



Canterbury's Woodland



Oak leaves

A Family Fun Break in...

The Blean

Canterbury's Ancient Woodland

This Country Break explores the woodlands and villages of **The Blean**, the area of ancient woodland between; Canterbury, Faversham, Whitstable, Herne Bay and the Marshes of Thanet.

Woodlands form the heart of **The Blean** covering over 3,000 hectares and it remains as one of the most extensive woodlands in the south east of England. This is ancient woodland and is particularly rich and diverse in wildlife, so much so that large areas are specially protected as Nature Reserves or Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The Blean's very nature makes it superb for plenty of outdoor activities, but it really is a walking haven, with miles of footpaths (120 miles to be exact), accessible woodlands, good public transport, plenty of promoted routes and few busy roads. It is one of the few places where some truly car-free days out are possible.

The Blean provides a changing variety of experiences and sights through the seasons. Winter, spring, summer and autumn all bring a particular character to the Blean and it really can be a totally different place to visit depending on when you chose to come.



A Family Fun break

There are many things to do in **Canterbury, Faversham** and **Whitstable** that will keep the children – and adults – happy for hours. But there are also plenty of opportunities for you to explore the woodlands and attractions of **The Blean** and on the following pages are a few suggestions for the whole family to experience the very best of the area.

During your stay check the local websites or local parish magazine (your accommodation and the local pubs may well have a copy) for details of fetes, fairs, courses and other country events.



A walk in the woods



No man's Orchard

Further Information

- www.theblean.co.uk
- www.canterbury.co.uk
- www.faversham.org.uk
- www.seewhitstable.com
- www.visitkent.co.uk
- www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent
- www.kentdowns.org
- www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk



Getting There

The Blean is easily reached from Canterbury and the A2 or M2.

Several bus routes operated by Stagecoach cross the Blean between Canterbury, Whitstable, faversham and Herne Bay.

There are several rail stations all with connections to London and points beyond



Wild Horses at Wildwood

Where to start...

Start with a walk in the woods and enjoy some of the Blean's attractions by trying **Perry Wood and the Western Blean?** There's plenty for all the family.

Details on page 3.



View from Perry Wood towards Faversham

The

Western Blean

and the Kent Downs

Basing yourself in **Boughton** is a great way to experience the Blean and its surrounding woodlands whilst still being in easy reach of **Faversham** or **Canterbury** and their attractions should the weather turn rainy.

Why not start the day with a short walk in the 150 acres of woodland at **Perry Wood** (part of the **Kent Downs AONB**)? A simple loop following the carved fingerposts up to the pulpit with its views across the downs and foraging for chestnuts (in season) would take about 2 hours and although a little adventurous, is suitable for most. However those with pushchairs and very little legs may want to stick to the short easy access route.

The pulpit makes a great spot to stop for a picnic, or alternatively seek out the **Rose & Crown Pub** and feast on local produce to fortify yourselves (they also have a treasure hunt trail leaflet if a walk in the woods isn't quite exciting enough!).

With the afternoon ahead of you why not head to one of the larger attractions in the Blean? Within easy reach are the Edwardian Gardens at **Mount Ephraim**, perfect for a game of hide and seek amongst intoxicating colours and scents or a more sedate exploration of the Mizmaze.

Gardens at Mount Ephraim



Perry Wood

Alternatively spend the afternoon gaining an experience of rural life firsthand at **Farming World**, with its rare breeds, heavy horses, falconry and plenty more activities and experiences for both young and old alike.

A little further East (and if you still have the energy) you could also visit the enchanted woodland at **Druidstone**. Here you can interact with the friendly animals, have fun in the adventure play areas, or find some peace and tranquility on the woodland trail (complete with sleeping dragon and other mystical creatures!).

With the day done head back to Boughton for dinner, either in one of its pubs (perhaps the grade 2 listed **Queens Head**) or at **Martin's Restaurant** a little way out of the village.

There are plenty of options to stay in Boughton, so you can easily follow all these options over several days...



Getting There

Boughton is easily reached from the A2 and lies only minutes from the M2 itself.

Buses on Stagecoach **Route 3** operate between Canterbury Bus Station and Boughton three times an hour Mon-Sat.

The nearest rail station to Boughton is a few miles away at Selling.



