

for lunch, which adds **2.2km (1.4 miles)** to the walk length, making a total circular walk from Sevenoaks of **18.5km (11.5 miles)**. Since this crosses some low-lying fields it is muddier in winter than the rest of the walk. Towards the end of the loop there is fairly steep but scenic climb up onto the escarpment.

A fairly regular **bus** – the 222 – leaves outside The Chaser Inn on Monday to Fridays (eight departures) and Saturday (five departures). There is no service on Sunday or bank holidays. The buses run to Tonbridge station in one direction and in the other to Borough Green station, which is on the Maidstone to Victoria line.

Transport

There are several fast trains an hour from **Charing Cross, Waterloo East** and **London Bridge** to Sevenoaks. You can also get to Sevenoaks on slower Thameslink services from **Blackfriars** via **Bromley South**, which in May 2018 are due to become through services through central London

Either way aim to **start the walk** at **10.45am** to get to Ightham Mote or the Chaser Inn comfortably in time for lunch. In spring and summer it is also possible to start an hour later, and have lunch in at the Bucks Head in Godden Green and then tea at Ightham Mote.

Lunch and Tea

There are early lunch options at the National Trust-run **Brewhouse Cafe** at **Knole House**, 2.6km (1.6 miles) into the walk, and at the **Bucks Head** (01732 761 330) in Godden Green, 3.9km (2.4 miles) into the walk: the latter serves food until 12-2pm Tuesday to Friday, 12-3pm on Saturday and 12-3pm Sundays (it is closed on Mondays).

More centrally placed is the National Trust-run self service restaurant at **Ightham Mote** (8.4km/5.2 miles into the walk), which these days is open year round till 5pm (4pm November to early February) and does hot dishes and soup from 12pm to 2.30pm.

Two other former pub lunch options on this walk – **The Padwell** and the **Snail** at Stone Street – are both currently (January 2018) closed with no sign of re-opening, but an optional extra loop to the walk (see **Walk options** on page 1) takes you to the excellent **Chaser Inn** in Shipbourne (01732 810360), 9.7km (6 miles) into the walk, which serves food all afternoon and evening daily. This is a large pub with a range of different seating areas including outside tables in summer in a garden next to the church: however it is also popular and booking might not be a bad idea.

For **tea** the **Brewhouse Cafe** at Knole House is recommended. It is open till 5pm daily (4pm November to early February). Otherwise Sevenoaks has several cafes including **Malabar**, open till 6pm daily and a **Caffe Nero** which stays open until 6.30pm Monday to Saturday and 5.30pm Sunday.

WALK DIRECTIONS

Sevenoaks station to Knole House (2.2km/1.4 miles)

1. Coming out of Sevenoaks station, cross the main road at the pedestrian lights, and turn right, uphill.
2. In 50 metres turn left into St Botolphs Road.
3. In 600 metres, at the end of this long wide road, cross two roads with a war memorial in between them and beyond keep left around the edge of the cricket pitch.
4. In 150 metres, in the far left-hand corner of the cricket pitch, turn left onto
5. a lane. In 40 metres turn right at a crossroads to go steeply downhill.
5. In another 50 metres, at the bottom of the hill, **cross the road with care** (*fast traffic*) and turn left along the far side.
6. In 200 metres, just before the pavement ends, **go through a small wooden door** in the stone wall to the right to enter **Knole Park**
7. Go straight ahead for 30 metres to an estate road and turn left along this. Follow it as it curves right along the valley floor.
8. In 450 metres stay on the road as it climbs up out of the valley and in

another 100 metres curves left up through trees.

9. In 400 metres more the road curves right and you emerge from trees into an open space, with the turrets of **Knole House** visible ahead. Here **turn left off the estate road**, onto a grassy path and continue with the directions in paragraph 10.
 - **If you miss this turning**, or if you want to have **a closer look at Knole House** or visit its **Brewhouse Cafe** at this stage in the walk, simply keep on down the estate road for 300 metres to the house. Your **onward route** is then on the tarmac and gravel drive lined with trees that runs leftwards away from the house, in line with its facade, roughly north east. This is marked **Duchess Walk** on the Explorer map. Carry on down this for 400 metres until it crosses a golf fairway at the bottom of a dip and continue with the directions in paragraph 11 below.

