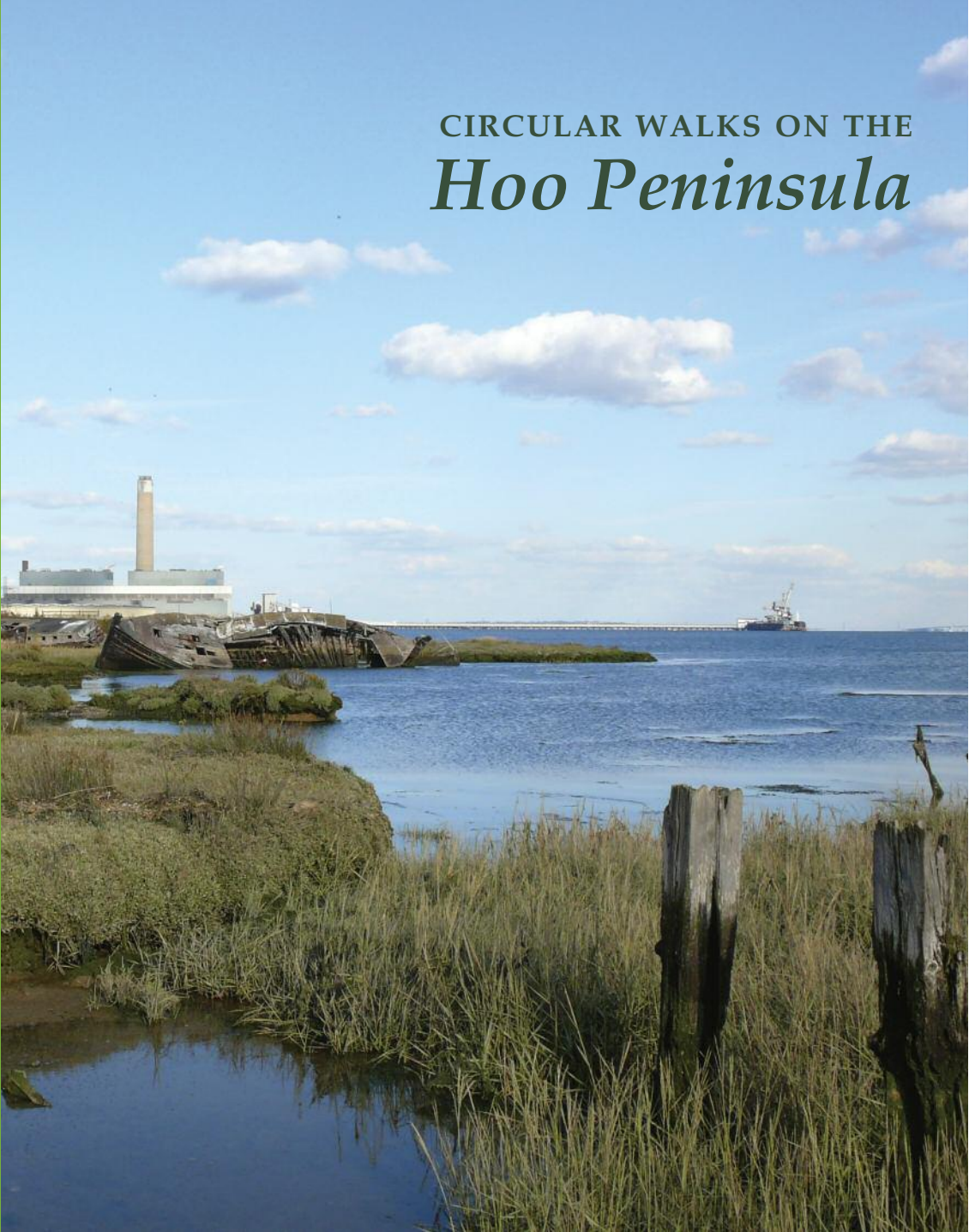


CIRCULAR WALKS ON THE
Hoo Peninsula





Key to maps



Car parking



Viewpoint



Toilet



Refreshments



Point of interest



Public house



Caution



Contents

Introduction.....	2
Countryside Access Charter.....	3
South - points of interest	4
South walk 1 - Upnor to Hoo St Werburgh	6
South walk 2 - Hoo.....	8
South walk 3 - Chattenden Woods	10
North - points of interest	12
North walk 1 - Cliffe to Cooling	14
North walk 2 - High Halstow to St Mary Hoo.....	16
North walk 3 - Allhallows Marshes.....	18
Useful information	20

Introduction

Welcome to this new edition of Circular Walks on the Hoo Peninsula. As with the revised Cuxton and Halling guide, it contains six walks of varying lengths. The routes have been devised to help as many people as possible explore this unique and somewhat still remote area.

