



Shoreham Circular (Figure-of-8) walk

The steep-sided hills above an attractive village in the Darent valley.



Length	<p>Main Walk: 20 km (12.4 miles). Five hours walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 9 hours.</p> <p>Alternative Walk: 15¼ km (9.4 miles). Three hours 45 minutes walking time.</p> <p>Short Walk (north): 10½ km (6.5 miles). Two hours 30 minutes walking time.</p> <p>Short Walk (south): 9½ km (5.9 miles). Two hours 25 minutes walking time.</p>
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OS Map	Explorer 147. Shoreham, map reference TQ526615, is in Kent, 7 km N of Sevenoaks.
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Toughness	6 out of 10 (4 for the Alternative Walk, 3 for the Short Walks).
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Features	<p>This walk consists of two loops around the attractive Kent village of Shoreham, nestling in the valley carved out of the North Downs by the River Darent. There is a good mix of woodland and open countryside with some fine views from the steep-sided hills overlooking the valley, interspersed with easier stretches along the valley floor.</p> <p>The northern loop initially follows the route of the Otford to Eynsford walk (1-23), starting with an attractive riverside stretch alongside The Mount Vineyard and a climb up the western side of the valley. It takes a similar route through Lullingstone Country Park, an attractive landscape of chalk grassland and ancient woodland with an internationally important collection of veteran trees, then drops down 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</p>
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(freely open to the public at all times) and a **World Garden** with plants from around the globe, open Thu–Sun from April to October; admission (2024) is £9. The route back to Shoreham is along the **Darent Valley Path** and passes extensive **lavender** fields at **Castle Farm**.

The southern loop goes through a couple of small nature reserves on the hillside to the south-east of Shoreham and joins the route of the Eynsford Circular via Otford walk (#59) into the village of **Otford**, passing its scale model of the **Solar System**. The village has many interesting old buildings and the full route takes you past the ruins of **Otford Palace**, a rival to Hampton Court in Tudor times. The remainder of this loop follows the ‘longer afternoon’ route of Walk #59 along the wooded hills on the western side of the valley.

Walk Options

Shorter alternatives are provided for both the northern and southern loops, and these have been combined to make an **Alternative Walk** with the southern loop first and the northern loop in the opposite direction. This version of the northern loop essentially follows the waymarked **Samuel Palmer Trail**, exploring landscapes painted by the artist.

The Figure-of-8 shape of the Main Walk means that you can also do the northern and southern loops as separate **Short Walks** of around 10 km each.

A few other variations are mentioned in the directions. In addition you could devise your own route through Lullingstone Park using any of its waymarked trails from the Visitor Centre. You could also curtail the Main Walk by diverting to **Otford** station on the southern loop.

Transport

Shoreham is on the Blackfriars to Sevenoaks line, with a half-hourly stopping service taking about an hour. You can also take a fast train from Victoria or Charing Cross and change at Bromley South or Swanley for the Sevenoaks train. Unless you intend to finish at Otford (which is one stop further out, with additional fast services), **buy a return to Shoreham (Kent)**, not Shoreham-by-Sea.

If you have a Travelcard the Boundary Zone 6 station is St Mary Cray, but a London Freedom Pass is valid as far as Swanley (in TfL Zone 8).

If you wanted to abandon the walk there is a very limited bus service (Mon–Sat) along the A225 between Sevenoaks and Swanley, but it will nearly always be better to head for the nearest station.

If driving, there is a small car park “free for rail users” at Shoreham station. There is also a free car park in the village, but this is 800m from the station and there should be space in Station Road (or a lay-by on the A225) at weekends.

Suggested Train

Take the train nearest to **09:45** from **Blackfriars** (or **Victoria**) to **Shoreham (Kent)**. If you want to do one of the Short Walks with just an afternoon tea stop, take the train nearest to **12:15**.

Lunch

There is a good choice of lunch places in **Shoreham**, after 9–10 km on the **Main Walk**. The first place you come to is **The Crown** (01959-522903; food to 2pm Mon–Wed, 3pm Fri–Sun, closed Thu) at the northern end of

Shoreham's High Street. At the other end of the village is the equally good **Kings Arms** (01959-523100; open again after its fire in March 2022). A little further along Church Street the route passes a restaurant and a coffee shop at **The Mount Vineyard** (01959-524008; open Wed–Sun) and **The Samuel Palmer** (01959-525442), an up-market pub/restaurant on the site of Ye Olde George Inn.

The **Alternative Walk** also passes all these places (after 6½–7½ km), but in the reverse order.

*Shoreham used to have another pub but the **Two Brewers** has permanently closed.*

Tea At the end of the walk in **Shoreham** there are the same pubs, plus a couple of tearooms on its High Street: one at the **Shoreham Aircraft Museum** (01959-524416; open weekends to 4pm); and **The Honey Pot Café & Tea Rooms** (07546-696623; open to 4pm Fri–Sun). The **Coffee Box** at the vineyard is open weekends to 3pm and tea might also be available at the church on Sundays in August.

On the return leg of the northern loop a convenient place to break for refreshment is the **Lullingstone Café** in the Country Park Visitor Centre (01322-865995; open to 5pm summer, 4pm weekends & 3pm weekdays in winter).

