

1 Leave Sevenoaks station by the main exit and walk out to London Road. Cross the road using the pelican crossing, turn left and then immediately right onto Hitchin Hatch Lane. Follow the Darent Valley Path signs. Fork left onto Bradbourne Park Road, passing a modern multi storey car park, and climbing gently to the junction on the left with Clockhouse Lane, an unmade road. Turn here, cross over the railway and continue on a footpath to emerge onto Lambard Road. Turn right and a gate on the left gives access to Bradbourne Lakes.

- Visit Bradbourne Lakes and pass Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve
- Follow the valley as it cuts through the North Downs with views of the Downs on both sides
- Visit the beautiful riverside village of Shoreham and the Samuel Palmer Trail
- Enjoy riverside walking along the Darent Valley Path
- Pass Lullingstone Castle, Lullingstone Roman Villa and Otford solar system

On The Way

Start point: Sevenoaks station
End point: Eynsford station
Length: 8.5 miles / 13.6km
Terrain: Some pavements and hard surfaced paths but the majority is countryside tracks. Some road crossings. This trail follows the Darent Valley Path
Accessibility: There are some steps and gates along this walk
Toilets/refreshments: During opening hours at stations, Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve, Lullingstone Country Park and in the villages
What3Words: ///hands.unithelp
OS Explorer map: 147

Darent Valley Rail Trails

WALK 15

SEVENOAKS/EYNSFORD

Along the Valley Floor

This 8.5 mile walk explores the Darent Valley from the valley floor, hugging the River Darent for much of the route and discovering villages, stunning heritage and Samuel Palmer along the way.



2 Follow the path keeping to the right of the lakes, crossing a road on the way. Beyond the last lake, the path emerges onto the A25. Cross the road with care. The main route turns left but a diversion is possible to the Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve by turning right and walking a short distance to the entrance on the left.

3 Back on the main route follow the A25 to an entrance on the right at the far end of a field. This leads across the field and then onto a track running along the western boundary of the reserve. A bridge over an inlet crosses the River Darent which changes direction at the reserve from eastbound to northbound (the river is not seen again until Otford). The track continues between commercial and residential development to the west and open land to the east, eventually reaching a road.

4 Turn right and follow the lane for about 400 metres to a footpath on the left opposite a mobile home park. Follow the path across a field and then under the railway. Fork right on the far side and then go

5 On the far side, follow the lane into Otford village keeping straight on at junctions with residential roads. Shortly before a T junction, look on the left for a concrete plinth just in front of a garden hedge.

6 Turn left and follow the road down to the bridge over the river where it becomes the High Street. Further along there is a second stream crossing at a higher level.

7 Turn left by the mill stream (signposted as the Darent Valley Path) onto a drive and at its end continue on a path that leads into a field. Follow the edge of this field initially next to the river, though it soon curves away to the left. At a junction with a surfaced track continue ahead, now on the right edge of the field.

8 The small globe on top of the plinth represents the planet Neptune which forms part of the Otford Solar System. The Solar System is a scale model in which the planets are scattered around the village according to their position relative to the sun at the time of the millennium. Look out for Uranus on the north side of the sun and the inner planets can be found at the back of the Recreation Ground in the village centre.

9 This is a good spot to pause and take in the views of the North Downs at the entrance to the Darent Valley gap, particularly looking northwest.

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11 Turn left and follow the road down to the bridge over the river where it becomes the High Street. Further along there is a second stream crossing at a higher level.

12 Turn left by the mill stream (signposted as the Darent Valley Path) onto a drive and at its end continue on a path that leads into a field. Follow the edge of this field initially next to the river, though it soon curves away to the left. At a junction with a surfaced track continue ahead, now on the right edge of the field.

13 This stream used to serve a mill to the north of the road. The mill was destroyed by fire in 1924 – an interpretation board here contains more information on the fire and the history of the mill.

14 Continue along Lullingstone Lane, which is also the Darent Valley Path, and after 800 metres, pass Lullingstone Roman Villa. Take extra care along this section of the walk as there is no pavement along the road.

