

discover  
**Thanet's  
Coast**

Margate  
Broadstairs  
Ramsgate



# Thanet Coast Learning Pack

Fun and learning at the seaside

Learning activities and resources for...

- ▣ Minnis Bay
- ▣ Joss Bay
- ▣ Margate Main Sands
- ▣ Ramsgate Main Sands



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## Introduction

# Inspiring and fun school days out beside the seaside

This Learning Pack has been developed by Thanet District Council and the Coastal Communities Fund to help schools and youth groups enjoy their visits to the Thanet coast. The pack has three sections: Introduction, Activities and Resources. This Introduction gives an overview of the Thanet coast and suggests four bays that are ideally suited to visits by school and community groups. The Activities section has 12 Activities for schools and community groups to do at the four bays and the Resources section has 16 resources which are support materials for the 12 Activities.

Thanet is a fascinating corner of England. Projecting out into the North Sea at the mouth of the Thames Estuary and within easy reach of London, it has a surprisingly remote atmosphere. Thanet's location has attracted many people over the centuries from Viking raiders and smugglers to famous artists and holidaymakers. There are superb beaches, bustling harbours and an exciting range of cultural and educational attractions.

Thanet's mix of fascinating history, stunning coastal scenery, safe beaches and plenty of visitor facilities means that it is also a popular destination for educational trips. This Learning Pack contains all the information you need to plan trips to four of Thanet's best beaches, with a series of curriculum-linked activities and supporting resource materials for Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils.

**Come and discover this wonderful area - where children  
can enjoy inspiring, informative, memorable and fun days out  
beside the seaside!**



# 1. The four beaches and bays



**Blue Flag Award** - awarded to beaches with good facilities and clean water.



**Seaside Award beach** - awarded to beaches which have fewer facilities but are safe and clean.

0 1 2 3km

## The best bays and beaches for the Learning Pack and school visits

This Learning Pack has been developed for four beaches on the Thanet Coast:

- Minnis Bay, Birchington
- Margate Main Sands
- Joss Bay, Broadstairs
- Ramsgate Main Sands

All these beaches and bays have public toilets and parking for coaches nearby.

Coach drop-off points and parking information can be found at:

W: [www.visitthanet.co.uk/groups](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/groups)

Margate Main Sands and Ramsgate Main Sands are busy, popular bays, at the heart of each town, and are each suitable for most of the activities.

Minnis Bay and Joss Bay are quieter and more suitable for the Rock Pool Rummage and the Maritime Myths and Local Legends activities.



## Minnis Bay

Minnis Bay near Birchington has a long sandy beach in a secluded, rural bay with rock pools and shingle areas at low tide. There is also a paddling pool, and this and the rock pools are excellent for seeing and catching rock pool wildlife. There are toilets, a first aid point, lifeguards (seasonal), picnic areas and refreshments. A free outdoor play area is close to the beach. The nearby town of Birchington has a railway station. At high tide there is only a small amount of beach left uncovered by the sea, so this bay is best for school group visits on a falling tide or low tide. At spring tides, which happen twice a month throughout the year, the beach can be completely covered at high tide.

Looking east along the coastline, you'll see Reculver Towers, the striking remains of a medieval monastery. There was a Roman fort here too, before the monastery was built. The fort guarded the northern entrance to the Wantsum channel, the watercourse that used to separate the Isle of Thanet from the rest of Kent until it silted up completely in the 1600s. Parts of the fort and the monastery have been washed away by sea over the last nine centuries and only parts of their structures remain visible on the shore.





# Margate Main Sands

Margate Main Sands is the archetypal holiday beach with golden sands, perfect for sandcastles and beach art, as well as a picturesque stone harbour with boats. There's also a tidal pool and a range of children's rides (fees apply) and amusement arcades along the sea front. There are great views of Margate from the main sands as well as the huge skies that inspired Margate's famous artist, JMW Turner. The Visitor Information Centre, public toilets including toilets for disabled visitors and a first aid point are all located near the beach. Lifeguards are on the beach (seasonal). Margate train station is opposite Margate Main Sands.





