

Francigena Britannica



An extension to the Via
Francigena from London to
Canterbury

Confraternity of Pilgrims to
Rome
Spring 2023



THE CONFRATERNITY OF PILGRIMS TO ROME



The Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome was founded in 2006, and in 2019 was granted charitable status (registered charity number 1182135). It is a non-denominational association whose objectives are:

- to encourage, inform, and assist those making a journey to Rome along historical pilgrimage routes on foot, bicycle or horseback.
- to promote the health and cultural benefits of journeying along ancient pilgrimage routes, learning about them and engaging with those who live along them.
- to collaborate with other organisations to support the maintenance and accessibility of pilgrimage routes to and from Rome.

We believe that everyone who journeys along these ancient paths, and for whatever reason – spiritual or secular – is a pilgrim. Part of the pilgrim journey is the companionship with others on the road, and the CPR wishes to actively encourage and foster a sense of community among its members, of being part of something greater than a repository of information and guidance.

We provide information and encouragement through our website, through regular e-newsletters, other mailings, an annual printed bulletin, and publications. We also offer an email information service, aiming to respond speedily and accurately to questions both from members and non-members. We also administer the Facebook Via Francigena Group and our own Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome Facebook page.

To foster a sense of community we hold events such as our Annual Meeting and Member Conference, and organise pilgrim festivals and walks. We regularly meet for social get-togethers in pubs in London and Canterbury, and look to extend these round the UK.

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W1A 6US

Introduction

History

The number of pilgrims walking from Canterbury to Rome on the Via Francigena has increased markedly in the past decade, and the trustees of the Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome (CPR) decided to investigate the viability of re-establishing the historic pilgrimage route from Southwark Cathedral to Canterbury. This route, as described by Geoffrey Chaucer in the 14th-century Canterbury Tales, is a significant pilgrimage route in its own right, but also a logical extension to the Via Francigena in the UK.

The CPR felt the pilgrim community would appreciate the opportunity to approach the starting point of the Via Francigena on a four-day pilgrimage from London to Canterbury, following in the steps of pilgrims who travelled for centuries to the shrine of St Thomas Becket, rather than travelling to Canterbury by train.

Preliminary investigation found the route excessively urban as it crossed south London with too much traffic and very poor air quality. CPR chair and vice chair, Carlo Laurenzi and Brian Mooney discussed a route which would be longer, greener and less busy. In 2021 we asked members if they would be interested in such a route were it available. 71% of respondents said that they would.

This CPR draft guide has been thoroughly tested, and follows existing and well-waymarked routes as far as possible. Its present published form has space for notes, and we are requesting feedback so that revisions can be implemented. For example, once the bridge over the Darent, close to Dartford is completed, the route will be amended to cut out a long detour.

The final version will provide more options and variants, whether following the North Downs Way from Otford all the way to Canterbury or sticking to the valley route along the Pilgrims Way. We believe that this, our recommended route makes more sense for the long-distance walker, especially one carrying a heavy backpack.

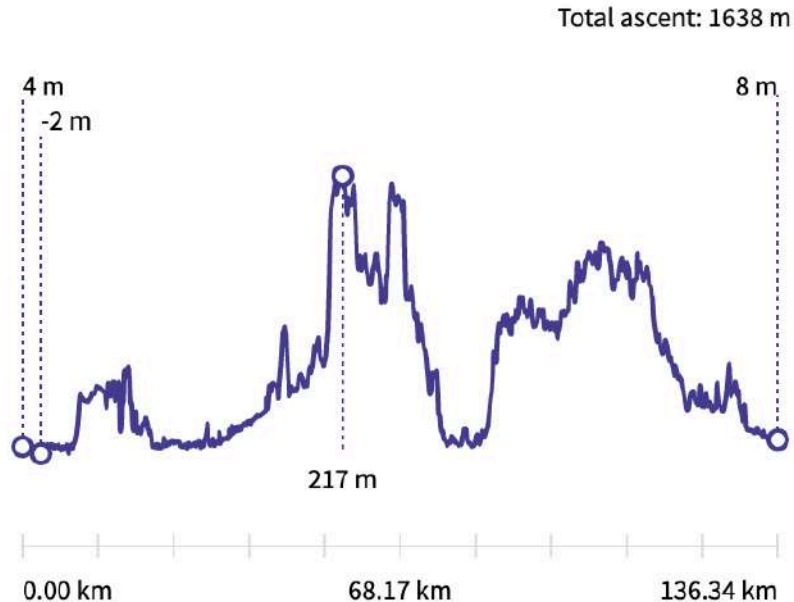
The route

The CPR route knits together a number of established and well waymarked paths:

- Thames Path
- Green Chain Walk
- Darent Valley Walk
- Pilgrims Way
- North Downs Way
- Medway River Walk
- Stour Valley Way

An online version is available at

<https://explore.osmaps.com/route/8525389/london-to-canterbury-cpr-route>



The route from Southwark Cathedral to Canterbury is 136.5km (84.8 miles) in total. We have not divided into stages, but have noted the distance from the start point together with a map in kilometres at frequent intervals. Suggestions have been made for accommodation, and further feedback would be welcome. Eventually we hope to have engaged local churches to offer rest points and a stamp for a credential.

Important

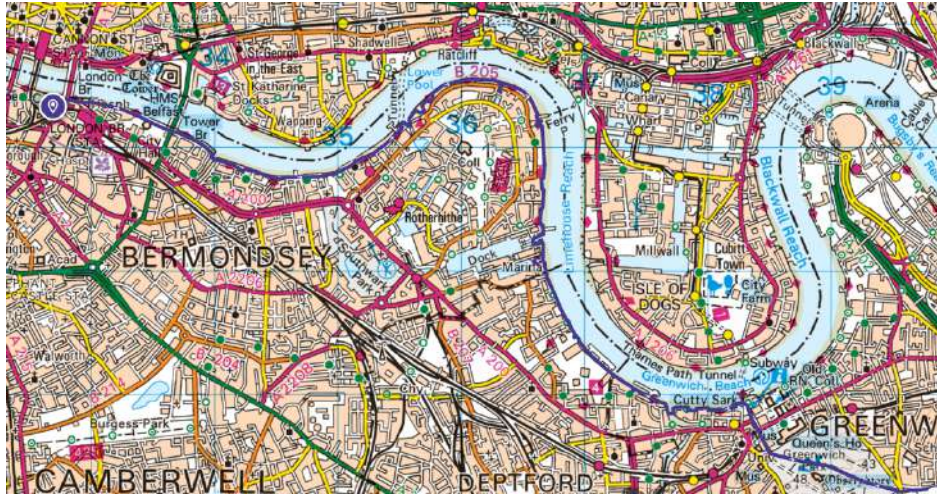
Some of this route uses the public highway and we strongly recommend remaining alert throughout the whole time on are on the road. The experienced pilgrim will of course also know that when walking through wooded areas it is important to observe potential risks such as tree roots or branches. At certain times of year paths may be muddy or even flooded. There are some stretches on busy roads where particular care should be taken. Crossing a major highway is a hazard, and those who live in countries where **you drive not drive** on the right-hand side of the carriageway should remember the advice once given to every schoolchild in this country: "Look right, look left, look right again"! We have noted points where particular care should be taken in **bold** in the text.

The Confraternity of Pilgrims to Rome is not responsible for traffic conditions, or for any changes to pedestrian access to any part of the route, nor for walkers' safety on it.

KEY

LOCAL CHURCHES
ACCOMMODATION
SITES OF INTEREST
AMENITIES

Southwark Cathedral (start) 0 km



Southwark Cathedral to Greenwich

Leave **Southwark Cathedral** grounds onto Cathedral Street, head right and follow Montague Close around the northern edge of the cathedral and under London Bridge, merging into Tooley Street. Turn left at St Olaf House hospital along a footpath that will bring you out onto the Thames riverbank. This is the start of the Thames Path - turn right, heading east.



The Thames Path is waymarked throughout, and will be followed eastwards all the way into Greenwich.

AMENITIES: 100m along from St Olaf House is Hays Galleria, where there are public toilets and free WiFi access.
TRANSPORT LINK: London Bridge Railway Station is also located close by, at the other end of Hays Galleria.



Passing Hays Galleria on your right, continue along the riverbank towards **Tower Bridge**. The Tower of London can be viewed on the opposite bank of the river, as well as HMS Belfast. Passing under Tower Bridge, the path will follow a street called Shad Thames. In the 19th century Shad Thames included the largest warehouse complex in London, housing huge

quantities of tea, coffee, spices and other commodities which were unloaded and loaded onto river boats. Look up and spot the metal bridges connecting the buildings on either side of the street - these were originally used to roll barrels between the warehouses.

