



# Lullingstone Eynsford

## THE ROUTE

Start the trail at any point. For example you can walk from Lullingstone Roman Villa to Eynsford Castle, or to Lullingstone Country Park and back the same way. Turn over for Lullingstone's Time Trail.

Below the buildings (which include Eagle Heights) cross the farm road and take the path opposite, down across a field. Please keep to the signposted footpaths. To visit Eagle Heights turn left on the farm road. Retrace to resume the trail.

Turn right at the top of the field.

Go up steps, signposted 'Darent Valley Path', through woods and then along the left edge of a field.

Cross the railway line with special care: listen and look both ways.

If you want to find this path from Eynsford and walk up to Eagle Heights (and do the trail in reverse), look for the Darent Valley Path signpost on the right just after the last house in the village.

You can divert into Sparepenny Lane to get views of Eynsford Castle and see the memorial to Flight Lieutenant James Paterson, the Battle of Britain pilot.



## ALTERNATIVE ROUTE

The road between Eynsford and Lullingstone Roman Villa provides a level surfaced alternative route to the walk up to Eagle Heights.

## TO/FROM LULLINGSTONE ROMAN VILLA - EYNSFORD STATION

about 20 minutes each way

**Eynsford railway station to Lullingstone Roman Villa**  
Turn left out of the station and downhill on the road. At the T-junction with A225, cross the road (with care) and turn left along the pavement under railway bridge. Continue on the grass verge until the metal fence visible on the other side of the road ends. Turn right on a track here (signposted Public Footpath) and continue downhill between fences and over a bridge where you emerge by Lullingstone Roman Villa car park.

**Lullingstone Roman Villa to Eynsford railway station**  
With your back to the Roman Villa, take the farm road over the metal-sided bridge to the left of the car park and continue between fences until you emerge on the A225. Turn left, walking on the verge, continuing under the railway bridge. Cross the road (with care) and turn sharp right to reach Eynsford Station.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Hello. This leaflet is part of a pilot project to develop trails at heritage sites, trails that encourage people to visit the surrounding area, as well as the heritage site itself. To be able to produce similar trails elsewhere, we need to know what you think of this one. Please complete the questionnaire, and then tear it off and simply put it in the post.

Please return it to us by the 30th September 2007. Thank you very much for your feedback, Tourism South East.

- Are you a member of English Heritage?  
Yes  No
- Have you visited Lullingstone Roman Villa in the past?  
Yes  No
- Where did you see this Trail promoted/pick up this leaflet?  
Lullingstone Roman Villa   
Lullingstone Country Park Visitor Centre   
On the internet   
Other
- Did you follow any of the Trail?  
All of it  Part of it  None of it
- Did the Trail encourage you to visit more of the area around Lullingstone and Eynsford than you had originally planned?  
Yes  No
- Did the Trail give you a glimpse of the different historic periods that survive around Lullingstone?  
Yes definitely  A little  No
- If you visited Lullingstone Roman Villa, does this Trail encourage you to make another visit in the future?  
Very likely to come back   
Might come back   
Not going to come back   
Don't know if I'll come back   
Didn't visit Lullingstone Roman Villa
- Does this Trail encourage you to make another visit to the area?  
Very likely to come back   
Might come back   
Not going to come back   
Don't know if I'll come back

- Next time you visit a heritage site would you take the time to visit nearby historic places or attractions, if a similar Trail to this was available?  
Yes definitely  Maybe  No
- How much did you spend in Eynsford, Lullingstone or Shoreham apart from at Lullingstone Roman Villa?  
None  Less than £3   
Between £3 and £5  More than £5
- How many (if any) children are with you today?  
None  1  2   
3  4 or more

Thank you for your time.

Find out from Lullingstone the ancient owl, who's lived here in the Darent Valley since Roman times, what makes this such a special place.

- Six amazing sites on a trail take you back thousands of years.
- A 3 1/4 mile/5.2 km trail which you can do in sections, depending which attractions you want to visit - there's enough here to keep you coming back again and again!
- Parts of it are on a level lane or riverside path, and for the more energetic there's a short hillier section leading up to Eagle Heights.
- The whole trail takes about 2 hours - but allow extra time to look at things.

