

## KINGSCOURT AND ROYAL FOREST RAMBLE | 5 MILES/4.5 MILES

*The route lies in the area of the medieval Gillingham Royal Forest. It passes the remains of Kingscourt, King John's hunting lodge, and Wolfridge and Woodwater farms which were established in the mid 1600s. They were part of the "forest estate" acquired by the Nicholas family after the disafforestation of the Royal Forest in 1625.*

1. Leave train station by the footpath at far end of platform 1. At the main road, turn right, cross over at the lights and continue along the Shaftesbury Road, B3081. After about 400 metres cross the main road into King's Court Road. You are now on the route of The White Hart Link. Look out for the way markers with the white hart's head. Continue to the end of the road.

***Before crossing the bridge take a look at the information board about Kingscourt. The earthwork in the field ahead is all that remains of King John's hunting lodge.***

Follow the White Hart Link markers over three fields and then along an enclosed section round a fourth. Kingscourt Wood will be on your left along the top of the field. At the end of the wood take the footpath to the left going uphill to a track.

2. Look for a footpath sign pointing off left towards the railway. This is where you leave the route of The White Hart Link. Cross two fields to the railway. Cross it with care into a muddy field. Keep to the right-hand side of this field and look for a stile leading into next field. Keep to the left-hand side of this field and cross a stile into third much smaller field. From here a gate leads onto the track to Wolfridge Farm.
  - 2a. *Alternatively continue on the route of the White Hart Link across the next field, joining the farm drive about 100 metres before the gate. Turn left onto drive and then climb stile next to gate into the lane. Follow the lane past the Coppleridge Inn. Or stop here for refreshments and views across to Dunccliffe.*
  - 2b. *Turn right onto the road. After 140 metres take the bridleway on your right. Continue ½ mile to the point where three bridleways meet.*
  - 2c. *Turn right here, leaving the White Hart Link route and follow the path. After the pedestrian gate, cross the field, bearing slightly to your left to the next pedestrian gate in the hedge. This boundary is the historic Park Pale.*
  - 2d. *Go through the small plantation, turn right, then immediately left, following the blue bridleway markers. Through next farm gate, bear right towards gates at far right-hand corner of the field. Go through these and follow path for about 250 metres to rejoin outward route past King's Court Wood. Retrace steps back to Gillingham station.*
3. Turn left onto the track and pass between the farm buildings. Keep on the track until well clear of the farm then head left uphill across a field, through a gateway and across to a large oak and a stile. Go over the stile and continue with the hedge on your right across three fields. There are often cattle in these fields.
4. Cut diagonally across the fourth field and into final field next to Woodwater Farm. Turn left and follow the track around the buildings to the front of the farmhouse. Continue over a bridge and then immediately bear right and through a gate. With the hedge on your right go uphill to a seat.

5. Go through the gate by the seat. Turn left and follow the hedge and then down to the bottom lefthand corner of the field. Go through the gate and to an unusual long kissing gate ahead. Go through this and continue straight ahead on tarmac path.
6. Emerging into residential road go left and continue to the High Street. Cross into Town Meadow and then over footbridge. Turn left and continue to second footbridge. Cross back over the river and into road passing Coronation Club on your right.
7. Turn right and go past Asda. Cross straight over at the lights and continue to the station.

