



Sunsets & Seascapes

The

Pick n' Mix...

Isle of Sheppey

Kent's Treasure Island

This Country Break explores the **Isle of Sheppey**, one of England's few true islands, sited at the mouths of the Thames and the Medway and cut off from the rest of Kent by the tidal channel and estuary known as the Swale.

At just 36 square miles the island packs a lot in, from the miles of beaches (perfect for lazing on or getting wet from), its acres of low-lying marshes making it one of the best places in UK to see birds of prey, to its renowned fossil beds which provide regular prehistoric finds.

Scratch a little beneath the surface and you'll also discover more history and heritage per square mile than just about anywhere else in the country. Uncover the strong maritime tradition, stand on the same soil as Saxon Queens, Dutch Invaders and famous writers, and for the piece-de-résistance visit the site of the birthplace of UK aviation.

So forget what you think you know about Sheppey and come and take a fresh look, you're sure to find something surprising!



KENT
GARDEN of ENGLAND
visitkent.co.uk



Find out more at www.visitsheppey.com

Pick n' Mix

Sheppey has so much to do and experiences to choose from, it can seem a bit overwhelming, so just to keep things simple here are some ideas to enjoy the very best of the Island...

These are just a few ideas so feel free to mix it up or swap them around, combine with any events that are on in the area (remember to check local websites and magazines) and in short make it an experience of your own. Do be sure to note those activities that need to be booked in advance.

Speaking of which, why not book a Sheppey Greeter to get things off to a good start? These are volunteers full of useful local knowledge and experience to help you get even more from your day.



Further Information

www.visitsheppey.com

www.visit.swale.gov.uk

www.visitkent.co.uk

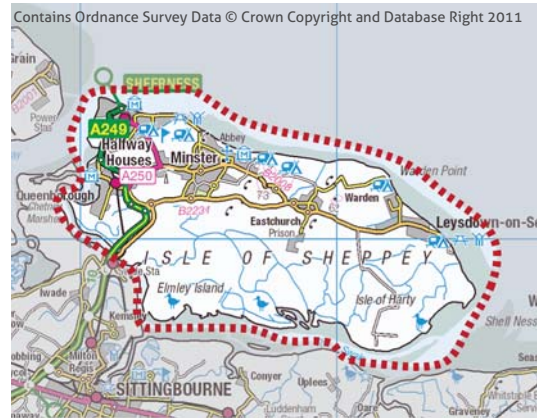
www.visitkent.co.uk/greeters/

www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent

www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk

www.southeasternrailway.co.uk

www.ruralkent.org.uk/swailrail.htm



Getting There

The Isle of Sheppey is easily reached via the **Sheppey Crossing** (A249) from the M2 and the A2 at Sittingbourne.

Several bus routes cross the island linking to Maidstone, Canterbury and the rest of Kent. **See the map.**

Trains operated by **South Eastern** call at Sheerness and Queenborough, with connections to Kent, London and points beyond.



Getting Started...

Whether you have half a day, the luxury of a whole day at leisure or even longer, you can get a great taste of the island...

Head to **page 3** to discover how!

Half a day

Best bites...



1

Leys on the Beach... How can so many visitors be wrong? Take your pick of Sheppey's award winning beaches, from peace and quiet at **Warden Bay**, to the naturist beach at **Shellness** (for the more adventurous) or just have a real seaside experience at **Leysdown-on-Sea** (don't forget the Fish n' Chips!).



2

Cycle Sheerness. Easy, flat, mostly off road and packed with history, spend a morning following the 5.6 mile **Sheerness Way Cycle Route**. There's less than an hour of cycling here, and some amazing history and heritage to absorb as you do, so great for the whole family!



3

Queen for an Afternoon... Spend a rewarding afternoon exploring the nooks and crannies of Queenborough on the **Queenborough Historic Walk**, but make sure you don't miss the **Queenborough Guildhall Museum**, **Trinity Church** and the **Castle Site**!



Image © Guildhall Museum Rochester

4

What the Dickens...? Not quite Rochester but there is evidence Dickens lived in **Bluetown** and that he used the **Gatehouse Museum** and **Minster Abbey** as the model for the "Old Curiosity Shop" as well as other spots in Minster, follow in his footsteps and find out for yourselves!

A Full Day

Get more in depth...