On the southern loop there are three tearooms in **Oxford**: **The Olive Tree** in the **Hospices of Hope** charity shop (01959-524322; open to 5pm Sat & Mon–Fri summer, 4pm Sun & Mon–Fri winter); **Sally's Cake Emporium** (01959-928447; open to 4pm Tue–Sun); and the **Pond View Café** (01959-522150; open daily to 4.30pm). There are also two pubs on the High Street, **The Bull** (01959-580585) and **The Woodman** (01959-522195).

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** TN14 7RT

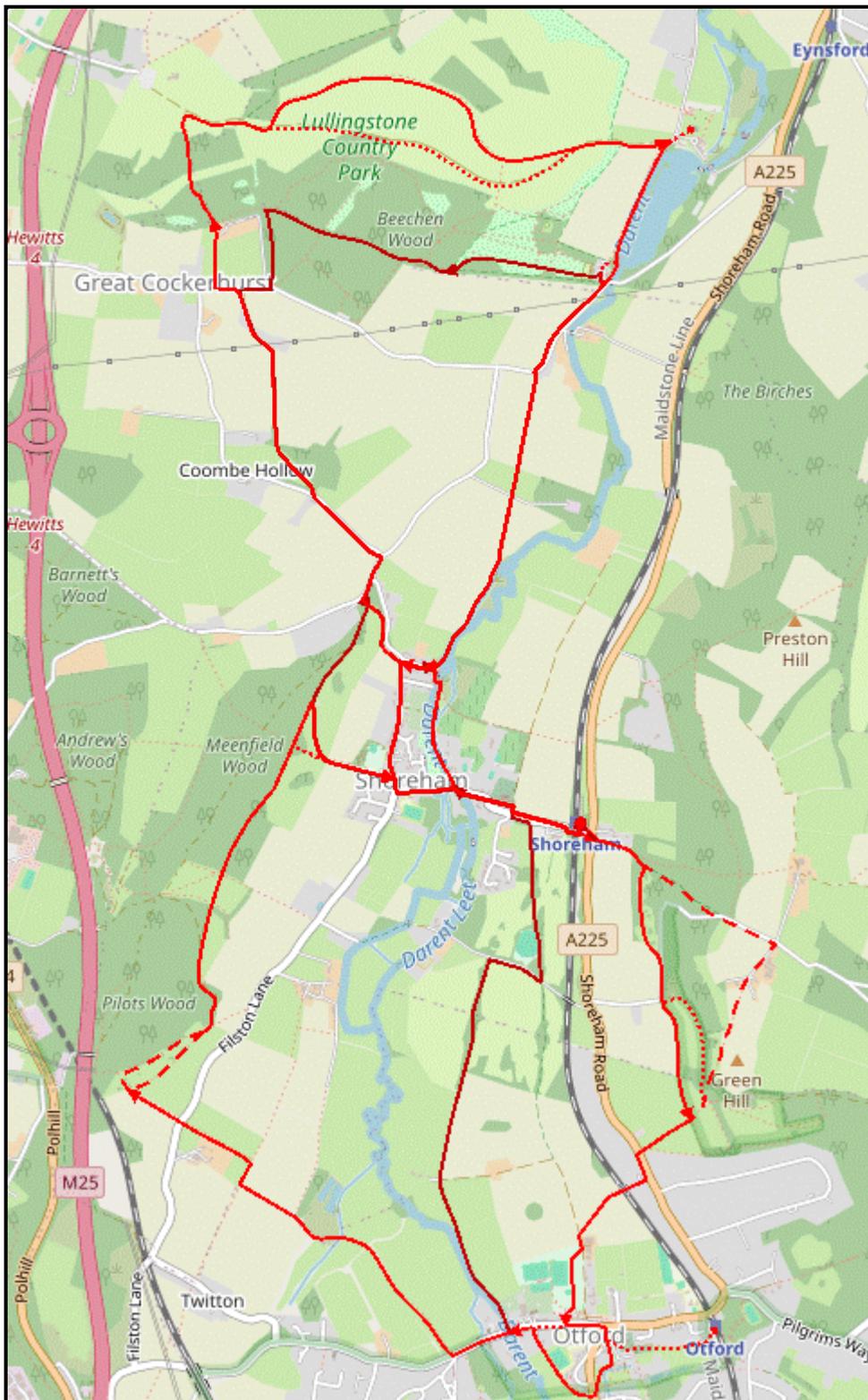
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Walk Directions

Walk Map



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Walk Options

M. Main Walk (20 km)

- a. Alternative Walk (15¼ km)
- b. Short Walk (north) (10½ km)
- c. Short Walk (south) (9½ km)

Walk Directions

If you are doing the Alternative Walk or the Short Walk (south), start at [29] in §F.

