

PARISH WALK (ABOUT 8 MILES)

Cross the road at the zebra crossing, walk a few yards past the White Hart and turn right into the private road. Follow the road straight ahead ignoring the turning in the left followed by a turning on the road. You can walk a few yards through the gate, bearing in mind that you are now on private property, to get a good view of Brasted Place.

1. Brasted Place – Designed by Robert Adam for John Turton, physician to George III, this Palladian villa was built in 1784. Additions in French Renaissance style were built in 1871. In 1840, it was briefly the home of Prince Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte who later became Napoleon III of France. The present building is the last of a number of manor houses on this site. The earliest known was built in the mid-thirteenth century, closer to the former stable block, when the house was known as Stockets and later, Crow's Place.

Return to the High Street and look across the road at Combe Bank Lodge.

2. Combe Bank Lodge – The lodge house for Combe Bank, built in 1721 for Lt-Col John Campbell, later fourth Duke of Argyll. Combe Bank, now Radnor House Sevenoaks, is a private school in the parish of Sundridge.

Turn left and continue walking along the south side of the High Street. After about 200 yards, turn left into Elliotts Lane. At the top of the lane is the Oast House.

3. The Oast House - The conical roof of this private house is typical of the Kentish landscape and indicates that hop growing and drying was also a significant industry in this part of Kent. Look in the hedgerow along Church Road in the summer and you will see wild hop plants, another remnant of hop farming in Brasted.

Go straight ahead onto the footpath (SR304), which continues uphill for about a mile before the path ends at an unadopted lane opposite Colinette Cottages. Go straight ahead with the cottages on your right, passing a pond on your right. Go straight ahead onto the footpath (SR304) through the barriers and do not follow the lane bearing right into private property. Follow this path as it leads uphill for about two miles (SR259, SR318) until you reach Emmetts Lane.

There are two alternative routes from here:

1. ***If you wish to visit Emmetts Garden, turn left along the lane or the parallel path on the south side of the lane for about a quarter of a mile or follow the path running parallel to the lane on its south side. At the crossroads, turn right and then immediately right again into the drive leading to the main entrance to Emmetts.***
2. ***Turn right onto Emmetts Lane and, after a few yards and before the lane turns sharp right, go straight ahead onto the footpath. Follow the path until you get to a cross paths where you will see a signpost marked 'tea room', which is just inside Emmetts' boundary. Take this path if you wish to stop for refreshments. If not, go straight on.***

4. Emmetts - Occupying the highest point in Kent, the original farmhouse was demolished and replaced by the present Victorian mansion in 1860 and the surrounding land planted as a gentleman's residence. A third storey was added to the house and the grounds developed further to take the shape that we see today. The garden was bequeathed to the National Trust in 1964 and is worth visiting at any time of the year. Check the National Trust website for opening times.

To resume the walk from the tea room, re-trace your steps to the cross paths and turn left onto Weardale Walk. Follow this path, crossing signs for the 'red walk', until you come out into Scords Lane, an unmade road turning into a tarmacked road after a couple of hundred yards. Go along Scords Lane until you reach the crossroads at Toys Hill. Go straight over the crossroads with the old red telephone box on your right. After 100 yards on your left is Toys Hill viewing point, which overlooks the Kentish Weald with the South Downs in the far distance. Note also Toys Hill well nearby, dug in 1898.

5. Toys Hill – Named after the Toys family who lived there in the 13th century, was part of the common of Brasted Chart. Local people once kept pigs and cattle, gathered peat and firewood and quarried stone for roads and buildings. Various pits dug by charcoal burners and also for extraction of stone, are still visible in the woods today.

Retrace your steps turning left onto the steep footpath, just after the phone box. Follow the path until you reach a signpost for the 'orange walk' and turn right onto this path, which will lead you to Toys Hill car park. From here, there is another potential refreshment stop as, by following the adjacent road north for about 200 yards, you will come across the Fox and Hounds public house.

Either way, from Toys Hill car park, follow the red walk until you reach the site of Weardale Manor on the left.

6. Weardale Manor – Built in 1906, the manor was the home of Philip Stanhope, 1st Baron Weardale and his wife, Countess Alexandra Tolstoy. Occupied only in the summer months, Weardale Manor was a substantial house comprising 145 rooms. After Philip died, it was allowed to fall into disrepair and was demolished 1939 having been considered a landmark for German bombers searching for nearby Chartwell and RAF Biggin Hill. The foundations and terrace are all that remain.

With Weardale viewing point to your left and the war memorial on your right continue along the wide track, which is the bridlepath to French Street and also signposted 'red walk'. Follow this until you see another signpost indicating 'red walk' to the right. Follow this path downhill, which also includes some steps, until you reach a wide path. Follow this straight ahead to Outridge Farm.