## Joss Bay

Joss Bay is a popular sandy beach with steep chalk cliffs and is Kent's best-known surfing beach with a surf school on the beach. It's one of Broadstairs' seven beaches. The bay apparently gets its name from Joss Snelling, a famous 18th century smuggler who brought his contraband into Thanet's beaches and coves, skilfully outwitting the Excise men for decades. He lived until he was in his 90s and was introduced to the future Queen Victoria, when she was a child staying in Broadstairs. Joss Bay has lifeguards (seasonal), children's rides (fees apply) and refreshments. Broadstairs station is the nearest station to Joss Bay. Organised group barbeques are allowed at Joss Bay, Broadstairs, by prior agreement with the Visitor Information Centre:

T: 01843 577577

E: [visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk)





# Ramsgate Main Sands

Ramsgate Main Sands are spectacular, with a long stretch of sandy beach right next to Ramsgate's Royal Harbour and the marina. There are toilets, including disabled toilets and disabled access to the beach, and a first aid point. The beach has clean, safe bathing water. Ramsgate Main Sands has lifeguards (seasonal), rides for small children (fees apply) and refreshments. Ramsgate station is north of the town centre.





## Who has produced this Learning Pack and why

Thanet District Council has produced this Learning Pack to help schools and other youth and community groups to make the most of their trip to Thanet's coast. The Learning Pack is funded by the Coastal Communities Fund, to develop and enhance heritage and coastal tourism in Thanet. There are 12 Activities and 16 supporting Resources, all specially designed to make your visit to the seaside more rewarding and fun.

## How the Learning Pack can support your visit

The Learning Pack can help your pupils and young people get involved and engaged in seaside activities from rock pooling to beach art. The Learning Pack is suitable for children aged between 5 and 11 years of age. All the activities and supporting resource materials are linked to the National Curriculum, and cover English, Science, Art and Design, History and Geography for Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils.

## North East Kent Marine Protected Area

All the beaches and bays are part of the North East Kent Marine Protected Area, which includes some of the best coastal wildlife sites in Europe.

W: [www.thanetcoast.org.uk](http://www.thanetcoast.org.uk)

## Thank you!

Thanet District Council thanks everyone involved in the development and production of this Learning Pack, especially staff and volunteers from the following organisations:



Turner Contemporary

## Activities and their links to the National Curriculum

Activity	Subject	KS 1	KS 2	Minnis Bay	Margate	Joss Bay	Ramsgate
Rock Pool Rummage	Science	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
World Wide Watery Web	Science		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Beach I Spy	Science	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Strictly Beach Art	Art	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Try a Turner	Art		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wish You Were Here	Art		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Go Fly a Kite	Design		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Maritime Myths and Local Legends	English	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Picture This: Holiday History	History	✓	✓		✓		✓
Changing Coasts	Geog		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
If Chalk Could Talk	Geog	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
What's That Ship?	Geog	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

## Using the Activities and Resources

- All Activities include recommendations for pre-visit preparation, on-site activity and post-visit follow up. You can, of course, use the Resources to suit your own requirements and tailor your own visit.
- Some Activities are site specific whereas others are generic and can be used at any of the four locations. The site-specific Resources can be easily identified by their different colour heading.
- The Maritime Myths and Local Legends Activity has audio files as Resources.
- It is made clear where you will have to source additional materials and what you will need to bring with you to take part in the activities.

Most of the Activities are best done with a low tide, ideally a falling tide when the tide is going out, as there is more beach area available for your group. However, there is always some beach left uncovered by the tide at the four bays in summertime. Please check the tides prior to booking your visit.

