

Walk 8: Shoreham/Otford circular

An idyllic village set in a pastoral valley is the start and finish point of this walk with a trout stream, water meadows, hills and woodland

How long? 2½ hours/5.5 miles (5km)

Public transport: Thameslink and Southeastern trains run a regular service to Shoreham (and Otford) station (on the London Blackfriars to Sevenoaks line).

Parking: easy – car park in Filston Lane or park near station
Start of walk: footpath 80 metres west of Darent Valley golf club
Steep slopes? One short, quite steep uphill section. Moderately easy walk.

Kid friendly? The walk might be long for younger children but they'll love wading in the river at the war memorial and picnics in the meadows (best picnic spot at Point 9 on hillside).

[Click here for Ordnance Survey GPX map of this route](#)

Walk and local highlights

Superb 15th-century village houses in both villages; the Water House, associated with early 19th century landscape painter Samuel Palmer of the Ancients fame; Shoreham Aircraft Museum, with tea shop attached; the Archbishop's Palace ruin in Otford; sparkling wine specialist Mount Vineyard (open on Sundays); Castle Farm shop and lavender fields nearby; solar system scale model in Otford. Also the Darent river, hillside views, wild flower meadows, hedgerows and old, flint and wooden houses and a great church. Four pubs in Shoreham, two in Otford.

[Covered on Ordnance Survey Explorer 147 map](#)

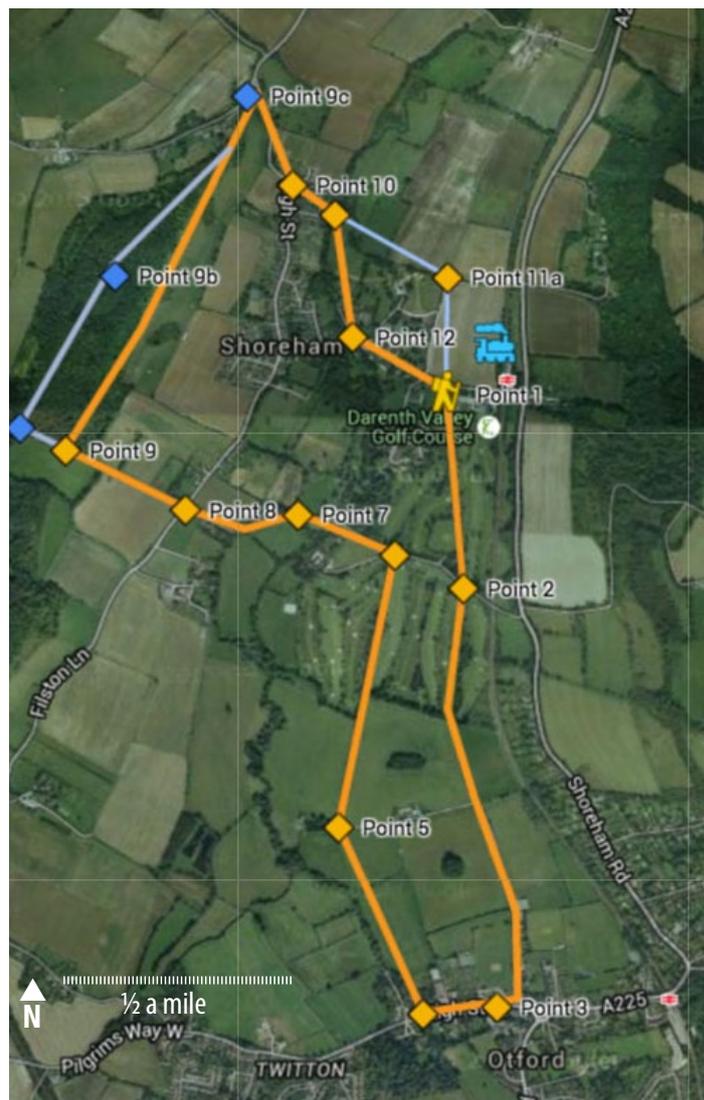
[More info on Shoreham on \[loalkentwalks.wordpress.com\]\(http://loalkentwalks.wordpress.com\) and \[shorehamvillage.co.uk\]\(http://shorehamvillage.co.uk\)](#)



