



The Tradescants

During the 17th century, John Tradescant and his son, also John, spearheaded the hunt for new species of plant and tree suitable for introduction into England. They became the founders of English gardening as we know it. They lived for a time at both Meopham and Canterbury and between them introduced hundreds of plants into the UK including; Larch, Swamp Cypress, Tulip Tree, Runner bean, Lilac and Apricot.



The Tree Trail links to other nearby walks:

The **Medway Valley Walk** follows the River Medway from Rochester in the east to Tonbridge in the west.

At Rochester, **The Medway Valley Walk** links to the **Saxon Shoreway** – a long distance path that follows the historic Saxon shore of Kent from Gravesend to Hastings in East Sussex.

At the eastern end of the Medway Viaduct or motorway bridge, **The Medway Valley Walk** crosses **The North Downs Way** – a long distance path from Dover to Farnham on the North Downs

At Yalding, **The Greensand Way** – a long distance path from Haslemere in Surrey to Hamstreet crosses the **Medway Valley Walk**.

At West Peckham, **The Wealdway** runs from Gravesend in Kent to Eastbourne in East Sussex and joins the **Medway Valley Walk**. It also links with the **Eden Valley Walk** at Tonbridge.



manor house. Thomas Charles, a local doctor and antiquarian, left his collections of art and antiques to Maidstone Council in 1855 who later acquired Charles's house, Chillington Manor and opened it as a museum.

Brenchley Gardens, originally the orchard gardens of Chillington Manor, were purchased by author and traveller, Julius Brenchley who commissioned Mackenzie to design the gardens. He donated the gardens to Maidstone to become the town's first public park. Mackenzie designed Alexandra Palace gardens, Finsbury Park and the Victoria and Albert Embankment gardens.



Explore Maidstone's riverside and green spaces through a trail of its trees and history.

Start in Brenchley Gardens behind the museum for the shorter trail (30 mins) of the historic garden or combine this with the longer (1hr) trail which takes in historical sites en route to the historical riverside area.



This leaflet was produced as a legacy of the Kent Heritage Trees Project, a five year project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund celebrating Kent's tree heritage. A significant achievement of the project was the recording of over 10,000 heritage trees – trees that are old, wide, rare or have a story to tell. Visit tcv.org.uk/kentheritagetrees to view the tree finds and map.

This is one of a series of leaflets created by volunteers to encourage people of all ages to explore the outdoors, learn about nature and heritage trees and enjoy the Kentish countryside.

The Kent Heritage Trees Project was developed and run by The Conservation Volunteers (TCV), a charity that works with thousands of people across the UK, helping them to discover, improve and enjoy their local green spaces and by doing so create happier and healthier communities.

www.explorekent.org

Find out more about the continuing work of TCV and how you can become involved, visit www.tcv.org.uk

Kent Heritage Trees Project is managed by

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LOTTERY FUNDED

To follow the trail on your phone, scan this QR code

TCV The Community Volunteering Charity

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Maidstone has been an important town since Roman times with Week Street linking Hastings and Wealden iron workings to the south with Rochester to the north. It has prospered due to its position on the River Medway which has historically enabled easy transport of goods to London via The Thames. Locally quarried ragstone was transported to London for the construction of the Roman city walls and Tower of London. Abundant fruit and vegetables for the London markets labelled Kent 'The Garden of England'.

Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery is based in Chillingdon Manor (1577) an Elizabethan

Kent Heritage Trees Project

Maidstone Tree Trail








1. Himalayan Birch

Betula utilis
Similar to our native Birch but with bigger leaves and beautiful white peeling bark.

2. Soldier Monument

This monument is a tribute by the town to Maidstone's 36 Engineer Regiment depicting a soldier returning home from a mission in Afghanistan.

3. Sycamore

Acer pseudoplatanus
A big Sycamore. Notice the winged seeds which are affectionately called helicopters because they spin to the ground.

4. Common Lime

Tilia x europaea
Common Lime, not to be confused with the citrus fruit, is commonly known as Linden; the wood is easy to work and nowadays it is commonly used to make electric guitars. It is the tallest deciduous tree that commonly occurs in Britain and has leaves shaped like hearts. Lime flower nectar is a valuable source of food for Honey Bees and can be made into a soothing tea. Nearby is an attractive form of the variegated Norway Maple (4a).

