



Ham Street to Appledore walk

A walk full of historical interest in the low hills around Romney Marsh

Length	<p>Main Walk: 19¼ km (12.0 miles). Four hours 30 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 9½ hours.</p> <p>Short Walk 1, via the Canal: 13½ km (8.4 miles). Three hours 10 minutes walking time.</p> <p>Short Walk 2, via the Vineyard: 12¾ km (7.9 miles). Three hours walking time.</p>
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OS Map	Explorer 125. Ham Street, map reference TR001337, is in Kent, 8 km S of Ashford.
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Toughness	3 out of 10 (2 for the Short Walks).
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Features	<p>From the station a path takes you across a field and straight into Ham Street Woods, a National Nature Reserve noted for its wood anemones and bluebells in spring. The walk loops through this extensive woodland and then heads south-west on the Saxon Shore Way (SSW), a long-distance path indicating that this was the coastline in Roman and Saxon times. A short section through Hamstreet village and across gently rolling sheep pastures soon brings you to an early lunch stop in Warehorne's village pub.</p>
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In the afternoon the walk continues to follow the SSW through more pastures to the isolated Kenardington church, some way from its village. In the next section you go through the extensive **Gusbourne Vineyard** to an ancient mound whose 'pew with a view' gives you a panoramic view across Romney Marsh. The Main Walk now loops back past the unusual 14thC **Horne's Place Chapel** and Park Wood, before heading south to the area's most famous landmark.

The **Royal Military Canal** was hastily constructed in the early 19thC to protect England from a threatened Napoleonic invasion. As William Cobbett was fond of pointing out, the emperor whose armies had crossed the Rhine and the Danube was hardly likely to be deterred by this innocuous waterway; the invasion never came and the project was soon being condemned as an extravagant military folly. In the ditches alongside the canal you might come across some more resolute invaders, such as the green marsh frog (originally from Hungary) or even one of its predators, the mink.

A broad grassy path alongside a stretch of the canal owned by the National Trust eventually brings you to an attractive village with a broad street of elegant medieval houses: **Appledore** was an important port until great storms in the 13thC changed the course of the River Rother. Its station is more than 2 km away but you can choose between an excellent tearoom and a fine pub for refreshment before the final stretch across flat farmland.

Walk Options

The suggested circuit through **Ham Street Woods** can be tricky to follow and for a simpler alternative you could take one of its three designated **nature trails**. No written instructions are given here but the routes are all clearly waymarked.

Two significantly shorter walks are possible by cutting out the afternoon loop. The first of these **Short Walks** heads for the Royal Military Canal from Kenardington church, omitting the stretch through the vineyard; the second continues directly into Appledore from the far end of the vineyard, omitting the stretch alongside the canal.

Additional Notes

This walk was redesigned in 2018 as some parts had become awkward or difficult to follow (including the alternative start from Appledore). However, one drawback of cutting out the long and relatively featureless morning section via Ruckinge has been to make the Main Walk more unbalanced, with a significantly longer afternoon; the two Short Walks work better in this respect.

Transport

Ham Street and Appledore are adjacent stations between Ashford International and Rye on the “Marshlink Line”, which has an hourly off-peak service. From London, it is much quicker to travel via Ashford on the High Speed Train from St Pancras, taking about 1 hour. You can also travel on the regular services from Charing Cross or Victoria to Ashford, but the total journey time is at least an hour longer.

The only bus route in the area is Stagecoach 11, which runs every 1–1½ hours (Mon–Sat) between Ashford and Lydd via Hamstreet, with just one or two of these services also going through Appledore.

If driving, a small car park at Ham Street station is shown as “free for rail users”. There are also free car parks in both Hamstreet and Appledore villages.

Suggested Train

Take the train nearest to **10:40** from **St Pancras** to **Ham Street**, changing at **Ashford International**. If travelling on a slower train from **Charing Cross** or **Victoria**, leave at least half an hour earlier.

Lunch

The suggested lunchtime stop is the **Woolpack Inn** (01233-732900) in **Warehorne** (after 5 km), which reopened in May 2015 after being closed for 1½ years. This attractive pub is open all day and serves excellent home-cooked food made from local ingredients.



