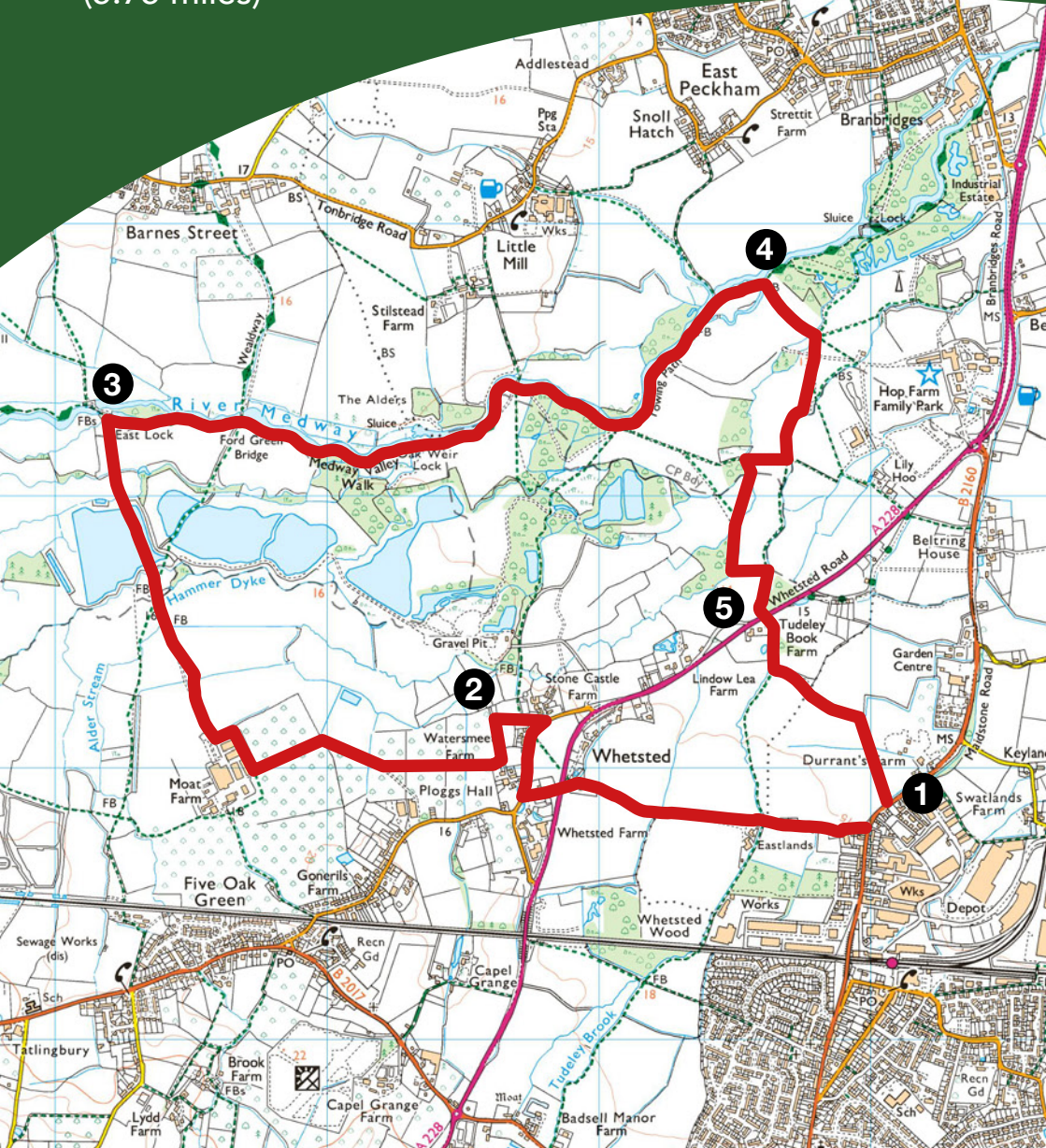


Paddock Wood

Walk No.6

Along the River Medway
(5.75 miles)



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The Medway offers a major amenity to everyone living in this area. It is navigable along its whole length up to Tonbridge, all the lock gates having been replaced in recent years together with the installation of automatic sluices. In summer, there are many boats to be seen negotiating the locks and tied up on the bank near Ford Green Bridge. Fishing is active throughout the year whilst many walkers use the towpath between Tonbridge and Maidstone. Of interest is a stretch of bank approaching Oak Weir that was rebuilt in a major operation during 1994 using traditional techniques. 6500 bundles of sweet chestnut, known as 'faggots' were used forming a wall 350 metres long. These were staked using Osier, a species of willow, which rapidly takes root. The whole structure is strong, long-lasting, and provides a natural habitat.

1. Take the path off the Maidstone Road at the Eastlands Estate, and follow the clear farm track right through to the main A228 road at Whetsted. Cross the road carefully, walk down the track opposite to the road at Ploggs Hall, and turn right.
2. Just past the Old Chequers Inn, turn left over a footbridge onto an enclosed path. Follow this round to two stiles across a farm track into orchards. Follow the way-marks round and across the apple and pear orchards to Moat Farm. On reaching the farm buildings, turn right, and follow the path, crossing the Alders Stream and then the Hammer Dyke which forms the parish boundary between Capel and Hadlow at this point. Continue forward across several fields and footbridges to the River Medway at East Lock.
3. Turn right, and follow the riverbank, past Ford Green Bridge, and then into a wooded section approaching Oak Weir. (It is this section that was rebuilt in 1994.) The river path then enters an open field alongside a fenced track that has been built at the Beltring Hop Farm for 4WD vehicle events. Continue to follow the river to a bridge at Bullen Island and, ignoring the major bridge on the left, go over the second footbridge at the far side of the small island, and turn right across the field towards Beltring.
4. Cross two footbridges set close together on the far side and bear right across the field within Beltring Hop Farm. On reaching a farm track in the far left hand corner of the field, turn right and, after some 100 yards, turn left at the way-mark post to walk over a footbridge. Follow the way-marks across two fields to a second footbridge. Walk forward to the Tudeley Brook and turn right over a stile. The path then leads to the A228.
5. Cross this road carefully to another path almost directly opposite. On reaching the first hedgerow, turn left and walk round the field keeping the hedge on the left. Go over a culvert, bear right, and follow the headland path down to the Maidstone Road.

