



Shoreham Circular (Figure-of-8) walk

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

Length **Main Walk:** 19¾ km (12.3 miles). Five hours 5 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 9 hours.

Alternative Walk: 15½ km (9.6 miles). Four hours walking time.

Short Walk (north): 10½ km (6.5 miles). Two hours 40 minutes walking time.

Short Walk (south): 9¼ km (5.7 miles). Two hours 20 minutes walking time.

OS Map Explorer 147. Shoreham, map reference TQ526615, is in Kent, 7 km N of Sevenoaks.

Toughness 6 out of 10 (5 for the Alternative Walk, 3 for the Short Walks).

Features 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.

The northern loop initially follows the route of the Otford to Eynsford walk (1–23) and takes a similar route through **Lullingstone Park**, an attractive landscape of chalk grassland and ancient woodland with an internationally important collection of veteran trees. It comes out by **Lullingstone Castle** (01322-862114), a historic manor house which can be visited (but with limited opening hours). Its grounds contain an unusual parish church (open to the public at all times) and a **World Garden** with plants from around the globe, open Fri–Sun afternoons between April and end-October; admission (2020) is £9. The route back to Shoreham is along the **Darent Valley Path** and passes extensive **lavender** fields at **Castle Farm**, while in Shoreham itself **The Mount Vineyard** is usually open for tastings at weekends (it also has a restaurant).

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 walk (#59) into and through 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. The shape of the main Figure-of-8 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 cut the Main Walk short 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 59 minutes. You can also take a fast train from Victoria to Bromley South and change there for the Sevenoaks train. Unless you intend to finish at Otford (which is one stop further out, with additional fast services to Victoria), **buy a return to Shoreham (Kent)**, not Shoreham-by-Sea.

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

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 are three pubs in the small village of **Shoreham**. On the **Main Walk** you pass these after 9–10 km: the **Crown** (01959-522903) on the High Street, followed by the **Kings Arms** (01959-523100) and **Ye Olde George Inn** (01959-522017) on Church Street. The **Alternative Walk** passes the same three pubs (after 6½–7½ km), but in the reverse order.

Shoreham used to have a fourth pub but the Two Brewers has become a weekend-only restaurant.

Tea



At the end of the walk in **Shoreham** there are the same three pubs, plus a couple of tearooms on its High Street: one at the **Shoreham Aircraft Museum** (01959-524416; open to 4.30pm on summer weekends); and the **Honey Pot Café & Tea Rooms** (07546-696623; open to 4.30pm Wed–Thu, 5pm Fri–Sun). Tea might also be available at the church on summer Sundays.

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, 3.30pm winter).

On the southern loop there are two tearooms in **Otford**: the **Otford Tea Rooms** at the back of the **Hospices of Hope** charity shop (01959-524322; open to 5pm Sat & Mon–Fri summer, 4pm Sun & Mon–Fri winter); and the **Pond View Café** (01959-522150; open daily to 4.30pm). There are also two pubs on the High Street, the **Bull** (01959-523198) and the **Woodman** (01959-522195).

Help Us!