5. Ginkgo

Ginkgo biloba
Also known as the Maidenhair tree. This tree, introduced in 1730, is now only native to China and is found in fossils all over the globe from the Jurassic period. It is so different from other plants that exist today that it has been classified in its own order.

6. Memories of War

HOUSE OF COMMONS FINIAL
This finial crowned the main wall of the House of Commons debating chamber that was destroyed in the German blitz in 1941. It was given to Maidstone in 1948 by Alfred C Bosson, MP longest serving representative of this borough.

WAR MEMORIAL

A memorial pays tribute to 'The Glorious Dead of the Queen's own Royal West Kent Regiment'. Designed by Sir Edward Lutyens, it is a 2/3 replica of his Whitehall Cenotaph in London. There has been a permanent military presence in Maidstone since the second half of the 18th century.

7. Bandstand

The bandstand which dates from the time when Brenchley gardens was laid out, incorporates the names of composers on the sides. It hosts music at weekends in the summer.

Red Horse Chestnut

Aesculus x carnea
Horse Chestnut, a native of the Balkan peninsula was introduced to Britain by plant hunter John Tradescant from his 1621 expedition to the Mediterranean. This pink flowered variety is a hybrid between Horse Chestnut and Red Buckeye from America. This tree, unlike the white flowered Horse Chestnut, doesn't attract the Leaf Miner moth. The caterpillars of the moth feed on Horse Chestnut leaves and cause brown patches in summer.

London Planes

Platanus x acerifolia
London Plane is a cross between the Oriental Plane and American Plane which were originally from different continents. It is thought that the two species crossed accidentally, probably somewhere in Europe where they were growing in close proximity. Some people think this could have happened in John Tradescant the Younger's garden in London where both species were growing. The London Plane has since been planted all over London because it is tolerant to atmospheric pollution. The bark naturally flakes off and in doing so removes any dirt.

8. Havoc Square

A plaque in Havoc Square commemorates The Battle of Maidstone, 1 June 1648, when parliamentary forces recaptured the town from the Royalists who fled to nearby St Faith's Church where they surrendered.

Towards the top of St Faith's Street is a row of almshouses donated to the poor of the town by Sir John Banks, a Member of Parliament for Maidstone.

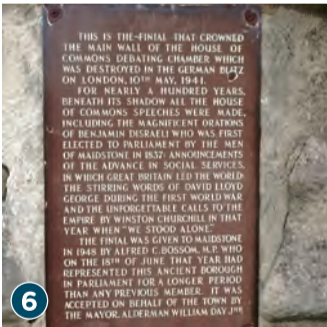
9. Fremlin's Walk Shopping Centre

This new shopping street was built on the site of Fremlin's, one of Kent's main breweries. Hops, the ingredient that adds bitterness to beer, have been grown in Kent since the 16th century. In Victorian times it was the biggest industry in the county. Every September casual workers from Kent, London, Sussex and East Anglia would come to Kent to pick the hops which were dried out in oast houses which you can still see dotted across the countryside.

Walk out of the arch and turn left up Earl Street and right into the market buildings.

10. Earl Street and The Market Buildings

On Earl Street, on the right before the market buildings, there is a



plaque commemorating Andrew Broughton 'Mayor and Regicide'. Following the battle of Maidstone 1648, Broughton, as Clerk of the High Court of Justice read out the sentence, declaring that King Charles I should be put to death. when the King returned to power Broughton fled to Switzerland where he found sanctuary and spent his life in exile.

William Hazlitt

The Hazlitt theatre in Earl Street is named after William Hazlitt, essayist and artist, whose father was a minister at the church which stands in the lane. The Royal Star, now a shopping arcade was once Maidstone's premier hotel. Queen Victoria stayed here in 1836.

At the end of the market buildings cross the High street.

11. The High Street and Jubilee square

In 1554 Protestant Sir Thomas Wyatt of Allington Castle, Maidstone, started an uprising here to prevent Queen Mary's marriage to Catholic Philip of Spain. The uprising failed, Wyatt was executed and Maidstone lost its royal charter. The interiors of the two buildings below can be viewed as they are now pubs.

The Muggleton Inn

At 8-9 The High Street is a magnificent building, built in 1827 as the Kent Fire Brigade's Head Office, is now a pub named The Muggleton, a name Charles Dickens is thought to have used for Maidstone in his book *The Pickwick Papers*.

