



Paddock Wood to Yalding walk

An easy walk in an attractive part of the Medway Valley.

Length **Main Walk:** 18 km[†] (11.2 miles). Three hours 55 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 9 hours.

Short Walk, omitting Hunton: 12¾ km[†] (7.6 miles). Two hours 35 minutes walking time.

† Add 2¾ km (1.7 miles; 40 minutes) if continuing along the Medway Valley Walk to Wateringbury station. See Walk Options below.

OS Maps Explorers 136 & 148. Paddock Wood, map reference TQ670453, is in Kent, 8 km **E** of Tonbridge.

Toughness 2 out of 10 (1 for the Short Walk).
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Features The fact that Paddock Wood's main street is called Commercial Road suggests that this is not the most rural of stations to start a walk, and it does take a few minutes to get past the large distribution centre to the north of the railway. However, prospects improve as you continue along the tree-lined edges of large fields in the flood plain of the **River Medway**, reaching the river itself just before Sluice Weir Lock. The rest of the morning route now follows the **Medway Valley Walk** on its meandering riverside course through a mixture of woods and open countryside to a picturesque spot in front of the medieval **Twyford Bridge**. You can choose between two lunch places here, with the opportunity to visit "the largest teapot exhibition in England" (over 8,200) at a quirky museum on **Teapot Island**; admission is £3 (2024).

If you find the lunch choice difficult you will have the same dilemma a few hours later, since the afternoon leg returns to Twyford Bridge for a tea stop. It goes out through the attractive village of **Yalding** with its many historic buildings to the neighbouring hamlet of Hunton and returns along the lower slopes of the **Greensand Ridge**. Yalding station is 1 km away by road, but you can avoid this downbeat ending by taking a more adventurous route through the small but varied landscape of **Yalding Fen**, which includes a community orchard.

Walk Options The afternoon section is in the form of a Figure-of-8, so for a very easy **Short Walk** you could omit the outer loop to Hunton (and with it the only hill), saving 5¾ km.

Conversely, you could extend the walk by continuing on the Medway Valley Walk from Twyford Bridge. Directions are hardly necessary but are provided to **Wateringbury** station. For a longer extension you could simply continue on the riverside path to **East Farleigh** (+5 km) or **Maidstone**

(+9 km), or for a little more variety switch to the directions in one of these companion walks: the Wateringbury Circular walk (#336) or the East Malling to Maidstone walk (#337).

Transport Paddock Wood is on the South Eastern Main Line between Tonbridge and Ashford, with a half-hourly off-peak service from Charing Cross. Yalding and Wateringbury are adjacent stations on the Medway Valley branch line (Paddock Wood–Maidstone–Strood), with a half-hourly service (hourly on Sundays). Buy a **return to Yalding** (or Wateringbury if you might want to finish there). This is valid for returning to London via Paddock Wood, but you will probably be asked to pay a supplement if you decide to travel back via Maidstone or Strood. If you want to abandon the walk and there are problems with the trains, there are buses to Maidstone from Yalding village up to around 5pm (Mon–Sat). If driving, the station car park at Paddock Wood costs around £7 Mon–Fri, £5.50 Sat, £3.50 Sun & BH (2024). There are small free car parks at Yalding and Wateringbury stations.




Suggested Train Take the train nearest to **10:10** from **Charing Cross** to **Paddock Wood**.

Lunch The suggested lunch place is the **Boathouse** pub (01622-814359) on the north bank of the River Medway at **Twyford Bridge**, after 6¾ km. At the time of writing there is still an alternative refreshment place on the opposite bank, but the owners of **Teapot Island** (01622-814541; open to 3pm Mon–Fri, 4pm Sat, Sun & BH) have put it on the market and its “bistro-style café” is due to close at the end of October 2024.

*There used to be another pub option in **Yalding** village, but **The George** has permanently closed.*

Tea The walk route loops back to **Twyford Bridge** via Yalding village and so the Tea options are the same as the Lunch options above (if you can get there before the café's closing time). Allow 15 minutes to reach Yalding station by road; at least 25 minutes on the slightly awkward route via Yalding Fen.

On the extension there are two more refreshment places near **Wateringbury** station. The **Ramblers Rest Café** (01622-960288; open daily to at least 4pm winter, 5pm summer) across the river in Medway Wharf Marina describes itself as a “quirky bistro café with alfresco seating”. For stronger fare **The Railway** pub (01622-812911) is on the B2015 opposite the station car park.