Clydesdale Horses at Farming World



Eagle Owl at Druidstone Park



The Queens Head in Boughton

Further Information

- www.theblean.co.uk
- www.kentdowns.org.uk
- www.roseandcrownperrywood.co.uk
- www.mountphraimgardens.co.uk
- www.farming-world.com
- www.druidstone.net
- www.thequeenshead-at-boughton.co.uk
- www.martinsrestaurant.co.uk
- www.boughton-under-blean.org.uk



A Walk in the Woods

Extending your break...

An ideal second day over a weekend would be to follow the **Gunpowder and Godwits** itinerary. This option will take you exploring further to the West in and around the market town of Faversham. Details on page 5...



Oyster Shells and Gunpowder



Gunpowder and Godwits

a full day around Faversham

Starting again from **Boughton** head first to see some of the Bleans finest products put to a most destructive end at the **Oare Gunpowder Works**. Just 1 mile west of **Faversham**, take a glimpse in the past art of making gunpowder. The works itself is a scheduled ancient monument but you can visit easily on signed woodland and waterside trails, and see all aspects of the past art of making gunpowder, as well as taking in the wildlife and more peaceful surroundings of the site today.

Afterwards blow that sulphurous experience away with a few hours walking and bird watching in **Oare Marshes**, an internationally important site for rare birds with esoteric names like Black Tailed Godwits and Bearded Reedlings. There are over 81 hectares of marsh here and all can be comfortably observed from the pushchair friendly nature trail.

If you need some refuelling stop at the **Three Mariners** in Oare with its garden terrace overlooking the marshes.



Oare Marshes

Snipe

If the summer heat gets too much you could spend your afternoon swimming or simply splashing at one of the three outdoor pools at **Faversham Pools**. Choose from the 33 metre pool with diving boards, the paddling pool for the younger ones, or the wild water rapids pool for the more adventurous.

Afterwards why not explore some more of **Faversham**, one of Kent's most historic and charming towns? Perhaps some more gunpowder action at the **Chart Gunpowder Mills** (the oldest of their kind in the world) or finding out more about Faversham's distinguished local history at the **Fleur de Lis Heritage Centre**.

You now either have the choice making the trip back to **Boughton** and taking dinner at the **White Horse Inn** or stay a while longer in **Faversham** with its wide choice of restaurants and perhaps a trip to the mock tudor **Royal cinema**, with its traditionally uniformed staff, for anyone still with the energy to spare!



Getting There

Boughton is easily reached from the A2 and lies only minutes from the M2 itself.

Buses on Stagecoach **Route 3** operate between Canterbury Bus Station and Boughton three times an hour Mon-Sat.

The nearest rail station to Boughton is a few miles away at Selling.



Historic Faversham



Further Information

www.theblean.co.uk

www.gunpowderworks.co.uk

www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk

www.threemarinersoare.co.uk

www.favershampools.com

www.faversham.org

www.royalcinema.co.uk

www.whitehorsecanterbury.co.uk

www.boughton-under-blean.org.uk

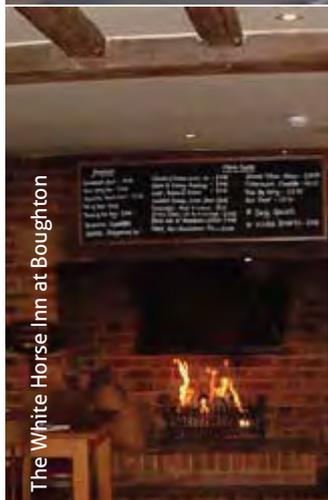


Oare Marshes

Extending your break...

If you haven't already then try exploring **the Western Blean and Perry Wood** (details on Page 3).

For something different head to Page 11 for Roman's cathedrals and Bears!



The White Horse Inn at Boughton



Autumn Colours in the Blean Woods



Wild Horses

Getting Natural

in the Eastern Blean

Why not spend a day exploring the Eastern Blean? For the outdoors types and a real taste of getting back to nature, there are several campsites around the Blean, particularly in the Eastern parts.

Start your day with a howl by visiting **Wildwood**, where you can come nose-to-nose with British Wildlife past & present. For the kids that means a chance to see wolves, wild horses, lynx and wild boar roaming the woodlands as well as some more usual native species like red squirrels, foxes and badgers. If that isn't enough to keep them entertained there is also an adventure playground and plenty of chance to get up close and personal with some less ferocious residents in the animal encounters. Getting the most of **Wildwood** can easily encompass a morning (or longer!) as there's plenty to see and do.

