

Paddock Wood to Yalding walk

An easy walk in an attractive part of the Medway Valley

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| Length | <p>Main Walk: 18 km[†] (11.2 miles). Four hours 5 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 9 hours.</p> <p>Short Walk, omitting Hunton: 12¼ km[†] (7.6 miles). Two hours 40 minutes walking time.</p> <p>[†] Add 2¾ km (1.7 miles; 40 minutes) if continuing along the Medway Valley Walk to Wateringbury station. See Walk Options below.</p> |
| 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). |
| Features | <p>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 industrial estate to the north of the railway. However, prospects soon 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 popular riverside lunch places on Teapot Island, with the opportunity to visit “the largest teapot exhibition in England” (over 8,000); admission to its exhibition is £2.50 (2019).</p> <p>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.</p> |
| Walk Options | <p>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.</p> <p>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 use the directions in one of these companion walks: the Wateringbury Circular walk or the East Malling to Maidstone walk.</p> |
| 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 line, which branches off the main line at Paddock Wood. There is an hourly off-peak service to Maidstone West and Strood on this section of the line. Buy a **return to Yalding** (or Wateringbury if you might want to finish there). This is valid for returning to London via Paddock Wood and Tonbridge, 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 £6.40 Mon–Fri, £3.50 Sat, £1 Sun & BH (2020). 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 There are two popular refreshment places on the banks of the River Medway at **Twyford Bridge**, after 6¾ km. The **Boathouse** pub (01622-814359) is on the north bank, opposite the “bistro-style café” on **Teapot Island** (01622-814541; closes for several weeks in winter). These are the suggested lunch and tea stops respectively, but you could choose to have a light lunch in the café or carry on for ten minutes into **Yalding**, where **The George** is a traditional village pub with a large beer garden, serving inexpensive basic food.

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. Allow 15 minutes to reach Yalding station by road, or at least 20-25 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** (0333-666 6364; 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; closed Mon) is on the B2015 opposite the station car park.

Help Us! After the walk, we would love to get your feedback

You can 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

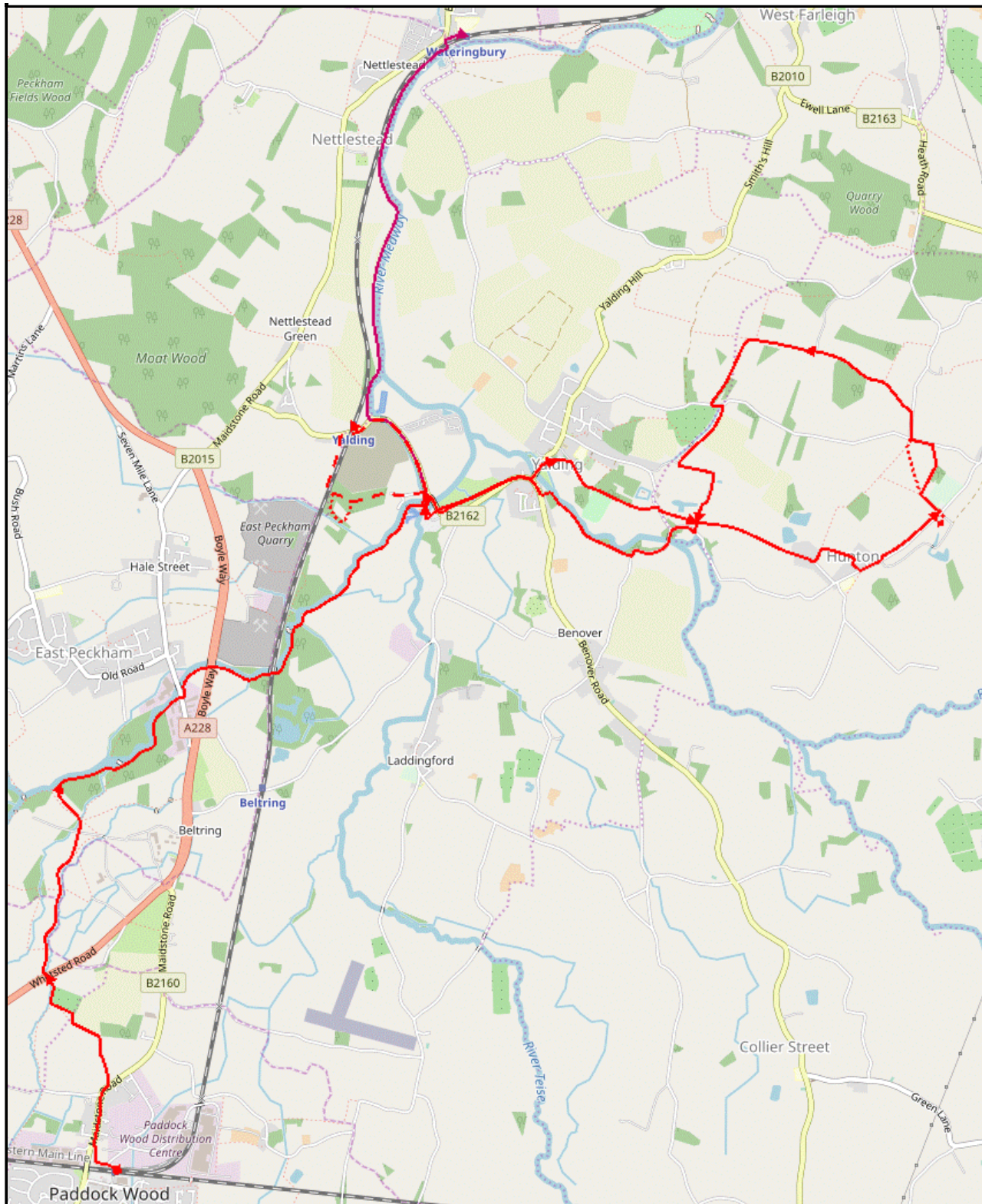
Help National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234

