

# CYCLE

## THE VIKING COASTAL TRAIL

The Viking Coastal Trail



EXPLORE THE VIKING COASTAL TRAIL, MARGATE, BROADSTAIRS AND RAMSGATE, AND CIRCLE THE ISLE OF THANET BY BIKE



Romans, Saints and Saxons landed here, artists and writers drew inspiration here, so hop on your bike and discover why visitors have been coming to the Isle of Thanet for centuries. Whichever section of the **32 mile (51.4 km)** Viking Coastal Trail you choose to explore, you are sure to find dramatic scenery and a wealth of local historical gems.

Divide the trail up into the manageable sections and you'll find a variety of fantastic days out; from pedalling your way through rural villages to winding your way along the coast, taking in vibrant seaside towns and the haunts of Charles Dickens and JMW Turner.

The route is also known as the Regional Cycle Network 15 and well signed throughout with the trail logo and the National Cycle Network.



*Italianate Greenhouse*



*Reculver Towers*



## 4 THE PATH OF ST AUGUSTINE'S

**Location:** St Augustine's Cross (CT12 5JN) - Monkton

**Distance:** 4.5 miles (7 km)

**Time:** Allow 45 minutes

**OS Explorer Map:** 150

**Terrain:** On-road

**Refreshments & facilities:** Pubs and restaurants in Minster and Cliffsend

**Parking:** Car park at the Viking Ship 'Hugin'

Retrace the footsteps of St Augustine, the intrepid missionary of Pope Gregory the Great, charged with the task of bringing Christianity from Rome to England in 597 AD.

Ebbsfleet was where St Augustine and 40 monks first stepped on to English soil. **St Augustine's Cross** marks the spot where it is said he first met King Ethelbert, a sovereign he later converted to Christianity.

As Britain's oldest inhabited house it is no surprise that **Minster Abbey** has had a stormy past. Founded as the first English monastery in 670 AD, the Abbey was destroyed by Vikings, rebuilt by King Canute and then razed to the ground during the Norman Conquest.

From an ancient monastery to an ancient church, Minster's **St Mary the Virgin Church** was the first church in Thanet. The peal of five bells carries across the marshland from the church, four of which date back to the 17th century.

A little way off the trail, the 16-acre **Monkton Nature Reserve** is worth a small detour. The abandoned chalk quarry provides a fantastic site for animals, wild flowers and bats to flourish.

## 5 SMUGGLERS' HAUNTS RIDE

**Location:** Joss Bay (CT10 3PG) – Margate

**Distance:** 3.5 miles (6km)

**Time:** Allow 30 minutes

**OS Explorer Map:** 150

**Terrain:** Mainly off-road

**Refreshments & facilities:** Restaurants and pubs at Margate. Public toilets in Margate and Joss Bay

**Parking:** Joss Bay and Margate

Cycle this stretch of the trail from the sweeping Joss Bay to lively Margate. Evidence of smuggling legend is found all along this trail, from bays named after notorious crooks to a museum packed with smuggling history.

The notorious 18th century smuggler Joss Snelling was named after the glorious **Joss Bay**. Unlike his peers, Snelling escaped hanging, his status reaching lofty heights, so much so that he was even introduced to Queen Victoria as "the famous Broadstairs smuggler".



**Botany Bay** is said to have been named after Botany Bay in Australia; the fate for many smugglers was deportation to Australia by convict ship!

Riding into Margate, the **museum** and harbour offer a perfect end to your smuggling trail. The museum tells the town's tale, from the town's smugglers to its important role in the evacuation of Dunkirk.

A departure from the history and heritage of the area, the visually dynamic **Turner Contemporary**, next to the 19th century harbour, offers a refreshing end to your ride.

## 6 BEACHES AND BAYS

**Location:** Margate (CT9 1JD) – Minnis Bay

**Distance:** 3.75 miles (6.25 km) optional extended route to Reculver – 3.75 miles (6.25 km)

**Time:** 30 minutes (Allow 1 hour with extension to Reculver)

**OS Explorer Map:** 150

**Terrain:** Mainly off-road

**Refreshments & facilities:** Pubs and restaurants at Margate, Westgate-on-Sea and Minnis Bay. Public toilets at Margate, Westgate-on-Sea and Minnis Bay

**Parking:** At Margate, Westgate-on-Sea and Minnis Bay

Enjoy the trail from Margate harbour to the family haven of **Minnis Bay**, discovering six sandy bays and hidden coves along this largely traffic-free route.

