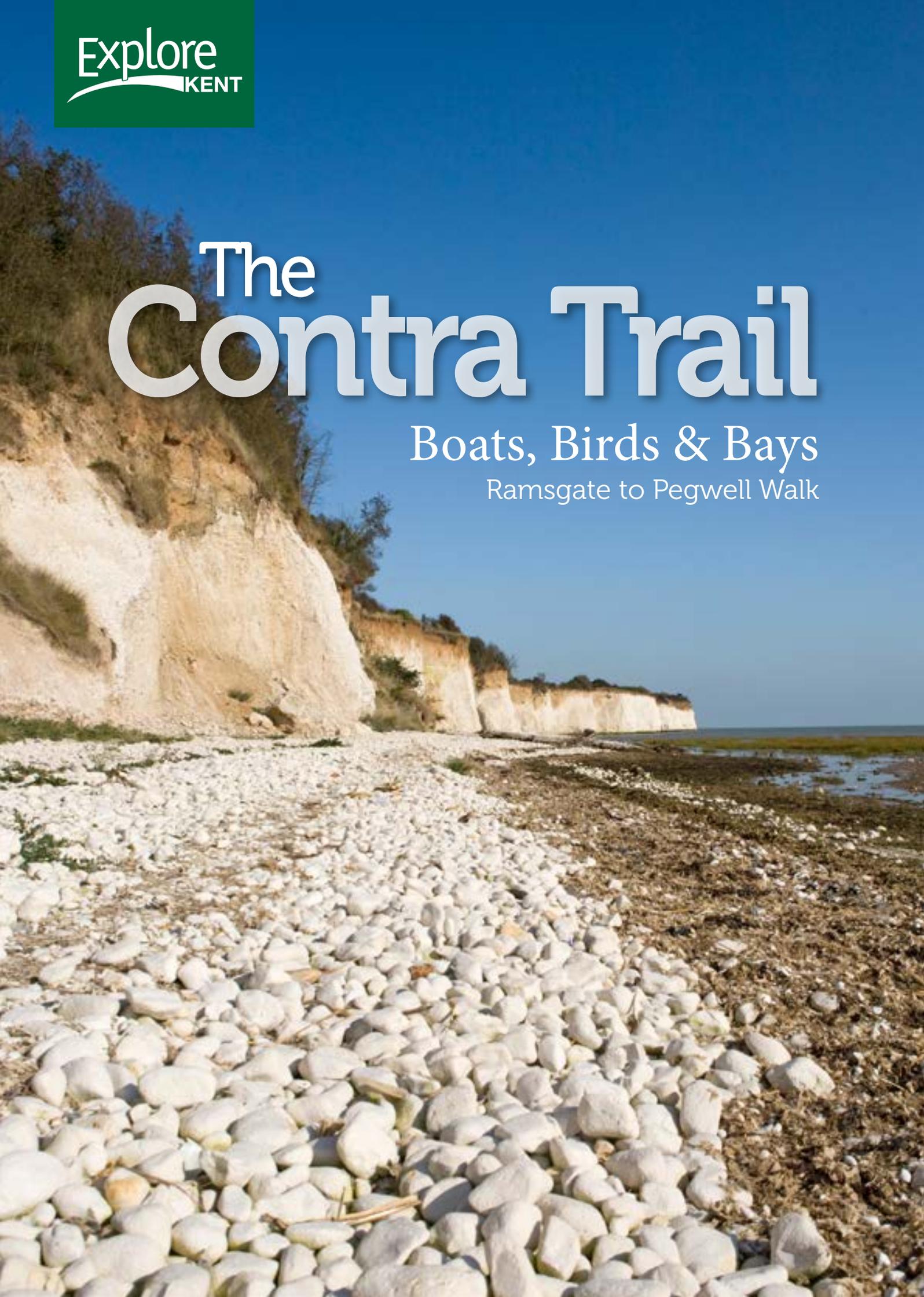


# The Contra Trail

Boats, Birds & Bays  
Ramsgate to Pegwell Walk



# Ramsgate to Pegwell Bay Walk

“Ramsgate’s at the Land’s End of the south-east; the getaway place with great scenery and the great outdoors. (And it’s just down the line from London.)”

**Nicholas Crane**  
Presenter of the BBC Coast series

A Royal Harbour with the common touch. An English monument to a Viking invasion. A nature reserve with wetland birds you’ll want to shout about. Beautiful bays and boats galore. Whatever you think you know about the South East coast, get ready to think again, because this is a route that’s brimming with fascinating contradictions.

# Bright lights & light bites

The Contra Trail - a gentle 6.1 mile (9.8km) walk that leads past the hustle and bustle of modern Ramsgate, down the gently undulating Isle of Thanet Coastal path and into the natural peace and tranquillity of Pegwell Bay, is everything a walk should be, and much more besides. And thanks to the wonderfully diverse range of pubs, restaurants and local attractions on the route, it's one you can enjoy with a full belly and a spring in your step.