There are tide times and a weather forecast for Thanet at:

W: [www.visitthanet.co.uk](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk)

If in any doubt contact:

Thanet Visitor Information Centre at The Droit House, Stone Pier, Margate, Kent CT9 1JD

T: 01843 577577

E: [visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk)

## Listen to local experts - audio interviews

There are short audio interviews with the following Thanet experts on the Resources web pages.

### [John Ray, Press Officer, Royal National Lifeboat Institution \(RNLI\)](#)

John explains the importance of lifeboats for saving lives around the Thanet coastline. RNLI has two lifeboat stations, in Margate and Ramsgate, with four lifeboats that are ready to go to sea at any time. The sea around Thanet has some of the busiest shipping routes in the world. RNLI also has a team of lifeguards to help look after people on the beaches.

### [Vanessa Ray, Voluntary Education Presenter, Royal National Lifeboat Institution \(RNLI\)](#)

Vanessa works with schools in the area to promote safety. She explains the term **SAFE** – **S**pot the dangers on the coast, **A**sk advice on where to go for safe swimming, always go on the beach with **F**amily or friends, and shout help, or call 999, for **E**mergency if you see anyone in difficulties.

### [Jennifer Scott, Schools Officer, Turner Contemporary](#)

Jennifer talks about the gallery, which brings world class art to Margate. The gallery has no permanent collection, but borrows from lots of other galleries so the exhibitions are always changing. The gallery is named after JMW Turner, the famous 19th century painter who used to visit Margate regularly to paint its magnificent seascapes.

### [Fiona White, Marine Officer, Kent Wildlife Trust](#)

Fiona's job is to take people out to show them the amazing things that can be found around the coast. She explains the excitement of rockpooling – exploring pools that are exposed by the retreating tide. She talks about the seaweeds, sea slugs, crabs, anemones and piddocks that you can find in pools on the coast.

### [Tony Child, Thanet Coast Project Officer](#)

Tony explains the geology and landscape of the Thanet coast. The Thanet coastline is the longest continuous stretch of chalk coast in the country. It is ever-changing, continually being worn away by the sea. The chalk reef, which is the chalk exposed at low tide, is the best place to find fish and crabs in the pools. The chalk coastline is a Marine Protected Area.

### [Laura Welton, Guardians of the Deep Project Officer](#)

Laura loves walking along the strandline, the top of the beach where the waves deposit lots of treasures from the sea. There are lots of things you can find on the strandline, including shells from crabs, whelks and winkles; feathers from gulls; mermaid's purses that are the egg cases of sharks and skates; and also rubbish that is brought in on the tides.

### [Fran Sayer-Doyle, Visitor Centre Assistant](#)

Fran works at the Visitor Information Centre in Margate, putting her detailed knowledge of Thanet, its heritage and environment to good use. She talks about a time in her childhood when she was out with her mates on the beach and got cut off by the tide and had to be rescued by the RNLI!

## What to bring

Your list of equipment and things to bring to the beach will change according to what activities you have planned, but some things you might want to consider are:

- Emergency contacts phone list
- Mobile phone, check beforehand as reception is not available at some beaches
- First aid kit
- Water
- Sunscreen
- Bowls, trays, tubs, and sieves for collecting and displaying specimens from the rockpools
- Laminated rockpooling guides
- Buckets and spades for beach art activities

All students, staff and helpers should be advised to dress appropriately for the weather, including wind/rain proofs and wear shoes that are appropriate to the planned activities.

## Beach safety guidelines

For beach safety advice visit:

W: [www.rnli.org/safety/beach-safety](http://www.rnli.org/safety/beach-safety)

- If your group are going to swim in the sea, choose an area that is patrolled by lifeguards. The area they patrol is between the red-and-yellow flags and within the buoys on the beaches.
- Always check the weather and tidal conditions before you set out. Think about whether your group could become cut off and do not take risks; don't try to climb cliffs as a short cut back to the top.
- Don't allow children to dig deep pits (below waist height) or tunnels in the sand - remember that at some point the sand will cave in.

