



# Visit Thanet Press Pack

Margate • Broadstairs • Ramsgate

# Escape to the Isle of Thanet

The Isle of Thanet is around 40 square miles in area (103.30 square km) and is situated on the most north-easterly edge of Kent, the Garden of England, with coast on three sides. Historically the isle was separated from the mainland by a significant waterway, the Wantsum Channel.

Today the isle is easily accessible with excellent road links to the national motorway network. It takes just 75 minutes from London's St Pancras International aboard HS1, the country's only high speed rail service. And rail services link Thanet to other London stations and mainland Europe (Eurostar) via Ashford International. Cross-Channel services are available from the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel.

Thanet's three resorts – Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate – are geographically so close to each other but beyond all three boasting great golden sandy beaches, chalk cliffs and mainline railway stations, their personalities could not be more different.





Margate Main Sands



Royal Harbour, Ramsgate



Viking Bay, Broadstairs

# Thanet's unique selling points

- 15 spectacular sandy beaches and bays – more Blue Flag beaches than any other district in England
- North East Kent Marine Protected Area – the whole of our coastline is covered by international and national designations for its marine and bird life
- Longest continuous stretch of coastal chalk in Britain
- The only 'Royal' Harbour in the country
- Turner Contemporary – the largest purpose-built gallery in the South East, outside London.
- Dreamland, the UK's original pleasure park, re-imagined
- Rich in historic connections and commemorations such as the evacuation of Dunkerque, helping hold the frontline in WW1 and WW2, the arrival of the Saxons, the invasion of Hengist and Horsa and the arrival of England's first Christian
- Famous connections such as Charles Dickens, JMW Turner and Augustus Pugin
- High Speed 1 from St. Pancras International – Margate (90 mins), Broadstairs (85 mins) and Ramsgate (75 mins).

## THANET PEOPLE

- Thanet population: 136,800 (2013 mid-year estimate ONS)
- Average age: 42 years (2013 mid-year estimate ONS)
- Over 65 years: 15.9% of the population (2013 mid-year estimate ONS)
- BME population 4% (2011 census)
- Out of work benefits 15.5% - 12,530
- People aged 16 – 64 years claiming JSA 3.8% - 3,027 (DWP Longitudinal Study 2014)

## THANET VISITOR ECONOMY

- 3.6 million visitors each year
- 5,392 jobs (15% of all employment)
- Contributes £245 million to the local economy each year (Cambridge Model Economic Impact survey 2013), £286 million including language schools.



Turner Contemporary and Margate Sands



Viking Bay, Broadstairs



Royal Harbour, Ramsgate

## Why visit?

Londoners have been **escaping** to the Isle of Thanet for more than 200 years ... for the **laidback** seaside vibe ... breathtaking sandy beaches ... **fresh** sea air ... and **romantic** Turner skies ...

Here at the very **edge** of the **Garden of England**, three **Georgian and Victorian** resorts, each with its own distinctive character – Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate – **cluster** around the **bays** at the far end of the **peninsula**.

There's a **retro** feel to these harbour towns, with their remarkable 18th and 19th century **architecture**, their **classic seaside heritage** and kitsch, their eclectic attractions and live arts and music venues. And there is a variety of **independent** places to shop, eat, drink and stay.

Miles of low **chalk cliffs** edge the peninsula, sheltering a string of **secluded, unspoilt sandy bays**. Chalk **rockpools**, chalk stacks and **rare**

chalk reefs teem with **wildlife**. These are the closest **surfing beaches** to the capital city: a popular choice with southeast boarders.

**Artists, writers and musicians** have long been inspired by this almost-island ... and continue to be drawn here. **Turner** said Thanet had "the loveliest skies in all Europe" ... for **Dickens**, Broadstairs was "the freshest, freest place" ... and Tracey **Emin** declares in green neon on Margate seafront: "I never stopped loving you".

The Isle's a **historic landing place** steeped in symbolism for the story of Britain ... the **first Saxons, Hengist and Horsa**, arrived and settled here ... and **St Augustine** first stepped onto these shores on his way to nearby **Canterbury**.