Following the Thames Path waymarking, turn left down **Maggie Blake's Cause** and back onto the waterfront. Continue east, crossing the footbridge at St Saviour's Dock. This is the point where the subterranean River Neckinger enters the Thames. Be aware of waymarkings as the path now merges onto Mill Street/Bermondsey Wall West.



LOCAL CHURCHES: Most Holy Trinity (RC) This church has claims to be the oldest mission in the Archdiocese of Southwark, having been established in 1773. Today's post-war building has particularly striking polychrome brickwork.

Turn right at East Lane and then left onto Chambers Street. Take the next left up Loftie Street then immediately right onto Bermondsey Wall East. There are a number of places to access the Thames waterfront, but be aware new private developments may block this at certain points.

Continue to follow Bermondsey Wall East - you will eventually come to a pub called The Angel, where the Thames Path becomes a footpath again to cross King's Stairs Gardens.

LOCAL CHURCHES:

- **St Peter & the Guardian Angels (RC)**
- **St Mary's Rotherhithe (CofE).** Christians have worshipped at the site of St Mary's for at least 1000 years, with the current church building completed in 1716 by an associate of Sir Christopher Wren. It has strong links with the Mayflower and the Pilgrim Fathers, as is the burial site of Prince Lee Boo, a Pacific Island prince buried there in the 18th century.

YHA London Thameside (£), 20 Salter Road, Rotherhithe SE16 5PR 0345 371 9756.
<https://www.yha.org.uk/hostel/yha-london-thameside>. Scheduled to re-open summer 2023.

Continue east along King's Stairs Close and Rotherhithe Street, crossing the red Bascule Bridge. Turn immediately left and back onto a footpath along the waterfront. There are a couple of points where private developments block the waterfront, and the Thames Path diverts onto a road for a few metres. Keep an eye on waymarkings.

AMENITIES: As you continue east around the Rotherhithe peninsula, there are a number of places to take a break if you turn off the Thames Path footpath and onto the parallel Rotherhithe Street. This includes shops, pubs and cafés. In particular, there is a large retail complex at the western end of Greenland Dock, including a large Tesco with public toilets.

TRANSPORT LINK: Access to Surrey Quays overground station from this complex.

After passing the large Greenland Dock (on your left as you are now heading south), the Thames Path continues straight, turning right at Pepys Park. Cross Millard Road and continue through Lower Pepys Park, emerging onto Grove Street. Turn left and continue straight on until Sayes Court Park. Look out for the waymarking that will direct you left into the park, emerging onto Sayes Court Street. Take the next left down Prince Street, turning right just past The Dog and Bell pub onto Watergate Street. Follow the road (and waymarking) around into Borthwick Street and continue onto a footpath at the end of that road which leads you left past the Ahoy Centre and out onto Glaisher Street. Turn right. The Thames Path now follows the riverfront again.

LOCAL CHURCHES: St Nicholas (CofE). Legend has it that the Jolly Roger pirate flag was based on the skulls of the gateposts of St Nicholas's church.



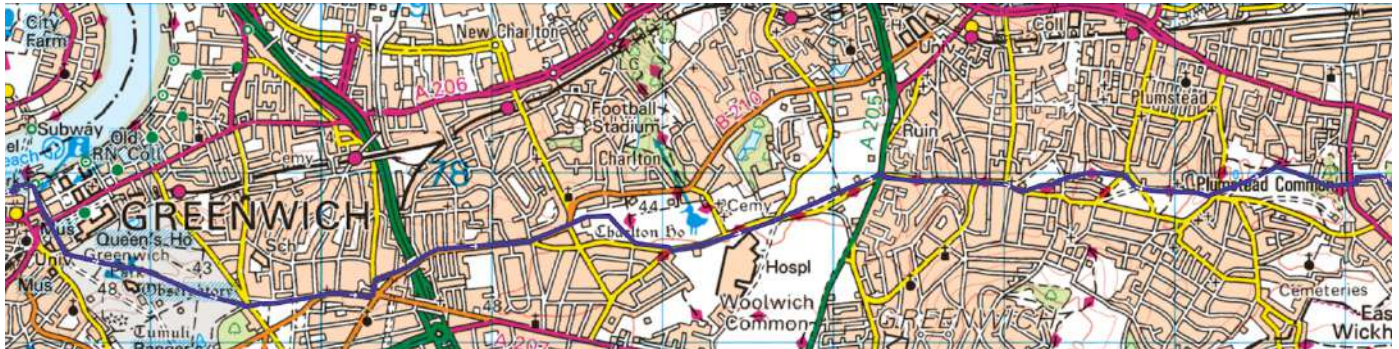
You can choose to cross Deptford Creek at the first footbridge (Greenwich Reach Swing Bridge) and continue on the Thames Path to the **Cutty Sark**,

or cross on the main road (Creek Road) and head directly for Greenwich Park. If you opt for the footbridge, cross and turn left onto Dreadnought Walk, continuing to follow the waterfront on the Thames Path to the Cutty Sark in Greenwich. If you cross on Creek Road continue down Creek Road, turning right at the end, then left into Stockwell Street, and left again into Nevada Street to enter Greenwich Park at St Mary's Gate.

TRANSPORT LINK: Stop here for the Cutty Sark DLR (Docklands Light Railway) Station, Greenwich Pier, or the entrance to Greenwich Foot Tunnel.

Notes

Greenwich (+10km)



Greenwich to Plumstead Common

LOCAL CHURCHES

- Chapel of Ss Peter and Paul (CofE) Part of the Old Royal Naval College, and still and active place of worship. Open daily 10am-5pm.
- Our Lady Star of the Sea (RC)
- St Alfege (CofE)



The Royal Observatory

There are several options through Greenwich town centre to reach Greenwich Park: the simplest is to stand facing south with the Cutty Sark on your right and follow King William Walk to the St Mary's Gate entrance. Continue past St Mary's Gate up The Avenue. **Greenwich Observatory** will be on your right (worth a detour for the panoramic view of London). At the crossroads/roundabout turn left onto Great Cross Avenue. This begins as a small car park but soon becomes a wide pedestrian-only avenue. You will pass a bandstand on your right. Eventually several paths will converge and there will be a gated flower garden on your right. Proceed with the flower garden on your right and exit the park onto Maze Hill. Cross the road and take Vanbrugh Park straight ahead.

LOCAL CHURCHES: St John's Blackheath (CofE)



Follow Vanbrugh Park, taking care not to curve left into Beaconsfield Road where the pavements merge, but continuing east until a large roundabout (the Royal Standard pub will be on your right). Turn left and cross at the zebra crossing (onto the roundabout island), then cross again on your left and continue down Charlton Road. A public toilet facility will be on your right, at the edge of a

small green. Follow Charlton Road (you will pass over the busy A102), until it ends at **Charlton House**.

Enter Charlton House Park - there are various paths through the park but you want to end up on the right hand side, exiting onto the Canberra Road, becoming Charlton Park Lane with the first views of the Kentish hills ahead. Here the route will begin to follow the Green Chain Walk, so look out for that specific local waymarking.

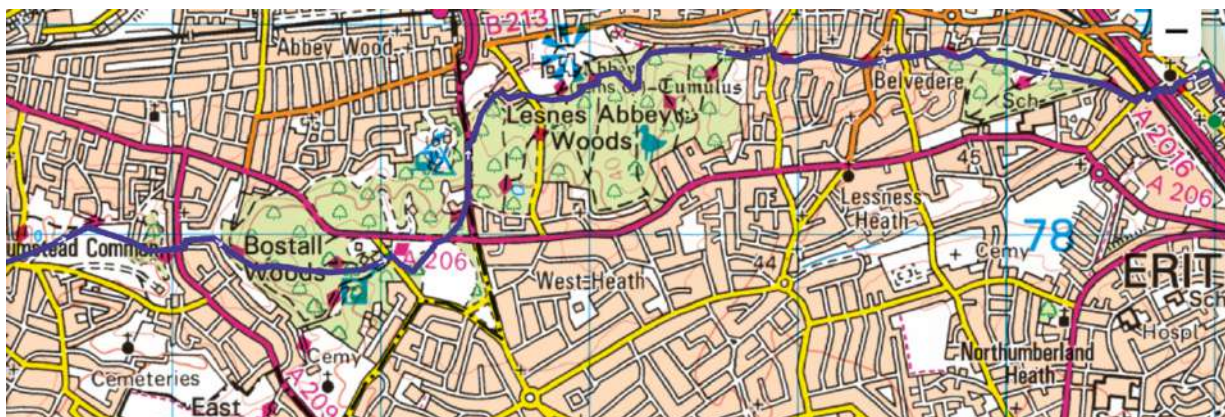
AMENITIES: There is a café and public toilets in the north-east corner of Charlton Park.