## Codes of conduct

**Codes of conduct** for the seashore, for fieldtrips and for marine wildlife watching are available from the Thanet Coast Project.

W: [www.thanetcoast.org.uk/factfile/thanet-coastal-codes](http://www.thanetcoast.org.uk/factfile/thanet-coastal-codes)

## Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment for all visits is the responsibility of each school.

The following guidance is taken from the Kent Education Learning Skills Information (KELSI) website:

W: [www.kelsi.org.uk](http://www.kelsi.org.uk)

Risk Assessment and resulting control measures must always include:

- The visit leader having a good knowledge of the location – knowledge of hazards, knowledge of access points, where nearest phone is located.
- The visit leader having visited the location and seen the beach at low water.
- Having supervision strategies that will always ensure that a member of staff is between the group and the sea.
- The visit leader having checked tide tables and obtained a weather forecast for the day.
- Contacting Visitor Information Centre, who will also let you know if other schools have registered to visit that day or whether there will be lifeguard cover or toilet facilities open.  
T: 01843 577577  
E: [visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk)
- Informing the Coastguards - especially if deciding to use a bay 'off the beaten track'! Ring the Coastguards to let them know when you arrive at the beach and again to let them know when your group leaves.  
T: 01304 210008

Although you may be repeating a trip that you have done before, which will include a number of generic safety control measures, you must always:

- undertake a fresh risk assessment or review the generic record.
- address the fact that there will always be differences in the nature and experience of your group, different supervisory staff, the weather conditions prior to and during your venture, and a number of other variables.

**Please Note:** Kent based schools still need to gain Local Authority permission for visits to the coast. Check the Kent Education Learning and Skills Information website (KELSI) for guidance and training for visiting the coast under Outdoor Education.

W: [www.kelsi.org.uk](http://www.kelsi.org.uk)

## Emergency contacts

Coastguard, Ambulance, Police or Fire phone 999.

If someone appears to be in trouble in the water call 999 and ask for Coastguard.

### Police

#### **Margate Police Station**

Odell House, Fort Hill, Margate. CT9 1HL

T: 01622 690690

#### **Ramsgate Police Station**

21-31 York Street, Ramsgate. CT1 19DS

T: 01622 690690

### Lifeguard stations

#### **Margate Lifeboat Station**

Rendezvous, Margate. CT9 1HG

T: 01843 221613

#### **Ramsgate Lifeboat Station**

Western Crosswall, Ramsgate Royal Harbour, Ramsgate. CT11 9RN

T: 01843 580580

### Hospitals

#### **Margate - A&E**

#### **The Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital at Margate**

St Peters Road, Margate. CT9 4AN

T: 01843 225544

#### **Whitstable - Minor Injuries Unit (not 24 hours)**

#### **Whitstable and Tankerton Hospital**

Northwood Rd, Whitstable. CT5 2HN

T: 01227 594601

#### **Deal - Minor Injuries Unit (not 24 hours)**

#### **Victoria Hospital**

London Road, Deal. CT14 9UA

T: 01304 865400

### Thanet Coast Project

[www.thanetcoast.org.uk/contact-us-and-links/reporting-hazards/](http://www.thanetcoast.org.uk/contact-us-and-links/reporting-hazards/)

## Useful contacts

### Thanet District Council Group Booking System

Make the Council aware of your visit. For more details please contact Thanet District Council Reception on:

T: 01843 577577

W: [www.visitthanet.co.uk](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk)

### North East Kent Marine Protected Area and Thanet Coast

Tony Child, Thanet Coast Officer

T: 01843 577672.

E: [Tony.Child@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:Tony.Child@thanet.gov.uk)

Jasmin Vickers, Environmental Education Officer

T: 01843 577827

E: [Jasmin.Vickers@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:Jasmin.Vickers@thanet.gov.uk)

## Visitor Information Centre

Thanet District Council Visitor Information Centre serves the whole of the Thanet area and have information about Margate, Broadstairs, Ramsgate, and all the surrounding villages. They will help you plan your visit to Thanet and have maps and lots of information about the area.

