through the woods and out into the clearing. Cross over the clearing and then continue downhill. When the path forks, take the route to the left signposted Greensand Way. After 60 metres you will come to a road.

13. Cross over with care and then walk downhill for 100 metres and then just before the white gate, turn right and follow the path for 475 metres.

14. At the end of this path, you reach a T-junction. Turn left, heading downhill through a deep cutting in the hillside. This is nearly impassable in the wet Winter months - you have been warned!

15. When the path forks follow the purple arrows to the right and continue you to descend Carter's Hill. After 350 metres you will see some oast houses at Kettlehill farm. Continue straight on and when you reach the junction in the path turn left.

16. Follow the path for approximately 400 metres passing Valley Farm enroute. When you reach the driveway continue straight on until you emerge onto the road.

17. Turn right as you enter the village of Underriver and then continue down the road with care for 150 metres and you will see The White Rock on your left.

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18. Upon leaving the pub turn right and retrace your steps back up the road 50 metres before turning right and walking through two metal gates.
19. Follow the path through the field and after 180 metres cross the stream and climb a stile. Then continue over the hill and through the fence.
20. Keep going through this field, firstly crossing a ditch and then climbing a stile that forms a gap in the hedge. Having climbed this walk straight on and then climb the next stile or walk through the gate if this is open.
21. Cross this final field as you approach Underriver House. Go over the little wooden bridge and then climb a stile before turning left up the road, passing a duck pond
22. After 130 metres turn right and walk past the row of cottages, then continue to the end of this driveway, before following the path to the right of the metal five bar gate.
23. Follow the path between the woodland and the fence before climbing a stile. Then continue straight on with the wood to your immediate left.
24. At the end of this field climb the next stile and walk past the barn before climbing another stile and then continuing through the right-hand field. There are sometimes cows here so keep dogs on a lead.
25. Climb two more stiles and then cross a brook before following a track through a field of crops. At the end of this track climb the stile and follow the path for 150 metres as you walk past a swampy pond and then some houses.
26. When you reach Budds Green walk to the road and then turn left before climbing the stile on the right just after Budds Oast.
27. Walk on through the woods for 450 metres. When you reach the T-junction turn right and continue for another 250 metres before climbing the stile into a long field.
28. Follow the path through this field, aiming for the church in the distance. When you reach the church yard, go through the gate and then back through the car park, ending your walk at The Chaser.

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When out walking please remember to follow these guidelines...

Respect other people

Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors

Park carefully so access to gateways and driveways are clear

Leave gates and property as you find them

Stay on footpaths but give way to others where it's narrow

Protect the natural environment

Leave no trace of your visit - take all your litter home with you.

Keep dogs under effective control

Bag and bin your dog poo.

Enjoy the outdoors

Plan ahead, check what facilities are open, be prepared.

Follow advice and local signs and obey social distancing measures