15 Continue along the lane, underneath a viaduct.



14 Continue along Lullingstone Lane, which is also the Darent Valley Path, and after 800 metres, pass Lullingstone Roman Villa. Take extra care along this section of the walk as there is no pavement along the road.

Lullingstone Roman Villa is among the most outstanding Roman villa survivals in Britain. The villa was begun in about AD 100 and developed to suit the tastes and beliefs of successive wealthy owners, reaching its peak of luxury in the mid-4th century. Visitors to the villa today can still view the spectacular mosaics and prints of the rare wall paintings, a heated bath-suite and a 'house-church'.

15 Continue along the lane, underneath a viaduct.



The Darent Valley Rail Trails have been created by the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme. DVLP is led by the Kent Downs AONB, working throughout the Darent Valley to conserve the area's rich heritage landscapes and encourage people to enjoy, explore and connect to them www.darent-valley.org.uk

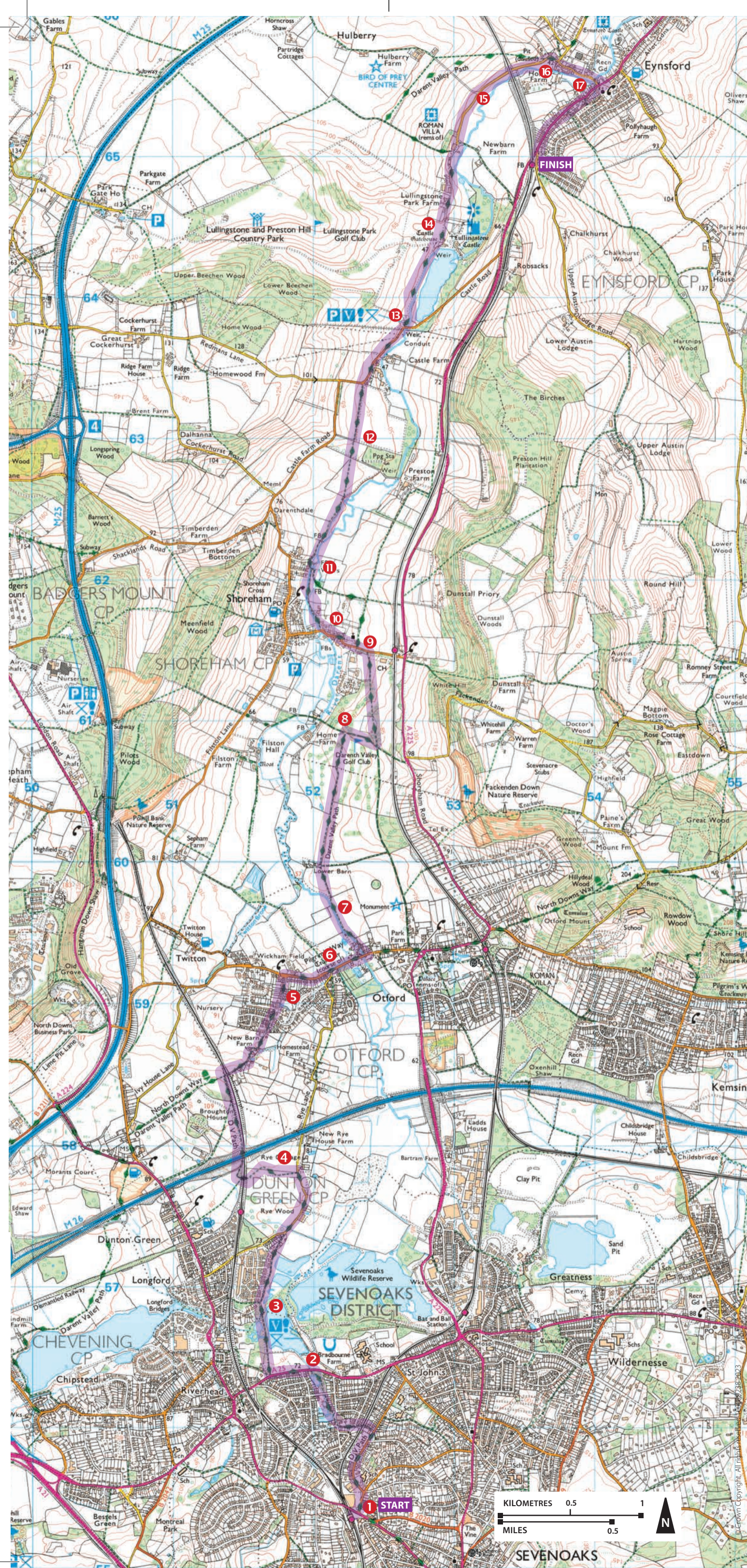
A selection of the Rail Trails are available to use on the Darent Valley Trails app, available free of charge on the App Store and Google Play. With special thanks to Alan Dyer for devising this route.



