Farningham Road to Eynsford walk

Ancient woodlands, low hills and riverside paths in the Darent valley.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Main Walk: 17½ km (10.9 miles). Four hours 25 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 8 hours.</th>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Short Walk, omitting Lullingstone Park:</strong> 13¼ km (8.2 miles). Three hours 15 minutes walking time.</td>
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<td><strong>Circular Walk, from Farningham Road:</strong> 11¼ km (7.0 miles). Two hours 40 minutes walking time.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Alternative Circular Walk, from Eynsford:</strong> 9¼ km (5.7 miles). Two hours 15 minutes walking time.</td>
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| OS Maps                  | Explorers 162 & 147. Farningham Road station (in Sutton-at-Hone), map reference TQ555694, is in Kent, 4 km E of Swanley.                                                                                     |

| Toughness                | 4 out of 10 (3 for the Short Walk, 2 for the Circular Walks).                                                                                                                                               |

| Features                 | The Darent Valley between Otford and Eynsford is covered by several SWC walks and this one extends the range northwards. It starts with a rather nondescript 2 km along field edges and farm tracks, but the scenery improves with a stretch through **Farningham Woods Nature Reserve**, an ancient woodland containing a now rare native tree, the small-leaved lime. The reserve also includes some fields which are being restored to their original ‘unimproved’ condition in order to support orchids and other wild flowers. The morning section concludes with the first of several stretches along the **Darent Valley Path**, with the riverside path leading directly into the beer garden of a pub in **Farningham** (overlooking a unique and puzzling structure in the river). Its attractive High Street was once on the main London-to-Folkestone highway but all the through traffic now thunders past on the main roads you passed under on the approach to the village, the M20 and the A20. |

https://www.walkingclub.org.uk/walk/farningham-road-to-eynsford/
The first part of the walk after lunch is along the side of the valley overlooking the ruins of **Eynsford Castle**, one of the earliest Norman stone castles (which you could visit at the end of the walk; free entry). The remainder of the walk has been fashioned from the two alternative endings of the Eynsford Circular walk (#59).

The high-level outward route goes past **Eagle Heights**, one of the UK's largest **Bird of Prey** centres which is open daily to 5pm from March to October, 4pm on winter weekends. Admission (2019) is £9.95 but you might be able to see something of the afternoon flying display from the public footpath. The walk then loops through **Lullingstone Park**, an attractive landscape of chalk grassland and ancient woodland with an internationally important collection of veteran trees.

The low-level return route is essentially the same as the ending of the Otford to Eynsford walk (1–23). Another attractive riverside stretch leads to **Lullingstone Castle** (01322-862114), a historic manor house which can be visited (but with limited opening hours). Its grounds contain an unusual parish church (open to the public at all times) and a **World Garden** with plants from around the globe, open Fri–Sun afternoons between April and end-October; admission (2020) is £9. There are several more possible refreshment places in Eynsford before the short climb through the village to its station.

**Walk Options**

You can shorten the walk by 3¾ km by taking a more direct outward route, omitting the section through Farningham Wood. This would make a very short morning but is worth considering if you miss a train and would have to start an hour late (or if you want to avoid a motocross event at **Canada Heights**).

The directions also mention a couple of places where you could cut out some or all of the afternoon loop to Lullingstone Park (but still taking in Eagle Heights and the Roman Villa), saving 4¾ km.

As this walk's start and finish stations are on different lines directions are given for two completely separate short **Circular Walks** (one from each station), more suitable perhaps as half-day walks with just one refreshment stop.

**Transport**

There is an hourly service from Victoria to Farningham Road station, taking 40 minutes. Eynsford is on a different line, with a half-hourly stopping service from Blackfriars. In practice a return to **Farningham Road** would almost certainly be accepted from Eynsford on the way back.

There is a very limited bus service through Farningham and Eynsford (Go-Coach 2, Mon–Fri), but it will usually be quicker to head for the nearest station if you want to abandon the walk.

Car drivers could park in Swanley and take separate services out and back. The station car park costs £7 Mon–Fri, £4.60 Sat, £1 Sun & BH (2020); the council car parks in the town are free at weekends.

