

NORTH DOWNS WAY

NATIONAL TRAIL 

NORTH DOWNS WAY RAIL TRAIL No. 10

DOVER to FOLKESTONE

11 MILES (17.7KM) ALLOW 4 TO 5 HOURS

From the ancient pilgrims' places of Dover take the North Downs Way along the iconic White Cliffs above the English Channel known as "Hellfire Corner" during the Battle of Britain in WW2. Follow the Heritage Coast above a man-made nature reserve and explore the hills of Folkestone Downs before descending into Folkestone town.














HOW TO GET THERE -

Parking: Accessible parking at: Dover Priory, Folkestone West, Folkestone Central, Samphire Hoe, Battle of Britain Memorial, Capel le Ferne

Train: Nearest stations: Dover Priory, Folkestone West, Folkestone Central

National Rail Enquiries:
www.nationalrail.co.uk

Traveline: www.traveline.info

	Start	Dover Priory Station
	what3words	///myself.odds.rated
	Finish	Folkestone West Station
	what3words	///blog.fuse.entitle
	Gates	19
	Steps	10 flights, 367 steps in total
	Terrain	Pavements in towns. Some surfaced footpaths but mostly unsurfaced and steep in many places.
	Warning	Take care along cliffs, follow signage. Keep fence to the left.
	Views	Spectacular views all along cliff tops and Folkestone Downs.
	Refreshments	At stations and in town centres. Samphire Hoe, Clifftop Cafe, Battle of Britain Memorial, Valiant Sailor Pub.
	Toilets	As per refreshments. Accessible toilets at Folkestone W and Central, Samphire Hoe, B of B Memorial.

ROUTE DESCRIPTION AND POINTS OF INTEREST

MAISON DIEU: Dover's Grade I listed town hall, the Maison Dieu was founded in 1203 to provide hospitality for pilgrims and the care of wounded and destitute soldiers. It reopened in May 2025 after two years of major restoration work and boasts a fascinating 800 year history and glorious interiors.

1. Turn right out of Dover Priory Station, following Station Approach Rd to the left onto Folkestone Rd. Continue to the roundabout, turning left to the traffic lights. Cross safely at the lights and turn left to Maison Dieu, passing St Edmund's Chapel on the way. There is the option to visit the refurbished Maison Dieu before heading off to Folkestone.
2. Facing Maison Dieu turn right down Biggin Street Cannon St. Follow the main street, pedestrianised in part, all the way down to the Market Square. Cross the square, with Dover Museum to the right, onto King St towards the A20 underpass.
3. Follow the underpass on Bench St to Cambridge Terrace, continuing straight to the North Downs Way Start/Finish and the 'We Are All Winners' sculpture on the seafront.

4. Retrace your steps the short distance to Queen Street and turn left, crossing York Street at the traffic lights. Turn left, then take the path to the right of York Street, passing by a large church. Bear right onto Adrian St, slowly climbing out of town. Follow Adrian St to where it meets Albany Place, taking a left between bollards, then immediately towards a long flight of steps.
5. Follow this track for a short distance until arriving at some steps. Climb two flights of steps, passing through a gate halfway to the top of the Western Heights and Drop Redoubt fortifications. Bear right at the top of the steps and follow the

'WE ARE ALL WINNERS':

This sculpture is one of nine installations making up The Great Artdoors Arts Trail and marks the Start/Finish of the North Downs Way. Why not pose for pics on the podium with Dover Castle and the White Cliffs in the background.



fence around to the left until eventually descending some steps and passing through a gate onto North Military Road. Cross the road carefully to the footpath opposite and turn left uphill. Follow this road, taking a right onto Citadel Road.

6. Follow Citadel Road past the ruins of the Knights Templar Church. At a Y junction keep left, leaving the sealed tarmac road surface and out onto the Western Heights. Follow the main path marked North Downs Way downhill towards Shakespeare Cliff and the main road in the distance. At a gate, head left down some steps to the road. Follow the road to the right with houses either side.



SAMPHIRE HOE: A 30-hectare nature reserve, located at the foot of Shakespeare Cliff. Created from chalk marl excavated during the construction of the Channel Tunnel, this unique site, managed by the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership and owned by Eurotunnel, is renowned for its biodiversity, wildflowers, and sea views.

