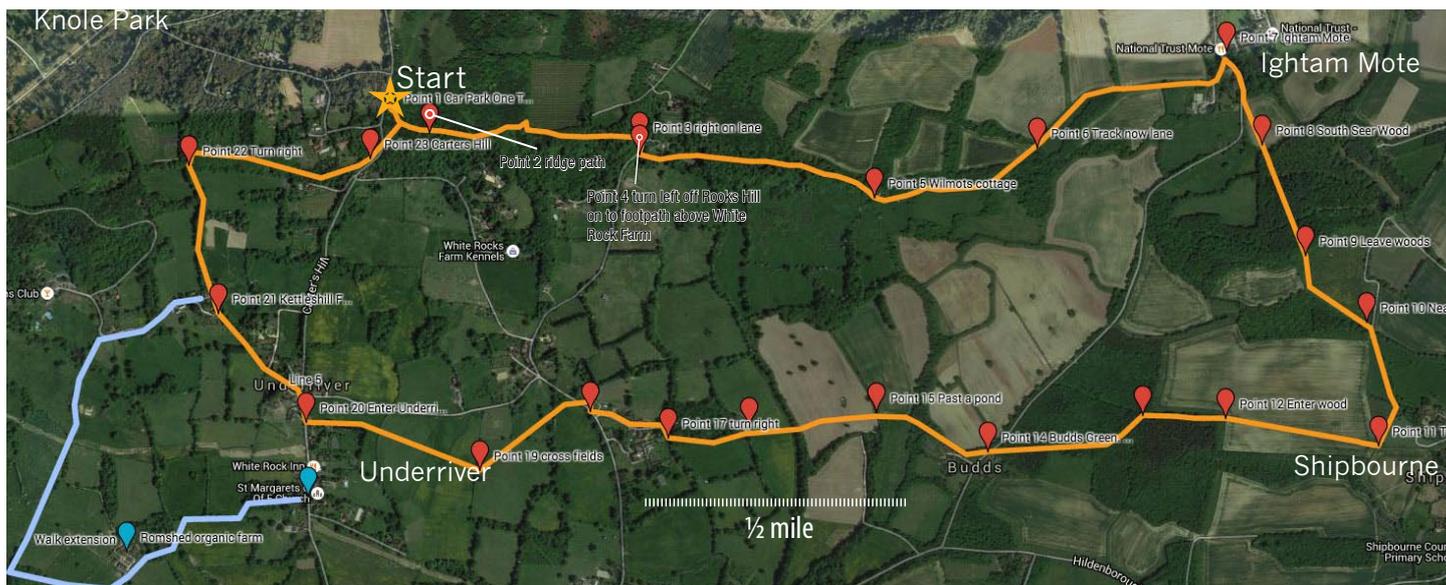


Walk 6: One Tree Hill circular



The dramatic wooded escarpment of the Greensand Ridge and a wildlife-rich suntrap are among the highlights of this stroll past the tudor glory of Ightam Mote and quiet hamlets and farms

How long? 2½-3½ hours
5.6 miles (9km)

Public transport: 10-minute taxi ride from Sevenoaks or Hildenborough stations.

Parking: One Tree Hill NT car park (Carter's Hill)

Start of walk: footpath that leaves car park to south, or the one heading east

Steep slopes? Yes, at either end of walk, but not sustained

Walk highlights

Surprisingly dramatic sandstone escarpment, fantastic trees, big garden of England views, glorious Ightam Mote, butterflies, birds of prey, woodland flowers, autumn colours, the White Rock Inn and its great beer garden. Combine with visit to Ightam Mote or Knole House. Refreshments at the Mote cafe, and pubs in Shipbourne and Underriver

Covered on Ordnance Survey Explorer 147 map



THE WALK IN SHORT

Points 1-2: 300m. Leave One Tree Hill NT car park and take path heading south (on your right). The path bends round to the east (left) and heads to a glade with a great view

Point 2-3: 620m. Continue east, cross over stile with orchard on left as path descends, steep slope of escarpment on right

Point 3-4: Descend steps, turn right on lane (Rooks Hill) then take first path on left with llama/donkey farm (White Rocks) on right.

Point 4-5: Continue east, past NT Ightam Mote sign, past sandstone rocks and 'undercliff' vegetation

Point 5-6: Eventually, after twists and turns, the path comes out by a pretty cottage on left. Continue straight ahead, now a lane/track

Point 6-7: Follow lane until you reach Mote Rd. (NT Ightam Mote house is to your left here, the cafe is on the south eastern side of it)

Point 7-8: Turn south/right on Mote Rd and take first footpath on left through field to Seer Wood

Point 8-9: Pass through wood

Point 9-10: Emerge from wood and make for the church (Shipbourne) ahead of you on footpath

Point 10-11: Continue toward church

Point 11-12: Skirt rear of church then take path sharp right heading west across a large field to conifer woods

Point 12-13: Walk slightly uphill through woods

Point 13-14: At fork in paths, take the trail on the left. Walk downhill through tree corridor down often muddy path to Budd's Green

Point 14-15: Cross Mote Road (again) and take path by house. Pond on left after garden/tennis court

Point 15-16: Across two fields

Point 16-17: Walk along copse on right

Point 17-18: Follow path as turns right then left as it meets driveway. Cottages on right

Point 18-19: Emerge on to Underriver House Rd then cross and walk through field to oak tree and stile on other side

Point 19-20: Cross series of fields to Underriver – look ahead for stiles on other side of fields if path is indistinct. On arriving at Underriver, White Rock pub and church are on your left

Point 20-21: Turn right on Carter's Hill at Underriver then very soon take the track left to Kettleshill Farm.

Point 21-22 At farm, continue uphill on what is now a sunken (and muddy) path

Point 22-23 Turn right at junction of paths and walk along top of field to Carter's Hill. Cross road and head back to car park

Blue line on map is extension walk

Much of the first half of this walk, particularly between points 5 and 6, is in something of a suntrap, so even early in spring it can be very warm. This is presumably why it's so popular with butterflies (not the walk, but the location), with clouds of pale yellow brimstones in April soon followed by orange tips, peacocks, red admirals etc. Kestrels hunt along the edge of the fields below and I've seen buzzards, hobbies and a tawny owl here too.

The views of the Weald from the escarpment are gorgeous, but more impressive still is the way the trees grow out of the side of the 'cliff'. The 'suntrap' microclimate section features a wonderful tangle of trees and undergrowth above it at some points – a haven for wildlife – and there are also big lumps of sandstone to admire, if that's the right word. Some of the trees even on the flat are incredible, watch out

for one of the tallest, straightest oaks you'll ever see between points 3-4 and giant beeches.

The second half of the walk is not as spectacular but South Seer Wood has some great pines and Ightam Mote is an eye-ful of course. The fields sometimes have livestock in them but if you want to take a diversion, you should be able to devise one from parallel paths and the like. At Underriver, the White Rock Inn has a lovely lawn of a beer garden and decent ales.

After the pub, if you fancy getting home quicker, just walk up Carter's Hill (careful, cars are frequent) for about ⅓ of a mile. Otherwise, take the route parallel with the road, as marked or even the 3km extension (blue line on map) from the church past Romshed farm, where springs mark where the green sandstone gives way to wealden clay.

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