

Kearsney Loop

2.6 mile walk

Directions

Starting from the middle car park opposite Russell Gardens, cross the road and turn right along the pavement of Alkham Road until the brick wall on left ends.

Here there are two asphalt tracks – first a drive through a gateway and then a rougher track climbing past a “Scotland Common” sign. Take the rougher track, soon entering woodland and climbing steadily onto a wooded ridge where the track levels out. Passing Summerhill Lodge on left, continue along track keeping right at fork. Enter a long meadow and follow path parallel to right hand edge. At corner, turn left along field edge and at next corner go over stile by gate to join a broad track.

Follow track downhill with fine views of Alkham Valley. When track bears right towards valley bottom, splitting into two parallel paths, take the left hand path. Just before reaching the road, turn left along bottom of field to kissing gate. After going through a second kissing gate go sharp right downhill toward lake then left to continue with the lake below on your right.

At the end of the lake, bear right then sharp left close to a building alongside stream and across bridge over stream into Russell Gardens. Follow path closest to pond and at the end turn right across the ornate pavilion bridge back to the car park.

Public Transport

Kearsney railway station is just a five minute walk to the starting point with trains from Dover or London Victoria and intermediate stations.

There are bus stops immediately outside the Russell Gardens car park for buses to and from Dover and Folkestone (the one opposite the Gardens, for buses towards Folkestone, is unmarked). For more frequent services and other routes, there are stops on London Road. All four stops are marked on the map and the codes shown are for use with web sites and messaging services offering live service information.

About Kent Ramblers

Kent Ramblers has around 4000 members. Many of these join the walks organised by our thirteen local groups. Many more belong simply to support the work we do for the benefit of all walkers, particularly to protect and maintain the paths that make Kent such a fine county to walk in. We also produce various publications, including a Guide to the Kent Coast Path from Camber to Ramsgate. Find out more at:

www.kentramblers.org.uk

If you live in the Dover area, your local group is White Cliffs Ramblers and you can find more about their activities, including regular led walks and the annual White Cliffs Walking Festival, here:

www.whitecliffsramblers.org.uk

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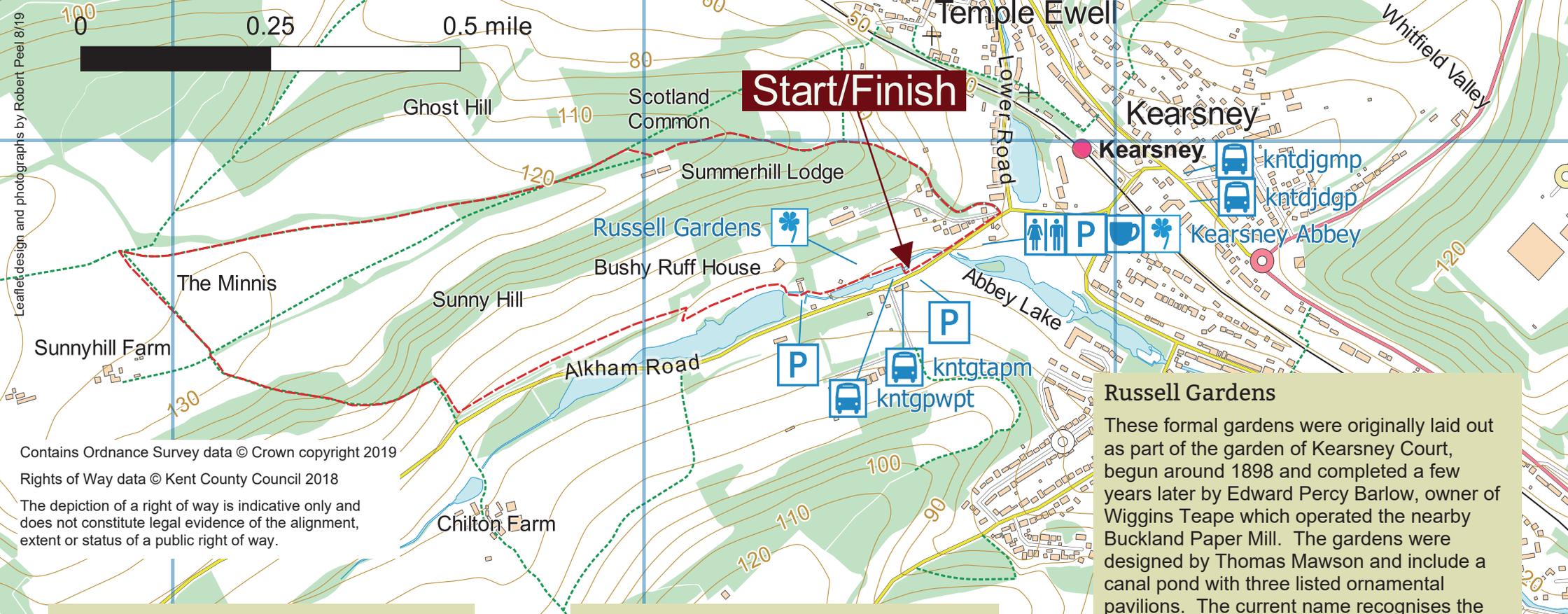


**A beautiful route
over the North
Downs and back by
lakes and formal
gardens**



Kearsney Abbey Gardens





General Information

This circular walk is available thanks to cooperation between White Cliffs Ramblers, the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, part of the Ministry of Defence, over whose land part of the route passes and Dover District Council who have made significant improvements to the route. The route is waymarked except in Bushy Ruff and adjoining Russell Gardens.

Sturdy footwear is recommended and there is one steep climb. The walk can be undertaken in either direction but the description will take you anti-clockwise round the route. It should take between an hour and an hour and a half.

The walk can conveniently be combined with a visit to Kearsney Abbey Gardens where there are toilets and a tea room or kiosk.

Points of Interest

Kearsney Abbey

The Abbey was built around 1820 in the picturesque Gothic style by John Minet Fector, a member of one of Dover's banking and ship owning families, but he died before its completion. Recycled stone from buildings and medieval town walls and gatehouses being demolished in Dover supplied the dressed stonework for the house. The picturesque grounds with their lakes, bridges and folly were laid out in the style of Humphrey Repton. The estate changed hands many times and by the 1940s was owned by Dover Borough Council. By 1960 the Abbey building was in such poor condition that it was demolished, except for the billiard room which is now used as a tea room.

Russell Gardens

These formal gardens were originally laid out as part of the garden of Kearsney Court, begun around 1898 and completed a few years later by Edward Percy Barlow, owner of Wiggins Teape which operated the nearby Buckland Paper Mill. The gardens were designed by Thomas Mawson and include a canal pond with three listed ornamental pavilions. The current name recognises the efforts of Hilton Russell, one time Mayor of Dover, who championed the purchase of the gardens by the Rural District Council for use as a public open space.

Bushy Ruff

The large lake was created in the late 18th century when the river was dammed to power first one then two paper mills. The colonial style Bushy Ruff House was built in 1825 by the then owner of the mills, William Knocker. The house has had a chequered history with periods of abandonment, dereliction and severe fire damage in 1982 and 2010 but it has now been renovated and converted into apartments. Part of the grounds and the lake, owned by Dover District Council, were opened to the public as an extension to Russell Gardens in the 1970s.