AN INTRODUCTION TO VISITING CHURCHES

This leaflet can be made available in large print and on audio.

Acknowledgements

We would also like to thank Kent Churches Tourism for their guidance in putting together this leaflet. Kent Churches Tourism is an initiative of the Church of England Dioceses of Canterbury and Rochester. Further information available on the Royal Tunbridge Wells Tourist Information Centre.

TERMINOLOGY

Aisle A parallel passage running between the nave and the side walls.
Alcove A recess or niche in the wall.
Alcove A recess or niche in the wall.
Piscina A basin for washing and sacred vessels.
Pulpit An elevated platform for the preacher.
Font A large bowl for baptismal water.
Facade The front of a building.
Facade The front of a building.
Nave The central part of a church.
Nave The central part of a church.
Rood Screen An barrier that separates the nave from the chancel.
Rood Screen An barrier that separates the nave from the chancel.
Sedilia A recess in the wall for seating or storage.
Sedilia A recess in the wall for seating or storage.

Glossary of Church Terms

1. Aisle: A parallel passage running between the nave and the side walls.
2. Alcove: A recess or niche in the wall.
4. Pulpit: An elevated platform for the preacher.
5. Font: A large bowl for baptismal water.
8. Rood Screen: A barrier that separates the nave from the chancel.
9. Sedilia: A recess in the wall for seating or storage.

INTRODUCTION TO VISITING CHURCHES

The churches of the Wealden area have a rich history and a unique architectural style. They are a testament to the ingenuity of the builders and the wealth of the local communities. This guide offers a selection of some of the most interesting churches to visit in the Wealden area.

Most are in beautiful rural settings with spectacular views across the Wealden countryside. Generally made of local sandstone they display a characteristic tawny-golden colour. The aim of this guide is to give you just a taster of the architectural and historical information.

This leaflet can be made available in large print and on audio.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Alternatively you can visit our website on www.visittunbridgewells.com

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4C  
Wheelchairs should enter through the South Gate

ST MARTIN’S, TOURSH
One of the oldest churches in the area
Ashwell Hill, Ashwell, Tunbridge Wells Kent 01892 882391
www.spiritualism.org/chat/ashwell

Precedent period: Medieval  
Ongoing Times/Daily: 8am – 6pm

This simple little aisle church is one of the oldest churches in the area. It was first recorded in 1400, and was restored in 1858. The church building was remodelled in the thirteenth century with further alteration and additions in the fourteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The church was made famous as the points of departure of the various marching armies, including the Normans, who, during the Hundred Years War, used the church as a campsite. The church was completely rebuilt in 1858 and the small porch and the church's tower was added. The church has a fine timber screen, and thought was given in the design of the church's tower which is both unusual and picturesque. The church's tower is a fine example of the fifteenth-century church tower.

Despite its small size, the church contains many beautiful features, including the beautiful stained glass windows. The church also contains a number of interesting tombstones, including that of the local brewer, William Brown.

Directions: Head out of Royal Tunbridge Wells on the A21 and follow signs for the M25. Turn left at the first roundabout, then left again at the second roundabout. The church is on the right-hand side.

ST GEORGE’S, BENENDEN
A stunning church with a peaceful walk
High Street, Benenden, Kent 01580 734205  

Precedent period: Medieval  
Ongoing Times/Daily: 8am – 6pm

This church is regularly visited by the public, and the church also offers guided tours. The church contains a number of interesting features, including the beautiful stained glass windows and the fine timber screen. The church also contains a number of interesting tombstones, including that of the local brewer, William Brown.

Directions: Situated in the centre of the old town area of Royal Tunbridge Wells, the church is across the High Street from the Market Square.

ST THOMAS-A-BECKET, CAPEL
'The most picturesque ruins of religious history'
1/2 miles take the next right signposted All Saints Church and the church is at the end of this short lane.

Precedent period: Norman  
Ongoing Times: Daily 9.00am – 5.00pm

This church is cared for by The Churches Conservation Trust.

Although All Saints church can trace its existence to the Doomsday book – and maybe as far back as the seventh century – the most remarkable feature of this church is a twentieth century mosaic by the artist William Morris. This mosaic is a beautiful and unique representation of the church's history.

Directions: Situated in the centre of the old town of All Saints, take the first right outside the centre of the village signposted Speldhurst. Carry on until you reach a T-junction. St Mary's is located on this junction.

ST MARY THE VIRGIN, SPELDSTOUR
'The Glory of Speldhurst in the golden windows'
Speldhurst Hill, Speldhurst, Tunbridge Wells, Kent 01580 712150
www.speldhurst.org/church

Precedent period: Norman  
Ongoing Times/Daily: 10.00am – 1.00pm & 2.00pm – 5.00pm

This church is considered by many to be one of the most beautiful in the county, and is a perfect example of the Norman style of architecture. The church contains a number of interesting features, including the beautiful stained glass windows and the fine timber screen. The church also contains a number of interesting tombstones, including that of the local brewer, William Brown.

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ST MARY’S, GOUDHURST
A stunning church with a peaceful walk
High Street, Goudhurst, Kent 01580 712550
www.goudhurst.co.uk

Precedent period: Medieval  
Ongoing Times/Daily: 8am – 6pm

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