

# Woodland and Duck Ponds Trail










**3.8 + 2.7 miles (6 + 4.3km) allow 75 + 60 minutes, suitable for all fitness levels & dogs**

A wonderful country walk via the picturesque village of Rodmersham Green, with its village green, duck ponds, coffee shop, pub and church at its beating heart. Blow the cobwebs away as you walk across open fields, through fruit orchards and along leafy woodland trails. With an optional extra loop thrown in, this walk really goes the extra mile to delight and surprise.



## How to get there:

Use the free journey planner on the Kent Connected app to find the best route to the Woodland and Duck Ponds Trail, whether by train, bus, cycling, walking or driving.

	Start/Finish	ME10 4LZ
	what3words	statue.boost.spider
	Gates	4 +2
	Kissing Gate	1
	Stiles	0 + 1
	Steps	0
	Terrain	Fields, unmade paths, country lanes, woods
	Views	East towards Rodmersham church and north towards the estuary
	Refreshments	Rodmersham Village Coffee and Shop, The Fruiterer's Arms, Rodmersham Green, The Club @Rodmersham, Red Lion, Milstead



## Step-by-step Guide:

You are free to start your walk at any point on the map: as this is a circular walk, you'll always return to where you began. To help you plan your walk we've flagged where you'll find a pub, restaurant or coffee shop along the way – for a little break during your walk or to reward yourself with a welcome treat once you've finished!

We've provided a Step-by-Step guide to help you navigate the route, in addition to the map, and to highlight some points of interest along the way. Remember you don't need to start at No. 1 – you can start the walk at any point. Your walk, your choice!

### ▶ SITTINGBOURNE - RODMERSHAM GREEN

1. Take the footpath (ZU30) on the green space running alongside Wadham Place, in between the houses and walk towards the main road (Swanstreet Avenue). Cross the road (take care as busy) and follow the public right of way (ZU30) opposite into fields. Turn left at the end of the first field and take the footpath (ZU31) running between two open fields. This can be muddy and slippery when wet. Continue walking straight ahead. On a clear day at the top look back at the view over the Swale Estuary.
2. After the kissing gate turn down the footpath (ZU34A) on your left just before Oast Cottages. Continue along this wooded footpath with fruit orchards on your right and open fields on your left. Turn right at the fork in the path (ZR208) when you reach metal rail fencing. Keep walking straight ahead along the footpath and out into open fields. Keep going straight on diagonally right across the fields heading for the church in the distance. Go through gate into a fenced off woody enclave and through gate in bottom left-hand corner (or take gate on your right into the churchyard). Walk through the garden of Church House (private residence) keeping to the right-hand side and out the gate at the end onto Church Street.
3. Turn right along this road passed attractive village dwellings to **St Nicholas' Church**. Continue right

along Church Street (no footpaths) and turn right down the public footpath (ZR209) (Muddy Lane) at the end of the fruit orchards and field. The path bends round to your left and then sharp right alongside a farm building. Take the left-hand fork straight after these buildings leaving the tarmac footpath and head along a footpath (ZR211) through the fruit orchards. Head diagonally (to the left) across the orchard. The path is clearly laid out and passes across each row of fruit trees to the next. Above you on wires are plastic markers delineating the route. At end of first orchard turn left through a big gate and again follow the delineated route diagonally to your right through the next fruit orchard. At the end of this orchard turn left down a dirt footpath (ZR210) and through a gap in the fence ahead out into **Rodmersham Green**.

4. Continue along the road with the village Green on your left. Look out for the duck ponds to your left at the far end of the Village Green. Take a break and refuel at **Rodmersham Village Coffee and Shop** on your right near the primary school or at **The Fruiterer's Arms** on the corner.

### ▶ RODMERSHAM GREEN TO SITTINGBOURNE

5. Continue forwards from the Green along Bottles Lane (no footpaths). Take the public footpath (ZR214) on your right after the houses through a wooded area. Listen out for the woodland birds. Go passed a horse paddock on the right and on reaching the road turn right along Highsted Road alongside fruit orchards and houses (no footpaths from here so take care).
6. Continue forwards at the offset crossroads up Highsted Road signposted towards Sittingbourne. At top of the hill is a deep quarry to your right.
7. Take the public footpath (ZU30) on your right leading diagonally across the orchards. Keep on this footpath between two fields straight on until you reach the main road (Swanstreet Avenue). Cross the road and head along the footpath (ZU30) opposite to bring you back to the green space alongside Wadham Place.