For ease of use all the walks have been colour-coded, both in this publication and on the waymarking used along the routes. This should ensure that no further directional information is needed. All distances and times given are approximate and refer to the circular walks only, not the links used to access them.



Countryside Access Charter

The rights of way are:

- Public footpaths - on foot only. These are waymarked in yellow
- Bridleways - on foot, horseback and pedal cycle. These are waymarked in blue
- Byways - all traffic. These are waymarked in red
- Road used as public paths (RUPPs) - are currently undergoing reclassification.

On rights of way you can:

- Take a pram, pushchair or wheelchair if practicable
- Take a dog (on a lead or under close control)
- Take a short diversion around an illegal obstruction or remove it sufficiently to get past.



And, wherever you go, please follow the Countryside Code:

- Be safe - plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people.



Points of interest

Upnor Castle

This impressive castle was built in the 16th century and designed to defend Chatham Dockyard from attack. It failed spectacularly though, when in 1667 the Dutch navy sailed up the river and destroyed much of the anchored British fleet. A frequent visitor to Upnor was the artist JMW Turner, who painted the castle in 1831.

Upnor High Street

Upnor's High Street is a charming cobbled street lined with terraced weather-boarded houses, leading down towards the river. A more recent addition is Manna house, completely hand-built from Kentish oak in a traditional Tudor style.

St Mary's Island

Throughout much of the 19th century, huge prison hulks were moored along the river, including just off the St Mary's Island. Many of the prisoners who died whilst on board were later buried there.



Cockham Wood Fort

The London Stones

These two obelisks mark the southern extent of the City of London's fisherman's rights to fish on the northern side of the river. The smaller stone is thought to have originally come from Yantlet creek.

Cockham Wood Fort

Built in the late 16th century as a direct result of the Dutch raid in 1667, the fort originally held 48 guns. Within a 100 years, the arsenal had been removed and the fort had begun to fall into ruins. The red brick remains of the fort can be seen from the beach at the high water mark.

Hoo Fort

Hoo Fort and its neighbour Darnet were built in the 1870s as part of the defences against an expected French invasion. They were originally intended to mount 25 guns on two tiers, but it soon became clear that the forts would sink into the marsh under the weight. Both forts are privately-owned and cannot be visited.

St Werburgh Church

The church dates mainly from the 14th century, but stands on the site of a much older Saxon building. St Werburgh was a devoutly religious princess believed to have been responsible for an

unrecorded miracle in the village in the seventh century. There are five yew trees in the churchyard, of which one is believed to be over a 1,000 years old. The artist William Hogarth visited the church in 1793 during his walking tour of the peninsula and the Isle of Sheppey.

Hoo St Werburgh

This unassuming village mentioned in the Domesday Book, has only been formally known by its full name since 1968. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the area was a hive of industrial activity, with the surrounding agricultural land used to provide gravel and the raw materials for bricks and pottery.

Hoo Marina

The river frontage around here was originally used by barges to take away the raw materials from the surrounding landscape. A number of their derelict hulks can still be seen today.

Pillboxes

During the Second World War, the peninsula was of national strategic importance. A number of defensive features still remain today, including at least 29 pillboxes.



St Werburgh Church

Lodge Hill Camp

This has been home to the Defence Explosive Ordnance Disposal School since 1966.

Cooling Street

This hamlet was once home to the Beehive Public House, a tiny circular thatched beer house.

Berry Court Wood

This wood is a remnant of a traditional coppice woodland. It is also home to the strange Stag's Horn or Candle-snuff fungus, which grows on dead wood.

Weslyan Chapel

Once known as 'The Chapel in the Orchard' it also served the village school. The building still remains but is now a private house.