A. Shoreham Station to Shoreham High Street (1¼ km)

1. From the platform do not go out along the station approach road, but **turn right** and go down a flight of steps near the footbridge. Go under the railway bridge on Station Road and **veer right** into a large field to take a new permissive path along its edge, parallel to the road.
2. In the next corner follow the field edge briefly round to the right, joining the **Darent Valley Path**¹ (DVP), then **turn left** through a kissing gate in a low flint wall into the churchyard, the starting point of the **Samuel Palmer Trail**² (SPT). Follow the tree-lined path past the church of **Ss Peter and Paul**³, which is well worth visiting.
You will have another chance to visit this church later in the walk.
3. Go out through its lychgate, with **The Samuel Palmer** pub/restaurant opposite. Follow the road (now Church Street) gently downhill, passing a driveway leading to **The Mount Vineyard**⁴ on the right. At the bottom the road bends right to run alongside a branch of the River Darent for a short distance.
For the next 2½ km you will be following the Walk 1-23 route.
4. Do not cross the river on the road bridge but keep ahead onto Darent Way, passing the **War Memorial**⁵ on the riverbank. Pass to the left of **Water House**⁶ and follow the tree-lined riverside path.
5. After passing a few properties the vineyard is visible off to the right, beyond an orchard. At the far end cross the river on a footbridge and follow the path alongside the garden fence for Mill House.
6. After passing the entrance to the house leave the DVP & SPT (a footpath off to the right, which is the return route) and go up Mill Lane to its T-junction with the High Street. Cross the road carefully onto the footpath opposite.

B. Shoreham High Street to Upper Beechen Wood (2¼ km)

7. Follow the enclosed footpath alongside the main road. In 100m go through a metal kissing gate and turn right to follow a line of wooden posts curving round the edge of a large field, climbing steadily. At the top go through another kissing gate and keep ahead on a short track through a belt of trees.
8. Go past a vehicle barrier onto Shacklands Road and turn right to go downhill, **taking care as there is no pavement**. You will be turning left at the second road junction, into Cockerhurst Road.
 - On the left just before this junction, if you go up a few steps in the bank you will discover a curious **memorial stone**⁷.
9. Go along the tree-lined Cockerhurst Road for 350m, through a small dip and then steadily uphill. Opposite the first house on the left (Coombe Vale) **turn right** through a gap in the trees onto a signposted footpath, which winds through a scrubby area and then broadens out to continue climbing between a wire fence and shrubs.
10. At the top follow the path round to the right and go over an old stile to head **N** along the left-hand edge of a large field, towards the buildings of Homewood Farm. On the far side bear left onto a narrow path beside a wooden fence and continue along the farm's concrete driveway to a narrow road with high hedges (Redmans Lane).
11. **Turn left** onto the lane (leaving the Walk 1-23 route), **taking care as there is no pavement**. In 100m **turn right** up steps in the bank onto a signposted footpath along the left-hand edge of a field, then past farm sheds. At the end go through a metal gate into **Upper Beechen Wood**, part of **Lullingstone Country Park**⁸. Almost immediately you come to a path crossing with a wooden signpost.

C. Upper Beechen Wood to Lullingstone Castle (3 km)

There are many possible routes through this country park, although the waymarked trails through the woodland lead directly to the Visitor Centre rather than Lullingstone Castle. For a longer route you could follow the waymarked Lullingstone Loop in a clockwise direction all the way around the park's northern perimeter.

12. For the suggested route **keep ahead** at the crosspaths, initially following a black arrow waymarker for the **Lullingstone Loop** (LL). The woodland path winds downhill for 200m, turning right at a marker post near the bottom to come to a golf fairway. Cross this carefully, watching out for **golfers playing from left to right**. Head for a gap in the trees opposite and continue on a path climbing gently through a copse.
13. At the top keep to the left of a golf green and follow a line of tall trees to meet a surfaced path by a footpath signpost. **Turn right** onto the path, now also on a horse route (blue arrows). Follow the path round a left-hand bend and then **keep right** in front of a small wood, leaving the LL which enters the wood.
14. After another left-hand bend the horse route goes straight ahead down the valley, but for better views **fork left** to stay on the surfaced path alongside the wood.
 - The horse route goes all the way along the valley floor, with the main route rejoining from the left at an oblique path crossing near the far side of the country park. If you take this straightforward alternative route (saving 200m), resume the directions at [18].
15. On the suggested route the surfaced path curves round to the right and passes a maintenance area after 250m. It then turns half-left and becomes a broad grassy path. Ignore ways off and stay on the main path as it heads roughly **E**, with a belt of trees on the right after 250m.
16. Carry on alongside these trees, in a further 250m also with a wood on the left. Later the path turns half-right and gently descends through the golf course, heading **SE** with fine views across the Darent valley. Keep ahead at path crossings, with the path gradually curving left.
17. In 250m the path bears left around the back of a slightly elevated golf tee to head **E** again, with **Orchid Bank** sloping down to the right. Follow the path down a long gentle slope for 300m to an oblique path crossing, where you **turn half-left** to rejoin the horse route you were on earlier.
18. In 200m the horse route comes to a metal fieldgate on the edge of the country park, by the left-hand edge of some trees. Go past the gate onto a permissive path curving downhill alongside a farm field. At the bottom go through a gap in the hedge into a small parking area, where the route continues to the right.
 - It is worth detouring left to view the imposing entrance to **Lullingstone Castle** and going through its **Tudor Gatehouse**⁹ to visit the unusual parish church of **St Botolph**¹⁰. This "Church on the Lawn" is open to the public at all times, even though you might have to unhook a chain before walking across the manor house's private lawn to reach it.

