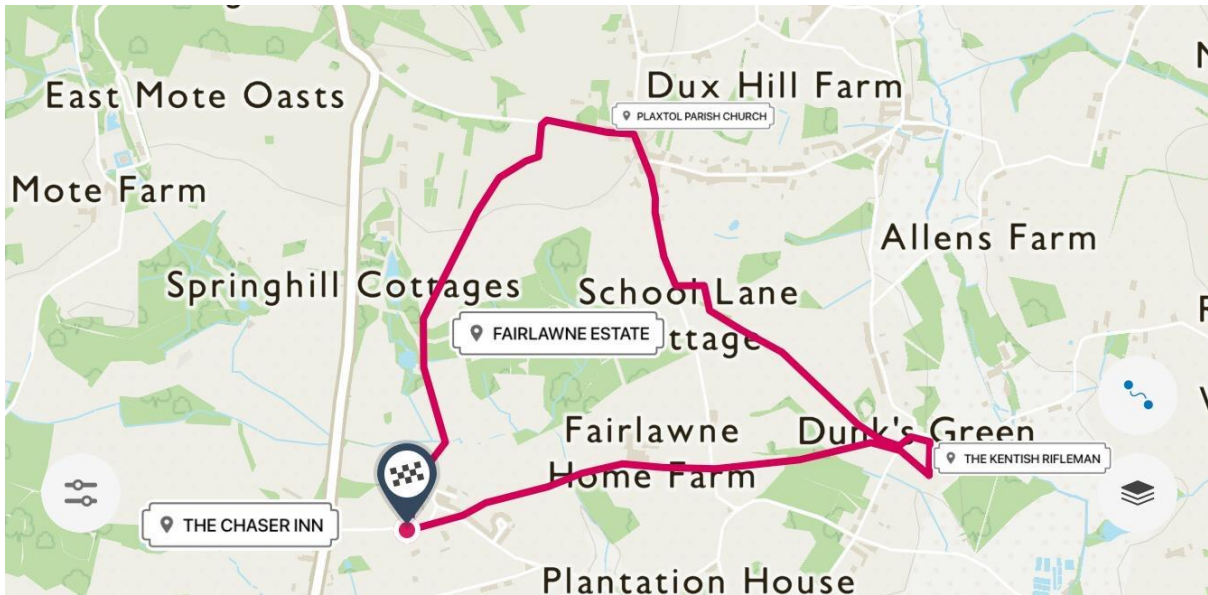


Walk 11 – The Steeplechase

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Description: A short circular walk from Shipbourne that features stunning views, the historic Fairlawne Estate and the pretty village of Plaxtol.

Length: 3.5 miles / 5.6 km (approximately 2 hours, longer if stopping at The Kentish Rifleman)

Grade: Leisurely

Good for: A small walk with big views

1. Begin your walk at Shipbourne common and walk towards the tennis courts with Shipbourne church and The Chaser behind you. Take the path on the far side of the courts, following this under the oak trees and then off to the right hand side.
2. Climb over the stile and then continue along the path, walking down through the field. Cross over the little stream and then climb a second stile before walking straight ahead through the sheep field.
3. Go through the gate and join the grounds of Fairlawne Park. This part of the route is a public footpath but runs through a private property. **Please stick to the path and do not explore the gardens.** Pass the ornamental bridge, then cross over the main driveway before walking uphill and going through the wooden gate.

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4. Continue across the estate using the yellow posts as a guide. Roughly halfway across you will come to a stile. Climb over this and then carry on uphill until you reach the stone wall.
5. Climb the stile and then turn right, walking down Plaxtol Lane. Walk past the church and turn right, before continuing along School Lane.
6. Walking past the memorial hall and Plaxtol Primary School, then follow the road with care for 230 metres before climbing the stile on your left. Stay on this path and then climb over another stile before walking through the trees.
7. Climb the next stile and then turn left, walking along the stony track. Follow the track along the hedge and then take the stony path off to the right, walking downhill through the field.
8. At the bottom of the hill, ignore the first stile on your left then keep going along the hedge until you come to another stile, over a large rock. It's a little awkward to climb, so do take care. Turn right and then walk through the kissing gate that leads onto the road.
9. Turn left and then walk down the road with care. The Kentish Rifleman is just around the bend.
10. When leaving the pub, turn right and then turn right again just after the beer garden. Follow the path until you reach a metal kissing gate and then walk cross the meadow before going through the next kissing gate and emerging onto the road.
11. Cross over with care and then go back through the kissing gate and over the awkward rock stile, before continuing diagonally across the bottom of the field.
12. Climb the stile and then continue through the woods, before following the path through a field. Once you reach the far hedge, climb another stile and then cross over the road with care before continuing through Fairlawne Home Farm.

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13. After the cottages, continue downhill and then up again, walking past the dead tree. Leave the field via the kissing gate and then walk past the house.
14. Once you reach the road, turn right, and follow this with care until you re-join Shipbourne common, ending your walk.

If you've enjoyed this walk then please tag your photos #walktonbridge on Instagram or share with a friend. Visit my website for more beautiful walks in and around Tonbridge.

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When enjoying this walk, please remember to follow the countryside code:

Respect other people

Consider the local community and other people enjoying the outdoors

Park carefully so access to gateways and driveways are clear

Leave gates and property as you find them

Stay on footpaths but give way to others where it's narrow

Protect the natural environment

Leave no trace of your visit - take all your litter home

Don't have BBQs or fires

Keep dogs under effective control

Bag and bin your dog poo.

Enjoy the outdoors

Plan ahead, check what facilities are open, be prepared

Follow advice and local signs and obey social distancing measures