

Ashford

Visit Ashford and Tenterden and discover the very best the 'Garden of England' has to offer. Beautiful tranquil 'Darling Buds of May' countryside, hop gardens, oast houses, orchards, picture postcard villages and historic buildings all give this part of Kent its own unique flavour.

Ashford offers the best of a flourishing market town with its historic buildings, yet all the vibrancy of a modern international gateway with Ashford's international Eurostar station. Tenterden, known as the 'Jewel of the Weald' boasts wide tree-lined greens and a host of specialist shops, pubs and restaurants.



Facts about Ashford & Tenterden

Did you know about...??

History

- Records show that for several centuries the settlement or town of Ashford was known as "Essetesford". The 16th century writer Philpot believed that "Essetesford" stood for "ash trees growing near a ford", while Lampard, a 16th century local historian, suggested that it meant "a ford over the river Eshe.
- No one can be quite sure when the first settlement was made in the area. Roman remains have been found locally at Westhawk. It is believed that the town's real origins lie in the ninth century when the country was invaded by the Danes in 893AD.
- By 1600 Ashford was well established as an important and flourishing market town. Ashford was aided in this by its location, with roads to the port of Faversham and to Canterbury, Hythe, Romney Marsh and the Weald.
- The town consisted of a small medieval gathering of buildings with the Parish Church of St. Mary the Virgin at its centre. Close by was the Six Bells, the Chequers and the Court House, a number of ale houses, shops, craftsmen's premises and cottages.
- Tenterden stands on the peninsula of high land between the Rother Levels to the south and the River Beult valley. The new settlers began to claim areas in the Wealden forest for pasturing their pigs and one of these areas was cleared by the men of Thanet, who gave Tenterden its name, Tenet-ware-den, the 'den' or pig pasture of the men of Thanet.
- In the 13th century Tenterden began to play an active part in the new wool and cloth trade - an industry which flourished for the next 350 years.
- In the 18th century, access to the rich grazing lands of the Marsh and the cultivation of fruit and hops on the higher land brought wealth to the landowners of Tenterden, which developed into an important market and service centre for the surrounding district.
- By far one of the most important times for Ashford was in 1842, with the arrival of the railway and 1846 with the building of the railway works. This helped the town double in size by 1861. The railway community had its own shops, schools, pubs and bathhouse.
- 1996 continued the railway tradition in Ashford with the opening of Ashford International Passenger station, part of the high speed rail connection network between Britain and the continent, bringing the journey time from Ashford to Paris to about 2 hours 30 minutes. (although now in 2008 it is just two hours)

Villages

Today the borough is home to over 40 towns, villages and parishes.

- **Wye** is a large and historic village, with buildings of Wye College dating from 1447 and the old bridge dating from 1638. The Village is surrounded by beautiful and interesting countryside and is the ideal base from which walkers can explore the North Downs. An unusual feature is the Wye Crown carved into the side of the Downs by Wye College students in 1902 to commemorate the coronation of King Edward VII.

- **Chilham** is an attractive 15th century village situated in the valley of the River Stour with the North Downs passing through. The village attracts thousands of tourists each year for the picture postcard views of the North Downs and River Stour. Chilham's church, castle, pub and historic buildings are set around an historic village square that often acts as a movie backdrop.
- **Pluckley** is situated on the south slope of the Greensand Ridge, known for its reputation as being the most Haunted Village in England but also for its picturesque views used for the setting for the television series *The Darling Buds of May*.
- **Rolvenden** consists of two hamlets nearly a mile apart - the Streyte and the Layne. Great Maytham Hall was designed by Lutyens, contains the ancient walled garden that inspired Frances Hodgson Burnett to write the children's novel "The Secret Garden". Rolvenden features many interesting sights such as the Rolvenden Windmill and is also home to Hole Park Gardens, famous for its spectacular displays of bluebells, azaleas and rhododendrons
- **Biddenden** has one of the prettiest main streets in England and a wealth of genuine examples of mediaeval to 17th century architecture. The weavers' houses on the south side of the High Street are fine examples of Kentish half-timbered buildings. The village was home to Mary and Elisa Chulkhurst, Siamese twin sisters who lived in the village in the 12 century. Today it is home to Biddenden Vineyards and Cider Works, Claris's an award-winning tea shop and The West House, a Michelin starred restaurant.
- **Godmersham** lies on the A28 midway between Ashford and Canterbury in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The small village features a Norman church containing a carving considered to be one of the earliest representations of Thomas-à-Beckett. Godmersham Park House was built in 1732, and eventually became the property of Edward Knight, brother of Jane Austen. Her novel "Pride and Prejudice" is said to depict characters and scenes from the village.

