



**SOME NOTABLE
TONBRIDGE RESIDENTS -
A WALK
ROUND THE TOWN'S
BLUE PLAQUES**



A Tonbridge Civic Society Publication

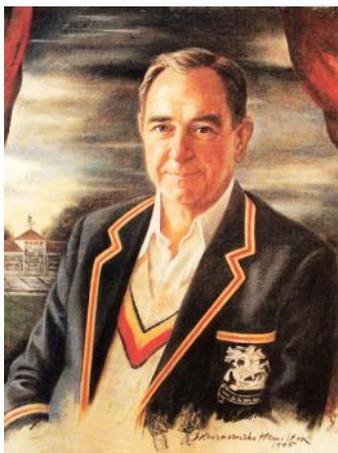
Introduction, by Sir Paul Britton

Tonbridge is an ancient town with a rich history, so it is no surprise that a number of people have been born or have lived here who have played a part in our national life. Eight well known people have in recent years been commemorated in the town by the erection of Blue Plaques. This suggested walk takes in all eight sites and enables you to see where these people lived. This leaflet both gives directions and tells you something about the people themselves. The length of the walk is about 4 miles.

Seven of the plaques have been put up in 2013-14 by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, working with the Civic and Historical Societies and the Town Wardens. It is hoped to erect more plaques in the future.

Suggested walk

The walk begins outside the Rose and Crown in the High Street. Walk North for 300 metres to Ferox Hall, on the right just beyond the junction with Bordyke, where the first plaque is situated.



Colin Cowdrey - Lord Cowdrey of Tonbridge - was born in India in 1932 and was a pupil at Tonbridge School in the late 1940s. He lived at Ferox Hall, a school boarding house, while his parents remained in India. He was the finest of many fine cricketers produced by Tonbridge School. A stylish batsman, he was a blue at Oxford and captained both Kent and England. Between 1950 and 1976 he scored 42,719 runs, including 7,624 in Test Matches. He was the first person to play 100 Tests. Later in life he was President of the MCC and became a peer in 1997. He died in 2000.

From Ferox Hall cross the High Street and walk a short distance Northwards along the High Street. On the end wall of the former chapel

of Tonbridge School, now the Cawthorne Lecture Theatre, you will find the next blue plaque.



The Reverend George Austen, the father of the novelist Jane Austen, was born in Tonbridge in 1731. The Austens, originally from Horsmonden, settled in Tonbridge in the eighteenth century, where they intermarried with other Tonbridge families, such as the Wellers and Hoopers. There are monuments to all three families in the parish church, including one to George's own father William. George was a pupil at Tonbridge School in 1741-47 and subsequently second master in 1754-57. He later became rector of Steventon in Hampshire, where Jane was born in 1775. He died in 1805.

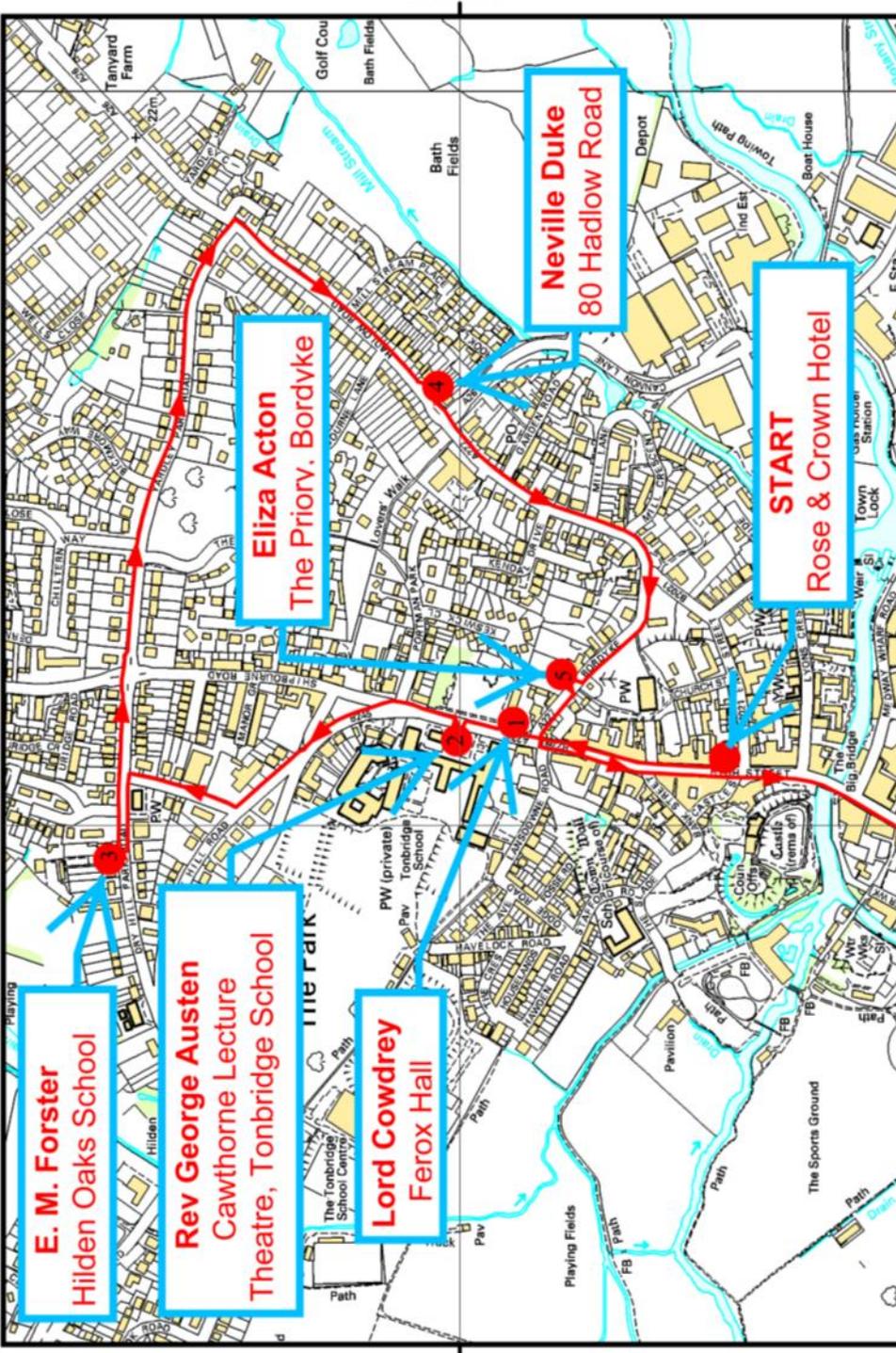
Continue North along the High Street and bear left at the traffic lights into London Road. After 200 metres bear right into Dry Hill Road and then turn right into Dry Hill Park Crescent. At the junction with Dry Hill Park Road turn left and cross the road to number 38, now Hilden Oaks School.



