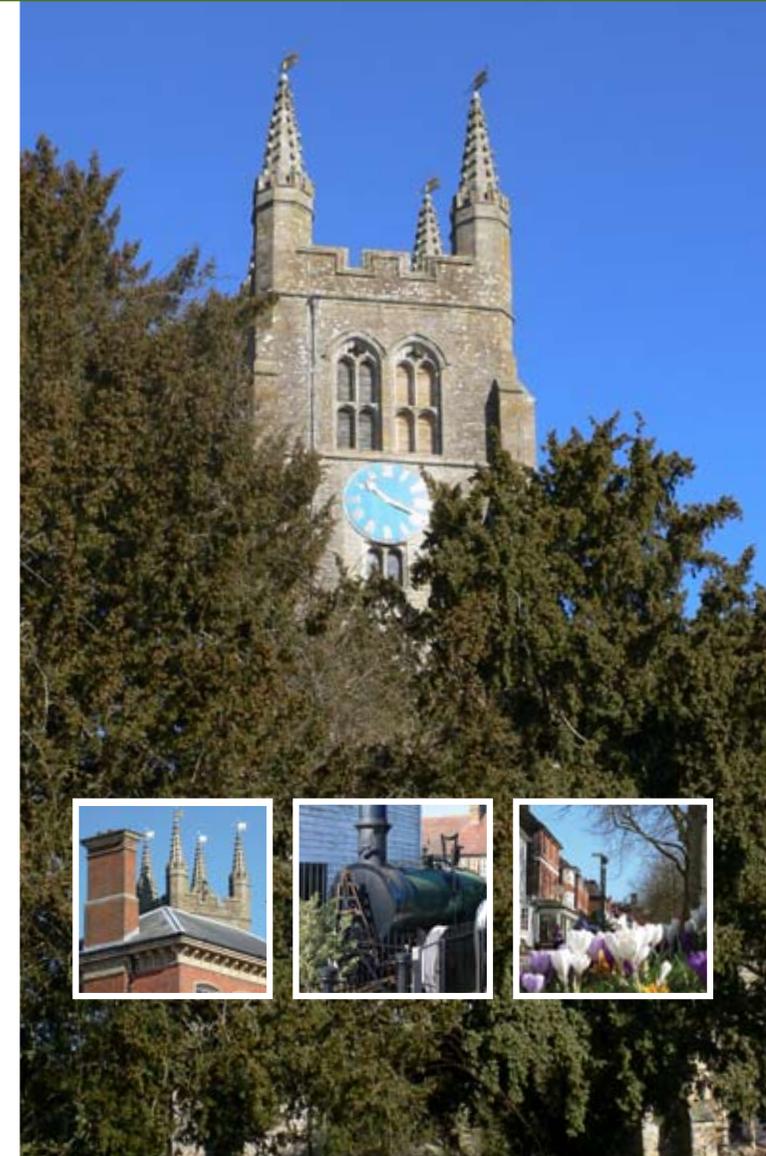
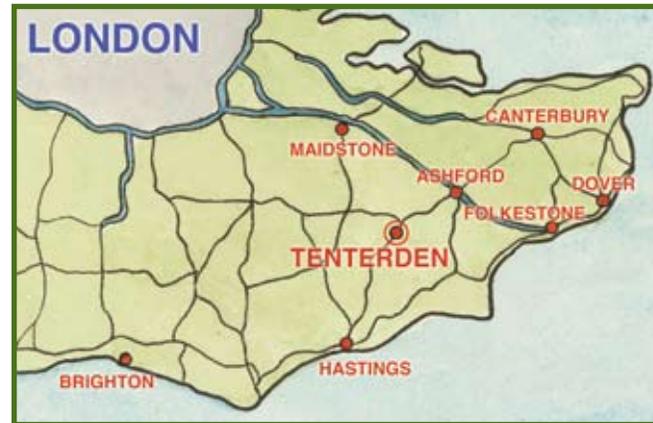


# Further Information

# Tenterden

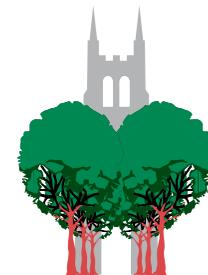
Heritage Trail



The Tenterden Improved Project is partly funded by SEEDA through the Channel Corridor Partnership and Kent Rural Towns Group.



