

Walk 5: Otford circular

A quiet six-mile walk through peaceful woods and along exposed hilltops on the high chalk downs. Combines well with Walk 14. Train access

THE WALK IN SHORT

Points 1-2: 215m (approx). Leave Otford station through the ticket hall and head up Station Approach, then turn right (heading east) on reaching the A225 (Station Road). Then, turn right at Pilgrim's Way East. After a few metres take the path opposite, uphill signposted North Downs Way (looks like a private drive)

Point 2-3: 1km. Path enters light woodland and has some steps in it. Pass seat on left. After gate is grassy field. Keep on right hand side and pass through trees to lane junction

Point 3-4: 700m. Continue along lane heading east (Birchin Cross Rd) until you rejoin the North Downs Way on right. After a few metres at path t-junction turn left (east). Walk alongside field on your left, past large isolated house to Shorehill Lane

Point 4-5: 340m. Turn left down Shorehill Lane to Birchin Cross Rd. Turn left (west-ish) then after a few metres look for path through woods on right, across the lane

Point 5-6: 800m. Walk through woods

How long? 3hrs/6 miles (10km)

Start of walk: Otford station
Public transport: Otford and Shoreham railway stations are served by regular daily services from London Blackfriars, Peckham Rye, Catford, Bromley South etc.

Parking: in Otford village in car park by recreation ground

Steep slopes? two steep sections
Livestock? Sometimes bulls in field nearing Point 6. Avoid by: walking on paths along floor of Magpie Bottom - when you hit the lane turn right then take the path on your left climbing through woods to Romney St.

Walk highlights

Lofty viewpoints, ancient, quiet woodland, untouched chalk upland wildflower meadows. Covered on [Ordnance Survey Explorer 147 map](#)



Blue line is alternative Darent path - actually a bit nicer than the standard Darent path

and emerge in secluded field (SSSI Magpie Bottom). Walk uphill diagonally across field to top left hand corner. Pass through two more fields separated by stiles, hedges/trees until you reach a lane (also called Magpie Bottom)

Point 6-7: 740m. Turn left on lane then very soon look for footpath resuming on right. Take path through woodland and fields to Romney St (there are several paths as you approach Romney St - doesn't matter which you take)

Point 7-8: 650m. Turn left (west) at Romney St and continue along path/alley beside a fence. Path opens out on to chalk upland. Great views. Continue on path down very steep hill where golf course used to be on floor of deep valley

Point 8-9: 400m. Pass through hedgerow 'corridor' then over a high stile (take care) and up a very steep hill to copse

Point 9-10: 380m. Leave copse, walk diagonally across field then another field to join farm track
Point 10-11: 300m. Walk up track through little valley to Dunstall Farm. Turn right at farm buildings and just before a circular cattle barn, turn left on footpath across field to woods

Point 11-12: 850m. Enter woods, walk down steps, then to A225 road by Shoreham station

Point 12-13: 260m. Walk down Station Rd, past golf club and take footpath on left

Points 13,14,15: 2km. Go past cricket pitch, across narrow lane and continue to Otford

This superb walk, probably the longest on this website, can be shortened by returning from Shoreham station, or lengthened by combining it with Walk 14.

It's notably quieter than, say, Ide Hill and the Shoreham walks and so is a good one for a bit of solitude.

It's a real shame the Fox and Hounds pub at Romney St has shut (for now). The pub entertained shot-down German airmen in the second world war on a couple of occasions, according to the Shoreham Aircraft Museum and had a great beer garden. Its closure means that Ye Olde George, opposite Shoreham's church at

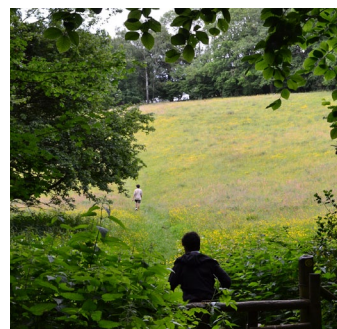
the bottom of Station Rd close to Point 13, is best placed to quench walkers' thirst.

I particularly like Magpie Bottom, the woods and secluded field between points 5-6, and the views between points 7 and 9 and the ancient woodland after point 11 (Dunstall Woods).

The lower Darent Valley path is a nice variation. It can be found by turning right on the lane by Point 14 and then taking the first path on the left. It comes out further down Otford High St.

[Click here for GPX map](#) of this route, and [here for alternative route](#) (avoiding any livestock risk).

amac49@hotmail.co.uk



The secluded field (points 5-6)



View from on high (points 7-8)