D. Lullingstone Castle to Shoreham (Mill Lane) (2½ km)

19. At the back of the parking area go through a wooden kissing gate to continue on an attractive tree-lined path alongside the River Darent, with glimpses of a large fishing lake beyond it.
20. In 600m the DVP swings left to skirt around a building in the trees ahead. The straightforward route is to stay on the riverside path, passing a wooden **sculpture**¹¹ by a footbridge over the river and coming out onto Castle Road.
 - If you want to break for refreshment **veer right** onto one of the paths through the trees and go around a children's playground to the **Visitor Centre**, which has a **café**. Afterwards, go out on its short access drive to Castle Road.

21. Where the drive meets Castle Road go through a wooden kissing gate onto a signposted permissive footpath (not the path or horse ride coming down from the country park). This broad path runs parallel to Castle Road, with a large lavender field beyond the fence on your right. In 250m there is a wide gap in the hedge on your left.
 - You could detour through this gap and go across the road into Castle Farm, whose **Hop Shop** sells local farm produce and snacks.
22. At the end of the permissive path go down a few steps and cross the road carefully (slightly to the left) to pick up the continuation of the DVP, a broad path between farm fields (with hops on the left and more lavender fields behind them).
23. Follow this well-defined path across several fields, going through a line of poplars and over an access road along the way, to the corner of a field in front of a line of trees.
24. Go through a wooden kissing gate and continue along a fenced path, with glimpses of the river behind the trees. After another gate a tree-lined stretch alongside the river leads to Mill Lane on the outskirts of Shoreham.

E. Mill Lane to Shoreham Station (1½ km)

25. Bear right to go up Mill Lane, briefly repeating a short section of your outward route. At the top **turn left** onto the High Street to come to the suggested lunch pub, **The Crown**. In a further 400m the tearoom for the **Shoreham Aircraft Museum**¹² is up a track on the right (The Landway).
26. Head **S** along the High Street from The Landway, soon passing another tearoom on the left, the **Honey Pot Café**. At the next junction **turn left** into Church Street, in 175m passing the **Kings Arms**¹³ on the right. After crossing the River Darent stay on Church Street as it swings right, alongside a branch of the river.
27. You now retrace your outward route towards the station. You pass the driveway leading to **The Mount Vineyard** (which has a restaurant and a coffee shop) and **The Samuel Palmer** pub/restaurant, then go through the churchyard and along the right-hand field edge to return to the road by the railway bridge. Unless you are finishing a Short Walk here, go up to the T-junction with the A225.

28. Finishing at Shoreham Station

If finishing the walk here, go under the railway bridge and **turn left up steps** to the station forecourt. Cross the footbridge to Platform 1 for trains to London.

F. Shoreham Station to Fackenden Down (1½ • 2 km)

29. Starting from Shoreham Station

If starting the walk here, go out along the short station approach road to the main road.

30. Cross the A225 with great care and take the track to the right of the house opposite, signposted as a public bridleway and climbing gently. Shortly after the track bends right ignore a signposted footpath off to the left and continue briefly along the bridleway.
31. **The next turning is easy to miss**. In 50m there are paths off to both sides from the broad grassy path going straight up the hill ahead (which is not the route). The main route is a narrow unmarked path off to the right, but if access through this small nature reserve is not possible (eg. during conservation work), take the alternative route in [33] along rights of way.

32. Main route

- a. **Turn right** onto the narrow path along the side of **White Hill**¹⁴, going through a belt of trees after 125m to continue along a broad grassy strip. After a further 200m the path curves left in front of a field and goes up the edge of the nature reserve.
- b. At the top make your way out past a vehicle barrier and turn right onto Fackenden Lane. Where the road turns sharply right after 175m, **go through a squeeze gate** to the left of a metal fieldgate onto **Fackenden Down**¹⁵.
- c. The straightforward route is to follow the broad grassy strip between hedges running along the bottom of this nature reserve for 500m, going over a slight rise along the way. Eventually you meet a broad grassy path between fences coming down from the left (the alternative route) and **turn right**.
 - For better views you could venture up the hillside at the entrance to Fackenden Down; there is a narrow permissive path along the top of this nature reserve which also leads into the alternative route.

33. Alternative route (+½ km)

- a. **Turn left** onto the continuation of the bridleway (with a ground-level concrete marker) and follow it up the wooded **White Hill** for 400m, climbing quite steeply in places. At the top turn left onto Fackenden Lane.
- b. In 250m **turn right** into the driveway to Warren Farm, signposted as a public footpath. Go over a stile to the right of a fieldgate and follow the long straight drive past farm buildings.
- c. At the end of the drive go through a metal kissing gate (just off to the right) to follow a grassy path across a field, heading **SSW** towards a wooden fieldgate by the left-hand end of a line of trees.
- d. Go through this fieldgate (or a side gate) to continue in much the same direction through another field, slanting slightly downhill. The grassy path stays just above the bushes and small trees dotted around the bottom of the field and leads to another kissing gate near the bottom corner.
- e. Go through this gate onto a woodland path, slightly to the left. The path gradually approaches a wire fence on the right and after going alongside it for a short distance you emerge onto open access land by a wooden bench at a viewpoint overlooking Otford.
- f. From the bench go straight downhill on a broad grassy path between wire fences (joining the Walk #59 route) and keep ahead at a crosspaths, where the main route joins from the right.