**ASHFORD**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



TENTERDEN  
-IMPROVED-

## Railway Station

Headcorn is the nearest mainline station.

## Buses

There are regular bus services from Ashford, Headcorn, Maidstone, Rye, Hastings and Tunbridge Wells.

## Car Parking

There is short stay street parking along the High Street and a number of 'pay and display' car parks throughout the town. These are marked on the map.

## Tourist Information & Accommodation

There are many places to stay overnight in and around Tenterden, including hotels, traditional inns and small guest houses. You can also find self-catering and bed and breakfast accommodation in the town and surrounding villages. Information on these and more general tourist queries is available from Tenterden Gateway, 2 Manor Row, High Street, Tenterden. Telephone 01580 762558.

For further information on Tenterden, its shops, businesses, attractions, accommodation and events, please visit

[www.tenterdentown.co.uk](http://www.tenterdentown.co.uk)

## Acknowledgements

The Heritage Trail has been produced with the help of the Tenterden & District Local History Society. Walking tours guided by a member can be arranged through [www.tenterdentown.co.uk](http://www.tenterdentown.co.uk) and follow the links to **Historic Tenterden**.

Historic photographs are courtesy of Dr Jack Gillett and the Tenterden & District Museum Association.

Museum opening times: [www.tenterdenmuseum.i12.com](http://www.tenterdenmuseum.i12.com)

Design, illustration and photography by [www.arccreativedesign.com](http://www.arccreativedesign.com)

An introduction to  
The Jewel of the Weald

# Tenterden's Coat of Arms

Tenterden's coat of arms is widely regarded as one of the most impressive of all those of the Cinque Ports,

It shows a three masted ship with

- Fores'l furred
- Mains'l charged with the arms of the Cinque Ports (three half lions – from the Royal arms-conjoined with three half ships)
- Mizzen sail bearing the arms of Thomas Petlesden, the town's first Bailiff
- Cabin and rudder at the stern
- Anchor

The coat of arms can be seen in the Town Sign at East Cross Gardens, opposite the recreation ground at the entry to the town centre, on the balcony of the Town Hall, and in the Gateway Centre



*Eighteenth century engraving of the tollgate*



*Tenterden's last windmill, destroyed by fire 1913*

## Tenterden's Origins and Growth

Tenterden origins were as a mediaeval 'den', a clearing in the forest of Anderida, providing acorns for fattening pigs, prior to their autumn slaughter and salting. By the eighth century there was possibly a wooden church here dedicated to St Mildred.

The town flourished as a major weaving centre in the 14th century after the draining of the Romney Marsh and introduction of sheep. Skilled Flemish settlers and the town's river ports at Smallhythe and Reading Street, which also became nationally important shipbuilding centres in 15th and 16th centuries, contributed to this prosperity. The magnificent St Mildred's tower was built on the wealth generated.

The town's inhabitants suffered from the Peasants' Revolt in 1381 and may have taken part in Jack Cade's rebellion in 1450.

Tenterden joined the Cinque Ports Confederation (as a "limb" of Rye) in 1449, supplying ships and men against French raiders. In return the town gained legal privileges and exemption from national taxation through a charter granted by Henry VI. The growing importance of the town was reflected in the creation of a new Charter in 1600 and the installation of a mayor, in place of a bailiff.

However, the ports had silted up by the 18th century and failed plans for a canal and later a railway reflected the decline of the town's national prominence. In the 1830's its population was about 2000, its cattle markets flourished, and for most of the nineteenth century it remained "a small market town and a singularly bright spot" (Cobbett 1823).

