**The Hidden Gems of Parochial Kent**

Kent is not only the garden of England, it is also the first landing site of Christianity in Britain. St Augustine began his mission to convert the Britons to Christianity in Canterbury, although he was not the first practicing Christian in the city. Queen Bertha first celebrated the mass at St Martin’s church around 580 AD. This makes St Martin’s priory, in the city of Canterbury, the first and oldest place of Christian worship in Britain. Kent is known for a number of famous and celebrated churches and cathedrals, but parochial Kent also includes some hidden gems with just as much to explore as the great Canterbury Cathedral. These churches are enveloped by rich local folklore, and often played major roles in the history of Britain.

[St Peter and St Paul in Headcorn](link), is a very old building on an even older site; there are many facets to this picturesque church and its grounds. Discover some of the local tales told about this landmark.

A short walk from the city of Canterbury, Fordwich boasts the title of the smallest town in England, and contains many beautiful examples of historic architecture. Its church [ St Mary the Virgin](link) is of course amongst these examples, but within its tranquil walls lies a possibly spectacular monument.

The church of St John the Baptist in the village of Small Hythe (a village with a curious and unexpected history of its own) holds many precious relics, including the grave of [Ellen Terry]( /20c/20c-terry-biography), one of the most famous thespians of the modern age.

The church of [St Mary and St Eanswythe](link) sits atop the cliffs of Folkestone. This ancient building has existed in many iterations, and not always in the same place. A conglomerate of buildings from many centuries, hosting some very special remains, it is a sight you can see from all over Folkestone. Note to MC: We have lovely artists’ pictures of this by Ingrid Bax

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