

of garden fences which in turn leads into a large field. Cross the field following the right boundary. The path now enters a sloping field, bears left and descends with more good views looking down and across the side valley and the Downs. This section is part of the Samuel Palmer Trail.

One of Britain's most talented artists, Samuel Palmer 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 the eyes and ears of one of our best painters on this self-guided audio visual trail (available on the free Darent Valley Trails app).

- 6 At the bottom join a lane, turn left and follow it downhill to a T junction. Turn right here and go uphill a short distance past a road on the left and onto a footpath turning just before a house. Take this footpath.

On the right, there is a memorial stone, erected in 1928 by a Miss Maud Berkeley in memory of her father. It also marks the site of a pre-war plane crash in which a civilian aircraft leaving the Croydon Aerodrome crashed in the field, killing all four of its passengers.

- 7 Follow the track uphill and where the path forks, keep straight through a vehicle barrier with Shoreham Woods to your right. It eventually levels out and soon after, some steps on the left lead to the Shoreham Cross.

The cross was carved out of the chalk hillside in 1920 as a memorial to residents of the village lost in World War I. It is listed as a scheduled monument and maintained by Shoreham Parish Council.

- 8 Follow the path into a wooded section and turn left onto a path heading steeply downhill. Emerging from the trees, the path continues to descend across two fields with views of the village in front,

eventually reaching the High Street with the Shoreham Aircraft Museum on the corner.

The aircraft museum commemorates the Battle of Britain and the air war over Britain during World War II.

- 9 Turn right and then left onto Church Street. The bridge ahead marks the return of the route to the River Darent. Cross the river and turn left into Darenth Way following the Darent Valley Path (and also the Samuel Palmer Trail).

The white-rendered Water House was the home of the painter Samuel Palmer when he lived in Shoreham in the early nineteenth century. Scan the QR code on the nearby bench with your smartphone (one of the stop points on the Samuel Palmer Trail) to find out more.

- 10 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.

- 11 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 eventually 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.

- 12 Return to the road opposite the entrance to the Country Park where there is a Visitor Centre, café and toilets and impressive veteran trees in the

valley top woodland. 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 of 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.

- 13 Beyond the Castle, the route becomes a surfaced lane returning to the Roman Villa in just under 800 metres. From here, go over the bridge and along the track before crossing over the A225 main road back to Eynsford station.



The Darent Valley Rail Trails have been created by the Darent Valley Landscape Partnership Scheme. DVLPS 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



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Photo credit - bobmillerphotography.com

Veterans and Lavender

An 8 mile circular walk taking you through the heart of the Darent Valley landscape, with panoramic views, majestic veteran trees and impressive heritage sites along the way.



Start / end point: Eynsford station

Length: 8 miles / 12.8km

Terrain: Some pavements but mainly fields and tracks. Undulating path. Two sections of road walking with no pavement. Road crossings. Follows a section of the Darent Valley Path

Accessibility: There are steps, kissing gates and steep up and downhill sections

Toilets/refreshments: At Lullingstone Country Park and in Shoreham village. Toilet at Eynsford station (during opening hours)