Knole House to Godden Green **(1.6km/1 mile)**

10. Having turned left off the estate road onto the grassy path, in 50 metres it starts to go downhill. In 70 metres more it merges with a grassy path coming from the right. In 80 metres you come to a gravel track at the bottom of the valley, where you turn left, crossing a golf fairway.
11. Follow the track across the golf fairway at the bottom of a dip, and then keep on it as it curves uphill to come to the gates of the park in 500 metres
12. Leave the park by the gates and carry on down a track into the woods.
13. Ignore minor paths to the right, but in 500 metres, after a gentle descent and when you can see a house 150 metres ahead along the path, **fork right** up a broad path signposted to Godden Green.
 - **If you miss this turning**, do not worry. Keep straight on along the track to the road and turn right on it until you come to the Bucks Head pub: walk past it and continue with paragraph 16.
14. In 70 metres the path runs between garden fences. In 40 metres cross a track with a line of cottages to the right, and go through a metal gate and on up a track to the right of some stables.
15. In 150 metres you come out onto the green of **Godden Green**, where you turn right, passing the **Bucks Head**, a possible early lunch stop, on your right.

Godden Green to Stone Street **(2.3km/1.4 miles)**

16. 40 metres beyond the pub veer left off the road up a tarmac driveway (which is also a bridleway) signposted to Cygnet Hospital.
17. *You essentially keep straight on along this bridleway all the way to Stone Street: but in more detail:*

In 250 metres the track passes to the right of the entrance to Cygnet Hospital (aka Medlars Mead Lodge) and becomes earth and gravel.
18. In another 250 metres it leaves the houses behind and curves left, but is still a track passable by cars.
19. In another 400 metres you pass one last house and after this the track descends a steep hill impassable to cars and becomes a normal bridleway in open country.
20. You now keep on this bridleway for 800 metres, passing some woods which in late March and early April have fine displays of wood anemones, and slowly climbing uphill.
21. At the end of the 800 metres you pass a house on the left and in 100 metres more come to a road.
22. Cross the road and go straight up the signposted footpath beyond. Initially you have a line of shrubs to the left and a fenced field to the right, but in 120 metres you are crossing an open field, though with a line of newly planted trees on either side.
23. In 250 metre more you come to a fieldgate, with a road beyond it. **To continue the walk**, go to paragraph 24 overleaf.

The **Padwell Arms** and the **Snail**, two former pub options on this walk, were near this point, but both currently (January 2018) are closed with no sign of reopening.

In case either pub reopens, directions to them are as follows:

 - For the **Padwell Arms** turn **sharp left before** the fieldgate, almost doubling back on yourself up a signposted bridleway, a track on the

right-hand edge of the field. In 350 metres this passes houses and becomes a driveway and in another 300 metres comes to the road. The Padwell Arms is opposite.

- **For The Snail**, go through the fieldgate and cross the first road you come to, turning left on the second one. This goes uphill between hedges, with some **fast traffic**, so take care. In 350 metres, at the top of the hill, another road joins from the left, and on the right is The Snail.

Stone Street to Ightham Mote (2.3km/1.4 miles)

24. Go straight across the road (actually two, a road diverging) and up a farm road between hedges on the far side, a signposted bridleway.
25. In 230 metres, where the hedges end, keep straight on with arable fields either side.

Until the 1960s the area would have been covered in hop fields, a very different kind of landscape to the one you see now. It was then replanted with apple orchards, which were grubbed up in 2011. But new crops have taken their place - some of the fields have now been replanted with lavender and later on the left there is a plantation of cobnuts (hazelnuts).

26. In 450 metres the path starts to descend steeply, soon entering an area of young trees.

Once a conventional wood, this whole area is now being managed through traditional coppicing by the National Trust, giving a glimpse of how woods in England looked for centuries until medieval wood management was abandoned in the 19th century.