Help Us! After the walk, please leave a comment, it really helps. Thanks! You can also upload photos to the   SWC Group on Flickr (upload your photos) and videos to  Youtube. This walk's tags are:

By Car **Start** TN12 6ER **Finish** ME18 6HN

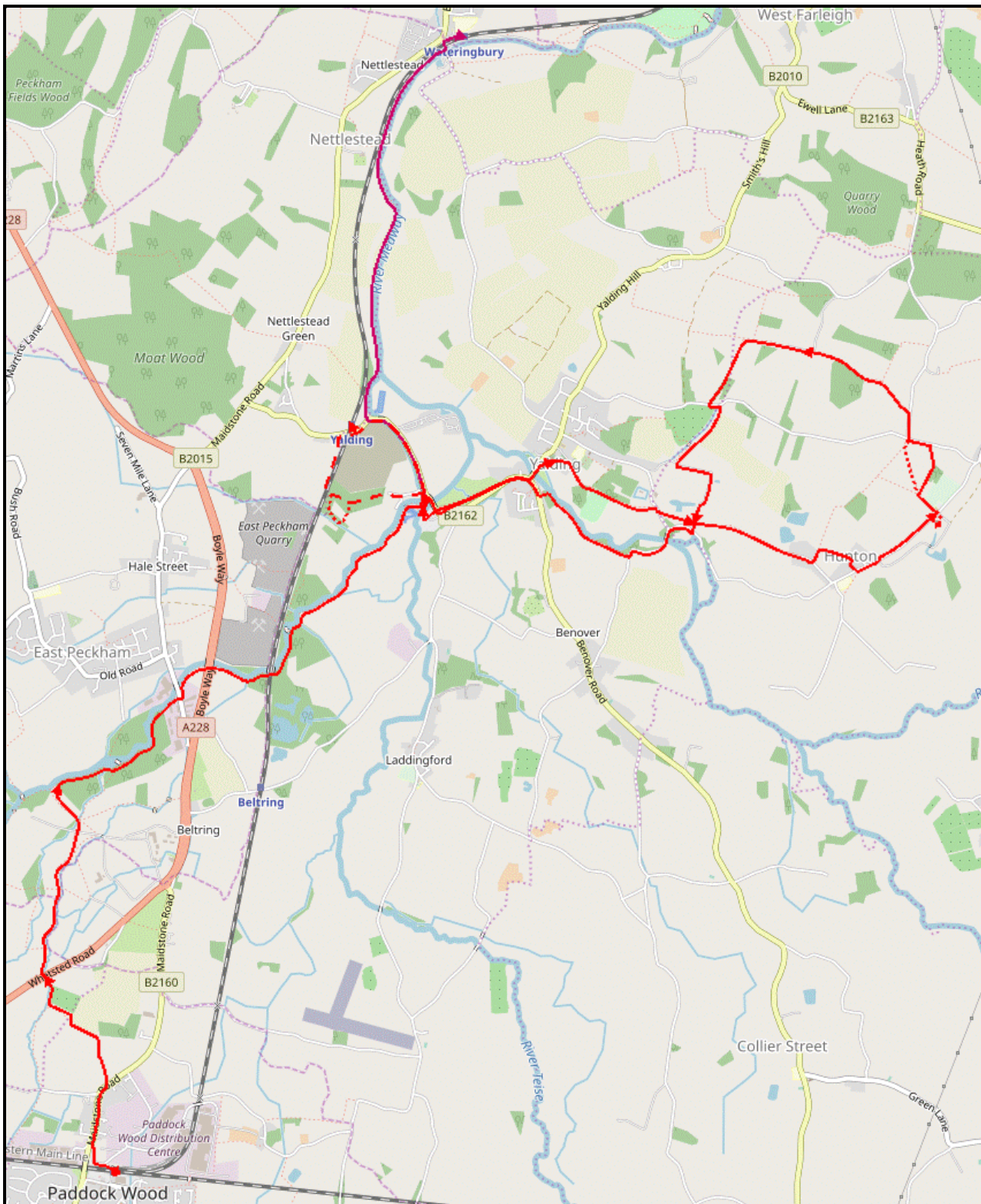
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Version Sep-24 [Sean](#)

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Walk Directions

Walk Map



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Walk Options (Short)