This trail was produced as part of a SEEDA/Tourism South East initiative with the support of English Heritage, the Historic Houses Association and the National Trust. It was produced by Acorn Consulting Partnership Ltd, www.acorn-tourism.co.uk, researched and written by Tim and Anne Locke and designed by Jam Marketing Communications.

We would like to thank Pauline Penney, Caroline Alexander, Tom Hart Dyke and the staff at Lullingstone Roman Villa, Lullingstone Country Park and the Kent Archaeology Service for their help in creating this trail.

The views expressed in this leaflet are not necessarily those of the constituent organisations. The contents of this trail are believed correct at the time of printing. Nevertheless, the publisher cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions, or for changes in the details given, or for the consequences of any reliance on the information it provides.

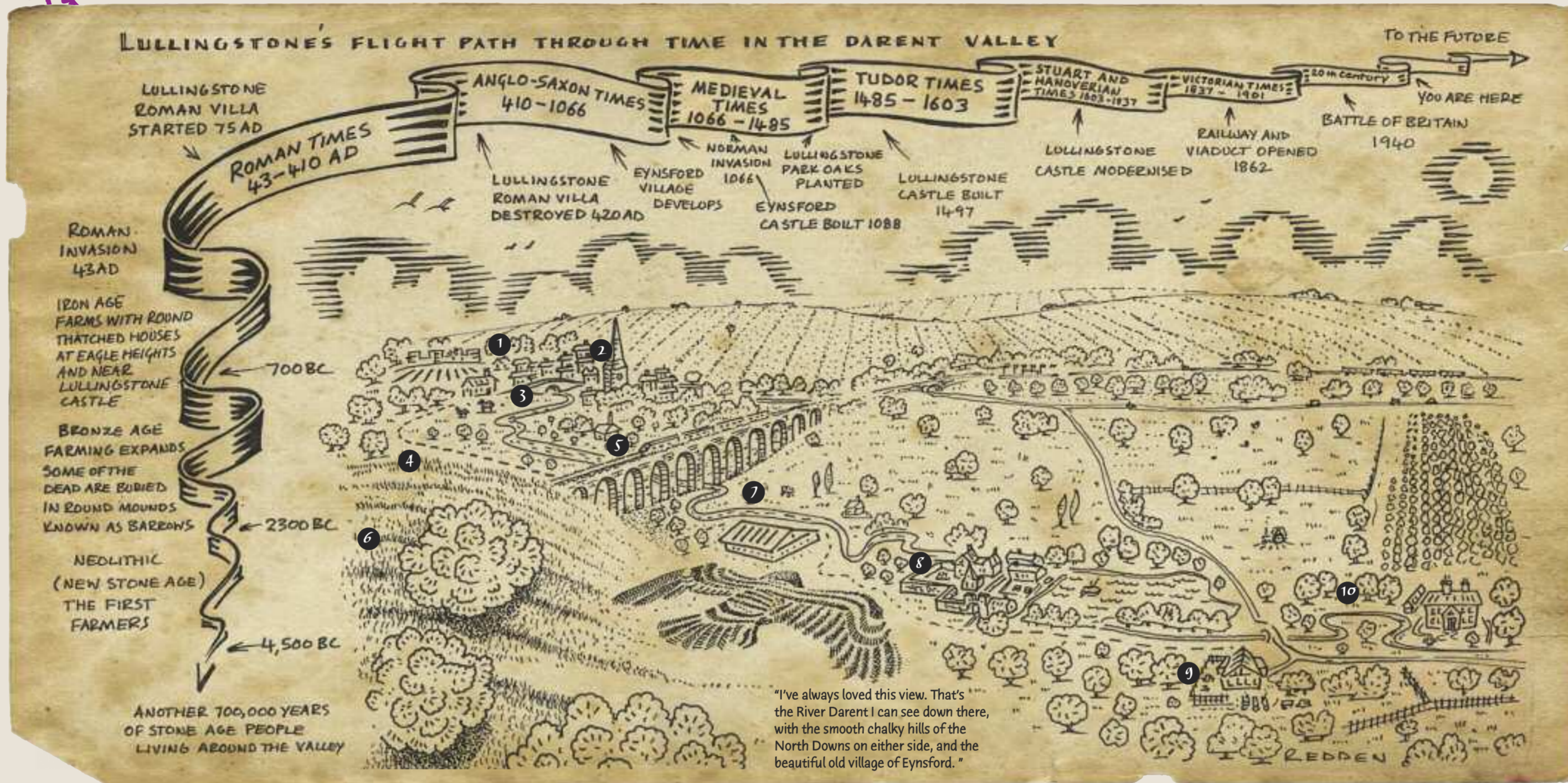
We have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that this trail is safe and achievable by people with a realistic level of fitness. However, all outdoor activities involve a degree of risk and the publishers accept no responsibility for any injuries caused to readers whilst following the trail.