Your walk begins in the heart of the only British harbour that can claim to be 'Royal' - a unique honour that followed a visit to Ramsgate in

1820 by King George IV, who was so moved by the warmth and hospitality he received from his commoners, that he officially decreed the harbour to be 'Royal'.

It will introduce you to a vibrant, modern town steeped in history at every turn. Elegant Georgian houses, traditional fishermen's cottages, stylish terraced restaurants and busy pubs such as the Churchill Tavern, a local inn with an authentic country atmosphere, a wide-ranging selection of quality real ales.

Along the way you will pass the beautiful marina with its array of boats and yachts... with the start of the walk just a stone's throw from the best chip shop in Britain. It's official! A wealth of sights, old and new, all help create a perfect backdrop to this perfectly British walk.

Savour every moment though, because you will soon be leaving the hustle and bustle of this extraordinary harbour town behind as you make your way to the seclusion of the cliff top and begin the second stage of this inspired route into a wetland haven for birds.

# Viking legends & English legacies

Don't be fooled. The route between Ramsgate town and Pegwell Bay is a lot more than just a beautiful distraction. It is a well trodden path steeped in history of its own... you just need to know where to look.

Take the honeycombed network of caves and tunnels buried deep in the chalk and rock of the cliff you are standing on. Tunnels that still connect the Sir Stanley Gray bar and restaurant to the Pegwell Bay Hotel and the Belle Vue Tavern to the cottages across the road. These once allowed notorious 17th century smugglers like

village blacksmith 'Big Jim' to ply their dreadful trade. Call in to the Belle Vue Tavern today and you step into a tavern full of history and legend. It is a place where exiled royalty are thought to have stayed during the French Revolution and Charles Dickens regularly enjoyed something delicious to eat and drink. Today, it is somewhere you can enjoy 2 for 1 on anything you order from the Bar Snack menu.

Or what about the English Channel? It isn't one of the most famous stretches of water in the world for nothing. Kings waged war on

it, merchants traded on it... Vikings even invaded on it! The Hugin, a striking life sized and faithfully replicated Nordic longboat you will pass along the route, explains how!

You will wander ancient cliffs, walk in the footsteps of royalty and raise a glass to villains and heroes before arriving at your final destination, Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve. Celebrated for its mix of delicate orchids and beautiful wetland birds, the reserve is full of unexpected pleasures and, like the walk itself, designed to surprise and leave you wanting more.



# Our local National Treasure

## Sandwich & Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve

This National Nature Reserve (NNR) is home to an amazing variety of plants and animals making it nationally and internationally important for wildlife. You can find more habitats here than anywhere else in the south east. The mudflats, saltmarsh, beach, sand dunes, coastal scrublands and cliffs are home to dozens of rare species of plants and wetland birds. Bird hides are available for your viewing pleasure! The Contra Trail is a wonderful way to explore this remarkable national treasure and enjoy a wealth of exclusive Active Ramsgate offers and discounts in the process.



# Vive La Difference!

Ramsgate harbour with all its royal history and naval connections could never be described as anything other than very British. Until you look a little closer that is and discover more than a hint of the continent in the town's delicious choice of restaurants, pavement cafés and styles.

named Nice Things, in the Custom House - a charming little shop that boasts a truly impressive selection of ceramics, glass, jewellery and textiles. It is this wonderful mix of businesses and styles that help to make Ramsgate such a special town with so much to offer everybody.

Cafes like the stylish Miles Bar overlooking the harbour, wonderful pubs like the The Queens Head, and aptly

