



WHITSTABLE MARITIME

Coastal Trail

Includes
Exclusive
Discounts for
South Quay
Shed



WHITSTABLE COASTAL TRAIL

A bespoke trail for walkers, cyclists, runners and wheelchair users, exploring the local landscape, heritage & coastline.

For more information please visit:
www.whitstablemaritime.org.uk

Welcome to the Coastal Trail

5km of History, Nature and Seascapes

The Whitstable Coastal Trail offers a bespoke route for cycling, running, walking, family adventure and health and wellbeing. This leaflet provides a map and information about local history, nature and geography, as well as suggestions for where to eat and drink.

The Trail's 8 Highlights are spread along the route and you can easily adapt its length to suit your available time, where you wish to explore, or the need for coffee and ice cream! The map also indicates public car parks, accessible toilets and sections unsuitable for wheelchairs, with alternative routes included.

We hope you enjoy exploring Whitstable and Tankerton via the Coastal Trail.



The Trail follows a beautiful route by the sea with options for exploring lesser known paths & places



Suggested Routes

The beauty of the Coastal Trail is that routes can be adapted to vary how you explore the Highlights. From a quick stroll, to a family outing on the Tankerton Slopes, to an extended walk via a pub or circular running route. Below are two convenient circular walks extending either side of Whitstable Harbour.

The Main Loop (5.25Km): This route starts in the harbour at Highlight 3 and heads east to Highlight 1; Long Rock. There are plenty of footpaths on the way which take you up to the top of the slopes where you can connect with the higher section of the path should you wish to shorten the route.



At Highlight 1, there is the option to add a fully accessible 'there and back' or full loop around the beautiful marshland. From Highlight 1, take the high path returning on the Tankerton Slopes to the harbour.

The Western Walk (from 2.5Km): Starting in the harbour at Highlight 3, head west and explore West Quay (Highlight 4) and pass the beaches with views across The Swale. From Highlight 6, continue along the beach to Highlight 8.



A fully accessible route takes you along historic streets at Island Wall and down to Highlights 7 and 8. Alternatively, at Highlights 7 and 8, the route can be continued inland along accessible public footpaths and roads that return to Whitstable via an elevated path with stunning views before coming back to the harbour via the town's high street.

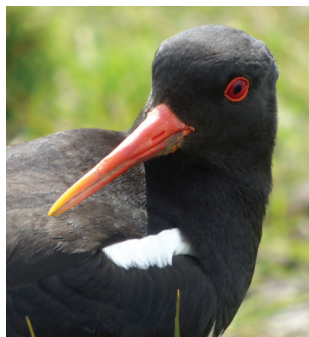
Trail themes & features

Archaeology: The coast near Whitstable has been inhabited for over 10,000 years, with flint artefacts found dating from between about 10,250 and 5,500 years ago when sea level was probably 10m lower than now. Artefacts of Bronze Age, Iron Age and through to the Roman Age have all been found.

Geology and Environment: The North Kent coast is formed predominantly of London Clay. To the west of Whitstable it is covered by salt marsh, created as sea levels rose over the last 6000 years.

Whitstable's beach is shaped by longshore drift carrying shingle westwards. The groynes are there to control this flow of material. The beaches they protect help to break the force of the waves during winter storms which used to flood the town!

Significantly, two sections of the Trail are Sites of Special Scientific Interest: Swalecliffe and Tankerton Slopes. In addition the coastline from the Harbour to Seasalter, extending to the Seasalter Levels and Graveney Marshes, forms part of the Swale Marine Conservation Zone.



Ecology and Wildlife: A large number of animals, birds and plants can be seen along the coast, many on the beach, although what can be seen will depend on the season. Two birds that are present all year in the harbour and on the foreshore are the Oyster Catcher and Turnstone. Plant-wise, you may see the Yellow Horned-Poppy, a specialist of coastal shingle habitats, or Hog's Fennel.