Walk 1 - Upnor to Hoo St Werburgh

Black route



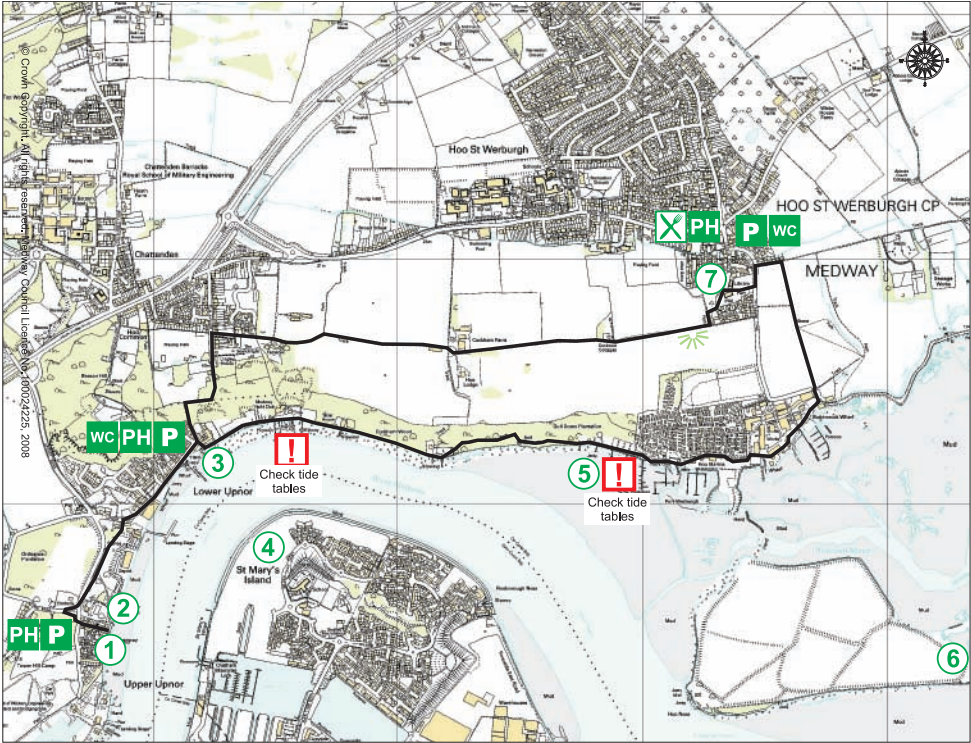
Distance: **4 miles (6.4km)**

Time: **Allow 2 hours**

Terrain: **Some surfaced paths and roads. A long stretch of beach. One fairly steep path.**

Points of interest

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| ① Upnor High Street | ⑤ Cockham Wood Fort |
| ② Upnor Castle | ⑥ Hoo Fort |
| ③ The London Stones | ⑦ St Werburgh Church |
| ④ St Mary's Island | |