For lunch either make the most of the facilities in **Wildwood** (hot and cold food, snacks and ice cream), or alternatively tuck into that picnic you remembered to pack earlier at one of the picnic areas or head into the woods to find a suitable spot.

Wildwood's Wolves



After lunch why not walk off some of that great food with a wander through **West Blean and Thornden Woods**. This is an easy linear walk with a two mile hard track running from East to West and an even easier, pushchair friendly circular route. Whilst in **Thornden Wood** make sure to walk the **Wildart Trail**, an art and sensory trail using natural, local materials to create sustainable, non-invasive artwork which will blend into the surroundings.

If you are feeling more energetic you could follow the **Blean Initiative walk no.1 - Herne and West Blean wood**, a circular route of some 3.5 miles through the woods and countryside with views across to the coast.

With the day winding down, head back East and find yourself a country pub (the **Punch Tavern** and the **First and Last** are both close by), before winding your way back to your tents.



Getting There

Herne and Herne Common in the Eastern Blean are easily reached from the A299 Thanet Way or on the A291 from Sturry.

Buses on Stagecoach **Routes 4 & 6** operate regularly from both Canterbury and Herne Bay Mon-Sat.

The nearest rail stations are at Sturry or Herne Bay.



Download the walk instructions at www.theblean.co.uk



Further Information

www.theblean.co.uk

www.wildwoodtrust.org

www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk

www.crowncarveries.co.uk

www.firstandlastfreehouse.co.uk



Grey Squirrel

Extending your break...

Having spent a day on your feet, why not take on a different challenge and **Cycle to the Sea** on the Crab and Winkle Way?

Full details can be found on Page 9...



Not far now...

A

Ride to the sea

cycling the Crab and Winkle Way

Start your day in Canterbury with a little shopping expedition to **The Goods Shed** for picnic supplies (making sure of course to look for local Blean produce where you can).

With food packed your next mission is to hire some bikes from **Canterbury Cycle Hire** (conveniently also at the Goods Shed) . Then get yourself set and head off on the **Crab and Winkle Way** towards **Whitstable**.

The trail itself is 7.5 miles of mainly traffic free along the disused railway line, which is also mostly flat and features plenty of interesting sculptures, medieval earthworks and some good views along the route if you need a break.

Find yourself a shady spot somewhere for that picnic, a good choice is at the winding pond, built in 1829 to store the water that the steam winding engines needed to pull the passenger carriages up out of Whitstable.

The route officially ends at **Whitstable** station, but is signed right through to the harbour of this lovely seaside town where you could spend an afternoon of fun on the beaches, swimming or rock pooling (depending on the time of year and temperature of the water) or just soaking up the atmosphere of **Whitstable Harbour**.



Whitstable at low tide

It's probably best to continue this aquatic theme and tuck into some of the seafood from which the trail takes its name, either fish and chips or if feeling brave some of the local oysters! As an aside if you are here in July then join the crowds for the **Whitstable Oyster Festival**.

If you have the time and energy retrace the **Crab and Winkle** back to **Canterbury**, if not then you could find yourself some comfy accommodation and settle down for an enjoyable evening in **Whitstable**.

Of course don't forget to revitalise yourselves for the return journey the next day (although if you really wanted, you could return your bikes to the sister operation - **Whitstable Cycle Hire** and take the **Triangle Route bus!**)



Getting There

Canterbury is easy to reach from the M2/A2

Buses on **Stagecoach routes 4, 5 and 6** run regularly between Canterbury and Whitstable.

Regular trains run into **Canterbury East** and **Canterbury West** stations, including high-speed trains to and from London

Brave enough for Oysters?



Starting in Canterbury

Further Information

- www.theblean.co.uk
- www.thegoodshed.co.uk
- www.wcch.co.uk
- www.sustrans.org.uk
- www.kentishstour.org.uk
- www.seewhitstable.com
- www.whitstableharbour.org
- www.whitstableoysterfestival.org
- www.stagecoachbus.com

Cycling for everyone



Extending your break...

