

PILGRIM'S LOOP (ORANGE DOTTED LINE)

A Pilgrim's Way and pilgrim sculpture

The Pilgrim's Way runs from Winchester to Canterbury, and is associated with pilgrimage to the shrine of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral in the Middle Ages. Actually, it is both much older and much more modern than that!

Prehistoric trackways linked the Kent coast with Stonehenge and other sites in the West, via ridges of chalk hills. In Kent, the foot of the North Downs would have been a sensible route, avoiding heavy Gault Clay below and exposed hilltops above. So it's quite possible that some of the tracks and lanes that we call the Pilgrim's Way coincide with one of these ancient ways.

It is also quite possible that this same route was used by pilgrims travelling to Canterbury from the 12th century. However, pilgrims were coming from all over England and Europe, so would have used many other routes as well. It is true that Winchester was a popular gathering place for travellers to then progress to Canterbury, but large numbers would have followed Watling Street from London and other old roads. In fact the idea of a single route from Winchester with the name 'Pilgrim's Way' is a piece of poorly researched historical supposition by Edward James, surveyor with the Ordnance Survey in the 1870s. It was then popularised by Hilaire Belloc and other Romantic writers in the early 20th century.

The sculpture here depicts 'Brother Percival', a monk taking a rest on the long and arduous pilgrimage. It was commissioned by the Mid Kent Downs Countryside Partnership and Harrietsham Parish Council from sculptor Steve Portchmouth.

This stretch of the Pilgrim's Way is also part of the North Downs Way national trail.



B Stede Court

Look uphill to get a view of this stately home. The history of the estate goes back to the Norman Conquest but the existing house is a mix of Tudor and Georgian. It was the home of a number of aristocratic families – the Turners, the Baldwins and the Stedes themselves. This colourful family had to sell the estate in the early 1700s when, it is said, Edwyn Stede blew his entire fortune gambling on cricket! In WWII, the house was used to accommodate evacuees then later became an officers' mess. Before his triumph in North Africa, Field Marshall Montgomery was stationed here.

You may have noticed the unusual pattern of wooded areas in this landscape. Known as Grotto Wood this is thought to be part of the ornamental planting of the estate and has remained the same for at least 150 years.



Stede Court
© N Chadwick (cc-by-sa/2.0)

C Anglo-Saxon burials

Two Anglo-Saxon burials were found close to the Pilgrim's Way, in 1928 and 1932. Grave goods buried with the bodies included glass beads, a silver ring, a key, a knife, a buckle and a bronze armilla (armband).

D Viewpoint

This is a good place to get a view of the landscape and geology of this part of Kent. You are standing at the foot of the North Downs, the ridge of chalk hills that run right across the county and into Surrey. Looking to the south you can see, on the horizon, a smaller ridge – these are the Greensand or Chart Hills, made of sandstones and clays. The wide sweeping valley between is called the Vale of Holmsdale and has Gault Clay geology. The River Len flows through this valley which is also a busy transport corridor, for the A20, M20, mainline railway and HS1.

E No Man's Acre

This footpath follows the parish boundary between Harrietsham and Hollingbourne. Because it straddles the boundary, this large field is called No Man's Acre.

F Goddington Local Wildlife Site

Some special habitats can be found here at Goddington – high-quality chalk streams, which in turn give rise to valuable fen and wet woodland. The source of the main stream, known as the Selesbourne, is Synden Pond; it then flows through Goddington Wood, which is an ancient woodland. The footpath crosses the Selesbourne via stepping stones – they can be slippery so take care! A second stream feeds a private lake used for fishing. Some unusual wetland plants occur here – tussock sedge, common bistort and large bitter cress – all are scarce in Kent. Dragonflies, damselflies and wetland birds thrive. *Please keep to public rights of way.*



G Parkwood Trout Farm and Holm Mill

This part of the trail takes you alongside the Selesbourne, and under the mainline railway. You then pass Parkwood Trout Farm, where the crystal-clear stream feeds a lake used for fly fishing, and is also home to wildfowl such as tufted duck. The lake dates back to the early 20th century. The Selesbourne once drove a water mill here, known as



The Selesbourne

Holm Mill, which stood close to the junction of Goddington Lane and Holm Mill Lane. Old maps indicate it was demolished before the end of the 19th century and very little is known about it.

H Archaeological evidence at Harrietsham School

An excavation carried out at the school in 2005 revealed ancient activity in this area from a number of periods. The oldest features were from the Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic in the form of oval depressions with flint working debris. One flint tool was found. A Late Iron Age/Early Roman ditch, dated 45-70AD, contained pottery indicating nearby domestic activity. Cart tracks from 19th-century sand quarrying in this area were also found.