### ▶ OPTIONAL LOOP - BETWEEN RODMERSHAM GREEN & MILSTEAD

- a. Continue forwards along Bottles Lane (no footpaths). Turn right down the public footpath (ZR215) on the bend in the road immediately after reaching **The Club@Rodmersham** (open to non-members for drinks and snacks) on your right and head through woodland running around Rodmersham Cricket Club – be aware of flying cricket balls during a home game! At the end of this footpath turn right back onto Bottles Lane and walk forwards passed houses and alongside open fields to your left and woodland to your right.
- b. At the T-junction turn left down Cheney Hill. When this road forks take the right-hand fork and continue into Rawling Street passing fruit orchards and Rawling Street Farm on your left and open arable fields on your right.
- c. Immediately before the **Red Lion pub** (another opportunity to take a break and refuel), take the public footpath (ZU45) on your right over a stile and head uphill through the pub's garden and out through a gap at the top into the field beyond. Turn left and head diagonally across the field to a gate ahead into woodland. Take the right-hand fork in the path (ZU45) through the woods and continue forwards until you exit the woods into a paddock. Cross this field to a gate in the bottom left-hand corner and turn sharp right onto Bottom Pond Road.
- d. Continue along this country lane with fields to your right and woodland to your left until you come to the entrance to **Cromers Wood** on your left. Continue forward on the path (ZU38) through the woods and turn right at the top of the woods and continue forwards. Look out for the wooden animal sculptures as you walk through the woods. Continue forwards through the woods ignoring the footpath to your right. Walk around the pond to your right and continue forwards until the footpath bends round to the right and you come out of the woods into a field.

- e. Turn left and then right a short way along the boundary of the field until you find the opening into an orchard. Continue forwards through the orchards walking alongside fruit trees (to your right) until you exit the orchards. Continue straight forwards through the parking area to the premises a head keeping to the left-hand side. Then along a track running from the left-hand corner of the parking area straight on to reach the road at the end (Highsted Valley).
- f. Turn left and continue forwards along Highsted Road towards Sittingbourne picking up the original loop at point No. 6 here.

This walk through undulating fields, orchards and woodlands, over unmade paths and down country lanes, explores the chalk landscapes on the northern edge of the North Downs. Here are some of the things you will discover along the way.

**St Nicholas' Church, Rodmersham** - This attractive Grade 1 listed church dates back to the 13th Century and is the oldest building in the village. The churchyard is really interesting with views over fruit orchards, benches for resting and some very old graves including that of the distinguished artist and illustrator Edward Ardizzone CBE who lived in Rodmersham Green, along with some very impressive ancient yew trees. The church has an exceptionally tall and proud west tower that you can spot from afar.

The church is usually closed but you can enter the porch and there are benches in the churchyard. Search out significant graves including the Dennes (brickmakers), Mercer and Ardizzone families.

**Rodmersham Green** - A picturesque Village Green with two duck ponds in a characterful countryside setting. It lies on the northern edge of the North Downs and is a designated conservation area. A handful of houses and cottages were built around the Green during the 17th and 18th centuries at which time owners would have benefited from commoners' grazing rights. The surviving medieval houses today are Holly Tree Lodge, Pardoners Cottage and Baker Cottage. Rodmersham Green was surrounded by fruit orchards but by the turn of the 21st century many had been grubbed out and

turned over to arable farming. It still retains some of its apple, pear and cherry orchards.

**Rodmersham Village Coffee and Shop** – A charming village coffee shop overlooking the Green serving breakfast, brunch and lunches. Enjoy freshly made food and drinks in a cosy and friendly environment. Dogs are welcome in the outdoor seating area and garden - with fresh water available and a treat!

**The Fruiterer's Arms, Rodmersham Green** – A traditional English village pub and restaurant serving a selection of real ales and homemade food. Dogs welcome in the public bar. Log burners keep it cozy in winter. Garden with outside seating.