27. In another 300 metres, at the bottom of the hill, go left at a T-junction (which is the main path anyway) onto a track.
28. In 650 metres you come to a road. The track on the far side of the road is slight shortcut into **Ightham Mote** via its car park, but a more scenic option is to **turn right** on the road.
29. In 200 metres you have a clear view of the garden and house on your left. In another 100 metres you pass some old cottages on the left. 50 metres beyond the cottages there is a tarmac track on the right, just in front of the buildings of Mote Farm.

- **If NOT stopping at Ightham Mote and NOT planning to do the extra loop to Shipbourne**, you can turn right here and pick up the directions paragraph 33 below.

30. Otherwise, keep straight on. In another 60 metres there is a driveway **sharp left**, an entrance to **Ightham Mote**.

- **If you want to carry on to Shipbourne** from this point, **NOT stopping at Ightham Mote**, ignore this entrance and keep straight on down the road. Continue with paragraph 37 on page 5.

- **To visit Ightham Mote**, turn left onto the driveway, to come to the house in 60 metres. Walk round to the right along its moated front and, ignoring the National Trust shop just beyond it, climb a short rise and turn left up through a car park for 50 metres to find the entrance to the **self service restaurant**, on your left, just by the entrance to the toilets.

31. **After lunch**, exit past the toilets and turn right downhill. In 50 metres turn right again along the moated front of the house. At its far end veer left up the driveway to the road.

- **To continue on to Shipbourne**, turn left on the road and continue with paragraph 37 on page 5.
- **To omit the loop to Shipbourne**, turn sharp right onto the road, and continue with paragraph 32 below.

Ightham Mote to Wilmot Cottage (1.5km/0.93 miles)

32. Having turned sharp right out of the driveway from Ightham Mote, in 60 metres left up a farm track, a signposted bridleway.
33. *You are now on the well-waymarked **Greensand Way** and can follow it all the way to Knole House: but in more detail:* Follow the track past the farm and then to the right uphill.
34. 350 metres after the farm, ignore a track to the left leading to a fieldgate, and keep on uphill.
35. 50 metres later the track starts to level out. In another 200 metres, at the end of the level section, ignore a track forking to the right, and instead follow the Greensand Way arrow slightly to the left, on a track which goes downhill for a

while before climbing again. (*Ramsons or wild garlic flower to the left and right of this path in late April and early May*).

36. In 500 metres the track passes a house on the right and beyond it turns right up some steps, following an arrow on a post.

Now continue with the directions in paragraph 61 on page 6.

Ightham Mote to Shipbourne (1.5km/0.9 miles)

37. 100 metres beyond the Ightham Mote entrance, go straight ahead across a stile into a field to continue parallel to the road along a field edge, with a hedge to your right.
38. In 120 metres exit the field in its bottom right-hand corner and carry on up a path with a fenced-off field to your right and a wood edge to your left.
39. In 80 metres cross a stile and carry on up a fenced path through the wood. *There are some **bluebells** towards the end of this wood in late April and early May.*
40. In 300 metres cross a stile to leave the wood and carry on down the left-hand side of a field, with Shipbourne church visible ahead.
41. In 70 metres turn left with the fence to go along a broad grassy strip along a field edge.
42. In 250 metres cross a track and go over a stile to the left of double fieldgates, veering right up the small field beyond.
43. In 50 metres go through a gate to the right of a fieldgate and carry on up a fenced path.
44. In 200 metres cross a stile and 15 metres later another, turning left along a field edge after the second stile.
45. In 170 metres, just in front of Shipbourne church, cross a stile in the right-hand field corner and then turn left to pass through a gate into the churchyard.
46. Follow the path around to the left of the church (ignoring a path forking left to a gate by its main door) to come round the far end of the church. A driveway leads down to a road and the **Chaser Inn** is to your right.