1

Tour in Style... Too much to see in one day? Well why not let someone else do the hard work? Full day guided mini-bus tours of the island complete with a lunch stop and exclusive access to the dockyard can be arranged at the **Blue Town Heritage Centre**.



Picture: Sheerness Times Guardian © Kent Messenger Group

2

Take a **Ride to Harty**. Stretch your legs and tackle the **Isle of Harty Trail** by bike. This is a moderately challenging 8 mile ride from Leysdown-on-Sea to Harty, mostly off-road and taking in aviation sights of both the powered and feathered kinds.



3

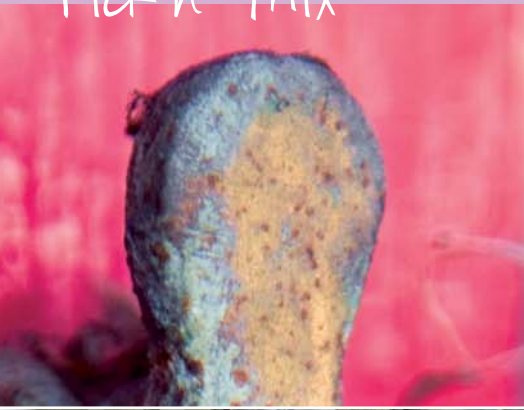
Get Twitchy... Sheppey really is a bird watchers paradise, and it's easy to lose yourself for a few hours (or days) at the **RSPB Elmley Marshes Reserve**, **Capel Fleet Raptor View Point** or in the **Swale National Nature Reserve**, just don't forget the packed lunch, camera and binoculars!



4

Take in a show... If you are here for the day then make sure to stop by the **Sheppey Little Theatre** (be sure to check the website for details of shows) which has been hosting arts, drama and music since 1975. Impressively it's all run by volunteers so stop by and support them!





A Weekend

Take your time...



1

Meet & Greet... Get the inside track on a great weekend and book a **Sheppey Greeter!** These are volunteers who can impart local knowledge, insight and expertise, saving you time and making sure you get the best from your stay on the island.



2

Circumnavigation! That's the thing about an island, you can sail round it! Here's the opportunity to do so in style aboard the **Thames Barge Greta** which sails from Whitstable Harbour for a full day trip round Sheppey, and can also be arranged from the **Ferry House Inn.**



3

Land Ho! With its **All-Tide Landing** at Queenborough, there's nothing like arriving in Sheppey by boat, and it's easy enough to explore the island. If you happen to be seafaring your way in then make sure to drop into the **Queenborough Yacht Club**, for shower facilities, evening classes in boat skills, a well stocked bar and a bite to eat amongst fellow mariners!



Image © Roy Shepherd

4

Fossil with the experts... Having trouble telling the difference between your Ammonites and Echinoids? Well then why not join Fossil Guru **Roy Shepherd** in a guided exploration of Sheppey's fossil beds? Roy runs both hunts throughout the year, all you need is suitable clothing and an enquiring mind.

Close By...

If you have time to explore...

1

Still feeling twitchy? Why not discover the secret's of Kent's last wilderness amongst the 70 miles of wildlife-rich wetlands among the RSPB reserves of the **North Kent Marshes**? The reserves include woodland, open water and of course marsh, an ornithologists paradise!



2

Discover **Faversham**, one of England's most historic and charming towns. Enjoy the independent shops, gunpowder works, wetlands of the Oare Marshes, the Brogdale National Fruit Collection, the UK's oldest brewery and the delightfully eclectic Royal Cinema



3

Steeped in history and rich in maritime heritage the Medway towns of **Chatham & Rochester** make a great day trip from Sheppey. Wander in the footsteps of Dickens and stop by Rochester's splendid castle and cathedral or head to Chatham to soak up the maritime history at the Historic Dockyard.



4

For a thousand years **The Blean** has remained one of the largest and most distinctive areas of woodland in the south east, covering some 300 hectares - over 11 square miles! This is prime walking country in a wooded landscape that provide a changing variety of experiences and sights through the seasons.



Further Afield...

Discover Kent...



1 Explore the **Kent Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**. A landscape of dramatic chalk escarpments, secluded dry valleys, networks of tiny lanes and historic hedgerows, ancient woodlands, traditional orchards, locally distinctive villages, unique and precious wildlife, all waiting for you to discover!

