

Walk 20: Downe circular mk2

Tread in Charles Darwin's footsteps on this walk among woods and meadows in the North Downs. Combine with trips to Downe House, Christmas Tree Farm and High Elms

How long? 90 mins/2hrs
4 miles (6km)

Public transport: 146 bus runs hourly every day until late from Bromley North and Bromley South (25-minute bus journey from Bromley). R8 bus runs every 80 minutes from Orpington railway station (20mins). 12 mins by taxi from Hayes railway station.

Parking: easy, in Downe village
Start of walk: footpath next to Christmas Tree Farm, Downe
Steep slopes? One (Blackbush and Twenty Shaw woods)

Day out? Combine with Down House and nearby High Elms nature centre. Young kids will love Christmas Tree Farm. Also, Biggin Hill airfield is close, and Westerham and Chartwell not so far off.

Walk highlights/refreshments
Superb North Downs chalk hill scenery, ancient woods. Two good pubs in Downe, one in Cudham. Good cafe in Downe and a farm cafe on road back towards Keston. Ordnance Survey Explorer 147 map

[Click here for GPX track of this route for real-time navigation](#)



St Mary the Virgin church, Downe

Point 1-2 (about 500m): Take the path right just east of Christmas Tree farm on Cudham Rd, passing over a stile (don't inadvertently take the second path signed to Cudham). Walk south past Christmas Tree farm paddocks then head diagonally across meadow to right. Ignore paths signed to Downe House then head diagonally left across another field towards a farmhouse.

Point 2-3 (480m): Head towards farmhouse (south east) ignoring another path signed towards Downe House. Walk past sign for Stable Cottage and see 'footpath' sign in front of house pointing right (south). Join this path crossing over surfaced driveway and passing a monkey puzzle tree and follow edge of field heading south. Arrive at path junction.

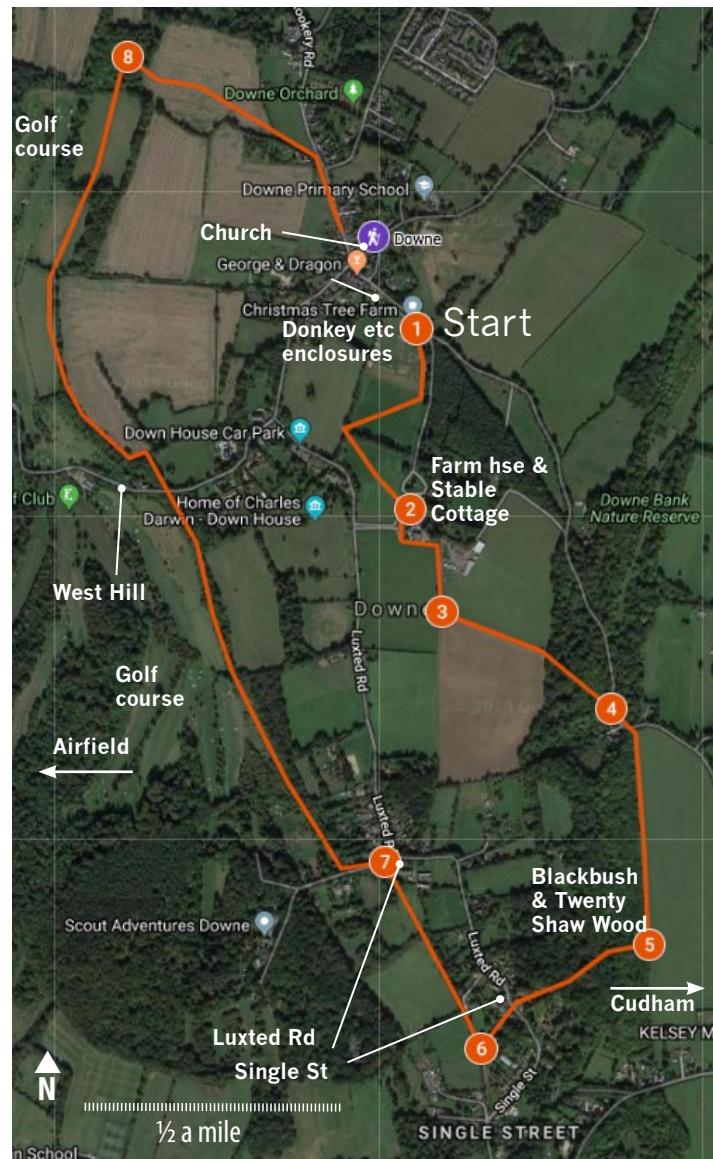
Point 3-4 (550m): Turn left on this path (east) heading towards woods between hedgerows. Enter woods (ancient and very familiar to Charles Darwin) and follow path down hill until you hit Cudham Road. Turn right on this road for a few metres.

Point 4-5 (600m): Enter huge field in valley between Downe and Cudham and follow path south with woods on your right. Footpath coming up on right.

Point 5-6 (500m): Take footpath right (west) into beautiful woods (Blackbush and Twenty Shaw ancient woodland, managed by Woodland Trust) and climb fairly steeply up steps then enter an alley by gardens and hit Single Street; cross the road and continue down alley opposite.

Point 6-7 (500m): On emerging from alley turn right on footpath on eastern edge of Downe/Biggin Hill Airport valley, now heading north. Soon you'll hit Lusted road again, this time on a corner. Look out for Bird House Lane (signed to activity centre or scout camp) on your left.

Point 7-8 (2.2km): Turn left on the road then left again downhill on a small lane (Bird House Lane) which serves



a Scout camp nearer the airport. After a few metres watch for a footpath on your right just before a house and drive. Take this path (this is a long stretch now generally always heading north) skirting meadows and continue north along the eastern edge of the valley; go straight on at a path junction near Down House into light woods and soon cross West Hill. After this, continue on the path heading north; it soon takes a 90-degree turn to the left and then right again to resume heading north. After this turn the path soon emerges into a large grassy hillside,

the first of three fields with lovely views along the valley (with golf course on the left and tall beeches and the odd bomb crater to the right).

Point 8-Downe (500m): Enter woods after the third field and turn right after about 70 metres, looking for the footpath that goes east across a crop field back to Downe. Head for the south east (far right hand corner) of this field. The path narrows and emerges on Rookery Rd nearly opposite North End Lane by a bus stop.

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