Walk 2 - Hoo

Brown route



Distance: **3 miles (4.8km)**

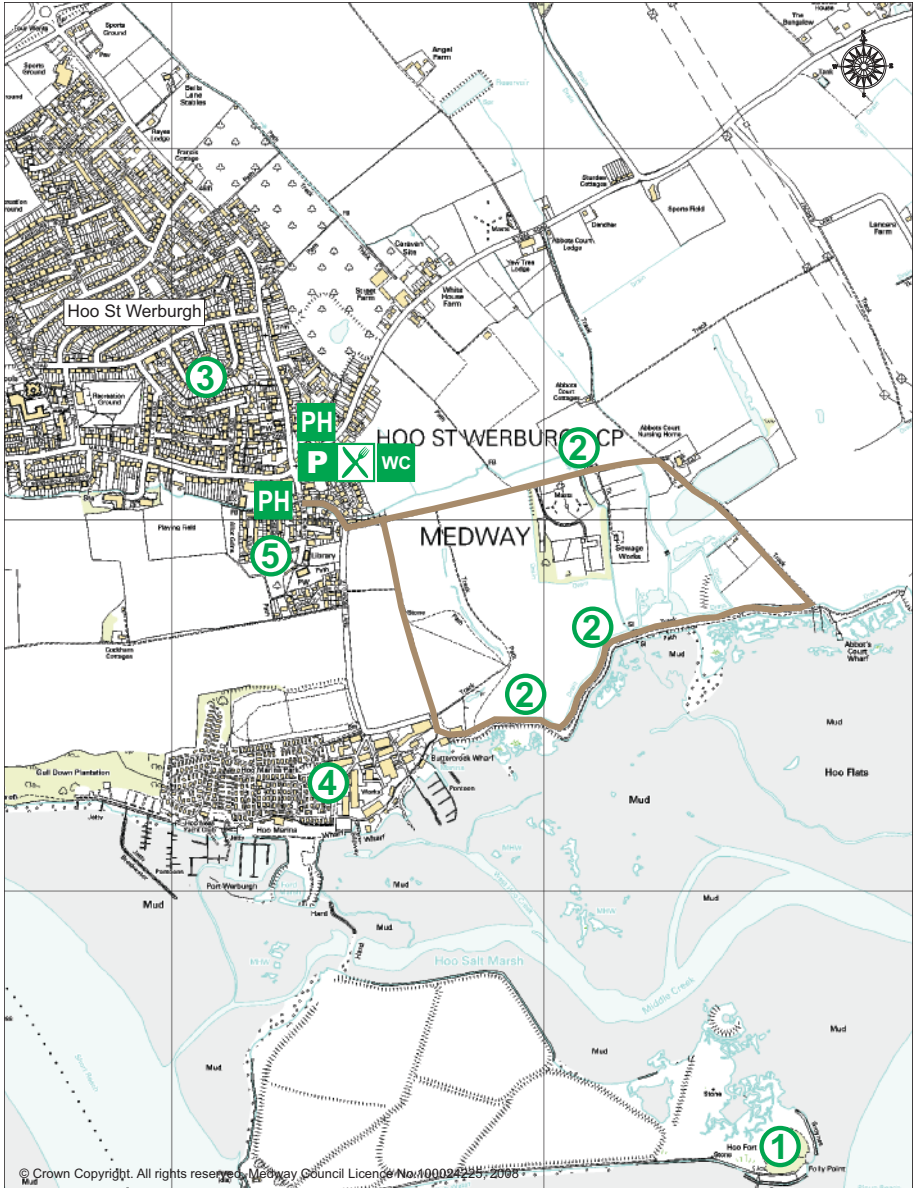
Time: **Allow 2 hours**

Stiles: **2**

Terrain: **Flat unmade tracks which can get muddy.
One surfaced road.**

Points of interest

- ① Hoo Fort
- ② WW2 Pillboxes
- ③ Hoo St Werburgh
- ④ Hoo Marina
- ⑤ St Werburgh Church



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Medway Council Licence No 10009595, 2008