Having exited the park onto Charlton Park Lane continue straight ahead (east). The road will become Ha-Ha Road, with Woolwich Barracks on your left, and Woolwich Common and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on your right. At the crossroads continue straight on down Nightingale Place, becoming Plumstead Common Road. Look out for a park (Plumstead Common) on your left and follow the Green Chain Walk waymarking into and across the park. Be aware that a number of footpaths converge here. You should emerge onto Warwick Terrace opposite the Plumstead Pantry and Old Mill Public House - continue east along Old Mill Road (the Old Mill Public House will be on your left). At the Church of St Mark with St Margaret there will be two footpaths on your right - take the left fork, down and up steps, emerging onto Lakeland Road. Cross and pick up Winn Common Road, cutting diagonally across **Plumstead/Winn Common**.



(+17km)

Notes



Plumstead Common to Erith

Before the very end of Winn Common Road you want to turn right (staying within the Common), and then left through a thicket, emerging onto Wickham Lane. Cross and go down Rutherglen Road - immediately on your left is a footpath through some parkland. Follow this around and to the right, up into **Bostall Woods**.

The woodland path will bring you out onto Longleigh Lane, opposite an open space. Cross the road and continue along the footpath towards Bostall Hill Road (the footpath is waymarked but may not be immediately obvious in certain seasons). Once on Bostall Hill Road cross over and turn right. On your left will be a waymarked footpath (also signposted for Belvedere Private Clinic). Follow this woodland path, emerging onto the



A2041. Cross the road (carefully) and continue down Hurst Lane into a small housing development. Take the second left and then turn right - look out for a waymarked Green Chain Walk footpath on your left through a green fence/gate. Follow this footpath through woodland, following any signs for **Lesnes Abbey**. The footpath will emerge onto New Road - cross straight over and continue through the woods to reach the Abbey.

Lesnes Abbey ruins

If you visit the Abbey Kiosk café, exit via the prominent window arch and follow the path down the dell to a playground. Enter through the gates and exit on the opposite side also through gates and follow a track at the back of houses until you emerge onto St Augustine's Road/Heron Road.

AMENITIES: There is a café and public toilets at Lesnes Abbey

TRANSPORT LINK: Lesnes Abbey is a 800m (half-mile) walk from Abbey Wood town and train station.

ACCOMMODATION

- Abbey Wood Experience Freedom Glamping £ Federation Road SE2 0LS 0208 311 7708
<https://www.experiencefreedom.co.uk/locations/regions/south-east/london/abbey-wood>
- Julius Guest House ££ 96 Mottisfont Rd, Abbey Wood, London, SE2 9LN
<https://www.lodging-world.com/uk/hotels/julius-guest-house-in-south-east-london-95093692>

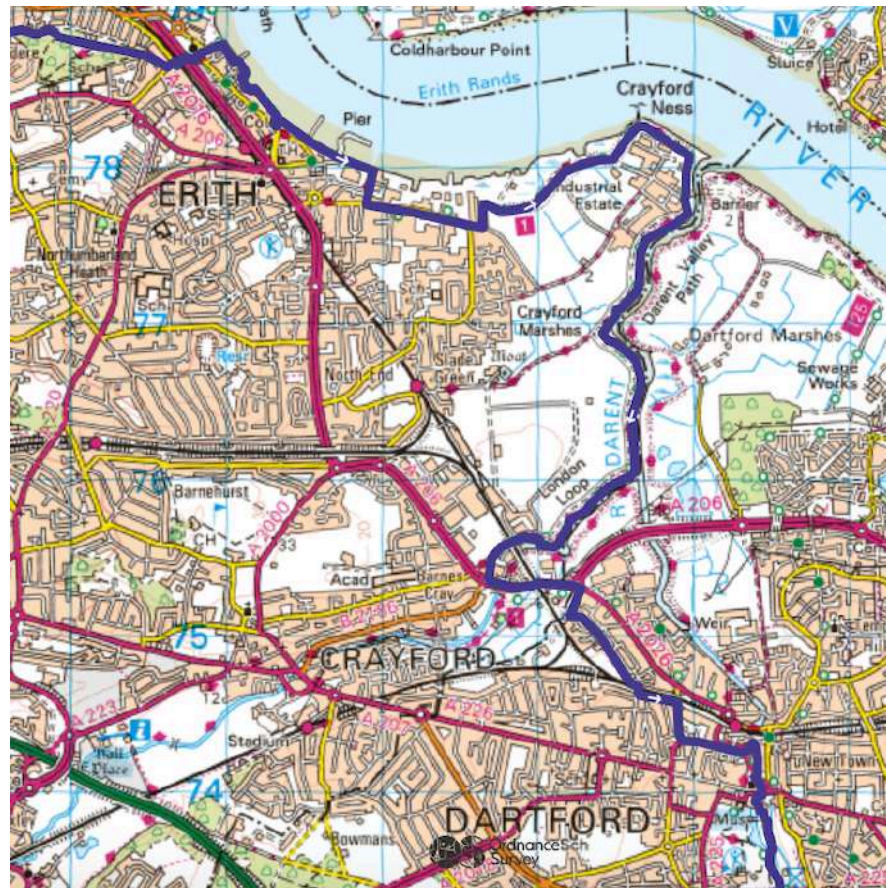
SITES OF INTEREST: Lesnes Abbey. Now ruined, Lesnes Abbey was founded in 1178 by Richard de Luci, Chief Justiciar of England, possibly in penance for the murder of Thomas Becket.

Continue following the Green Chain Walk eastwards - there are a number of footpaths around the Abbey and surrounding woodlands, but the GCW is prominently waymarked. After a steep downhill section there will be a footpath crossroads - the GCW will continue straight ahead, and there will be two paths to your left and two to your right. Take the right-hand path (looks like a service road) on your left and follow this alternative path around the base of the hill for 1km, following the treeline. It will merge back with the footpath and onto St Augustine's Road/Heron Hill. Turn right up the hill, then immediately left onto Upper Abbey. You will follow Upper Abbey Road as it turns into Halt Robin Road, turning into woodland on your right-hand side called Franks Park. Enter and follow waymarking for the GCW through Franks Park in an easterly direction, emerging onto Valley Road. At the bottom of Valley Road turn left and immediately right up a footbridge (this is slightly hidden but just next to an old phone box on the sharp left bend of Pembroke Road). On the other side of the bridge you will emerge onto West Street, with St John the Baptist Church on your left.

LOCAL CHURCHES: St John the Baptist (CofE)

Cross West Street at the zebra crossing and turn left, then take the next right down Corinthian Manorway. Follow to the river Thames waterfront, turning right onto the Thames Path, heading south-easterly, then east.

Erith (+25km)



Erith to Dartford

The Thames Path can now be followed in an easterly direction for a number of miles.

TRANSPORT LINK: Erith Railway Station is less than a mile (1.6km) away, and can be reached by turning back onto the main road. The route between Erith and Dartford becomes quite remote, so Erith is the final significant town before Dartford where you can find refreshments, or pick up public transport.

TRANSPORT LINK: The London Loop continues on your right. This option can be used to reach Slade Green railway station within 1.6km.



The confluence of the Darent and the Thames

At the mouth of Darent river just south of the confluence with the Thames and the Dartford Creek flood barrier (a misnomer as it is some distance from Dartford Creek), walkers are forced to head back west towards London via Slade Green through an unpleasant industrial site, adding an unnecessary two kilometres.



Dartford Creek Flood Barrier

The onwards path will meet another river, the River Cray, and turn west along its northern bank. Continue along this path, which becomes a light industrial road (there is a pavement, although beware of lorries) and passes under a railway line. At the fork turn left, emerging onto a roundabout with the A206. Turn left, sticking to the pavement, and follow the A206 (Thames Road) back under the railway line. You will need to cross the road at some point before the next roundabout - there are traffic islands just after the railway line that provide a safe option.