For this is the **furthest** south east you can go in Britain ... almost touching mainland **Europe** ... yet these days only 75 minutes from central London ...

And now with the **Turner Contemporary** gallery, the return of the iconic pleasure park **Dreamland**, reimagined for the 21st century, and **high-speed trains** from the capital ... **a new generation** is discovering this **original seaside escape**.

## On the menu

Thanet has a wide range of eateries and fine dining opportunities, below is a list of those recognised in the Taste of Kent Awards and our local producers.

**The Ambrette** in Margate Old Town ([www.ambrette.co.uk](http://www.ambrette.co.uk)) and **The Corner House** in Minster ([www.thecornerhouseminster.co.uk](http://www.thecornerhouseminster.co.uk)) were both Kent Restaurant of the Year finalists.

**Cliftonville Farmers' Market** (last Sunday of each month excluding December) was a finalist in the Kent Farmers' Market of the Year category.

**Kent Crisps** are produced in Birchington by AMC Foods with delicious flavours from locally sourced ingredients, including sea salt, vinegar and Biddenden Cider. AMC Foods won the Ambient Class for their extra virgin rapeseed oil blended with lemon. [www.amcfoods.co.uk](http://www.amcfoods.co.uk)

**Margate Smokehouse**- family run and producing smoked sausages, sea salt, habanero peppers and more. [www.margatesmokehouse.co.uk](http://www.margatesmokehouse.co.uk)

**Mannings** – family run cockle and whelk stall in Margate.

**Broadstairs Food Festival** (October) and **Spring Fair** (Easter)  
[www.broadstairsfoodfestival.org.uk](http://www.broadstairsfoodfestival.org.uk)

**Ramsgate Brewery** – Gadds' No 3 selected as a finalist in the Kent Beer of the Year category – just one of a growing number of local beers available from Thanet's rapidly expanding number of micro-pubs.

## Where to stay

Contemporary and richly restored quality boutique hotels are to be discovered across the isle, many with stunning views of sea, sands and Thanet's stunning sunsets. Stylish and chic B&Bs and guest houses are flourishing alongside delightful self-catering town houses, flint-faced fisherman's cottages and apartments. Outdoor enthusiasts have an excellent selection of caravan and camping sites.

Find full details of Thanet's accredited accommodation at [www.visitthanet.co.uk/plan-your-visit-introduction/places-to-stay](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk/plan-your-visit-introduction/places-to-stay)



Broadstairs Food Festival



Mannings Seafood Stall, Margate



'Room with a view'

A dramatic sky at sunset or sunrise, with a large jellyfish in the foreground. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds in shades of blue, purple, and orange. The jellyfish is translucent and has a long, thin, trailing structure. The overall scene is serene and beautiful.

“the freshest, freest place”

Charles Dickens

“the loveliest skies in all Europe”

JMW Turner

“I never stopped loving you”

Tracey Emin

# Roots, revival and regeneration

## ROOTS

The origins of the district's three distinctive resorts – Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate – and their surrounding villages lie in farming and fishing.

The passion for the health benefits of sea air and bathing, which started among the aristocracy in the 18th century, led to a building boom and development of the towns to cater for a rapidly growing number of wealthy visitors.

With an increase in ferry services from London and even more significantly the arrival of the railways, many more people gained access to the coastal resorts, each of which has its own mainline stations. Investment in buildings and businesses followed in their way to offer accommodation and entertainment for holidaymakers, group excursions and day trippers from the capital and beyond.

The resorts shared much in common – golden sands, sweeping beaches and hidden bays, and impressive chalk cliffs. However, each developed differently.

Ramsgate's waterfront reflects its maritime heritage including its working Royal Harbour and port. Broadstairs grew up around its traditional fishing roots with narrow streets frequented by Charles Dickens. Margate's wide and open seafront was shaped by its capacity to develop the heyday of classic seaside fun and entertainment alongside the narrow cobbled streets of its Old Town.

As the visitor economy grew so did the number of wealthier people wishing to enjoy much more of the year on the healthy coast or spend their retirement in an area where they had enjoyed happy summer holidays. Grand houses and gated communities were built along the coast on the

outskirts of the main resorts as were many estates of classic bungalows.

