

A large, weathered tree trunk lies horizontally across the middle of the frame. The bark is dark, textured, and shows signs of decay and peeling. The trunk is surrounded by a dense field of purple irises in the foreground and background. The lighting is soft, suggesting a late afternoon or early morning setting, with a warm glow on the right side of the trunk.

# a natural haven

At Hamstreet Woods, the Saxon Shore Way passes through ancient woodland along clay cliffs – now more than six miles (9.6km) from the sea.



**Location:** Hamstreet

**Distance:** 2.3 miles (3.7km)

**Time:** allow 1 hour 15 minutes

**Explorer Map:** 125

**Terrain:** well-defined tracks

**Stiles:** 0

**Parking:** at start of walk or on road

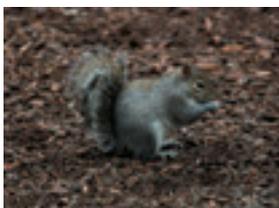
**Refreshments and facilities:** The Duke's Head public house in the village and local shops

**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 4,600

 **Dog friendly**

This peaceful circular walk starts and finishes at Hamstreet railway station, passing through the woodland of Hamstreet Woods National Nature Reserve. The route traces the ancient cliff line above Romney Marsh and joins the start of another popular long distance walking route – The Greensand Way.



From the station, take the footpath to the entrance of Hamstreet Woods. Follow the broad path uphill through the nature reserve along the former coastline.

English Nature uses traditional woodland management methods, such as coppicing, to encourage wildlife to flourish. Wild service (chequer) trees can be found among the oak, silver birch and hornbeam. This type of woodland flourished after the Ice Age and once covered the whole of the Weald.

The woodland glades are carpeted with bluebells and wood anemones in spring. Wild honeysuckle is also well established.

Nightingales are heard in spring and tawny owls in autumn. Other birds regularly seen include treecreeper, hawfinch and spotted flycatcher.

A large number of rare invertebrates can be found, particularly near or on decaying wood. This is a site for seeking out moths and butterflies.

Turn south and join the Greensand Way for a short distance before following the route back towards Hamstreet village. The Greensand Way starts in Hamstreet. The popular walking route runs 105 miles (169km) to Haslemere, Surrey, along a sandstone ridge through the Kent Downs and the Surrey Hills. Take time to enjoy stunning views across the marshes and rich farmland to the Royal Military Canal and beyond.

Hamstreet has been described as the “gateway to Romney Marsh”. It was one of the first areas in the country to be mapped by the Ordnance Survey. Hamstreet Woods was one of the first sites in the country to be designated a National Nature Reserve.

# look out for...

- Trees – oak, hornbeam, wild service
- Wildflowers – such as honeysuckle and bluebells
- Animals – squirrels, rabbits
- Butterflies and moths
- Birds – including nightingale and owl

Coppicing – cutting down trees to produce new growth – has been a sustainable way of harvesting wood for thousands of years. Coppicing allows light through to the woodland floor so bluebells and other wildflowers can flourish.

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## did you know?

Kent County Council's Walks for All 2 pack is available, free of charge, at [www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent](http://www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent). The pack includes a 0.45 mile (0.7km) easy access walk through Hamstreet Woods.

*Writers who have known Hamstreet well include: H E Bates, Noel Coward and Joseph Conrad.*

The village name combines the Saxon words "ham" meaning clustered settlement and "street" meaning road.

*The village centre was originally in Orlestone. People moved to Hamstreet to be closer to a source of clean spring water during the Plague.*

Hamstreet is twinned with the village of Therouanne, near St Omer, in northern France.

*Hamstreet is renowned for its annual fireworks displays and its summer Country Fayre.*

A map of Hamstreet village appeared on a special edition set of postage stamps in 1991 to mark the bicentenary of the Ordnance Survey.