Edward Morgan Forster OM CH

(E. M. Forster), one of the finest English novelists of the 20th century, was born in London in 1879. He lived at 38 Dry Hill Park Road in the 1890s while a day boy at Tonbridge School. After Cambridge he wrote a series of memorable novels including *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, *A Room with a View*, *The Longest Journey*, *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*. Later in life he wrote mainly essays, collected as *Abinger Harvest* and *Two Cheers for Democracy*. He was also co-author of the libretto for Benjamin Britten's opera *Billy Budd*. He died in 1970.

TONBRIDGE BLUE PLAQUES WALK



E. M. Forster
Hilden Oaks School

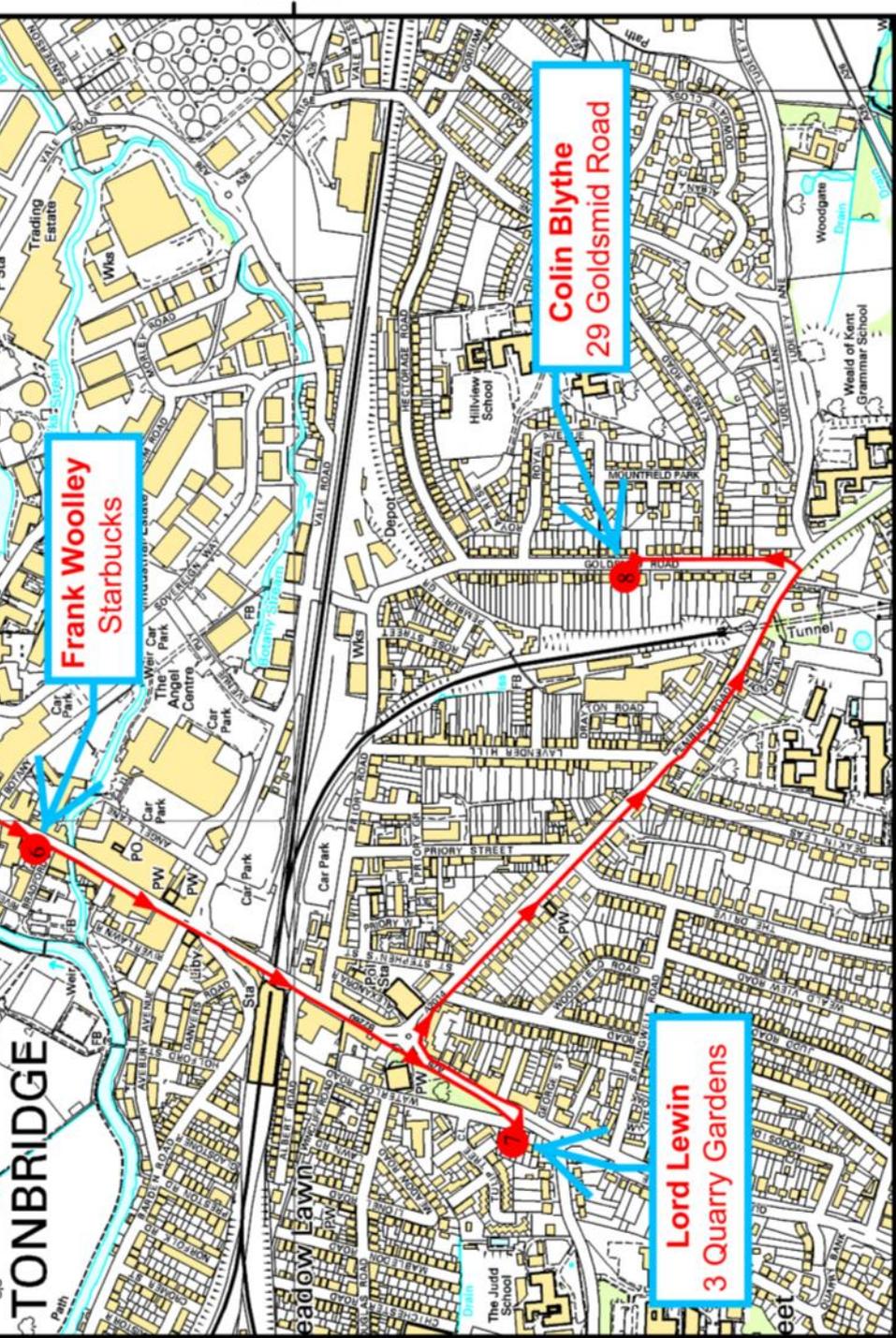
Rev George Austen
Cawthorne Lecture
Theatre, Tonbridge School