At the next roundabout (you should now be on the right-hand side of the road) continue straight across (what would be the second exit if you were driving). Just before the start of residential housing you will see a brick wall with a gate in it on your right - follow this track through scrubland towards the railway line. Before the railway line turn left at a silver pedestrian gates, entering a new housing development. Follow Eton Way and, at the end, look for a paved footpath on your right continuing east. Follow this path, emerging onto Chatsworth Road. Cross and continue on the path straight ahead.

There will be a playground on your right, housing on your left, before emerging at the top of Francis Road. Do not turn down Francis Road but continue along a footpath straight ahead, crossing over the railway line via a footbridge. At the other end of the footbridge turn left and follow alongside the railway line, taking the left fork path down a steep hill. Turn right onto Priory Road. This will join with Westgate Road - turn left past the modern retail complex. At the next junction a left turn will take you

into Dartford train station, whilst a right turn down Hythe Street will bring you into the town centre and high street. A good ending point is the historic Holy Trinity Church at the eastern end of the High Street.

LOCAL CHURCHES:

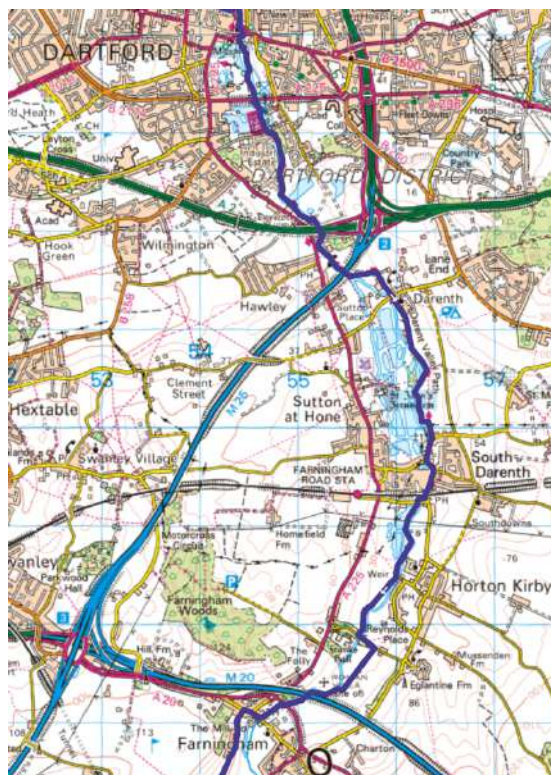
- St Vincent's (RC)
- Holy Trinity (CofE) Holy Trinity was built c 1080, although there is evidence to suggest an earlier church on the site. A chapel to St Thomas Becket was added in the 13th century, which acted as a stopping place for those on pilgrimage to Canterbury

ACCOMMODATION:

- Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel ££ 1 High Street Dartford DA1 1DU 01322 224415
<https://royalvictoria.southcoastinns.co.uk/>
- Holiday Inn Express ££ University Way Dartford DA1 5PA 0371 902 1606
<https://www.ihg.com/holidayinnexpress/hotels/gb/en/dartford/dfbuk/hoteldetail>
- Doubletree by Hilton Dartford Bridge ££ Masthead Close, Crossways Business Park DA2 6QF 01322 284444 <https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/gatdbdi-doubletree-dartford-bridge/>
- Hotel Campanile £ Crossways Business Park, Dartford DA2 6QN 01322 278925
<https://www.campanile.com/en-us/our-hotels/united-kingdom/hotels-dartford/>
- The Fulwich Hotel £ 150 St Vincent's Rd, Dartford DA1 1XE 01322 223683
<https://sites.google.com/view/the-fulwich-hotel/>

Notes

Dartford to South Darenth



Dartford (+35km)

This section now follows the Darent Valley Path, but there is no immediate sign to it from the town centre. Taking the Holy Trinity Church at the eastern end of the High Street, cross over to the entrance to Acacia Hall (local government offices) and then continue ahead and to the left until you see a height barrier for cars and a sign to the Dartford Outdoor Theatre. Follow the paved lane south until you come to a river crossing where you turn right over a black metal bridge (there will also be a river bridge on your left). Entering Dartford Park, turn left and join the Darent Valley Path (waymarked). The footpath heads directly south, passing underneath the A225 and past **Brooklands Lakes** complex.



You will emerge onto Powdermill Lane - turn left and cross the river and take an immediate right. The path now follows the east bank of the river through woodland. The path then enters open fields before crossing a footbridge back to the west bank to leave the river and soon after emerge onto the A225.

[Care needed: South of Dartford's Brooklands district, walkers are required to join short stretch of busy road before the junction of the A225 and A2, followed by a poorly signed section going forward on same section of river under M25.]

The path follows south on the pavement under the A2 till just after the entrance to a mill complex opposite the first houses on the other side of the road where it turns sharp left down a hedged way. This re-joins and re-crosses the river to head southeast under the M25 and then turns east to emerge onto Darent Hill Road South where you head south.

LOCAL CHURCHES: St Margaret of Antioch (CofE) This church is the sixth oldest in England, and third oldest in Kent. It was built c 940, and its original Norman font is still in use.

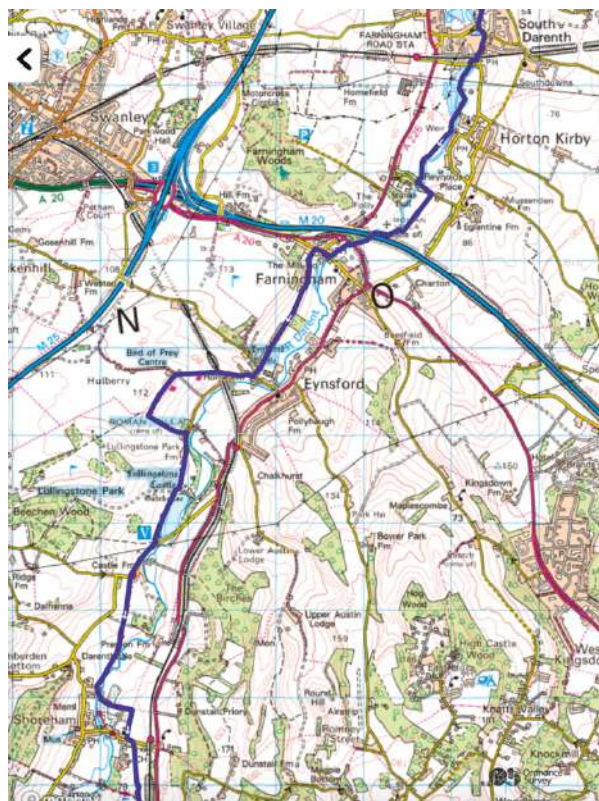
As you emerge onto Darent Hill Road, cross immediately over and follow the footpath sandwiched tightly between a light industrial unit and the fishing complex car park (keep the chain link fence on your right). The waters of the Darent Fishing Complex will be on your right. After about half a mile there will be a crossroads with another footpath/track. To visit St John's Jerusalem turn right - otherwise continue onwards on the Darent Valley Path with the river to your right.

LOCAL CHURCHES/SITE OF INTEREST: St John's Jerusalem. Now a National Trust property, this 13th-century chapel is the only remaining structure of a large Knights Hospitaliers complex that stood on this site.

The path continues directly south, emerging onto Holmesdale Hill. Turn right and follow the road into the village of South Darent.

Notes

South Darent (40km)



South Darent to Shoreham

AMENITIES: South Darent has a small number of cafés and pubs, as well as a Coop supermarket.

TRANSPORT LINK: Farningham Road Railway Station is 800m/half a mile outside the village.

Going through the village down Horton Road you will pass under the railway line viaduct, with The Bridges pub on your right. At the pub turn right down Station Road, crossing the river and turning left down the (waymarked) footpath. The footpath follows the river, emerging into Westminster Fields Park. There is an opportunity to cross the river here and explore the village of Horton Kirby. Otherwise continue south with the river on your left, emerging onto Franks Lane. Turn left, crossing the river, then take a right turn down a waymarked footpath - Horton Kirby Cricket Club will be on your left, and there may be horses in the fields to your right.

Care needed: On the outskirts of Farningham The Darent Valley walk unexpectedly leaves the river for a short stretch only to rejoin it as passes under M20 and very soon after that, it goes under A20. It may be confusing and feels counter-intuitive for walkers.

Follow the footpath and it will shortly rejoin the River Darent and pass under both the M20 and A20. Cross the river via the footbridge under the A20, following the path and emerging into Farningham close the Lion Pub.