Countryside

Surrounded by three designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the borough of Ashford is enriched by the most stunning countryside in Kent.

- Although well known as an expanding urban area, much of the borough is made up of picturesque villages and stunning protected countryside including Romney Marsh, the North Downs and the High Weald. The borough also hosts many Sites of Special Scientific Interest including Hothfield Common, Hoads Wood, Orlestone Forest and Walland Marsh.
- The stunning countryside of Ashford includes the Kent Downs an area of outstanding natural beauty. These areas can be visited by walkers and ramblers as there are a range of routes available. www.kentdowns.org.uk
- Ashford has local access to many different natural reserves including the Ashford Green Corridor Network and Hothfield Common, which is an attractive area where visitors can relax and enjoy the local wildlife such as grazing Highland Cattle and Konic ponies.
- The borough boasts a wide range of woodlands which, as well as supporting a great diversity of wildlife, provide attractive walks for both residents and visitors alike. The Kings Wood at Challock, is where King Henry VIII hunted, but now features the Stour Valley Arts "Arts in the Environment" project and displays natural sculptures of the landscape.
- While viewing the countryside of Ashford and Tenterden, visitors can take the opportunity to sample local Kent Produce including Kentish apples, pears and

cherries from local farms. While local shops and traditional pubs provide jams, preserves, fine wines, ciders and local beers flavoured by Kent-grown hops.

- Ashford features many fantastic public footpaths such as the **Stour Valley Walk**, the **North Downs Way**, the **Greensand Way**, **The Pilgrims Way** and the **Saxon Shore Way**. There are 11 promoted linear and circular walks on the Explore Kent website including Appledore Walk, Lost Landscape Heritage Trail and High Weald Landscape Trail. www.kent.gov.uk/explore-kent
- You can cycle from **Ashford to Tunbridge Wells!** (Sustrans route 18) This 42 mile route runs on small country lanes through the High Weald, and is the best way to take in Kent's quintessential Garden of England scenery, complete with hops, apple orchards, Oast Houses and picture postcard villages!

Growth

- Ashford is the **largest borough in Kent (geographically)** and has a fast-growing population which has more than trebled in the last 40 years to around 110,000 residents. It is now the fastest growing town between London and the continent.
- The rapid ongoing growth and investment has turned Ashford into one of the UK's most prosperous areas with new businesses, leisure opportunities, retail developments, first-class transport links and quality new housing.
- Ashford features some of the best leisure facilities in the South East including a £15 million redeveloped leisure centre and international standard athletics stadium called the Julie Rose.
- Ashford benefits from its excellent location in the UK. Situated on one of the key transport gateway corridors between continental Europe and London. Ashford's central location and excellent rail, road, air and sea links is one of it's most significant assets. It is perfectly placed to offer a choice of transport links to Europe. (our strap line is actually Ashford- Best Placed in Britain) The high speed rail link from Ashford to London St. Pancras becomes fully operational in December 2009, cutting journey times to London to just 37 minutes.
- The Eurostar passenger service to Paris takes just two hours from the Ashford International Station Freight and passenger traffic passes through the Eurotunnel departure point at nearby Folkestone, taking just 35 minutes to Calais. Future train journeys take 37 minutes to London (from 2009) via the HighSpeed1 rail link. Also services to Brussels and Disneyland Paris.