You could explore further from Canterbury and take in the Roman fort at Bigbury as well as see more of the historic city itself.

Full details are on Page 11



Site of Bigbury Camp

Canterbury and Countryside

Romans, Orchards and Bears

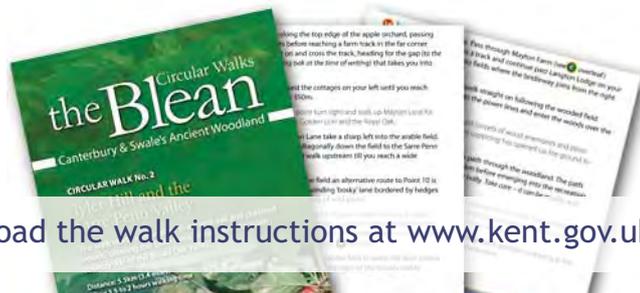
Starting from Chartham Hatch take a walk to **Bigbury Camp**, site of Julius Caesars first battle (and defeat of the Britons) in 54 BC after landing on the Kent coast somewhere between Walmer and Thanet. The Iron age Hillfort at Bigbury was probably established around 800BC as safe and fortified place for the local farmers and their livestock against attacks by invaders from Northern France, but was almost certainly abandoned after the defeat to the Romans.

The **Explore Kent Chartham Walk** provides a convenient route and directions for a circular 5 mile walk of about 2.5 hours. The second route follows parts of both the North Downs Way and Stour Valley walk, along the river and through orchards and close to and indeed through the cattle annexe of the Bigbury site.

The walk also takes you through **No Man's Orchard**, the first community orchard in the country and local nature reserve, in spring the blossom here is particularly lovely on the old growth apple trees.



No Man's Orchard



Download the walk instructions at www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent

For lunch return to **Chartham Hatch** and relax with a great local produce lunch in the one acre garden of the **Chapter arms** overlooking the orchards.

After lunch head to **Canterbury**, either by road or just as easily via a short walk to Chartham station and taking the train. The first point of call in the city must surely be the **Cathedral**, but make sure to seek out Rupert Bear at the **Museum of Canterbury** (as well as finds from Bigbury) and explore bygone eras at the **Canterbury Tales Museum**, or if that all seems too hectic, just kick back and feed the ducks.

Canterbury has a great variety of family friendly restaurants or cafes, suitable for all tastes and palates for an evening meal, as well as plenty of options like the cinema for evening entertainment.



Getting There

Chartham Hatch is easy to reach from Canterbury and the A2 or A28

Buses on **Stagecoach route 652** runs regularly between Canterbury and Chartham on the way to Ashford.

Regular trains run to **Chartham** station from **Canterbury West** station.



The Canterbury Countryside

Further Information

- www.theblean.co.uk
- www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk
- www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent
- www.chapterarms.com
- www.canterbury.co.uk
- www.canterbury-cathedral.org.uk
- www.canterbury.gov.uk
- www.canterburytales.org.uk



The Chapter Arms



River Stour

Extending your break...

If you have enjoyed Bigbury and Chartham Hatch then why not head further west and try **Perry Wood and the Western Blean**? There's plenty for all the family.

Details on page 3.

More Information

Listings & Details



Attractions

Name	Telephone	Website	Address
Perry Wood	01795 424341	http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/40places/13.PerryWood.html	Selling, Nr Faversham
Mount Ephraim Gardens	01227 751496	http://www.mountephraimgardens.co.uk	Hernhill, Kent, ME13 9TX
Farming World	01227 751144	http://www.farming-world.com	Nash Court, Boughton, Kent, ME13 9SP
Hawklands Bird of Prey Centre	07706 122796	http://www.hawklands.co.uk	Nash Court, Boughton, Kent, ME13 9SN
Druidstone Park	01227 765168	http://www.druidstone.net	Honey Hill, Blean, Kent, CT2 9JR
Oare Gunpowder Works	01795 417850	www.gunpowderworks.co.uk	ME13 7UD
Oare Marshes	01622 662012	www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/greater-swale-wetlands/oare-marshes	ME13 OQA
Chart Gunpowder Mills	01795 534542	http://www.faversham.org/pages/business_directory_item.aspx?i_PageID=131655&i_DirectoryID=1035	Faversham Kent ME13 8NS
Fleur-de-lis Heritage Centre	01795 534542	www.faversham.org/pages/business_directory_item.aspx?i_PageID=131655&i_DirectoryID=39	10-13 Preston Street Faversham Kent ME13 8NS
Faversham Pools	01795 532426	http://www.favershampools.com	Leslie Smith Drive, Faversham, Kent, ME13 8PW
The Royal Cinema	01795 591211	http://www.royalcinema.co.uk	Faversham, Kent, ME13 7AG