**Suggested Train**

Take the train nearest to **10:15 from Victoria to Farningham Road**, or an hour later for the shorter start.
**Lunch**

The suggested place to stop for lunch is at one of the two large coaching inns in **Farningham**, after 6¾ km (3½ km on the shorter start). The obvious choice is the popular **Lion Hotel** (01322-860621), which has an enviable location with a riverside beer garden. If you want to try a less crowded alternative the **Pied Bull** (01322-862125) is a short distance away along the High Street (on the route of the Circular Walk). Both places serve a good selection of food all day.

If you reach these pubs too early a short detour along Riverside (2 km beyond Farningham) would take you to the **Plough** (01322-862281) in Eynsford; this also has a fine riverside location and serves food all day.

There are also some later pubs on the Circular Walk (see below), but none at all on the Alternative Circular Walk until you reach the **Plough**. On this variation you could have a light lunch or afternoon tea at the **Lullingstone Café** in the Country Park Visitor Centre (see below).

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**Tea**

On the **Main Walk** the suggested place to stop for mid-afternoon tea is the **Lullingstone Café** in the Country Park Visitor Centre (01322-865995; open to 5pm summer, 3.30pm winter). If you get there in time the suggested place in **Eynsford** itself is the **Riverside Tea Room** (01322-861551; open to 4.30pm weekdays & 4pm weekends, but may stay open later if called in advance). If you want stronger fare the walk route passes the **Plough** (see above), while a short detour along the main road would reveal the **Malt Shovel Inn** (01322-862164), the **Five Bells** (01322-863135) and the **Castle Hotel** (01322-863162).

The **Circular Walk** passes two more pubs after Farningham, although the **Fighting Cocks** (01322-862299) in Horton Kirby comes too soon to be a separate tea stop; it is a family-friendly pub with a large beer garden stretching down to the river. In the final section the riverside route passes **The Bridges** (01322-860588), an old-fashioned pub on the outskirts of South Darenth.

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**Help Us!**

After the walk, we would love to get your feedback

You can upload photos to the SWC Group on 📷 Flickr, and videos to 🎥 Youtube. This walk's tags are:

![swcwalks](https://www.flickr.com/photos/136772375@N05/)

![swcwalk291](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXNQf6fFf7ZQYr7X5S13VjA)

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**By Car**

**Start** DA4 9JB   **Finish** DA4 0HP

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**Help**

National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

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**Walk Directions**

https://www.walkingclub.org.uk/walk/farningham-road-to-eynsford/
Walk Options (Main)

- Main Walk (17½ km)
  - Main Walk, with shorter start (14¼ km)
    - a. Circular Walk, from Farningham Road (11¼ km)
    - b. Alternative Circular Walk, from Eynsford (9¼ km)

Walk Directions

If you are doing the shorter start (omitting Farningham Wood), start at §C.
If you are doing the Alternative Circular Walk (from Eynsford), start at §G.
A. Farningham Road Station to Farningham Wood (2¼ km)

1. Arriving from London on Platform 2, do not cross the footbridge but leave on a nearby tarmac path heading NE through a belt of trees. This comes out into a large field overlooking the village of South Darenth, dominated by its prominent chimney¹ (a useful landmark). Ignore the two paths ahead and turn sharp left to go along the field edge, back past the station and heading W.

2. In 400m you come to a farm track and turn left to cross over the railway tracks. On the other side turn right onto a broad track going alongside the railway for 500m. After going gently downhill it curves left past Homefield Cottages and enters Homefield Farm (where you can disregard some off-putting “Private” notices: this is a right of way).

3. Bear right through the large farmyard, go past a barn in the far corner and turn right onto another broad farm track, with a concrete footpath marker. Follow the track along the edges of several large fields for over 500m, heading W.

4. At the end turn left in front of a hedge, then turn right at the next corner. Go along the field edge for just 60m, then veer left up a slope and go through a metal kissing gate. Ignore a path on the right into a belt of trees.

At the time of writing this path was the definitive right of way, but it later goes through a motocross circuit. The landowner is seeking an official diversion onto the more convenient route described below.

