



WHITSTABLE **MARITIME**

Coastal Trail



WHITSTABLE COASTAL TRAIL

A unique 5km trail
exploring Whitstable's
heritage and coastline

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

Welcome to the Coastal Trail

The Whitstable Coastal Trail aims to highlight the diversity of the coastal environment from Long Rock, Swalecliffe in the east, to the WW2 Tank Traps in the west - a distance of about 5km (3 miles), although you may wish to continue to the Sportsman Pub (8.5km; 5.3 miles). The trail is designed to highlight key features that can be seen, and some which cannot, at a number of points along the coast. We have relied on knowledge from local enthusiasts and experts in geology, flora and fauna, history and archaeology.

We have tried to ensure that there is something for everyone, whether you are interested in the coastal environment and how it has changed over time, the wildlife that can be seen or uses the coast, or to the way the coast has been used economically both recently and in the past. To accommodate a wide range of users, the map highlights the nearest public car parks, accessible toilet facilities, and areas where access may be restricted.

We hope you enjoy exploring Whitstable and the Coastal Trail.



Trail themes & features

Geology and Environment: The North Kent coast is formed predominantly of London Clay, although to the west of Whitstable it is covered by salt marsh, developed as sea level rose over the last 6000 years or so. London Clay erodes easily, allowing many fossils to be found on the foreshore near Tankerton slopes.

Whitstable's beach (partly artificial) helps to break the force of the waves during winter storms that might otherwise flood the town.



Ecology and Wildlife: A large number of animals, birds and plants can be seen along the Whitstable 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.

Please do not pick the flora and take care on the coastal mud when the tide is out.



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.



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.

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.



WHITSTABLE MARITIME

Celebrating Our Coastal Communities



Formed in 2014, Whitstable Maritime is a Registered Charity that helps residents, visitors, schoolchildren and students to discover our maritime heritage; explore our marine environment; contribute to our coastal economy; and improve their wellbeing.

It therefore seemed an obvious project for the Charity to develop this 5km long Coastal Trail that helps walkers, runners, cyclists and wheelchair users enjoy and understand the natural environment, history and landscape of our coastal zone.

The first stage - the identification of key sites and the production of this guide - was achieved by a team of volunteers who researched and debated information gleaned over the past two years. This work has been supported by funding from Vattenfall UK, who share Whitstable Maritime's commitment to protecting and improving our marine environment.

The next development of the Trail will be to capture the historical, geographical, social, economic and archaeological material that the team has gathered and put this on an app. Any other organisations interested in developing the use of the Coastal Trail and its interpretation will be welcome to contribute.

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

Whitstable Maritime's other initiatives:

The Harbour Day & Boat Show: This annual maritime festival is held in and around the Harbour. The quay is packed with stalls and the sight of many traditional and modern boats afloat on the water attracts thousands of visitors each year.



The Gamecock Restoration:

Users of the Coastal Trail can also view the ongoing restoration of a 43-foot wooden Oyster Yawl called 'The Gamecock' in the harbour. Built locally in 1906, this craft spent all its working life dredging for oysters in the Swale and it is now registered as a National Historic ship.

The England Coast Path

When complete, the England Coast Path will be a long-distance National Trail following the whole of the English coast. Developed in consultation with owners and occupiers of affected land, the trail will be approximately 4350km (2,700 miles) long and benefit pubs, cafes, restaurants, accommodation providers, and other local businesses. Visit www.nationaltrail.co.uk for more information.

The trail is being implemented by Natural England, which is responsible for ensuring that England's natural environment is protected and improved, and encourages people to enjoy, understand and access the natural environment.

Natural England proudly supports the Whitstable Maritime Coastal Trail initiative.

www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england



Coastal Trail Highlights

We have identified a number of sites along the coast which we think have particular interest to a wide range of different groups. This leaflet highlights where each point is, and what the main points of interest are.

The highlights are numbered from one end of the trail to the other and while we expect most people will start their walk from the Harbour (Highlight #3), depending on your specific interests, it's possible to start from anywhere.

You will also find a great selection of pubs, cafés and restaurants along the way.