Lord Cowdrey
Ferox Hall

Eliza Acton
The Priory, Bordenyke

Neville Duke
80 Hadlow Road

START
Rose & Crown Hotel



**Frank Woolley
Starbucks**

**Colin Blythe
29 Goldsmid Road**

**Lord Lewin
3 Quarry Gardens**

TONBRIDGE

Walk East along Dry Hill Park Road, cross Shipbourne Road, walk down Yardley Park Road to the junction with Hadlow Road, turn right, cross the road and walk 300 metres to number 80.



Squadron Leader Neville Duke, a fighter and test pilot, was born in Tonbridge in 1922 and lived at 80 Hadlow Road. After attending the Judd School, he joined the RAF in 1940 and during World War II was the most successful Allied fighter ace in the Mediterranean theatre, credited with destroying 27 enemy aircraft. After the war he became a leading test pilot, in 1953 setting a World air speed record of 728 miles per hour flying a Hawker Hunter jet. He died in 2007.

Continue along Hadlow Road towards the town centre and then along Bordyke. The Priory is on the right, 100 metres before the junction with the High Street.



Eliza Acton, born at Battle in 1799, lived at The Priory in the 1840s. She wrote poetry - her first collection, on unrequited love, was published in 1826 - but is better known as a cookery writer. She published in 1845 *Modern Cookery for Private Families*, the first comprehensive cookery book for domestic use in English and in 1857 *The English Bread Book*. Mrs Beeton plagiarised many of her recipes in her *Book of Household Management* first published in 1861. Eliza has been called by Delia Smith "the best writer of recipes in the English language". She died in 1859.

Turn left into the High Street and walk about 400 metres down into the town to Starbucks, on the right just beyond the Big Bridge.



Frank Woolley, Kent and England cricketer, was born in 1887 in a house on the site of the building occupied by Starbucks (the Blue Plaque is at first floor level). In an exceptionally long career stretching from 1906 to 1938 he made 58,969 runs, including 3,283 in Tests. His career total was exceeded only by his contemporary Jack Hobbs. He also took 2,068 wickets and 1,018 catches. No one has taken more catches than Woolley. Along with W. G. Grace, he was the most prolific all-rounder to have played first class cricket. He died in 1978.

Continue along the High Street, past the station and up Quarry Hill and, on the right, just beyond St Stephen's churchyard, is Quarry Gardens.



Terence Lewin - Admiral of the Fleet Lord Lewin of Greenwich KG - was born in Tonbridge in 1920 and lived at 3 Quarry Gardens. After attending The Judd School, where he was head boy, he joined the navy in 1939, serving throughout World War II. During a long and distinguished naval career he was successively Nato Commander-in-Chief, First Sea Lord and Chief of the Defence Staff and a member of the War Cabinet during the Falklands War. He was the first Chief of the Defence Staff to be the Head of the Armed Forces. He became a peer in 1982 and died in 1999.

You may wish to end your walk at this point since the eighth plaque is some way out of the town centre in Goldsmid Road. Those with the energy to go to see it should return down Quarry Hill, turn right into Pembury Road and walk about 800 metres to the junction with Goldsmid Road, on the left.



Colin Blythe, who lived at 29 Goldsmid Road, was yet another Kent and England cricketer but a left-arm bowler rather than a batsman. Born in 1879, between 1899 and 1914 he took 2,506 wickets, including 100 for England. He took a wicket with his very first ball in first class cricket and later, playing for Kent against Northamptonshire in 1907, he took 17 wickets in the match for 48 runs, the second best return ever recorded. Volunteering to join the army in World War I, he was killed at Passchendaele in 1917. There is a fine monument to him in Tonbridge parish church.

This is the end of the walk. Return to the town centre either via Pembury Road or along Priory Road.

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