The Visitor Information Centre is next to the Turner Contemporary art gallery on the seafront at Margate.

Open 7 days a week, 10am to 5pm from April to October.

Closed on Sundays and Mondays from November to March.

Contact details: The Droit House, Stone Pier, Margate, Kent. CT9 1JD

T: 01843 577577

E: [visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk)

## Additional educational resources provided by Thanet District Council

**Two Community Beach Huts** are available for schools and groups to use during their visit, one at Margate and one at Ramsgate. The huts are packed with lots of resources for enjoying this natural open space including the Coastal Explorers Packs for families, see below. For more information:

W: [www.visitthanet.co.uk](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk)

**Coastal Explorers Packs** are available for hire and include a range of fun activities, games and equipment to help you explore Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate.

W: [www.visitthanet.co.uk/coastalexplorers](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/coastalexplorers)

Hire at: Thanet Visitor Information Centre, Margate, CT9 1JD  
Lillyput's Mini Golf, Broadstairs, CT10 1QL  
Ramsgate Information Centre, CT118LP

**Thanet Coast Project** can help with equipment and advice on your trip to the beach. The volunteer Coastal Wardens run community or school shore-based activities at a small cost. These include rock pooling and shore life identification, scavenger hunts, beach art, games and labyrinths and beach cleans. Please get in contact to request this assistance:

E: [thanet.coast@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:thanet.coast@thanet.gov.uk)

W: [www.thanetcoast.org.uk](http://www.thanetcoast.org.uk)

**The Guardians of the Deep** project involves local people in the protection and monitoring of Kent's coastal wildlife. It aims to get young people excited about marine wildlife through a programme of snorkelling activities and practical learning opportunities at coastal sites around the county.

**Undersea Explorers** teaches children how to snorkel and gain confidence in the water, and enables them to explore the undersea world from the safety of a swimming pool.

**WildBeach** is a 6-week beach school programme run by the Guardians of the Deep Project that brings the classroom to the coast. Participating schools need to cover their own transport costs or be within walking distance of an appropriate beach.

For Guardians of the Deep, Undersea Explorers and WildBeach Contact:  
North East Kent Guardians of the Deep Project Officer.

E: [Laura.Welton@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:Laura.Welton@thanet.gov.uk)

### Recycle for Thanet Team

There is a booklet for schools about recycling on Thanet District Council's website:

W: [www.thanet.gov.uk](http://www.thanet.gov.uk)

Contact Jasmin Vickers for more details.

E: [jasmin.vickers@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:jasmin.vickers@thanet.gov.uk)

### Two-minute beach cleans

Litter pickers and bags are provided by Thanet District Council at several beaches.

Please do a quick beach clean with your group - it all helps keep Thanet's beaches clean!



## Other educational activity providers in Thanet

**Turner Contemporary** is one of the UK's leading art galleries, right on Margate's seafront, on the same site where artist JMW Turner stayed when he visited the town.

The Gallery is open Tuesday to Sunday and public holidays.

Entrance into the Gallery is free. The Learning Team can enhance your visit with tours, workshops and activities.

Contact details: Turner Contemporary, Rendezvous, Margate, Kent CT9 1HG

T: 01843 233000

E: [learn@turnercontemporary.org](mailto:learn@turnercontemporary.org)

W: [www.turnercontemporary.org](http://www.turnercontemporary.org)

**Margate Museum** is in Margate's Old Town, just a short walk from the sea front.

Open between 11am - 5pm (last admission 4pm) on Wednesdays and Weekends all year plus Summer Bank Holidays.