Tourism Figures: Key headline figures for Ashford for 2006

- 369,455 overnight tourism staying trips were made to Ashford with a total of 1,201,675 staying visitor nights.
- £61,333,135 spent by staying visitors on their trip to Ashford in 2006. Of this expenditure, 64% was spent by domestic visitors and 36% by overseas visitors.
- 3.3 million Tourism day trips were made to Ashford in 2006, generating a further £103,075,350 trip expenditure.
- In total £164,408,458 was spent by all visitors on their trip, 24% of this expenditure was made by domestic staying visitors; 14% by overseas staying visitors and 62% by day visitors.

- In addition, expenditure by friends and relatives on visitors, and visitors spend on second homes (i.e. maintenance) generates a further £8,607,000.
- With the addition of other expenditure tourism activity generated £173,015,485 expenditure.
- Of this expenditure, £135,794 translates into direct income for local business; and a further £44,235,000 of income is generated through indirect and induced effects (a total of £180,029,000 business turnover.)
- This income supported 2,543 FTE jobs and 3,479 Actual jobs.

*Figures from Cambridge Model 2006

Places to Visit

Historical Houses:

Smallhythe Place

Smallhythe, Nr Tenterden,
Kent, TN30 7NG
Tel: (01580) 762334
Fax: (01580) 762334
Email: smallhytheplace@nationaltrust.org.uk
Website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk/smallhytheplace

Godinton House and Gardens

Godinton House, Godinton Lane,
Ashford,
Kent TN23 3BP
Tel: (01233) 620773
Fax: (01233) 647351
Email: ghpt@godinton.fsnet.co.uk
Website: www.godinton-house-gardens.co.uk

Windmills:

Stocks Windmill

Stocks Road, Wittersham, Kent, TN30 7ER
Tel: (01797) 270295/270364
Fax: (01797) 270295
Email: suepduff@fsmail.net
Website: www.kentwindmills.homestead.com

Willesborough Windmill, Ashford, Kent

Tel: (01233) 661866
Email: info@willesboroughwindmill.co.uk
Website: www.willesboroughwindmill.co.uk

Steam Trains:

Kent & East Sussex Railway

Tenterden Town Station,
Station Road, Tenterden,

Museums:

Agricultural Museum, Brook

The Street, Brook,
Ashford,
Kent, TN25 5PF
Tel: (01304) 824969
Email: brianwimsett@hotmail.com
Website: www.agriculturalmuseumbrook.org.uk

Ashford Borough Museum

The Churchyard,
Ashford,
Kent, TN23 1QG
Tel: (01233) 631511
Email: ashfordmuseum@ntlworld.com
Website: www.ashfordmuseum.co.uk

Tenterden & District Museum

Station Road,
Tenterden,
Kent, TN30 6HN
Tel: (01580) 764310
Website: www.ukpages.net/kent/museum.htm

The C M Booth Collection of Historic Vehicles

Falstaff Antiques,
63 - 67 High Street,
Rolvenden,
Kent, TN17 4LP
Tel: (01580) 241234
Email: chrismbooth@tiscali.co.uk
Website: www.morganmuseum.org.uk

Woodchurch Village Life Museum

Susans Hill, Woodchurch, Near Ashford, Kent, TN26 3RE
Tel: (01233) 860240
Fax: (01233) 860653
Email: curator@woodchurchmuseum
Website: www.woodchurchmuseum.com

Kent, TN30 6HE
Tel: 01580 765155
Fax: (01580) 765654
Email: enquiries@kesr.org.uk
Website: www.kesr.org.uk

Walking and Rambling:

Singleton Environment Centre
Wesley School Road (off Cuckoo Lane)
Singleton
Ashford
Kent TN23 5LW
Tel: 01233 666519
Email: singleton@btcv.org.uk
Website: www.btcv.org/kent

Ashford Community Woodland
Singleton Hill,
Bucksford Lane,
Ashford,
Kent TN23 5WE

