



- 9. Head downhill, following the line of the fence. Go over a stile at the bottom, over a small stream, then another stile to emerge in a large field with beautiful, ancient oak and ash trees.
- 10. The footpath strikes diagonally left and uphill; it is not very obvious to start with. Aim for a metal gate in the top, left hand corner of the field, passing between large oak trees.
- 11. Pass through the gate, into a field with soft fruit polytunnels, and follow the path, keeping the hedge on the left to the next gate on the left. Go through this gate and turn immediately right.
- 12. Cross the gravel drive for Caring Wood and continue between tree plantations to another metal gate. Go through and follow the path left,



which can be overgrown, as it meanders towards a line of poplar trees. Ignore Footpath FP258 on the left and come out on a road, Caring Road.

- 13. Turn right, and walk along this very quiet road passing Caring Stud and Jacksons. After a bend, look out for magnificent Caring House on the right, which has the date 1547 above the door.
- 14. Continue along the road, with glimpses of Caring Wood on the skyline on the right and pass a private fishing lake on the left in the dip.
- 15. Coming out of the dip, the road joins Caring Lane where you turn right. Walk uphill as far as Rose Cottage, with good views of the North Downs on your left.

16. Turn right up a Restricted Byway, KH264, towards Merriams Farm and Caring Wood Lodge. Follow the path right then around to the left, leaving the gate to Caring Wood Lodge behind. Before the next gate, turn right, taking a partially paved track uphill.

17. At the top of this track, turn right along a bridleway, clearly identified by several stone markers. The bridleway bends left then left again at which point take the footpath on the right that passes through a line of poplar trees, KH359.

18. Follow the straight path to a gap in the hedge. Note the small recently planted cobnut trees on the left, a traditional Kentish crop.

19. Turn right at the gap in the hedge and follow footpath KM97 along the line of polytunnels growing soft fruit. It can be very muddy here due to farm vehicles.



20. At the end of the line of tunnels, turn left and, a few yards on, take the path on the right over the stile. Walk down the middle of this ancient valley, usually home to sheep, to the fishing pond at the bottom. Cross over the stile on the left and come out onto the road.

21. Enjoy overlooking the pond with its abundance of waterfowl and then take the little bridge over the ford to avoid wet feet. On the left is land belonging to Stoneacre, a small National Trust property back up the hill behind you.



