

soar with the birds

Enjoy a bird's eye view



Lullingstone Roman Villa



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Location: Eynsford**Distance:** 1.8 miles (2.9km)**Time:** allow 30 minutes**Explorer Map:** 162**Terrain:** fields and road**Stiles:** 2**Parking:** Lullingstone Roman Villa.
Please donate in honesty box (charges after May 2008)**Refreshments and facilities:**
Lullingstone Roman Villa; public houses and restaurants in Eynsford village centre**Public transport:** for information about local bus and train services in Kent, contact Traveline tel: 0870 6082608, www.traveline.org.uk**Step count:** approx 2,600

This short walk is popular with photographers keen to capture striking views across the valley. An insight into the history behind its hidden villages and hamlets – a perfect accompaniment to a fine meal at a village public house or a visit to one of the many local attractions.



The rich history of Lullingstone Roman Villa with its nationally important mosaics, now preserved for the nation by English Heritage, reflects the continuing agricultural prosperity of the Darent Valley. The villa is by far the best preserved of the many Roman buildings in the valley.

The Romans settled here to take advantage of good farmland close to water and on sloping land to catch the warmth of the sun in the lee of the hill.

From the Villa car park, follow the Darent Valley Path up the hillside taking time to turn back now and then to enjoy the views across the river towards the village of Eynsford, the impressive red-brick viaduct, and across to the right for a glimpse of Lullingstone Castle.

Follow the path alongside the Eagle Heights Bird of Prey Centre casting a glance skyward now and then for regular sightings of the centre's falcons and other birds soaring high above the fields with their handlers below.

Gradually descend to the floor of the valley through the fields which have supported generations of farmers since the Romans first settled near the River Darent. Today many of the farms incorporate a wide range of activities to broaden their economic base. These activities range from offering livery services to the many riders who enjoy taking their horses up on the Downs to converting former barns and outbuildings into offices.

Finally, take the road following alongside the banks of the River Darent to return to the car park at Lullingstone Roman Villa.

Please note that the villa will be closed from 31st August 07 - May 08 due to building works.



Eagle Heights Bird of Prey Centre is one of the largest in the country with more than 50 species. The birds can often be seen flying over the valley during the centre's daily demonstrations. The centre recently introduced husky rides in the Darent Valley.

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look out for...

- Lullingstone Roman Villa
- Birds of prey
- Traditional Kent farmsteads
- Eynsford viaduct
- Lullingstone Castle

did you know?

The Eynsford Viaduct carries the Swanley to Sevenoaks railway line across the Darent dramatically framing cottages and the landscape with its high arches. The line was opened in 1862.

The picturesque centre of Eynsford village features a ford which has been of strategic importance since Roman times. Nearby Eynsford Castle was possibly erected to protect the ford.

Eynsford has been home to Elliott Downs Till, who introduced an annual tree planting day in 1897; composer and writer Peter Warlock; artist Graham Sutherland; and Leslie Hore-Belisha, the transport minister who introduced the pedestrian crossing Belisha Beacon.

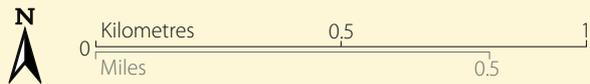
In 1930, Eynsford was announced as the site of a new airport for London. The plans were dropped with the outbreak of the Second World War.

Eynsford village church is dedicated to St Martin of Tours, a third century soldier who shared his cloak with a shivering beggar. The church is built on former Saxon site and does not face due east.

St Martin's church spire was reshingled 20 years ago and local primary school children wrote their names on the underside of the shingles.



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- ◆— Darent Valley Path
- H Golf Course
- q Interest
- English Heritage
- j Fort
- " Public House
- Country park
- Take care
- Stile
- Railway Station