LOCAL CHURCHES: Ss Peter and Paul (CofE)

Turn right along Farningham High Street and follow the road down Sparepenny Lane which will be on your left. After about 50m there will be a waymarked footpath on your left. Follow this, running parallel to Sparepenny Lane. You will need to rejoin Sparepenny Lane just after Furlongs Farm, emerging onto Lullingstone Lane/ Riverside. Turn left if you want to explore Eynsford, otherwise turn right.

SITES OF INTEREST: Eynsford Castle

LOCAL CHURCHES:

- Eynsford Baptist Church
- St Martin's (CofE)

**ACCOMMODATION: Castle Hotel ££ High St, Eynsford, Dartford DA4 0AB
01322 633917 <https://www.castlehotelkent.com/>**

Just after the road bends to the left, look out for a footpath on your right. Follow this footpath uphill, crossing the railway line and passing the Eagle Heights Wildlife Foundation. With only light traffic, it is also possible to stay on the road all the way to Lullingstone Roman Villa. Continue southwest along the footpath then turn right, emerging at Lullingstone Roman Villa.

TRANSPORT LINK: Eynsford Railway Station is 1.1km/0.7 mile from Lullingstone Roman Villa.

Turn right at the villa and follow the lane south. **Lullingstone Castle** and the World Garden and the River Darent will be on your left.



LOCAL CHURCHES: St Botolph's (CofE)

The lane will join the car park for Lullingstone Country Park and emerge onto Castle Road. Turn right and follow the road south past Castle Farm, looking out for a footpath on your left just as the road bends to the right. Follow this footpath south, eventually emerging onto Mill Lane in

Shoreham.

Shoreham (+52km)

Turn right and join Shoreham High Street if you want to explore the



village. If not, continue on the footpath south, crossing the river. The path will fork - take the left-hand option (the one not following the riverbank), then follow as it curves around. At a footpath crossroads, turn right, emerging onto Station Road. Cross over and turn left.

The Darent through Shoreham

LOCAL CHURCHES: Ss Peter & Paul (CofE)

Look out for a waymarked footpath on your right and follow south (through the golf course and past the cricket ground).

Stay on Station Road to reach Shoreham Railway Station in less than 800m/0.5miles

Notes



Shoreham to Wrotham



Otford

This path continues directly south all the way into **Otford** village, emerging onto the High Street. Turn left to enter the village - the railway station is at the eastern end of the High Street. The route to Canterbury now turns east and offers two options and even a combination of the two. The North Downs Way (NDW) follows the ridges and hills all the way to Canterbury and Dover but the going can be rugged. An ancient pilgrim track along the valleys, which is easier going, involves some road walking and entails an occasional encounter with traffic. We have generally opted for the Pilgrims Way for this particular section.

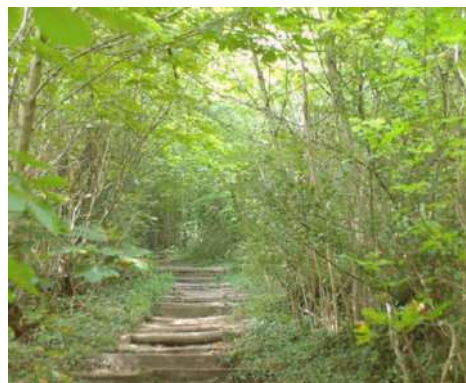
LOCAL CHURCHES:

- Church of the Most Holy Trinity (RC)
- Otford Methodist Church
- St Bartholomew's (CofE)

SITES OF INTEREST: Otford Palace: Thomas Becket is said to have particularly enjoyed staying at Otford Palace while he was archbishop. 'Becket's Well' is found nearby - two springs of clear water are said to have been created to the east of the palace when - displeased with the taste of local water - Becket struck the ground with his crozier.

From the centre (taking the roundabout duck pond as your guide) head east with the Woodman pub on your left. Follow the road along past the railway station. About 100m after crossing the railway line, turn right down Pilgrims Way East – there is a pavement on the right-hand side of the road. You can either continue on the Pilgrims Way though the village of Kemsing to Wrotham, or join the NDW in another 100m, up a narrow lane which shortly becomes a stepped footpath.

If on the NDW continue along the footpath through a wooded area. As it emerges from the treeline into an open space, the footpath forks - stay on the right hand side so that the open space remains on your left. The path eventually emerges onto the junction of Rowdow Lane and Birch Cross Road - cross over and continue straight ahead (west) down Birch Cross Road and look out for the waymarked footpath starting again on your



right. The path will take you through woodland, with a fenced field on your left, emerging via a pedestrian gate into another open space. The footpath should be visible but continues straight ahead in a southwesterly direction, at one point crossing a field boundary. Continue onwards, emerging onto Shorehill Lane. Turn right and follow the lane as it curves around to the left, passing the brick pillars. The lane ends at Otford Manor. This is private property but you can turn right just past the manor house down a paved track (a walled camping ground will be on your left), which turns into a footpath through woodland. After about 100m turn left through the metal pedestrian gate, rejoining the North Downs Way.

Follow the waymarked NDW as it curves left to the north, through woodland and some open spaces. At times you will be able to see the brick walls of the Otford Manor campsite on your left. The footpath eventually turns west again through a wooded area, emerging onto Cotman's Ash Lane. Turn left, then take a right at a large farm/warehouse building - the path here may be barred by a locked metal gate, but the footpath is on the right hand side through a narrow metal gate.

Follow the footpath west, keeping the farm property on your left. At the next gate, continue through the open space straight across the field to the next gate, and then follow with the fence on your left through to a wooded area. The path will soon emerge once more into open space - keep the

treeline on your left as you continue northwest until you come to a crossroads with a faint trackway that crosses from north to south. The NDW continues to the east, but turn right (south) and follow the trackway along the boundary line between two fields (should be with trees), emerging onto the Pilgrims Way Road (you will need to climb over a metal farm fence here).

Turn left and follow the road until it bends sharply to the right. Straight ahead should be a trackway - this is the NDW again and you can follow this in a straight line east for roughly two miles, emerging into Wrotham onto a road also called the Pilgrims Way.

There will be housing on your right - continue onwards, crossing Old London Road and continuing along the Pilgrims Way east. Eventually the M20 will be on your left (behind trees, but you should be able to hear it) and Wrotham Recreation Ground on your right.

Wrotham (+64km)

ACCOMMODATION: The Bull Hotel ££ Bull Lane, Wrotham, Sevenoaks TN15 7RF
01732 789800 <https://www.thebullhotel.com/>

LOCAL CHURCHES: St George's Church (CofE)

AMENITIES: Wrotham has a number of pubs, cafés and shops. The Bull is specially recommended for both accommodation and food.

TRANSPORT LINKS: The town is not served by a railway station, but Borough Green station is a short bus journey to the south.

Wrotham is the last significant place for refreshments till Aylesford.

Notes



Wrotham to Peter's Bridge

Care needed: - a dangerous road crossing on leaving Wrotham: walkers need to follow the busy A20 for about 200m on the footpath, and cross over as soon as it's safe to do so; then immediately cross over the top of the M20. At the roundabout take hard right turn not signposted as NDW, but the lane is helpfully called **Pilgrims Way**.



Pilgrims Way, Wrotham © N. Chadwick

Immediately after a lay-by with some communal recycling bins on your right-hand side, look out for a footpath turning right. Follow this, and emerge onto the A20. Carefully cross over, turn left and follow the footpath over the bridge above the M20 then follow the pavement to the right down what is again called the Pilgrims Way. Follow this lane for 800m or just under half a mile, looking out for a waymarked footpath on your left, just after a private property.

Note: Deviation off the North Downs Way at White Horse Wood (east of village, Vigo) to make use of the new option of Peter's Bridge; there no signage. Leave the NDW and follow Pilgrims Way for short stretch until Chapel Lane and

follow footpath through the small estate of Dean Hill, then past deep quarries on the right until reaching the Peter's Bridge roundabout. It is important to use pedestrian crossing as it is fast-flowing dual carriageway traffic, as you head over to the right side of the roundabout.

It is possible to stay on this lower level now for some 9.6km/six miles on a mix of road and trackway until the route leaves the NDW as you head towards the River Medway. Alternatively, follow the NDW signs as they offer off-road walking starting in 800m/half a mile with a waymarked footpath on your left after just after a private property.

Join this footpath, which runs alongside the lane (this avoids walking on the road). After about 400m/ $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile it rejoins the road for a few hundred metres, then returns to the fields a little further up (a sign on the gate warns you to stay on the footpath as it crosses private property). The footpath now follows the boundary of a field before heading into woodland and emerging onto a more substantial trackway. There are signs for the NDW throughout. Follow this track (also called Hognore Lane on some maps) until it emerges onto Gravesend Road. Turn right, then right again at Vigo Hill (a narrow lane just past a red post box). Follow for a few hundred metres (carefully, as there is no pavement), looking out for footpaths on your left. There will be two - one heading directly up the hill and one up some steps but slightly to the right. Take the second option (which is also waymarked for the NDW) into Trosley Country Park.



