

## Rolvenden to Tenterden circular



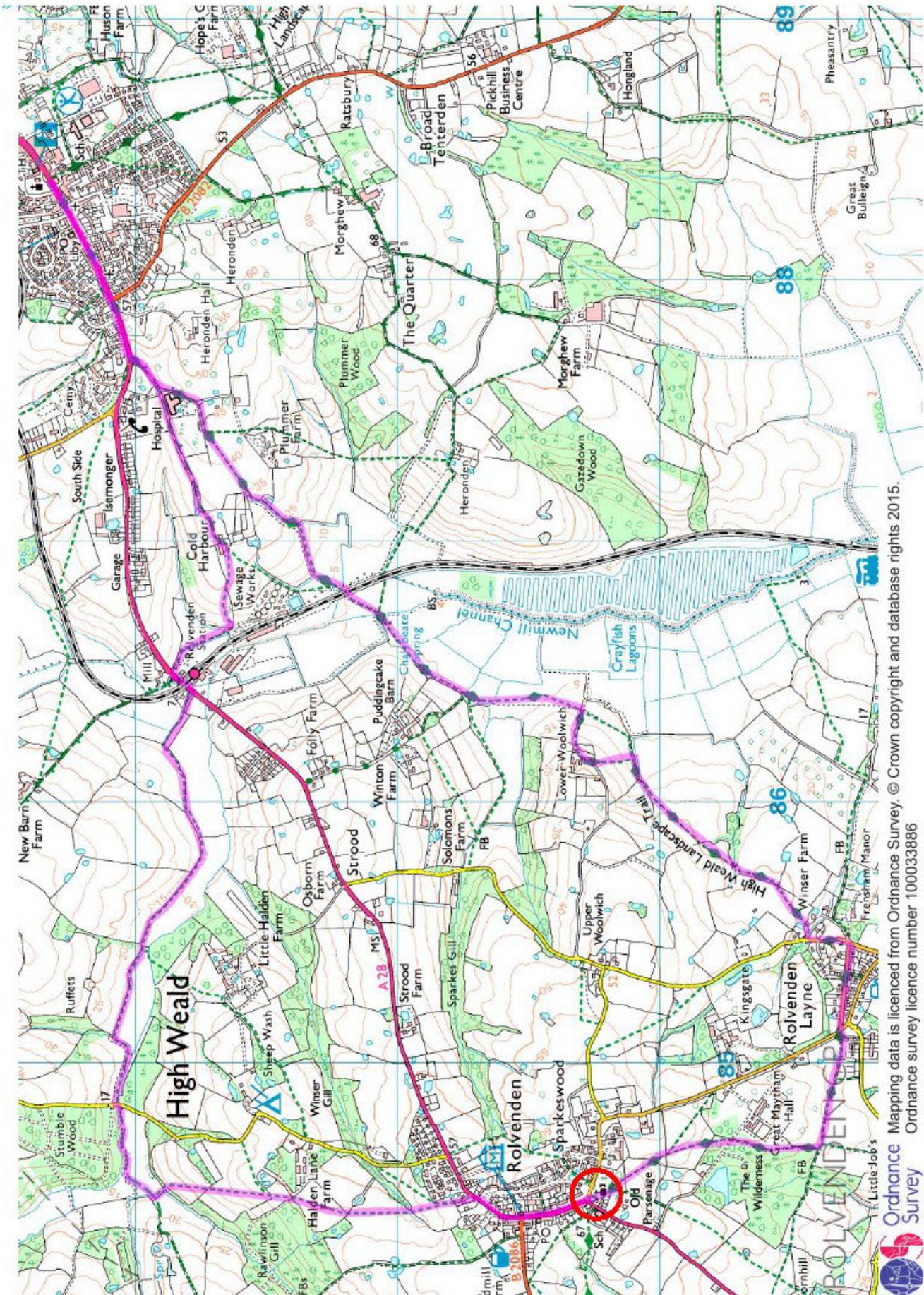
Welcome to the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, an unspoilt medieval Landscape. Discover a great variety of history and a preserved steam railway, plus some magnificent scenery. This walk was kindly provided by Kent Ramblers