G. Fackenden Down to Otford High Street (1¼ km)

The route into and through Otford is essentially the same as Walk #59.

34. Go through a gate in the hedge and follow the broad grassy path downhill across a couple of wildflower meadows to the A225. Turn left and walk along the right-hand side of this busy road for 125m, **taking care as there is no pavement**. At "Stileways" **turn right** onto a signposted footpath to the left of its driveway. Follow this between garden fences to the railway line and cross the tracks carefully.
35. Go up to a new wooden gate and bear left as indicated to continue alongside a wire fence. At the far end go through a gate, across a farm track and through another gate to drop down onto a track between hedges. **Turn left** and go along this bridleway for 50m.
36. Opposite some stables **turn right** through a gap in the hedge into the corner of Otford's large recreation ground. Directly ahead there are four concrete pillars representing the sun and inner planets of the **Otford Solar System**¹⁶, with an information panel about the model ahead on the right.

37. Take any convenient route across the recreation ground to its large car park on the far side. Go through this to come out onto the High Street opposite one of the village's pubs, **The Bull**.

While crossing the recreation ground you could try to find two more planets: Mars (a ground-level disc between two football pitches) and Jupiter (a pillar by the groundsman's hut on the left-hand boundary hedge).

H. Otford High Street to Millmead (1 • ¼ km)

If you do not want to try any of the other refreshment places and/or see more of the village, you could take the short cut in [39].

38. Main route (1 km)

- a. **Turn left** to head **E** along the High Street (or right if coming out of The Bull). You pass **The Olive Tree** bistro and tearoom on the right (at the back of the **Hospices of Hope** charity shop), opposite **Sally's Cake Emporium**.
- b. The High Street ends at a large roundabout encircling the **village pond**¹⁷, with the **Pond View Café** and **The Woodman** pub ahead on your left. Make your way to the far side of the pond, where there are two footpath signs.
- c. Unless you want to visit the parish church of **St Bartholomew**¹⁸ (via the set of modern doors on its north side) **take the right-hand path** away from the pond, heading **S**.
 - If you want to abandon the walk and return from **Otford station** (500m away), take the left-hand path past the south side of the church and head **E** through the churchyard, with a high brick wall on your left. At the far end go through a wooden gate and follow the enclosed path to the station car park. Platform 1 on the near side is for trains to London.
- d. After passing Chantry Cottage on the left and the elegant **Holmesdale**¹⁹ off to the right you come to a row of cottages built into the walls of the old **Otford Palace**²⁰. **Turn right** to go past the ruined north-west tower and an information panel about the palace.
- e. Follow the tarmac path to the far corner of Palace Field and continue past a small parade of shops. Cross the A225 at a traffic island and take the footpath opposite, alongside extensive water meadows.
- f. The path eventually leads into Pickmoss Lane and back to the High Street, where you turn left. In 75m you pass the timber-framed **Pickmoss**²¹ on the left where the road narrows. A little further on there is a signpost for the **Darent Valley Path**¹ (DVP), with one arm pointing ahead and the other to the right, along the driveway to Millmead and several other properties.



39. Short cut (¼ km)

Turn right to head **W** along the High Street (or left if coming out of The Bull). In 200m you pass the timber-framed **Pickmoss**²¹ on the left where the road narrows. A little further on there is a signpost for the **Darent Valley Path**¹ (DVP), with one arm pointing ahead and the other to the right, along the driveway to Millmead and several other properties.

If you are doing the Alternative Walk, go to §K.

I. Otford (Millmead) to Polhill Bank (2¼ km)

For the next 4 km you will be following the longer afternoon route of Walk #59, as well as weaving in and out of the Walk 1-23 route.

40. Continue along the High Street (which becomes Pilgrims Way West) for a further 250m, crossing several branches of the River Darent and passing **Broughton Manor**²² on the left. Just past a bus shelter (and a Solar System pillar representing the planet Uranus) **turn right** onto a signposted public footpath, going through a metal gate into a meadow.
41. For the next 1¼ km you will be heading **NW** on this footpath towards the oast houses of Sepham Farm, initially across the meadow and then on enclosed paths. In 750m the path swerves left and right and crosses a brook on a concrete slab; keep right as indicated to stay on the public footpath.
42. In a further 200m ignore a footpath off to the right (which leads to a Solar System pillar representing the minor planet Pluto). Continue on a broad grassy track towards the farm buildings, which comes to a T-junction in front of an enclosure.
43. **Turn right** onto another broad grassy track between fences. In 100m **turn left** onto a narrow path with a footpath waymarker, leaving the Walk 1-23 route and heading **NW** again. Follow the path alongside several enclosures, passing the farm buildings off to the left.
44. At the far end **take great care** as the path comes out directly onto a narrow winding lane with limited visibility for drivers. Cross Filston Lane carefully and go up a few steps onto the continuation of the footpath, climbing steadily. In 250m go through a wooden kissing gate onto **Polhill Bank**¹⁵.