There are a number of footpaths and trails through Trosley Country Park - stay on the NDW heading northwest. After a period following the top of a ridge, the NDW will direct you steeply downhill to rejoin the end of a lane called (again) the Pilgrims Way. Turn left and follow the trackway west - this time you will be at the bottom of the ridge. After a 3.2km/two miles the trackway will emerge from the treeline into some fields, although the footpath itself will continue to be edged by trees. Continue straight on but keep an eye out for the NDW waymarking directing you to turn left. At this point, do not turn left but carry straight on (leaving the NDW). This footpath will continue to follow the boundary of fields down a green lane, emerging onto Birling Hill.

ACCOMMODATION: Badgells Wood Campsite £ Whitehorse Road, Meopham, Kent, DA13 0UF 07528 609324 <https://www.badgellswoodcamping.co.uk/>

Turn left and pick up the footpath almost immediately opposite, which continues in an easterly direction. It is waymarked as a restricted byway but will eventually turn back into the Pilgrims Way lane again. You will

eventually emerge onto a tarmacked road where you continue ahead towards the whitened gash of a chalk quarry. Then continue straight ahead into the small village of Upper Halling (there are no amenities here). Turn right at the first crossroads down Meadow Crescent (a fairly new housing development) - the road will end after only a short distance but the pavement continues. Follow this for a little while then take a waymarked footpath on your right, which will lead you alongside a steep escarpment before merging with a trackway that will head east alongside some fields. You will emerge onto a roundabout on the A228, with the River Medway visible straight ahead.

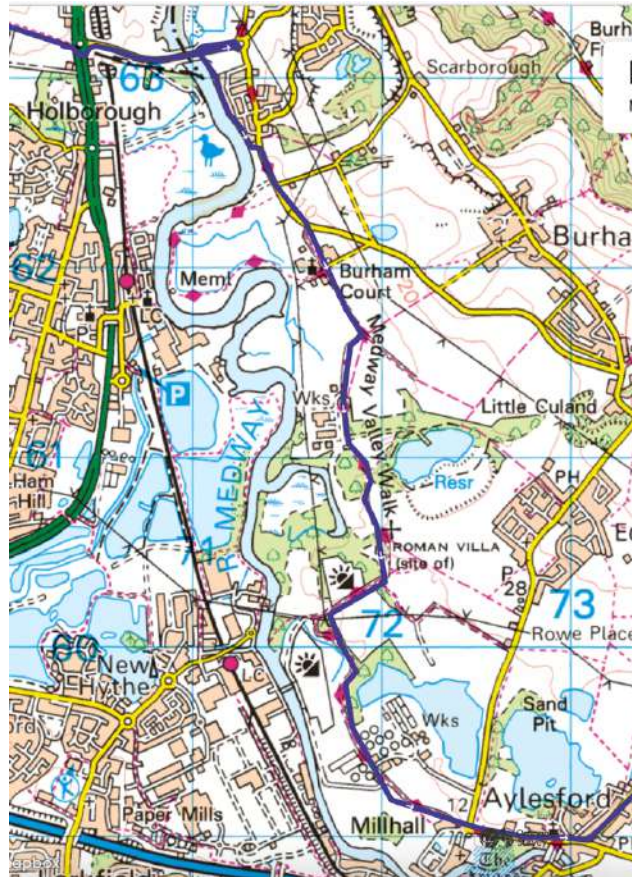
Turn left on the A228 to reach **Halling** within 1.1km/0.7 miles.

TRANSPORT LINK: Railway station at Halling

Peters Bridge (+76km)

ACCOMMODATION: Manor Farm Campsite £ 1.1km.0.7 miles from Peter's Bridge
<https://www.manorfarmcampsite.co.uk/>

Notes



Peter's Bridge to Aylesford

From the A228 roundabout head east towards the River Medway, crossing Peter's Bridge on the footway to the right. On the east bank, by the end of the crash barrier and just before the fence there is a gap giving access to a steep grassy bank down which the intrepid walker can scramble to reach the river bank. **Care should be taken here.** Otherwise continue to the roundabout just beyond the eastern bank, cross over and weave left back under the bridge. You should now be facing south, with the River Medway on your right.



A new pedestrian walkway has been built on the eastern bank of the river which can be followed south until it ends and rejoins the main Village Road/New Court Road. Turn right and follow the road for about 800m/half a mile. As it starts to bend to the left the footpath will continue separately straight ahead. Stay on the footpath, where you will join a narrow lane (Old Church Road) with **St Mary's Church** on your right.

Continue straight ahead along the waymarked Medway Valley Walk and turn right at the next crossroads (made of footpaths and trackways). The path will pass some light industrial units on the right. After 800m/half a mile

the path will fork - stay on the right and then turn left - there will be a large solar panel installation on your right. There will then be an electricity pylon on your left - turn left immediately after this and follow this trackway past the sewage works (on your left) and to its terminus at the junction of Bull Lane and Aylesford High Street. The entrance to **Aylesford Friary** is straight ahead.



With the Friary on your right, join Aylesford High Street heading east (the white picket-fence sign welcoming you to Aylesford will be on your left) and follow into Aylesford town centre.

Aylesford (+82km)

Continue straight ahead along the waymarked Medway Valley Walk and turn right at the next crossroads (made of footpaths and trackways). The path will pass some light industrial units on the right. After 800m/half a mile the path will fork - stay on the right and then turn left - there will be a large solar panel installation on your right. There will then be an electricity pylon on your left - turn left immediately after this and follow this trackway past the sewage works (on your left) and to its terminus at the junction of Bull Lane and Aylesford High Street. The entrance to Aylesford Friary is straight ahead.

ACCOMMODATION:

- Church Barn La Grande £££ 76-103 High St, Aylesford ME20 7BA: 0345 498 6900. Self-catering; book on cottages.com
- Aylesford Friary <https://www.thefriars.org.uk/Accommodation>

LOCAL CHURCHES: Ss Peter & Paul (CofE)

AMENITIES:

- The Hengist 7-9 High Street, Aylesford 01622 885800
<https://www.hengistrestaurant.co.uk/> £££
- The Chequers Inn (takeaway) 63 High Street 01622 717286
<https://www.thechequersaylesford.co.uk/> £
- The Village Pantry 2 Forstal Road. 01622 792673 £
- The Bush Pub 17 Rochester Rd £

SITE OF INTEREST: The Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St Simon Stock. The RC shrine is the main focus of Aylesford Priory (The Friars), and was established in 1242 as the first Carmelite house in England. It is also the site of St Simon Stock's mystical vision of the scapular. The Shrine is a popular pilgrimage destination.

TRANSPORT LINK: Cross Aylesford bridge and follow Station Road for Aylesford Railway Station (less than 1.6km/one mile)

Notes



Aylesford to Thurnham

As you walk into Aylesford along the High Street the pavement on the left-hand side will rise above the road - keep to the left as it becomes an independent footpath up to the church of Ss Peter and Paul. Just past the church you will emerge onto Vicarage Lane. Turn right to go back onto the High Street, then turn left and take the Rochester Road. The pavement will be on your right and you will pass a pub called The Bush.

After 600m/ 0.4 miles turn right down Pratling Street - the pavement on your right will disappear after a few metres, but just a couple of metres after that there will be a footpath into the fields on your left. Follow the footpath as it cuts diagonally across fields which have been awkwardly divided into a succession of gated paddocks, emerging back towards Pratling Street (the road not the village of the same name), bringing you close to a farm. Turn left and follow the lane - it will bend sharply to the right and left, but before the next left bend there will be a footpath visible continuing straight onwards. Follow the footpath and turn right at the treeline where it joins the North Downs Way. Follow the waymarking as the NDW crosses the busy A229.

Note: There is a confusing tunnel about 2km from Aylesford under the A229. It is important to go under, and shortly after - leave the NDW following Pilgrims Way as it crosses over the Eurostar line, and continues for approximately 3km.

Once on the other side of the road, a few footpaths overlap but make sure you follow the waymarking for the Pilgrim's Way, passing down the side of the Kent Motorhome Centre before turning left and crossing the high-speed railway line. At the next fork, take the right-hand option, leaving the NDW (which heads steeply uphill). Stay on the lower Pilgrims Way (a trackway), emerging onto Lidsing Road / Boxley Road.