<b>Distance and duration</b>	8 miles / 13 kilometres - 4 hours
<b>Level</b>	Moderate
<b>Start point / Post code</b>	High Street , Rolvenden, TN17 4LS
<b>OS map reference / what3words</b>	TQ844312 <a href="https://w3w.co/stunts.intrigued.hoops">https://w3w.co/stunts.intrigued.hoops</a>
<b>Other information</b>	Roadside parking. Is on bus routes, see website at: <a href="https://www.geopunk.co.uk/locality/E0047104">https://www.geopunk.co.uk/locality/E0047104</a> Find GPX at: <a href="https://www.highwealdwalks.org/Rolvenden.gpx">https://www.highwealdwalks.org/Rolvenden.gpx</a>

### I-Spy - Things to look out for in the landscape



The High Weald - An outstandingly beautiful medieval landscape



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### **The Kent and East Sussex Railway**

The railway you see today at 10½ miles in length is a fine example of one of England's light railways and originally part of a larger system which operated between Headcorn and Robertsbridge. The K&ESR was the very first 'light railway' to be constructed: light railways are equipped with full size trains, but have steep gradients and operate at low speed.

Passenger trains ran from 1900 until 1954 but an ambitious scheme to reopen the railway from Tenterden was proposed, although it was not until 1974 that the first trains were able to run on a short section of line. The registered charity that now owns and operates the line was able to finally restore services to Bodiam in time for the centenary of the line in 2000: today the K&ESR welcomes around 90,000 people each year.

### **Tenterden**

Tenterden has a charm all of its own. The broad high street is lined with properties that bear testimony to the town's affluence from the wool trade. The variety of architectural styles blend well together and display the full range of building materials typical of the Weald – red brick and hanging tiles reflecting the iron content of the Wealden clay and white weatherboarding introduced when Scandinavian timber imports became cheap.

The church in contrast is made from 'Bethersden marble', actually a local freshwater limestone found amongst the Wealden clay. The church tower is very ornate, supporting the legend that the tower caused the Goodwin Sands because money intended for coastal defences was diverted instead to building the tower.

In medieval times Tenterden was a corporate member of the Cinque Ports although the harbour itself was two miles to the south at Smallhythe on the Rother estuary but it silted up long ago.

### **Great Maytham Hall**

Whilst difficult to actually see these days due to thick clumps of Rhododendron. The present house was designed by Edwin Lutyens and built in 1909. Author Frances Hodgson Burnett lived in the previous house on the site and the walled garden was said to be inspiration for her book 'The Secret Garden'. The house is now converted into luxury flats.

### **The Walk**

Go North along the main A28 towards Tenterden and soon after Sparkeswood Avenue on the right take footpath on the left, just before white weather-boarded house.

Go along grassy track, through gate and across field to a narrow strip of woodland.

Go through a kissing gate and up steps into field.

Go ahead, bearing slightly right across the field to a hedge/narrow belt of trees.

Go through a kissing gate and over footbridge into a field.

Go across this field diagonally slightly left to the opposite corner. Pass through a gap, cross a rough farm track, and continue in the same direction, aiming for a wide gap in the hedge with a stile on the right, and yellow way markers.

## Four

Maintain direction across the field in front. As you clear the brow of the hill, look out for a stile in the hedge immediately left of a prominent clump of trees.

Cross the stile, and go left downhill to a gap in the hedge and onto a rough track, passing between high hedges.

Follow the track to a T-junction at the bottom of the hill, and turn right.

Follow the left hand edge of the field, joining a more prominent dirt track, and maintain direction to a gate leading onto a tarmac lane.

Turn left across the bridge, then almost immediately right onto a farm track running along the bottom of the field, and parallel to the stream. On the far side of the field the track turns uphill.

After a short while turn right through a gap and continue straight across the middle of the next field towards a strip of woodland. Keep to the right of this.

Pass through a further gap and follow the left hand edge of the next field to a kissing gate, and into the next field.