5. Just beyond the old footpath turn right onto a track. Turn left at a path junction to go uphill, with the Canada Heights² Motocross Circuit off to your right, behind a fence. At the top of the slope follow the track briefly round to the right in front of a wood, then turn left onto a clear path through the trees. In 60m go through a metal kissing gate into Farningham Woods Nature Reserve.

B. Farningham Wood to Franks Lane (2¾ km)

6. Follow the footpath through the wood, heading S and later broadening out into a grassy strip. Go straight across a byway flanked by metal fieldgates into a more open part of the wood, with an information panel on the left about the Nature Reserve.

7. There are many possible continuations but the simplest route is to follow the main path ahead (shown as Footpath SD77 on the panel) for the next 1 km. At first you go across a patch of heathland, passing a pond in the trees on your right. As you re-enter woodland ignore side paths dropping down to the right and keep to the main path at all junctions, gradually curving left to head SE.

8. The path finally drops down and comes to a recently-cleared area at the southern edge of the wood (with a view across a large field to Farningham in the Darent valley, and the M20 motorway snaking through the landscape). Leave the wood through a wooden kissing gate and turn left to go all the way along the top of the field, heading E.

9. In the field corner bear left through a narrow gap and go over a stile at the top of a small bank. Go across Little Folly Field, slightly to the left, then over another stile into a small wood known as The Folly. Follow the woodland path through it, keeping right at a path junction and then swinging left to come to another viewpoint.

10. Go over a stile to the right of a wooden fieldgate into Great Folly Field, with a new wooden bench inviting you to “rest awhile and feast your eyes” on the view north-east towards South Darenth. As you go down across this field (with no clear path), aim slightly to the right of the chimney and railway viaduct 2 km away: your exit is by a metal fieldgate about 50m to the left of a more prominent wooden fieldgate.

11. Go over a stile to the left of this metal fieldgate and down a short track. Squeeze past another fieldgate and turn right to go down Calfstock Lane to the A225. Veer left onto a small patch of grassland and cross the main road carefully to continue on the footway opposite, briefly heading back towards Farningham Road station.
12. At the first junction fork right into Franks Lane, taking care as there is no pavement and more traffic than you might expect. Keep right where another slip road joins from the main road, opposite some imposing iron gates on the driveway to Franks Hall. Follow the lane for a further 300m to a bridge across the River Darent, where the shorter start joins from the Darent Valley Path\(^3\) (DVP) on the left.

*Continue the directions at §D.*

C. Farningham Road Station to Franks Lane direct (1½ km)

13. Arriving from London on Platform 2, cross the footbridge to the main exit and go down the station approach road to the A225. Cross the main road carefully and turn right onto a fenced path, screened by trees from the main road and with paddocks on the left.

14. In 300m go past “The Topiary Centre” and veer left at a footpath signpost onto a surfaced path through Hundred Year Wood\(^4\) For the main route stay on the public footpath, a long straight path through this ‘Community Woodland’.
   - If you wish you can fork right at an information panel onto a longer route through this small wood.

15. After 200m along the public footpath the longer route rejoins from the right. Continue down a short stretch of boardwalk and go past a vehicle barrier into a recreation ground, Westminster Field. A straightforward route is to follow the tarmac path to the far side and veer right at a sports pavilion in front of the River Darent, joining the Darent Valley Path\(^3\) (DVP) and continuing through a small car park.
   - If there is no sports activity you could bear right off the tarmac path in about 100m and cut across the recreation ground.

16. Both routes leads to gates (about 50m apart) in the hedge on the ground's southern boundary, then grassy paths across a meadow. The two paths soon merge and lead to its far right-hand corner. Continue alongside a wooden fence in another meadow, then on a tree-lined stretch alongside the river. At the end turn left onto a minor road (Franks Lane), joining the main route.

D. Franks Lane to Farningham (village) (1¾ km)

You will be following the waymarked DVP through Farningham and Eynsford to Eagle Heights.

17. Cross the river and head east along Franks Lane for 200m, ignoring a footpath off to the left along the way. At a pair of footpaths in front of Horton Kirby Cricket Club turn right through a wooden kissing gate onto a long straight path between fences, passing the cricket pitch on your left.
   - You might be able to glimpse Franks Hall\(^5\) through the trees away to the right.