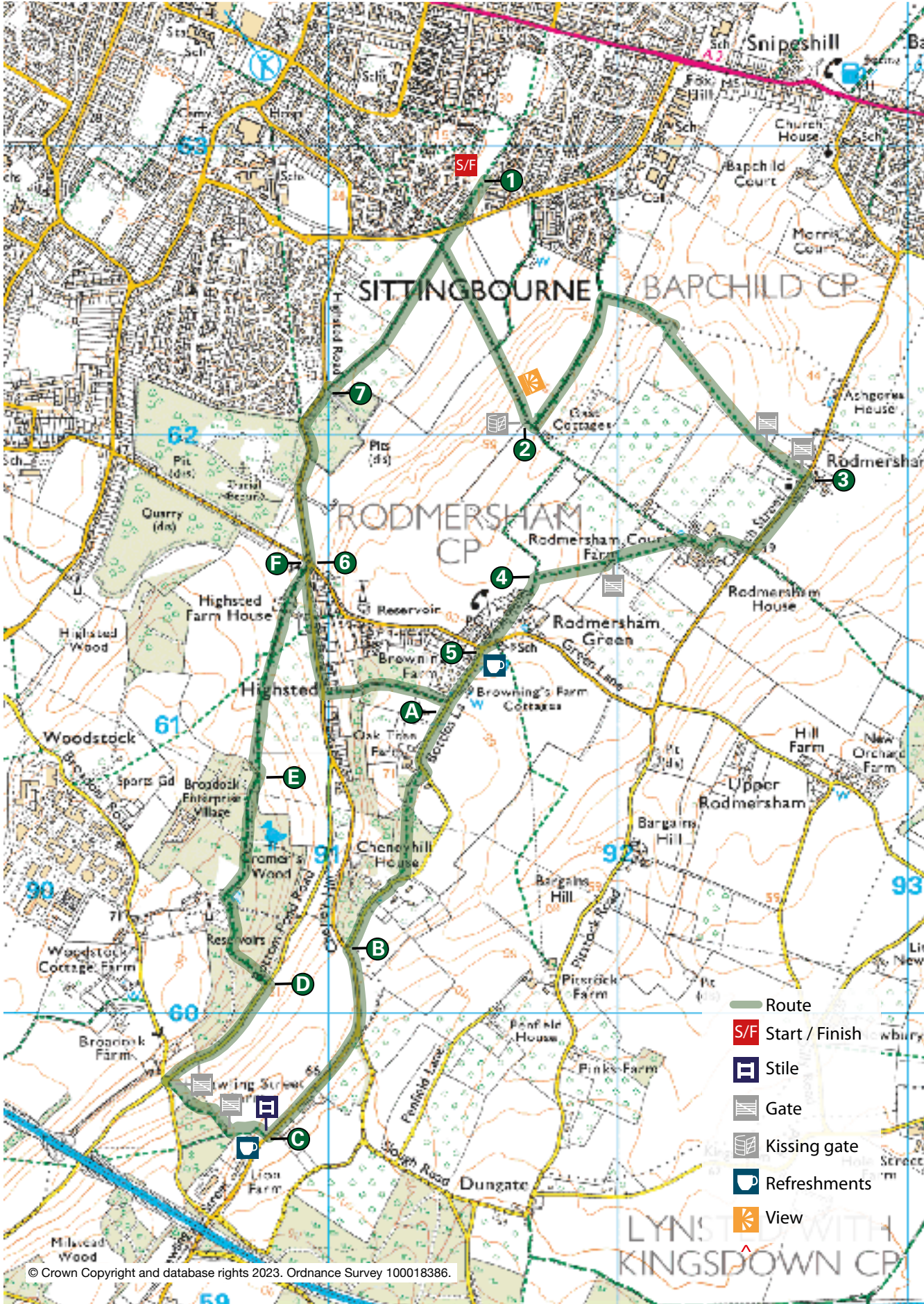
**The Club @Rodmersham** – Licensed bar at this squash and fitness club is open to non-members and offers bar snacks and hot and cold drinks. Dogs on leads are welcome. Open fire. Outside seating.

**Red Lion, Milstead** - A family run country pub and beer garden offering delicious pub food and local ales. Open Fire dog-friendly pub and restaurant. Garden with outside seating.

**Cromers Wood, Milstead** – Managed by Kent Wildlife Trust, this 28-hectare ancient semi-natural woodland, rich in wildlife, sits on the southeast side of a dry slope valley. Most of the upper slopes and plateau have been converted to sweet chestnut coppice with a few oak standards. The greatest diversity of woodland flora is found on the lowest slopes where the chalk has its biggest impact in reducing soil acidity. It's a working wood where Sweet Chestnut has been coppiced for a long time. The tall stands give way to open areas of new growth. This variety of habitats makes it ideal for observing birds and minibeasts! There are birds such as sparrowhawks, green woodpeckers and great spotted woodpeckers. Flora includes early purple and common spotted orchids.

We have taken all responsible steps to ensure that this route is safe and achievable by people with a reasonable level of fitness and skill. However, all outdoor activities involve a degree of risk. To the extent permitted by law, Swale Borough Council accepts no responsibility for any accidents or injury resulting from following this route. Walking routes change over time. Weather conditions and other users may also affect the route. Please use your own judgement when using the route, based upon the weather and your ability, experience and confidence levels.





Route

S/F Start / Finish

Stile

Gate

Kissing gate

Refreshments

View