On the trail of wildlife and history

Explore... further afield

Harrietsham

Discovery Trail

Harrietsham has a wealth of fascinating and beautiful places to discover. Despite being a growing community, close to major transport links, it boasts scenic countryside, special wildlife sites and a rich heritage. This leaflet will help you discover what Harrietsham has to offer, via two trails.

Harrietsham Parish Council own and manage four green spaces in and around the village. They are publicly accessible for everyone to enjoy:

Teers Meadow

A chalk grassland, full of wild flowers and butterflies.

Woodlands Walk

Tranquil tree-lined lake with a picturesque boathouse.

The Glebe Field

A large recreation space with a fascinating history.

Land south of the allotments

A new and developing wildlife area created for reptiles.

You can explore all four sites by following the **Main Trail** on the map, which is 2.5 miles long and takes in other places of interest in and close to the village.

The 5.2 mile **Pilgrim's Loop** trail will take you further out into the countryside, to the foot of the North Downs, and west, to the boundary with Hollingbourne.

Gateway to the Downs

Roughly half of Harrietsham Parish lies within the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), so it is something of a gateway to this nationally protected landscape. Both trails pass through the AONB, and the Pilgrim's Loop also links up with the North Downs Way, a 153 mile National Trail. There are beautiful and interesting places to explore along the North Downs Way to the east and west of Harrietsham and via other public rights of way.

The North Downs Way and other public rights of way link Harrietsham with many other places to explore. Ordnance Survey Explorer maps 148 and 137 include all the places listed below.

Hollingbourne Downs Site of Special Scientific Interest

Grid ref.: TQ845561

Chalk grassland. The North Downs Way passes through.

Kings Wood Local Wildlife Site TQ853509

Large ancient woodland accessible by public footpaths.

Kiln Wood Nature Reserve TQ886515

Kent Wildlife Trust reserve with access paths.

Lenham Quarry TQ914525

Geological site accessible to the public.

War Memorial Chalk Cross TQ905527

North Downs Way passes close by.

Fairbourne Mill TQ865518

Picturesque hamlet with old mill, access via Fairbourne Lane.

Warren Wood Local Wildlife Site TQ844537

Ancient woodland accessible by a public footpath.

Chilston Ponds and Pines TQ892507

Remnant parkland landscapes managed for wildlife

Leeds Castle Grounds TQ833530

Grounds are accessible by public footpaths.

Contact Harrietsham Parish Council :
www.harrietshampc.org.uk 01622 850089

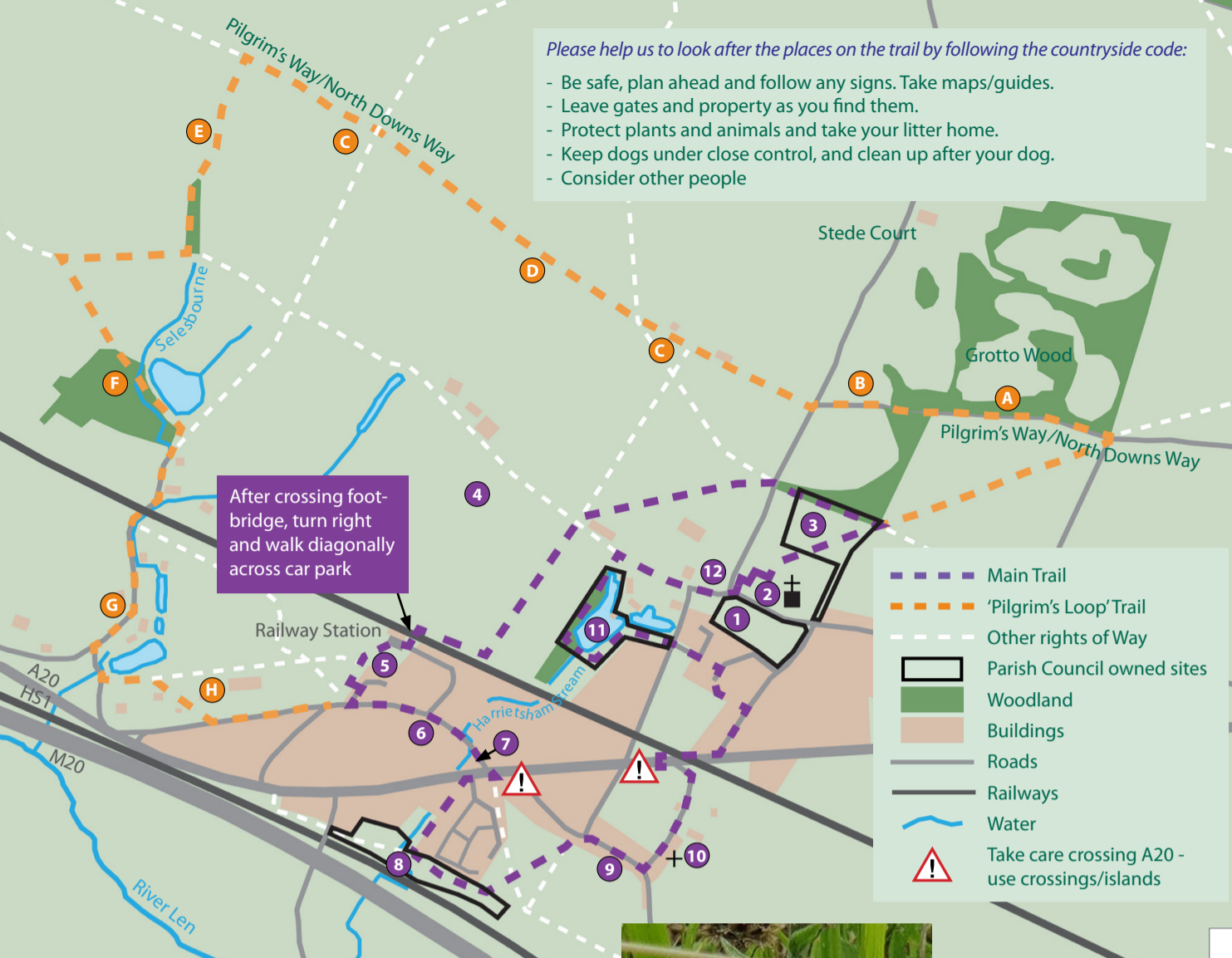
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Leaflet produced by Clarity Interpretation
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Explore the village and its surrounding countryside...