# The History of Tenterden

## Mathematical Tiles



So-called because, made geometrically true and laid flush, they present the appearance of sophisticated brickwork. This was the intent, and many buildings were, in the 18th century (mostly around 1770-1800+) given a "modern" appearance, using their old timber frames to hang and point tiles which then yielded the look of a new brick building. The illusion becomes impossible to disguise at the corners, unless the corner is itself disguised, usually using vertical timber quoins to finish the edges. Indeed, if you examine many of the traditional and obviously "tile-hung" buildings, you will see that the corners need a vertical quoin for weather-protection.

At point no. 10 on the Heritage Trail, the Miller's/Chandler's warehouse presents an imposing three-storey "brick-built" frontage. The clue is in the white wooden quoins at the edges, which disguise the fact that these are tiles not bricks. If you look at the shop at 7 East Cross (directly opposite the Oaks Road junction) you will see at the right of the frontage that the "join" of the mathematical tiles has simply been pointed, not disguised with a quoin. How many examples of mathematical tiles can you spot in Tenterden? There are a lot.



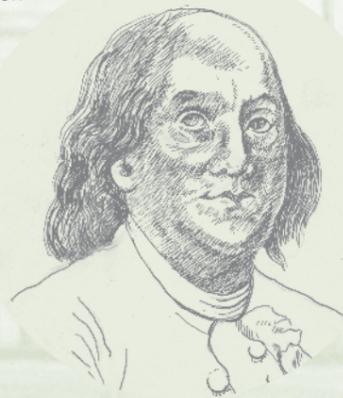
Tenterden past and present



## Our American Cousins

Escape from religious intolerance was a key factor in the extensive emigration of Wealden families to New England in the 17th century. Four Tenterden families were among those who sailed from Sandwich to New England in the "Hercules" in 1635. Of these most prominent was the family of Nathaniel Tilden. His descendant Samuel Tilden became Governor of New York and a candidate for the Presidency in the 1865 election, which he lost after a suspect recount.

The American connection was renewed the following century when ambassador and statesman Benjamin Franklin, who was to become one of the Founding Fathers of American independence, visited Tenterden in 1774. Franklin accompanied the eminent scientist Joseph Priestley who was prominent in the Dissenting Movement. The two men stayed at Dovenden in Woodchurch Road (still today a private residence), home of the Vineys, a leading Dissenting family in Kent. Priestley preached at The Meeting House in Ashford Road. Twenty years later he was to settle in Philadelphia.



Benjamin Franklin

## Smallhythe

Today a quiet hamlet to the south of Tenterden, Smallhythe was once a thriving port with quays and a tidal dock. It was the country's leading shipbuilding centre for much of the 15th and 16th centuries, constructing vessels for wars against the French.

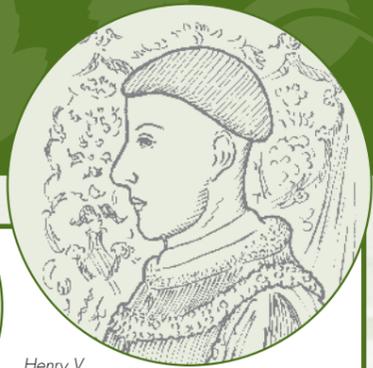
Most of Smallhythe's buildings, including the newly built church, were burned down in a terrible fire in 1514.

The above photo is of a barge at the beginning of the last century used to transport building materials and coal up river and to carry agricultural produce down river.

Smallhythe Place, the half-timbered building to the right of the tree, was the home of the famous actress Dame Ellen Terry for 29 years. It was previously the residence of the harbour master and is open to the public, courtesy of the National Trust.