What better way to start this beach-hopping tour than taking in some of the traditional trappings of a seaside town? Make the most of ice cream stalls overlooking the magnificent stretch of **Margate Main Sands**.

At **Westbrook Bay** take in a deep breath of sea air, visit the café along the promenade, or have a game of golf at **Strokes Adventure Golf**.

**St Mildred's Bay** at Westgate-on-Sea offers plenty of distractions. Take in stunning views from the chalk cliff tops and former WWI seaplane lookout, or wander the sandy beach, complete with chalk reef, tennis courts and cafés.

**West Bay** features a promenade, cliffs, a café and rock pools surrounding a glorious sandy beach. From here your route continues along the cliff top road to the promenade at **Apple Bay** where you can view the chalk sea caves.

You'll find tranquil bays at **Beresford Gap** and **Grenham**, each with an extensive chalk reef habitat and wildlife.

Finish your trail with a stroll along **Minnis Bay**. If you're feeling a little more adventurous kite boarding, sailing and windsurfing are all popular here. You can continue the route along the sea wall and on to the **Reculver Towers**.

## 1 THE SIX CHURCHES RIDE

**Location:** St Nicholas at Wade (CT7 0NG) – Ramsgate

**Distance:** 9.5 mile (15.25 km)

**Time:** Allow 1.5 hours

**OS Explorer Map:** 150

**Terrain:** Mainly on-road

**Refreshments & facilities:** Restaurants and pubs at St Nicholas at Wade and Ramsgate

**Parking:** Ramsgate

Take on the trail from **St Nicholas at Wade**, passing six ancient churches and charming villages to meet the coast and vibrant Ramsgate.

St Nicholas at Wade's grand flint and ragstone church dates back to the 13th century.

Cycle across peaceful marshland and you'll reach Thanet's smallest ancient church, **St Mary Magdalene**, nestled in the traditional village of Monkton.

Minster's 12th century **St Mary's the Virgin Church** is a stark reminder of the Reformation; the 1160 nave was the only part of the church to survive destruction.

One of England's oldest religious buildings, **Minster Abbey** was founded by Princess Ermenburga in the 7th century; it is said to have been funded by her cousin and King of Kent, Egbert, after he murdered her two brothers.

**St Augustine's Cross** marks a piece of ancient local legend; it is said that this is the spot where St Augustine met with King Ethelbert nearly 1,500 years ago.

Along the sweeping clifftops at Pegwell Bay, you'll see the architectural splendour of **St Augustine's Church**, designed by the great Gothic revivalist architect Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin.

The small **Sailor's Church** is your final stop, a contrast to the grand St Augustine's Church. Built in 1878 by the Vicar of Christ Church, it was a refuge for the men and boys of the Ramsgate fleet.

## 2 HISTORY, ART AND ARCHITECTURE

**Location:** Ramsgate (CT12 5HY)

**Distance:** 4.5 mile (7km)

**Time:** 45 minutes

**OS Explorer Map:** 150

**Terrain:** Mainly off-road, some on-road sections

**Refreshments & facilities:** Pubs and restaurants in Ramsgate and public toilets at Pegwell, Ramsgate and King George VI Memorial Park

**Parking:** Car park at the Viking Ship Hugin

Viking ships and nostalgic villages pepper this section of the trail, not to mention the obligatory backdrop of fantastic coastal views along the entire ride.

This ride begins at the very heart of Thanet's heritage with the Viking invasion. The **Viking Ship 'Hugin'** is a replica of the 1949 'Hugin', which sailed from Denmark to Thanet to mark the 1500th anniversary of the invasion of Britain.

The grand **St Augustine's Church** was designed by the Victorian architect Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, designer of the interiors of the Houses of Parliament. **The Grange**, the grade I listed house next to the church was designed by Pugin for his family. A self guided walking tour from East Cliff to West Cliff highlights Pugin's influence in Ramsgate.

Ramsgate's harbour lies along your trail, a perfect place to stop and enjoy lively restaurants and bars or take a tour of the **Ramsgate Maritime Museum**. Wander through the town and you'll be distracted by sweeping crescents, Regency squares and Georgian terraces.