Animal life in the sands and muds is abundant; over a hundred species live in or on it which range from worms to large shellfish and you can often find them at low tide. If you see the piles of neatly curled sand it's from the ragworm which lives in a burrow in the mud reaching out to feed on the nutrient rich sediments.

Please do not pick the flora; it forms part of a delicate ecosystem and Site of Special Scientific Interest.



History and Industry: The more recent history includes evidence of a Copperas industry, fish traps, an Anglo-Saxon boat, a Tudor ship wreck, and a range of WW2 military defence works. It also includes what some call the last armed battle against an enemy that took place on British soil – The Battle of Graveney Marsh.

A plaque explaining more about the Copperas industry can be found on the trail at Tower Tea Gardens, opposite Whitstable Castle (see map).

Thames barges are still seen afloat on The Swale and The Greta is berthed on the trail, in the harbour, and open for day sailing trips.

Maritime Heritage: Whitstable supported not just a large oyster fleet, but also a burgeoning ship building industry. All along the trail, from Highlights 3-8, yards were making and repairing vessels during a time when ships were vital for transporting goods nationally and internationally.

In this period, before deep water vessels, Whitstable harbour was one of the UK's largest and busiest ports.



Where to eat & drink

The Coastal Trail offers plenty of great places for food, drink and ice cream. This guide also includes exclusive discounts for drinks purchased at **HatHats Coffee Company & Unit 6** (South Quay Shed) in the harbour, see Highlights 3 & 4.

Highlight 1

The Trail's higher route passes **Jo Jo's Meze** (Mediterranean food) and **Sea View Café**, a seaside café serving hot food and drinks. Further west, at Pier Avenue, is **The Royal**, a pub with sea views and local beers.



Food & drink outside The Royal

Highlight 2

On Marine Parade is the **Tankerton Ice Cream Parlour** and **The Marine Bar and Hotel**. Just west of 'The Street' is **The Bubble Café** and **Tower Tea Gardens**.

Highlights 3 & 4

Whitstable Harbour is full of places to enjoy food & drink. **The South Quay Shed** (with seating) and **Harbour Market** (outdoor only) offer various fresh foods, drinks, arts and crafts. Al Fresco (summer) dining is at **Harbour Garden Café**.

Highlight 5

As you pass Whitstable Yacht Club, a number of small shacks offer hot food, drinks and doughnuts. Try **The Forge** and **Keith's Coffee Hut**. Also on Sea Wall (behind The Forge), is **Kent Cycle Hire**.



Sunset views from the Old Neptune

Highlight 6

Here you'll pass **Gelateria Whitstable** and a little further west **The Pearson's Arms** (including outside bar in the summer) and the **Whitstable Oyster Co.** Further on, the iconic **Old Neptune** pub serves food with seats on the beach.

Highlights 7 & 8

At West Beach, where the Trail passes the caravan park, is **West Beach Bar & Tea Rooms**. From here the Trail extends west towards Seasalter where it passes **The Oyster Pearl**; the last pub on the Trail and also a restaurant serving South East Asian food. At the end of the Trail lies **The Sportsman**, a Michelin starred restaurant.

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At low tide the remains of the ship building past can be found near Highlights 7/8

Coastal Trail - 8 Key Highlights

The Coastal Trail will help you explore and discover Whitstable and Tankerton's coastline via 8 highlights. Due to its proximity to Gorrell Tank car park (just behind the Harbour), it is recommended to enter the Trail here, at Highlight 3.

Set out below is some key information to help you explore and discover each Highlight for yourself. For further details on each Highlight, together with historic photographs, please see the Coastal Trail section of our website.

Please see over for suggested routes and an overview of the food & drink along the Trail, including exclusive discounts off beverages in the South Quay Shed inside the harbour; a perfect way to end your walk!