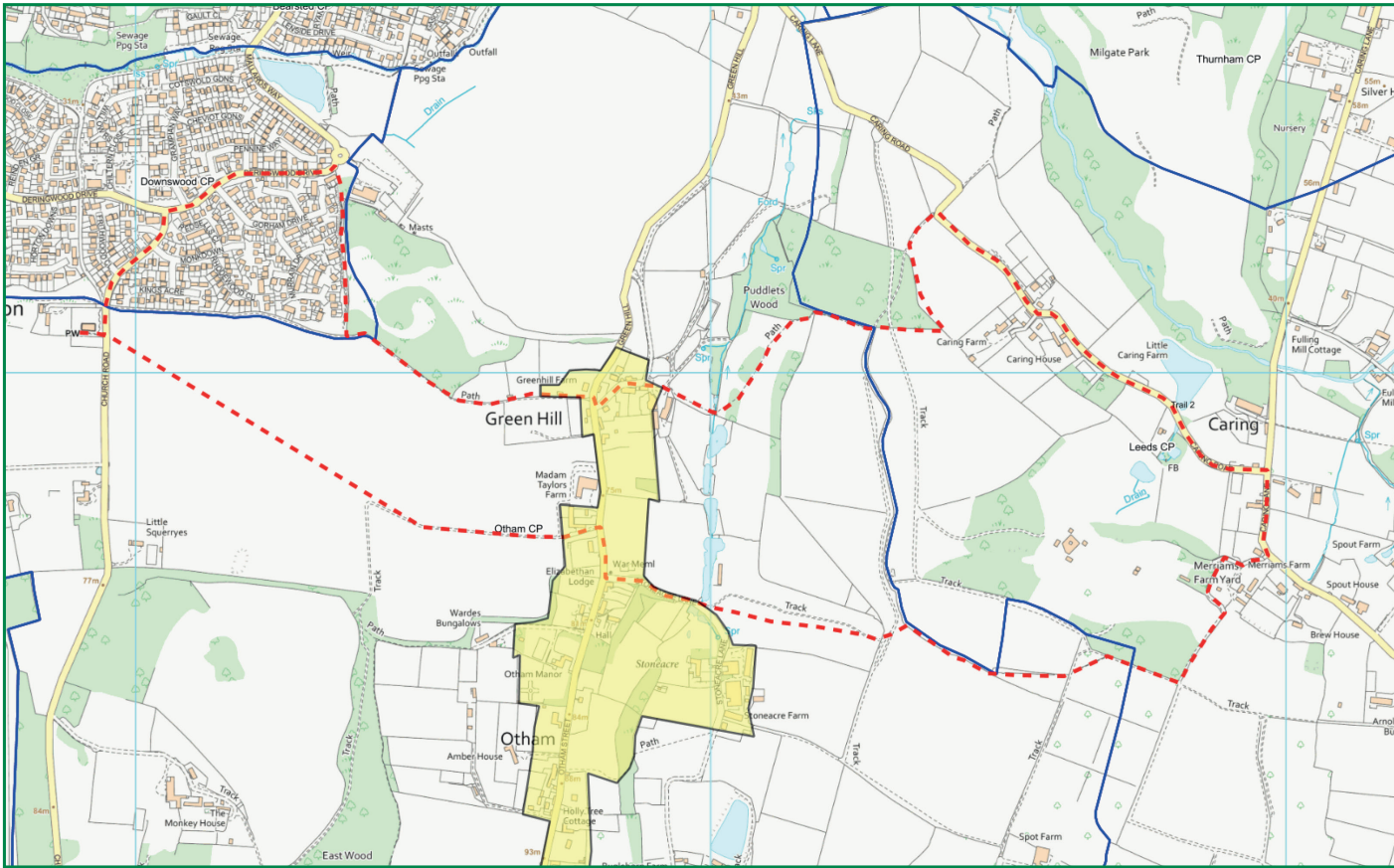
22. Walk up the steep hill until you reach the village green on your right.

## OTHAM HERITAGE TRAIL 2

### A CIRCULAR WALK FROM OTHAM VILLAGE GREEN

3.5 miles





1. Starting at the war memorial and village sign, walk on the green away from the housing (North View), along the line of the road.
2. Pass 16th Century home, Madame Taylor's, on the left, one of the oldest houses in Otham, and walk as far as the Diamond Jubilee plinth. At this point, turn

left to cross the road and take the path directly opposite (KM132), passing the Cart Lodge and Barn which are on your right.

3. Pass around the metal gate and follow the same path across the large field towards Otham Church in the distance. Ignore the path coming in from the left and admire the views of the North Downs to the right.
4. Come out onto Church Road, opposite Otham Church and, going through the lychgate, walk around the churchyard. St Nicholas Church is a 12th Century, Grade 1 listed building with many interesting memorials. Look through the old gate at the rear of the church to see Grade 2 listed Church House, originally built as cottages in the 16th Century.



5. Return to the road and walk left down the road towards Downswood, joining the footpath when possible. At the T junction at the end of Church Road, turn right onto Deringwood Drive and follow this down to just before the roundabout, where there is a footpath going up steps and through trees on the right. This footpath follows the line of Otham's Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) the face of which can be seen along the path between Downswood and Otham.

6. Continue up until the path rejoins the field and turn left, on Footpath KM86. Follow the path which keeps Downswood on the left and then passes between trees and field then garden boundary. There are good views of Bearsted at this point.

7. Come out on the road, Greenhill, cross over, following the sign for the Len Valley Walk. Take the track opposite which then curves right, between houses and through a gate marked Footpath, and passes The Oast House and Greenhill Farm.



8. Continue straight ahead, ignoring the first track on the left. Turn into the second track on the left and look for a small gate a few yards ahead on the right marked, 'Please keep to the Footpath' and go through it.