Rounding the coast from Ramsgate to Broadstairs, you'll ride through the King George VI Memorial Park where the 19th century **Italianate Greenhouse** sits within a sweep of parkland.

## 3 HISTORIC BROADSTAIRS

**Location:** King George VI Memorial Park, Ramsgate (CT11 8BD) – North Foreland Lighthouse

**Distance:** 3.25 miles (9km)

**Time:** Allow 30 minutes

**OS Explorer Map:** 150

**Terrain:** On-road

**Refreshments & facilities:** Pubs and restaurants in Ramsgate and Broadstairs. Public toilets at King George VI Memorial Park, Broadstairs and Joss Bay

**Parking:** At Ramsgate, Broadstairs and Joss Bay

Explore the landscape that inspired famous figures including Charles Dickens and Thomas Crampton on this ride to nostalgic Broadstairs.

Pedaling along the cliff tops above **Louisa Bay**, you'll soon reach Broadstairs; a short detour up the High Street leads you to **Crampton Tower Museum**. Situated in the original Broadstairs Waterworks, the museum is dedicated to the famous Victorian civil engineer, Thomas Russell Crampton.

This striking coastline attracted many creatives. Broadstairs was a favourite holiday spot for Charles Dickens and the **Dickens House Museum** on the seafront boasts a fascinating collection of his belongings. **Bleak House**, Dickens' holiday home was famously where he wrote much of David Copperfield.

Seven glorious bays make up the Broadstairs seafront. The most notable bay, the **Viking Bay** was named after the landing of the anniversary Viking Ship 'Hugin' at Broadstairs.

The curved **York Gate** on Harbour Street stands as testament to George Culmer's shipyard of the 16th Century. York Gate stood to protect Culmer's prosperous business. The **North Foreland Lighthouse** is the final stop on your tour.

This great tower marks the southern entrance to the Thames and was the last manned lighthouse in the country until its conversion in 1998. External viewing only.



## RECVLVER TO ST NICHOLAS AT WADE

**Location:** Reculver Towers (CT6 6SU) - St Nicholas at Wade

**Distance:** 5 miles (7.9 km)

**Time:** Allow 55 minutes

**OS Explorer Map:** 150

**Terrain:** Mainly on-road

**Refreshments & facilities:** Restaurants and pubs at Reculver

**Parking:** At Reculver and St Nicholas at Wade

Complete your circle of the Thanet peninsular and ride along the final section of the Viking Coastal Trail.

Pedal on from the magnificent **Reculver Towers** and take on this final 5-mile section, heading away from the glorious beaches and busy seaside towns and back through peaceful countryside and marshland towards the village of **St Nicholas at Wade**.

## RECVLVER TO HERNE BAY

**Location:** Reculver Towers (CT6 6SU) - Herne Bay

**Distance:** 7 miles (11.3 km)

**Time:** 1 hour

**OS Explorer Map:** 150

**Terrain:** Mainly off-road

**Refreshments & facilities:** Restaurants and pubs at Reculver and Herne Bay

**Parking:** At Reculver and Herne Bay

Stretching on from the **Reculver Towers**, the section of the Oyster Bay Trail to Herne Bay is a fantastic addition to your exploration of the Viking Coastal Trail.

Your tour will take in the Reculver Towers, an imposing landmark which can be seen across the coastline as you make your way to Herne Bay. These 12th century towers stand amid the ruins of a Saxon monastery and a Roman fort.

Travel along the coast on traffic-free cycle paths and residential roads and you'll soon reach Herne Bay seafront, lined with a rainbow of beach huts and with views back to the magnificent towers.

## WALKING TRAILS

### WALK THE VIKING COASTAL TRAIL

Explore the Viking Coastal Trail on foot and you'll discover more fantastic days out. Whether you are looking for a bracing cliff top walk on an autumn morning or a summer's stroll along the beach, Thanet has a range of walks for any season.

### ACTIVE RAMSGATE

Try one of the Active Ramsgate walking trails which lead you from the lively harbour town of Ramsgate to the tranquil Pegwell Bay, the sweeping beaches of Broadstairs, a historic tour through the heart of Ramsgate's town and along the sweeping bays towards Margate.

