

Newington Walk 3 - Lower Halstow



Walk No. 3781026

A lovely walk through Kent orchards, past bird-rich lagoons and onto a hill with views across the Medway estuary. It takes you past historic settlements and the site of WWI inland defences before finishing with a birds-eye view of the fine tower of St Mary's church.

Calculated time : 2h10	Difficulty : Average
Distance : 4.54mi	Return to the departure point : No
Vertical gain : 138ft	Activity : Walking
Vertical drop : 207ft	Location : Newington (Kent)-1
Highest point : 190ft	
Lowest point : 23ft	

Description

(D) Starting from Station Road in Newington, walk towards the railway station and turn right along the footpath towards Church Lane.

(1) Cross Church Lane carefully to the pavement on the other side. Walk to the bottom of Church Lane and turn left onto School Lane. Walk past the school and keep to the right onto Boxted Lane, go past the cemetery on your left and stay on Boxted Lane until the footpath on the right just before Libbetswell Cottages.

(2) Proceed along the footpath past the traveller site and continue till you reach a stile. Go over the stile, walk about 25m then through the gap in the fence on the left. The footpath follows the hedge and then the Libbet stream on your right until you reach the small bridge at Lower Halstow. Note that a willow has come down across the footpath beside the stream. It is passable with care on the right or through the small gap underneath.

(3) In Lower Halstow at the small bridge, cross the stile, turn right and walk towards Vicarage Lane.

(4) Turn left into Vicarage Lane when it meets Wardwell Lane and then right at the track, marked 'No Through Road'. Keep straight, ignore other footpaths off this one. Walk up and over the hill. Pause at the top to admire the panoramic views.

(5) Cross the road and continue through two metal gates (locked but with passing space to one side). At the gas pressure beacon, take the footpath to the right. Turn left over the little wooden bridge towards the pond. After the bridge, turn right and take the footpath to the right through the solar farm.

(6) At the railway line, turn right. Follow the railway line, look out for the display board, then look out for the next footpath sign on the left-hand side - it's not easy to see. Continue straight down the hill, keeping the lake on your right. As the land rises, cross the stile by the gate and follow the track down the hill. At the bottom of the hill, the track curves round to the right and joins with Iwade Road. This part of the walk is on road with no pavement. Please take care. You'll come to the junction of Wardwell Lane, Church Lane and School Lane and this is where the walk ends.(A)

Practical information

With a small detour, there is an well-reviewed pub in Lower Halstow called The Three Tuns that has outdoor seating and welcomes dogs. Other than this, there are no toilet facilities or water points on the route.

There is some road walking. Take care, walk on the right and keep dogs and children close. In summer and autumn, you will find stinging nettles and brambles on sections of the paths.

Please remember that all directions are advisory and you are responsible for your own safety at all times.

Waypoints

- S Station Road**
N 51.352148° / E 0.667984° - alt. 128ft - mi 0
- 1 Church Lane**
N 51.352852° / E 0.669546° - alt. 115ft - mi 0.12
- 2 Footpath**
N 51.359982° / E 0.666057° - alt. 69ft - mi 0.74
- 3 Lower Halstow**
N 51.371308° / E 0.668432° - alt. 23ft - mi 1.62
- 4 Vicarage Lane**
N 51.370655° / E 0.672199° - alt. 30ft - mi 1.8
- 5 Road**
N 51.364555° / E 0.689796° - alt. 131ft - mi 2.74
- 6 Railway Line**
N 51.354959° / E 0.690943° - alt. 125ft - mi 3.63
- F Junction**
N 51.356197° / E 0.671224° - alt. 72ft - mi 4.54

All historic information is taken from *Newington Times Past* and *Newington Street and Place Names* by Thelma Dudley.

In the nearby area

In Boxted Lane, you'll see a sign to Watercress Barns. Watercress was once an important part of the local economy. [Watercress](#) grows best in slow-flowing, clean water and was originally was grown in the widened Libbet stream of the wet meadow. In the early 1920s, three and a half acres of beds were dug out and 12 artesian boreholes were sunk to a depth of more than 300ft to supply the pure spring water that the cress required. Eventually, other water extraction in the area caused the artesian pressure to fail and pumping was necessary. This finally made the commercial growing of cress uneconomic about 30 years ago.

As you walk through the orchards, note that the loam and brick-earth soil here means that fruit-growing has been the mainstay of Newington's economy for centuries. In fact, Newington church is known as 'The Church among the Orchards' because at one time, it was almost hidden in spring-time by the blossom of cherry, apple and pear trees surrounding it. In the 20th century, it was a tradition to have 'The Blessing of the Blossom' each year. One of the reasons that Newington has a railway station is because local landowners wanted a fast route to London and the coast to transport their fresh produce.