Photo credits:  
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To Shoreham



Lullingstone the owl has lived in the Darent Valley for 2000 years, since Roman times. He can tell you all about it. Because the river valley was such a useful route across Kent and to the Thames, there have been people here for thousands of years. It's changed a lot, of course!



### 1 Eynsford Castle

"The Normans put this up about 900 years ago. They took over one of the Saxon sites."

The people lived upstairs but it was more like a country house than a castle for defence. Then there was a squabble about land ownership and the place was wrecked in 1312. No-one's lived here since. It's amazing you can see anything of it at all.

There's free access to Eynsford Castle. You can either go into it from the village street in Eynsford (look for the turning opposite the Castle Inn), or if you just want a view detour from the trail into Sparepenny Lane, a two-minute walk from the junction with Lullingstone Lane.

### 2 St Martin's Church, Eynsford

"When I was a young owl in Roman times, the Christians used to meet up at Lullingstone Roman Villa. There weren't very many of them. Christianity was quite a new religion, and there were plenty of others to choose from."

Those Roman Christians would be pleased to see all the churches in the valley. But they'd be confused by the yew trees. In the Iron Age the Druids, who weren't Christians, used to worship in yew groves. After the Romans invaded they thought the Druids were leading the rebels against them, and sent in the army to kill them off.

St Martin's Church was built in Norman times using flint, a hard black stone found in the chalk Downs. The spire is covered in wooden tiles called shingles, made from oak. Those stone coffins in the porch were used in medieval times.

### 3 The Bridge and Ford at Eynsford

"This has always been an important place to cross the river. There was a Roman building nearby but everything you can see now is medieval or later."

You can see the timber frames that hold the medieval houses up – the gaps are filled in with plaster. Some of the other buildings have walls made of flint and brick, or wooden planks called weatherboarding.

The ford, where you cross the river, was so important that it gave its name to Eynsford in Saxon times. Originally it was known as Aegen's Ford – the ford belonging to a person called Aegen.

There are many other places which used to have fords, like Catford, Otford and Oxford, but you can't usually see them any more. There has been a proper bridge here since medieval times but people still try to drive through the ford, and some of them get stuck!

Some of the fiercest air fighting of the Second World War took place over the valley during the Battle of Britain in 1940. You can find out more about the Battle of Britain and the pilots' memorials at the Shoreham Aircraft Museum.

### 4 Viewpoints

"When you look over the valley, the hills haven't changed in shape since humans have been here, but there aren't so many woods and Eynsford is much larger than it used to be. The river is smaller than it was and the farming is different too."

Hundreds of thousands of years ago, when the first humans were here, they shared the valley with animals like mammoths and woolly rhinoceroses which are extinct now. Sometimes the climate was very warm, like Africa is now, and at other times there were freezing ice ages.

There were farms along the valley almost from the time farming first began. Until the Romans came, farmers lived in thatched wooden round houses – there were farms up where Eagle Heights is now, and in Lullingstone Park. When the Romans came and founded London (they called it Londinium) some farmers got rich selling food to the people living in the city and started replacing their round houses with Roman-style villas with tiled roofs. Most people who lived in these kinds of villas were locals who'd done well, not Romans from Italy.

The fields used to be full of people working. It was like that right up until the early 20th century. Now the fields are emptier because they use modern machines such as combine harvesters instead.

### 5 The Railway Viaduct

"This huge railway viaduct was built by the Victorians in 1862. Its arches carry the railway over the valley because trains can't manage going up and down steep slopes."

In Roman times people would have been astonished to see anything as big as this, and of course railways didn't exist. But some people living in the Roman Empire would have found it strangely familiar – it looks like some of the aqueducts built by the Romans to carry water across a valley.

