

Three Kent villages

Distance - 6 miles

Walk 6

The outward section of this ramble takes in three Kent villages - Bridge, Bishopsbourne and Kingston. Also the verdant, rolling landscape of Charlton Park is visited. The return route visits Charlton Wood and two farms - Langham Park and Lenhall, where hop production past and present is evidenced.

Start/car parking - Bridge

It would be a great help to future walkers if you could record any inaccuracies you come across during this walk and report them to reception so that appropriate amendments can be made.

Thank you. Happy walking!

WALK

Start on the main street in Bridge, heading S.E. beyond the church. Turn right into Bourne Park Road, cross a stile 50m on the left to follow the right fork of two paths. Tall marker posts lead to a stile giving access into a wooded section. A clear path leads down to a road. Turn left.

After 100m cross a stile on the right to enter an area known as 'The Wilderness' (Bourne House to the right). Cross the enclosure making directly towards Bishopsbourne church. This involves crossing the intermittent river Nailbourne several times (footbridges).

Enter the graveyard of St. Mary's, a church mentioned in the Domesday Book - 1086, but rebuilt in C13th, leaving by the impressive lychgate funded by public subscription in 1911, then walk straight ahead towards Kingston village.

Pass the forge, several pretty cottages and The Mermaid public house, before leaving the road (at a sharp bend in favour of an access road running through the grounds of Charlton Park. Again leave the metalled surface at a pronounced bend - signposted Kingston. Cross a small, brick bridge and pass through two gates making towards the village. Reaching the main road turn right to walk uphill for $\frac{3}{4}$ mile and veer right at a junction (50m beyond last house), continuing along the road for an additional $\frac{1}{4}$ mile.

After passing a footpath sign on the left - swing right into Charlton Wood - where a carpet of wood anemone awaits ramblers in springtime. A short distance into the wood bear left at a junction. When a second junction appears proceed straight ahead between the trees.

Continue along a field edge with trees to the right. Where the trees end turn right and immediately left to cross the field and descend to Langham Park farm - turn right to walk along the road for approximately one mile.

The next manoeuvre towards Lenhall farm offers two choices! Turn left immediately beyond the two impressive residences (signpost); follow the boundary to the angle then cross the cultivated field diagonally right, towards Lenhall farm building (in sight). The second option will be better underfoot.

Continue a little further along the road and turn left into the farm access road.

The oasts bear dates of 1875 and 1912. A keystone on the N.W. wall is inscribed 'God giveth the increase' MB 1875.

At the end of the access road - facing the metal kilns turn right and pass a house, curving left (note diamond datestone MB 1860) along an obvious track. Note the line of trees away to the left. ***These stand on a disused railway tunnel (portal visible) where massive artillery guns were hidden during inactive periods of the 1939-45 war. The guns are reputed to have fired shells across the English Channel!***

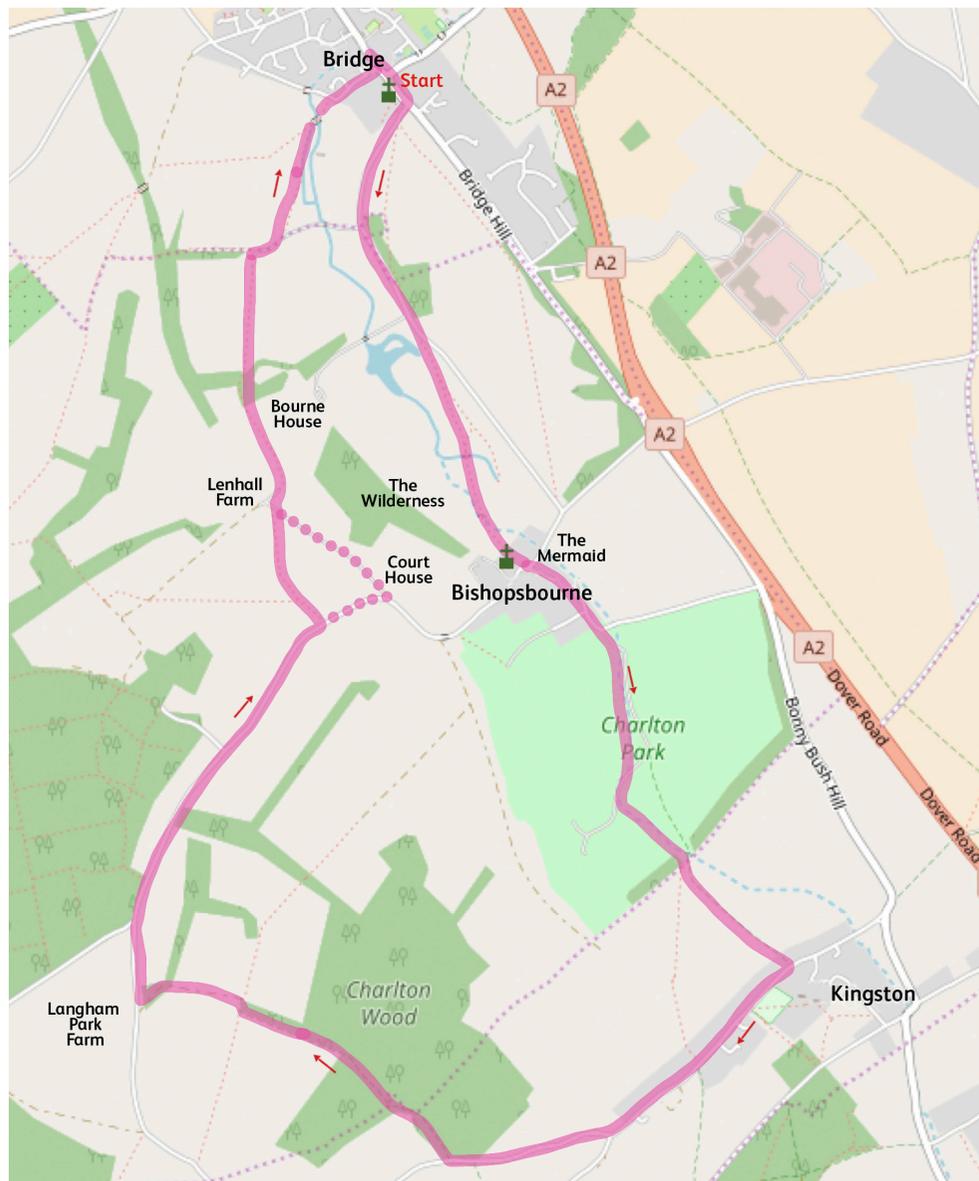
After passing an area known as The Shave and a white painted cottage, the hop lines are encountered. Fifteen-foot poles with thick twine lines attached, encourage the hops to grow rapidly. Only two counties in England grow hops - Kent and Herefordshire.

With the rooftops of Bridge in sight, veer right at Flint Cottage, cross a stile on the left, then cross the fields and two footbridges to arrive at a road. Turn right along the road to return to the main street in Bridge.

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— - Walk

— - A2

Disclaimer:

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