- Teers Meadow
- Woodlands Walk
- Glebe Field and the Church
- Pilgrim's Way
- Other wildlife and heritage sites



Please help us to look after the places on the trail by following the countryside code:

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs. Take maps/guides.
- Leave gates and property as you find them.
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home.
- Keep dogs under close control, and clean up after your dog.
- Consider other people

After crossing foot-bridge, turn right and walk diagonally across car park

- Main Trail
- 'Pilgrim's Loop' Trail
- Other rights of Way
- Parish Council owned sites
- Woodland
- Buildings
- Roads
- Railways
- Water
- Take care crossing A20 - use crossings/islands

MAIN TRAIL (Purple dotted line)

1 Glebe Field

Traditionally, 'glebe' land was owned by the church and used to generate income for the parish priest. Today, Glebe Field is a recreational space for the community, owned by Harrietsham Parish Council.

The history of this part of the parish is fascinating! When the houses to the south of Glebe Field were constructed in 1997, Canterbury Archaeological Trust were on site and soon started to see interesting features appearing. Further investigation revealed the presence of a Late Iron Age settlement and a flint road. Occupation had continued into the Roman period, with a group of nine buildings that may have been barns serving a possible nearby villa. Geophysical survey showed that the settlement and road almost certainly extended into Glebe Field itself.

Excavations also uncovered evidence of Anglo-Saxon occupation, in the form of a 'Grubenhau' – a timber building based around a sunken hollow. Possible remains of three further such buildings were found.

2 Parish church

Harrietsham's parish church was founded by the Normans in the late 11th century. The oldest surviving part of the building is the north tower. The west tower was built in the late 1400s and this church is very unusual in having two towers. The walls are mainly Kentish Ragstone, but also feature small pieces of tufa – a porous rock deposited by chalk springs (see F). Inside, the Norman font is said to be one of the finest in Kent, and there are memorials to the Stede family of Stede Court (see B).



In the churchyard, archaeological finds indicate activity predating the church. These have included Iron Age and Roman coins, Roman pottery, cremations and rings and an Anglo-Saxon brooch. These finds may link the churchyard to the settlements described above. The churchyard is also a home for birds and other wildlife and has a lovely show of ox-eye daisy in spring.

3 Teers Meadow

Teers Meadow is a haven for wildlife you won't see in other places, because of an important habitat here called chalk grassland. This habitat abounds in wild flowers and insects, while sunny, open areas are perfect for basking reptiles, and birds and mammals like the mixture of grazed pasture, scrub and hedges.

Chalk grassland is a globally threatened habitat, with large areas lost during the 20th century. In some cases it was ploughed up or 'improved' with agricultural chemicals, in others grazing stopped and trees and shrubs colonised.