The Trail across the beach at Highlight 6



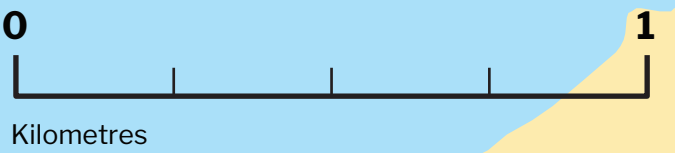
Discover hidden gems for food and drink



Whitstable Harbour at Highlight 3



The Street at Highlight 2



1 Highlights

- Accessible Coastal Trail Route
- ⋯ Trail Route not Accessible by Wheelchair
- Triangle Bus Route
- Changing Places Toilet with Hoist
- Accessible Toilets
- Parking
- Café/Restaurant
- Pub
- Ice Cream Shop/Kiosk
- Train Station

For more information about bus routes to Whitstable, visit www.stagecoachbus.com

Optional: Continue west from here on the footpath to Seasalter.



1 Long Rock: Nature is Key - a SSSI

This most easterly part of the Trail offers both a circular route and a fully accessible path to explore this beautiful marshland.

Long Rock is created by longshore drift which has formed a spit and diverted Swalecliffe Brook (a small stream from Blean, near Canterbury) to create a series of shingle ridges with marsh and freshwater. Long Rock is home to rare plants and animals, including the Water Vole. Fossils from the last Ice Age found on the beach indicate Woolly Mammoths once roamed here.

As you head west and back towards Whitstable, the route splits at the first set of beach huts between the higher and lower routes. Choose either as there are plenty of connecting paths along Tankerton Slopes which allow you to adapt your route between the higher and lower parts of the Trail.



The Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation is due to Hog's Fennel which only grows at a few locations in Britain. Significantly, it also supports the rare Fisher's Estuarine Moth, only found in Kent and Essex.

2 The Street & Tankerton Slopes: An Interesting Puzzle

As the tide falls, The Street is revealed; a long spit of shingle that you can walk out on at low tide. Geologists believe it is formed from a circular tidal current at this specific point which means it defies the general movement of material by longshore drift.



Tankerton Slopes are a very ancient landform. These slopes were here many thousands of years ago, before the sea rose and came to meet them as we find it today. The slopes are also home to the rare Hogs Fennel and the moth *Agonopterix putridella* whose larvae feed exclusively on it.

3 The Harbour and Crab & Winkle: The Heart of Whitstable

The Canterbury and Whitstable Railway, opened in 1830, was the first ticketed regular steam-powered passenger railway in the world. This and the harbour (opened in 1832) enabled Whitstable to develop. Canterbury needed coal and Whitstable needed to transport its oysters, fish and shellfish to market in London.

Extending to London, the Crab and Winkle line ensured the harbour's importance for decades. It is still an exciting and busy working harbour,



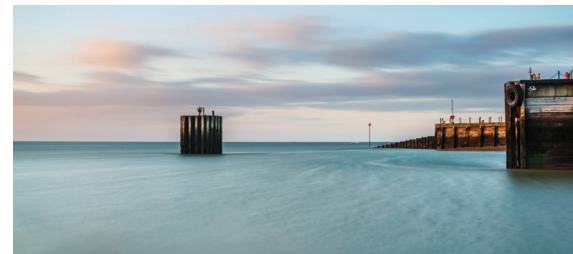
including ship building, with the charity's restoration of the Gamecock oyster yawl available for you to view at Dead Mans Corner. Why the name? Because long ago the tide brought in various flotsam including the odd dead body of an unfortunate seafarer which gathered in the south east corner of the harbour!

4 West Quay: An Important Extension

West Quay, built in the 1970s to extend berthing for the busy harbour, is accessed from opposite the Lifeboat Station. It provides stunning views along



the coast making it ideal for photography and painting; the weather, light and shipping here were depicted by JMW Turner, regarded by many as Britain's finest landscape painter.