If you are feeling adventurous why not try one of the canoe trails? website: [www.ramsgatetown.org/activeramsgate](http://www.ramsgatetown.org/activeramsgate)

### TURNER AND DICKENS WALK

Take a tour between Dickens' Broadstairs and Turner's Margate on the 4 mile (6.4 km) signposted Turner and Dickens Walk.

Explore the area's connections to these two creative giants with colourful mosaics documenting their lives and works. [www.turneranddickenswalk.co.uk](http://www.turneranddickenswalk.co.uk)

### EXPLORE KENT

Discover the great outdoors with a choice of over 400 walks, rides, parks, open spaces and events across the Garden of England. To find your day in nature visit the Explore Kent website. visit [www.explorekent.org](http://www.explorekent.org)

Looking for a unique experience that will truly make your trip memorable? Book a free welcome with a Kent Greeter and see the Garden of England from the eyes of a friendly local! [www.kentgreeters.co.uk](http://www.kentgreeters.co.uk)

For information on more self-guided and guided walks and tours in Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate visit [www.visitthanet.co.uk/walking](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/walking)

## PLACES TO VISIT



1	Bleak House <b>N5</b>	21	RAF Spitfire & Hurricane Memorial Museum <b>H4</b>
2	The Boating Pool <b>L1</b>	22	Ramsgate Maritime Museum <b>M2</b>
3	Club World <b>I8</b>	23	Ramsgate Sports Centre <b>L2</b>
4	Crampton Tower Museum <b>M5</b>	24	Revolution Skatepark <b>L6</b>
5	Dickens House Museum <b>N5</b>	25	Ramsgate Tunnels and Defence of the Nation Museum <b>M2</b>
6	Drapers Windmill <b>K7</b>	26	Sandwich & Pegwell Bay National Reserve <b>I1</b>
7	Dreamland <b>I8</b>	27	Sea Searcher Boat Trips <b>M2</b>
8	The Grange & St Augustines Church (Opening 2017 St Augustine's Visitor Centre) <b>L1</b>	28	Shell Grotto <b>J8</b>
9	Hartsdown Leisure Centre <b>I7</b>	29	St Augustine's Cross <b>H1</b>
10	Kent Surf School <b>N5</b>	30	Strokes Adventure Golf <b>I8</b>
11	RIB Request <b>M2</b>	31	Theatre Royal Margate <b>J8</b>
12	Hornby Visitor Centre (Moving to a new location 2016/17) <b>K6</b>	32	Tom Thumb Theatre <b>K8</b>
13	Italianate Greenhouse <b>N3</b>	33	Tudor House <b>J8</b>
14	Joss Bay Surf School <b>N7</b>	34	Turner Contemporary <b>J8</b>
15	Lillyputt Mini Golf <b>N4</b>	35	Viking Adventure Playground <b>K8</b>
16	Margate Museum <b>J8</b>	36	Viking Ship 'Hugin' <b>J1</b>
17	Minster Abbey <b>F1</b>	37	Walpole Bay Hotel and Museum <b>K8</b>
18	Monkton Nature Reserve <b>C3</b>	38	Margate Winter Gardens <b>J8</b>
19	Quex Park <b>E5</b>		
20	RAF Manston History Museum <b>H3</b>		

# CYCLE HIRE AND CLUBS

Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate have a huge variety of accommodation, many welcoming walkers and cyclists. For more information visit [www.visitthanet.co.uk](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk)

## CYCLE HIRE

### BIKESHED

71 Canterbury Road, Margate CT9 5AS  
Tel: 01843 228866

### BROADSTAIRS BIKE HIRE

17 Lloyd Road, Broadstairs CT10 1HZ  
Tel: 01843 447669

### KEN'S BIKE SHOP

28 Eaton Road, Margate CT9 1XA Tel: 01843 221422

### VIKING COASTAL TRAIL BIKE HIRE

The Parade, Minnis Bay, Birchington CT7 9QR  
Tel: 01843 843309 / 07818 828862

## CYCLE GROUPS

### SPOKES EAST KENT CYCLING CAMPAIGN


Tel: 01227 830336 [www.spokeseastkent.org.uk](http://www.spokeseastkent.org.uk)

**STEP FORWARD** – Cycle club aimed at people with disabilities Tel: 01843 292795

### THANET ROAD CLUB

[www.thanetrc.org.uk](http://www.thanetrc.org.uk)

## PARKING

Cycle parking around Thanet is located in a number of town centre locations, including all train stations, beaches and a number of visitor attractions. All cycle parking facilities are marked on the map. 