J. Polhill Bank to Shoreham High Street (2½ km)

45. You will be leaving this small nature reserve in its right-hand corner, and there are grassy paths along both its top and bottom edges. For the best views, climb steeply up the hillside in front of you to the bench at the top and then descend gently on the upper path; alternatively, simply turn right onto the lower path.
46. The two paths merge at the far end where you leave the reserve through a wooden kissing gate. Go down a slope towards a second gate but **turn left before reaching it** onto an unmarked path into **Pilots Wood**.
47. The path meanders along the bottom edge of the wood, passing a picnic table as it curves left. After a right-hand bend the path straightens out to head **N**, climbing gently with a field behind the fence on your right.
48. **The next turning is easy to miss**. Where the main path bears slightly left away from the fence and before it starts to climb more steeply, **veer right** onto a side path to stay alongside the fence. Follow this narrow path to the edge of the wood, still climbing gently.
49. Leave the wood via a stile and **keep ahead** on a grassy path across a steeply-sloping field. On the far side go through a metal kissing gate to the right of a fieldgate onto a broad woodland path, briefly rejoining the Walk 1-23 route. After a while there are views on the right of Shoreham in the Darent valley below.
50. In 600m you come to a path crossing by a sign for **Meenfield Wood**, where the suggested route is to continue a little further along the hillside before descending into Shoreham.
 - You could head directly for the village (as per the Walk 1-23 route) by turning right at the path crossing, although you would have to descend a potentially slippery flight of steps at the top of this path into Shoreham. If you take this short cut (saving 300m) resume the directions at [53].
51. On the main route carry on along the broad path for a further 200m, then **turn right** through a gap in the hedge into a small enclosure. There is an information panel about the **Shoreham Cross**²³ on the hillside below, and benches to enjoy the view.

52. Leave this enclosure via a gate on the right, taking a new footpath slanting down the hillside past an isolated tree. At the bottom of the field it merges with the main path into the village, coming straight down the hillside from Meenfield Wood.
53. Go through a wooden kissing gate onto a narrow path between hedges. As you descend you pass the entrance to a new **Centenary Wood** and then a recreation ground on the left, now on a narrow tree-lined track (The Landway). The entrance to the **Shoreham Aircraft Museum**¹² (which has a tearoom) is on the right shortly before you reach the bottom of The Landway, where you **turn right** onto the High Street.
- Complete the directions at §P.*

K. Otford (Millmead) to Shoreham Bridge (3 km)

You will be following the shorter afternoon route of Walk #59 into Shoreham and then on to Lullingstone Park.

54. **Turn right** off the High Street onto the driveway, joining the DVP as it runs alongside an old mill-stream. At the far end keep right, taking the path with a waymarker post past allotments and continuing through a wooden swing gate into a meadow.
55. Follow a grassy path alongside the tree-lined river for 300m, then go through a metal kissing gate to continue alongside a fence. Go through more kissing gates by the entrance to Lower Barn Farm and head **N** for a further 1 km, at first along the right-hand edge of a field and then on an enclosed path through a golf course.
56. At a major path junction go past a metal fieldgate and **turn right** onto a driveway. At the next path crossing in 250m, **turn left** onto a path and head **N** again for a further 700m, passing a cricket pitch on your left and continuing across the golf course. The path eventually comes out onto Station Road on the outskirts of Shoreham.
- If you want to abandon the walk, Shoreham station is 200m off to the right.
57. Turn left briefly onto the road, then in 75m **turn right** up a slope into the corner of a large field. Go along the field edge for just 50m, then **turn left** through a kissing gate in a low flint wall into the churchyard, the starting point of the **Samuel Palmer Trail**² (SPT). Follow the tree-lined path past the church of **Ss Peter and Paul**³, which is well worth visiting.
- You will have another chance to visit this church later in the walk.*
58. Go out through its lychgate, with **The Samuel Palmer** pub/restaurant opposite. Follow the road (now Church Street) gently downhill, passing a driveway leading to **The Mount Vineyard**⁴ (which has a restaurant and a coffee shop) on the right. At the bottom the road bends right to run alongside a branch of the River Darent for a short distance.

L. Shoreham Bridge to Mill Lane (1 • ½ km)

If you do not want to visit any of the other refreshment places in the village you can take the more attractive riverside route in [60].

59. Main route (1 km)

- Follow Church Street across the river (leaving the DVP & SPT) to come to the **Kings Arms**¹³ on the left. At the T-junction at the top **turn right** onto the High Street.
- The **Honey Pot Café** is on the right and a little further on the small **Shoreham Aircraft Museum**¹² (which has a tearoom) is on the left.
- The Crown** is near the far end of the village. In a further 100m **turn right** down Mill Lane, back towards the river.
- In 125m (where the lane turns half-right towards the entrance to Mill House) **bear left** onto a footpath, rejoining the waymarked routes.