Walk 3 - Chattenden Woods

Green route



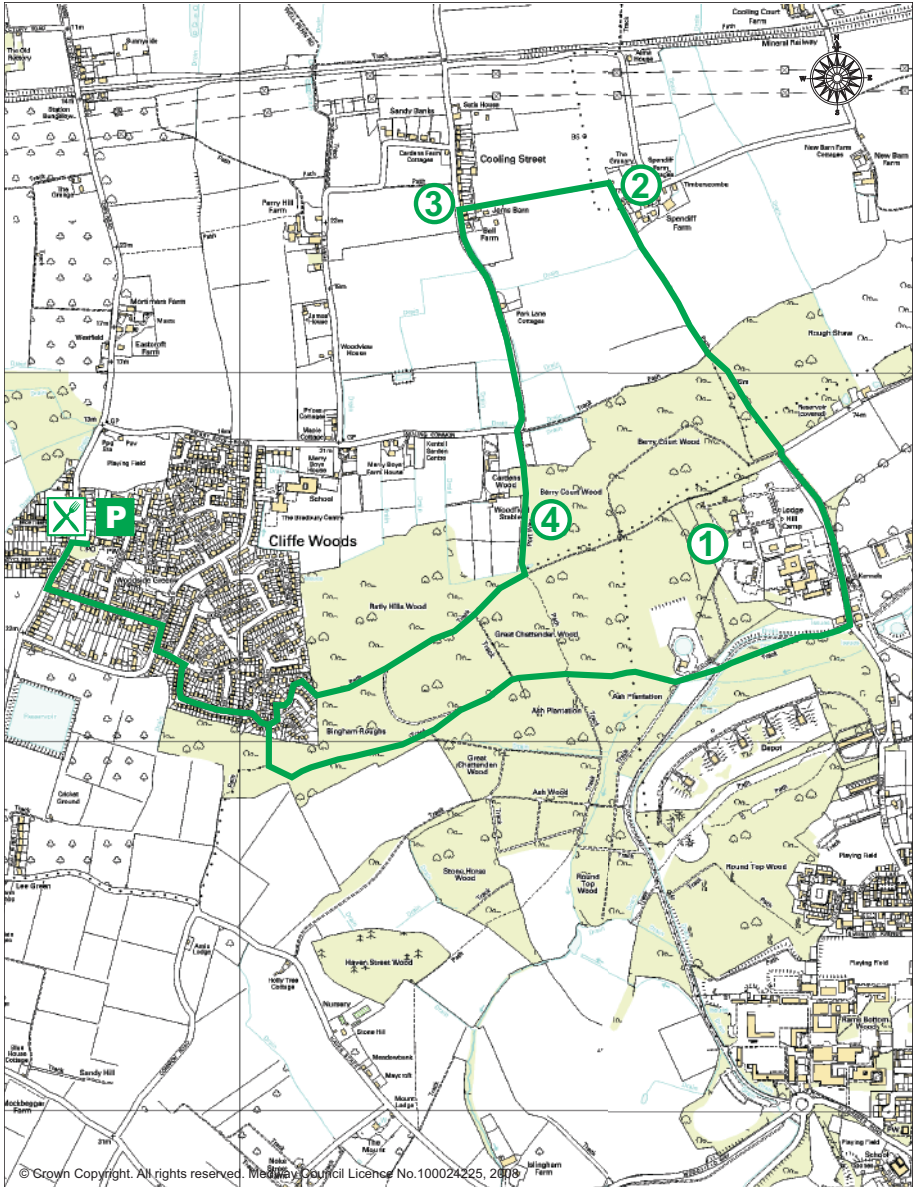
Distance: **4 miles (6.4km)**

Time: **Allow 2 hours**

Terrain: **Some surfaced paths, some road walking.
Unmade tracks through woodland. One fairly
steep ascent and descent.**

Points of interest

- ①** Lodge Hill
- ②** Wesleyan Chapel
- ③** Cooling Street
- ④** Berry Court Wood



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Mapbox Council Licence No.100024225, 2019

Points of interest

Cliffe village

Cliffe is believed to have begun life as the ancient Saxon settlement of Cloveshoo, later translating as Cliffe at Hoo. By the Middle Ages, Cliffe had become a fairly prosperous town with a thriving port and large farm. The surrounding landscape owes much to the 19th century cement industry, which dug quarries in search of clay. These have flooded over time and become havens for wildlife.

Cliffe Church

The impressive church of St Helen's was originally built around 1260 in the local style of alternating layers of Kentish ragstone and black flint. The churchyard includes the 19th century Grade II listed Charnel House, historically used to store the bodies or bones of the dead.



Cooling Castle

Cooling Castle

The privately-owned Cooling Castle is actually a fortified manor house built in 1380 and would have originally stood much closer to the river. The gatehouse remains in an impressively good condition and can be easily viewed from the adjacent road.

Cooling Church

The church of St James' dates mainly from the 13th century and has an interesting vestry covered in shells. Its churchyard is home to a group of lozenged - shaped gravestones, believed to have inspired the opening scenes of Charles Dickens epic novel *Great Expectations*.

Well Penn Road

This ancient route takes its name from the Old English 'Wielle Pund', meaning a pound, or an enclosure, by a spring.

High Halstow

The village takes its name from the Anglo-Saxon word Hagelstowe (also hagelsto or Agelstow) meaning 'high holy place'. Its 10th century church of St Margaret stands on the peninsula's highest point and was referred to in the Domesday Book of 1086.



St Mary Hoo

This tiny hamlet was first recorded in 1240 and originally much larger. Its 14th century church was largely reconstructed around 1881 and is now a private dwelling. Its 18th century vicar the Reverend Robert Burt is believed to have performed the illegal marriage ceremony between the future George IV and Maria Fitzherbert in 1785.

Northward Hill

Established in 1955, this is the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' (RSPB) oldest nature reserve and is only one of three woodlands on the peninsula. Its abundance of mature oak trees make it ideal territory for grey herons and it is actually the largest heronry in England. The woodland is also renowned for its springtime display of bluebells.

Swigshole

The name Swigshole, sometimes also spelt Snagshole, means 'snake-infested muddy pool'.

Allhallows

The original settlement takes its name from its 12th century church of All Saints. The church is the peninsula's only Grade 1 listed building.

Allhallows-on-Sea

Originally planned to transform the area into a major seaside resort during the 1930s, much of the proposed development never went ahead. Had it done so the area would be very different today as the proposals included zoological gardens, the country's largest swimming pool, several hotels and up to 5,000 houses.

Yantlett Creek

This once navigable creek was part of a trading route used since the Roman occupation of Britain. It is also what originally made the Isle of Grain a true island.

The London Stone

This stone marks the northern extent of the City of London's fisherman's rights to fish on the northern side of the river. The southern boundary is marked by two stones at Lower Upnor.