After the walk, we would love to get your feedback

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

**By Car**

Start TN14 7RT

Help

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

Version

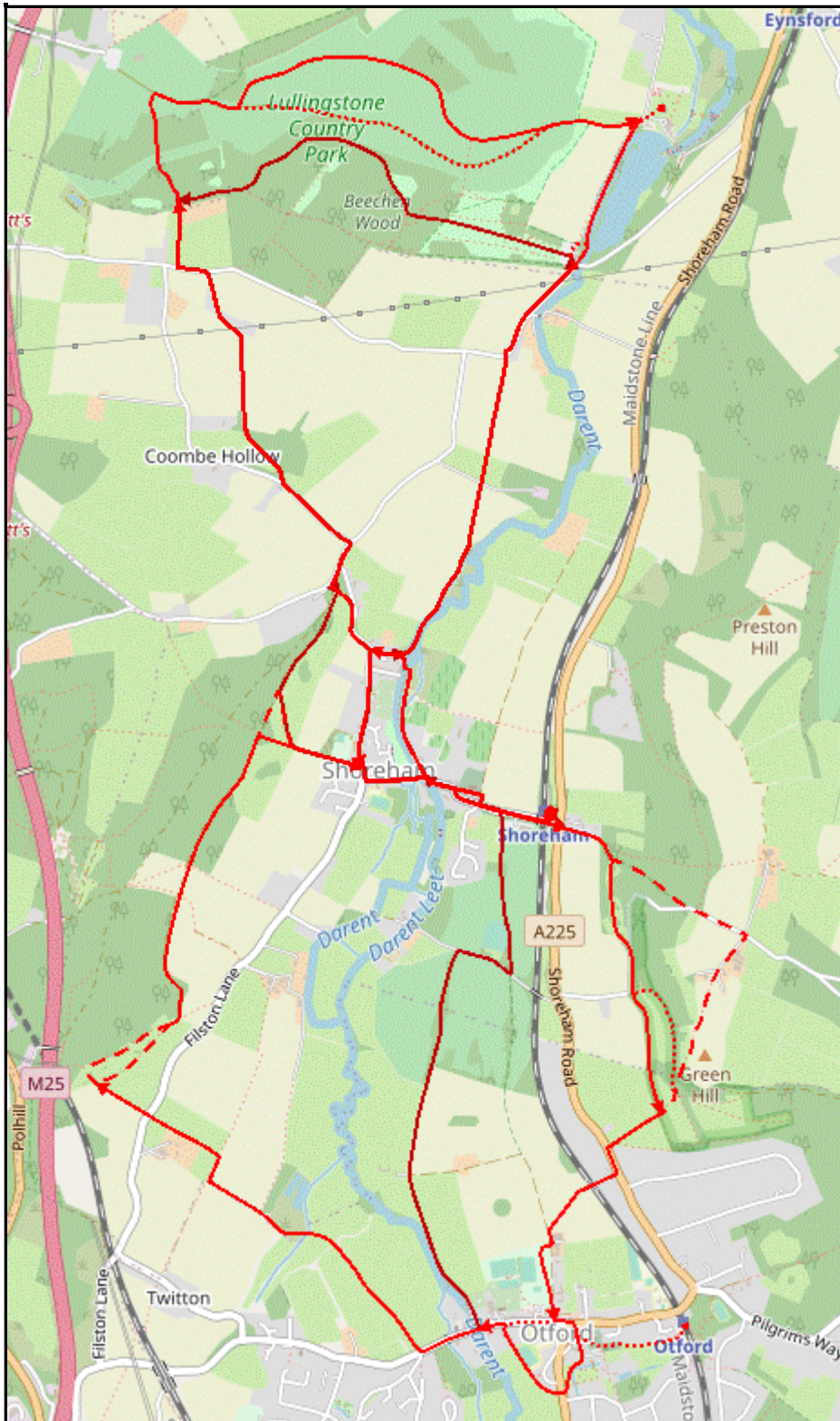
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Walk Directions

Walk Map



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Walk Options

- M. Main Walk (19¾ km)**
- a. Alternative Walk (15½ km)**
- b. Short Walk (north) (10½ km)**
- c. Short Walk (south) (9¼ km)**

Walk Directions

If you are doing the Alternative Walk or the Short Walk (south), start at [25] 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. At the bottom turn right onto Station Road, passing under the railway bridge. Shortly after the entrance to Darent Valley Golf Club you join the **Darent Valley Path**¹ (DVP), coming into Station Road from a footpath on the left.
2. Unless you want to detour through the churchyard – you will get another chance to visit the church when you come back this way in §Q – ignore a footpath on the right after 75m. The road curves right and then makes a sharp left-hand turn by **Ye Olde George Inn**. Follow the road (now Church Street) gently downhill, bending right at the bottom 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.

3. Do **not** cross the river on the road bridge but keep ahead onto Darent Way, passing the **War Memorial**² on the riverbank. Pass to the left of **Water House**³ and follow the attractive riverside path, later with an orchard on your right.
4. At the far end cross the river on a footbridge and follow the path alongside the garden fence for Mill House. After passing the entrance to the house leave the DVP (a footpath off to the right, which is the return route) and go up Mill Lane up to its T-junction with Shoreham's High Street. Cross the road carefully onto a raised footpath opposite.

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

5. 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.
6. 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.
 - Just before this junction, up a few steps in the bank on the left, there is a curious **memorial stone**⁴ which is worth a look.
7. 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.
8. 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).
9. **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 of the path go through a metal gate – easier than the rather daunting step ladder – into **Upper Beechen Wood**, part of **Lullingstone Park**⁵. 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.