60. Riverside route (½ km)

- a. Do not cross the river on the road bridge but keep ahead onto Darenth Way, passing the **War Memorial**⁵ on the riverbank. Pass to the left of **Water House**⁶ and follow the tree-lined riverside path.
- b. After passing a few properties the vineyard is visible off to the right, beyond an orchard. At the far end cross the river on a footbridge and follow the path alongside the garden fence for Mill House.
- c. Shortly after passing its entrance, ignore Mill Lane up to the left and **turn right** at a footpath signpost to continue on the DVP & SPT.

M. Mill Lane to Beechen Wood (2½ km)

61. Go along the footpath, with a mill-stream and then the river on your right. In 150m go through a wooden kissing gate and continue on a fenced path along the right-hand edge of several fields. The path leads into the corner of another field and bears left to go diagonally across it, towards the centre of a line of poplars 400m away.
62. Go across an access road, up a slope and through the line of trees to continue on a broad grassy path, later with a hop field on your right. The path comes out onto a lane (Castle Road) at a bend. Cross the road carefully (slightly to the left) and go up a few steps onto a permissive path running alongside it, with a large lavender field beyond the fence on your left. In 250m there is a wide gap in the hedge on your right.
 - You could detour through this gap and go across the road into Castle Farm, whose **Hop Shop** sells local farm produce and snacks.
63. At the end of the permissive path go through a gate to return to Castle Road by the entrance to **Lullingstone Country Park**⁸, where you will be leaving the DVP but continuing on the SPT. **Veer left** into the car park for the Visitor Centre (which has a café).
64. Go all the way up the left-hand side of the broad grassy slope in front of the Visitor Centre, with increasingly fine views along the Darent valley towards Eynsford, 2 km away to the right. At the top veer left to go through a wide gap in the corner into **Lower Beechen Wood**.

N. Beechen Wood to Darenthdale (3 km)

65. Follow the waymarkers for the Lullingstone Loop (black arrows) and Woodland Walk (white arrows) through the wood, briefly overlapping with a horse route (blue arrows). There are several metal kissing gates to negotiate before the woodland path drops down to cross a small open valley, where you pass a wooden post identifying an instance of **Phoenix Regeneration**²⁴ on the right.
66. Follow the path back uphill into **Upper Beechen Wood**. In 200m keep ahead where the Woodland Walk branches off to the right. In a further 50m **turn left** at another path junction, staying on the SPT but leaving the Lullingstone Loop.
67. Follow the path through a hazel coppice for 300m, forking right as indicated halfway along. At the end of the wood go over a stile to emerge onto a minor road (Redmans Lane). Turn right and go along this narrow road with high hedges, **taking care as there is no pavement**.
68. In 125m **turn left** onto the driveway to Homewood Farm, signposted as a public footpath. At the end of the drive continue on a narrow path beside a wooden fence, which comes out into the corner of a large field.
69. Bear right to go along its edge, heading **S** with a hedge on your right. On the far side go over an old stile and round to the left to go downhill on a broad grassy path between a wire fence and shrubs. At the bottom follow the path through a scrubby area and out to a lane (Cockerhurst Road).

70. Turn left and follow this quiet tree-lined lane for 350m, steadily downhill and then up a short rise. At a T-junction turn right onto Castle Farm Road, **taking care as there is no pavement** and rather more traffic.
- On the right just beyond this junction, if you go up a few steps in the bank you will discover a curious **memorial stone**⁷.
71. Go uphill on Castle Farm Road and its continuation (Shacklands Road). 100m after the junction with Shoreham's High Street, **turn left** past a metal vehicle barrier onto a short track through a belt of trees (not the sunken path on its left). There is a tree-lined path leading off to the right, just before the track drops down to a metal fieldgate leading into a large field.

O. Darentdale to Shoreham High Street (1 • ¾ km)

The main route climbs gently along the hillside to the Shoreham Cross before descending into the village, but for a slightly easier route you can take the short cut in [73].

72. Main route (1 km)

- For the suggested route **turn right** onto the tree-lined path, which soon starts to climb gently. In 200m keep left at a sign for **Meenfield Wood**, ignoring a bridleway going up into the wood. Go past a metal vehicle barrier and continue along a broad path between a hedge and the wood, with views on the left of Shoreham in the Darent valley below.
- In 300m **turn left** through a gap in the hedge into a small enclosure. There is an information panel about the **Shoreham Cross**²³ on the hillside below, and benches to enjoy the view.
- Leave this enclosure via a gate on the right, taking a new footpath slanting down the hillside past an isolated tree. At the bottom of the field it merges with the main path into the village, coming straight down the hillside from Meenfield Wood.
- Go through a wooden kissing gate onto a narrow path between hedges. As you descend you pass the entrance to a new **Centenary Wood** and then a recreation ground on the left, now on a narrow tree-lined track (The Landway). The entrance to the **Shoreham Aircraft Museum**¹² (which has a tearoom) is on the right shortly before you reach the bottom of The Landway, where you **turn right** onto the High Street.

73. Short cut (¾ km)

- Go through a metal kissing gate to the left of the fieldgate ahead and follow a line of wooden posts curving round the edge of the field, gently downhill. At the end go through another kissing gate and along an enclosed footpath to come out onto the High Street, opposite Mill Lane.
- Turn right onto the road through the village, retracing the main outward route and soon passing **The Crown**. In a further 400m the tearoom for the **Shoreham Aircraft Museum**¹² is up a track on the right (The Landway).