The museum offers tours and worksheets for education groups and will open the museum on days when the museum is closed to the public, for school visits. Call for more details

Contact details: Margate Museum, Market Place, Margate Old Town, Margate CT9 1ER

T: 01843 231 213

E: [info@margatemuseum.org](mailto:info@margatemuseum.org)

W: [www.margatemuseum.org](http://www.margatemuseum.org)

There is a group visit booking request function: [www.margatemuseum.org/visit.php](http://www.margatemuseum.org/visit.php)

**Ramsgate Maritime Museum** is based in the historic Clock House on Ramsgate Harbour. It has four galleries covering the development of the harbour, navigation, lifeboats and shipwrecks. The museum is run by the Steam Museum Trust Ltd.

Contact details: The Clock House, Pier Yard, Royal Harbour, Ramsgate, Kent CT11 8LS

T: 01843 570622

E: [info@ramsgatemaritimemuseum.org](mailto:info@ramsgatemaritimemuseum.org)

W: [www.ramsgatemaritimemuseum.org](http://www.ramsgatemaritimemuseum.org)

### Royal National Lifeboat Association

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) is a charity with the primary function of saving lives at sea. It carries out sea rescues and advises and informs people, aiming to prevent them from getting into difficulties in the first place.

**The RNLI Education Team** exists to help keep young people of all ages safe in and around the water and to engage them with the RNLI's work. As well as free education resources, there are a number of trained volunteers available throughout the country who, by prior arrangement, can visit your school or youth group to give a presentation tailored to meet your needs and timings.

RNLI Education:

T: 01202 336330

E: [education@rnli.org.uk](mailto:education@rnli.org.uk)

W: [www.RNLI.org/education](http://www.RNLI.org/education)

**Dreamland** is an amusement park, one of the oldest in the UK, dating back to the 1860s, when it was called the Hall by the Sea. It was named Dreamland in 1920 and became one of the UK's top 10 visitor attractions. In 2003 there was a plan to close the amusement park, but local people and amusement park enthusiasts ran a successful campaign to save it. The park reopened in 2015.

Contact details:

T: 01843 295887

E: [office@dreamland.co.uk](mailto:office@dreamland.co.uk)

W: [www.dreamland.co.uk](http://www.dreamland.co.uk)

### **Quex Park and the Powell-Cotton Museum of Natural History and Ethnography**

Quex Park is a 15th century estate with a Regency House and gardens, a farmers market and a craft village. It includes the Powell-Cotton Museum with Victorian natural history exhibits from Africa and Asia. Quex Park offers workshops and tours for education and group visits.

Contact details: Quex Park, Birchington, CT7 0BH

T: 01843 842168

E: [enquiries@quexmuseum.org](mailto:enquiries@quexmuseum.org)

W: [www.quexpark.co.uk](http://www.quexpark.co.uk)

**Ramsgate Tunnels** are a series of underground tunnels that sheltered 60,000 people during World War II. It's the only known Civilian Deep Shelter Air Raid Precaution scheme authorised by Central Government, and is unusual in telling the story of civilians during wartime.

Contact details: Ramsgate Tunnels, Marina Esplanade Ramsgate CT11 8LN

T: 01843 588123

E: [admin@ramsgatetunnels.org](mailto:admin@ramsgatetunnels.org)

W: [www.ramsgatetunnels.org](http://www.ramsgatetunnels.org)

**Joss Bay Surf School** is a nationally recognised provider of professional surf lessons for people of all ages and abilities. They offer group surf and sup lessons, board and wetsuit hire, kayaks and sup tours.

Contact details:

T: 01843 860777

E: [info@jossbay.co.uk](mailto:info@jossbay.co.uk)

W: [www.jossbay.co.uk](http://www.jossbay.co.uk)

**Southern Water** provides water and related services to Thanet. They have a wide range of educational resources for all all Key Stages on their website.