The Brenchley

Now a pub, this building was formerly the National Westminster Bank.

The Town Hall and Bank Street

It is believed that the main market was held here from at least as far back as the 1200s until the 1820s. The Town Hall dates from 1763. In the attic is an old gaol with 18th century graffiti on the wall which can be visited.

Bank Street and Victorian Gin

The best preserved medieval street in Maidstone. In Victorian times 5,000 litres of spirit a week could be produced here.

Continue down Bank Street, turn left down Mill Street to the traffic lights. You will cross the River Len which has been dammed to make a mill pond which you will pass on the left. After

this cross this junction and enter the grounds of the Archbishop's Palace.

The Carriage Museum and garden

Opposite the Archbishop's Palace is the Museum of Carriages which can be visited. This building was originally a lodging place for horses and servants of visitors to the Archbishop's Palace.

12. Archbishop's palace, All Saints Church and The Priest's College complex

The Archbishop's Palace was a resting place for archbishop's travelling between London and Canterbury. In the 14th century, King Richard II granted permission to William Courtenay, Archbishop of Canterbury to build All Saints Church and The College of Priests on the site of the earlier St Mary's Church.

John Ball - a Hedge Priest

John Ball was imprisoned in the Archbishop's palace for preaching ideas about social equality and was freed by Wat Tyler's men in The Peasants' Revolt in 1381. Wat Tyler was later killed as he stormed the Tower of London. Ball went on the preach his famous sermon at Blackheath which contained the words: *"When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman. From the beginning all men by nature were created alike."*

Pacifist and song writer Sidney Carter used the words to compose, a now popular, folk song titled 'Sing John Ball'. John Ball was later captured and hanged, drawn and quartered in the presence of Richard II.

Infirmarer's garden

To the front of the palace is walled Apothecary's Garden containing local fruit varieties.

From the palace either head down the slope to the river to 13 (no steps involved) or through the archway into the churchyard to 14 (steps involved).

13. Mulberry Morus nigra and Giant Redwood Sequoiadendron giganteum

On the slope towards the river you will encounter Giant Redwood Trees. Also known as Wellingtonia's, this species is the world's largest tree. Plantsman William Lobb brought seeds to the UK in 1853 and botanist John Lindley named it after the Duke of Wellington who defeated Napoleon in the Battle of Waterloo in 1815.

The Americans had wished to name the tree Washingtonia after their first president. Next to the Giant

Redwood notice a low Mulberry growing propped-up by a post. John Tradescant the elder, (see overleaf) collected Mulberries for Charles I who wished to encourage a home-grown silk worm industry.

14. All Saints Church

Through the archway the path will pass All Saints Church, built on the site of a 7th century Saxon church. All Saints was completed in 1398. Inside the church there is memorial to the great uncle of George Washington which shows the stars and stripes on the family coat of arms. These symbols became the basis for the American flag.

From the church, go down steps and cross over a wide sloping track.

The Old Horseway

This track which passes downhill from Knight Rider Street between All Saints Church and The Priests College to the Millenium Bridge was historically called the Horseway, an old fording point on the river. It has been suggested that Knight Rider Street is named after the night watchman who used to patrol the town after dark to alert the townsfolk of invaders. See photo overleaf.

15. River Millenium Park

To celebrate the new millenium, the area around the River Medway in Maidstone was developed and a new bridge erected. This park runs along the River Medway 6.6m from Teston downstream to Allington.

Continue on this side of the river through the college gardens through an archway of Horse Chestnut and Yew trees into the ampitheatre - a pleasant place for a picnic.

Continue downstream back towards maidstone along the river path.

Cross the river via the 'Millenium Bridge' and turn left to view the enormous riverside Planes. The Medway Valley Walk continues upstream through the villages of East Farleigh, Teston, Watlington and Yalding to Tonbridge.

16. London Planes

Platanus x acerifolia
As you can see on the cover of this leaflet, several enormous bulbous London Plane trees sit along the riverside walk set out in 1699. For many years the area this side of the river, known as Fairmeadow, was the site of Maidstone's livestock market. Today this area is the site of a new cinema complex and continues to hold the Maidstone market on Tuesdays and Saturdays.