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Walk Directions

Walk Map



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Walk Options

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 **cross the road carefully** and take the signposted footpath through a small gap in the trees into a field. Go along the broad grassy field margin with a stream and a 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 ignore a footpath off to the left to continue on a grassy path near the brook. In 400m keep ahead at a signposted path crossing.
5. About 75m after the brook has curved to the right **turn half-left** at a footpath signpost to head **NNE** across the meadow, with no clear path. In 200m go straight across a track in the meadow (leading to a car-wide bridge across a stream on the left) and keep ahead for 75m to reach a new wooden footbridge across the stream, where a signpost indicates that five footpaths meet.
6. Cross the 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)

7. This section simply follows the MVW, with the meandering river close by on your left throughout (ignore footbridges across the river at **Sluice Weir Lock** and later at the disused **Stoneham Lock**). Apart from a short stretch either side of Branbridges Road where the riverside path has to squeeze past a small industrial estate, this section is through a pleasant mix of open and wooded countryside.
After crossing Branbridges Road the right of way used to go straight ahead through the industrial estate, but the MVW signpost now directs walkers along a new path back to and alongside the river. This looks more sensible but it is possible that the original route might be reinstated.
8. After Branbridges Road the path goes under the busy A228 and then the Medway Valley branch line. There is a long rural stretch after Stoneham Lock, before eventually you pass an estate of Park Homes and come to a weir in front of the medieval **Twyford Bridge**². The café garden of **Teapot Island** is on your right; to reach the **Boathouse** pub, carry on across the weir and go over the canal arm of the river on a footbridge.

D. Twyford Bridge to Yalding Church (1 km)

9. From the pub go back across the canal on the footbridge. Turn right onto 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, **Yalding Lees**³.
 - If you have not crossed the weir to the pub a more direct route onto The Lees 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.
10. Follow a clear grassy path through the meadow, 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 vehicle barriers and turn left onto the B2162. Follow the road for 200m as it curves round to the right and comes to a road junction in the village of **Yalding**.