Off the end of West Quay is what the locals call 'The Dolphin'. It was used to 'warp' large vessels into the harbour as they battled wind and tide trying to enter it.

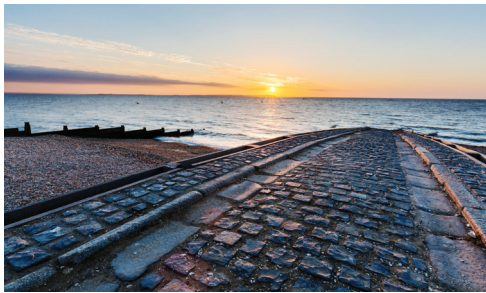
5 Horsebridge, Whitstable Oyster Company and Keam's Yard: A Core Industry



Whitstable's oysters have been harvested for millenia, with records showing they were even exported to Rome during the Roman occupation.

Key to this trade is the Horsebridge; the slipway seen here today which allowed horse and carts to reach the flat-bottomed oyster dredgers and load the catch destined for Billingsgate Market.

Behind the Horsebridge, the old building (now a restaurant) was the base of the Whitstable Oyster Fishery Co. The oystermen would meet in the large room upstairs.



6 Shipwrights Lee: Stay Afloat or Sink

Once a huge trade spanning the length of Whitstable's coastline, Shipwrights Lee was the site of the last yard to build boats on Island Wall. Ships were built or repurposed here for fishing, the Coal Run to the North East, and for D-Day.

You may also find a 'Blue Plaque' marking the house of the inventor of the deep-sea diving helmet - Whitstable is the home of deep-sea diving and salvage (1800s).

The remains of an old slipway for launching boats can still be found below the beach here.



7 Old Haven Inlet: Salt and Smuggling

Here, longshore drift creates a spit and a low marsh behind it, now drained and occupied by Seasalter Golf Club. Evidence shows salt extraction from pans started here in around 1300. Increasing trade led to smuggling (1800s), mainly of French perfume and spirits, and the Coastguard set up on the spit to tackle it. The route passes the Blue Plaque on Peter Cushing's former house.



At the red beach hut, the Trail rejoins the path at the end of Island Wall and one can begin a route heading inland, across the golf course, and back to town. Alternatively, continue onward towards Highlight 8. The Trail can also be continued along the beach where it eventually re-joins the footpath to Seasalter.

8 Railway Footbridge: Defence of the Realm

Defence of the Thames Estuary was essential during WW2 and, as you look out to sea, the odd shapes visible on the horizon are the Maunsell anti-aircraft forts.

By the railway crossing, among the weeds, are the concrete block remains of the WW2 tank traps designed to stall a beach landing.



From here, the Trail continues west to Seasalter and finishes at The Sportsman. Alternatively, a route inland and over the railway footbridge, up some steps to a left turn where the public footpath then heads east and towards Whitstable's high street makes for an excellent round loop to complete the Trail.

WHITSTABLE MARITIME

Celebrating Our Coastal Communities



Whitstable Maritime (charity no. 1171563) aims to:

- Celebrate and highlight Whitstable's past, present and future maritime heritage
- Support the town's coastal local economy
- Positively influence and raise awareness of marine conservation
- Encourage health, well-being and enjoyment of the local coastline

The charity currently achieves this by providing this free Coastal Trail leaflet and restoring the Gamecock, a National Historic Ship and the last Whitstable oyster dredging vessel of its kind. The charity's intention is to re-launch this vessel and make her available for residents and visitors to sail on The Swale. You can visit her ongoing restoration at Highlight 3 on the Trail.

This leaflet is supported by:

Donors: Rotary Club of Whitstable and Whitstable & Herne Bay Lions Club

Commercial Sponsors: HatHats Coffee Company & Unit 6, both in South Quay Shed, Whitstable Harbour.

Images & Cost Contributions: Alex Hare/The Whitstable Photographic Co.

Rotary



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For more information please visit:
www.whitstablemaritime.org.uk