Cuckoo Woods
Stanhope Road,
Ashford,
Kent, TN23 5RF

Hothfield Common
Cade Road,
Hothfield,
Ashford, Kent, TN26 1HA

Wye National Nature Reserve
Hamstreet
Ashford, Kent
Tel: (01233) 812525
Fax: (01233) 812520
Email: enquiries.southeast@naturalengland.org.uk

Hole Park Gardens
Rolvenden
Cranbrook
Kent
TN17 4JB
01580 241344
www.holepark.com

Farms:

The Rare Breeds Centre
Woodchurch, Ashford,
Kent TN26 3RJ
Tel: (01233) 861493
Fax: (01233) 861457
Email: visit@rarebreeds.org.uk
Website: www.rarebreeds.org.uk

Vineyards:

Biddenden Vineyards & Cider Works
Little Whatmans,
Gribble Bridge Lane,
Biddenden,
Kent, TN27 8DF
Tel: (01580) 291726
Fax: (01580) 291933
Email: info@biddendenvineyards.co.uk
Website: www.biddendenvineyards.com

The Chapel Down Winery
Tenterden Vineyard,
Small Hythe,
Tenterden,
Kent, TN30 7NG
Tel: (01580) 766111
Fax: (01580) 765333
Email: retail@englishwinesgroup.com
Website: www.englishwinesgroup.com

Shopping:

Park Mall
Town Centre, Ashford
Tel: (01233) 630811
Fax: (01233) 646680
www.parkmallshopping.co.uk

County Square Shopping Centre
Town centre, Ashford
Tel: (01233) 634001
www.countysquashoppingcentre.com

Ashford Designer Outlet
Kimberley Way,
Ashford,
Kent, TN24 0SD, UK
Tel: (01233) 895900
www.ashforddesigneroutlet.co.uk

Tenterden High Street
High Street
Tenterden
Kent, TN30

Leisure centre:

The Stour Centre

Tannery Lane,
Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL
Tel: (01233) 639966
Email: enquiries@ashfordleisuretrust.co.uk
Website: www.thestourcentre.co.uk

Julie Rose Stadium

Ashford
Kent
Tel 01233 613131
www.thestourcentre.co.uk

Biddenden Par 3 Golf

Gribble Bridge Lane,
Biddenden
Kent
Tel: 01580 291215

Ashford Town Centre, (Ashford Town Centre Partnership) Tel: 01233 664410,
www.ashfordtcp.co.uk

N.B the web address for Tenterden Town Centre is www.tenterdentown.co.uk

Accommodation within Ashford

Type of Accommodation	Bedrooms/ Units/Pitches	Bed spaces
Caravan & Camping	521	2,190
Self catering (Cottages, Barns & Houses)	95	378
Serviced (Hotels, B&B's & Inn's)	1,190	2,646
Group (shared accommodation)	182	278

*Information sourced by Tourism South East

Population Figures

	Male	Female	Total
Population (Mid 2006)	54,000	57,100	111,200
Population Forecast	-	-	-
2011			118,300
2016			127,600

Source: Population Estimates Unit, Office for National Statistics (ONS)

To find out more visit your local Visitor Information Centre:

Ashford Visitor Information Centre

18 The Churchyard, Ashford, Kent TN23 1QG
Tel: (01233) 629165
Fax: (01233) 639166
Email: tourism@ashford.gov.uk
Website: www.visitheartofkent.com

Tenterden Tourist Information

Tenterden Gateway
2 Manor Row
Tenterden
Kent TN30 6HP
Tel: (01580) 762558
www.visitheartofkent.com

Useful Tourism Contacts:

Ashford & Tenterden Tourism Association

C/O Ashford Tourist Information Centre
18 The Churchyard, Ashford, Kent, TN23 1 QG
Tel: (01233) 330345
Email: Sarah.barber@ashford.gov.uk

Ashford Borough Council, Cultural Services, Civic Centre

Tannery Lane, Ashford TN23 1PL
Tel: 01233 331111
Website: www.visitheartofkent.com

Visit Kent

Kent County Council
Invicta House
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent ME14 1XX
Tel: +44 (0) 1622 671411
Website: www.visitkent.co.uk
www.visitkent.co.uk/business