There are no more refreshment stops until you reach **Appledore**, but the **Black Lion** (01233-758206) also serves excellent food if you want a late pub lunch on either of the Short Walks, around 6 km further on.

Tea

There is no refreshment place near Appledore station (the Railway Hotel closed in 2013) but there are two nice places in the village. As well as the **Black Lion** (see above), **Appledore** offers “the quintessential English tea time experience” at the delightfully-named **Miss Mollett's High Class Tea Room** (01233-758555; open to 4pm weekdays in winter, 5pm otherwise; closed Mon and the Tue following a Bank Holiday). Allow at least half an hour to reach the station, 2¼ km away.

Help Us!

After the walk, we would love to get your feedback

You can upload photos to the  SWC Group on Flickr (upload your photos) and videos to  Youtube. This walk's tags are:



By Car **Start** TN26 2DU **Finish** TN26 2DG

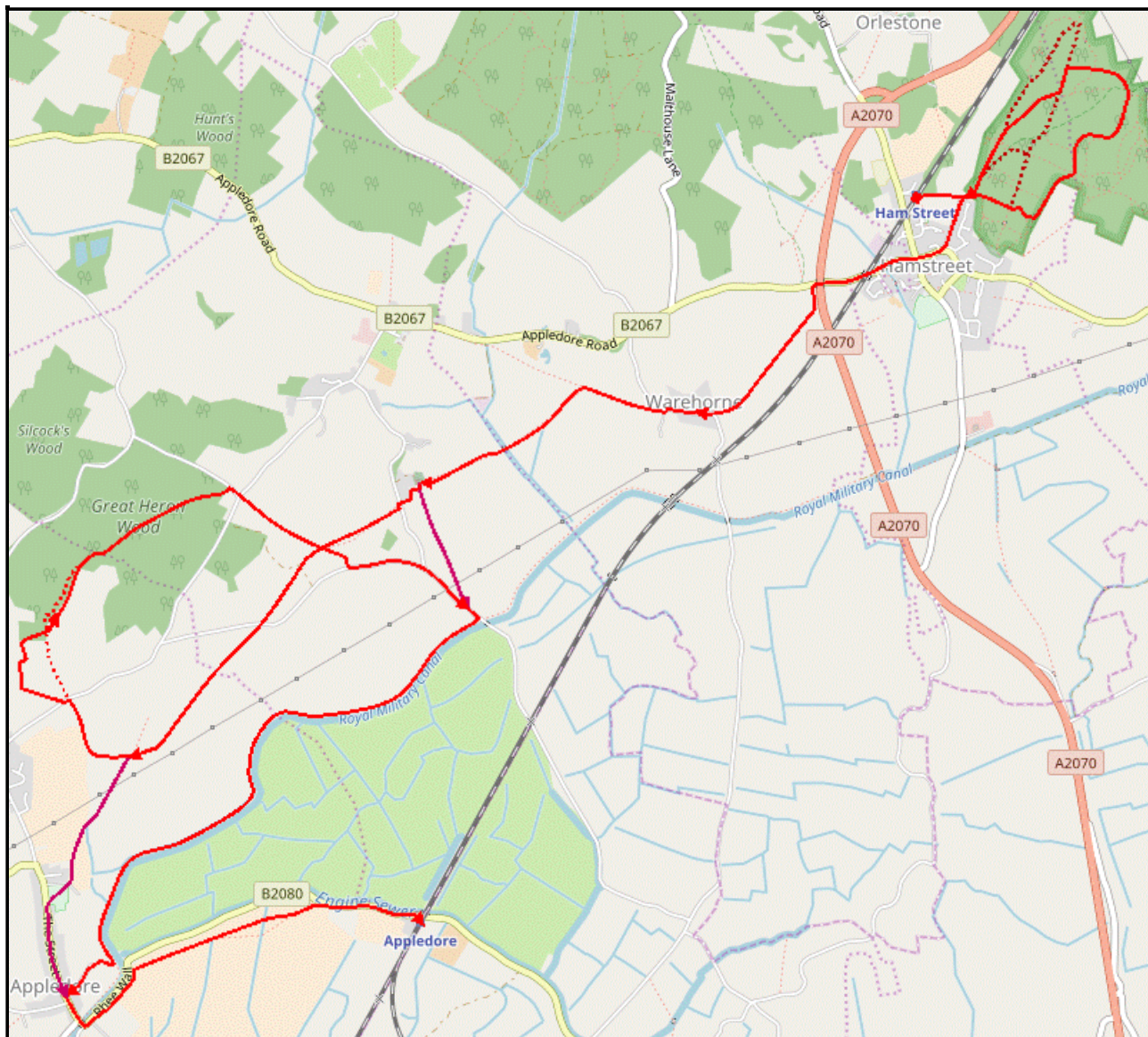
Help National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