Note: At the end of the trackway where it joins Lidsing Road towards Boxley there is a 500m- stretch of fast road with little shelter for walkers as far as the PW lane towards Detling.

Follow the busy road to the right, then take the narrow lane (still the Pilgrims Way) on your left which appears as an extension of the road, towards Detling. Follow the lane until it rejoins the NDW just outside of Detling. Ensure you use the large footbridge ("Jade's Crossing") over the dangerous A249, which acts a bypass for Detling.

Detling

LOCAL CHURCH: St Martin's CofE

**ACCOMMODATION: The Cock Horse Inn £ 39 The Street, Detling, ME14 3JT
01622 730144 <https://cockhosedetling.co.uk/>**



The Cock Horse

Follow the combined NDW and Pilgrims Way routes to the eastern edge of Detling, where the NDW turns the left. Stay on the PW into the small village of Thurnham.

Notes

Thurnham (+91km)

LOCAL CHURCHES: St Mary the Virgin (CofE)

ACCOMMODATION:

The Black Horse Inn ££ Pilgrims Way, Thurnham, ME14 3LD 01622 737185
<https://www.blackhorsekent.co.uk/>



Thurnham to Lenham

After Thurnham the Pilgrims Way continues east past Cobham Manor and Broad Street, into the village of **Hollingbourne**.

TRANSPORT LINK: Turn left on Hollingbourne Hill to reach Hollingbourne Railway Station within 1.6km/1 mile

LOCAL CHURCHES: All Saints (CofE)

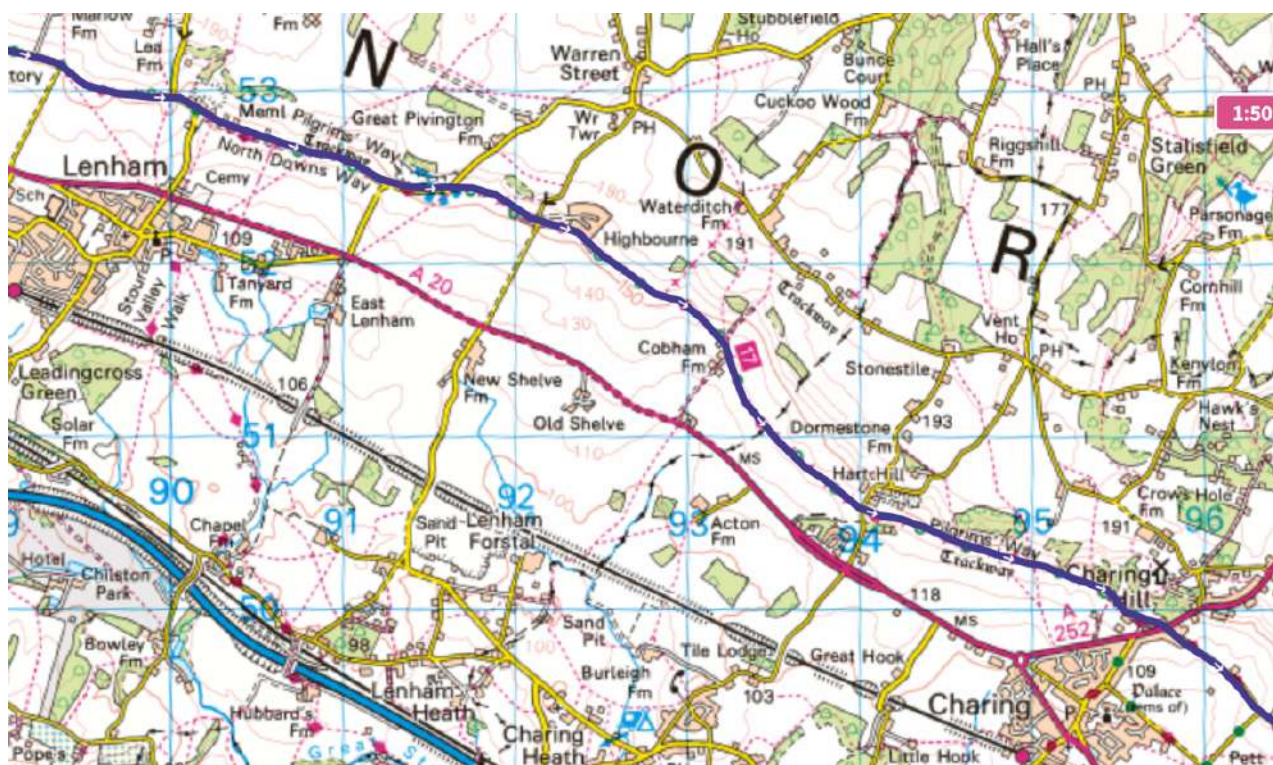
From the crossroads of Hollingbourne Hill and the Pilgrims Way, orientate yourself so that the Dirty Habit pub is on your right as your face east. Follow the NDW signage east, past the back of the pub car park. The Pilgrims Way and NDW have once again merged. After 3.7km/2.3 miles you will emerge onto Slade Hill.

TRANSPORT LINK: Turn right here to reach Harrietsham Railway Station after 1.6km/1 mile

Lenham (+102km)

Cross Slade Hill and continue straight ahead on the Pilgrims Way, passing the Pilgrims Rest statue on your left. After the statue you will cross a lane that leads down to **Lenham village**, before passing through a gate onto a grassy drove road. Look out for the large War Memorial cross carved into the hillside here.

Note: Just past turning from PW for Lenham, there's a poorly signposted section onto a road called Hubbards Hill. The footpath leaves the PW, cuts across a field, then divides. At this point take the right fork, and ensure that you meet Highbourne Manor to the south of it (ie it should be on your left as you proceed past it).

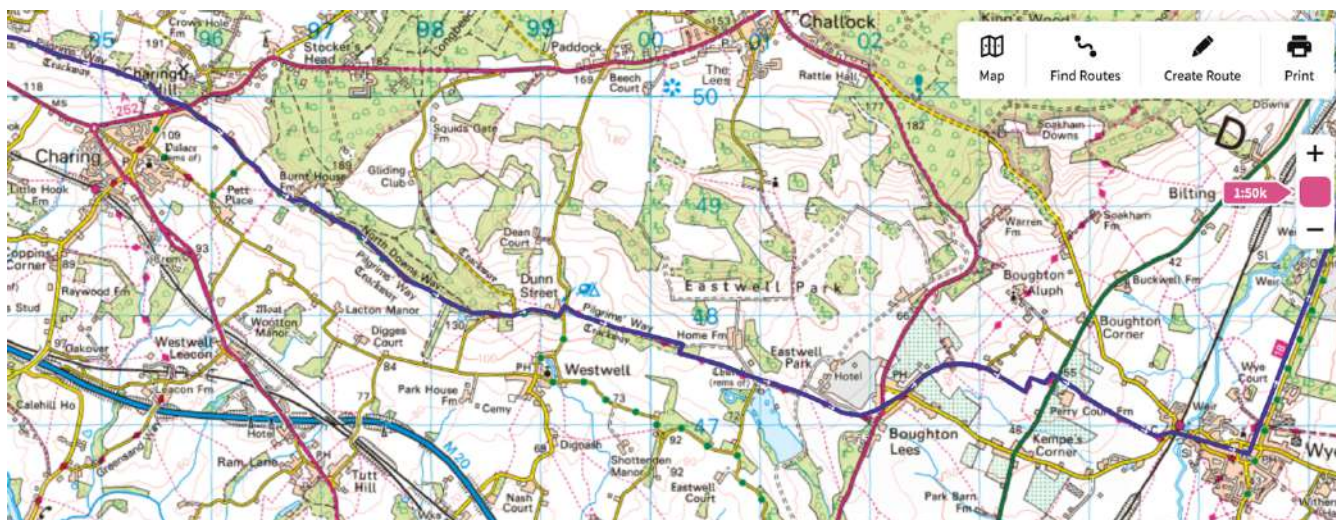


Lenham to Charing

The path continues through open countryside, past Cobham Farm - the village of **Charing** will be visible in the distance.