11. Unless you want to visit the alternative lunch pub (**The George** is just past this junction), **turn left** onto the B2010 and cross **Town Bridge**⁴ over the **River Beult**. On the far side go through its lychgate and up a short path to the parish church of **Ss Peter & Paul**⁵, which is worth a visit: its entrance is round to the left.

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

12. From the entrance ignore another path going back out to the B2010 and take the tarmac path heading **E** through the churchyard. Go out 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).
13. 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.
14. 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). At the end of the verge cross the road and go over a stile into a wildflower meadow.
15. Take the left-hand of the two footpaths indicated, a clear grassy path going straight ahead across the meadow (off to the left you might be able to glimpse Cheveney's landscaped gardens through the trees). 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)

16. For the **Main Walk** go 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 with neat rows of crops on the left and later another on the right as you head towards the buildings of Grove Farm, 600m away.
17. As you approach these buildings go past a raised bank on the left (holding a reservoir) and 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.
18. After passing some outbuildings on your left and skirting around a metal fieldgate, **fork right** off the main track onto a broad grassy path which swings round in front of another metal fieldgate 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**.
19. 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)

20. 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 [22].

21. 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. In the far left-hand corner join a track leading onto 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).
22. 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.
23. 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)

24. 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. **The next turning is easy to miss**. In 60m **turn left** off the GW at a low 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.
25. 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 between wooden barriers and 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.
26. At the end of the garden continue along the right-hand edge of a field. On the far side go over a 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)

27. 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 passes a footpath on the right (another route across the wildflower meadow).
28. In 150m **turn left** at a triangular road junction 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.
29. Eventually the path swings left and goes past a pub's beer garden to the B2162 (Benover Road). Turn right onto the road and go past **The George**. Keep ahead at the road junction with the B2010, going back towards Twyford Bridge.
30. You now retrace your outward route back to Teapot Island: along the road for a further 200m and then across Yalding Lees. For the suggested tea place fork right as you approach the B2162 to go under it through a tunnel. Keep ahead along the right-hand edge of a field to the corner and cross the **River Teise** on a footbridge to reach 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)

31. From Teapot Island cross the weir towards the Boathouse pub. Go between the pub and the B2162 to a private road which crosses the canal on a drawbridge.
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 [33] is more adventurous, if slightly awkward in places.
32. **Route via the Canal (1 km)**
 - a. Ignore the drawbridge and make your way onto the B2162 to head **N** along its pavement, alongside 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 and Tonbridge.

33. Route via Yalding Fen (1½ km)

- a. **Turn left** onto the private road (which is also a public footpath), going over the drawbridge and past the Boathouse car park. Before reaching the last house on this road **go over a stile on the right** onto the continuation of the footpath, a short fenced path leading to a small grassy area.
- b. Ignore a fieldgate ahead and **veer left** across the grass. 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. At the end 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.
- c. 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). Follow the path down to the right and over another stile.
- d. You 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. Shortly before reaching the far side **fork right** onto a narrow and potentially overgrown path between garden hedges (the left fork leads to a private garden).
- e. At the end turn right onto the B2162 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 and Tonbridge.

If you want to extend the walk by continuing alongside the River Medway to Wateringbury station, carry on past the station for 125m to Hampstead Marina and resume the directions at [35] in §K.

K. Teapot Island to Wateringbury Station (3¾ km)

34. Ignore the drawbridge and make your way onto the B2162 to head **N** along its pavement, alongside the canal on your left. The road eventually swings left and crosses the canal above **Hampstead Lock**, with **Hampstead Marina** on the right.
35. At the marina take the footpath with MVW and GW waymarkers, heading **N**. In 100m **fork right** to stay alongside the canal (leaving the GW). In 250m the canal rejoins the main branch of the River Medway and the remainder of this section is alongside it.
36. 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**, carry on along the riverside path.
37. 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**.
38. 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 **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 and Tonbridge, 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 & 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 WWI and housed prisoners of war in WWII before being sold and converted into private apartments.
10. **Yalding Fen** is a small but very 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 II. 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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