From the mid-20th century wider access to package holidays abroad gradually took its toll on the Thanet visitor economy. Increasingly cheaper flights and the rapid growth of resorts in destinations such as Spain meant more people chose to go abroad for their one or two week family sun and sand holidays.

Thanet continued to be popular as a daytrip or weekend destination but many of the larger hotels, and guest houses had to close followed by larger entertainment venues.



Botany Bay, Broadstairs



Margate Harbour



Royal Harbour, Ramsgate



Dreamland, Margate



Broadstairs Bandstand



Westcliff, overlooking Royal Harbour, Ramsgate

## REVIVAL

In recent years, fashions in holidays have changed once again. The popularity of package holidays has declined in favour of a widening interest in independent travel to more exotic destinations. More people want to be seen as travellers not tourists.

Concerns about the environmental costs of flying abroad became more focused and following the recent difficulties since the financial crisis of 2008 the popularity of the "staycation" has increased dramatically.

At the same time, people became more interested in re-discovering different areas of the UK enabled by the new trend for taking one or two short breaks during the year alongside the main holiday. Once again there was a growing desire to escape big towns and cities and get outdoors and enjoy the health benefits of walking and cycling, alongside a wealth of water sports.

Thanet with its superb coastline and beaches, alongside its history and heritage in three highly distinctive resorts in easy reach of London, is ideally placed to cater for the needs of today's visitor economy.

Broadstairs, with its narrow streets, flint-faced cottages and picturesque harbour that would still be recognised by its most famous resident, Charles Dickens, retains its traditional seaside atmosphere including two 1950s-style ice-cream parlours.

Margate captures the fun and entertainment of the Great British Seaside Holiday alongside a cultural and creative revolution inspired by the

internationally acclaimed Turner Contemporary gallery and the regeneration of Margate Old Town with a wealth of cafés, galleries and independent shops.

Meanwhile, the impressive Georgian and Victorian architecture of Ramsgate overlooking its historic Royal Harbour and thoroughly modern marina, reflects its maritime heritage and its 18th and 19th century role as a very popular health and leisure destination with the wealthy. Perhaps reflecting its importance as a port and proximity to Europe, the resort is now famous for its busy waterfront continental café culture.

## REGENERATION

Public and private investment in regeneration has seen the arrival of HS1, improvements to the road infrastructure, development of Ramsgate's Royal Harbour and thoroughly modern marina, and the rebirth of Margate as an internationally-acclaimed destination.

Regeneration is totally refreshing the visitor industry in Thanet and bringing benefits to the wider economy across the resorts and their villages. HS1 links Margate to St Pancras International around 75 minutes and other rail services link Thanet to other London stations and mainland Europe (Eurostar) via Ashford International. Cross-Channel services are available from the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel.

Thanet now entertains 3.36 million visitors each year contributing more than £245 million to the district economy and supporting 5,932 jobs (Cambridge Model Economic Impact Survey 2013).

People working in London are making their homes in Thanet and others are opting to invest in second homes on the isle.

Thanet is attracting new investment in 21st century boutique hotels, guest houses, restaurants, cafés and outdoor leisure opportunities alongside new and relocating businesses.

The isle now has world class attractions, such as Turner Contemporary and The Powell-Cotton Museum and Quex House, at Birchington, voted the UK's most inspiring museum. Meanwhile, there is a long list of other key attractions – many relatively new such as Dreamland and The Ramsgate Tunnels – alongside traditional favourites such as Margate Shell Grotto and the Dickens House Museum at Broadstairs.

Turner Contemporary, designed by award-winning architect Sir David Chipperfield, opened to the public in 2011 and since then has generated £50 million for the local economy, which has led to the opening of 72 new businesses and the safeguarding of 155 jobs.



Turner Contemporary, Margate

Turner Contemporary has also attracted 2million visits, 54% of these comprised 'intentional visits', eg. visitors who came to Margate specifically to see Turner Contemporary.