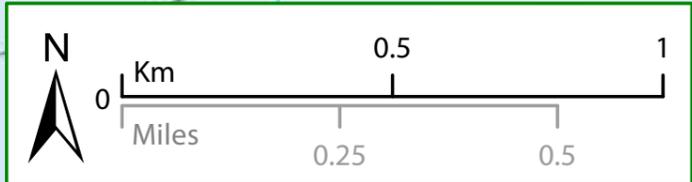
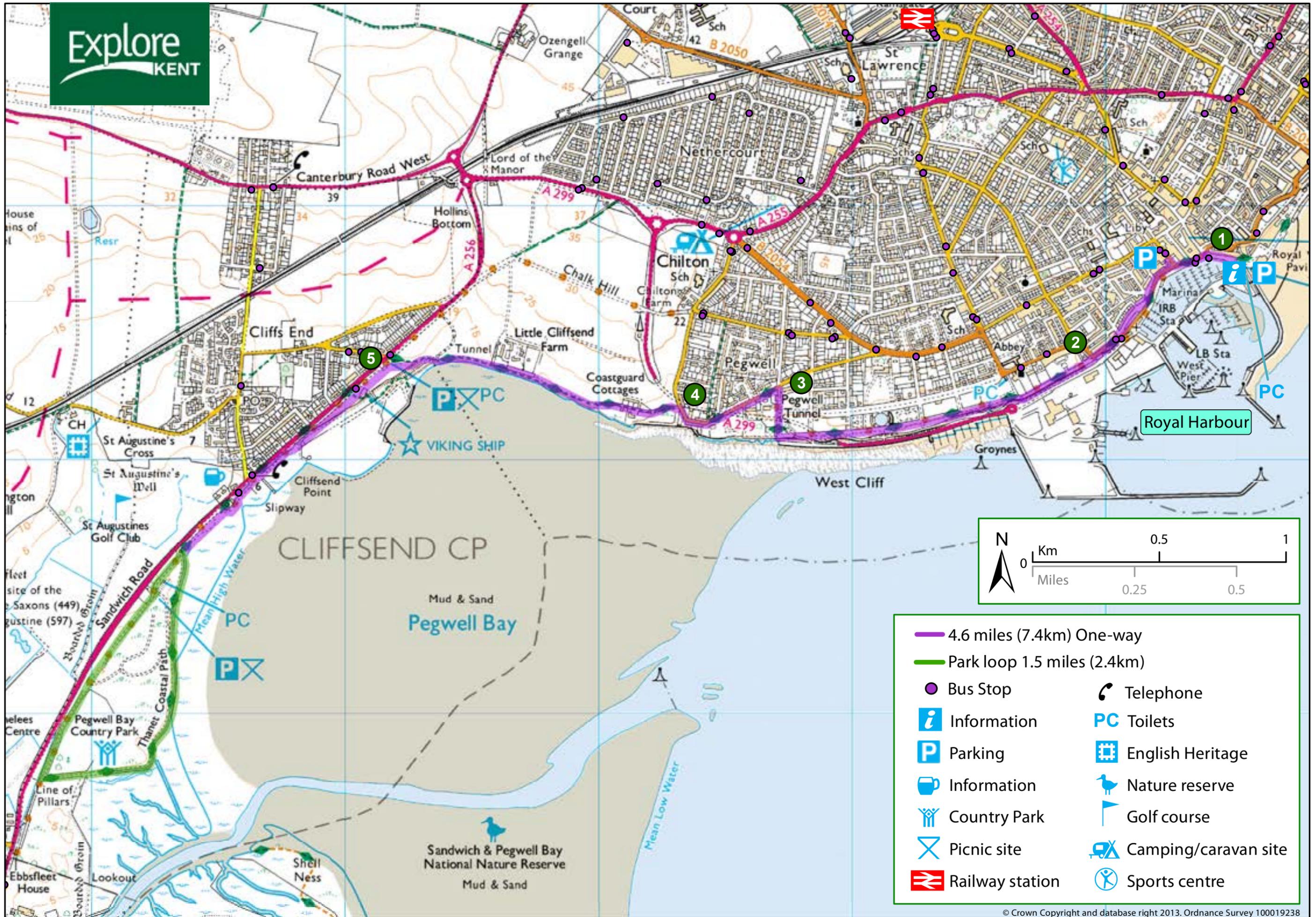


## Chip Chip Hooray!

If you fancy sampling what are now officially the best chips in Britain, pop into Peter's Fish Factory in Harbour Parade. Peter Curtis, the owner, says his secret to bagging Britain's Choice Chip Award for 2012 was deceptively simple: "It is all about cooking them

properly... There is no secret to it but loving what you do and doing it well." The chips are all cooked in vegetable oil and are made from Markies potatoes, grown in Sandwich - three tons of them every week in Summer!





- 4.6 miles (7.4km) One-way
- Park loop 1.5 miles (2.4km)
- Bus Stop
- i Information
- P Parking
- ☕ Information
- 🌳 Country Park
- ⛺ Picnic site
- 🚉 Railway station
- ☎ Telephone
- PC Toilets
- 🏰 English Heritage
- 🐦 Nature reserve
- 🏌️ Golf course
- 🏠 Camping/caravan site
- 🏊 Sports centre

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# Step by step guide

## Walk overview:

**Location:** Harbour Parade, Ramsgate, CT11 8LN and Pegwell Bay Country Park, CT12 5JB

**Distance:** 6.1 miles (9.8km) one-way including Nature Reserve loop - allow 3 hours

**Terrain:** Mainly flat surfaced paths with one field edge path and surfaced tracks around Pegwell Bay

**Facilities:** Shops, cafés, restaurants and pubs in Ramsgate. Pub and seasonal kiosk at Cliffs End and Dog Walkers Rest Cafe at Pegwell Bay Country Park