After passing through the orchard with the pylon, pause where the footpath turns right. This is a good place to spot [buzzards](#) using the thermals over the open fields or a murder (group) of [rooks](#) foraging in the field.

Alongside the stream, look out for [reeds](#) which were an important building material for making thatched roofs. Stop quietly for a while at the lagoons. These are a haven for wild birds and you might even be lucky enough to see a [kingfisher](#).

Just before the stile at Lower Halstow, you'll walk between plants with large green leaves. Rub one between your fingers and sniff - you'll get a whiff of the distinctive odour of [horseradish](#). The root is used to make a fiery sauce usually served with beef. We've eaten horseradish sauce in this country since the 1600s but the ancient Greeks used it as a rub for back pain.

Grass snakes have been spotted swimming here. They're not dangerous.

When you cross the stile before going up the hill, look at the tree on the right. This is a [sweet chestnut](#) - you can probably see some spiky casings on the ground. Unlike horse chestnut, sweet chestnuts can be roasted and eaten. 2000 years ago the Romans would grind them into flour. In Kent, the trees are coppiced (cut back) regularly and the branches used for poles.

The footpath over the hill passes by a single [oak](#) tree. Oak trees are very long lived and their wood has been used for millennia. The wood is very strong so is useful for building and decorating important buildings. The Vikings used oak planking on their longships in the 9th and 10th centuries. Alcohol such as wine, sherry, brandy and whisky is aged in oak barrels which give the drink a distinctive smell and taste.

The hedgerow between the solar farm and the railway line has oak trees, sweet chestnut and [blackthorn](#) bushes. Can you spot any other trees and shrubs? There's a theory that you can work out the age of a hedgerow by counting the number of varieties of plants then multiplying by 100. How many can you count?

As you walk along this footpath, you'll see an information board about the former use of this area. It was an important site for inland defences during WWI.

When you walk along the track towards the church, look into the field on your right and you might be lucky enough to see llamas.

Enjoy the birds eye view of the flint tower of St Mary's. It was built in the 14th and 15th centuries and is one of the finest in Kent. Medieval churches such as this one are built almost entirely from natural materials - [flint](#), [limestone](#) and tiles and bricks made from the local brick earth.

Let us know your opinion on : <https://www.visorando.co.uk/walk-newington-walk-3-lower-halstow/>



Visorando and the author of this walk sheet cannot be held responsible in the event of an accident during this walk.



THE WALKER CODE

Visorando

by Visorando

Before the walk



CHOOSE YOUR WALK CAREFULLY

by matching its difficulty and duration to your skill and physical ability.



CHECK THE WEATHER FORECAST

and look for other important information, such as snow, temperature, tide times, wind speed, fire risk etc.



BE PROPERLY PREPARED

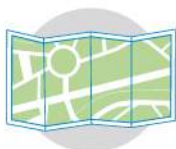
by taking suitable equipment with you, such as a whistle, first-aid kit, appropriate clothing and something to eat and drink.



LET SOMEONE KNOW

where you will be walking.

During the walk



STAY ON THE PATH

(unless you have an exceptionally good reason not to).



RESPECT THE COUNTRYSIDE

by not damaging fences, fields and crops and not picking fruit or vegetables.



RESPECT LOCAL RESTRICTIONS

such as bans on fires, barbecues, camping, fishing, swimming etc.



LEAVE GATES AS YOU FIND THEM

and be cautious of farm animals: try to go around, not through, herds or flocks.



TAKE YOUR RUBBISH HOME

and do not leave any trace of your journey except your footprints.



DON'T MAKE LOTS OF NOISE

and do be respectful and courteous to people along the route.



KEEP YOUR DOG ON A LEAD

and keep it close to you when you meet other people. Make sure you can call it back to you at any time. Walking with a dog is not recommended on routes where there are farm animals.



THE COUNTRYSIDE IS A LIVING ENVIRONMENT

that changes all the time. Walking is an adventure and there are risks associated with it. Be responsible, and know when it is better to give up and turn around than get into danger.

Whether it is private or public, the land you walk on does not belong to you. In particular, the owners of private land have generously and graciously given you permission to cross their property.

If you have an accident, please do not sue the owners of the place where it happened, because other walkers might be banned from that route. However, please feel free to tell us about any dangers you find.