

Background information

The surrounding landscape has provided the backdrop, setting, food and raw materials for life at Ightham Mote for seven centuries. The coppiced woodland provided wood for fencing, fuel for the house and hop poles for the estate. The stone came from the Greensand quarries, whilst lime for the mortar came from the adjacent chalk lands to the north.



The landscape itself consists of plateau hilltops with steep valley sides dropping to Dinas Dene to the north and the scarp edge of the Greensand Hills to the south. Southwards the land is gently undulating.

Woodland clothes the hill tops and the valley sides giving the estate a secluded and intimate atmosphere. Relics of a once extensive system of shaws (strips of woodland that form boundaries between the fields or along a road) still survive around the estate.

People were probably living here well before the Mote was built and prehistoric evidence shows that humans were hunting across the landscape since before the last Ice Age.

Today, the public footpaths follow a combination of ancient and new routes, centred around Ightham Mote.

Conservation and Estate Management

Farming

350 acres of the 546 acre estate is worked by a tenant farmer as an arable farm with some grazing for cattle (beef) and sheep.

Coppiced Woodland

Coppicing is a traditional type of woodland management. Trees are cut periodically and allowed to regrow from the stumps. Whilst this may look destructive, this is short term and the trees soon re-shoot. This practice lets light in to the woodland, which allows flowers and butterflies to flourish.



Hedges

There are twice as many boundaries on the estate than when the National Trust acquired the land. Hedges have been planted to act as wildlife corridors linking different areas of woodland, which allows plants and animals to spread throughout the countryside.

Wildlife

Our estate is rich in flora and fauna. Fallen trees provide food and homes to insects, birds, mammals and fungi. You may also see footprints and droppings of badgers and deer, as well as the feeding signs of mice and voles.

Downloadable walks

If you enjoyed these walks, you may also like to visit our website to download our other circular walks, which include:



Oldbury Hill

An area of mixed woodland on the site of an Iron Age hillfort, with substantial ramparts dating from between 150 and 50 BC.



Old Soar Manor

This is the remaining structure of a rare, 13th-century Knight's dwelling, including the solar chamber and chapel.



Knole

Follow part of the Greensand Way, through areas of outstanding natural beauty that link these two National Trust properties.

Ightham Mote

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Discover

Ightham Mote

Estate walks



Green Walk (2.5 miles / 4 kms / 1 hour)

This circular route can be walked in either direction and covers most of the estate.

Accessibility: Physically challenging.

Not suitable for small children or buggies.

What to look out for:

- Hoppers huts - these were where families from London would live during the September hop picking season.
- Source of water - the stream in Dinas Dene and its source near the pond, feed the moat.
- Various birds - including blackcap and buzzards.
- Wilmot cottage - formerly an Inn and smithy for packhorses.
- Oast houses - used for drying the hops to flavour beer.

Red Walk (1.2 miles / 2 kms / 30 mins)

This circular route can be walked in either direction.

Accessibility: An easier walk over reasonably level ground.

What to look out for: birds, including kestrels, green woodpeckers and long tailed tits, as well as wildflowers are to be seen all around the route.


Scathes Wood (1.4 miles, 2.25 kms / 30 mins)

Accessibility: A relatively gentle route if you begin from the top of the drive, as the walk through the woods is then downhill.


What to look out for: wildflowers including bluebells and campion in spring, various birds including pheasants and woodpeckers.

Ightham Mote Estate

There are 3 waymarked routes

 Red walk (1.2 miles / 2 kms)

 Green walk (2.5 miles / 4 kms)

 Scathes Wood (1.4 miles / 2.25 kms)

Note: there may be livestock on the estate so please keep your dog under control or on a short lead