10. 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.
11. 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.
12. After another left-hand bend the horse route goes straight ahead down the valley, but the suggested route is to stay on the surfaced path as it curves left alongside the wood.
 - Alternatively you could stay on the horse route, but there are better views from the higher-level route described here (which rejoins the horse route in 1½ km, on the far side of the park).
13. 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. Keep alongside these, in 250m also with a wood on the left. In a further 150m the path turns half-right and gently descends through the golf course, heading **SE** with fine views across the Darent valley.
14. Keep ahead at path crossings, gradually curving left. 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 your 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.
15. 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 down towards the imposing **Tudor Gatehouse**⁶ of **Lullingstone Castle**. At the bottom of the slope the path leads into a small parking area where the route continues to the right.
 - It is well worth detouring through the Gatehouse entrance to visit the unusual parish church of **St Botolph**⁷. This "Church on the Lawn" is open to the public at all times, even though you might have to unhook a chain and walk across the private lawn of Lullingstone Castle to reach it.

D. Lullingstone Castle to Shoreham High Street (3 km)

16. At the back of the parking area go through a wooden kissing gate onto an attractive tree-lined path, rejoining the DVP. The path goes alongside the river for 600m, with glimpses of a large fishing lake beyond it. Eventually it swings left past the back of the country park's **Visitor Centre**.
17. The straightforward route is to stay on the riverside path (passing a footbridge over the river where there is a wooden **sculpture**⁸) to 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 find the **Lullingstone Café** in the Country Park Visitor Centre. Afterwards, go out on its short driveway.
18. Either way, where the drive meets Castle Road, continue through a wooden kissing gate onto a signposted permissive footpath (not the path or horse ride coming down from the country park). Follow this broad path as it 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.
19. 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).

20. 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. Go through a wooden kissing gate and continue along a fenced path, with glimpses of the river behind the trees on your left. After another gate a tree-lined stretch alongside the river leads to Mill Lane on the outskirts of Shoreham.
21. Bear right to go up Mill Lane, briefly repeating a short section of your outward route. At the top **turn left** onto Shoreham's High Street, a route which will take you past all of the village's refreshment places. You soon pass the **Crown** and 300m later the **Two Brewers** restaurant, both on your left. In a further 100m the tearoom for the **Shoreham Aircraft Museum**⁹ is up a track on the right (The Landway).

If you are doing the Short Walk, complete the directions at §Q.

E. Shoreham High Street to the A225 (1 km)

22. 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**¹⁰ on the right.
23. After crossing the River Darent stay on Church Street as it turns right to go alongside a branch of the river, then curves round to the left and uphill. Halfway up the slope you pass a driveway leading to **The Mount Vineyard**¹¹ on the left and come to **Ye Olde George Inn** at the top.
24. You will have another chance to detour through the churchyard ahead so the suggested route is simply to follow the street (now Station Road) all the way out to its T-junction with the A225.

F. The A225 by Shoreham Station to Fackenden Down (1½ • 2 km)

25. Starting from Shoreham Station

If starting the walk here, go out along the short station approach road to the A225.

26. Cross the main road 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.
27. **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 in [28] is a narrow unmarked path off to the right, while the continuation of the right of way in [29] is a path on the left with a ground-level concrete bridleway marker.

The main route goes through a small nature reserve where access might not be possible (eg. during conservation work), hence the alternative route along rights of way.

28. Main route

- a. **Turn right** onto the narrow path along the side of **White Hill**¹², 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**¹³.
- 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.

29. Alternative route (+½ km)

- Turn left** and follow the bridleway up the wooded **White Hill** for 400m, climbing quite steeply in places. At the top turn left onto Fackenden Lane.
- 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.
- At the end of the drive go over a stile in the fence ahead (just off to the right) to follow a faint grassy path across a field, heading **SSW** towards a wooden fieldgate by the left-hand end of a line of trees. Go through a metal kissing gate to the left of this fieldgate into another field, with no clear path ahead.
- The exit from this field is an inconspicuous stile, near the bottom of the the tree line 250m ahead as it slopes down to the right. Continue in much the same direction as before, staying just above the bushes and small trees dotted around the bottom of the field, to pick up a faint grassy path leading to this stile.
- Go over the stile onto a woodland path, slightly to the left. After going alongside a wire fence on your right you emerge onto open access land and meet a broad grassy path coming down the slope on your left (the Walk #59 route), where there is a wooden bench at a viewpoint overlooking Otford.
- Follow this path downhill between wire fences and keep ahead at a crosspaths, where the main route joins from the right.