EUROPEAN UNION

Co-financed by the European Union and the European Regional Development Fund

Photo credit - John Miller photography.com
Painting - Yale Center for British Art, New Haven



There are more good views here looking west across the valley to the Downs. Much of the valley side is wooded but a more open patch straight ahead is Polhill Bank, while on the opposite side of the valley is Fackenden Down. Both are Kent Wildlife Trust Nature Reserves protecting chalkland habitat and are accessible on foot.

- 8 At the far end of the field, join an enclosed path with the Darent Valley Golf Course now on the right. The path ends at a surfaced lane. Turn right and head uphill to the next path junction. Turn left here on a path that skirts around the edge of a cricket ground and then a little further on, crosses a fairway of the golf course before eventually reaching a road.
- 9 Turn left and head downhill into Shoreham then after 50 metres, turn right to continue along the Darent Valley Path. Turn left through the timber gate into the churchyard with an avenue of yew trees.

The Grade 1 listed Church of St Peter and St Paul is a largely medieval church with an outstanding late medieval timber-framed porch. The church also marks the start of the Samuel Palmer Trail.

One of Britain's most talented artists, Samuel Palmer lived in Shoreham and immortalised the beautiful landscape of the Darent Valley nearly 200 years ago. Walk in his footsteps on this 5.3 mile circular trail, experiencing the landscape through his eyes and ears on this self-guided audio visual trail (available on the free Darent Valley Trails app). You will pass stop points 1 – 8 on this Rail Trail so look out for the numbered waymark discs with QR codes to access the free audio information on your smartphone (if you don't have the app downloaded).

- 10 Leave the churchyard and continue ahead on the road which soon turns right to run alongside the river. When the road turns left to cross a bridge, continue ahead into Darent Way following the Darent Valley Path.

The white-rendered Water House was the home to Samuel Palmer when he lived in Shoreham in the early nineteenth century.

- 11 The road turns into a drive then a path which follows the riverside to the northern edge of the village. Turn left at a path junction, cross the river and walk by a fence to the end of Mill Lane.
- 12 The riverside path continues across the lane and passes the point where the mill stream rejoins the main river. Follow the path by the river and then along the right edge of fields. Just after the river briefly reappears on the right, bear left and cross two fields going over a slight rise, passing hop fields on your right just before reaching Redmans Lane. Carefully cross over the road and up the flight of steps along a permissive path with lavender fields to the left.

The lavender fields at Castle Farm form a sea of vibrant purple in the landscape during summer months, with pure lavender oil harvested and extracted for use in a variety of products.

- 13 Return to the road opposite the entrance to the Country Park where there is a Visitor Centre, café and toilets. Continue alongside the riverside path, following the Darent Valley Path signs until you reach the Tudor gatehouse of Lullingstone Castle.

The present manor house and gatehouse were built in 1497 and both Henry VIII and Queen Anne were regular visitors. The silk farm established here in the 1930s provided silk for the late Queen Elizabeth II's coronation gown. The castle is also home to the World Garden of Plants based on the collections of plant hunter Tom Hart-Dyke. Hidden in the grounds, alongside the River Darent, are the notable heritage features of "Queen Anne's" Bath-house and an 18th century Ice House.