**Buses:** Traveline Tel: 0871 200 22 33, [www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info) (Buses don't run on Sunday)

**Taxis:** United Cars Tel: 01843 581581, Central Cars Tel: 01843 601601, Cars for You (Broadstairs) Tel: 01843 582 777, Station Cabs (Margate) Tel: 07522 311500

*Where better to begin this celebration of contradictions than the historically rich and thoroughly modern marina area?*

*"Kent's coast line is one of the finest in Britain. It blends great scenery and history with some fantastic family activities, alongside great sailing waters."*

Sam Brearey  
National, European and World  
Sailing Champion

- 1 Set off past the Royal pub, cross the road at York Street and keep walking until you reach Leopold Street (beyond the Travelodge hotel). Now look for a black signpost directing you to Westcliff Arcade, nestled below the Royal Templar Yacht Club on the other side of the road. Take the steps up to the arcade entrance and then make your way through this popular restaurant and café lined street.

Exit the arcade down some more steps and make your way along Sion Hill. Continue until you have passed the Foy Boat public house, walked through a small park and crossed the road to join the Promenade. There are plenty of interpretation panels and benches dotted around here if you fancy a little break, and some wonderful views of the harbour and yacht marina to enjoy.

- 2 Further along the promenade, after the Churchill Tavern, the promenade becomes noticeably wider and more peaceful. Continue past the Lookout kiosk (public toilets are available here) and the promenade widens again to reveal even more green space with a genuinely charming



'open parkland' feel. There's also a sculpture by David Barnes called 'Hands and Molecules' that overlooks Pegwell Bay (in the direction of the old Pfizer complex at Sandwich). A little further on and you arrive at the Boating Pool Café with its unmistakable circular boating pool, café and free children's play park. Public toilets are also available.

- 3 It is worth noting that the end of the Promenade is now approximately 350m away where the path turns ninety degrees and emerges, some 200m on, at Pegwell Road. Turn left here and follow the road but be aware there is a short section of road (approximately 65m) where there is no foot-way.

- 4 As Pegwell Road begins to curve to the right, you will pass the Belle Vue Tavern with its wonderful terrace overlooking the bay and the Sir Stanley Gray pub on your left hand side and the popular Pegwell Bay Hotel on your right. Keep on for another fifty metres and then turn left to follow a shingle track to the old Coastguard Cottages (now all private dwellings). Don't be concerned when the path becomes bare earth and grass for several hundred metres, you will soon reach and cross the access road to the old Hoverport and emerge in a wide open park area at Cliffs End where there is a kiosk, some public toilets and some very good views back towards Ramsgate across Pegwell Bay.

- 5 Follow National Cycle Route 15 down Sandwich Road and past the impressive replica Viking ship 'Hugin' until the marshes of Pegwell Bay are on your left hand side. Continue a little further and you enter Pegwell Bay Country Park where you can follow a circular path around the reserve. The site has public toilets, bird-hides, plenty of interpretation, a children's play area, a car park and the welcoming Dog Walkers Rest Cafe (open every day except Monday). When you are ready to leave you can retrace your steps back to Ramsgate harbour, catch a bus from across the road outside the entrance to the reserve near the Sportsman pub (not Sundays) or call for a taxi.



Black Tailed Godwit

# Kent Greeters

Want a bit of individual attention? Kent Greeters are a band of helpful and passionate volunteers that are ready and waiting to share the local area they know and love so well. As well as taking you on a short 2 - 4 hour personalised walk, greeters will introduce you to the local highlights, hidden gems and everything else that makes up their day-to-day world. The service is created to be as helpful and fun as possible, totally free and available to groups of up to six people.

Visit their website for more details: [www.kentgreeters.co.uk](http://www.kentgreeters.co.uk)



For more information about Ramsgate and all the local area has to offer, you can pop into the Visitor Information Centres where the local staff will be happy to help.

## Ramsgate Visitor Information Centre

The Custom House, Harbour Parade  
Ramsgate CT11 8LP  
**01843 598750**  
Open 10am - 4pm

## Thanet Visitor Information Centre

For more things to do and places to stay in Ramsgate, Broadstairs and Margate.  
Droit House, Stone Pier  
Margate CT9 1JD  
**01843 577577**  
[www.visitthanet.co.uk](http://www.visitthanet.co.uk)  
Open 10am - 5pm

## KENT GARDEN of ENGLAND

For more things to do and places to stay in Kent, the Garden of England, go to [www.visitkent.co.uk](http://www.visitkent.co.uk)

For more walks in Kent use the excellent Explore Kent website [www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent](http://www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent)  
Download the Explore Kent App and follow this walk on your smartphone.



This document is available in alternative formats and can be explained in a range of languages.  
Tel: 0300 333 5540



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