Thanet District Council was the first local authority in Kent to take up on the Visit England initiative for Destination Management Plans (DMP). Working with the local tourism industry a five-year DMP has been produced and is in the third year of being delivered. This includes staff training, tourism marketing initiatives, highlighting grant and advantageous funding streams available to small and medium-sized businesses alongside investment opportunities available locally, countywide and nationally.

The need to deliver and continuously refresh an all-round high quality visitor experience is also improving the quality of life enjoyed by everyone living and working in the district.

For example, Thanet District Council worked with an artist and landscape architect to make sure flood defences constructed in Margate were designed to enhance the regeneration of



Ramsgate Tunnel

Margate Old Town Conservation Area and to provide a new amenity area on the seafront.

New schemes have also been introduced by the council in Margate to improve the streetscene and bring problem and derelict buildings back into use as family homes. There are initiatives encouraging the restoration and conservation of historic properties.

Enhancing the quality of life for residents and visitors alike also plays a major role in many other regeneration initiatives attracting new businesses and investment in other sectors across the district and its business parks.

#### **Find out more about the regeneration of Thanet at:**

[www.visitthanetbusiness.co.uk](http://www.visitthanetbusiness.co.uk)

There is also a full events calendar with long standing favourites such as Broadstairs Folk Week, now in its 51st year, to newer additions such as Screamland and The Frosted Fairground.

Find out more on [www.visitthanet.co.uk](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk)



Powell-Cotton Museum and Quex House, Birchington

## What's New

### THE YARROW HOTEL, BROADSTAIRS

Opening this July, a former convalescent home and Grade II listed building which is undergoing a multi-million pound refurbishment. The hotel will offer a sumptuous 4 star experience, luxury spa, hair and beauty salon and 64 seat restaurant.

The Yarrow Hotel will be the only hotel in the country run by a further education college and will act as a training ground for the hospitality industry's future leaders.

[www.yarrowhotel.co.uk](http://www.yarrowhotel.co.uk)



The Yarrow Hotel, Broadstairs

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

### OLD KENT MARKET, MARGATE

This is on the site of the old Parade Cinema and has been lovingly restored to incorporate the building's history and heritage. The Old Kent Market houses a range of different stalls selling food and crafts including baked goods, fish, handmade dog treats, vinyl, craft ales, cheeses and more. There will also be a range of pop-up stalls throughout the year.

[www.theoldkentmarket.com](http://www.theoldkentmarket.com)



Old Kent Market, Margate

### DEFENCE OF THE NATION EDUCATION CENTRE

The museum, based within the entrance to Ramsgate Tunnels, has at its core the intention to identify the Isle of Thanet, its people and heritage as a location of historical and strategic military importance. Discover the story behind the military campaign code-named Operation Dynamo, the greatest maritime evacuation in the history of warfare. The museum is constantly evolving and will hopefully soon feature a WWI exhibit, along with other key Thanet-based military installations.

[www.defenceofthenationeducationcentre.org](http://www.defenceofthenationeducationcentre.org)



Defence of the Nation Education Museum, Ramsgate

## Future Developments

Thanet's regeneration has only just started. there are a number of new and exciting projects that are taking place over the next few years, which will help build on the current success story.

### ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH VISITOR CENTRE, RAMSGATE

A new Visitor Centre planned for St. Augustine's church in Ramsgate is expected to have a trial opening later this year, with the official opening in 2017. This will house The Pugin and St Augustine's education, research and visitor centre. The project aims to increase knowledge and accessibility for people of all ages around two themes: the Victorian architect, Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin and St. Augustine of England, founder of the Christian church in Southern England.

The centre will provide facilities for visitors, schools and the local community to learn about Pugin and St. Augustine with teaching, displays and physical access through the principal areas of this seminal building.

[www.augustine-pugin.org.uk](http://www.augustine-pugin.org.uk)

### SUNSHINE CAFÉ

Opened in 1934, the Sunshine Café was the premier restaurant on Margate seafront. The first floor former café has panoramic windows looking north over Margate Main Sands and west towards the sunset.

The Cinema complex is listed Grade II\*. Thanet District Council is using Coastal Communities

Fund monies to replace the windows to the Sunshine Café, repair the Cinema façade and re-instate the Art Deco neon signage. This work is due to be completed in December 2016.