(+109km)

Notes



After Charing the path will cross Dunn Street - turn left here to reach Dunn Street Farm Campsite. **Note: At Dunn Street hamlet, the route takes you left onto a small road, then immediately right, it's easy to miss the second turning.**

ACCOMMODATION: Dunn Street Farm Campsite £ Dunn Street Farm, Dunn Street, Westwell, TN25 4NJ <https://www.dunnstreetfarm.co.uk/> £

After Dunn Street the path approaches the back of the Eastwell Park Estate (private), where you can visit the remains of St Mary's Church (abandoned) and the alleged tomb of Richard Plantagenet, son of Richard III. Following onwards, the path will take you past the entrance to Eastwell Manor Hotel, and across the A251 Faversham Road (**care is needed here**) into **Boughton Lees** and the large village green, **where there is a dangerous junction on Boughton Lees village green where traffic from your right (ie from Wye) is not easily visible.**

ACCOMMODATION: Eastwell Manor Champneys Hotel and Spa £££ Eastwell Park, Ashford TN25 4HR 0343 224 1700 <https://www.champneys.com/hotels/eastwell-manor/>

LOCAL CHURCHES: St Christopher's Church CofE

At Boughton Lees orientate yourself so that you are standing outside the Flying Horse pub, which sadly no longer offers accommodation, looking towards the common. Turn left then left again, once more down the Pilgrims Way. **This a junction that needs care to manoeuvre.** After 600m/0.4 miles a section of the NDW towards Canterbury will branch off on your left, but remain on the Pilgrims Way, looking out for an alternative NDW footpath on your right signposted towards Dover via Wye. There are in fact two footpaths signposted on your right; take the second one, which follows the boundary line of a field with a farmhouse on your left. At the end of the footpath turn left, then right, emerging onto Canterbury Road, and crossing a somewhat challenging stile.

Cross over and dog-leg to the left. Continue immediately onwards, along the NDW past Perry Court Farm and emerging onto Harville Road just opposite Wye Railway Station. Cross the railways line and river via Bridge Street, entering the village of Wye.

Wye (+120km)



Great Stour river, Wye

LOCAL CHURCHES: Ss Gregory and Martin (CofE)

Notes



Wye to Chartham

From the centre of Wye, find the church of Ss Gregory and Martin - from the main gates take the right-hand footpath through the churchyard, passing through a gap in the brick wall at the end. Turn left and follow the path - allotments will be on your left. Turn right at the end, emerging onto Olantigh Road. Although this is a quiet straight road, there is little or no shelter for walkers until arrival in village of Godmersham Turn left and follow the road for two miles.

Just before Olantigh Road passes under the railway line turn right down Eggarton Lane. After 300m/0.2 miles the road will bend to the right, but a footpath will continue straight ahead (alongside the railway line, which will be on your left). This path is signposted as the Pilgrims Cycle Trail. It will cross Pope Street, but otherwise continues north uninterrupted for almost 3.2km/2 miles. After 3.2km/2 miles there will be a crossroads with another footpath - turning left will allow you to reach Chilham village, where there is a railway station.

Otherwise, bearing right continue straight on until the path emerges onto the junction of Pickelden Lane and Mystole Lane. **Note: Crossing Mystole Road just east of Chilham railway station, the path cuts diagonally across a field and is easy to miss; it should take you into hamlet of Rans Corner, and from here it is pleasant back roads into Chartham.**

Continue straight ahead on Mystole Road but look out on your left for the waymarked footpath of the Stour Valley Walk. Follow this footpath to the north, and turn right at the next opportunity. You will emerge onto the junction of Thruxted Lane and Bobbin Lodge Hill. Carry on straight ahead down Bobbin Lodge Hill and into the hamlet of Shalmsford Street. At the junction with Shalmsford Street cross straight over and continue down Bolts Hill. This road will turn into Parish Road - continue to follow this into **Chartham**

Chartham (+120km)

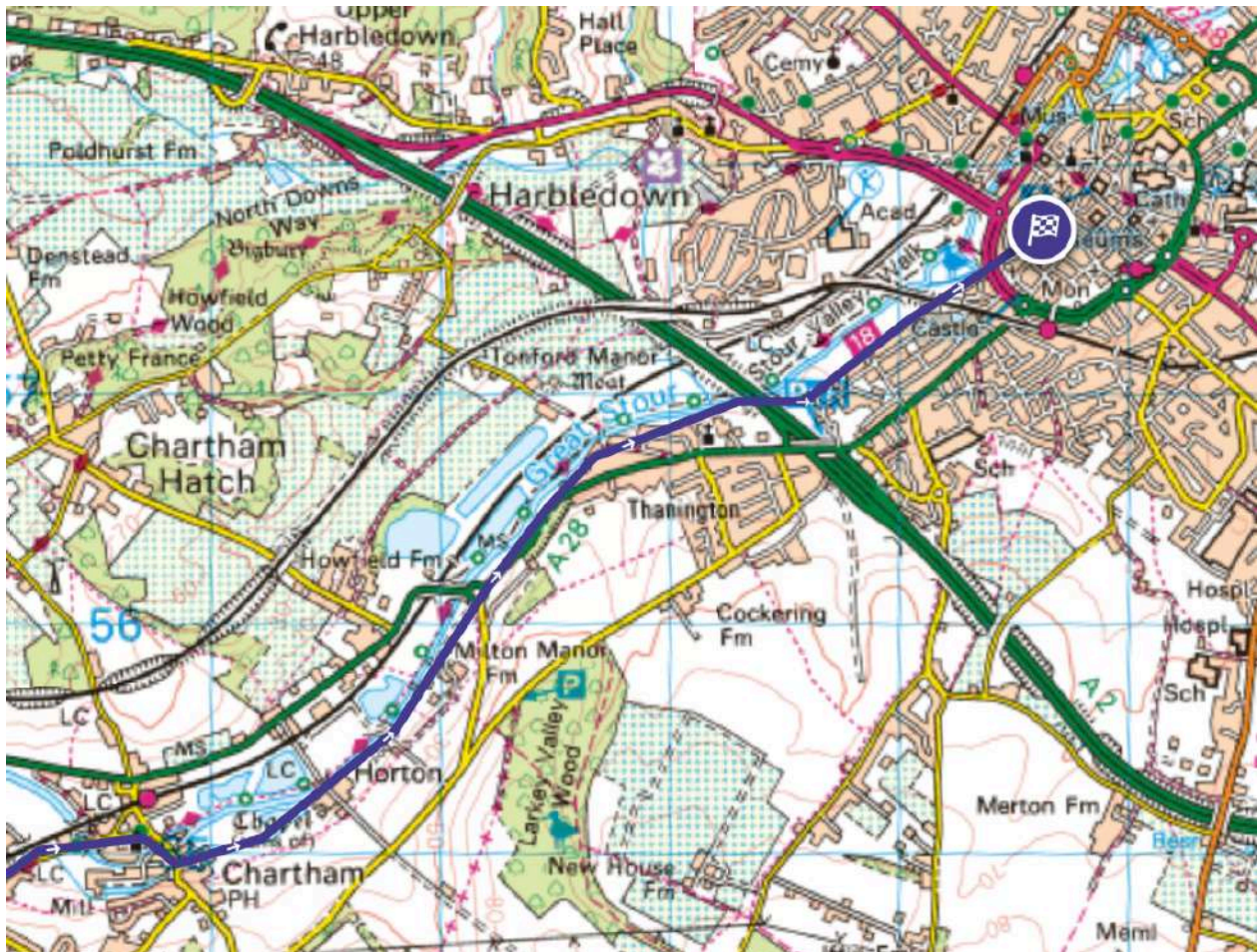
LOCAL CHURCHES: St Mary's (CofE)

TRANSPORT LINK: Chartham has a railway station in the centre of the village



Chartham

Notes



Chartham to Canterbury Cathedral



From the centre of Chartham, stand outside the church of St Mary with the village green in front of you. On the right-hand side of the green is a waymarked footpath/cycle path that runs alongside the River Stour called the Stour Valley Walk. Turn left (northwards) then stay on this well maintained and waymarked footpath all the way into Canterbury.

As you approach the city you are on the left bank of the river, which goes under a bridge belonging to A290. After a couple of kms/1.2miles when you've switched to the right bank of the river, take the exit up and to the right.



Westgate Towers, where we leave the river path

This brings you up onto the High Street. To your left the Westgate Towers should be visible but go right, immediately passing the Franciscan Gardens and Eastbridge Hospital of St Thomas the Martyr, on your right.

Continue up the High Street for a couple of minutes until Mercury Lane; turn left here, and after 100m you come face to face with the large doors to the cathedral walls.

Once through impressive gates, you are faced the magnificent Canterbury Cathedral. Currently all visitors not staying within the cathedral complex, must enter via the Visitors Centre; however, if CPR pilgrim's be charged for entry.



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