18. The path eventually zig-zags right and left to continue alongside the River Darent. You now simply follow this attractive riverside path into Farningham, passing under two main roads: the M20 and later the A20. At the second road bridge the path crosses the river on a footbridge to continue on the other side.

19. The riverside path leads directly into the beer garden of the first of the village's two coaching inns, the Lion Hotel.
   - An information panel in the garden describes what is known about the unusual structure spanning the river opposite the pub, the Farningham Cattle Screen\(^6\). The prominent weatherboarded building ahead on the far side of the High Street is Farningham Water Mill\(^7\).

*There is a picnic area on the other side of the river, directly opposite the beer garden. Directions to alternative lunch places are in the next section.*

*If you are doing the Circular Walk back to Farningham Road, go to §K.*
E. Farningham to Eynsford (Riverside) (2 km)

The walk continues up the High Street to the right, but follow the directions below if you want to visit the alternative lunch pub (or explore the village).

20. Detour to the Pied Bull (+600m)

- To detour through the village turn left onto the High Street, crossing the river and passing the parish church of Ss Peter & Paul (or detour through the churchyard; there is another gate further along). The Pied Bull is on the right, just after a bridleway (Horton Way) on the left. Return the same way, crossing back over the river.

21. From outside the Lion Hotel go uphill on the High Street for 200m. You pass Dartford Road on the right and then turn left into Sparepenny Lane. In a further 200m, shortly after the lane levels out and bends slightly left, turn left through a gap in the hedge. Go through a wooden kissing gate into the top of a large field and veer right onto a grassy path running parallel to the lane.

22. Follow this permissive path for 1¼ km, along the top of several large fields and through a small patch of open-access woodland in the middle. Towards the end of this stretch you can see the ruins of Eynsford Castle in the Darent valley below. At the end of the last field go through another gate to return to Sparepenny Lane and follow it downhill to a T-junction with Riverside and Lullingstone Lane on the outskirts of Eynsford.

23. Detour to the Plough (+400m)

- To detour into Eynsford turn left into Riverside. The Plough is on the left in 200m, where the lane goes alongside the River Darent. To resume the walk, return the same way and keep ahead at the road junction, into Lullingstone Lane.

F. Eynsford (Riverside) to Lullingstone Park (1¾ km)

24. From the road junction go along Lullingstone Lane for 100m, curving around a water meadow dotted with trees on the left. Just before the lane bends back to the right, veer right up the bank at a footpath sign, staying on the DVP. Follow a path slanting up across a field, gradually moving away from the lane.

25. In 300m cross the railway tracks carefully and continue in the same direction across a larger field, still climbing. On the far side go through a gap in the hedge and across the corner of the next field to a lane, the access road for Eagle Heights. Cross the lane and continue on the footpath opposite, aiming for the left-hand end of a hedge 300m away.

If your walk coincides with a flying display you might see eagles and other exotic large birds overhead. They are not supposed to attack walkers who stay on the public footpath.

26. After passing the Bird of Prey centre off to the right the footpath carries on alongside the hedge. On the far side of the field the walk leaves the DVP by turning right up the hillside.

At this point you are directly above Lullingstone Roman Villa in the valley below, which is on the return route. If you want to cut out the entire loop through Lullingstone Park, follow the directions below.

27. Short Cut to the Roman Villa

- Turn left to go down the field edge. Towards the bottom of the hill the path goes through a wooded area and down steps to a lane. Turn left onto the lane (leaving the DVP) to come to a large shed on the left housing Lullingstone Roman Villa. If you take this short cut (saving 4¾ km), resume the directions at [40] in §I.

28. After going up the side of the field for 75m veer left through the belt of trees at a footpath junction, following a black arrow waymarker for the Lullingstone Loop (LL). Continue on a broad grassy strip between two large fields, passing an isolated tree along the way. On the far side of the field keep ahead on a track between hedges, entering Lullingstone Park (with its golf course) and now also on a waymarked horse route (blue arrows).
Continue the directions at §H.