Walk 1 - Cliffe to Cooling

Black route



Distance: **3.5 miles (5.6km)**

Time: **Allow 2 hours**

Terrain: **Unmade tracks across fields which can get muddy.
Some road walking.**

Points of interest

- ① Cliffe Church
- ② Cooling Castle
- ③ St James' Church
- ④ Well Penn Road

Walk 2 - High Halstow to St Mary Hoo

Brown route



Distance: 4 miles (6.4km)

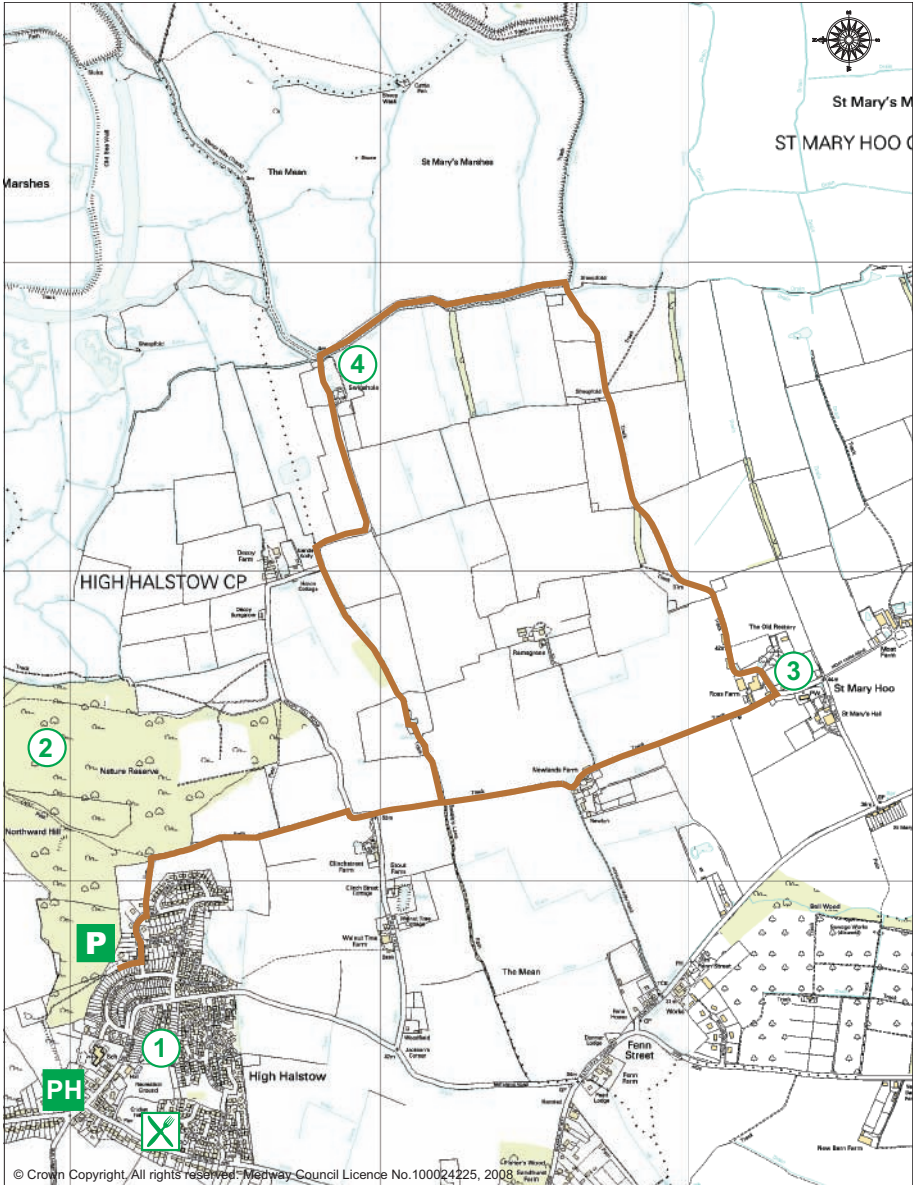
Time: Allow 2 hours

Stiles: 7

Terrain: Unmade tracks and paths which can get muddy.
One surfaced path. Some road walking.

