

Walk 3: Shoreham to Eynsford

Walk between two well-served railway stations through the glorious Darent valley, following the course of a trout river through water meadows and past historic buildings

How long? 2.5hrs/4.2 miles

Public transport: Thameslink and Southeastern trains run a regular service to Shoreham and Eynsford (on the London Blackfriars to Sevenoaks line). Arriva Kent's 403 bus from Bluewater to Tunbridge Wells is hourly.

Parking: if you want to make it a 'there and back' walk park on Station Rd, Shoreham
Start of walk: Shoreham railway station or war memorial
Steep slopes? Tiny one (20m) in Lullingstone park, so not really
Kid friendly? Loads to interest children but 4.2 miles will be a bit long for some

Walk and local highlights

Delightful 15th-century village houses; the Water House; Shoreham Aircraft Museum, with tea shop attached; sparkling wine specialist Mount Vineyard (open on Sundays); Castle Farm shop and lavender fields, Lullingstone visitors' centre and Lullingstone Castle with Tom Hart Dyke's World Garden. Lullingstone Roman Villa (superb), Eagle Heights Bird of Prey centre (also superb). Plenty of pubs at either end.

Covered on Ordnance Survey Explorer 147 map

More info on at localkentwalks.wordpress.com and shoreham-village.co.uk



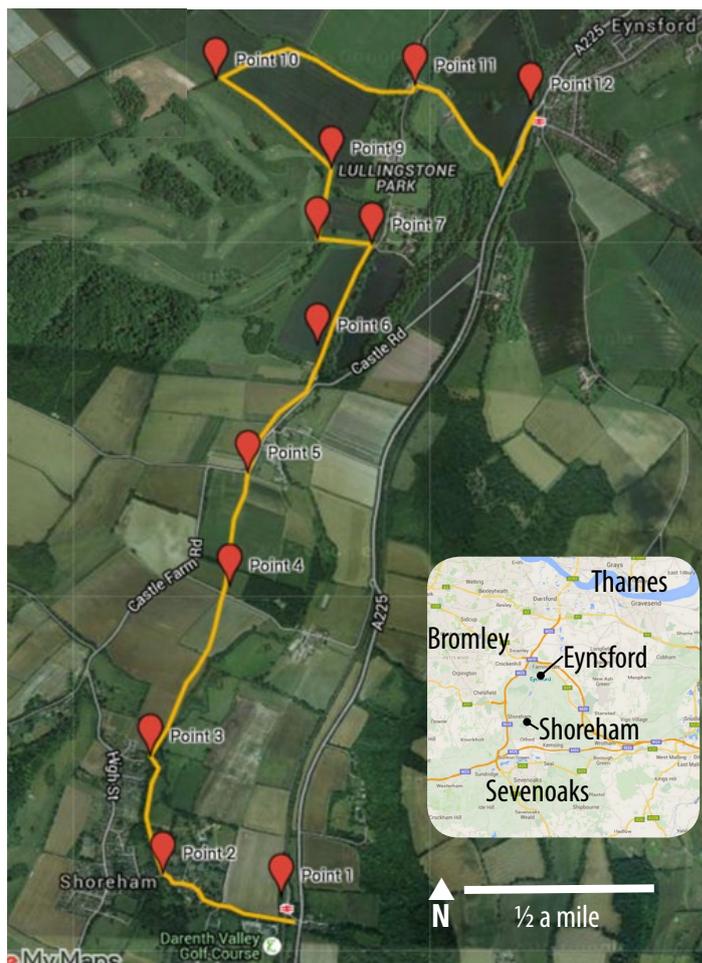
Cereal field by Lull'stone Castle (point 7)

THE WALK IN SHORT

Points 1-2: Leave Shoreham station and walk under bridge down Station Rd to village
Point 2-3: War memorial, take river path. Cross bridge, look for path continuing on right
Point 3-5: Cross a series of fields and through a row of poplars heading north
Point 6-7: From Lullingstone visitors' centre walk by river or along edge of field to Lullingstone Castle
Point 7-8: Take path opposite castle uphill to copse
Point 8-9: Walk past copse then take path on right between golf course and field. Walk up steep bank
Point 9-10: Follow path as it bends left (west), above golf course and grassland
Point 10-11: Turn right at path junction and make for lonely tree, north east across fields. Pass tree then follow path down to Roman villa
Point 11-12: Follow lane under viaduct to Eynsford village pubs and ford or, for the station, cross the bridge over the river and follow a lane past a farm cottage to the main road. Turn left on main road and walk a few metres to the station

From Shoreham's war memorial (**POINT 2**), turn right on the river path. Continue for 150-odd metres, noting the cute gardens backing onto the river, then go left to cross a bridge over the river while admiring a lovely house in front of you surrounded by water (**3**). Turn right after the bridge (at the bottom of Mill Lane) and take the path by the river with a steep bank on its left. Very muddy in winter.

Soon you will emerge into fields. Follow the path, now a few metres back from the river, which soon begins to meander away to the east. You will cross two fields, a small one then a much larger one. When you emerge at the corner of a third field, follow the path diagonally across it (**4**) to a farm track and row of poplars. Go straight through a gap in a hedgerow and cross another large field. Now you meet Castle Farm Road (**5**). Go over the road and join the path towards Lullingstone or pop into the excellent Hop Farm shop at Castle Farm.



Not long after this is Lullingstone visitors centre (**6**) where there's a decent cafe. Join the footpath running next to the river. If it's too muddy, walk parallel on the path on the edge of the field just above the river. Trout and even pike can be seen in the river.

After 600 metres you emerge from the trees where the river gushes into the lake. Here is the 15th-century Lullingstone Castle (**7**), a favourite haunt of Henry VIII among others. It is also the site of Tom Hart Dyke's World Garden, behind which is a remarkable story, including being held hostage in the Colombian jungle. Next to the castle is St Botolph's Church which has Norman elements and medieval windows.

Take the path uphill going away from the castle. On reaching the copse at the top turn right alongside Lullingstone golf course (**8**). Continue up a steep bank (**9**) then the path turns left along a low, long hill heading west. The golf course is now below you to the

left; on the right is a large field and you'll be able to see the lonesome tree we'll eventually reach. At a T-junction (**10**), take the path on the right and go slightly uphill. After a few hundred metres the path bears right, past the lonely tree. The views up here are great. Follow the path down between hedgerows. You'll come out next to Lullingstone Roman Villa, with its superb mosaics (**11**).

To walk straight to Eynsford and its two pubs (see below) and grassy river verge by an old ford (in which cars often get stuck) go straight down the country lane for 10 minutes, under the fantastic Victorian railway viaduct. To go to the station, cross the bridge over the Darent river next to the villa's car park. Follow the lane past a farmhouse, for 500 metres up to the main road, the A225. Unfortunately you then have to walk 400 metres (to the left) to the awkwardly sited Eynsford station, along this road.

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