G. Eynsford Station to Lullingstone Park (2½ km)

29. Turn left out of the station and go down to the A225. **Cross this busy main road with great care** and turn left onto the pavement, going under the railway bridge. You have 400m of walking alongside the A225, until just past the end of a lay-by on the left. **Turn right** here onto a signposted footpath and follow this farm track for 600m, past Newbarn Farm and a cottage.

30. After crossing the River Darent turn left onto a lane in front of a large shed housing **Lullingstone Roman Villa**. Before reaching the first cottage on the lane **turn right** up steps in the wooded bank, briefly joining the **Darent Valley Path** (DVP). At the end of the trees continue up the left-hand side of a large field. In 400m **keep ahead** at a footpath junction in front of a hedge stretching across the field, leaving the DVP.

31. In a further 75m **veer left** through the belt of trees at a footpath junction, following a black arrow waymarker for the **Lullingstone Loop** (LL). Continue on a broad grassy strip between two large fields, passing an isolated tree along the way. On the far side of the field keep ahead on a track between hedges, entering **Lullingstone Park** (with its golf course) and now also on a waymarked horse route (blue arrows).

H. Through Lullingstone Park to the Visitor Centre (3 km)

32. The track goes through a dip and climbs back into a more wooded area. Keep right where it forks to stay on the main track, emerging from the trees in the corner of a field. Continue along its right-hand edge to come to the start of a long strip of woodland, where again the path forks. The suggested route is to **take the left-hand path** into the trees, staying on the LL.

- Alternatively you could take the horse route on the right, along the other side of a narrow strip of woodland. Shortly before the two routes rejoin 600m away, riders are directed along a short detour to bypass a potentially hazardous old oak tree; walkers can stay on the original path.

33. The LL goes along the left-hand edge of the wood and passes another ancient oak tree (thought to be the oldest in the park) towards the end, on the edge of the golf course. At the end all routes come out onto a golfers' track which you go straight across (slightly to the right from the LL). In 200m this woodland path emerges from the trees onto a surfaced track, the route of an old driveway through the park to Lullingstone Castle.

34. **Turn sharp left** onto this driveway, leaving the LL. The drive curves around the wood, going gently downhill. In 100m **bear right** off the surfaced track onto a chalky track going straight downhill into a valley (still following the horse route), with a tall hedge on your left and golf fairways down to your right.

35. The track gradually approaches **Upper Beechen Wood** on the right. After going alongside it for a short distance **turn right** at a marker post, joining a children's Discovery Trail (red arrows) and a Woodland Walk (white arrows). The woodland path passes "Wild Wire" (a zip-wire contraption) on the right and climbs gently. Go past a metal fieldgate on the right (leaving the Woodland Walk) and follow the main path down to the left.

36. At the bottom of the slope go straight across a small open valley onto a path climbing past a metal fieldgate ("No Horses") into **Lower Beechen Wood**. In this part of the Discovery Trail there are several little detours to children's activity areas. Soon after passing one marked "High Flyer" **turn left** at a path junction, following a signpost to the Visitor Centre Car Park.

37. The path eventually leaves the wood through a wooden fieldgate by some "Mega Beasts", emerging onto the top of a stretch of open downland with fine views along the Darent Valley towards Eynsford and its railway viaduct, 2 km off to the left. Go straight ahead down the grassy slope for 500m to come to the car park and **Visitor Centre**, where you can break for refreshments in its café.
I. The Visitor Centre to Eynsford (Riverside) (2½ km)

The rest of the walk essentially follows the Walk 1–23 route.

38. Make your way round a children's playground on the north side of the Visitor Centre and turn left onto the riverside path, rejoining the DVP. Continue along this attractive tree-lined path for 600m, with the river on your right and glimpses of a large fishing lake beyond it. At the far end go through a small parking area and keep ahead on a tarmac lane to come to the imposing Tudor Gatehouse\(^1\) of Lullingstone Castle.

- It is well worth detouring through the Gatehouse entrance to visit the unusual parish church of St Botolph\(^2\). This “Church on the Lawn” is freely open to the public at all times, even though you might have to unhook a chain and walk across the private lawn of Lullingstone Castle to reach it.

