

NORTH DOWNS WAY

NATIONAL TRAIL 

NORTH DOWNS WAY RAIL TRAIL No. 7

WYE DOWNS

5 MILES (8KM) ALLOW 2.5 HOURS

A scenic climb along the North Downs Way National Trail from the historic village of Wye, taking in the iconic Devils Kneading Trough at Wye National Nature Reserve.



ROUTE DESCRIPTION AND POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Turn left out of the train station. Walk past the Tickled Trout pub and follow the road to the left and as it bends again to the right until reaching the Co-op and Wye Church.
2. Take the diagonal footpath marked North Downs Way (NDW) and Stour Valley Way through the churchyard, following waymarkers along an enclosed alley past allotments. At the end of the alley, turn right and follow North Downs Way waymarkers to the road.
3. Cross over the road, passing Wye School and up a rough tarmac road. Go through the metal gate at the end. Continue straight along a stone track that becomes steeper as it nears a road. This is all part of the North Downs Way.
4. Cross the road and follow the North Downs Way straight up a steep hill to the edge of woodland. There is a bench here to rest. Go through the gate and follow the path through

WYE: Wye's parish church of St Gregory and St Martin has Saxon origins, was rebuilt by the Normans, enlarged in the 15th century by Archbishop John Kempe, and later reshaped after its tower collapsed in the 17th century. Pilgrims once paused at Wye's St Gregory & St Martin Church before continuing along the North Downs Way, part of the historic Pilgrims' route to Canterbury and the shrine of Thomas Becket. Wye College, founded in 1447 by Archbishop John Kempe as a college for priests, later became an agricultural education centre under Imperial College London. It closed in 2009 and is being developed for housing.



Church of St Gregory and St Martin, Wye

APHRA BEHN Aphra Behn, one of England's first professional female writers and playwrights, was likely born in Wye in 1640, making this historic village part of her remarkable literary legacy.

woods and up a steep well surfaced path to meet a road (before the road there is a permissive path shortcut on the right to the Crown field). Turn onto the road.

HOW TO GET THERE -

Parking: Parking in Wye at the station, the Village Hall, and near the Co-op. Also at Wye National Nature Reserve car park.

Train: Nearest station: Wye.

National Rail Enquiries: www.nationalrail.co.uk

Traveline: www.traveline.info

	Start/finish	Wye station
	what3words	///simply.action.parsnip
	Gates	10
	Steps	6 flights, totalling 218 steps
	Terrain	Fields and tracks, some steep slopes. One section of road without pavement. Several rural road crossings.
	Warning	Livestock graze fields by Crown and Devils Kneading Trough. Dogs on lead.
	Views	Far reaching and sweeping views all the way to Dungeness.
	Refreshments	There are a number of pubs and cafes in Wye.
	Toilets	Public toilets next to Co-op in Wye. Toilets in pubs and cafes. Accessible toilet in Hub Cafe.

THE JUNIPERS: The Junipers in Wye are named after the juniper bushes that once grew on the chalk downland slopes above the village. The area took its name from this distinctive plant, which was historically common in southern England and often used as a landmark or descriptor.

5. After 250m, turn right up a smooth surfaced slope to follow the NDW. Go through a scissor gate and follow field edge and through a second scissor gate. Turn immediately left and follow the NDW along the fence line. There are great views to the right as well as a rest area, a commemorative plaque and the Wye Crown.

WYE CROWN: The Chalk Crown above Wye, carved in 1902 for Edward VII's coronation, remains a striking landmark. Visible across the Downs, it draws walkers, photographers, and heritage enthusiasts. Today it is made of painted flints. The Hollows in the chalk grassland above the Wye Crown are ancient ironstone extraction pits, likely over a thousand years old. Dug into the chalk downs, they supplied stone for tools and building.



DEVIL'S KNEADING TROUGH: This dramatic dry valley on the Wye Downs was carved by Ice Age erosion of chalk. Folklore links its amphitheatre slopes to the Devil kneading dough. Once used for mortar practice during World War II, it is now protected as a National Nature Reserve for its rare chalk grassland, orchids, butterflies, and sweeping views across Kent. Its rare chalk grassland and striking geology make it a designated Geopark Geosite. See cover photo.

6. Follow the fenceline as it bends to the left and continue straight across an open section of grass and undulations until reaching a gate. Warning - there are sometimes cows grazing in this field.
7. Go through the kissing gate and follow the North Downs Way on a long stretch of bridleway on top of the Downs where sheep often graze. Go through a gate, and after a short section of path turn right to cross the road to another gate and an information panel for the Wye National Nature Reserve.
8. Go through the kissing gate and bear left on a bare earth path through a small area of woodland. At the next gate follow the NDW sign to bear right over a grassy area and go through another gate. There is a picnic bench on the left.
9. Walk down the grassy slope ahead and go through the kissing gate on the right, leaving the NDW. Walk straight ahead enjoying views of the Devil's Kneading

Trough. At the end of the path, stop to enjoy far reaching views of Brook, Wye and on a good day, Dungeness in the distance.

10. Straight ahead take a series of steps down the steep hillside. These are arranged in 6 flights of 24, 30, 7, 26, 5, 11 and 115 steps with narrow, slippery sections in between. At the bottom, go through a gate. Keep to the left-hand side past a rest bench and turn right down a short muddy chalky slope to another kissing gate.
11. Turn right onto the road, then left at the footpath sign after 40m. Cross the field diagonally, then walk straight ahead keeping the hedgeline to the left. Walk past the next hedge on the left, turn slight left and immediately right, keeping the next hedge to the right. Effectively, walk straight ahead until reaching a small road.
12. Continue straight to cross a small road, then onto a stony track and another road.

ST EUSTACE'S WELL: A medieval holy well near Wye, once visited by pilgrims and believed to cure blindness, paralysis, speech impediments, deafness and other ailments.

13. Bear left as the road bends and take the footpath to the right of the football field. Go straight, cross Orchard Drive, and continue along Cherry Garden Lane to reach Upper Bridge Street.
14. Bear left on Upper Bridge Street and walk straight down the road to reach Wye Station.

