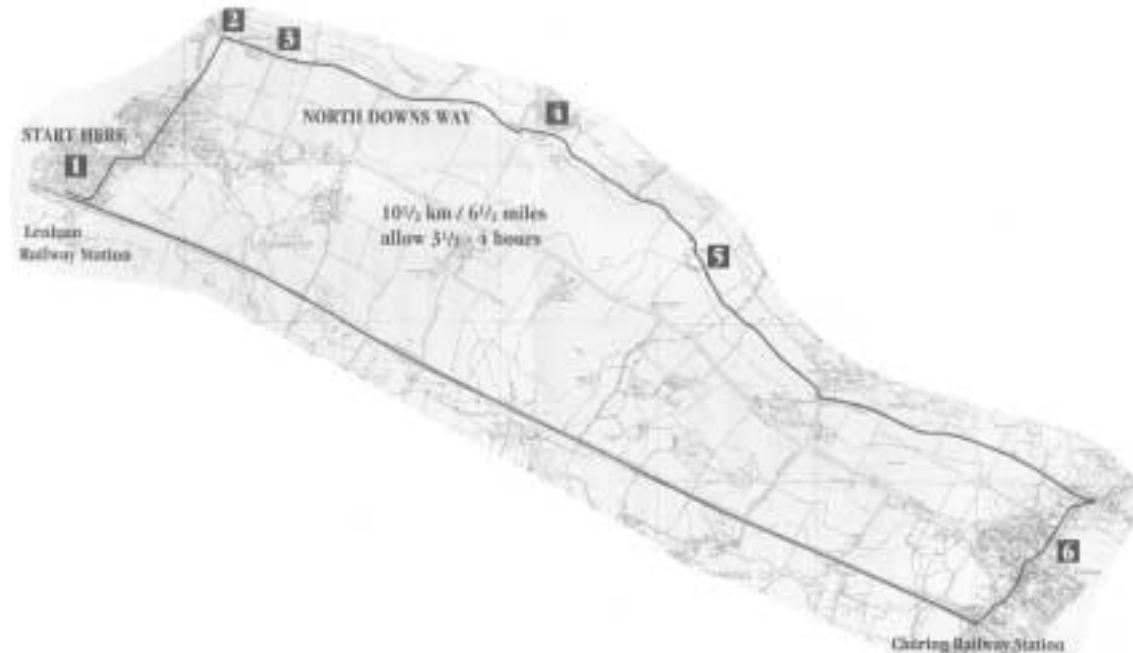


NORTH DOWNS WAY WALKS

Lenham and Charing



This leaflet describes a walk along the North Downs Way between the historic villages of Lenham and Charing with a return journey by train. The walk is described here from west to east but it may easily be done in the opposite direction. Trains run approximately hourly between Lenham and Charing on the Maistone-Ashford line; for details of times telephone Rail enquiries on 08457 484950. Car parking is available at both Lenham and Charing railway stations and elsewhere in the villages. The walk and return journey require 3-4 hours; depending upon the amount of time spent exploring Charing and Lenham.

Lenham

- 1 As you walk along the High Street towards the village square, look out for Honeywood House, a half-timbered building constructed in 1621. Note the way timbering is also used in the Working Mens' Club almost opposite. On the corner of the square is a 15th century house (now a pharmacy) know as Saxon Warriors, beneath which the bodies of three Saxon men and remains of fighting equipment were discovered in 1946.

The church of St Mary is of Saxon and Norman origin but was badly damaged by fire 1297 and subsequently rebuilt. The pulpit is especially fine and dates from about 1570, although the sounding board above it is dated 1622. Little remains of the former monastery which stood near the church. The impressive tithe barn behind the church is one of two built to replace those destroyed in the fire of 1297. Unfortunately the second was destroyed, also by fire, in 1962.

Proceed north out of Lenham, cross the A20 at the junction with Faversham Road and take a footpath on the right hand side of Faversham Road which leads up to the slope onto the Downs.

North Downs Way

2. The walk follows the Natinal Trail for about 3 miles (6km) from just west of Lenham Cross to Charing. Most of this section which is also part of the Pilgrims' Way, is along a country lane with fine views of the countryside to the south.

The Pilgrims' Way is an ancient track, thought to date from neolithic times, which is popularly associated with Medieval pilgrims making their way to Canterbury although to use for this purpose has probably been greatly exaggerated.

Lenham Cross

3. The striking chalk cross, which is Lenham's war memorial, was dedicated in 1922 although it was re-turfed in 1939 for the duration of the Second World War. At the foot of the cross is a seat provided by the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, fifty two soldiers of the Sixth Guards Tank Brigade Workshop R.E.M.E. were killed near Lenham by a flying bomb in June 1944.

The field in which the cross is situated supports an interesting chalk grassland flora, including common milkwort, kidney vetch, marjaram and autumn gentian.

Lenham Hospital

4. The site of the former Lenham Chest Hospital is on the left immediately after cross Raynes Hill. The hospital was originally used for the treatment and convalescence of tuberculosis patients, this position on the southward facing slope of the Downs provided both isolation and fresh air. The hospital was later used for other purposes and was closed in the 1980s.

Cobham Farm

5. The name is derived from the family of William de Cobham, Lord of the Manor of East Shelve in Lenham in the early 14th century. A few hundred metres further on the rout crosses from the parish of Lenham to the parish of Charing.

Charing

6. The High Street holds a range of interesting buildings, some of which bear information plates provided by Charing and District Local History Society. Pierce House, set back slightly from the street leads to the church of St Peter and St Paul. The prominent west tower was built in about 1500, although much of the rest of the building is older. There is a fine view of the church from the nearby recreation ground. Next to the church are the remains of the Archbishop's Palace, now a farm. The buildings are of varying ages, with the oldest probably of the late 13th century.

Return to the High Street, turn left and follow it to the A20. Cross and continue along Station Road to the railway station. Trains to Lenham run approximately hourly, the journey taking about five minutes.

Remember to wear appropriate clothing and footwear and please follow the Country Code

This walk can be found on OS Explorer 148 & 137 starting at GR 891 518