

# butterflies and bees

Delight the senses with woodland walks, hilltop climbs and the scents of hops and lavender.





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36

**Location:** Lullingstone

**Distance:** 6.5 miles (10.4km)

**Time:** allow 4 hours

**Explorer Map:** 147

**Terrain:** field and woodland paths, some step slopes

**Stiles:** 10 **Gates:** 8

**Parking:** Lullingstone Country Park

**Refreshments and facilities:** Lullingstone Park Visitor Centre and public houses in Shoreham village centre

**Public transport:** for information about local bus and train services in Kent, contact Traveline tel: 0870 6082608, [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

**Step count:** approx 13,000



Lullingstone Country Park Visitor Centre is packed with information about the many delights to be discovered along this walk and across the North Downs. This area is renowned for its stunning views of the Kent countryside, lavender fields, hop gardens and historic buildings.



From the Visitor Centre follow the signs to the Darent Valley Path across the fields towards the banks of the river. Continue alongside the river to the picturesque centre of Shoreham and past the Kings Arms public house.

Take the footpath just past Shoreham Aircraft Museum, signposted to Halstead and Timberden Bottom (The Landway). Follow the path uphill taking time to turn back and savour dramatic views across the valley and Shoreham below.

At the top, Meenfield Wood offers an excellent resting point and an opportunity to enjoy the scenery and grassland wildlife before heading downhill to skirt the top of the Shoreham Memorial Cross carved into the hillside and on through the woods.

Follow up tree-lined Cockerhurst Road to take the footpath on the right and follow the route along the field edge, into Redmans Lane. After a short distance, turn right, and take the steps into a field.

Keep to the left, crossing over a stile and follow along an enclosed path to a gate.

Go through the gate into Beechen Wood, Lullingstone Park and across a fairway to the main entrance of the golf club car park to pass through a kissing gate and follow the path into the fields beyond.

Continue through the woodland before coming once again into the open to walk along the field edge. Look ahead as the path winds downhill to catch glimpses of Lullingstone Castle in the distance.

The waymarked path continues to wind downhill and offers stunning views of Eynsford Viaduct before turning to pass directly in front of Lullingstone Castle. A kissing gate leads back to the banks of the river and the Visitor Centre.

If time is short, numerous footpaths make it simple to plan shorter walks choosing, for example, just to complete the southern or northern section of the full circular walk and heading back to the Visitor Centre from the path at Beechen Wood.

Castle Farm is one of the biggest lavender growers in the UK. Lavender products, including speciality foods, are available at the farm's Hop Shop which concentrates on selling local produce. The Castle Farm Lavender Festival is usually on the second weekend in July with tours, food tastings, bee-keeping displays, aromatherapy and more.

## look out for...

- Lullingstone Visitor Centre
- Hop gardens
- Fields of lavender – covered in bees and butterflies in summer
- Shoreham Memorial Cross
- Birds of prey and huskies at Eagle Heights
- Lullingstone Castle

## did you know?

Hops have been grown in the Darent Valley for centuries to flavour the beer produced by the many breweries that used to flourish alongside the river.

*Hop bines are traditionally used for decorating old farmhouse kitchens and bars in inns and hotels as they are thought to bring good fortune.*

The word lavender comes from the Latin 'lavare' - to wash (which is also the origin of the word 'laundry') and derives from its use by the Romans. The plant's aromatic oils have long been prized for their domestic, medicinal and culinary uses, which is why lavender has remained popular throughout the centuries.

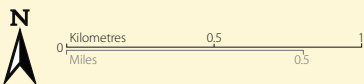
*The 15th century gatehouse at Lullingstone Castle was one of the first in the country to be built of brick. Both Henry VIII and Queen Anne are known to have been regular visitors.*

St Botolph's Church at Lullingstone contains some of the oldest stained glass windows in England.





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- ◆--- Darent Valley Path
- p Parking
- Visitor Centre
- d Nature reserve
- j Fort
- Country park
- " Public House
- P Picnic Site
- Museum
- English Heritage
- H Golf Course
- q Interest
- G Gate
- S Stile
- △ Take care
- Railway Stations