

NORTH DOWNS WAY

NATIONAL TRAIL 

NORTH DOWNS WAY RAIL TRAIL No. 5

HARRIETSHAM

5 MILES (8KM) ALLOW 3 HOURS

Although Harrietsham lies along the A20, it's not long before you are out of the village and away from the traffic on this route up on the Downs. Using part of the North Downs Way, the route offers some excellent views of the surrounding countryside from the Downs. There is a chance to rest at the Ringlestone Inn which was built in 1533 and retains many original features.



ROUTE DESCRIPTION AND POINTS OF INTEREST

HARRIETSHAM: Harrietsham has been a longstanding settlement, taking advantage of the spring line on the lower slopes of the Downs. Archaeologists have uncovered evidence of Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman and Saxon activities in the area. Mentioned in the Domesday Book, Harrietsham stands on various routes, ranging from the historic Pilgrims' Way, to the more recent arrivals of the railway and the M20.



Church of Saint John the Baptist, Harrietsham

PILGRIMS' WAY The Pilgrims' Way is a historic route in southeastern England that pilgrims traditionally took from Winchester to the shrine of Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral. It is now a long-distance walking and cycling trail, approximately 192 km (119 mile) long, that is open for use year-round. The route offers a historical and spiritual journey, with some parts following the older, less-marked paths and other sections merging with the well-marked North Downs Way National Trail.

HOW TO GET THERE -

By Car: From Maidstone on the A20, turn left at Harrietsham village into West Street. Turn right, following signs to the Railway Station.



Parking: There is limited parking at Harrietsham station and some on-road parking around the village.

Train: Nearest station: Harrietsham.

National Rail Enquiries: www.nationalrail.co.uk

Bus: 510 (Maidstone – Ashford). Mon-Fri 10 journeys per day, Sat 8 per day.

Traveline: www.traveline.info

	Start/finish	Harrietsham Station
	what3words	///pies.bothered.expiring
	Stiles	16
	Gates	6
	Steps	1 flight, 4 steps
	Terrain	Field paths and tracks. Some moderate slopes
	Warning	Take care when crossing road
	Views	Far reaching views across Kent Downs
	Refreshments	Pub and shop in Harrietsham and Ringlestone Inn along route
	Toilets	Harrietsham Station (including accessible toilets), open Mon-Fri 6.10am to 10.25pm. Customer toilet at Ringlestone Inn

1. From the station car park, cross the footbridge and turn right to follow the path alongside the railway line.
2. Pass through a gap in the fence line and continue on the path uphill. A short distance on, cross over a road and continue uphill.
3. Continue past a gate until reaching a junction with the North Downs Way/Pilgrims' Way and turn left.
4. Look out for a gap in the fence on the left at the junction with the footpath. Turn right here to follow the path up a steep hill across a field. A short distance on, follow the hedge line on the left hand side (there are fantastic views from the Downs at this point).
5. On reaching reach a stile in the hedgerow on your left, cross the stile and turn immediately right, continuing along the hedge line.
6. At the end of the hedgerow, cross the stile and head towards a gate to the right of the farm buildings. Pass through this gate and continue ahead over another stile. Follow the path through the farmyard.

7. On reaching a stile on the left, cross over and follow the path across the field towards a group of trees. On reaching the trees, turn left to follow the way marker along the field edge and bear right at the corner.
8. At a junction with another footpath, continue to the right of the line of trees ahead.
9. On reaching a road, go over stile and cross the road. On the other side, go through the gate and continue ahead with the woodland on the right-hand side.
10. On reaching a gate on the right-hand side, bear left across the field to a way marker sign on the other side and bear right. Go through a gate and continue ahead until reaching the Ringlestone Pub on the left.
11. Here you can either stop for a well-earned break or continue on your walk by turning right and crossing back across the field towards the telegraph pole and a gate.

RINGLESTONE INN: The Ringlestone Inn was originally built as a hospice or sanctuary for monks in the 16th century. The monks were probably farming in the area but left after the dissolution of the monasteries. The building retains many features from its long history, not least an inglenook fireplace to welcome travellers after a long day walking or cycling in the area. Interest in the long history of the public house has led to many tales of highwaymen, smugglers and ghosts.



12. Go through the gate and continue across the field towards another gate in the fenceline.
13. Go through the gate and follow the path with the woods to the right. Keep following the way markers until reaching a stile in the fenceline.
14. Cross the stile and follow the path bearing left across the field.
15. Go over a stile, cross the road and then over another stile to continue ahead on the path. A short distance on, cross another stile and follow the field edge with a hedge on the right-hand side.
16. Pass through a gate, cross a stile and follow the path across the field towards a large tree. Follow the path to a stile in the corner of the field at a road.

17. Cross the road, go over another stile and bear left. Head across the field towards 2 trees and the corner of a wood.

MARLEY WORKS: The large factory buildings in the distance were once the site of the Marley Tile Co, which made concrete roofing tiles from 1926. During the Second World War, the plant was requisitioned by the government to manufacture concrete products for the war effort, including components for the Mulberry Harbours used in the D-Day landings.

18. Cross a stile in the corner and follow the path through a paddock to cross another 2 stiles.
19. Turn left and follow the fence. Near the telegraph pole, turn right and head downhill towards the buildings in the distance.
20. Cross a stile in the fence line and head across the field to the left of the telegraph pole.
21. On reaching a fenced area, follow the path along the fence on the left, until reaching a stile on the left. At this point, bear right to follow the path uphill to a stile near the road.
22. Cross the stile, go down four steps and turn right to follow the Pilgrims' Way. On reaching a crossroads, continue straight ahead along the North Downs Way/ Pilgrims' Way.
23. Turn left and retrace your steps back to Harrietsham station.

