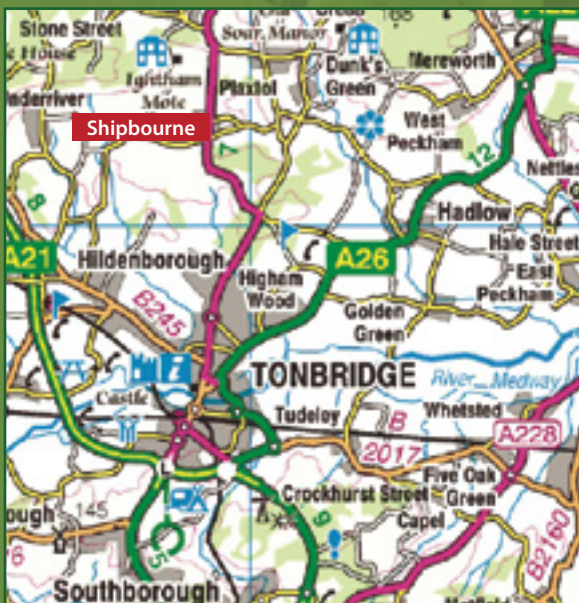


As pretty as a picture

Discover this enchanting stroll through classic Kentish countryside and peaceful Plaxtol.

Shipbourne Village Green



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St Giles' Church

Location: Shipbourne

Distance: 5 miles (8km)

Time: allow 3 hours

Explorer Map: 147

Terrain: Fields and roads, some moderate slopes

Stiles: 14

Parking: available at The Common in Shipbourne. (Please park considerately)

Refreshments and facilities: Chaser Inn Shipbourne, Kentish Rifleman Dunts Green

Public transport: for information about local bus and train services in Kent, contact Traveline tel: to 0871 200 22 33, www.traveline.org.uk

Step count: approx 10,500

Majestic trees, rolling open fields, historic houses and the picturesque village of Plaxtol – one of the most scenic areas in Kent – make this peaceful Greensand Way walk a delight for all the family throughout the year.



From Shipbourne, head along the path by St Giles' Church and through the kissing gate out into the open fields. Follow the path at the edge of the field alongside the Fairlawne Estate cricket ground and past pasture fields that in Springtime are home to flocks of sheep. At the end of the footpath bear left to follow the bridleway. At this point you may wish to take a diversion to take in views of Ighite Mote, one of the finest examples of a medieval house conserved by the National Trust.

Our route however continues uphill towards Ivy Hatch through Scathes Wood.

At the top of the hill, cross the A227 to follow the bridleway along High Beeches. At the end of the woodland you will enjoy some excellent views of the surrounding area to the south before heading downhill towards Plaxtol Lane.

Come into the village turning right along Plaxtol Lane passing the church and right again by the village war memorial and the fine yew topiary at Church House. The Street features attractive traditional cottages and the popular Papermakers Arms – a reminder of one of the area's most important industries in the past.

Many Plaxtol houses date from the 14th and 15th centuries are still private homes at the heart of this

thriving village community with its long history. A small Roman corridor villa, with a bath house, was discovered to the south east of the village in the 19th century and excavations uncovered a bronze statuette of Minerva.

From the village, follow the route back into open pasture and along the quiet banks of the River Bourne and on to pass a roadside nature reserve and the Kentish Rifleman public house which dates from the mid 17th century.

From Dunks Farm Road, a gate leads into fields with a classic Kent orchard on the right. The slight climb is rewarded by fine views over mature woodland and beyond. Cross School Lane and pass through the grounds of Fairlawne Home Farm to a bridge over the stream.

The route then passes through a kissing gate and alongside village houses to return to Shipbourne Common.

Sir Henry Vane the Younger's body lies in the crypt of Shipbourne Church in a stone coffin that, due to his beheading, is noticeably shorter than all the others. Sir Henry Vane was a Royalist, then became a Roundhead and then switched back to being a Royalist under Charles I. He was executed as it was thought that he was too dangerous to live. His ghost is said to wander the village.

look out for...

- The historic homes of Ightham Mote and Fairlawne
- Mature woodland
- The original oak Cromwellian altar in the Lady Chapel at Plaxtol Church
- The old village pound where lost animals of the village were locked up at night by the high wall on the north side of Plaxtol Churchyard
- A roadside nature reserve

did you know?

A farmers' market featuring fine local produce is held at St Giles' Church, Shipbourne, every Thursday morning. Stallholders pay a small fee each week to cover costs and this is donated to charities. The market gives more than £3,000 to charity each year.

St Giles' Church at Shipbourne was built by Sir Edward Cazelete, of Fairlawne, in the 19th century but in the 15th century a chapel on this site originally belonged to the Knights Hospitaller of St John.

Plaxtol Church has no dedication to a patron saint because it was built in 1649 in the time of Oliver Cromwell. It is thought to have replaced an ancient chapel on the Roman way from Lympe to London.

Hyders Forge, Plaxtol, is now a housing area but was once the site of a busy forge and an important employer in the village.



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Greensand Way
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 English Heritage
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