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Walk Directions

Walk Map



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Walk Options

M. Main Walk (19¼ km)

a. Short Walk 1, via the Canal (13½ km)

b. Short Walk 2, via the Vineyard (12¾ km)

Walk Directions

A. Ham Street Station to (and around) Ham Street Woods (up to 3 km)

1. Arriving from Ashford, do **not** take the exit from the front of the platform but go back under the new footbridge to the end of the platform opposite the small station building. **Veer right** down a tarmac footpath through a new housing development, briefly joining the **Greensand Way**¹ (GW). At the end go through a new metal gate and continue along the right-hand edge of a field.
2. In the next corner go through two more gates into a small parking area at the end of Bourne Lane. **Turn left** through it to enter **Ham Street Woods**.
The rest of this section describes an anti-clockwise circuit around these woods (mostly avoiding the potentially muddy main rides), returning to this car park.
 - For a simpler alternative you could follow one of three nature trails, described on an information panel at the entrance and waymarked in both directions with red, blue and yellow arrows (of 2½, 1½ and 1 km respectively).
3. For the suggested route **keep right** inside the wood to start along a broad ride heading **E**, initially following the waymarked trails in the anti-clockwise direction. The ride soon goes up a potentially muddy slope which you could skirt on side paths. After 250m you come to a path crossing with an “Oaks or Hornbeams?” information panel.
4. Leave the waymarked routes (which all turn left) and **go straight ahead** on a narrow woodland path, which initially bends left and then curves round to the right to cross a stream. As you approach the edge of the wood **fork left** at a Y-junction, soon merging with a path heading **NNE** near the boundary and crossing back over the stream.
5. In 200m there is a jumble of paths ahead where the wood opens out to the right. Keep ahead (slightly to the right) for about 100m to meet a broad ride with – if you have come out at the right place – a yellow footpath waymarker on a tree opposite. Take the path indicated into the trees, initially heading **N**.
6. In 200m the path bends right to follow the course of a valley down to your left. In 150m it merges with another path from the right and swings back to the left to head **N** again. In a further 250m you cross a stream and meet the main ride through the wood (the GW), near a wooden fieldgate at the Nature Reserve boundary.
7. Ignore this exit off to the right and **turn half-left** onto a path on the other side of the ride, initially heading **NW**. This gradually curves left to head **W** and passes a small pond on the right after 250m. Continue in this direction for a further 150m to come to a T-junction with another main ride through the wood.
8. **Turn left** and go along this ride for 150m, briefly joining the red route (in the clockwise direction) and soon passing a large pond on the right. In 150m **turn half-right** off the main ride at a marker post with red and blue arrows to switch to the blue route, this time in the anti-clockwise direction. Follow this path gently downhill through the wood for 350m, heading **SW**.
9. As you approach the western edge of the wood keep left to merge with the red route (which has made a loop out to the northernmost part of the wood). Follow this main path as it heads **SSW** for 400m, staying near the edge of the wood. The yellow route and GW merge from the left shortly before you complete the woodland circuit, with the parking area ahead on your right.