The Romans were the first people to realise that the round-topped arch is a very good way of building something really strong to support a weight like this.

### 6 Eagle Heights Bird of Prey and Animal Centre

"You can meet some of my fellow owls up here. Keeping us birds of prey used to be popular in medieval times but it's been hard to find anyone doing it for the last few hundred years."

One of the symbols of the Roman Empire was the Imperial Eagle. The Romans collected exotic animals from Africa for their circuses, but we didn't get many of those in Roman Britain. They were gruesome affairs with animals and people made to fight to the death. Now places like Eagle Heights look after their animals properly.

### 7 Lullingstone Roman Villa

"This is very different to how it once was. In Roman times this place used to be two storeys high, with white walls and a tiled roof and gardens all around."

This might look like a ruin in a modern shelter now, but it's really interesting – you can see exactly how the heating system worked. I'm glad the mosaic has survived. This is the only Roman building like this you can see in the valley, but there used to be at least seven villas – one at Shoreham and one at Otford for example.

Each villa had its own estate, with a stretch of water for transport, an area in the valley for growing crops, and some woods and hills for grazing and wood for building, fuel and charcoal.

### 8 Lullingstone Castle and world Garden of Plants

"I recognise the gatehouse from when Henry VIII came here but the rest of the house has changed a bit. The front is from the time of Queen Anne (1702-1714) but it's older if you look behind."

This is one of the earliest brick buildings in Britain. The Romans had bricks, but they were flatter and pale orange, and they didn't build them into high walls. The Saxons collected

them up from Roman buildings and used them together with flint or stone in their churches. Then people seemed to forget how to make them until Tudor times.

The World Garden is new. It's arranged like a map of the world, with plants growing on the continent they came from originally. The Romans brought in their Mediterranean plants like rosemary and lavender. But they wouldn't have recognised today's world maps. They hadn't discovered America or Australia.

### 9 Lullingstone Country Park

"The park used to belong to Lullingstone Castle. Some of the oak trees up there are over 700 years old. I remember perching in them back in medieval times."

There were two Iron Age farms here before the Romans came, and in medieval times it was enclosed as a deer park. You can still see the remains of the high fence used to keep the deer in. They were hunted for sport and to eat (the meat is known as venison). The top branches of the ancient oak trees were cut (pollarded) every twenty years or so. This meant that the new shoots were out of reach of the deer, and the timber could be sold and used to build houses and ships.

There were plans to build houses and an airport here in the 1930s, when London was spreading out into Kent. But after 1947 the park was protected as part of the 'Green Belt' round London. This meant that people weren't allowed to build on the countryside here. Without the Green Belt, the whole valley would probably have been built over by now.

In the Second World War they used to have a dummy airfield here. There were fake wooden aeroplanes where the golf course is now. The Germans were supposed to think it was Biggin Hill airfield and attack the fake planes!

You can pick up details of the walks in the Country Park from the Visitor Centre.

### 10 Hop Shop Castle Farm

"This farm would have been unusual in the past – it has its own shop. People come to the farm in their cars to buy things. In the past farmers used to take their crops and animals to a market to sell them."

The farm specialises in lavender and honey. The Romans probably brought lavender to Britain: it was used to wash clothes and get rid of insects like fleas, and as a perfume and flavouring. Honey was important too: it was the only sweetener the Romans had, as sugar cane had not been discovered.

### Walk to Shoreham

You can continue from the Lullingstone Country Park Visitor Centre on the Darent Valley Path to Shoreham (1½ miles/2.3 km, 30 minutes). Outside the Kings Arms is an Ostler's Box where the man who looked after people's horses would have sat under cover while they were in the pub. The carved screen in the church dates back to Tudor times: the vines and pomegranates were symbols of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. The chalk cross on the hillside above is a war memorial and the Shoreham Aircraft Museum (open Sun from Easter–end Sept; 01959 524416) has relics from the Battle of Britain. Return the same way, or take the train from Shoreham back to Eynsford (4 minutes, approximately half-hourly).

### Attractions

**Eynsford Castle** off High Street, Eynsford (opposite Castle Inn) www.english-heritage.org.uk. Entrance free. Open daily 10am–6pm until 30 September, 10am–4pm Oct–March. Closed Mon and Tues in Dec and Jan.

