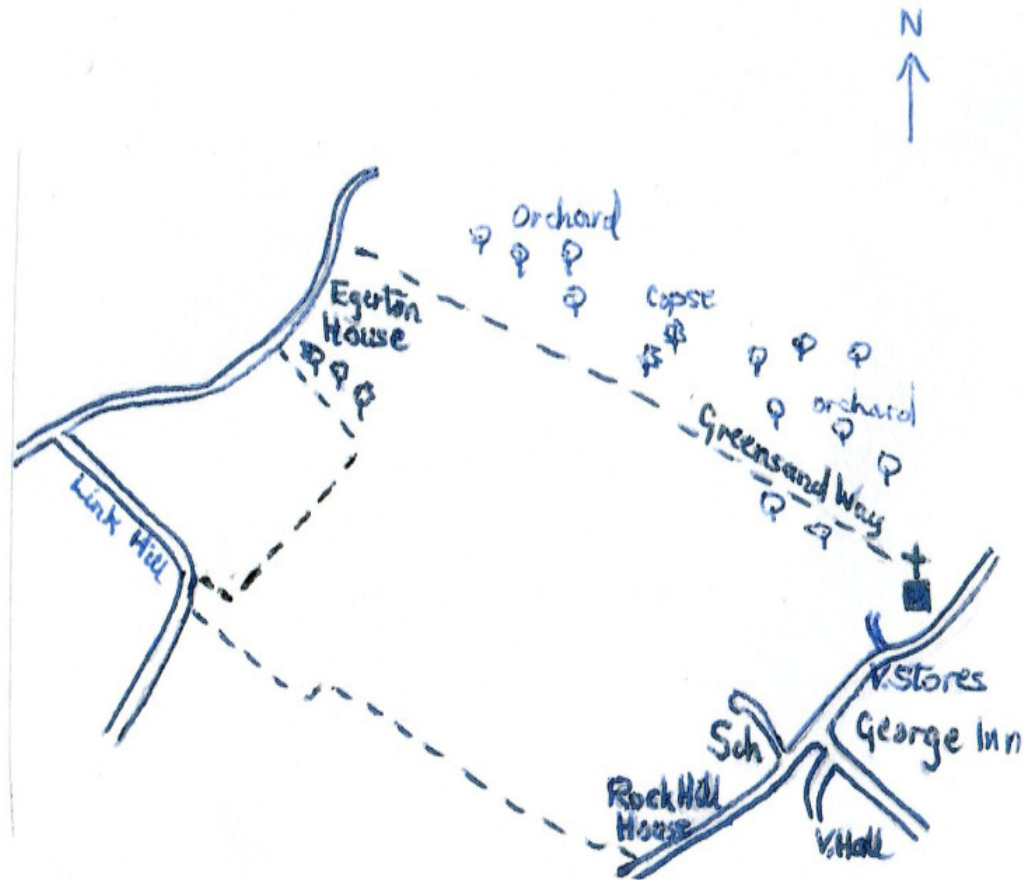


## EGERTON WALK - 1



*These walks have been compiled to enable you to enjoy our village from different aspects. We hope you will appreciate that we use the footpaths through the courtesy of local landowners, who do their best to keep them in good order, so that we can access the countryside at our leisure. Please help us to support farmers in the course of their work by leaving no hazardous litter, closing all gates and keeping dogs under control at all times. Watch out for the occasional rabbit hole and slippery mud – walking boots are a bonus!*



## **WALK 1: west of the village**

### START:

The George Inn, Egerton

### DISTANCE:

2½ miles (approx.)

### TERRAIN:

Pasture, tarmac roads, some plough, short incline, stiles. .

From the **George Inn**, walk northwards along **The Street**. You may wish to call in at the **Village Store**, on the right hand side, to purchase light sustenance for your walk. Turn left into the churchyard. Take a look inside **St James' Church**. The tower dates from 1476 and contains six bells. The representation of the Good Shepherd in the window of the north aisle dates from 1906. The brass chandelier is said to be the largest of its kind and was created in 1699, originally for All Saints, Maidstone and moved to Egerton when gas lighting was installed in Maidstone in 1856.

Follow the path to the northwest corner of the churchyard and out into the orchards, along the **Greensand Way**. This is part of a long-distance walk running from Haslemere in Surrey to Hamstreet, Kent. It follows the Greensand Ridge, which is one of a series of ridges forming the landscape of the Weald, between the North and South Downs.

At the far side of the orchard, pass through a tiny copse of mixed, mature trees and on past open fields to your left. Now you are approaching the back of **Egerton House**, walking alongside the ancient garden wall and charming cottages. This house was owned by the Dering family in the sixteenth century, when it was known as Goodale. Many buildings in the area have small arched windows, known as Dering windows. It is thought that a prominent member of the Dering family once escaped from the Roundheads through such a window and, in later years, many houses on the Dering estate land had them installed in his memory. Continue out onto the road, taking time to enjoy the spectacular views ahead of you, looking across towards the ridge, where nestles the ancient hamlet of Boughton Malherbe.

Now turn left, following the road to the far side of the small copse. Take the path turning left into the arable field, keeping the woodland on your left. Continue walking to the end of the woodland then turn right across the field. The path should be clearly marked through the planted area. At the other side of this field, take the right hand path and then turn left down some steps and on towards the lane.

Once on the lane, turn left. A little way down, before reaching the two cottages on the right, take the footpath into the field on the left. Gently stroll through the pasture, taking in the many rural sounds and local flora. Try to imagine the landscape to your right, once covered in majestic oaks where, in medieval times, swineherds would bring their pigs out into the Weald, along the well-worn tracks to feed on the wholesome acorns abundant in the forests. Many of these tracks became the major roadways of today. More recently, our farmland was famous for its hops and fruit, some of which is still grown today on many parts of the Weald.

Continue eastwards, over the stile and on towards the converted farm buildings, out onto **Rock Hill Road**. Turn left, up the hill, past **Rock Hill House** on your left. You will pass **Little Manor Cottage** and **Spring Cottage** on the right hand side, opposite **Oliver's Garage**. These houses are probably the oldest in the village and were formally part of a medieval hall house built around 1400, close to the site of the village well, fed by one of the many springs in the area. As you make the final climb to a well-earned rest at our local hostelry, glance back at the superb vista across our treasured Wealden landscape.