Contact details:

T: 01903 264 444

W: [www.southernwater.co.uk](http://www.southernwater.co.uk)

## Brief background to the Isle of Thanet

There is more to the Thanet coast than meets the eye! First-time visitors to the coast find attractive and bustling seaside towns and an outstanding collection of golden sandy beaches with rock pools, white cliffs and historic Georgian and Victorian seaside resorts. It's a lively place, fun to visit, of holiday delights and expectation. But there's much more to discover besides the seaside. Thanet has an exceptionally rich history, a wealth of wildlife and a vibrant contemporary arts-based culture. It's a great place for its laidback seaside vibe, fresh sea air and romantic Turner skies.

Thanet has a fascinating history that stretches back thousands of years. Located at the most easterly point of England, at the far end of a peninsula, Thanet has been the arrival point for invaders and settlers. There are stories of Stone Age settlers, Bronze Age hoards, Roman armies, Viking invaders, Saxon saints and princesses, Norman conquerors, Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian visitors, secret smugglers and wartime heroes as well as today's emerging vibrant arts-based personalities.

Life at the edge, where the land meets the sea, has given the Isle of Thanet a prominence in the nation's history. Its location has put it at the forefront of history. Invaders have landed here, other people have departed for adventures. It's a gateway to the riches of Kent, London and the South East, and as such has been guarded and defended for centuries. Thanet has long been a pivotal point for launching and repelling attacks, most recently during the First and Second World Wars.

Life at the edge of the land and the sea has also given Thanet a remarkable and stunning natural environment. There are 15 beaches and bays, with towering chalk cliffs, sea caves and inter-tidal reefs, all teeming with wildlife. It's a dynamic coastline, continually changing, as the sea erodes and deposits materials along the coast. Thanet's coastal wildlife is internationally significant and much of the coast is protected by national and international designations. It's particularly important for over-wintering wading birds that fly in from the frozen Arctic regions of Canada and Greenland.

The rich natural environment, with a mix of land and marine habitats, coupled with an equitable climate, has made Thanet a good place to live, for wildlife and also for people. Humans have harvested the land and sea for millennia and farming and fishing were the backbone of the economy for many centuries, before tourism developed. Thanet and the rest of Kent are often called the Garden of England.

Thanet also has outstanding literary and artistic links with famous artists, writers and architects, including JMW Turner, Tracey Emin, TS Eliot and Augustus Pugin. These and many other creative and influential individuals have been drawn to Thanet for its beauty, its seaside air, its remarkable sunsets and its unique character. These characteristics, its location and ease of travel by sea from London all helped establish Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate as leading traditional seaside resorts from the 1700s onwards. Initially visitors came for the benefit of their health, to 'take the waters' and to bathe in the seawater. Later they came for fun and pleasure! The arrival of the railway in the mid-1840s boosted tourism, which in turn boosted the population, and tourism enjoyed decades of growth, before declining in the 1970s. Along with agriculture, tourism remains an important part of Thanet's local economy.

The Isle of Thanet is enjoying vibrant growth, with the New Turner Contemporary and the re-opening of Dreamland encouraging more visitors and new residents. The new high speed trains from London bring a generation of people to discover England's original seaside escape. Come and discover it for yourself!

## Thanet's geography and geology

The Isle of Thanet is a coastal area at north-east of Kent, bordered by the Thames Estuary and the English Channel and North Sea. The area is underlain by Upper Cretaceous Chalk beds, which were laid down around 85 million years ago. The chalk gives Thanet a spectacular coastline with white chalk cliffs and bays with golden sandy beaches. As well as being an attractive seascape, the coast is also rich in wildlife and most of the coastline is designated, under UK and European law. Thanet's coast is particularly famous for its chalk cliffs, intertidal reefs and overwintering birds.

Thanet was an island for millions of years, separated from the rest of Kent by the Wantsum Channel. The channel has gradually silted up over the last 1000 years and Thanet is no longer an island. There are four main urban areas in Thanet: Margate, Ramsgate, Broadstairs and Birchington, as well as coastal and inland villages.