**Lullingstone Roman Villa** Eynsford DA4 OJA. 01322 863467 www.english-heritage.org.uk. Open daily 10am–6pm until 30 September 2007 then closing for refurbishment. £4/£3/children £2; English Heritage members free. Re-opens spring 2008.

**Lullingstone Castle and The World Garden of Plants** Eynsford DA4 OJA. 01322 862114. www.lullingstonecastle.co.uk. Open until end Sept. Fri and Sat 12pm–5pm (garden); 2pm–5pm (house); Sun and BH 2pm–6pm. £6/£5.50/child £2.50, family £12.50.

**Lullingstone Country Park and Visitor Centre** Kingfisher Bridge, Castle Road, Eynsford DA4 OJF 01322 865995. www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent. Pedestrian access at all times. Visitor Centre open daily 10am–4pm Oct–March, 10am–5pm April–Sept. Waymarked walks, information on landscape, wildlife and heritage. Café, toilets, shop. Car parking £1.

**Eagle Heights** Lullingstone Lane, Eynsford DA4 OJB 01322 866466. www.eagleheights.co.uk. Birds of prey and animal centre. Open daily 1 Mar–31 Oct, 10.30am–5pm; weekends Nov–Feb 11am–4pm. Café, play area, shop. £6.95/£5.95/child £4.95.

**The Hop Shop Castle Farm**, Shoreham TN14 7UB 01959 523219. www.hopshop.co.uk. Farm and craft shop, lavender farm tours. Open daily 10am–5pm. Open tours of the lavender fields on selected weekday afternoons from late June to mid July. £4. Lavender Festival is usually on the second weekend in July; free, with tours (£4, children free), food tastings, bee-keeping displays, aromatherapy.

**Shoreham Aircraft Museum** (WW2/Battle of Britain aviation relics and memorabilia), High Street, Shoreham TN14 7TB 01959 524416. www.shoreham-aircraft-museum.co.uk. Open Sundays only, throughout the summer.

### Find out more

See the sites above for more information. See also: www.bbc.co.uk/schools/romans BBC website on the Romans. www.english-heritage.org.uk Information on the work of English Heritage, including historic houses and ancient monuments that are open to visitors.

www.pyrrha.demon.co.uk Roman topics and ideas, aimed at schoolchildren.

www.felhs.org.uk The Farningham and Eynsford Local History Society.

www.kentdowns.org.uk About the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

www.shorehamkenthistorical.org.uk The Shoreham and District Historical Society.

www.britarch.ac.uk/yac Young Archaeologists' Club The UK-wide club for 8–16 year olds interested in archaeology, organised by the Council for British Archaeology, St Mary's House, 66 Bootham, York YO30 7BZ. 01904 671417.

### Local Businesses

#### Eating and Drinking

**Castle Hotel** (pub, restaurant, accommodation) High St, Eynsford DA4 OAB. 01322 863162.

**Five Bells** (pub), High St, Eynsford DA4 OAB. 01322 863135.

**Lullingstone Country Park Visitor Centre** (self service café) Kingfisher Bridge, Castle Rd, Eynsford DA4 OJF. 01322 865995.

**Malt Shovel Inn** (pub), Station Rd, Eynsford DA4 OER 01322 862164.

**Plough** (dining pub), 24 Riverside, Eynsford DA4 OAE 01322 862281.

**The Watermark** (restaurant), 2 Riverside, Eynsford DA4 OAE 01322 860300. www.thewatermarkrestaurant.co.uk

**St Martin's Church, Eynsford** serves teas most summer weekends, and there are several pubs in Shoreham village.

### Local Transport

Trains stopping at Eynsford and Shoreham run approximately half-hourly from London Blackfriars (Mon–Sat) or London Victoria (Sun) via Bromley South to Sevenoaks.

www.southeasternrailway.co.uk

National Rail Enquiries 08457 484950

General public transport enquiries

Traveline 0870 608 2 608, www.traveline.org.uk

### Visitor Information

**Sevenoaks Tourist Information Centre** Buckhurst Lane, Sevenoaks TN13 1LQ, 01732 450 305.

www.kenttourism.co.uk

www.ruralways.org.uk

www.visitsoutheastengland.com

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