

**NORTH DOWNS WAY RAIL TRAIL No. 2**

**SHOREHAM &  
OTFORD CIRCULAR**

**5 MILES (8 KM) ALLOW 2.5 HOURS**

A 5 mile walk exploring the stunning countryside of the Darent Valley. The walk includes two historic villages as well as rare chalk grassland meadows, woodland and farmland. The route includes sections of the North Downs Way and the Darent Valley Path.



**ROUTE DESCRIPTION AND POINTS OF INTEREST**

**SHOREHAM:** It is worth taking a short detour, either at the start or end of the walk, to explore Shoreham village with its medieval church, picturesque bridge, memorial cross and historic buildings. The village and the surrounding countryside provided inspiration for the visionary artist Samuel Palmer, who produced some of his most important work whilst living there.



**CRICKET FIELD:** Cricket has been played in the Shoreham area of Kent since as early as 1668, with one of the earliest recorded mentions of the sport appearing in a court case from that year.

3. Turn right onto a lane and after around 200m, take the Darent Valley Path on the left. Follow this path until reaching a gate to a field and continue until reaching another gate joining a farm track.
4. Cross the track and go through another gate into a field (still following the Darent Valley Path). The path slopes gently downward until reaching a gate. Enter the field and continue to follow the path, keeping the river to the right until reaching another gate at the far end. Pass by some allotments and an oast house before reaching a road.

**DARENTH VALLEY PATH:** A promoted route that runs for 25 miles, loosely following the course of the River Darent from its source at Westerham to the Thames Estuary at Dartford. Much of the route offers panoramic views through a mix of stunning landscapes of chalk grassland, woodland and marshes.

**HOW TO GET THERE -**

By Car: Shoreham Station is located just off the A225 around 4 miles north of Sevenoaks.

Parking: Parking, including accessible parking, is available at Shoreham and Otford Stations.

Train: Nearest stations: Shoreham and Otford

National Rail Enquiries: [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

Bus: No. 2 (Sevenoaks to Swanley) Mon - Sat, 2 journeys per day

Traveline: [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info)

	Start/finish	Shoreham Station
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	Stiles	1
	Gates	10
	Steps	2 flights, many steps in total
	Terrain	Mainly fields and tracks with some steep slopes. Several roads and one fairway crossing.
	Warning	Take care when crossing golf course fairways.
	Views	Extensive and far reaching views across the Darent Valley and beyond.
	Refreshments	Numerous pubs and cafes in both Otford and Shoreham.
	Toilets	Toilets at Otford Station. Toilets including accessible toilets at Shoreham and Otford Village Halls.

1. Exit Shoreham Station by descending the steps behind Platform 1. Turn right onto Station Road at the bottom of the steps and continue until arriving at a footpath on the left, a short distance after the golf club.
2. Leave the road at this footpath (Darent Valley Path) and continue, crossing a fairway and a cricket ground until reaching a lane.

5. This is the North Downs Way. Carefully cross the road and turn left towards Otford Village, keeping straight ahead and bearing slightly left at the duck pond until reaching Otford Station (at some point along this stretch, cross the road again due to lack of pavement). At this point there are options to shorten the walk and finish at Otford, or to make the walk even longer, by moving to Rail Trail 3 and walk to Borough Green (a further 10km).

**OTFORD:** Otford village boasts a wealth of heritage to explore including the Archbishop's Palace, Otford Heritage Trail and even a listed duck pond! Look out for the 10 heritage panels around the village along the Otford Heritage Trail.



6. To continue on this walk, cross the road when reaching Otford Station and continue uphill until reaching a junction. Bear right just before this and after a short distance, look for the North Downs Way signposted driveway on the opposite side of the road. Cross carefully and follow this as it climbs steadily and often steeply uphill.

**OTFORD MOUNT:** There are some impressive views from Otford Mount, one of the numerous peaks along the 153 mile North Downs Way National Trail.

7. Continue uphill leaving the houses and fences behind. The path becomes wider and more open. On reaching a bench, take time to rest and admire the views across the Darent Valley and beyond. The path continues uphill then starts to level off to reach a gate.
8. Continue a short distance to reach a field. At this point, leave the North Downs Way by aiming for a stile in the top left corner of the field in the direction of a trig point rather than continuing straight ahead. Turn left onto the lane and continue for around 500m.
9. On reaching a sharp bend in the road at Stursdon Farm, keep ahead through a gate and continue until the end of this path. Here there are fine views over Otford and Sevenoaks. Go through the gate and continue ahead with the far reaching views to the south. Please note that cattle may often be found grazing in this field.
10. Go through the gate at the end of the open access land and enter a small section of woodland. Follow the path down to the left. There are still more fine views, this time across the Darent Valley. Continue downhill until two footpaths cross about halfway down.

**FACKENDEN DOWN:** This site comprises high-quality chalk grassland, which supports fragrant, pyramidal and man orchids, together with characteristic downland butterflies such as brown argus, common blue and dark green fritillary. Four species of reptile can also be found here.



11. Turn right onto the footpath, which bisects Fackenden Down Nature Reserve, a Kent Wildlife Trust nature reserve and designated Site of Special Scientific Interest.
12. Continue until reaching a lane and exit the reserve, bearing right and uphill. After around 200m, look for a vehicle barrier on the left and duck under this, following the path through more chalk downland. This is White Hill. Continue ahead, squeezing through a gap between two yews until reaching a footpath junction. Turn left here and continue to the road at the bottom and the station opposite.

**WHITE HILL:** A haven for butterflies in the summer, which thrive on the wildflowers of this steep chalk grassland site. This important site is a Site of Special Scientific Interest managed by Butterfly Conservation.