B. Ham Street Woods to Warehorne (2 km)

10. Go back out through the parking area and along Bourne Lane, now on the **Saxon Shore Way**². At the end of the lane **turn right** onto the B2067 and follow it into the centre of Hamstreet³, passing the **Dukes Head** pub on your left. Go straight ahead at the crossroads, signposted to Tenterden.
11. In 300m the road goes under the railway bridge. The pavement ends so you **need to take care** as you have a further 250m along this road. Immediately after going under the A2070 **turn left** onto a signposted footpath, going over a stile, up a flight of steps and along a fenced path. In 100m go over a stile in the fence on your right and turn half-left as indicated, heading **SW**.
12. Proceed in this direction across several large fields, following footpath waymarkers and negotiating stiles and gates as necessary. The path gradually descends and after 500m you cross a ditch on a concrete slab and go along the edge of a small meadow, with a line of trees on your right. On the far side go through a metal gate into a farm field and keep to its right-hand edge, curving slightly right to head directly towards Warehorne church.
13. In the corner of the field follow the path through a gap in the trees and along a driveway into the village. Continue along a grassy strip to the right of Church Lane, heading **W**. Just after passing **St Matthew's** church⁴ on the left you come to the suggested lunchtime stop, the **Woolpack Inn**.

C. Warehorne to Kenardington Church (1¾ km)

14. Turn right out of the pub to continue along the lane for 150m. Shortly before it curves right **turn left** into a lane leading to a farm, then almost immediately go through a kissing gate on the right with a signpost for the SSW. Go straight across the field and through a kissing gate in the hedge on the far side. Continue in the same direction across a much larger field, still heading **W**.
15. On the far side go through another kissing gate in the line of trees and **turn half-left** into the top corner of another large field. You are heading for Kenardington church, visible 1 km away, but you need to aim slightly to its left to find a chain of footbridges across Horsemarsh Sewer and two flanking ditches, which run through the centre of this low valley.
16. On the other side of these waterways keep ahead across a small field and go through a kissing gate to the right of a metal fieldgate. Continue up the left-hand side of the next field to reach the unusual **St Mary's** church⁵ (some way from its village), which is⁵ worth visiting.
If you are doing Short Walk 1, go to §H.

D. Kenardington Church to The Mound (2¼ km)

17. With the church door behind you, turn half-right and leave the churchyard through a kissing gate under a large tree. Ignore the path ahead across the field and **turn right**. Follow the field edge around two corners and through a kissing gate onto a minor road (Church Lane). Go through another kissing gate in the hedge opposite into a vast farm field.
18. **Turn left** along its edge, then in 40m **turn right** to head **WSW** across the field, directly away from an opening onto the lane. Carry on in this direction for over 500m, staying near the left-hand edge of this irregularly-shaped field and with occasional SSW waymarkers to guide you.
19. Avoid a faint path branching off to the left after 60m and go up to the corner of a hedge to continue alongside it for 150m. At the end keep ahead across the field for 250m to the corner of another hedge and again continue alongside it. In the corner of the field go through a kissing gate, along the left-hand edge of a small field and out through another metal gate.
20. Go straight across a sunken byway and up a flight of steps into **Gusbourne Vineyard**⁶, with an information panel about its operation (and a reminder to stay on the public footpath). The remainder of this section continues to follow the SSW on a broad and well-marked path through this extensive vineyard, heading **SW**.
21. The path goes gently downhill, crossing a lane (Snargate Road) after 350m and a stream on a plank bridge in a further 300m. It then climbs gently through a farm field for 200m and goes through a gap in a hedge into another part of the vineyard. In 350m you cross a farm track and bear right as indicated, alongside a line of trees on your right. At the end of these trees there is a path junction, with a prominent mound ahead on your left.
If you are doing Short Walk 2, go to §G.

