

# Peaceful paths and inspiring hills

Even on cold, grey days, it is likely you will encounter fellow walkers also enjoying the peace, quiet and amazing views on this refreshing, popular walk.



**Location:** Ide Hill

**Distance:** 4 miles (6.4km)

**Time:** allow 2.5 hours

**Explorer Map:** 147

**Terrain:** mainly arable and pasture paths with some roads and some steep slopes

**Stiles:** 7

**Refreshments and facilities:** Public house and shop in Ide Hill

**Public transport:** for information about local bus and train services in Kent, contact Traveline tel: 0871 200 22 33, [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

**Step count:** approx 8,500

Leave the picturesque green at Ide Hill - the highest village in Kent – and follow the path to the first stile to join the Greensand Way and your first taste of the breathtaking panoramic views to be enjoyed along the route.



The path then crosses the bottom of the valley and a gentle brook before heading uphill once again for more views over the Weald.

A bench at the top of the slope offers the opportunity for a rest after the climb. Views such as this inspired Sir Winston Churchill, at home in nearby Chartwell, to declare – “This is what we are fighting for.”

Toys Hill, on the right, is maintained by the National Trust and designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest. This area was an essential part of the local medieval economy for charcoal burners and wood collectors as well as for grazing livestock.

There is still evidence of charcoal pits at Toys Hill but the pits to be found in Scords Wood are mainly from quarrying chert – a stone used in road building.

A chainlink gate leads on up the hillside and into Scords Lane. Follow the path along the valley into open fields mainly used for cattle and arable farming taking advantage of the many small streams that flow across the lower slopes of the Greensand escarpment.

Shielded by woodland and hills on all sides, the route along the valley floor is incredibly peaceful.

A small footbridge leads once more across open farmland before the land begins to rise gently again and pass by historic Henden Manor. Henden Manor Farm covers more than 600 acres and has supported an exceptionally large dairy herd supplying one of the largest UK food retailers.

At the top of the hill head through Chains Farm passing a series of ponds to reach Boar Hill Road and the fringes of the Country Park at Stubbs Wood – a further Site of Special Scientific Interest in this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

English oak and beech trees are the main species to be seen although holly, whitebeam, ash, chestnut, hazel and rowan are also present.

Finally, the hill drops away on the left and you join a road over the ridge crest and follow the path downhill, with fine views across the roofs of the houses set on the hillside.

Rejoin the main highway straight over the crossroads to re-enter Ide Hill. Proceed gently uphill to the green as the road opens out alongside the Cock Inn.

## did you know?

*The wooden shelter on Ide Hill green is also the village war memorial.*

The Victorian church, St Mary the Virgin built around 1865, has an intricate lychgate, crafted by local builder Cecil 'Dusty' Boakes.

*During his down-and-out days, George Orwell stayed at the 'spike' in Ide Hill – a temporary home to poor visitors from London helping with the harvest.*

Nearby Toy's Hill takes its name from Robert Toys who kept pigs in Otford Woods in the 13th century.

*Toy's Hill was once part of the Common of Brasted Chart – locals were permitted to keep their livestock here, gather fuel and quarry Chertstone.*

In 1516 Henry VIII gifted Henden Manor to Sir Thomas Boleyn, father of the future Queen Anne. The house you see now is 16th century.

*Hanging Bank, towards the end of the walk, is an old gallows site.*

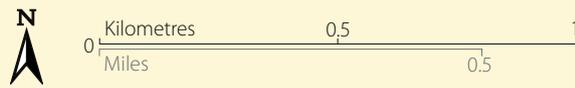
At 800 feet above sea level, Ide Hill is one of the highest villages in Kent. In days gone by a beacon was maintained here to transmit alarm signals north to London.

## look out for...

- Game birds
- Hedgerow wildlife
- Mature trees
- Songbirds in the undergrowth
- Free range chickens
- Moated grange of Henden Manor
- Carpets of bluebells in Spring; fungi in Autumn
- Breathtaking views



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- ◆ Greensand Way
- 🌳 National Trust
- 🏠 English Heritage
- 🍺 Public House
- 🅑 Parking
- 🌸 Garden
- 🅑 Picnic Site
- 🚶 Stile
- 🚪 Gate