

PWSE1 Watt's Meadow to Baty's Marsh, Rochester

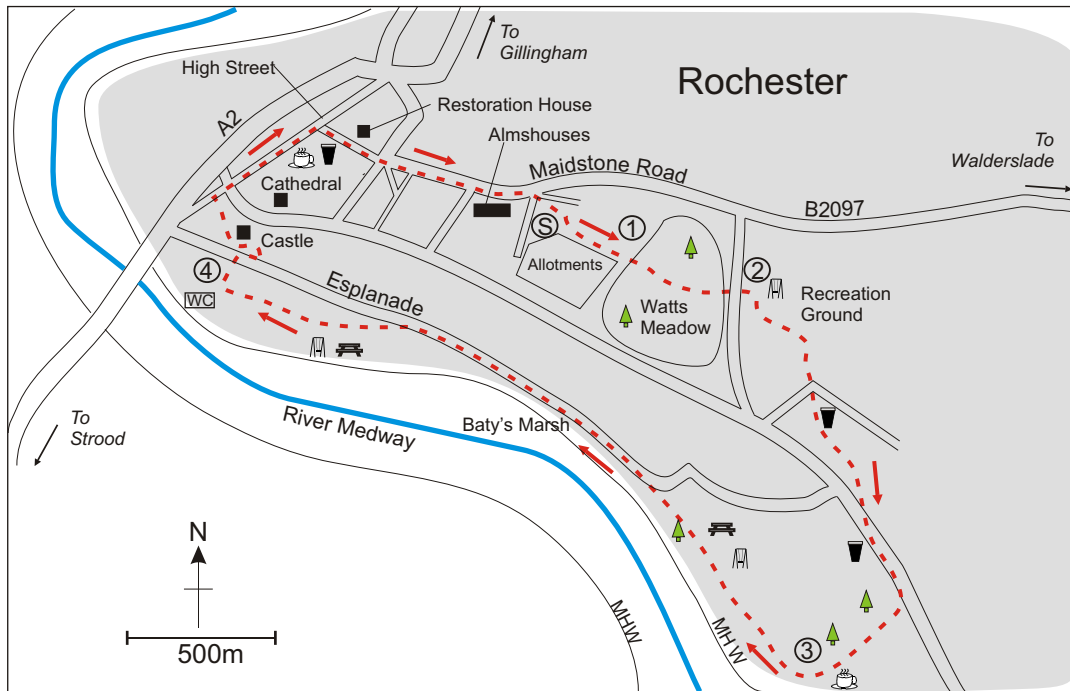


Outline Information

Distance: 4 miles (6.5km)
 Time: 2 hours
 Grade: Easy
 Map: OS Explorer 163
 Grid Ref: 741676

This is a great walk that takes you through meadows, parks, green lanes and marsh land all within the heart of Rochester. There is plenty of opportunity for watching wildlife, picnicking and for the kids to play in one of the many playgrounds en route.

Rochester is a city steeped in history and was a favourite of Charles Dickens who spent his childhood and final years in this area. The walk goes past the Norman Castle, Cathedral, Restoration House (an Elizabethan mansion visited by Charles II) and Watts Almshouses. The route also passes along Esplanade, a riverside road which was once the site of the Short Brothers boatyard. The famous Sunderland Flying Boats, which played a crucial role in World War II, were built at this site.



Getting there

Drive along the A2 (Corporation St) in the direction of Gillingham. Go straight ahead at the traffic lights (Victoria St) leaving the A2 and passing Barclays Bank on your right. Follow the road to the right (East Row) and then left onto Maidstone Road. Take the third turning on the right (Albany Rd and Ethelbert Rd) and park here.

S. Walk towards the main road and turn right onto a small green lane, with a low wooden barrier on the right, towards the allotments. Go straight ahead on the narrow path with the allotments on your right. Pass through a kissing gate and, when you reach the end of the allotments, continue straight passing some tennis courts on your right.

1. 1. At the fork in the path bear right into Watts Meadow. When the path forks again, stay on the left hand path (the main route). **Watts Meadow is a conservation area in the heart of Rochester which is uncultivated in order to encourage many different types of wildlife and plants. There is a picnic area in the centre of the Meadow to the left of the main path.** Continue on this path ignoring two tracks on the right. At the next fork bear right and follow this to a kissing gate at the end of the meadow.

2. Walk up the lane, cross the road and go towards Priestfields Recreation Ground ahead. Turn right onto a footpath immediately after the recycle point. Follow this path as it winds its way through to the other side of the recreation ground. Cross the road and go down the footpath to the right of The Canopus Public House. Turn left, follow the no-through road down the hill and take the narrow path between old school buildings at the end. Cross over the next road and turn left. Walk along the pavement and turn right immediately after the Coop (Medway Valley Walk Footpath and Kent County Council Centenary Walk). As you go down the hill don't follow the lane to the left but continue straight ahead on the narrow footpath down the hill.

3. Turn right at the T-junction and the path brings you to Medway Bridge Marina. Turn right and then at the bend in the road go straight ahead onto a footpath which takes you to Baty's Marsh and Borstal Nature Reserve. **This is one of the few remaining salt marshes in Rochester and it is a feeding ground for many wetland birds including Lapwing, Mute Swans and Black headed gulls.** Turn left onto the pavement (Esplanade) with the river on your left. Follow the footpath as it veers to the left away from the road and eventually brings you out to a park with a playground and picnic tables.

4. At the end of the park cross the road and turn right. Turn left up the cobbled path and go through the gap in the wall to the castle. Leave the castle area via the main exit (right of a kiosk). Go down the hill towards the cathedral. Turn left down a brick path and then right onto the High Street. Turn right up the road signposted to Restoration House and Baptist Church. At the top of the road cross over two adjoining roads and walk past the post box onto Maidstone Road. Continue up the road passings Watts Almshouses and take the third turning on the right where you left your car.