

Greensted History

There has been a settlement at Greensted since the Saxons. Located in a natural clearing, which would have been a stark contrast to the surrounding Epping Forest, the name Greensted is derived from Saxon term "Sted" meaning "Place" therefore Green Place.



Pendunculate Oak



The first Saxon settlers would have worshipped pagan gods. However in 654 A.D. St Cedd, a Saxon trained at a Celtic monastery, converted the Saxons of Greensted to Christianity. It is believed the first Church was built soon after. Evidence of two simple wooden buildings under the present chancel floor was found in an archaeological dig in 1960. These are believed to have been built in the late Sixth or early Seventh Century. The current Church is named after the Patron Saint of Scotland, St Andrew, which points to the Scottish roots of its founder.

In 1834 six farm workers from Tolpuddle in Dorset were arrested for forming a Trade Union to campaign for better working conditions. They were sentenced to transportation to Australia to work in chain gangs as slaves. After the sentence was announced the working class rose up in protest at the unfair judgment and 800,000 people signed a petition to have the men released. In 1837 the farm workers were pardoned of all charges and allowed to return to England. However, they were unable to return home due to opposition from Dorset farmers. Instead they were granted farm tenancies in Greensted and High Laver. A few years later they emigrated to Ontario in Canada.

About the Walk



The Greensted Country Walk is an attractive 4 ½ mile circular walk near Ongar. It will take approximately 3 hours to complete. Alternatively you can split the walk into two shorter circuits; both of which are approximately 2 ½ miles long.

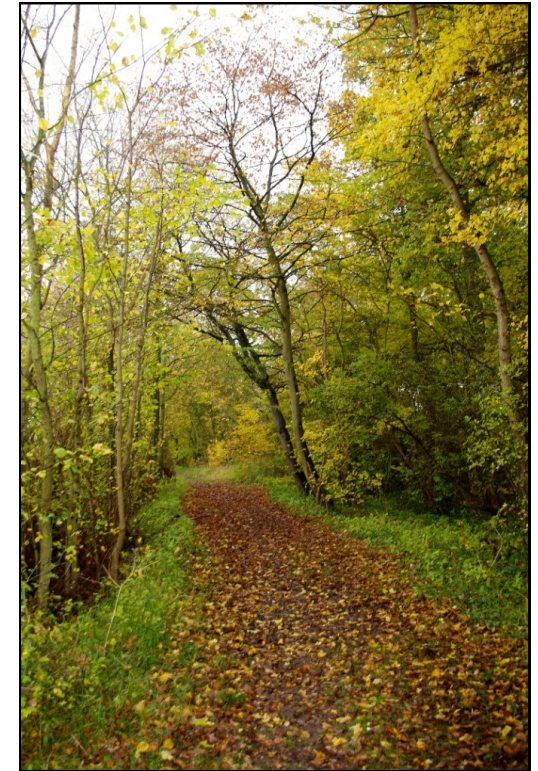
The footpaths on the walk are in good condition, but they will become muddy after wet weather, particularly Penson's Lane and in very wet weather it is recommended to do the shorter route to avoid this section. There is a small amount of road walking involved along main roads, please take care whilst walking along these. Please follow the Country Code. Keep dogs on a lead near livestock, and keep to the footpath when walking across privately owned land.

There are several parking places along Ongar High Street, there is also a pay and display car park by Ongar Library. For any footpath queries please contact Essex County Council on 08457 430 430.

For more information about Countrycare visit:
www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/countrycare
Or contact us via email at:
contactcountrycare@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

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Greensted Country Walk



Penson's Lane



Points of Interest

1. Greensted Hall

Greensted Hall is privately owned and as such only glimpses of it can be viewed through the hedgerows which surround it. The Hall was built in about 1700 on the grounds of the old Manor house which had once belonged to Richard de Luci. Richard de Luci was the Sheriff of Essex and Hertfordshire and later Chief Justiciar of England, which is the medieval equivalent of the Prime Minister. He also built Ongar Castle.