Coastal Trail Images courtesy of Alex Hare/The Whitstable Photographic Company.
Design by Howell & Hicks Creative (hh-creative.com).

1. Long Rock: Nature is Key - a SSSI

Longshore drift has developed a spit towards the west, diverting a small stream to create a series of shingle ridges with marsh and freshwater between - home to some specialist plants and animals. Fossils from the last Ice Age can be found on the beach (mammoth, woolly rhinoceros), as can ancient flint implements and ancient pottery.



The Site of Specialist 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: An Interesting Puzzle

Tankerton Cannons (dating from about 1700) show the importance of the area for defence, through to WW2, perhaps due to 'The Street' - a gravel ridge seen at low tide stretching



about 1km out to sea. It has been used for industry and shelter but its origin is unknown - have you any ideas?

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 harbours' importance for decades. It is still exciting and busy, e.g. the Gamecock restoration is taking place on the East Quay near Dead Man's Corner.

4. West Quay: An Important Extension

Added in the 1970s to extend berthing for the busy harbour. Walk past the Lifeboat Station (worth a visit) for brilliant views along the coast, and experience any activity at Whitstable Yacht



Club (the Club dating from 1904). This is an ideal location for photography and landscape painting.

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

Oysters to Rome – Whitstable's first export? With oysters offshore, this was inevitable. The first port of Whitstable developed at Horsebridge in medieval times - where the slipway allowed horse-and-carts to reach flat-bottomed Thames Barges to load oysters and fish for Billingsgate Market.



Behind you, the large brick building, now a restaurant, was the base of the Oyster Company. The oystermen would meet in the large room upstairs to discuss Company business.

6. Shipwrights Lee: Stay Afloat or Sink

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).

7. Old Haven Inlet: Salt and Smuggling

Here, longshore drift creates a spit with shelter and marsh behind – ideal for a variety of uses. Salt extraction from pans started in around 1300 (now drained for Seasalter Golf Club!). Increasing trade led to smuggling (1800s), mainly of French perfume and spirits, so the Coastguard set up on the spit with their cottages seaward of Island Wall!



En route, you'll pass the Blue Plaque on Peter Cushing's house.

8. Railway Footbridge: Defence of the Realm

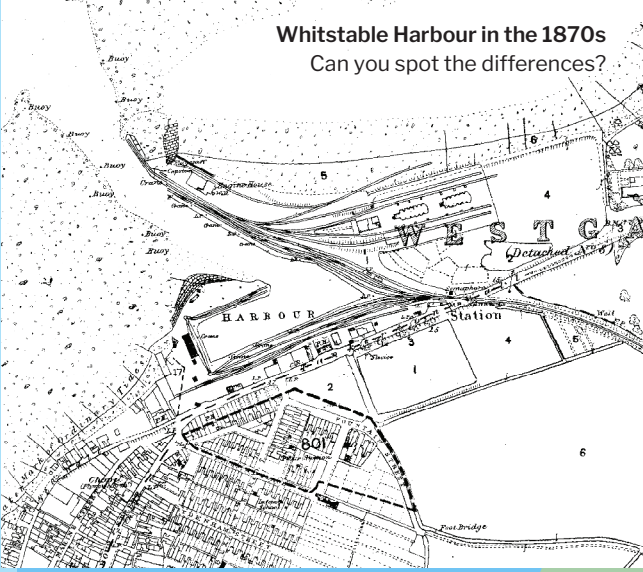
Defence of the 'narrow' Thames Estuary has always been essential: you can see Essex on the far side. Out to sea, among



the wind turbines, are the Maunsell anti-aircraft forts built early in WW2.

By the railway crossing, among the weeds, can you also find the WW2 Tank traps?

Whitstable Harbour in the 1870s Can you spot the differences?



- 1** Highlights
- Coastal Trail Route
- ... Non-Wheelchair Accessible
- Changing Places Toilet with Hoist
- Accessible Toilets
- Parking
- Train Station
- Triangle Bus Route
- 4 & 6 Bus Routes
- 5 Bus Route



**Proud to support the
Coastal Trail initiative
in association with
Whitstable Maritime**



www.vattenfall.uk