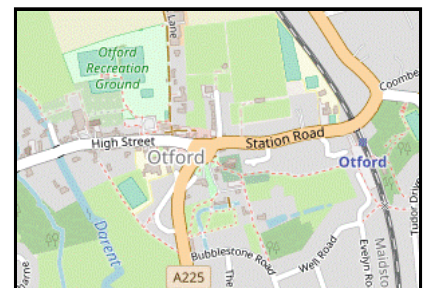
G. Fackenden Down to Otford High Street (1¼ km)

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

- Go over a stile 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.
- 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, then **go over a stile on the right** into the corner of a large recreation ground.
 - The concrete pillars representing the sun and inner planets of the **Otford Solar System**¹⁴ model are in front of you, with an information panel up ahead by the hedge.
- Take any convenient route across the recreation ground to the far left-hand corner (if you stay near the left-hand side you will pass the pillar representing the planet Jupiter by a groundsman's hut). Go through one of the gaps in the hedge to return to the bridleway and follow it out to Otford's High Street, with the **Hospices of Hope** tearoom opposite.

H. Around Otford (1 km)

- Unless you want to cut out the short loop around this village, **turn left** onto the High Street (or right if coming out of the tearoom).
 - To skip most of this section you can go along the High Street in the opposite direction for 200m, passing the **Bull** pub along the way; the main route joins from Pickmoss Lane on the left. If you take this short cut, resume the directions at [39].
- On the full walk you soon come to a large roundabout encircling the **village pond**¹⁵, with the **Pond View Café** and the **Woodman** pub on your left.



35. Make your way to the far side of the pond where there are two footpath signs, with the left-hand path leading to the parish church of **St Bartholomew**¹⁶.
 - If you want to visit the church its entrance is a set of modern doors on the north side.
 - If you want to abandon the walk and return from **Otford station** (500m away), take the left-hand path going past the south side of the church. Continue along the left-hand side of the churchyard and then an enclosed path to the station car park. Platform 1 on the near side is for trains to London.
36. To continue the walk **take the right-hand path** away from the pond, heading **S**. After passing Chantry Cottage on the left and the elegant **Holmesdale**¹⁷ off to the right you come to a row of cottages built into the walls of the old **Otford Palace**¹⁸.
37. **Turn right** to go past the ruined north-west tower and an information panel about the palace. Follow the tarmac path to the far corner of Palace Field and continue past a small parade of shops.
38. Cross the A225 at a traffic island and take the footpath opposite, alongside extensive water meadows. This eventually leads into Pickmoss Lane and back to the High Street, where you turn left.
39. Head **W** along the High Street, passing the timber-framed **Pickmoss**¹⁹ on your left. In 100m there is a signpost pointing right for the **Darent Valley Path**¹ (DVP).
If you are doing the Alternative Walk, go to §K.

I. Otford High Street 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**²⁰ 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 a neglected orchard.
43. **Turn right** past a metal fieldgate, briefly going along the edge of a large field. In 100m **turn left** through a wooden kissing gate, leaving the Walk 1–23 route and heading **NW** again. Follow the footpath alongside the orchard and underneath power lines.
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 to continue on the footpath opposite, climbing steadily. In 250m go through a wooden kissing gate onto **Polhill Bank**¹³.

J. Polhill Bank to Shoreham High Street (2¼ km)

45. You will be leaving this small nature reserve in its right-hand corner. There are grassy paths along both its top and bottom edges, so you can either:
 - Turn right and go along the lower path, or
 - Climb steeply up the hillside in front of you (with fine views from a bench at the top) and then descend gently on the upper 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**. This meanders along the bottom edge of this open access wood, passing a picnic table at a left-hand bend.
47. After a right-hand bend the path straightens out to head **N**, climbing gently with a field behind the fence on your right. Where the main path bears slightly left away from the fence and starts to climb more steeply, **veer right** onto an **easily-missed narrow path** to stay alongside the fence. Follow this side path to the edge of the wood, still climbing gently.
48. Leave the wood via a stile and **keep ahead** on a level course across a steeply-sloping field, ignoring a grassy path sloping down to the right. On the far side go through a metal kissing gate to the right of a fieldgate onto a broad woodland path, rejoining the Walk 1–23 route. After a while there are views on the right of Shoreham in the Darent valley below, and in 600m you come to a path crossing by a sign for **Meenfield Wood** and an information panel.
49. Unless you want a closer view of the Shoreham Cross, **turn right** to descend a (potentially slippery) flight of steps and continue down the left-hand edge of a field.

