



EGERTON WALK - 2



These walks have been compiled to enable you to enjoy our village from different aspects. We hope you will appreciate that we use the footpaths through the courtesy of local landowners, who do their best to keep them in good order, so that we can access the countryside at our leisure. Please help us to support farmers in the course of their work by leaving no hazardous litter, closing all gates and keeping dogs under control at all times. Watch out for the occasional rabbit hole and slippery mud – walking boots are a bonus!

WALK 2: north east of the village

START:

The George Inn, Egerton

DISTANCE:

3 miles (approx.)

TERRAIN:

Pasture, some plough, stiles.

From the **George Inn**, walk northwards along **The Street**. As you pass the **Village Store**, you may wish to purchase light sustenance for your walk. Continuing along **The Street**, you will notice the name **W.H.Buckle & Son** on the weatherboard cottages on the right hand side. This was, until 1973, a large local bakery, latterly also supplying Smarden village. Opposite the church, turn right next to **Church House**. This ancient building is believed to date from the early 1500's, built as a hall house, to which an inglenook was later added. It has a priest hole and still has strong connections with our church. In the late 1800s, until 1959, it was used as one of many butchers in the area and had its own slaughterhouse.

A little way down the main track, take the footpath signed to the left, in front of the stone wall. At the far end of the wall, go through a wooden gate, next to private gardens and out into a tiny field. Cross diagonally to the right and out across a large open field, turning right onto the farm track – watch out for horses as you emerge, as this is part of our local Toll Ride. A short way along the track, take the footpath signed to the left and walk along the right hand boundary hedge. As you emerge onto **Iden Lane**, beside **Shepherd's Cottage**, cross over the lane and walk across the field as far as the **Great Stour River**. Without crossing the river, turn right along the river bank. You are now on part of the **Stour Valley Walk**, a long-distance path which zigzags across Kent, following the valley of the River Stour from its source through some most varied and picturesque scenery. Continue along beside the river and over a stile, after which veer right, away from the river. Ahead of you is another stile, before which turn right, passing through a gateway and swinging westwards back towards **Iden Lane**.

Cross over **Iden Lane**, beside **Iden Farm Cottage** and head west across the open field. The cottages along Iden Lane were some of several once occupied by farm workers from **Court Lodge Farm** on **Stonebridge Green Road**. This beautiful ragstone house dates from 1560 and the farm has, over the centuries, produced crops and livestock fairly typical of this part of Kent, including pork, lamb, beef and dairy products; orchards, soft fruit and hops. As with many major farms in this area, this provided the main source of income for the local community. Our village, like so many rural settlements, boasted several butchers, grocery stores and other local businesses where all basic needs would be available within walking distance of most dwellings, until well past the middle of the twentieth century.

Across the open field you will find yourself back at the track you walked up earlier, which originates opposite **Court Lodge Farm**. Turn right onto this track and walk a very short way down the track, taking the left hand footpath, before you reach the path from which you emerged earlier. Walking through a small orchard and across a field towards **New Road**, this route crosses an ancient tumulus, believed to be a **Bronze Age Barrow**. Once on **New Road**, turn right, walking back towards the **George Inn** and some welcome refreshment. This ancient inn dates from 1576 and has been a working pub throughout its history. In Tudor times the kitchen, to the rear of the building, had its own well with a pump over the sink – a great luxury in those days. The cellar was lined with chalk to keep the beer at a constant temperature. We hope you enjoy it.