Marbled white

Every remaining piece of chalk grassland is precious!

The meadow is owned by Harrietsham Parish Council and we are now actively managing it to conserve the chalk

grassland. We have cleared most of the scrubby vegetation that had colonised the meadow. If left, this scrub would have eventually become woodland and the chalk grassland would have been lost. We are introducing cattle, which will make sure that the scrub doesn't come back. Grazing is vital to restoring this valuable grassland, and maintaining it for all the species that live here, into the future.

4 Prehistoric enclosure

A circular cropmark in this field was investigated by Kent Archaeology Field School in 2012. This revealed a circular enclosure within a rectangular enclosure and a possible field system. This feature is believed to date back to about 2500 BC. Could it have served as a ritual earthwork? It has been referred to as Harrietsham Henge! Please note there is no public access to the site.

5 Tong's Meadow

Here the footpath passes through an area with diverse grassland. You'll see a variety of different wild flowers growing in spring and summer, including pyramidal orchids (pictured right).



6 Historic buildings – West Street

There are nine listed buildings on West Street, some dating from the 16th and 17th centuries. The Roebuck Inn (the last surviving of four pubs in the village) has a 19th-century façade but a 15th- or 16th-century core. The post office is also notable – dating from the 18th century. (Please note most of the historic buildings are private residences, so please respect people's privacy.) As recently as the 20th century, West Street had a good range of shops, including a butcher, a wool shop, a sweet shop, Suttons General Stores, a newsagent, a clock maker, a baker, a saddler and a petrol station.



West Street c1920
Courtesy Harrietsham Historical Society

7 West Street Green

The small open space at the end of West Street is the village green. It is a registered green, which protects the right of local people to use it for recreation. The

village sign depicts pilgrims on their journey to Canterbury, the village church and a water mill. The small stream that runs through the green is known as the Harrietsham Stream. It flows from the lakes at Woodlands (see 11) and flows into the River Len just south of the M20.

8 Land to south of allotments

In this area, owned by Harrietsham Parish Council, habitats have been created for reptiles that were moved from nearby development sites. Slow-worms, viviparous lizards and grass snakes were all 'translocated' here. The site has become a home for lots of other wildlife too: butterflies, including the beautiful marbled white; wild flowers including St John's-wort and black knapweed. It is also good bird and mammal habitat and will continue to attract more species as it develops.



Slow-worm

9 Historic buildings – East Street

This part of the village is designated as a Conservation Area, and has a large proportion of the listed buildings in the Parish – 14 in all. Highlights include the 'Old House' (also known as Bell Farmhouse), a beautiful Tudor house that has been described as "unusually well preserved". On the other side of the road stands a row of 18th-century almshouses. An inscription on the central house reads "These Almshouses were founded and endowed Anno 1642 by Mark Quedsted Esq., a Native of this Place and a Member of the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers of London." They were rebuilt in 1770. (Please note, the buildings here are private residences – please respect people's privacy.)



The 'Old House'

10 The Church of the Good Shepherd

This church was built in 1881 as an Anglican Mission Church for workers constructing the London to Dover Railway. After the railway's completion, the building remained a Mission Church for the working people of the village (whereas the "gentry" went to the much older Parish Church of St John the Baptist).

After WWII, the church fell into disuse. In the late 1960s it was put up for sale and became a Catholic Church in 1970 as part of the Maidstone parish.



11 Woodlands Walk

This tranquil site is owned by Harrietsham Parish Council and used by local people for walking and relaxation. The main feature is a lake, which is home to a variety of aquatic birds, including mallards, coots, moorhens, greylag geese, mute swans and the more unusual little grebe. Most of these species probably nest here. The surrounding trees and shrubs provide habitat for other wildlife; the presence of trees and water makes it a good site for bats. Grass snakes can be seen on the banks and swimming in the water! There are fish in the lake but no fishing is allowed.



The lake and boathouse

The origin of the lakes is uncertain. The attractive boathouse/gazebo dates back to the early 18th century, so we can assume the lakes are at least that old. The parish tithe maps and survey from the mid-19th century tell us that the lakes, the surrounding land and a house, now known as Lake Cottage, were all owned by William Baldwin at that time. Lake Cottage is 16th-century, so it is possible the lakes are contemporary with that building.

12 Court Lodge Farm

The Court Lodge Farm was usually a significant farmstead in any parish, and often located close to the church, forming part of the medieval village centre. All that remains of Harrietsham's Court Lodge is the listed Georgian farmhouse, to the north of the footpath here.