

# a taste of the Garden of England

Leading through orchards and soft fruit farms –  
a perfect introduction to one of the most tranquil  
areas of the county.





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**Location:** Grove Ferry

**Distance:** 5.9 miles (9.4km)

**Time:** allow 2 hours 30 minutes

**Explorer Map:** 150

**Terrain:** field, orchard paths and some roadway

**Stiles:** 0

**Parking:** Grove Ferry picnic site

**Refreshments and facilities:** KCC picnic area and the Grove Ferry Inn public house. Public house, at East Stourmouth and Plucks Gutter

**Public transport:** For information about local bus and train services in Kent, contact Traveline tel: 0870 6082608, [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

**Step count:** approx 11,800



**Dog friendly**

The Grove Ferry Inn, and its adjoining picnic park is an ideal starting point for both the circular walk through East and West Stourmouth and the linear walk to Plucks Gutter. Today's fertile fields were once under water and a ferry was needed right into the 1500s to take travellers across the waters of the Wantsum Channel.



From the car park, strike off along the path to join the banks of the Great Stour - home to many river boats and pleasure crafts offering trips. Leave the riverside and the picnic site to head towards the Little Stour.

During spring the peaceful banks of the Little Stour are lined with flowering hawthorn and cow parsley. The orchards nearby are famed for their early displays of blossom.

Wildlife, particularly birds, flourish in this area, which is set near Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve – more than 240 acres of wetlands and reedbeds. Birdsong is bound to be a feature of any walk along these picturesque paths.

Grove Ferry is known for growing fruit and vegetables. Criss-crossed by drainage ditches and dykes surrounding small villages and historic farmhouses. The tracks across this marshland are very popular with people enjoying the open landscape with long views across the fields.

The two villages on the circular route – East Stourmouth and West Stourmouth – are examples

of the many small, attractive settlements to be discovered along these lanes. They retain a traditional rural atmosphere although they are just a few miles from the city of Canterbury and its historic Cathedral.

Take time to explore All Saints' Church in West Stourmouth before returning to the path and back to Grove Ferry. The church, which can claim Saxon origins, has a 17th century pulpit and a fine Royal Arms of George III.

The linear walk across the marshes from Grove Ferry to the Dog and Duck public house at Plucks Gutter is also a popular choice. It has been developed to be suitable for off-road electric scooter users.

The Little Stour and Great Stour join at Plucks Gutter and flow off to the sea at Sandwich. Look out for the old ferry cottage. The hamlet is named after a Dutch drainage engineer, Ploeg, whose grave can be seen in All Saints' Church, West Stourmouth.

Details of the linear walk are available on our website. Look for 'Walks For All' at [www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent](http://www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent)



Why not explore Grove Ferry by water? Take a boat trip along the River Stour.

## look out for...

- Boats – trips available
- Orchards
- Soft fruits such as Kentish strawberries
- Arable crops
- All Saints' Church, West Stourmouth  
(The Churches Conservation Trust)
- Birds - swans, mallards, lapwing and redshank

## did you know?

Lavender was once grown commercially in this area and its oils distilled at Grove Ferry. The quality of the lavender water was praised by the actress Ellen Terry.

*Grove Ferry Country Park is an ideal spot for picnicing or fishing. Fishing rights were granted during the reign of Henry II and are still available today.*

The marshlands at Stodmarsh were originally drained by Augustinian monks to graze their mares in foal.

*Kent County Council's 'Walks for All 1' pack is available, free of charge, at [www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent](http://www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent). The pack includes 1 mile (1.6km) and 5 mile (8km) easy access walks in Grove Ferry.*

A Hurricane aircraft shot down in the Battle of Britain crashed on farmland at West Stourmouth.

*All Saints' Church, West Stourmouth, is possibly the second oldest parish church in England. Its massive western brick buttresses were erected not long after an earthquake in 1579.*

For information on all that is made, manufactured and grown in Kent visit [www.kentishfare.co.uk](http://www.kentishfare.co.uk)



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0 Kilometres 0.5  
0 Miles 0.5

- ◆ Saxon Shore Way
- P Picnic Site
- q Interest
- " Public House
- G Gate
- S Stile
- 1 National cycle network
- ⚠ Take Care