50. Detour to the Shoreham Cross (+300m)

- Continue along the broad path at the bottom of the wood for a further 200m, then **turn right** through a gap in the hedge onto a small grassy area with benches above the **Shoreham Cross**²¹. Leave the area via a gate on the right, taking a newly-designated public footpath which slopes down the hillside past an isolated tree and goes through a wide gap in the boundary fence.
51. At the bottom of the field go through a wooden kissing gate onto a narrow path between hedges, down the hillside. On the left you pass the entrance to a new **Centenary Wood** and continue down a tree-lined track (The Landway). After passing a recreation ground the entrance to the **Shoreham Aircraft Museum**⁹ (which has a tearoom) is on the right. At the bottom of The Landway **turn right** onto Shoreham's High Street.
Complete the directions at §Q.

K. Otford High Street to Shoreham Bridge (3 km)

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

52. **Turn right** onto the signposted DVP, the driveway to Millmead and several other properties. At the end of the drive take the path to the right of "The Chalet", past allotments and through a wooden swing gate into a meadow.
53. Follow a grassy path alongside the 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.
54. At a major path junction go through wooden barriers and **turn right** onto a tarmac lane. 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, its station is 200m off to the right.
55. Turn left onto the road. Unless you want to detour through the churchyard – you will get another chance to visit the church when you come back this way in §Q – ignore a footpath on the right after 75m. The road curves right and then makes a sharp left-hand turn by **Ye Olde George Inn**. Follow the road (now Church Street) gently downhill, bending right at the bottom to run alongside a branch of the River Darent for a short distance.

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

For a choice of more pubs and tearooms, take the main route through the village. If you do not want to visit any of these places you can take the more attractive riverside route.

56. Main route (1 km)

- a. Follow the road across the river (leaving the DVP) to come to the **Kings Arms**¹⁰ on the left. At the top of Church Street **turn right** onto Shoreham's High Street, where the **Honey Pot Café** is on the right.
- b. A little further on the small **Shoreham Aircraft Museum**⁹ (which has a tearoom) is on the left and the **Two Brewers** restaurant on the right. The **Crown** is at the far end of the village.
- c. Continue for 100m past the last pub and **turn right** down Mill Lane. In 125m (where it turns half-right towards the entrance to Mill House) **bear left** off the lane onto a footpath, rejoining the DVP.

57. Riverside route (½ km)

- a. Do not cross the river on the road bridge but keep ahead onto Darent Way, passing the **War Memorial**² on the riverbank. Pass to the left of **Water House**³ and follow the attractive riverside path, later with an orchard on your right.
- b. At the far end cross the river on a footbridge and follow the path alongside the garden fence for Mill House. Shortly after passing its entrance, ignore Mill Lane up to the left and **turn right** at a footpath signpost to continue on the DVP.

M. Mill Lane to Lullingstone Park Visitor Centre (1¾ km)

58. 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.
59. Go across an access road, up a slope and through the line of trees to continue on a broad grassy path between fields. You pass a hop field on your right and 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.
60. At the end of the permissive path go through a gate to return to Castle Road by the entrance to **Lullingstone Park**⁵. **Veer left** into the car park for the Visitor Centre (which has a café).

N. The Visitor Centre to Upper Beechen Wood (2 km)

You could pick up a leaflet showing the waymarked trails through Lullingstone Park at the Visitor Centre. The suggested route follows parts of these trails: a children's Discovery Trail, the Woodland Walk and the Lullingstone Loop.

61. For the suggested route go all the way up the right-hand side of the broad grassy slope in front of the Visitor Centre. A mown path leads to a wooden fieldgate into the wood at the top, where there are fine views along the Darent valley towards Eynsford and its railway viaduct, 2 km off to the right.
62. Go through the fieldgate into **Lower Beechen Wood**, passing some "Mega Beasts" on the Discovery Trail (red arrows). Follow this waymarked trail through the wood, turning right at a T-junction where there is a signpost pointing back to the Visitor Centre. Along the next stretch there are several little detours to children's activity areas. The path eventually drops down past a metal fieldgate and goes across the end of a small open valley.
63. Ignore a gate leading onto the golf course and keep ahead on a path climbing into **Upper Beechen Wood**, now also following a horse route (blue arrows). At the top of a small rise **turn left** past a metal fieldgate, switching to the Woodland Walk (white arrows). Follow this trail as it meanders through the ancient woodland, gently uphill and gradually curving round to the left.