Points of interest

- ① High Halstow
- ② Northward Hill Nature Reserve
- ③ St Mary Hoo
- ④ Swigshole



© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. Medway Council Licence No.100024225, 2008

Walk 3 - Allhallows Marshes

Green route



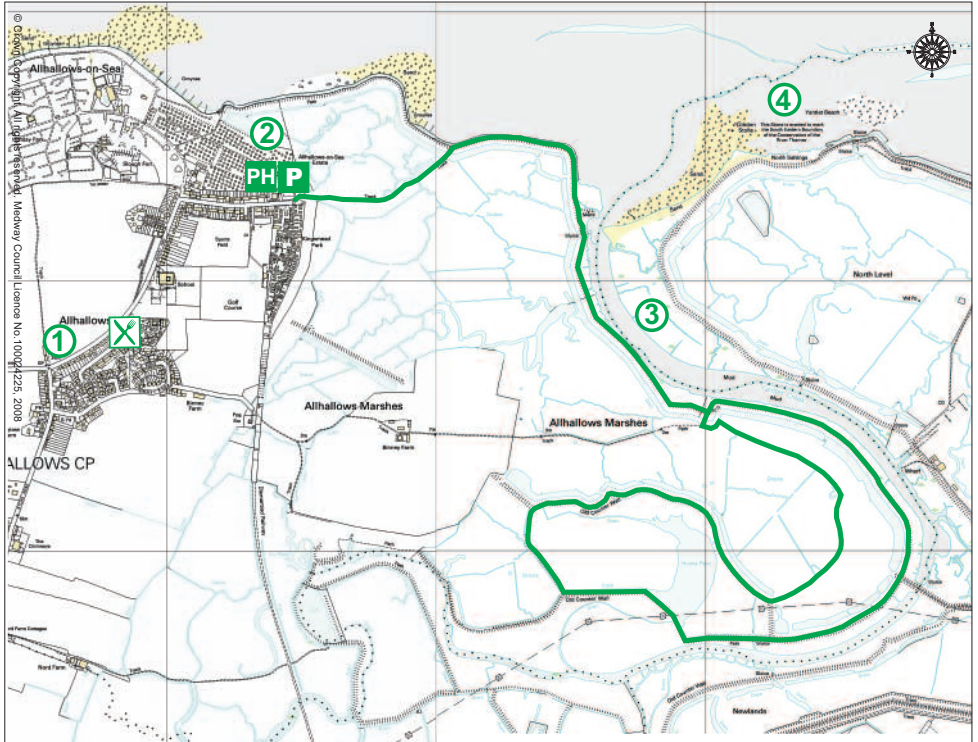
Distance: **4.5 miles (7km)**

Time: **Allow 2 hours 30 minutes**

Terrain: **Flat unmade paths and tracks which can get muddy**

Points of interest

- ① Allhallows
- ② Allhallows-on-Sea
- ③ Yantlett Creek
- ④ The London Stone



Local information

Medway Visitor Information Centre

The centre provides information on local attractions, events and accommodation. 95 High Street, Rochester ME1 1LX. Phone: 01634 843666 www.medway.gov.uk

National Rail

This provides information on rail timetables and fares across the UK, but does not sell tickets. Phone: 08457 48 49 50 www.nationalrail.co.uk

Traveline

This partnership provides a public transport route and timetable information. Phone: 0871 200 22 33 www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk

Useful organisations

Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)

This registered charity campaigns to protect and enhance the countryside for the benefit of all. Phone: 01303 815180 www.cprekent.org.uk

English Heritage

The government's statutory advisor on the historic environment ensures that it is properly maintained and cared for. Phone: 0870 333 1181 www.english-heritage.org.uk

The Environment Agency

This public body is responsible for protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales. Phone: 08708 506506 www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Medway and Swale Estuary Partnership

The partnership was formed to address issues affecting the economic, environmental and social well-being of the estuary. Phone: 01634 338891 www.msep.org.uk