M. Main Walk (18 km)

- i. Main Walk, extended to Wateringbury (20¾ km)
- a. Short Walk, omitting Hunton (12¼ km)
- ai. Short Walk, extended to Wateringbury (15 km)

Walk Directions

A. Paddock Wood Station to Whetsted Road (1½ km)

1. Arriving from London (or Maidstone), do not cross the footbridge to the main concourse but exit from Platform 2 into the station car park. Turn left to go out along its access road, which curves round to the right and comes out onto the B2160 (Maidstone Road). Continue on its pavement, heading **N**.
2. In 300m ignore a byway on the left where the B2160 bends right. In a further 100m (at a tree boundary between two fields on the left) **cross the road carefully** and go through a small gap in the trees, with a half-concealed footpath sign. Go along the broad grassy field margin, with a stream and the line of trees on your left.
3. In the field corner veer left and right to cross the stream and continue along the right-hand edge of the next field. Follow the field margin round to the left and around two more bends to reach a T-junction in front of another stream (Tudeley Brook). Turn right and follow a grassy path alongside the stream to the A228 (Whetsted Road).

B. Whetsted Road to the River Medway (1½ km)

4. **Cross the main road with great care** and take the signposted footpath on the other bank of Tudeley Brook. At the end of the first field go over a stile and continue on a grassy path near the brook, ignoring a footpath off to the left.
5. In 400m keep ahead at a signposted footpath crossing. In a further 200m, after the path and brook have curved to the right, **turn half-left** at a footpath signpost to head **NNE** across the meadow, with no clear path.
6. In 200m go straight across a track in the meadow (ignoring a car-wide bridge off to the left on this track). Keep ahead for 75m to reach a new wooden footbridge in the tree boundary, where a signpost indicates that five footpaths meet.
7. Cross a stream on this footbridge and go straight ahead across another meadow, aiming for the far right-hand corner 250m away. The **River Medway** is behind the trees on the far side. **Turn right** onto a path which goes through a gap in the trees and continues alongside the river, joining the **Medway Valley Walk**¹ (MVW).

C. The Medway Valley Walk to Twyford Bridge (3¾ km)

8. This section simply follows the MVW, with the meandering river close by on your left throughout. From **Sluice Weir Lock** you might see canoeists and paddle boarders from **Branbridges Leisure**, an activity centre (which has a **café**) at the far end of this 500m stretch. Shortly after passing it the path comes out onto Branbridges Road, with a small industrial estate opposite.
9. Cross the road carefully and take the roadside path back towards the river. In the next 1 km the riverside path goes under the busy A228 and the Medway Valley branch line, then passes the disused **Stoneham Lock**. A long rural stretch follows, where for some of the way the path goes along the edge of large farm fields to bypass eroded parts of the riverbank.
10. One of these field-edge paths eventually comes to a wooden fence. Ignore a fieldgate into the private area ahead and **veer left** as indicated to return to the river. Follow the riverside path past an estate of Park Homes and across the entrance to a marina to come to a weir in front of the medieval **Twyford Bridge**², with a choice of refreshment places.

11. The café garden of **Teapot Island** is on your right. To reach the **Boathouse** pub (which you can see across the river) carry on across the weir. A footbridge over the canal arm of the river leading to its riverside terrace appears to be permanently fenced off, so you will probably have to use the drawbridge a little further on and circle around the pub to its main entrance.

D. Twyford Bridge to Yalding Church (1 km)

12. From the pub go back out to the B2162 (Hampstead Lane) and cross the river carefully on the narrow road bridge, using the refuges when necessary to avoid the signal-controlled traffic. On the far side **turn left** onto a footpath across a meadow.
 - If you have not crossed the weir to the pub a more direct route is to cross a footbridge over the River Teise on the other side of Teapot Island and turn left alongside this tributary; a tunnel takes you under the B2162 into the meadow.
13. Follow a clear grassy path through **Yalding Lees**³, crossing a stream on a wooden footbridge along the way and gradually approaching the road on the right. On the far side go out past a vehicle barrier and turn left onto the B2162, which curves round to the right into the village of **Yalding**.
14. In 200m **turn left** at a road junction onto the B2010 (the village High Street). Cross the **River Beult** on **Town Bridge**⁴. On the far side bear right into the churchyard, going through the lychgate and up a short path. Turn left in front of the church of **Ss Peter and Paul**⁵ (which is worth a visit) to come to its main entrance.