64. In 500m **keep right** at some path junctions, switching to the Lullingstone Loop (black arrows) where the Woodland Walk turns back towards the visitor centre. In 250m you come to a crosspaths with a wooden footpath signpost and **turn left** to leave the wood through a metal gate.

O. Upper Beechen Wood to Darentdale (2 km)

65. Follow the footpath past farm sheds and then along the right-hand edge of a field to a narrow road with high hedges (Redmans Lane). Turn left onto the road, **taking care as there is no pavement**. In 100m **turn right** past a metal fieldgate onto the driveway to Homewood Farm (which is also a public footpath).
66. At the far end keep ahead on a narrow path beside a wooden fence, which comes out into the corner of a large field. Bear right to go along the right-hand edge of the field, 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.
67. At the bottom follow the path through a scrubby area and out to a lane (Cockerhurst Road). 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.
- Just past this junction, up a few steps in the bank on the right, there is a curious **memorial stone**⁴ which is worth a look.
68. 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.

P. 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 [70].

69. 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 onto a small grassy area with benches above the **Shoreham Cross**²¹. Leave the area via a gate on the right, taking a newly-designated public footpath which slopes down the hillside past an isolated tree and goes through a wide gap in the boundary fence.
- At the bottom of the field go through a wooden kissing gate onto a narrow path between hedges, down the hillside. On the left you pass the entrance to a new **Centenary Wood** and continue down a tree-lined track (The Landway). After passing a recreation ground the entrance to the **Shoreham Aircraft Museum**⁹ (which has a tearoom) is on the right. At the bottom of The Landway **turn right** onto Shoreham's High Street.

70. 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 Shoreham's High Street, opposite Mill Lane.
- Turn right to go along the High Street, retracing the main outward route. You soon pass the **Crown** and 300m later the **Two Brewers** restaurant, both on your left. In a further 100m the tearoom for the **Shoreham Aircraft Museum**⁹ is up a track on the right (The Landway).

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

71. 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**¹⁰ on the right.
72. After crossing the River Darent stay on Church Street as it turns right to go alongside a branch of the river, then curves round to the left and uphill. Halfway up the slope you pass a driveway leading to **The Mount Vineyard**¹¹ on the left and come to **Ye Olde George Inn** at the top.
73. If you have already visited the parish church you could follow the street (now Station Road) round to the right and all the way to the station, but otherwise the suggested route is to go through the lychgate ahead. Follow the tree-lined path past the church of **Ss Peter and Paul**²² (which is well worth visiting) and out through a wooden swing gate at the far end.
74. **Turn right** and go along the field edge. The right of way leads out past a fieldgate to Station Road where you would turn left, but locals seem to prefer an unofficial path inside the field, squeezing past a vehicle barrier to leave in the next corner. Either way, follow the road under the railway bridge and then **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 **War Memorial** in Darent Way is inscribed *Remember as you look at the cross on the hill those who gave their lives for their country 1914-1919*.
3. **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.
4. The **memorial stone** was erected in 1928 by a local Catholic woman (Miss Maud Berkeley) in memory of her late father, Dr E.J.G. 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.
5. **Lullingstone Park** was a medieval deer park in the estate of Lullingstone Castle. Some of its veteran trees (notably oak, hornbeam, beech and sweet chestnut) are over 500 years old. The park was used as a decoy airfield in World War II and as a result Shoreham was dubbed "the most heavily bombed village in Britain".
6. The **Tudor Gatehouse** of **Lullingstone Castle** was one of the earliest all-brick buildings in Britain.
7. **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.
8. The wooden **fish sculpture** was unveiled in 2004 "to celebrate the restoration of the River Darent".
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. **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.
12. **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.
13. **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.

14. 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.
15. **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.
16. **St Bartholomew, Otford** dates from the 11thC; construction began in 1060 with the tower being added in around 1185. It contains a large marble memorial to Charles and David Polhill, descendants of Oliver Cromwell.
17. **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.
18. **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.
19. **Pickmoss** resembles a genuine medieval hall house but it 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.
20. The 16thC **Broughton Manor** was originally a Crown property housing part of the retinue at Otford Palace.
21. 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.
22. **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.

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