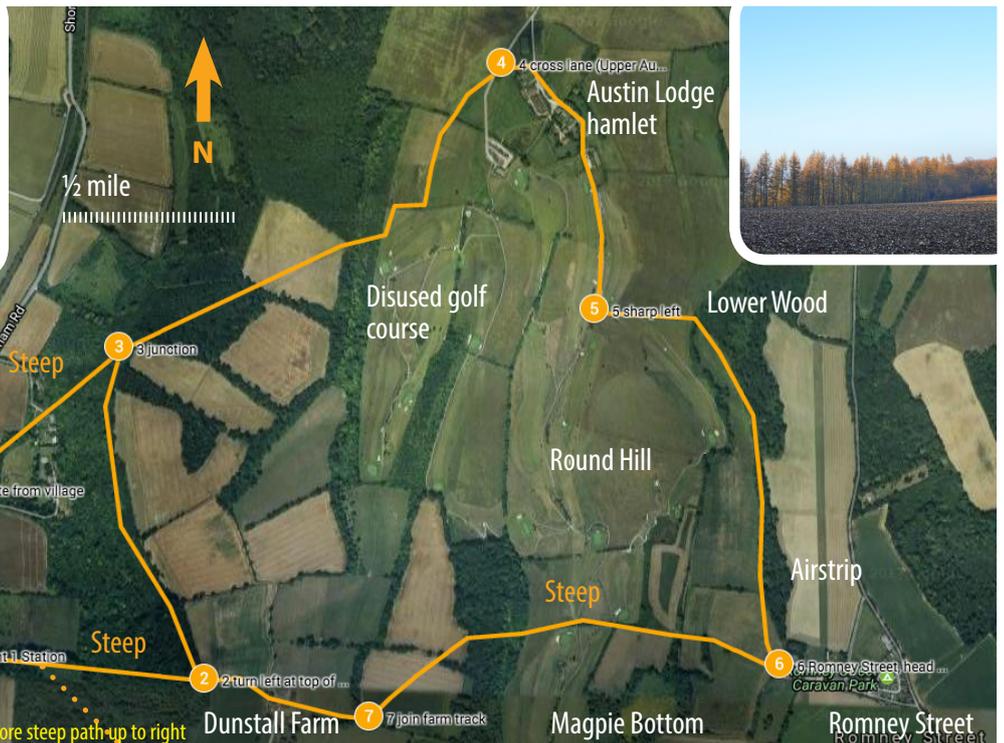


Walk 14: East of Shoreham



How long? 2 hours
4.5 miles
Public transport: Shoreham railway station – two trains an hour from Peckham Rye, Nunhead, Catford, Bromley South etc
Parking: Station Rd or large layby by Shoreham station
Start of walk: footpath opposite Shoreham station
Steep slopes? Three steep bits
Beer and food? Ye Olde George, Shoreham village

Highlights
Wild grassland on an abandoned golf course, beautiful views across chalk upland dry valleys, woods on the valley sides, a quiet hamlet, a mystery airstrip, a mysterious air...

Easy to follow on Ordnance Survey Explorer 147 map



THE WALK

Points 1-2: 675m. Leave Shoreham station, cross the main road (A225) and take the signposted footpath nearly opposite, but slightly on the right. The slope is shallow at first. After 200m or so ignore a path forking off to the right steeply uphill and continue straight on through mature woodland. Soon the gradient becomes steeper and the path climbs the hillside with a series of steps. Near the top you'll hit a path 'crossroads' (point 2).

Point 2-3: 900m. Turn left on this path so you are heading roughly north just beneath the crest of the hill with fields just beyond the treeline on your right. Eventually you reach another path junction (point 3).

Tip: from here until Romney St you are following yellow way markers, some of which advertise the now closed Fox and Hounds pub

Point 3-4: 1.3km. Take the path bearing right (north east). (Straight on would take you to Eynsford; left would take you back to Shoreham village.) You'll see a field directly on your right and soon, to your left is an impressive cluster of European Larch trees (a deciduous conifer) which puzzled me until I realised that some conifers do indeed shed their 'leaves' in winter. Watch out for buzzards here. Now, the path emerges from the woods into a field; follow it diagonally through the field then increasingly downhill through more woodland before entering a 'tree corridor'. To the right, the remnants of the shortlived Austin Lodge golf course can be seen for the first time. The path then turns left out of the tree corridor

along the bottom of the dry valley heading north. Soon you'll hit a lane that leads to the defunct club house (this lane is point 4).

Point 4-5: 770m. Cross the lane (footpath opposite and signposted with yellow waymarkers), pass an old barn/farm shelter and turn right (now heading southish) onto a lane by Upper Austin Lodge. Walk through the hamlet then take a left fork which becomes the footpath again heading south down a valley. Again, you are passing the overgrown golf course. Up ahead the path will take a sharp left through a hedgerow/tree corridor going gradually uphill (this is point 5).

Point 5-6: 1.3km. Take the tree corridor, heading east, noting yellow Fox and Hounds waymarker. After a few hundred metres the path reaches Lower Wood and bends south again. There are nice views over Round Hill and the old golf course to the right at this point. Keep going. Beyond the trees on your left, at the top of the ridge, is a large field which hosts a private airstrip. Eventually, after a dip, you'll see to the left some buildings. This is Romney St. (Turn left if you'd like to view the disused Fox and Hounds – a legendary pub which once served a Luftwaffe pilot who'd crash landed near Shoreham.) On the other hand, don't bother; our walk continues by turning right (point 6).

Point 6-7: 1.2km. So we've now turned right, heading west, with a splendid view as far as Canary Wharf and the Shard ahead slightly to the right. The path opens out on to chalk upland. Continue on path down very steep hill

(northern part of Round Hill) where golf course used to be on floor of deep valley. Pass through hedgerow 'corridor' then up very steep hill to a copse. Leave copse, walk diagonally across field then another larger field to join farm track (point 7) leading to Dunstall Farm.

Point 7- back to Shoreham station: 1.2km Turn right on this track and through yet another dry valley (much shallower, thankfully, than the one below Round Hill, note view to QE Bridge at Dartford) to Dunstall Farm. Turn right at farm buildings and just before a circular cattle barn, turn left on footpath across field to woods and point 2, down the steps, through the woods and back to Shoreham.

Alt route from the village: The benefit of this is that you avoid walking up Station Road. Start at the churchyard opposite Ye Olde George (very atmospheric; beautiful wooden archway, flint church, yews) and exit via gate into a field with the train station visible ahead. Turn left on the path and continue to the end of the field when you turn right on a path heading towards the railway line. Cross the railway (CAREFUL!!) by a pedestrian crossing and walk up to the main road. With great care cross this road (A225), and turn left along the verge a few yards then take the signposted public footpath into a large field. Remain on this path (it diverts around a house and drive at one point) and follow it through tangled woods overgrown with creepers as it steeply climbs the eastern valley wall to Point 2 (path cross road).