E. Yalding Church to Riverside House • Cheveney Mill (1¼ km)

15. If leaving the church turn right to continue along the tarmac path through the churchyard, ignoring another path leading back out to the B2010. At the far end leave through a gap in the brick wall and turn right onto a footpath, going through a wooden side gate. Go past a cemetery and keep right where the path splits (the left fork leads to allotments).
16. Follow the path down a slope, round a left-hand bend and between a children's playground and a small car park for **The Kintons**. Continue along the left-hand side of this recreation ground, with a wood on your left. In the corner keep ahead on a fenced path between the wood and a field, later passing a fine redbrick house off to the left, **Warde's Moat**⁶.
17. At the end go through a new wooden kissing gate and turn right onto a short grassy verge alongside a lane (Vicarage Road). Halfway along you pass the gated entrance to another historic house, **Cheveney** (not visible from the road, though you can glimpse its landscaped gardens). At the end of the verge cross the road and go over a stile into a meadow, with two footpaths signposted.
18. Take the clear grassy path going straight ahead across this wildflower meadow (there is little or no trace of the second footpath to its right). On the far side go over a stile onto the driveway to Riverside House and Cheveney Farm, where the Main Walk continues in the same direction along the broad grassy track opposite.

If you are doing the Short Walk (omitting Hunton), turn right onto the driveway and continue the directions at \$I.

F. Riverside House to Hunton Church (1¾ km)

19. For the **Main Walk** go straight across the driveway and make your way over an awkward stile next to a metal fieldgate, with a ground-level footpath waymarker. There is soon a large farm field on the left and later another on the right as you head towards the buildings of Grove Farm, 600m away.
At one time these extensive fields were laid out with numerous neat rows of crops but when last checked had either been left fallow or abandoned to weeds.
20. As you approach Grove Farm keep ahead, passing a raised bank on the left (holding a reservoir) and if necessary going through a wooden kissing gate to the left of a fieldgate. Follow the track and then a tarmac driveway between the buildings for 150m. After the last house on the left **turn left** at a post with footpath waymarkers onto a farm track, with a field on the right.
21. After passing some outbuildings and skirting around a metal fieldgate, **fork right** off the main track onto a broad grassy path which swings round to the right to head **E** between a wire fence and a hedge. Later the path narrows, turns right and comes out onto the end of a driveway. Bear left and follow this out between houses to a road (West Street) in the small village of **Hunton**.
22. Ignore a footpath opposite and **turn left** onto the pavement, passing Hunton Village Club (which sometimes hosts a pop-up café). In 175m, immediately after passing **Hunton Court's** South Lodge across the road, **veer left** onto a signposted permissive path running parallel to the road along the edge of a large field. In 500m you come to the field corner, opposite the parish church of **St Mary**⁷ (which is usually locked).

G. Hunton Church to Buston Manor Farm (2 km)

23. At the field corner turn left onto the driveway to Hunton Engineering, which is also a public footpath. At the end go past a double metal fieldgate into the corner of a field, where there are three footpath continuations: ahead, to the right and diagonally across the field.
 - The shortest route is the diagonal one but this could be heavy going, and the narrow path out to the road from the opposite corner might be overgrown. If you decide to take this direct route (saving 150m), go straight across Lughorse Lane and resume the directions at [25].
24. For an easier route, **turn right** to go all the way along the field edge. Go through a gap in the corner and bear left onto a grassy path across a meadow, with new metal gates at both ends. In the far corner join a track leading to a minor road (Lughorse Lane). Turn left and go along the lane for 200m to the road junction with Barn Hill, with a footpath emerging from the left (the exit from the diagonal field route).
25. Go up Barn Hill, signposted to West Farleigh. In 150m, after passing Barnhill House, **turn left** onto a signposted footpath. Go through a side gate beside a metal fieldgate and follow an undulating grassy path heading **NW**. After going through a small dip and through another gate the path climbs more steadily, with views across the Low Weald on your left.
26. Keep ahead at a footpath waymarker post, joining the **Greensand Way**⁸ (GW) from the field on the right. The path climbs past **Malice Wood** on the left and in 500m joins a tarmac driveway going between the buildings of Buston Manor Farm.

H. Buston Manor Farm to Cheveney Mill (2 km)

27. Go through the long farmyard and pass to the left of the final group of buildings, a large barn and then **Buston Manor** behind a high stone wall. Keep ahead briefly on a grassy track between large fields, then in 60m **turn left** off the GW at a footpath waymarker post to go down across the field; if there is no clear path, head for the left-hand end of a line of tall poplars, 250m away.