Shipbourne to Wilmot Cottage (2.4km/1.5 miles)

47. Coming out of the Chaser Inn, go back up the drive to the churchyard, and pass round to the right of the church.
48. Exit the churchyard by the gate into the field on its far side (the one you came in by before lunch, **not** the one at the end of the path leading to the right from the main door of the church) and, ignoring the stile to the right, keep straight on, with a hedge to your right.
49. In 200 metres pass through a gap and keep straight on across a large arable field, heading for a wood corner 500 metres ahead. (*There are nice backward views of Shipbourne church as you cross this field*)
50. When you get to the wood corner, cross a stile and go up a car-wide path into the wood.
51. In 230 metres, at the top of the rise and just past a fieldgate to the right, **ignore** a broad grassy path straight ahead (a footpath post has fallen over here) and instead **fork left uphill** on a broad path.
52. In 100 metres, at the top of the hill, ignore a grassy ride to the right to continue straight on down a descending path that in 20 metres veers right.
53. In 400 metres cross a stile by a house and turn right on a road.
54. In 20 metres go left over a stile with a National Trust Ightham Mote sign. **Turn right and then left** after the stile to carry on up **the far side of the hedge** (with the hedge to your left), going directly away from the road.
55. In 220 metres, where the hedge ends, veer right with the field edge.
56. In 100 metres pass through a gap in the hedge, hidden until you come up close to it, to cross a footbridge and carry on uphill across another field.
57. In 100 metres, in the top corner of the field, carry on up a path fenced off from another field.
58. In 170 metres, in the top corner of the field, pass through a kissing gate and carry on up a rougher section of grassy hillside, aiming for a house above.
59. In 100 metres pass through a kissing gate in front of the house and turn left

on a stony track. *(There is a fine view of Shipbourne church from this point).*

60. In 50 metres, just beyond the house, turn right up steps. Continue with the directions in paragraph 61 below.

Wilmot Cottage to One Tree Hill (1.4km/0.9 miles)

61. In 40 metres the path turns left again to roughly contour the hill (climbing slightly).
62. Ignore ways off to keep straight on along this path. In 750 metres you pass two barns to the left, after which you come to a tarmac lane. Turn right uphill on this.
63. In 100 metres, 10 metres before the tarmac lane ends, turn sharp left up some steps, still following the Greensand Way arrows.
64. There is a steep climb for 80 metres or so, until the path levels out, with a wooded escarpment to the left.
65. In another 80 metres or so you come to an area that was coppiced in 2017.

*Coppicing - cutting the trees down to the stump to encourage regrowth - looks drastic, but is an important way to regenerate the wood and encourage biodiversity. In particular it encourages the **bluebells**, which are a nice feature of the next section in late April and early May. (Just presently, however, it seems to be encouraging lots of brambles and foxgloves too...)*

66. In another 120 metres notice three majestic beech trees growing together on the left - possibly a tree coppiced many eons ago that has grown out, or maybe just three saplings that have spent decades competing with each other for light.
67. In 100 metres more you come to a stile and a National Trust sign for **One Tree Hill** (surely the most badly named hill in the country). Beyond the stile veer left onto a level car-wide bridleway.
68. 80 metres beyond this, **fork left onto an unmarked path** (which actually is still the Greensand Way) which closely follows the edge of the ridge. In season, the slopes to your left are covered in bluebells.
- **If you miss this turning**, after 90 metres more on the main path you reach a small open area. Go left here for 30 metres through a gap in the

trees to the viewpoint with the bench mentioned in the next paragraph.

69. After 150 metres on the bluebell path along the escarpment you come to an open space, with a fine view over the Weald to the left and a bench to the right.

One Tree Hill to Knole House (2.9km/1.8 miles)