2 **Canterbury** is a place that needs little introduction. Your first point of call in the city must surely be the Cathedral, but make sure to seek out Rupert Bear at the Museum of Canterbury and explore bygone eras at the Canterbury Tales Museum, or if that all seems too hectic, take a punt on the river or just kick back and feed the ducks...

3 Scratch beneath the surface and discover a whole raft of breathtaking views and hidden treasures in **Natural East Kent**. Delve deeper and find a range of activities to suit families and couples alike. Learn more about our heritage, sample some fine foods, get active, get creative, get inspired.... relax.

4 There's plenty more out there across **The Garden of England**, from award winning beaches, to castles, rolling countryside, big skies, bountiful local produce, leading-edge galleries and theatre, Michelin-starred dining and entertaining nightlife. Come and **Visit Kent**.

More Information

Listings & Details



Name	Telephone	Website	Address
Sheerness Way Cycle Route	N/A	http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/countryside_and_coast/cycling/cycle_routes/sheerness_way.aspx	Start at Barton's Point Coastal Park
Queenborough Historic Walk	N/A	http://www.ruralkent.org.uk/community-rail/QueenboroughHistoricWalk.pdf	Start at Queenborough Station
Queenborough Guildhall Museum	01795 667295	N/A	High Street, Queenborough, ME11 5AA
Holy Trinity Church	01795 662648	http://www.kentchurches.info/church.asp?p=Queenborough	High Street, Queenborough, ME11 5EN
Queenborough Castle Site	N/A	http://www.sheppeywebsite.co.uk/index.php?id=86	Queenborough
Minster Abbey	01795 879200	http://www.minsterabbey.org.uk/3.html	High Street, Minster, ME12 3QD
Minster Abbey Gatehouse Museum	01795 875111	http://www.minstergatehouse-museum.info/index.php	Union Road, Minster-on-Sea, ME12 2HW
Bluetown Heritage Centre	01795 662981	www.bluetownheritagecentre.com	69 High Street, Bluetown, Sheerness, ME12 1RW
Isle of Harty Trail	N/A	http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_and_culture/countryside_and_coast/cycling/cycle_routes/isle_of_harty_trail.aspx	Start on Leysdown Promenade
RSPB Elmley Marshes & Raptor Viewpoint	01795 665969	http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/e/elmleymarshes/	Kingshill Farm, Elmley, ME12 3RW
Swale National Nature Reserve	0845 600 3078	http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/nnr/1006143.aspx	Shellness Road, Shellness, ME12 4RJ

Name	Telephone	Website	Address
Sheppey Little Theatre	01795 665700	http://www.sheppeylittletheatre.org/	Meyrick Road, Sheerness, ME12 2NX
Sheppey Greeters	N/A	http://www.visitkent.co.uk/greeters/	N/A
Thames Barge "Greta"	01795 534 541	http://www.greta1892.co.uk/	Whitstable Harbour, Whitstable, CT5 1AB
Queenborough Harbour	N/A	http://www.queenborough-harbour.co.uk/	Queenborough
Queenborough Yacht Club	01795 663955	http://homepages.rya-online.net/queenboroughyc/	7 High Street, Queenborough, ME11 5AA
Roy Shepherd Discovering Fossils	N/A	http://www.discoveringfossils.co.uk/isle_of_sheppey_fossils.htm	N/A
Sheppey Fossils	N/A	http://www.sheppeyfossils.com/home.htm	N/A
North Kent Marshes	01634 222480	http://www.rspb.org.uk	RSPB Northward Hill, Cooling, Rochester, ME3 8DS
Faversham	01795 534542	http://www.faversham.org/visit_faversham.aspx	Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre 13 Preston Street Faversham, ME13 8NS
Visit Medway	01634 338141	http://www.visitmedway.org/	Medway Visitor Information Centre, 95 High Street Rochester, ME1 1LX
The Blean	N/A	http://www.theblean.co.uk/	N/A
Kent Downs AONB	01303 815170	http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/	N/A
Canterbury	01227 378 100	http://www.canterbury.co.uk	Canterbury Visitor Centre Stour Street, Canterbury, CT1 2NR
Natural East Kent	N/A	http://www.visitkent.co.uk/naturealeastkent	N/A

For more on The Isle of Sheppey

and across Kent...

Active

Family

Heritage

Outdoors

www.visitkent.co.uk



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