

Islington U3A Longer Walks Group

Walk Title	Otford	Walk No.	385
Area	Kent	Type	Circular
Date	Wednesday, 26 October 2022		
Distance	8 to 8.5 miles		
Timing	4 hours walking time + travel + lunch stop. Allow 7/7.5 hours in total. Therefore expect to be back in Islington by 5pm all being well!		
Meeting up & travel	We will meet at London Bridge at 9.35 outside Leon close to the bottom of the escalator which takes you up to Platform 6 to catch the 9.49 to Otford which arrives at 10.29 – 1 change at Sevenoaks. This train can also be caught at Charing Cross at 9.40 or Waterloo East at 9.43 – please let me know if you intend catch the train other than at London Bridge. You will need to buy a return ticket from Swanley (the last station within the Freedom Pass) to Otford. Currently on Trainline an off -peak day return is £5.50. The return journey is most likely to be to Victoria but this will depend on timing of walk and lunch.		
Route	This walk is relatively short but is rated 6/10 by the Saturday Walkers Club. The route at the outset is steeply uphill, for a time following the North Downs Way, with views back over Otford and the valley, then going through Greenhill Wood before heading north to Romney Street. You then have a steep descent to cross a former golf course for a short, steep ascent before dropping down to Shoreham village, for a late lunch at one of its pubs		
Lunch	Food is available all day at one of the pubs at Shoreham, the Kings Arms or the Crown or the Samuel Palmer.		
Dropping out	None available.		
Suitability	Suitable for any reasonably fit regular walker. There are no particular difficulties although there are 2 steep slopes at the start and some 5 miles in. Possible obstacles: It can get very muddy if there has been rain. Comfortable waterproof walking shoes/ boots. Waterproof jacket. Check weather forecast for temperature and likelihood of rain. Wear, or carry, an extra layer.		
Facilities	There are toilets at the beginning at Otford station and the pub in Shoreham (some 6 miles into walk) and at the end at the station.		
Walk source	Saturday Walkers Club		
Map & other references	OS Explorer 147 or OS Landranger 188 Links: https://www.walkingclub.org.uk/walk/otford-circular/		
Leader & contact details	<u>Walk Leader: Patrick Swaffer</u> <u>Beforehand</u> phone: 07771 956190 (leave message if necessary) e-mail: patrick@pljswaffer.co.uk <u>On the day</u> mobile: 07771 956190		

Interesting facts

Shoreham is the remote village which the 19th century landscape painter Samuel Palmer chose as a refuge from London's pollution. He was the leader of a group who followed William Blake and called themselves The Ancients .

The Church of St Peter and St Paul in Shoreham has many interesting features, including an outstanding wooden rood screen spanning the width of the building and a stained glass window by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Burne-Jones.

Shoreham Memorial Cross is a striking feature on the hillside above Shoreham Village and below Meenfield Wood. It was cut into the chalky hillside in 1920 as a memorial to the local men killed during World War One. It is 100 feet in length, and can be seen for many a mile.

Otford goes back to the sixth century when the Anglo-Saxons called their settlement Otтанford ('Otta's ford'). Offa and Canute fought battles here. The village pond, where the duckhouse is Britain's smallest listed building, was the main source of water for local people until the early twentieth century.

The Bull pub in Otford has magnificent fireplaces, brought there from the ruined Otford Palace. Opposite the Bull is the Arts and Crafts-style Church Hall, designed by Edwin Lutyens who waived his fee, as it was commissioned by his brother William who was then vicar of Otford.

Otford Palace once occupied four acres, but it fell into decay after Archbishop Cranmer was forced to surrender it to Henry VIII in 1537. A few fragments remain and are on open view.

Construction of St Bartholomew's Church, Otford, began in 1060, with the tower being added in around 1185. The church contains large marble memorials to Charles and David Polhill, great-grandsons of Oliver Cromwell.

The Otford Solar System is a full scale representation of the spatial position of the planets at a moment in time (midnight on 01-01-2000) and with the inclusion of four of the nearest stars located in museums around the world, it can lay claim to being the largest scale model of its type in the world. The model was constructed by the village as a Millennium Project, built to a scale of 1: 4,595,700,000. At this scale, the Sun is a little larger than a football - 30.3 cm across - and at the centre of the model, it can be found at the rear of the village recreation ground, a disc mounted on a concrete pillar. The earth is the size of a small ball bearing - 0.3 cm across - located 32 metres from the Sun. Jupiter, the largest of the planets is 162 metres away, the size of a small ping-pong ball - 3.1 cm across. To be found at various locations in the village, all mounted on similar pillars, are Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. Mars - due to its location being between two football pitches - is represented by a ground level disc. The Otford Solar System provides visitors of all ages with an extraordinary insight into the size of the solar system and the larger universe in relation to our small planet.