39. To resume the walk continue along the lane past the grounds of Lullingstone Castle (with its World Garden behind a high brick wall). In 700m the DVP goes up steps on the left to take a higher route into Eynsford (the outward route of the Main Walk), but you continue along the lane to come to a large shed on the left housing Lullingstone Roman Villa.

40. Unless you want to cut out the last part of the walk and head directly to the station (1¼ km away) without going past any refreshment places, ignore a private road off to the right and continue along Lullingstone Lane, still heading N.

41. Short Cut to Eynsford Station

- To head directly to the station turn right onto this private road (which is also a public footpath), crossing the river on a bridge. At the end of the road turn left onto the tarmac path alongside the A225, go under the railway bridge and turn sharp right up the station approach road. Cross the footbridge to Platform 1 for trains to London.

42. On the main route carry on along Lullingstone Lane, with the river meandering away in the valley on your right. You pass a turning on the left for Eagle Heights and go under Eynsford Railway Viaduct\(^3\). In a further 250m you briefly retrace part of the Main Walk as you follow the lane round to the right. In 100m keep ahead at its junction with Sparepenny Lane.

J. Riverside to Eynsford Station (1½ km)

43. Follow the lane (now Riverside) into Eynsford. In 150m it goes alongside the River Darent before crossing it on a narrow bridge by a ford. The two suggested refreshment places are on this street: the Plough inn before the bridge, and the Riverside Tea Room immediately afterwards.

.At the T-junction with the A225 the shortest route to the station is along the main road to the right, but follow the directions below if you want to visit the ruins of Eynsford Castle.

44. Detour to Eynsford Castle (+800m)

- Turn left onto the main road (away from the station) to go through the centre of the village, passing the Five Bells pub on your right. Opposite the Castle Hotel, turn left into a tarmac lane signposted to the Village Hall and follow it round to the right to find the Castle car park and ruins. Return the same way.

45. The suggested route to the station is a quiet route away from the main road. Go over the zebra crossing and into the churchyard of St Martin of Tours\(^4\). Follow the path past the left-hand side of the church and leave the churchyard in the top left-hand corner. Bear right across a small parking area and continue up a short alleyway (with vehicle barriers at both ends) to a residential street, Pollyhaugh.

46. Turn right and follow this quiet street (which becomes St Martins Drive) for 700m, climbing steadily. At the far end turn right and go down Eynsford Rise to reach the station. Cross the footbridge to Platform 1 for trains to London.
K. Farningham to Westminster Field (3 km)
47. From the Lion Hotel you could simply retrace your steps back to Franks Lane, but the suggested route starts with a short loop around the village. Go up to Farningham’s High Street and turn left onto it, crossing over the river and passing the parish church of Ss Peter & Paul (or detour through the churchyard; there is another gate further along). Just before the Pied Bull pub turn left into Horton Way, signposted as a bridleway.
48. At the end of this short lane continue on a path going under the A20, then turn left along the field edge to return to the River Darent. Turn right onto the riverside path and now retrace the rest of your outward route back to Franks Lane: under the M20, then zig-zagging away from the river onto a long straight path between fences.
49. Go straight across Franks Lane to continue on the footpath opposite, leaving your outward route (and the DVP). In 150m another footpath merges from the left. Go through a metal kissing gate and a belt of trees and turn left to continue along the edge of a large field. In the next corner keep ahead on a lane (The Street) and follow this through the village of Horton Kirby, in 150m passing a possible refreshment stop on your left, the Fighting Cocks pub.
50. In a further 250m, where The Street turns right by the village sign, turn sharp left onto a short lane, signposted as a footpath. Go past a new housing development and across the River Darent into a recreation ground, Westminster Field.