Princess Diana



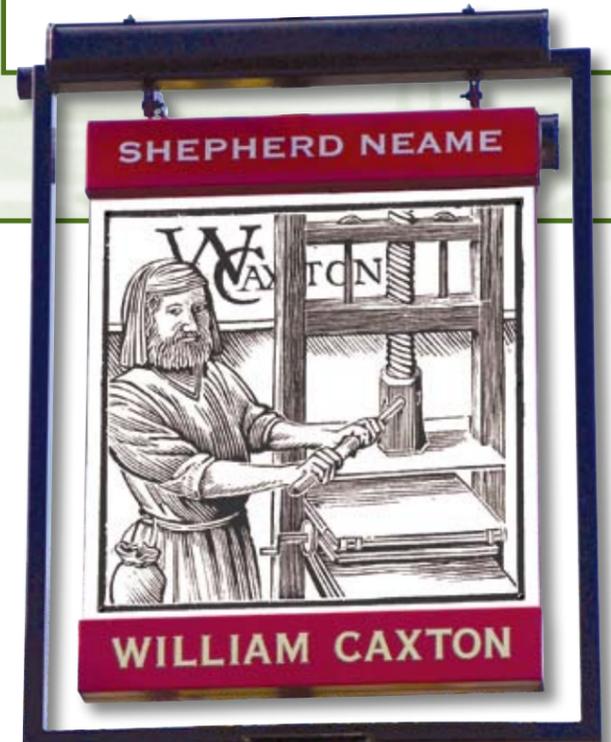
Henry V

## Royal Connections

- 1305 Edward I** ("Hammer of the Scots") visited Tenterden when he came to inspect the works for draining of the Walland Marsh.
- 1305 The Prince of Wales, the future Edward II**, stayed in Tenterden when he and his close friend Piers Gaveston were banished from court in disgrace for killing a bishop's deer. Both ultimately came to a grim end.
- 1416 Henry V** probably made several visits to Tenterden's shipyards. Certainly he was at Smallhythe in 1416 when he received news of naval victory at Harfleur. His ship "Jesus" (claimed to be 1000 tons) may have been the largest built at Smallhythe.
- 1449 Henry VI** granted Tenterden its original charter confirmed by Edward IV 1463.
- 1487 Henry VII** visited Reading Street in August 1487 to oversee the building of "The Regent".
- 1538 Henry VIII** came to Tenterden, probably on his way to Smallhythe. His ship "The Grand Mistress" similar to 'The Mary Rose' was built there in 1545.
- 1600 Elizabeth I** granted the town a new charter.
- 1700 William III** issued a replacement charter, after the original was lost in a fire in 1661.
- 1935 The Duchess of York** opened the Service Training Centre at St Michaels Grange. When she was Queen Elizabeth she stopped at the Town Hall in 1950 on her way from Cranbrook and Benenden. In 1982, as Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, she visited Tenterden Railway Station.
- 1990 H.R.H. Princess Diana, Princess of Wales**, officially opened the Leisure Centre.

## William Caxton – First English Printer

From his own account Caxton was born in the Weald of Kent, but date and place are unknown. Both Tenterden and Hadlow (near Tonbridge) claim him, and it is certain that a "Thomas Kaxton" (conjectured to be a brother) was Tenterden's Town Clerk in 1453-4. In 1473, in Bruges, William Caxton translated and produced the first book printed in English. A copy of Caxton's Polychronicon (1482) was presented to the Town in 1928 and is now held in the Cathedral Archive, Canterbury.



# The Heritage Trail

Start at the Tourist Office in the "Gateway" centre 100 High Street, in Manor Row, on the north side of the Greens.

## 1. Manor Row and The Greens

This 1960's parade, Manor Row, is on the site of a medieval manor house visited by the future Edward II when, as Prince of Wales, he stayed in the town in 1305.

Markets were held on the Greens in the nineteenth century. The noise and stench, compounded by the smell from the gasworks, the tannery and brewery, and conditions underfoot were a cause of complaint and the animal fairs were transferred to the Recreation Ground.

The trees were planted in 1870/1 after heated debate, on the casting vote of the mayor.

Turn left out of the Gateway and left down Station Road

The Town's Museum and a stationary engine are in the car park on the left. Opposite is the coach park, the site of Tenterden's brewery, demolished in 1925.

Continue down Station Road to

## 2. Tenterden Station

The Kent & East Sussex light railway linked Headcorn with Robertsbridge in East Sussex. Tenterden station was built in 1903 and the line extended to Headcorn in 1905. A passenger link to London, it was also extensively used for transporting agricultural products, including cattle. Closed to passengers in 1954, part of the line was reopened in 1974 and a further section to Bodiam reopened later.