After a short distance cross a stile on the left, and turn right to maintain direction towards a large oak tree.

After passing the oak tree turn right and go through a field gate then through a narrow field to a field gate and onto a track leading to the main road.

Turn left, cross railway and opposite former watermill on left, take concrete track over cattle grid on right.

Before reaching another cattle grid and locked gates across track, go through gate on left. Go uphill and keep right until you enter next field then bear left to gate between farm buildings.

Turn left, then right past converted oast house and along concrete track to a tarmac lane, with West View Integrated Care Centre on your right. Here you have two choices:

Option 1. To go into Tenterden, turn left up to the main road and turn right along the main road into Tenterden, where refreshments can be obtained. Then retrace your steps to the junction adjoining the above Care Centre and follow Option 2.

Option 2. If you are not going into Tenterden. At the junction with the Care Centre, turn right up the tarmac lane, passing the entrances to the Care Centre.

At a fork in the lane, take the signposted footpath straight ahead into the hedge and follow to a gate into a field.

Turn right along field edge, and after a short distance ignore the path on the left going straight across the field, but almost immediately after, take the second path, bearing diagonally left across the field. This leads down to a kissing gate some way to the right of the far corner.

Go through gate and turn left downhill following the left edge of the field to a waymark and gap.

## Five

Go through the gap into the next field, and immediately turn right, following the right edge of the field to a footbridge, then left over a second footbridge, and right across a small triangular field to the railway gates.

Cross the railway and on the other side follow obvious track towards wind turbine.

Bear right over ditch, then left along left hand bank of ditch ahead. The route now follows the 'High Weald Landscape Trail' all the way back to Rolvenden.

Just after left hand bend, turn right across ditch, and follow left hand bank of smaller ditch to junction of four paths.

Go straight ahead, cross footbridge and rough ground to edge of cultivated field. Although signed, the path across the field may not be obvious. You need to be about 100m to the left of the signpost.

Turn right and head straight across the field in a southerly direction, climbing gently. As you cross the brow of the hill, you will see a gap in the hedge.

On the other side, turn right uphill along a rough farm track, to buildings at Lower Woolwich.

Bear left along track, and soon after sharp right bend, look out for and go through a small gap in the hedge on the left.

Go straight ahead downhill, trending right towards hedge, and turn right.

On entering next field bear left up bank to kissing gate, and turn right uphill, along rough farm track along field edge.

In a short distance, at a post, go diagonally left across field to gap in hedge, and across corner of next field into narrow wood.

Go through wood. Turn right to field corner, and turn left along right hand edge of field, to top corner.

Go through a gap on the right, then head diagonally across another field, to join a track after a gate, leading to gravel driveway.

Turn right down to tarmac lane.

Turn left and follow past 30mph sign to the next road junction on right. Turn right here and follow through housing on both sides to T junction.

Cross road, bearing slightly right to footpath opposite. Go through gate into rough pasture. Bear left to kissing gate and take path between fences.

At the end of fenced-in path go through kissing gate and forward along right hand edge of field to kissing gate at corner, into next field.

After a few metres, turn right through another kissing gate. Take path fenced on both sides, through grounds of Great Maytham Hall.

On emerging at the top into open pasture, go through gate, and carry straight on until the top of Rolvenden Church Spire comes into view, slightly to your left. Follow the path towards the church. Go through churchyard back into Rolvenden village.

**At all times please follow the Countryside Code****Respect everyone**

- be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside
- leave gates and property as you find them
- do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking
- be nice, say hello, share the space
- follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access is available

**Protect the environment**

- take your litter home – leave no trace of your visit
- do not light fires and only have barbeques where signs say you can
- always keep dogs under control and in sight
- dog poo – bag it and bin it – any public waste bin will do
- care for nature – do not cause damage or disturbance

**Enjoy the outdoors**

- check your route and local conditions
- plan your adventure – know what to expect and what you can do
- enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory

Wildlife, including nesting birds, may have moved into new areas. Land managers may have provided extra protection for wildlife. Be vigilant and comply with these protective measures so that you do not disrupt the local wildlife