E. The Mound to Park Wood (1¼ km)

22. For the Main Walk, continue in the same direction alongside a wire fence and then a hedge, leaving the SSW (although you might like to detour onto the mound for the view across Romney Marsh). Follow the grassy path round to the right and downhill, with a fine view across a lake after 200m.
23. Keep right to go alongside the lake, eventually passing the medieval **Horne's Place Chapel**⁷ (with an English Heritage information panel) on the right, next to the picturesque manor house. Follow the driveway out to Kenardington Road.
 - The most direct continuation would be through a (usually locked) double fieldgate opposite and along a farm track leading to a corner of Park Wood. This is not a right of way but if Gusbourne Vineyard allow access in the future you could save 250m by taking this track and rejoining the route at the start of §F.
24. To stay on the right of way, **turn left** briefly onto the road and almost immediately **veer right** onto a signposted footpath. Go through a side gate to the left of a metal fieldgate and along an enclosed grassy track.
25. At the far end cross a ditch on a plank bridge and turn right onto a driveway towards a house. At a gate bear right onto a grassy path around the side of the house. Go over a stile and follow the enclosed path around the edge of a field to its top right-hand corner.
26. Go over a stile onto a short path through an abandoned orchard, heading **NE**. This little-used woodland path becomes slightly indistinct but soon emerges through a gap in the trees into the vineyard, where the right of way turns left onto a farm track (the one from the fieldgate on Kenardington Road). A simple continuation is to proceed along this track on the edge of the vineyard, soon with the open-access **Park Wood** on your left.
 - There are also permissive paths just inside the woods. Instead of going out onto the farm track you could turn left with the woodland path alongside a short line of ancient hornbeam trees and then round to the right towards another exit. Again the track on the edge of the vineyard is a simple continuation, but there is also a gap into the adjacent Park Wood where there is a path along its right-hand edge, parallel to the track on the edge of the vineyard.

F. Park Wood to Higham Farm (3 km)

27. Carry on along the edge of the vineyard – or just inside Park Wood – for about 300m (the vines currently end before this, but this might change). In the corner of the field a footpath waymarker post directs you through a metal gate into the wood, where you would bear right to join the alternative path.
28. Ignore marker arrows pointing left (for a circular trail back to Park Wood's car park) and in 100m **turn right** at a path T-junction. At the next junction **veer left** onto a path leading to a short stretch of boardwalk across a muddy area. You will now be following a meandering public footpath through **Heron Wood** for nearly 1 km, heading roughly **NE** and with occasional yellow waymarkers to guide you.
29. Halfway along you pass a redundant black metal gate (presumably marking an old boundary) and later you cross a broad track, slightly to the right. Eventually you turn left onto a potentially muddy track at the edge of the wood, which leads out to a narrow lane. Turn right and follow it past a small farm to a T-junction with Kenardington Road at Sly Corner.
30. Cross the road carefully and go over an awkward stile in the hedge opposite. Go straight ahead across a large field, heading **ESE**. In 250m you pass the right-hand end of a line of trees at an old field boundary and continue in the same direction (but with no clear path). In 200m you pass to the right of a couple of poles and shortly afterwards cross over your outward route. Head towards a wooden gate in the middle of a line of trees ahead.
31. Go through the gate and **turn right** to go along the edge of a field. In the field corner go through a gap and turn left onto a quiet lane (Snargate Road). In 500m keep right where Church Lane joins from the left. In a further 250m go past a footpath on the left (the Short Walk 1 route from Kenardington church), soon passing Higham Farm on the right.

Continue the directions at §I.

G. The Mound to Appledore (village) *direct* (1½ km)

32. The SSW continues over the top of the mound, where you will find a wooden bench with the appropriate injunction to "Take a pew - enjoy the view" as you gaze out over the wide expanse of Romney Marsh. Keep ahead on a broad grassy strip descending between the vineyard and a farm field.
33. At the bottom go through a kissing gate and continue near the left-hand edge of a small field to the far corner. Cross a footbridge over a stream and **turn half-left** to go diagonally up across the next field. On the far side bear left and go along the field edge to a tarmac lane.
34. At the lane, **turn right** through a metal gate and make your way to the opposite corner of a playing field, where you pass a toilet block. Turn left onto the B2080 to go through the village of Appledore on its long main street. In 300m you pass the **Village Stores** on the left, then in a further 100m **Miss Mollett's High Class Tea Room** on the right. If you want more substantial fare, the **Black Lion** pub is 100m ahead.

Complete the directions at §J.

H. Kenardington Church to Higham Farm *direct* (¾ km)

35. With the church door behind you, turn half-right and leave the churchyard through a kissing gate under a large tree. Go straight ahead across a large farm field, leaving the SSW; if the path is not marked out, stay roughly parallel to the hedge 100m away on your right.
36. On the far side go over an old stile and keep ahead alongside a short piece of hedge in another large field. Bear slightly right down across this field, gradually approaching the lane on your right. Go across a plank bridge in the hedge and turn left onto the lane (Snargate Road), soon passing Higham Farm on the right.