Turn back from the Station and retrace just 20 yards and on your left turn into Church Path and then up the steep footpath that emerges after about 150 yards onto Church Road. Turn immediately left into small private car park

## 3. View Across Country to Roman Road

At this end of Church Road from the small car park look north across the valley to St Michael's spire on the ridge. The Roman Road along this ridge was used to export Wealden iron and has been identified as the route taken 800 years later by the Norman army as it advanced on Dover and Canterbury after the Battle of Hastings.

Now turn round and walk down Church Road towards the High Street

On your right you pass Tenterden Day Centre, formerly the National School, established 1843. It was used as a school until 1973.

## 4. St Mildred's Church

The 15th century four-stage tower on your left dominates the locality. The unusual double west door has a huge perpendicular window above. The church can be entered at the south porch and a guidebook is available inside.

Stop at junction with the High Street

## 5. Lock-Up and Turnpike

The building on your left at the southeast corner of Church Road and the High Street was the police station until 1956 and the lock-up and turnpike booth prior to that. You can still see the cell bars through the window. There was turnpike gate across the main road until about 1880.

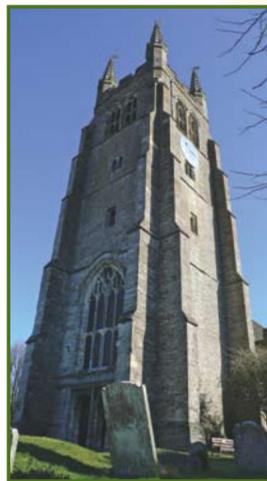
At this point the main street narrows. This was the result of traders in the thirteenth century encroaching onto the King's highway. Twelve horseshoes annually to the Crown was the price of staying there.



The Greens, today



KESR station



St Mildred's church



## 6. The Pebbles

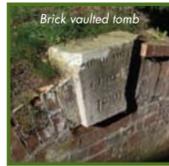
From the junction look across the High Street to "The Pebbles" with imitation wooden masonry and quoins. Erected in 1780 by Dr Mace, the central doorway was built to enable him to ride his horse through to the stables at the rear. Traces of the pebbles are visible on the forecourt. In 1830-1, during repairs to the Vicarage, it was home to the family of Rev. Philip Ward and his wife Horatia, love child of Horatio Lord Nelson and Lady Hamilton.

Turn left and continue up High Street 40 yards

Observe the butcher's hooks above on the building (42 High Street) immediately before the path on the left to the Church.

The distinctive brick vaulted tombs include those of the

Walk up this path leading to the south porch of the church and then right and then left halfway down the footpath alongside The Woolpack, noting the tombs on your left.



Brick vaulted tomb

influential Curteis family. The tomb of Rev. Philip Ward, husband of Horatia Nelson, is almost hidden behind the second yew on the left as you walk towards the Vicarage.

Retrace your steps and turn left to

## 7. The Woolpack

This 16th century building was a coaching inn with access through the archway. Bishops and archbishops regularly stayed here when attending the church for confirmations.



## 8. The Town Hall

next door was built in 1790 as a replacement for the one burned down in 1661. The Georgian Assembly Room on the first floor has boards with the names of Bailiffs and Mayors since 1449, and a musicians gallery. Incorporated as a member of the Cinque Ports, Tenterden enjoyed extensive privileges including virtual self-government and exemption from national taxation in the 15th and 16th centuries.



As you continue along the High Street view the following on the opposite side

## 10. The Miller's/Chandler's Warehouse

This three-storey 18th century building is immediately to the left of Sayers Lane. Looking up to the roof you see the doors and pulley, clues to its former use. It has white wood quoins and is clad with "mathematical tiles" (see item overleaf).

11. Ye Olde Cellars to the right of the old Embassy Cinema (5 High Street) formerly a bar below street level was furnished with old casks, vats and barrels.