70. On the far side of the open space (*that is, following the line of the ridge and having just passed the bench on your right*), veer left to keep to the waymarked Greensand Way as it slants left, slightly downhill.
71. In 180 metres ignore a path to the right at a footpath post, to keep on slightly downhill.
72. In 100 metres this brings you to a road. Turn left downhill on this.
73. In 60 metres fork right up the driveway of a house (Shepherd's Mead). In 25 metres turn right up the signposted Greensand Way along a fenced-in footpath.
74. There is a fine bluebell wood to the right for the whole next section in late April and early May. To the left to begin with there are a garden hedge and fence blocking views, but in 200 metres pleasant vistas to the south open up.
75. In another 300 metres you come to a junction with a bridleway climbing the hill from the left. Turn right on this and then in 8 metres fork half left off it up a slope and over a stile to the right of a metal gate into a field, still following the Greensand Way.
76. Carry on along the left-hand edge of the field along the line of the escarpment, and then in 120 metres, in its far corner, turns right along the far field edge.
77. Once on the far edge, in 100 metres the path **veers left into the wood** over an easily-missed stile.
78. Follow a clear path through the wood. In 200 metres you come to a road. Go straight across this and through the gate in the deer fence into **Knole Park**, and straight ahead on a grassy path.
79. In 100 metres go straight across a junction of tarmac drives.
80. You are now on a track that in 100 metres passes between two clumps of trees. Beyond the right-hand clump the

land to the right opens out. **Here there you have a choice:**

- **The easiest route** is to stay on the track you are on. It does down into a dip (where a track merges from the left) and up the other side, and eventually, in 500 metres, comes to a T-junction with a gravel track, slightly concealed by a line of trees that seem to block your way. Turn right on this track, emerging in 70 metres into an open space, on the far **left-hand** side of which you can see the stone garden wall of **Knole House**. (In summer this can appear like a line of bushes). Keep ahead on the track and in 120 metres you are level with a house to the right. In 60 metres merge with a track from the right and curve left with it. In 150 metres the stone wall of Knole House garden is to your left. Continue with the directions in paragraph 81 below.
- **A more scenic route** is to veer right off the track after the right-hand clump of trees. In 120 metres or so you come to a grassy path, running roughly parallel to the tarmac drive you have left. Follow this gently downhill for 200 metres, and then across a shallow dip and gently uphill for another 250 metres until you come to the edge of a large open space, with a complex of buildings surrounded by a wooden fence to your right. Ahead of you on the far side of the open space you can see the stone garden wall of **Knole House**. (In summer this can appear from a distance like a line of bushes but cross the space a bit and you can see the wall). Aim for the right-hand end of this, to pick up a track going slightly downhill, with the wall of the garden to your left. Continue with the directions in the next paragraph.

- 81.** Keep on down the track alongside the stone wall. In 400 metres you come to the entrance to the National Trust **Brewhouse Cafe** on your left.

Knole House to Sevenoaks station (2.1km/1.3 miles)

- 82.** Carry on past the cafe entrance (or turn left if coming out of it) and cross the car park. Walk up to the cluster of ancient (ie, somewhat decaying) trees at the very top of the hill beyond (*NOT the*

newer clump of trees to the right, slightly down the slope of the hill).

- 83.** Once at the ancient trees, turn half left to head between three trees 70 metres away. Beyond these, you should pick up a broad grassy path going downhill through the bracken, which crosses a tarmac drive in 80 metres and then carries on downhill to a pedestrian gate to the park in another 150 metres.
- **If you can't follow the directions above**, just follow the car road out from the car park: this comes out further up Sevenoaks High Street: turn right on it and take the left fork where the road splits to go direct to the station without stopping for tea, or take the right fork to find the Malabar cafe on the left or Caffe Nero on the right.
- 84.** Otherwise, coming up the path from the pedestrian gate to Knole Park, in 200 metres there is a building site to your right, and in another 80 metres you are on a paved path with the backs of houses to your right.
- 85.** In another 80 metres, cross a road with the entrance to the Waitrose car park left, and turn right for 20 metres and then left go up a brick-surfaced side road.
- 86.** In 70 metres this brings you to the main shopping street of **Sevenoaks**.
- For the **Malabar Cafe** cross the road. The cafe is on the right-hand side of the small piazza on the far side, just behind Lloyd's Bank. After tea turn **right** out of the cafe for 30 metres to come to a main road and turn right downhill.
 - For **Caffe Nero** turn right when you first emerge onto the main shopping street to find the cafe on the right in 100 metres. After tea come out of the cafe, cross the road and go up the pedestrianised Bank Street on the far side. In 100 metres turn right downhill on a main road.
- 87.** Either way carry on downhill on the main road to find **Sevenoaks station** in 1km at the bottom of the hill.