28. At the bottom of the field go past these trees to continue along the left-hand edge of another field. In the next corner go through a belt of trees to a minor road (Lughorse Lane again). Turn left and go along the lane for 75m, then **turn right** onto a signposted footpath, initially alongside a garden fence.
29. At the end of the garden continue along the right-hand edge of a field. On the far side go over an awkward stile and turn left onto a driveway, leading to a cluster of buildings at Cheveney Farm. At a T-junction turn right and follow the drive for a further 400m, eventually crossing over your outward route by Riverside House.

I. Cheveney Mill to Teapot Island (2¼ km)

30. Follow the driveway out to a road (West Street) with the converted **Cheveney Mill**⁹ opposite. Unless you want to make a brief detour for a view of the building across its former mill pond, **turn right** onto the road, taking care as there is no pavement. The road curves round to the left and comes to a triangular road junction.
31. At this junction **turn left** into Mill Lane, which crosses the **River Beult** and curves round to the right. Shortly after a sharp left-hand bend **turn right** onto a signposted footpath. At first this is a narrow enclosed path but later it broadens into a pleasant tree-lined path alongside the river.
32. Eventually the path swings left and comes out onto the B2162 (Benover Road). Turn right onto the road, passing what used to be The George. Keep ahead at the road junction with the B2010 and retrace your outward route back to Twyford Bridge: along the road for a further 200m and then across Yalding Lees.
33. For the suggested tea place fork right as you approach the B2162 to go under the road through a tunnel. Go along the right-hand field edge to find the footbridge across the **River Teise** leading to the café on **Teapot Island**.

If you want to extend the walk by continuing alongside the River Medway to Watlington station, go to §K.

J. Teapot Island to Yalding Station (1 • 1½ km)

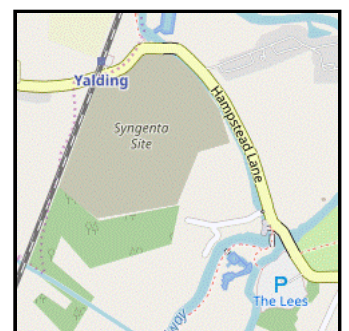
The B2162 offers an easy route to the station alongside the canal, but if you are not pressed for time the route via Yalding Fen in [35] is more adventurous, if slightly awkward in places.

34. Route via the Canal (1 km)

- a. From Teapot Island cross the weir towards the Boathouse pub. Continue along the pavement of the B2162, heading **N** with the canal on your left. The road eventually swings left and crosses the canal above **Hampstead Lock**, with **Hampstead Marina** on the right.
- b. To finish the walk here, ignore a footpath on the right (the continuation of the MVW) and carry on up the road for a further 125m to Yalding station. Go through the station car park to Platform 1 for trains to Paddock Wood.

35. Route via Yalding Fen (1½ km)

- a. From Teapot Island cross the weir towards the Boathouse pub. After passing it **turn left** to cross the canal arm of the river on the drawbridge. Go past the pub's car park and continue along this private road (which is also a public footpath), heading **W**.
- b. Before reaching the last house on this road **go over a stile on the right** onto the continuation of the right of way, a short fenced path. Ignore a fieldgate ahead and **veer left** across a small grassy area.
- c. Go over a stile and bear right onto a broad grassy avenue heading **W** through a community orchard, passing an information panel showing a 'Meadow Discovery Trail' around **Yalding Fen**¹⁰.



- d. At the end of the avenue go over a stile and **turn right** as indicated onto a grassy path skirting around a pond.
 - For a longer exploration of this small wildlife area you could turn left instead, following the nature trail shown on the information panel. The outward route on a boardwalk through a meadow is obvious but the continuation back to the public footpath is less clear, with few waymarkers.
- e. On the far side of the pond the public footpath straightens out to head **W** again. Keep ahead at path crossings, eventually passing another pond on the right and going up a short slope to the railway line. Go over a stile and cross the tracks carefully (with Yalding station visible off to the right, 500m away).
- f. Follow the path down to the right and over another stile. You might have to negotiate a short but potentially waterlogged path along the edge of some wet woodland before emerging into a field. Keep ahead along its right-hand edge.
- g. Ignore tempting paths curving into the field to stay near its edge. Your final hazard is a narrow and possibly overgrown path between garden hedges leading out onto the B2162.
- h. Turn right onto the road and go over the level crossing. To finish the walk here, go through the station car park to Platform 1 for trains to Paddock Wood.