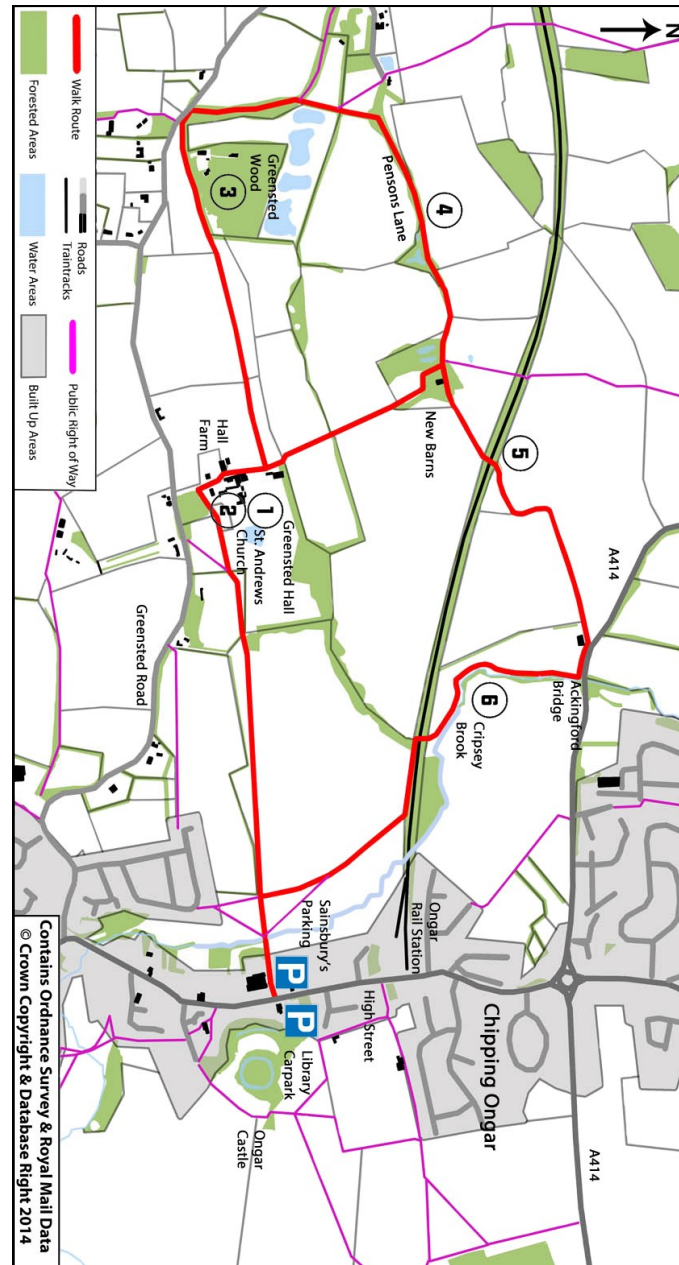
2. St Andrews Church

Perhaps Greensted's most famous feature is St Andrews Church. With its cloven oak walls the Church is the oldest wooden church in the world. It was built around 1060 A.D, and although features have been added since then it still retains some of the original wooden planks used in construction in 1060. The church is open to the public during the day but they do ask visitors to put plastic bags over muddy shoes to help keep it clean. These are provided in the porch. For more information on St Andrews a guidebook can be purchased in the church.



3. Greensted Wood

This ancient woodland was mentioned in the doomsday book, commissioned in 1085 by William the Conqueror to record information about Settlements in England. The wood is made up of hornbeam coppice, cut for firewood and oak trees grown for timber. Greensted Wood is a local wildlife site (Ep168) owing to its ancient woodland status. The remains of a roman villa were found in one of the fields next to the wood.



4. Penson's Lane.

Penson's Lane is part of an old Roman road from London to Colchester. The remnants of an ancient wood form hedges bordering both sides of this historic lane creating a corridor for wildlife which connects the small woods and ponds seen along its length. These ponds were created when gravel deposits found along the lane were extracted to make up the railway. Penson's Lane is also a Local Wildlife Site (Ep171). Local folklore says the lane is haunted by two ghosts.

5. Epping to Ongar Railway



This track way started life as an extension of the Great Eastern Railway which terminated in a field on the edge of Ongar. The line's construction heralded the golden age for agriculture in the area; many farms used the line to transport milk, meat and other farm produce up to London. The line was discontinued in 1994 after a considerable decline in use. A few years later the Epping Ongar Railway Volunteer Society was formed. They concentrated on improving the infrastructure of the tracks and stations and today steam and diesel locomotives run between North Weald and Ongar as a tourist attraction.

6. Cripsey Brook

The quietly meandering Cripsey Brook flows under the A414 at Ackingford Bridge. No longer a drover's road, this important route linking Epping to Ongar carries much traffic. Away from the bridge where cattle once watered, the Cripsey Brook winds its way to Ongar where it joins the River Roding. In the summer the azure blue flash of a kingfisher or the insistent rattle of a dragonfly's wings may be witnessed amongst the teaming life found along its length.