Name	Telephone	Website	Address
Wildwood	01227 712 111	http://www.wildwoodtrust.org/	Herne Common, Kent, CT6 7LQ
West Blean & Thornden Woods	01227 719506	www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/blean-complex/	Canterbury Road, Herne Common, Kent, CT6 7LF
The Goods Shed	01227 459 153	http://thegoodshed.co.uk/	Station Road West, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 8AN
Canterbury Cycle Hire	07791 114529	http://www.wcch.co.uk	Station Road West, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 8AN
Whitstable Harbour	01227 246086	http://whitstableharbour.org/visiting-the-harbour	Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1AB
Whitstable Oyster Festival	01227 862 066	http://www.whitstableoysterfestival.com/	Whitstable, Kent
Bigbury Camp	01227 719506	http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/blean-complex/bigbury-camp/	Bigbury Road, Chartham Hatch, Kent, CT2 9BJ
Canterbury Cathedral	01227 762862	http://www.canterbury-cathedral.org/	11 The Precincts, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2EH
Canterbury Museum	01227 475 202	http://www.canterbury.gov.uk/main.cfm?objectid=48	Stour Street, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 2NR
Canterbury Tales Museum	01227 479227	http://www.canterburytales.org.uk/	St. Margaret's Street, Canterbury, Kent CT1 2TG

Food & Drink

Name	Telephone	Website	Address
Rose & Crown Perrywood	01227 752214	http://www.roseandcrownperrywood.co.uk/	Perry wood, Selling, Nr Faversham ME13 9RY
Queens Head Boughton	01227 751369	www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/reserves/blean-complex/	111 The Street, Boughton-under-Blean, Kent, ME13 9BH

Family

Name	Telephone	Website	Address
The White Horse Boughton	01227 751343	http://www.whitehorsecanterbury.co.uk/	The Street, Boughton-under-Blean, Kent, ME13 9AL
Martin's Restaurant Boughton	01227 750304	http://www.martinsrestaurant.co.uk/	40 The Street, Boughton-under-Blean, Kent, ME13 9AS
Three Mariner's Oare	01795 533 633	http://www.thethreemariner-soare.co.uk/	2 Church Road, Oare, Faversham, Kent, ME13 0QA
Punch Tavern Sturry	01227 710474	http://www.crowncarveries.co.uk/find-us/punch-tavern.html	Calcott, Sturry, Kent, CT3 4NB
First and Last Herne Common	01227 364465	http://www.firstandlastfreehouse.co.uk/	Canterbury Road, Herne Common, Kent, CT6 7JU
Chapter Arms Chartham Hatch	01227 738340	http://www.chapterarms.com	New Town Street, Chartham Hatch, Kent, CT4 7LT

Walks & Rides

Name	Distance	Website	Start & End
Blean Initiative Walk1 Herne & West Blean Wood	3.5 Miles	http://www.theblean.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/walk-leafletblean11.pdf	Herne Common
Crab & Winkle Way Cycle Route	7.5 Miles	http://www.kentishstour.org.uk/C&W_way_lflt.htm	Canterbury to Whitstable
Explore Kent Chartham Walk	5 Miles	https://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/leisure-and-culture/countryside-and-coast/walks/walks-in-east-kent/walks-in-east-kent-chartham.pdf	Chartham Station

General Information

Name	Telephone	Website	Address
Kent Downs	01303 815170	http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/	West Barn, Penstock Hall Farm Canterbury Road, East Brabourne, Kent, TN25 5LL
Boughton-under-Blean Website	01227 751130	http://www.boughton-under-blean.org.uk/	N/A

For more in The Blean

and across East Kent...

Active Romantic Outdoors Pick N' Mix

www.visitkent.co.uk/explore/coast-natural2.asp



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www.hiddenbritainse.org.uk

Country Breaks in East Kent