The Open Spaces Society

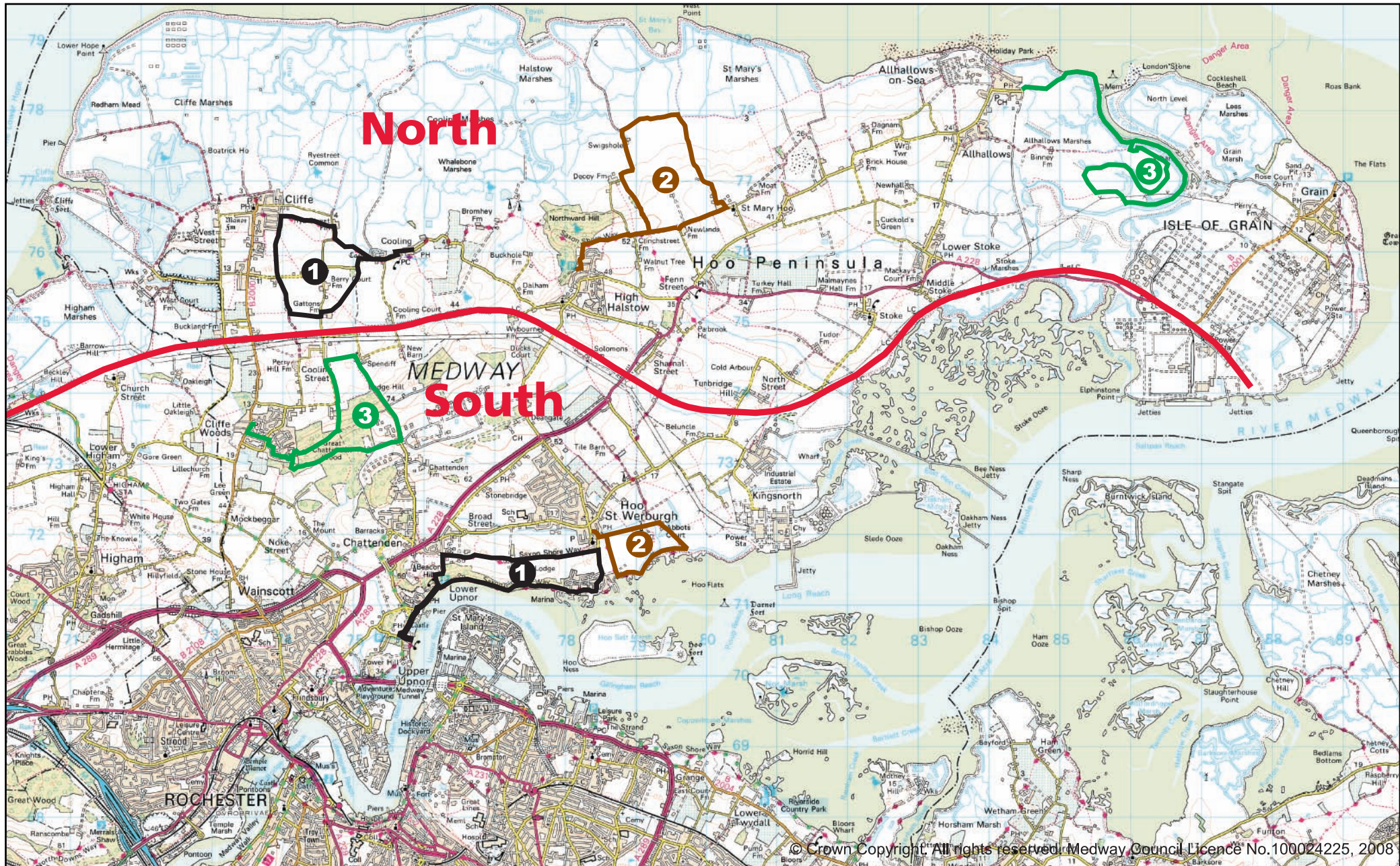
Britain's oldest conservation society is dedicated to protecting common land and Public Rights of Way. Phone: 01491 573535 www.oss.org.uk

Natural England

Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment for its intrinsic value, the well-being and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings. Phone: 0845 600 3078 www.naturalengland.org.uk

The Ramblers

Britain's biggest organisation for walkers campaigns for their continued enjoyment of the countryside. Phone: 0207 3398500 www.ramblers.org.uk



North

South

1

2

3

3

2

1



Further information

Medway Council has a duty to protect, maintain and record rights of way and any problems encountered on them should be reported to:
Medway Council, Rights of Way Team, Frontline Services, Regeneration, Community and Culture, Annex B, Civic Centre, Rochester, Kent ME2 4AU
Phone: 01634 333333. Minicom: 01634 333111
Email: customer.services@medway.gov.uk

All maps in this publication are reproduced/based upon the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Medway Council 2008. Copyright licence no: 100024225, 2008

Text: Medway Swale Estuary Partnership
Photography: Mark Loos, David Wise, www.davewise.biz
Maps: Sue Meheux, Medway Council

Disclaimer

While every care is taken in compiling this publication, neither Medway Council nor its servants or agents can accept any liability whatsoever for any incorrect statement contained herein, nor any omission.

G2238 Designed by Medway Council's Communications Team
www.medway.gov.uk/communications