7. Outridge Farm – Owned by the National Trust, the farm is notable for its triple rectangular oast house and drying shed dating from the 19th century. In the surrounding fields, a Messerschmitt Bf 110 was brought down in September 1940 after a raid on nearby RAF Biggin Hill.

Continue along the wide path going straight on until you reach the right angle bend in Pipers Hill Road. Note the old laundry on your right and the old dairy on your left, both formerly part of the Foxwold estate. Go straight ahead with the cricket ground and pavilion on your left and, at the end

take the bridle path in front of you. Do not follow the lane as it bears to the right as this is a private driveway into Foxwold. Follow the bridle path (SR305) downhill for about a mile until it meets Chart Lane. Follow Chart Lane downhill for about a mile taking great care along this busy road. Look out for a set up stone steps leading up the bank on the left hand side and climb those steps into the field following the path (SR302) until it leads between two houses within a cul-de-sac. Follow this down the slope to the junction with the High Street. Take great care crossing this very busy road and turn left along the pavement. Immediately on your left is Heaverswood Lodge at the entrance to the Heaverswood estate. Note that the main house cannot be seen from this point. Please therefore pay particular respect to the need not to trespass on this property.

8. Heaverswood - This modern house is built on the site of a 19th century house that was demolished in 1950. Heaverswood was originally part of the Hever Castle estate and was the site of a hunting lodge, which is thought to have been used by Henry VIII.

Continue along the pavement until you arrive at the entrance the village recreation ground.

9. Village recreation ground – A swimming pool, where the tennis courts are now, was opened in 1914, fed from the nearby River Darent. It was said to be one of the coldest in Kent and swimmers had to share the water with fishes and frogs. It has a car park and is a good spot to take a break with its picnic area and children’s playground.

Re-trace your steps along the High Street and turn left into Church Road past the points of interest numbered Follow the road up the slight incline past the places of interest numbered 9, 10 and 11 (Mill Farm, the Stanhope Arms and St Martin’s Church) on the village walk. Continue along the road as it becomes Station Road until you get to an overbridge carrying the M25.

10. M25 – Completed in 1979, this section of the motorway can be seen crossing Station Road and Brasted Hill Road. It follows the line of the former Westerham Railway, which was opened in 1881 and closed in 1961. The short road running parallel to the motorway from Station Road is the former approach road for Brasted station.

Return to Station Road and turn right under the motorway bridge taking care along this busy road until you reach a crossroads with Pilgrims Way crossing your path left and right.

11. Pilgrims Way – So named because it was the route taken by pilgrims from Winchester to the shrine of Thomas Becket in Canterbury, the route is far older having been dated by archaeological finds to 600 – 450 BC. This was the main east – west route as the current A25 would have been part of the marsh land that characterised the landscape in the Darent valley until was drained during the 16th century.

Go straight ahead across the crossroads up the steep hill. Shortly after the hill starts to level out and the road passes through an area shaded by trees, you will see a green footpath sign indicating a footpath on the left. Follow this path for about 150 yards and you will see the memorial to Stefan Wojtowicz on your left.

12. Hogtrough Hill – This steep hill rises from the Pilgrims Way towards the North Downs ridge. Look out for the memorial to Stefan Wojtowicz of 303 Squadron based at RAF Northolt. He was shot down in his Hawker Hurricane in September 1940.

Continue along the lane as it bears right and levels out to follow the line of the ridge with the Holmesdale Valley below to your right. The field immediately to your right is Bloodins Field.

13. Bloodins Field – This field, lying between Hogtrough Hill and Brasted Hill Road, is thought to have been the site a major and pivotal battle in 902 between the Saxons and the Danes. Human remains were recorded as being excavated in this field as recently as the 19th century, attributable to the battle.

At the end of the lane is a T-junction. Turn right and follow this lane as it descends into Brasted village. It's about a mile and a half but there are still many points of interest to admire. You will be able to see Combe Bank, now Radnor House Sevenoaks, a distinctive large white building in the valley below. This steep hill was used for the Annual Hill Climb Championship for cyclists from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, which often attracted huge crowds of spectators. You will pass a staggered crossroads as the lane crosses Pilgrims Way and you will also cross a bridge over the M25 as it follows the line of the old Westerham to Dunton Green Railway. The final (unlisted) points of interest as you continue to walk downhill, are the Chantry on the corner of Coles Lane, which was the rectory from the 1930s to the 1970s, and the Old Rectory, at the end of a private road at the bottom of the hill, a fine example of early Victorian gothic revival. Return to Rectory Lane and turn right to return to your start point.

If you would like to find out more about walking in Toys Hill, the following web page contains some useful information and downloadable maps:

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/toys-hill/features/walking-at-toys-hill>

If you identify any problems or inaccuracies with this walk, please let us know by emailing:

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