7. Follow Kings Ropewalk, turning left onto King Lear's Way and then right onto Old Folkestone Road, continuing to walk away from Dover to the underpass on the opposite side of the road. Cross carefully and take the underpass under the A20, turning right at the top of the steps to follow the NDW to Shakespeare Cliff alongside some allotments.
8. Cross the railway above Shakespeare Tunnel and continue climbing until arriving at a wooden gate with a fence running along the cliff edge. Turn right through the gate and follow the path with the fence to the left and the cliff edge and sea beyond.
9. The route now largely follows a straight line with the sea to the left. Enjoy the views but be mindful of any diversions in place in the event of a cliff slip fall. Turn back for impressive views over Dover, the port and the castle perched above the town.
10. Continue along the undulating coast with Samphire Hoe below, a manmade nature reserved created from the spoil of the Channel Tunnel. Follow the clifftop path noticing pill boxes and military fortifications. Turn right through a gate into a large field and immediately left towards Folkestone with the harbour and hotels ahead in the distance. Pass through a gate at a large grassy ridge, once an old firing range and bear slightly right after another gate to meet a sealed track, which carries the NDW and National Cycle Route 2 (NCR2).



ABBOT'S CLIFF SOUND MIRROR: A forerunner of radar, acoustic mirrors were built on the south and northeast coasts of England between about 1916 and the 1930s. The 'listening ears' were intended to provide early warning of incoming enemy aircraft. Being located on a public footpath, the Abbot's Cliff Sound Mirror is one of the most accessible of these structures.

11. After a while, the views open up with Folkestone appearing in the middle distance and, on a good day, France and Dungeness further ahead. On reaching the Sound Mirror, follow the main track passing Abbot's Cliff House to the left to a path on the left. Turn left up this path, then right alongside the coast path passing by holiday homes and gardens to the right.
12. Keep ahead passing the Clifftop Cafe, keeping left at the car park. Follow the path, turning right and then left between garden fences and down a flight of steps to a sealed road. Turn left downhill, then right down a long flight of steps to a

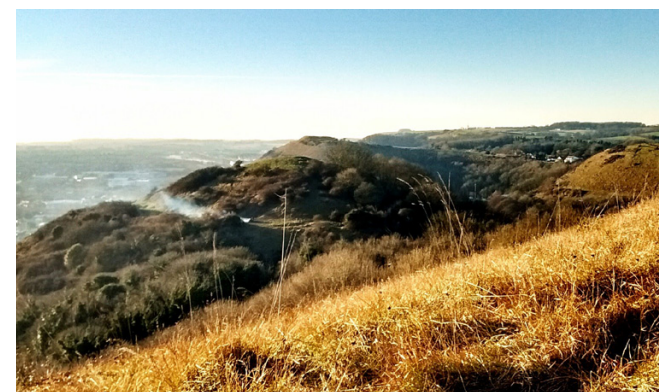
hollow known as the Eagles Nest. Climb up another flight of steps to the Battle of Britain Visitor Centre and Cafe to the right. Keep ahead on the NDW to a flight of steps.

13. Descend the steps, keeping right to follow the trail behind the Valiant Sailor Pub. Cross the road to pick up the trail via a gate in the field opposite. It may be safer to cross by turning right at the pub to the car park and crossing to the pavement opposite and turning left towards a gate in the corner of the field.
14. Follow the Folkestone Downs alongside Crete Road East for a while before briefly exiting onto the road, then back into a field and eventually following the road to a crossing point.



BATTLE OF BRITAIN MEMORIAL: This memorial at Capel-le-Ferne is dedicated to “The Few”, who won the Battle of Britain, 10 July to 31 October, 1940. Open daily, it features the National Memorial, a visitor centre, and two replica aircraft on the cliffs. The Cockpit Cafe is said to boast the best view in Kent.

15. Cross the road heading right and then immediately left onto Crete Rd West. Follow the verge where the trail heads through a gate back onto the open grass hillside.
16. Follow the trail towards Caesar’s Camp on Castle Hill, keeping left on the path, which bears right around the top of the hill. Keep left after a pillar towards a pylon heading downhill.
17. Leave Castle Hill when meeting a sealed tarmac lane heading downhill. At the large black North Downs Way gateway sign, take a left leaving the NDW, and follow the lane (Castle Hill) downhill to a roundabout.
18. At the roundabout, turn right following the Channel Tunnel tracks for a short period before turning left into a tunnel under the M20 motorway. On exiting the tunnel, take a sharp left and follow the road back alongside the M20/ A20 towards buildings. Bear right on the main track passing a hotel to the road to Cherry Garden Lane and turn left towards the traffic lights.
19. Cross the road at the lights and turn right heading up Cherry Garden Avenue to another set of lights, where this road meets Cheriton Road.
20. For Folkestone Town Centre, turn left here and follow Cheriton Rd for about 15 mins to Folkestone Central Station and a little further for the main town centre. For Folkestone West, cross straight over here onto Beachborough Rd before taking the second right onto Station Road to the train station.



FOLKESTONE DOWNS: There are spectacular views across the town and it is linked to the important wildlife sites of Creteway Down and Folkestone Warren. White Cliffs Countryside Partnership manage 72 hectares of the Downs including Castle Hill, Sugarloaf Hill, Round Hill and Cheriton Hill.