If you want to extend the walk by continuing alongside the River Medway to Watlington station, carry on past the station for 125m to Hampstead Marina and resume the directions at [37] in §K.

K. Teapot Island to Watlington Station (3¾ km)

36. From Teapot Island cross the weir towards the Boathouse pub. Continue along the pavement of the B2162, heading **N** with the canal on your left. The road eventually swings left and crosses the canal above **Hampstead Lock**, with **Hampstead Marina** on the right.
37. At the marina take the footpath with MVW and GW waymarkers, heading **N**. In 100m **fork right** off the GW to stay alongside the canal. In 250m the canal rejoins the main branch of the River Medway and the remainder of this section is alongside it.
38. Along the way you get a view of **Kenward House**¹¹, 400m away across the river, and soon afterwards **Nettlestead Place**¹² ahead on your left. Just past the manor house there is a path off to the left across the railway tracks, but unless you want to make an out-and-back detour to the church of **St Mary the Virgin**, continue along the riverside path.
39. In a further 500m the path crosses a stream on a wooden footbridge and the final 300m is on a driveway between a caravan park and boats moored on the river. Go past a wooden fieldgate and take either of two tarmac driveways past the (closed) Riverside Restaurant up to the minor road on **Bow Bridge**.
40. The refreshment choices here are the **Ramblers Rest Café** in **Medway Wharf Marina** (in an old boat house on the other side of the river), and **The Railway** pub off to the left across the main road. To finish the walk, go over the level crossing and veer right to go through the small station car park. For trains to Paddock Wood, cross the footbridge to Platform 1.

Walk Notes

1. The **Medway Valley Walk** runs for 45 km, between Tonbridge and Rochester. Apart from a stretch alongside the canal arm of the river at Yalding, the waymarked route covered in this walk is entirely on public footpaths close to the river.
2. **Twyford Bridge** was constructed in the 14thC on the site of the original Saxon village ('twin ford') where a branch of the River Teise flowed into the Medway. The settlement moved to its present location at Yalding because of flooding. It is a Grade I listed ancient monument.

3. **Yalding Lees** is a floodplain meadow at the confluence of three rivers, with a diverse habitat of grasses and wildflowers. It is cut for hay each summer.
4. **Yalding Town Bridge** was constructed in the 15thC across the flood plain of the River Beult. It is the longest stone bridge in Kent and the passing place in the middle was added in the 19thC to alleviate traffic problems on this narrow bridge. It is a Grade I listed ancient monument.
5. **Ss Peter and Paul, Yalding** is a Grade I listed building which was begun in the 13thC and extended in the 14-15thC. The unusual round stair turret with onion dome on the corner of the tower was added in the 18thC. A leaflet by "Kent Men of the Trees" describes the unusual trees in its churchyard.
6. **Warde's Moat** was built as the vicarage in the late 18thC. The side extensions were added in the 1880s and its attic converted to a third storey in the early 20thC. It is surrounded by a moat and listed Grade II.
7. **St Mary, Hunton** is a Grade I listed building which was begun in the 12thC but has been much altered and extended in later periods. It contains a monument to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Prime Minister 1905-08 and owner of Hunton Court.
8. The **Greensand Way** follows the course of a sandstone ridge just to the south of the North Downs. It runs for 175 km from Hamstreet in Kent to Haslemere in Surrey.
9. **Cheveney Mill** was a flour mill before being converted to generate electricity for the houses on the Cheveney estate. The large rooms and hall became the **Cheveney Institute**, a venue for village events. It was used as a war hospital in World War I and housed prisoners of war in World War II before being sold and converted into private apartments.
10. **Yalding Fen** is a small but diverse habitat of meadows, lowland fen, orchard and woodland, managed jointly by the **Medway Valley Countryside Partnership** and Yalding parish council.
11. **Kenward House** was a Dr Barnardo's children's home from 1942-67 and is now a centre for the rehabilitation of people with alcohol and drug addictions.
12. **Nettlestead Place** is a medieval manor house dating from the 13thC, greatly extended by Reginald de Pympe in the 15thC. The main house and separate 14thC gatehouse are both listed Grade I. After being used as an oast house for two centuries it was restored as a private house in the 1920s and is now a wedding venue. The 10 acre garden is occasionally open to the public on NGS Open Days.

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