What3Words: ///hands.unit.help

OS Explorer map: 147

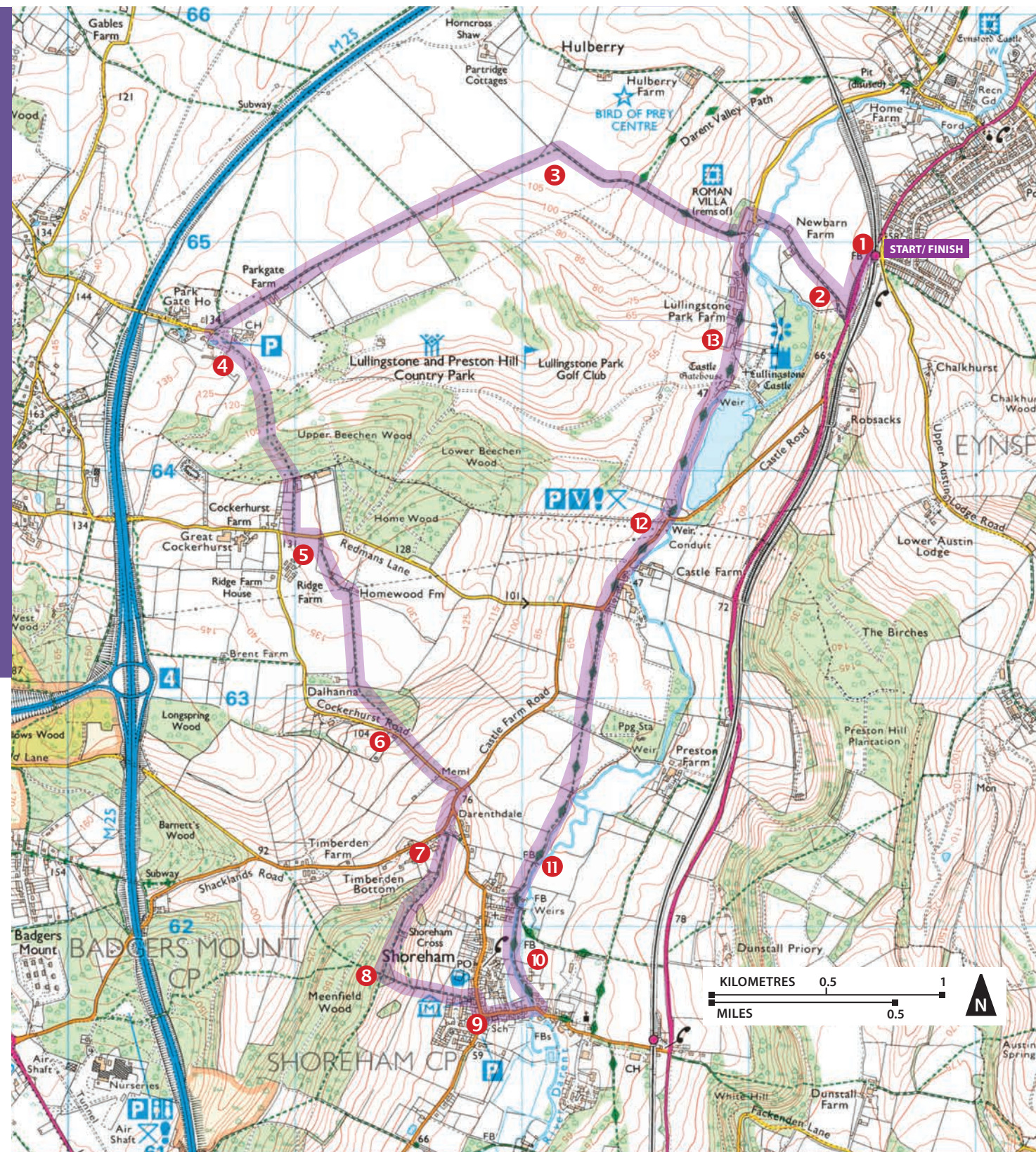
On The Way

- Take in breathtaking views across the Darent Valley landscape from Shoreham Cross
- Enjoy heritage sites of Lullingstone Roman Villa and Lullingstone Castle
- Discover majestic veteran trees over 500 years old
- Follow a section of the Darent Valley Path for the latter part of this walk

- 1 Turn left out of Eynsford station and walk to the main road. Cross the road with care (visibility is limited), turn left under the railway bridge and follow the roadside verge for about 400 metres to a gated track on the right. Follow the track downhill to a bridge over the River Darent in the valley bottom. A concrete structure ahead encloses the remains of Lullingstone Roman Villa.

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'.

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- 2 Turn left in front of the villa and then right onto a path leading uphill. Follow the path up the left side of a sloping field to the top corner from where there is a good view looking back into the valley. Continue into the next field then bear left through a tree belt onto open downland where the route enters Lullingstone Country Park. The public footpath turns right here but continue straight ahead on a permissive path that initially goes across the hillside with more good views on the left.
- 3 The path then crosses a wooded side valley, forking right at a junction on the far slope. At the top, continue ahead along the right edge of grassland and at the far corner, continue ahead following the Lullingstone Loop marker (black). The path continues through a woodland corridor with a golf course on the left. Continue until you reach a paved track then turn right, initially up a gentle slope. There is a seat here to the left of the track and just beyond, an impressive hollowed-out oak tree. The track levels off and heads towards the clubhouse but before it gets there a public footpath turns left (the path is initially rather faint but the turning is well-signposted).

Lullingstone Country Park is internationally important for its collection of ancient trees, with over 300 veteran oak, beech, ash, hornbeam and sweet chestnut, some of which are thought to be 800 years old.

- 4 The path becomes more pronounced as it leads into woodland and descends into another side valley. At the bottom, cross a fairway then climb back into woodland following the track as it curves left, still following the Lullingstone Loop. Then leave the Lullingstone Loop and carry on ahead to an old metal ladder and gate and beyond it, join an enclosed path leading to a field which is crossed to a lane.
- 5 Turn left and after about 100 metres, turn right into a driveway which leads to a path on the right