Walk 7: One Tree Hill fig of 8

The fantastic wooded greensand ridge of the North Downs figures strongly, plus medieval Ightam Mote. A slightly shorter take on Walk 6 with more trees.

How long? 3-4hrs/5 miles
Public transport: Nearest rail is Sevenoaks and Hildenborough. From there it's a taxi I'm afraid.
Parking: One Tree Hill NT car park on Carters Hill, Sevenoaks, near Knole Park
Start of walk: aforementioned car park
Steep slopes? some steps on the escarpment, nothing prolonged

Walk highlights
Wonderful trees clinging to the cliff-like sandstone ridge with vistas beyond across the Weald to the Bidborough ridge and the Ashdown Forest. Medieval glory of the NT's Ightam Mote. Chaser Inn pub at Shipbourne is excellent. Ordnance Survey Explorer 147 map

Here are lots of paths crisscrossing each other initially on this walk so it can be a bit confusing but even if you take the wrong one you'll find your way just fine. Use the orchard as a reference point and the two houses and lane beyond.

The initial part of the walk is pleasant but so-so. But things get a whole lot more interesting with the path down the escarpment at point 7-8. This is a truly magical stretch of walk with the Weald view to the right framed by ancient branches of beech and yew. Ightam Mote is a real beauty with great gardens and a super cafe. Seers wood, and Cold Blows wood after Shipbourne are both primarily of conifers – quite different from the broadleaf woodland of the ridge.

The only farmland stretches of this walk are around Shipbourne (where the Chaser Inn is much recommended) and after Budd's Green. Then you are back in the woods. On the return, you enter a section where greensandstone boulders mark the way and the trees tangle together in a rather jungle-like fashion. Watch out for a very tall, straight-trunked oak tree here and an abundance of butterflies in spring/summer. Kestrels hunt along the edge of the fields below and I've seen buzzards, hobbies and a tawny owl here too. Look out for llamas in the fields as you pass White Rock Farm.

Later, there are more views of the Weald from the escarpment (here called Rooks Hill) and trees growing out of the side of the 'cliff'. A surprising and richly varied walk, but, alas, muddy from November to April.

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