For most of the last 2000 years Thanet was predominantly an agricultural area, growing arable crops, particularly corn, that was sent by boat to London. There was also some fishing and sea trade. In the 1700s sea bathing became fashionable and this led to the towns of Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs developing as some of England's first seaside tourist towns.

Tourism continued to develop on Thanet until the 1970s when cheap foreign holidays began to take over much of the UK tourism market. Thanet is now experiencing a revival in its fortunes, re-emerging as a popular tourist destination, stimulated by the new Turner Contemporary art gallery and the re-opening of the famous Dreamland amusement park.

## Thanet timeline

Date	Event
3000 BC	Thanet was one of the more settled areas during the Stone Age and there are many archaeological remains from this period.
2100 BC	Numerous Bronze Age burial sites on the Isle of Thanet.
800BC - 43AD	Iron Age settlers farm land on Thanet.
43 -410	Romans in Britain. They build forts, ports and villas on Thanet.
449	Legend has it that Vortigern, king of the Britons, asked for assistance from the legendary brothers Hengis and Horsa, leaders of the Angles, Jutes and Saxons, and they arrive at Thanet.
597	St Augustine lands on Thanet with 40 monks.
797	Danish and Viking invasions attack Thanet.
850	Vikings overwinter in Thanet.
1086	Domesday Book compiled, Thanet is called Tenet.
1200s	Margate and Ramsgate are associated with the Cinque Ports and are known as 'limbs' of the Cinque Ports.
1300s	Thanet is the most densely settled part of Kent, with rich agriculture, sea trade and fishing.
1700s	Sea bathing becomes fashionable as a health cure. Hoys and sailing ships bring visitors from London.
1749	Ramsgate Harbour Construction starts.
1786	JMW Turner at school in Margate.
1802	Lifeboat station opens at Ramsgate.
1812	Droit House, the current Visitor Information Centre, built for Margate Pier and Harbour Company.
1815	Margate Stone Pier built, first steam boats run between London and Margate.

1821	George IV gives Ramsgate its unique Royal Harbour status.
1829	JMW Turner stays at Margate to paint.
1833	Sir Moses Montefiore's private synagogue opened in Ramsgate.
1844	Augustus Pugin's innovative private house, The Grange, completed.
1850	Ramsgate Harbour construction finally completed.
1840-1850s	Charles Dickens visits Broadstairs and writes David Copperfield.
1897	A statue at Margate seafront commemorates the loss of 9 crew of the 'Friend to all Nations' lifeboat.
1914-1918	Ramsgate's fishing fleet moves to Brixham for safety in WW1.
1920	Dreamland opens in Margate.
1922	TS Eliot's The Waste Land, partly written in Margate, is published.
1940-5	Ramsgate and Margate boats help evacuate Dunkirk in the Battle of Britain. Ramsgate is heavily bombed during The Blitz Winston Churchill shelters in Ramsgate Tunnels.
1960s	Margate has 2 million visitors a year, a record number!
1969	Hovercraft Service between Pegwell Bay and Calais starts.
1982	Hovercraft service ceases.
2001	Internationally important marine, bird life and habitats are recognised with the launch of NE Kent Marine Protected Area and the Thanet Coast Project.
2003	Dreamland closes.
2009	High Speed train line opens between Thanet and London.
2011	2011 Turner Contemporary art gallery opens.
2015	Dreamland reopens.
2016	Turner Contemporary welcomes its 2 millionth visitor.
2017	Major refurbishment at Dreamland. The St Augustine and Pugin Centre opens.



discover  
**Thanet's  
Coast**

Margate  
Broadstairs  
Ramsgate

For further information please contact us at:

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Thanet Visitor Information Centre is open 7 days a week 10am to 5pm (April to October) and Tuesday - Saturday 10am-5pm (November to March).

## Feedback

Please tell us what you think about this Learning Pack.

E: [visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:visitorinformation@thanet.gov.uk)

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