



Along this stretch of footpath, you pass through Nine Acre Wood, a Woodland Trust site. The land used to be a former golf course and the woodland was planted in 1998 by the local community and it now provides a valuable wildlife habitat.

Looking down into the valley from Sparepenny Lane, you will see the remains of Eynsford Castle on the other side of the river. Managed by English Heritage, Eynsford Castle is a rare survival of an early Norman 'enclosure castle', which remained unaltered by later building work. Begun by William de Eynsford I in the late 1080s, the castle was later the subject of a hotly disputed inheritance, which reached a climax in 1312 when one of the claimants broke in and vandalised it. Soon afterwards the castle was abandoned, and by the mid 18th century many of the buildings had fallen into disrepair, being used only as stables and kennels for hunting dogs.

5 Once at the end of Sparepenny Lane, turn right onto Lullingstone Lane carrying on along the Darent Valley Path. There is no pavement along this section so take extra care here. After a short distance, take the footpath uphill on your right-hand side. Follow this path across fields and across the railway line – take particular care here.

Eynsford Viaduct, with its impressive nine brick arches rising 75 feet (23 metres) above the valley floor, was built between 1859 and 1862 by the Sevenoaks Railway Company. It is a Grade II listed building and is still used by the London to Sevenoaks line and beyond.

6 Continue uphill along the footpath, enjoying the views offered from here. Then follow the line of trees back down into the valley towards 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'.*

7 From the Roman Villa, turn left and take the road on your right over the bridge. Follow this footpath until it joins the main road (A225). Once here, turn left taking extra care walking alongside this busy road. Go under the railway bridge then cross over the road and Eynsford station will be on your right.



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](http://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 the North West Kent Countryside Partnership (NWKCP) for devising this route.



EUROPEAN UNION



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# River and Ruins

A 9 mile walk along the middle section of the Darent Valley Path, following the tranquil River Darent with impressive heritage features through the ages dotted throughout.

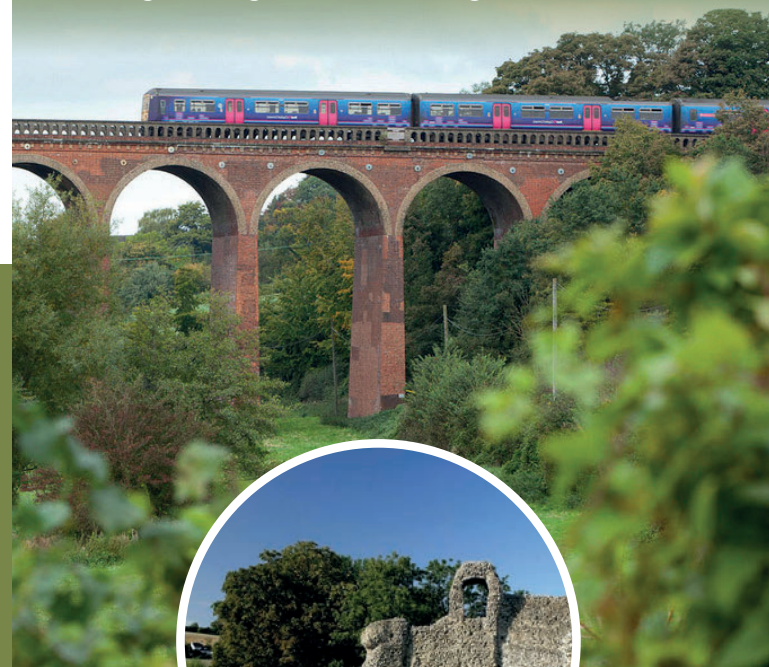


Photo credit - johmillerphotography.com and Adam Swaine

**Start point:** Farningham Road station

**End point:** Eynsford station

**Length:** 9 miles / 14.4km

**Terrain:** Some pavements but mainly fields and tracks. Undulating path. Some steep slopes up and down. One section of road walking with no pavement, road crossings and a crossing over the railway line on foot. Follows the Darent Valley Path

**Accessibility:** There are steps, kissing gates and stiles on this walk

**Toilets / refreshments:** Toilet at Eynsford station (during opening hours)

**What3Words:** ///finds.stable.with

**OS Explorer map:** 162

### On The Way

- Follow and explore the Darent Valley Path for much of this walk
- Enjoy stunning heritage sites and features including Lullingstone Roman Villa, Eynsford Castle and the intriguing cattle screen structure
- Take in breathtaking views across the Darent Valley landscape

**1** Turn left out of Farningham Road station and continue down the road. Cross over the main road (A225) – take extra care here - and continue down Station Road for just under 800 metres. Before crossing over a bridge, turn right along the Darent Valley Path with the River Darent on your left-hand side.

*The Darent Valley Path is a promoted route and currently runs for 19 miles between Dartford and Sevenoaks. Hugging the River Darent for much of it, the waymarked route offers panoramic views through a mix of stunning landscapes of marshes, woodland and chalk grassland.*

**2** Follow the Darent Valley Path along the riverside path for 800 metres, before arriving at Westminster Fields.

*The River Darent is a chalk stream and the defining feature in the Darent Valley landscape. It has played a fundamental role in attracting the original settlement by humans thousands of years ago. The river created fertile land for farming, provided transport into London and generated power to work the many mills along its length. It has also shaped the land by carving through the chalk on its way from its source in Westerham to where it flows into the River Thames north of Dartford.*

**3** After Westminster Fields continue straight until Franks Lane, still following the Darent Valley Path. Turn left towards Horton Kirby Cricket Club and once at the ground, turn right and continue to follow the riverside path into the village of Farningham. This also marks the boundary of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

*Farningham Folly, Bridge or Cattle Screen is an impressive structure straddling the River Darent opposite the historic Lion Hotel. It is thought to have been built between 1740 and 1770 although an exact date is not known. The Farningham Cattle Screen is said to be the only one in the country to have been constructed in such an ornate way and would probably have been built whilst the Hanger family owned Farningham Manor.*

**4** At the Lion Hotel, turn right up the High Street and then take a left onto Sparepenny Lane (still following the Darent Valley Path signs). Rejoin the footpath on Sparepenny Lane and follow this for approximately one mile across agricultural land.