Pickmoss Cottages, Otford

THE WALK IN SHORT

Leave Shoreham station and walk under bridge down Station Rd, past golf club entrance and car park to footpath on left
Point 1-2: 800m. Follow Darent Valley footpath through trees, across golf fairways (take care) and by a cricket pitch to narrow lane
Point 2-3: 1.5km. Cross lane, continue on Darent Valley path to Otford, passing recreation ground and village car park
Point 3-4: 300m. Turn right on High St then right again by river on footpath heading north parallel with previous path
Point 4-5: 800m. Continue on path across fields, river disappears to your left, hidden by vegetation
Point 5-6: 900m. Go straight over path 'crossroads' and enter 'tree tunnel' which takes you through part of the golf course to lane
Point 6-7: 300m. On reaching lane turn left. Going downhill you pass converted oast house, pond fed by stream and other Home Farm buildings
Point 7-8: 500m. After Home Farm and Mill Cottage, cross little bridge over river then bear left alongside river with plantation of broadleaf trees on your right. Pass 16th-century Kennel Cottage on right on more recent houses on left and reach Filston Lane
Point 8-9: 500m. Cross lane and walk up rough farm track opposite, stay on path up right hand side of large field on steep valley side until you see a bench ahead. (Points 9A and 9B are on a parallel path at the top of the hill, in quiet, atmospheric Meenfield wood, indicated by blue line on map).
Point 9-9C: 1.3km. Turn right along path on side of hill just before bench and stay on this path above white cross, all the way towards junction with Shacklands Rd.
Point 9C-10 500m. Before Shacklands Rd, turn right on path along edge of field back towards village.
Point 10-11-12 800m: Reach High St, cross, then walk down Mill Lane nearly opposite. Cross river on bridge, then turn right and walk along river path to war memorial (alternatively follow blue route on map; ie, walk straight on after bridge, then curve round the back of the vineyard and the church). From war memorial, explore village, or turn left to return to station (go through churchyard for slight short cut)
Ye Olde George pub is opposite church but there are other pubs, too. Aircraft museum is on the High St side of Shoreham



This is a superb walk particularly if you like to see beautiful old cottages and houses along with countryside.

There are loads of wonderful, unshowy, old buildings from the medieval era onward in Shoreham and Otford so add on extra time if you aren't familiar with the villages. The ruins of what was once the Archbishop's Palace in Otford, which fell victim to Cardinal Wolsey's rise to power under Henry VIII and the decline of Archbishop Warham's influence, is particularly interesting to see.

Shoreham is the prettier of the villages, but Otford is very intriguing with its nooks and crannies, especially the area around the old palace, but also with its to-scale solar system model, which makes a decent walk in itself.

The River Darent at Otford is a good place for spotting kingfishers, which are probably disturbed a bit less here than

around Shoreham and Eynsford, but there are no guarantees; populations of the bird vary from year to year. The river nearly disappeared in the 1980s-90s as extraction from bore holes and a run of dryish years reduced it to a trickle. The river is managed a bit better these days, and it's a lot healthier in wildlife terms. It rises on the greensand ridge south east of Westerham (see Walks 15 and 21) and disappears into the Thames near Dartford after joining forces with the River Cray.

The walk is easy to extend further; to the west to Meenfield, Pilot and Andrews woods; to the east to Romney St (Walk 5) and Fackenden Down (Walk 18). Kemsing, round the corner from Otford at the base of the escarpment also makes an interesting extension, along footpaths used for time immemorial through curiously untamed vegetation behind the station.

am49@hotmail.co.uk