P. Shoreham High Street to Shoreham Station (1 km)

74. Head **S** along the High Street from The Landway, soon passing another tearoom on the left, the **Honey Pot Café**. At the next junction **turn left** into Church Street, in 175m passing the **Kings Arms**¹³ on the right. After crossing the River Darent stay on Church Street as it swings right, alongside a branch of the river.
75. Shortly after the road has curved round to the left and started to climb, there is a driveway on the left leading to **The Mount Vineyard**⁴ (which has a restaurant and a coffee shop). At the top of the slope the road turns sharply right by **The Samuel Palmer** pub/restaurant.



76. Instead of following this street (now Station Road) all the way to the station, go through the lychgate ahead. Follow the tree-lined path past the church of **Ss Peter and Paul**³, which is well worth visiting. At the far end go out through a wooden swing gate and turn right to go along the edge of a large field.
77. In the field corner **veer left** onto a new permissive path alongside the boundary hedge, parallel to Station Road. In the next corner rejoin the road to go under the railway bridge and **turn left up steps** to the station forecourt. Cross the footbridge to Platform 1 for trains to London.

Walk Notes

1. 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.
2. The **Samuel Palmer Trail** is an 8½ km circular walk around Shoreham and Lullingstone Park, exploring the landscapes of this “valley of vision” painted by the artist. A free audio-visual guide is available from the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme.
3. **Ss Peter and Paul, Shoreham** dates from Norman times and has many interesting features, all described in an informative Visitor's Guide. They include an outstanding wooden rood screen spanning the width of the building and some fine stained glass windows, including one by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Burne-Jones.
4. **The Mount Vineyard** was planted in 2004 and produced its first harvest in 2008. Eight grape varieties are now grown on the 10 acre site, producing award-winning red, white, rosé and sparkling wines.
5. The **War Memorial** in Darenth Way is inscribed *Remember as you look at the cross on the hill those who gave their lives for their country 1914-1919*.
6. **Water House** is associated with **Samuel Palmer** (1805-1881), one of the group of artists influenced by William Blake who called themselves *The Ancients*. He lived in the village from 1826 to 1835, for some of the time with his father (also called Samuel) who had rented Water House.
7. The **memorial stone** was erected in 1928 by a local Catholic woman (Miss Maud Berkeley) in memory of her late father, Dr EJG Berkeley; she also erected a large crucifix but this was vandalised and later removed to a monastery. The inscription *Behold therefore I will allure her and will lead her into the Wilderness and there I will speak to her heart* is from Hosea 2:14.
8. **Lullingstone Country 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”.
9. The **Tudor Gatehouse of Lullingstone Castle** was one of the earliest all-brick buildings in Britain.
10. **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.
11. The wooden **fish sculpture** was unveiled in 2004 “to celebrate the restoration of the River Darent”.
12. The **Shoreham Aircraft Museum** was founded by volunteers in 1978 and holds donated items and aviation relics from the crash sites of local British and German aircraft in World War II.
13. The **Kings Arms** still has its **ostler box**, a shelter at the front of the pub for the person who used to attend to horses at coaching inns.
14. **White Hill Nature Reserve** is one of 36 sites in the UK managed by Butterfly Conservation. An observation on its web site (“...frequented by dog walkers”) implies that this small area of scrub and chalk grassland is open access but there is no information panel at the site to confirm this.

15. **Fackenden Down** and **Polhill Bank** are Local Nature Reserves managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust. These areas of chalk grassland support many varieties of orchid.
16. The **Otford Solar System** is a scale model showing the relative position of the sun and planets at the start of the millennium. The pillars representing the outer planets are scattered around the village, the furthest over 1 km away at the 1:5 billion scale used.
17. **Otford Pond** is one of many protected structures in the village, which has led to claims that its duckhouse is Britain's smallest listed building.
18. **St Bartholomew, Otford** dates from the 11thC; construction began in 1060 with the tower added in around 1185. It contains a large marble memorial to Charles and David Polhill, descendants of Oliver Cromwell.
19. **Holmesdale** was converted to a pair of semi-detached homes in the 1720s. The original property was built in the 1600s and its large width suggests that it might have had some industrial purpose.
20. **Otford Palace** was created by Archbishop Warham in 1514, a year before Cardinal Wolsey (his rival and successor as Lord Chancellor) began the construction of Hampton Court Palace. Both were subsequently taken over by Henry VIII but Otford (in its unfavourable marshy location) fell into ruins while Hampton Court expanded into a major royal palace.
21. **Pickmoss** resembles a genuine medieval hall house but is actually the result of an extensive refurbishment in the 1950s. A small Elizabethan house and a pair of unrelated cottages were amalgamated and a typical Elizabethan frontage added to give the appearance of a single large property.
22. The 16thC **Broughton Manor** was originally a Crown property housing part of the retinue at Otford Palace.
23. The **Shoreham Cross** was cut into the chalk hillside above the village in 1920, to commemorate those who lost their lives in World War I.
24. **Phoenix Regeneration** is a process whereby a fallen tree is able to regrow from roots formed where its trunk touches the ground. The hazel tree on the right of the path fell in the 1987 storm.

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