## OBSERVE THE COASTAL CODES

Your enjoyment of the coast is maximised by keeping to the Coastal Code. Staying safe, looking out for other coastal users and protecting precious habitats, marine and birdlife is the basis for the Coastal Code. Leaving the coast how you find it or how you would expect to find it is the best way of keeping to the code. Remember to check tide times before you travel and advise someone of your route. More information can be found at [nekmpa.org.uk/factfile/thanet-coastal-codes/](http://nekmpa.org.uk/factfile/thanet-coastal-codes/)

## GETTING AROUND

Thanet is well-served by mainline train stations and bus routes including the Thanet Loop which runs every 8 minutes during peak time. To plan your journey and for more information on sustainable and public transport links, visit [kentconnected.org](http://kentconnected.org)



For information on taking bikes on buses or trains, please visit the following websites;

**Trains** [www.southeasternrailway.co.uk](http://www.southeasternrailway.co.uk)

**Buses** [www.stagecoachbus.com](http://www.stagecoachbus.com)

### BE COURTEOUS

Cycle paths make your journey safer but on shared facilities, cyclists must give priority to pedestrians - Share with Care and dismount where signs advise

### SHARING IS CARING

Please pass people with care and slow down when approaching others. Try to stay to one side of the path.

### BE PROTECTED

Wear a cycle helmet. Make sure it is the right size, and is properly fitted and fastened at all times. Only buy a helmet that conforms to BS6863, Snell B90, B95, or ANSI standards.

### BE HEARD

Fit a bell or horn, and use it if you think drivers or pedestrians have not seen you.

### BE SAFE

Look after your bike. Check moving parts regularly, giving special attention to brakes. Make sure that tyres are properly inflated, and that you can see the tread on them clearly. Ensure your reflectors and lights are clean.

### BE WISE

Over 100,000 cycles are reported stolen every year. Always lock your bike when you leave it, even if it is only for a few minutes. Get your bike frame marked with your postcode and stick on a 'Coded Cycle' sticker.

### BE TRAINED

If you have not had training, find out where to get it. Visit [www.kent.gov.uk/bikeability](http://www.kent.gov.uk/bikeability)



Kent County Council  
Invicta House, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XX

[www.explorekent.org](http://www.explorekent.org)  
Email: [explore@kent.gov.uk](mailto:explore@kent.gov.uk)

Thanet Visitor Information Service  
Serving Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate  
The Droit House  
Stone Pier, Margate Kent CT9 1JD

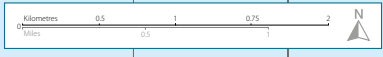
[www.visitthanet.co.uk](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk)  
Email: [visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk)  
Tel: 01843 577577

Supporting information points at:  
Royal Albion Garden Kiosk, Broadstairs CT10 1AN  
Lillyputt Mini Golf, Victoria Gardens, Broadstairs CT10 1QL  
Customs House, Harbour Parade, Ramsgate CT11 8LN

This guide is available in other formats and can be explained in other languages. To obtain a copy please call: 03000 41 71 71. Textphone users please call: 18001 03000 41 71 71.  
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Photos: Explore Kent, Thanet Tourism & Visit Kent



	Viking Coastal Trail on-road		Footpath walkers only		Cycle parking
	Viking Coastal Trail traffic-free		Place of interest Named and numbered		Bike hire / shop
	Signed on-road cycle route / one way		Hospital		Railway station / Level crossing
	Traffic-free cycle route Includes bridgeways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic. Not all routes are surfaced and may only be suitable for mountain bikes.		Museum		Car parking
	Regional Cycle Network route number		Toucan crossing		Toilet
	Advisory cycle route		Pelican crossing		Tourist information



Thanet District Council has byelaws relating to cycling on the promenades. However, a person shall not ride any cycle on any of the promenades as advised by the signs between 1 May to 30 September inclusive between the hours of 10am and 6pm

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see central inset for continuation of route to Reculver

see central inset for continuation of route to Reculver