12. The Embassy Cinema (name on front of building) that opened in 1937 and closed in 1967 replaced an earlier Picture House at East Cross that is now a parade of shops and offices known as the Fairings.

13. The building on the corner of Recreation Ground Road is the original Ivy Court, almost hidden by shops built in its front garden, although its portico has been brought forward at the end of a long corridor to be flush with the shop fronts. The 18th century house is still intact.

Cross over High Street at traffic lights and return on the other side, looking across the High Street to building 14 and 15

## 14. The Old Grammar School (Nos 20/18)

Next door but one to the Town Hall are Nos 18 & 20, formerly the grammar school established about 1521 by bequest "for the said chantry prest for the tyme being at Tenterden to loige and teche his scolars". By 1812 there were just 6 scholars and the school had ceased to exist by the mid-nineteenth century.

15. Cliff House (No 22) Adjacent to the Town Hall is an 18th century two storey building with attic, home of Jeremiah Cliff, Apothecary to the Workhouse. He left a complete record of the causes of death of all who died from 1713-40, including his maid, who hanged herself in an upstairs room here in 1722.

16. Bells Lane This medieval lane leads out into the countryside to Smallhythe.

17. Pitlessden Gatehouse, 91 High Street This is a 15/16th century timber framed cottage with plaster filling, reputedly the oldest building in Tenterden and one of the gatehouses to the manor house opposite.

18. Borough Place, a row of colour washed brick houses, where Tenterden's workhouse was established in 1724, on the site of the original Elizabethan poor house.

19. Wealden Hall House This black and white building was originally a great hall open to the roof with a central hearth. The smoke escaped through openings at the top of each gable. In the 16th century a huge chimney was built at the east end and a floor inserted at first floor level.

15. Cliff House (No 22) Adjacent to the Town Hall is an 18th century two storey building with attic, home of Jeremiah Cliff, Apothecary to the Workhouse. He left a complete record of the causes of death of all who died from 1713-40, including his maid, who hanged herself in an upstairs room here in 1722.

Just beyond the pelican crossing turn left into Bells Lane

16. Bells Lane This medieval lane leads out into the countryside to Smallhythe.

As you enter the lane note the jetty overhanging the lane from the property to your right. This restaurant was formerly a coaching inn whose changing names (The Angel, Six Bells,



Bell Lane

Eight Bells) have over the centuries reflected its proximity and association with the church.

Bells Lane is bordered by eighteenth and nineteenth century cottages. Under one of these, Theatre Cottage, is a weatherboard-lined passage leading to Theatre Square, the site of the old Tenterden Theatre, built in 1794, and now divided into three cottages. Here, during the Napoleonic War, the officers from the Reading Street barracks socialised with the young ladies of the town. In later years the lane gained a reputation for drunkenness and immorality.

Take the first turning right off Bells Lane into Jackson's Lane - follow it round

After just a few steps you pass a little building on your left with an inscription in the apex, "The Soup Kitchen 1875". It was supported by public donation for Tenterden's rural poor in the agricultural depression of the late nineteenth century.

Exit onto High Street and turn left, past the Pebbles and Bridewell Lane

This was originally Gas Lane and here was the town's gasworks from about 1840 until the late 1940's. At its junction with the High Street is the Zion Baptist Church, which was strongly supported and endowed by two local families, Rogers and Boorman. Tenterden had a strong Non-Conformist tradition.

Further along on your left is

## 17. Pitlessden Gatehouse, 91 High Street

This is a 15/16th century timber framed cottage with plaster filling, reputedly the oldest building in Tenterden and one of the gatehouses to the manor house opposite.

18. Borough Place, a row of colour washed brick houses, where Tenterden's workhouse was established in 1724, on the site of the original Elizabethan poor house.



Borough Place

Turn left into an alley between numbers 117/119 High Street

Note on the right hand side is Mayors Place, a row of modest cottages with a line of old outside privies.

Now retrace your steps to the Town Centre



Can you spot this in Jackson's Lane?



Pitlessden Gatehouse



Mayors Place