L. Westminster Field to Farningham Road Station (1½ • 1 km)
The main route is along another stretch of the DVP and includes the striking sight of a high railway viaduct towering over an old-fashioned pub. If you are in a hurry to catch one of the hourly trains you can take a direct route in [52], the reverse of the shorter start.
51. Main route (1½ km)
a. For the riverside route turn right to go along the edge of the field (or through the fenced-off riverside area if you prefer; there is a gate at both ends). In the corner of the recreation ground go through a gap onto a path leading to the river and follow this for 750m, passing the access gates to Horton Kirby Lakes on your left halfway along.
b. The riverside path comes out near the bottom of Station Road in front of South Darenth Railway Viaduct. The Bridges pub just off to the right is the last refreshment stop before the station, 700m away.
   • If you want to detour into South Darenth the village is along the road under the viaduct.
c. To complete the walk go all the way up Station Road, crossing over the A225 along the way. Platform 1 on the near side is for trains to London.

52. Direct route (1 km)
a. For the shorter route take the tarmac path to the right of a sports pavilion, curving gently round to the left to head NW across the field. On the far side follow the path past a vehicle barrier and up a short stretch of boardwalk into Hundred Year Wood. Unless you want to detour through this small ‘Community Woodland’, simply follow the straight path through it.
b. At the far end bear right onto a fenced path, screened by trees from the A225 and with stables on the right. The path ends at a crossroads where you cross the main road carefully and go up the approach road to the station. Platform 1 on the near side is for trains to London.
Walk Notes

1. The prominent chimney (originally attached to a boiler house) was built in 1881 during a major expansion of Horton Kirby Paper Mill, which operated from 1820 to 2003. The chimney has listed building status and was retained in the new housing development.

2. Canada Heights acquired its name in World War I when Canadian troops were stationed on this low hill.

3. The Darent Valley Path follows the course of the river for 31 km, from Sevenoaks (near its source in the Greensand Hills) to the River Thames at Dartford.

4. Hundred Year Wood was planted in 1994 to commemorate the centenary of Horton Kirby & South Darenth Parish Council.

5. Franks Hall is a large Elizabethan country house, completed in 1591. The estate declined in the 19thC and it had multiple owners in the 20thC, most recently as a business headquarters.

6. The Farningham Cattle Screen was once thought to have been the remains of a medieval bridge, or an 18thC folly. It is not known why such an ornate structure was built simply to prevent cattle from straying downstream while crossing the ford. It was restored by the Parish Council in 2008/9.

7. Farningham Water Mill was built in the late 18thC. In 2014 the mill and surrounding properties were converted into a residential estate.

8. Ss Peter & Paul, Farningham dates from the 13thC; the tower was added about a century later and enlarged in the 19thC. It contains a painted alabaster monument of 1597 to Antony Roper, the grandson of Sir Thomas More. Unusually for an Anglican church, the 15thC font depicts the Seven Sacraments of the Roman Catholic church.

9. The name Sparepenny Lane implies that this was once a private toll road which was cheaper than the main turnpike.

10. Lullingstone Park was a medieval deer park in the estate of Lullingstone Castle. Some of its veteran trees (notably oak, hornbeam, beech and sweet chestnut) are over 500 years old. The park was used as a decoy airfield in World War II and as a result Shoreham was dubbed “the most heavily bombed village in Britain”.

11. The Tudor Gatehouse of Lullingstone Castle was one of the earliest all-brick buildings in Britain.

12. St Botolph, Lullingstone dates from the 14thC and contains some impressive memorials to ancestors of the Hart Dyke family, the owners of Lullingstone Castle. It also has an elaborately carved wooden rood screen and some particularly fine stained glass windows, the oldest dating back to the 14thC.

13. Eynsford Railway Viaduct was built in 1862 to take the line over the Darent valley, with nine high brick arches and a stone parapet. In the past some repairs have been made with poorly-matched bricks and it has been given listed building status to maintain its original appearance.

14. St Martin of Tours, Eynsford was built by one of William the Conqueror’s knights in the 11thC on the site of a Saxon church. It has retained its Norman ground plan with apsidal chancel.

15. South Darenth Railway Viaduct was built in 1859-60, with ten high brick arches spanning Horton Road and the River Darent. Like the similar viaduct at Eynsford, its appearance has been marred by the use of poorly-matched bricks for repairs.

16. The Bridges pub is named after its owner (Wayne Bridges, a former heavyweight wrestling champion), not the neighbouring railway viaduct.

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