### MARGATE BREWERY

Microbrewery to open in former public house 'The Cottage' on the High street.  
[www.margatebrewery.com](http://www.margatebrewery.com)

### ROYAL SANDS DEVELOPMENT

Planning Permission has been granted for a redevelopment of the site for residential, commercial and leisure uses, including a hotel with conference facilities and health and fitness centre, with retail development on the seafront.

### 12 ARTHUR ROAD, CLIFTONVILLE

In the 1950s/60s, 12 Arthur Road was the Cecil Hotel and accommodated up to 50 people. Redesigned by architect Sam Causer, this 1890s

Cliftonville townhouse will be available for hire for a group of ten to enjoy historic reception rooms, five en-suite bedrooms and a walled garden. Furnishings are being selected to reflect its Victorian beginnings, its 50s/60s heyday and the needs of today.

Supported with funding from the Dalby Square Townscape Heritage Initiative.

### ROYAL VICTORIA PAVILION

The Grade II listed building is being developed by JD Wetherspoon into a public house, with additional commercial uses. The building is owned by Thanet District Council and a lease has been agreed with JD Wetherspoon. Applications are currently under consideration for planning permission and listed building consent, to include the refurbishment of the interior and exterior of the building.



Original Sunshine Café



Original features, 12 Arthur Road



Dreamland ©Oliver Dixon



Margate Main Sands



Margate Old Town

## So close

### MARGATE

Margate is a classic seaside destination with deep roots in the original development of visits to the coast for the health benefits of exhilarating sea air and salt water bathing.

As the passion and fashion for seaside fun and frivolity became more accessible with boat trips from London and the arrival of the railways, Margate and neighbouring Cliftonville became synonymous with family holiday fun, weekend escapes (including romantic liaisons) and daytrips.

Visitors today soak up the sun, sands and sea with all the enthusiasm of previous generations of the bucket 'n spade brigade as well as a wealth of retro and vintage seaside pleasures presented in 21st century style.

The re-opened and re-imagined Dreamland Pleasure Park is the newest addition and celebrates the age of the Great British seaside amusement experience, including the country's

oldest wooden roller coaster, the Grade II\* listed Scenic Railway.

Along with the resort's 50,300 residents, visitors find themselves at the heart of the cultural and creative arts revolution sweeping along the coast of Kent.

- World-class art and cultural exhibitions at Turner Contemporary gallery
- Dreamland, the UK's original pleasure park - Lonely Planet named Kent the Best in Europe for family holidays 2015 citing the retro thrills of Dreamland
- Margate Old Town, vibrant and expanding creative sector.
- Classic seaside heritage – magnificent sands, beaches and bays, water sports, rock pools, cockles and whelks, fish 'n chips and candyfloss

- Major attractions and entertainments alongside many hidden gems
- Time and space to relax and enjoy the resort's famous sunsets, clifftop walks and trails, and contemporary culture
- Independent galleries, vintage and retro hotspots, and quirky shops along cobbled streets
- Easter Beer Festival (March/April), Mods and 60s Festival, Margate Meltdown (May), Skagate Play Expo Margate (July), Margate Soul Festival and Carnival, Beach Volleyball England Finals (August), Screamland (October), Frosted Fairground (December)

*A Margate press pack is available, see back cover.*



Botany Bay

## BROADSTAIRS

Broadstairs succeeds in more than satisfying the needs of today's generations of short break, weekend visitors and daytrippers who flock to its beaches. Yet the coastal honeypot retains all the charms and features of a traditional seaside destination.

Morelli's, the quintessential 1950s ice cream parlour, still stands at the top of the chalk cliffs overlooking the flowers planted along the promenade and the gently sloping sands and rock pools of Viking Bay.

Charles Dickens, one of the town's most famous former visitor and resident, would easily recognise the narrow streets and flint walls in the older parts of the town and the streets winding down to the small fishing harbour.

Throughout the summer demand is high for the town's many guesthouses and B&Bs, self-catering houses and apartments.