I. Higham Farm to Appledore (village) (3¾ km)

37. After passing the farmhouse the lane comes to a low bridge over the **Royal Military Canal**, with signposted footpaths on both banks. Do not cross the canal but **turn right** through a wooden kissing gate onto a long narrow piece of grassland, flanked by a ditch on the right and the canal behind a raised bank on your left.
38. You now simply follow this broad grassy strip (or a shady path up on the tree-lined bank) to the outskirts of Appledore. On your right there are large farm fields and later the lower slopes of **Gusbourne Vineyard**⁶; from the bank there are sweeping views across Romney Marsh through gaps in the trees.
39. In 2½ km (where the canal turns left) ignore a stile next to a metal fieldgate on the right. In a further 500m, after passing some farm buildings and before the canal swings round to the right, **turn right** onto a wooden footbridge across the ditch. Follow the fenced path round to the right (briefly doubling back) and then to the left. At the end keep ahead on a lane (Old Way), which in 200m comes out onto Appledore's attractive main street, the B2080.
40. The village's two possible refreshment places are each 50m away, in opposite directions: **Miss Mollett's High Class Tea Room** is on the right, the **Black Lion** pub (and the continuation of the walk) on the left.

J. Appledore (village) to Appledore Station (2¼ km)

41. From the tearoom head **S** on the B2080, passing Old Way, the pub and **Ss Peter and Paul** church⁸ on the left. Keep ahead at the road junction by the church (where the SSW turns right), going down a slope and crossing the **Royal Military Canal** at the bottom.
42. Follow the main road round to the left at a junction. There is no pavement but before long a footpath signpost indicates a grassy path on its right-hand side. About 50m before the road makes a sharp right-hand turn, **turn right** at another footpath signpost to go across the first of several large farm fields.
43. If the right of way through the crops has been marked out the route for the next 1 km will be obvious. If not, stay roughly parallel to the B2080 (behind the hedge 50m off to your left); aim first for a stile in the wire fence ahead and then a series of wooden footbridges which take you across drainage ditches at the remaining field boundaries. After the third of these bridges the path bears left and gradually approaches the road.

44. Go across a plank bridge in the hedge and turn right onto the road, **taking great care as there is only a narrow grass verge**. Appledore station is just over 500m away. Trains to Ashford leave from Platform 1 on this side of the level crossing; for Rye and Hastings you would need to go over the crossing **before the barriers come down** and turn right onto a path to reach Platform 2, 100m back from the road.

Walk Notes

1. The **Greensand Way** follows the course of a sandstone ridge just to the south of the North Downs. The village of Hamstreet is at one end of this long-distance path, which runs for 175 km to Haslemere in Surrey.
2. The **Saxon Shore Way** runs for over 250 km, from Gravesend on the north Kent coast round to Hastings in East Sussex. It marks a line of coastal fortifications built by the Romans in the 3rdC as a defence against Saxon invaders.
3. **Hamstreet** (the station is spelt differently) featured on a set of postage stamps to mark the bicentenary of the Ordnance Survey in 1991. A baseline for the triangulation was measured in the nearby village of Ruckinge and the surrounding area was one of the first in the country to be accurately mapped.
4. **St Matthew, Warehorne** dates from around 1200, but most of the building (such as the brick tower and gabled porch) is much later. A tunnel built by smugglers linked the church with the Woolpack Inn.
5. **St Mary, Kenardington** was built on the site of a small Saxon fort in 1170. Only the square tower survives from that period since the nave, chancel and north aisle all collapsed after a fire caused by lightning in 1559. The ruins were patched up to provide a smaller church based on the south aisle, hence its irregular appearance. The unusual round tower on its north side contains the staircase to its belfry.
6. **Gusbourne Vineyard** has been producing award-winning English sparkling wines since 2010, from Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier grapes.
7. **Horne's Place Chapel** was built in 1366 as a domestic chapel attached to a manor house. It is privately owned but can be visited by prior arrangement (01304-211067).
8. **Ss Peter and Paul, Appledore** dates from the early 13thC. It suffered from French raids in 1380 and later neglect, but was sympathetically restored in 1925.

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