Viking Bay

As a resort, and a long-standing favourite destination for people of all ages and interests, Broadstairs has more than held its own and is thriving in the 21st century.

- Seven sand-filled, family-friendly beaches and bays, 4 with Blue Flag or Seaside Awards
- Stunning chalk cliffs including caves and much-photographed stacks at Botany Bay
- Closest surfing beaches to London and best in the south east
- Timeless seaside charm
- Traditional fishing harbour, cobbled squares and narrow streets
- Vibrant nightlife economy and exciting eateries
- Classic ice cream parlours and coffee shops
- Clifftop gardens and bandstand

- Clifftop and foreshore strolls, cycling and golf
- Blues Bash (February), Spring Fair (Easter), Dickens Festival (June), Folk Week and Water Gala (August), Wheels and Fins (September), Broadstairs Food Festival (October).

*A Broadstairs press pack is available, see back cover.*



Westcliff Arcade

## RAMSGATE

Ramsgate, a favourite seaside destination of Princess Victoria, is an architectural jewel in the coastal crown of the Isle of Thanet.

The town's long maritime history as a port, with the country's only Royal Harbour, and its thriving modern marina have contributed to the development of a relaxing Mediterranean-style waterfront filled with a wealth of bustling bistros and restaurants.

The resort's fine weather, superb sands, sea air and stunning views from the chalk cliffs alongside elegant side streets, independent shops, galleries and seaside entertainments add even more flavour to Ramsgate's popular café culture.



Royal Harbour

- UK's only Royal Harbour
- Golden sands, famous family-friendly beach and bay, boat trips and clifftop walks
- Modern marina filled with luxury yachts
- Augustus Pugin's house The Grange and St. Augustine's Church
- Elegant Georgian, Regency and Victorian architecture – hundreds of listed buildings
- Ramsgate Tunnels - deep shelter tunnels built to protect civilians during WWII
- Active Ramsgate itinerary – including two new canoe trails and a new coastal walk



Ramsgate Tunnels

- Thriving continental café culture along the south-facing waterfront
- Fine eateries serving local produce including seafoods
- Retro and contemporary boutique hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs and self-catering
- Events include Great Bucket and Spade Run (June), Ramsgate Week, an alternative to Cowes, including Ramsgate Festival (July) and Heritage Open Days (September).

*A Ramsgate press pack is available, see back cover.*



Quex House



Spitfire and Hurricane Memorial Museum



Minnis Bay

## THANET VILLAGES

Just a short distance from the coast visitors discover a treasure chest of delights in Thanet's traditional villages.

### Popular visitor gems include:

- Quex Park Estate and the Powell-Cotton Museum, plus their annual events diary, including I Love Vintage (April), Museum at Night (May), Gears of Change and Fought for Freedom (June), Quexmas (November)
- The Spitfire and Hurricane Memorial Museum at Manston
- RAF Manston History Museum
- Minster Show – ([www.minstershow.org.uk](http://www.minstershow.org.uk)) celebrating its 130th anniversary in July 2016. Minster and neighbouring villages work together to present action-packed entertainment, celebrating the success of flower and vegetable growers, cooks, jam and preserve makers and more.
- Minster Abbey at Minster – possibly the oldest inhabited house in the country near where St Augustine led the first Christian mass in Britain
- Monkton Nature Reserve and Observatory – trails, UK's first artificial bat cave, fossils and visitor centre
- Birchington and Westgate – coastal villages with Blue Flag beaches at Minnis Bay, West Bay and St. Mildred's Bay
- St. Mary the Virgin Church – A large Norman church with later additions and some unusual architecture. Also, eighteen fine medieval misericords, which are amongst the best in south east England.

For further media information including packs on Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate, press trips and access to up-to-date images, please contact Julie Edwards, Senior Tourism Officer at Visit Thanet, tel: 01843 577671 or email: [Julie.edwards@thanet.gov.uk](mailto:Julie.edwards@thanet.gov.uk)

For further information about all Thanet visitor destinations and attractions go to Visit Thanet [www.visitthanet.co.uk](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk)

**Visitor Information Services**

The Droit House, Stone Pier, Margate, CT9 1JD

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