

An Active Break in...

### Isle of Sheppey

Kent's Treasure Island

The Isle of Harty Trail

This Country Break explores the Isle of Sheppey, one of England's few true islands, sited at the mouths of the Thames and the Medway and cut off from the rest of Kent by the tidal channel and estuary known as the Swale.

At just 36 square miles the island packs a lot in, from the miles of beaches (perfect for lazing on or getting wet from), its acres of low-lying marshes making it one of the best places in UK to see birds of prey, to its renowned fossil beds which provide regular prehistoric finds.

Scratch a little beneath the surface and you'll also discover more history and heritage per square mile than just about anywhere else in the country. Uncover the strong maritime tradition, stand on the same soil as Saxon Queens, Dutch Invaders and famous writers, and for the piece-de-résistance visit the site of the birthplace of UK aviation.

So forget what you think you know about Sheppey and come and take a fresh look, you're sure to find something surprising!



GARDEN of ENGLAND

visitkent.co.uk

# An Active Break

A visit to Sheppey isn't all lazing on the beach you know... In fact there are some great experience s for those looking for a bit more activity all the way up to serious adrenaline junkies, so come on, get active!

These are just a few ideas so feel free to mix it up or swap them around, combine with any events that are on in the area (remember to check local websites and magazines) and in short make it an experience of your own. Do be sure to note those activities that need to be booked in advance.

Speaking of which, why not book a **Sheppey Greeter** to get things off to a good start? These are volunteers full of useful local knowledge and experience to help you get even more from your day.





#### **Further Information**

www.visitsheppey.com www.visit.swale.gov.uk www.visitkent.co.uk www.visitkent.co.uk/greeters/ www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent www.travelinesoutheast.org.uk www.southeasternrailway.co.uk www.ruralkent.org.uk/swailrail.htm



#### **Getting There**

The Isle of Sheppey is easily reached via the **Sheppey** Crossing (A249) from the M2 and the A2 at Sittingbourne.

Several bus routes cross the island linking to Maidstone, Canterbury and the rest of Kent. See the map.

Trains operated by **South** Eastern call at Sheerness and Queenborough, with connections to Kent, London and points beyond.



#### Getting Started...

It's an island, and there's no better way to get started than by getting wet!

Head to page 3 to start getting salty...



Experience an adrenalin-splashed day of action on the Isle of Sheppey; situated off the Kent coast the island habitat creates the perfect backdrop to for an array of water sports. You may need to book some sessions in advance, and keep an eye on the

Start the day on the furthest edge of Sheppey at the Minster Wind Surfing Academy (make sure to book in advance), for the complete beginner or those with some experience you can take lessons with Ricky Wooding, the fully certified instructor, and hire everything you need. If it has been a while, book in a for a refresher session, or for the light-travelling experienced surfer you can just hire the kit and head out on your own. In the shadow of enormous ships and vast skies, you can zip through

Once you have worked up an appetite you can stop by The Playa on Minster leas for a bite to eat with a cracking sea view or head along the sea wall to Barton's Point Coastal Park for a light lunch on the veranda by the lake at the **Boat House Cafe**. The peace and quiet may be a shock after the high adrenalin wave riding of the morning but enjoy your well-deserved rest before starting your next session.



For the afternoon it's all about getting back on the water but you have an interesting choice of vehicle!

Barton's Point Coastal Park offer Agua zorbing and kayaking on the lake, plenty to keep even the most vivacious adventurer occupied. Kayaking is relatively self-explained, but Aqua zorbing is the new rush on the block. It involves climbing inside an enormous inflated hamster ball on water, it is like entering a new planet where your voice sounds alien and it is a challenge just to remain standing.

For a cool down head to The Whitehouse Restaurant in Minsteron-sea where there is a delicious selection of English and Indian cuisine to replenish your energy. To finish the day, mosey on down to Layzells for a calmer game of snooker or pool and pint of the cold stuff.

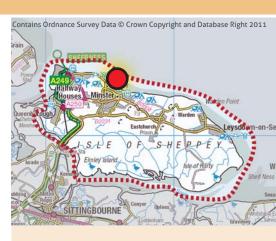




#### **Further Information**

www.visitsheppey.com www.visit.swale.gov.uk www.minsterwindsurfacademy.com www.the-playa.com www.bartonspointcoastalpark.co.uk www.thewhitehouse-restaurant.com





#### **Getting There**

Minster is a short drive from Sheerness along the seafront on Marine Parade or by following the A250/B2008 from Halfway then taking the Broadway seawards.

Several bus routes stop at Minster, with route 367 travelling along Marine parade. See the map.

The nearest station is at Sheerness where you can pick up the 367.



#### Extending your break...

Not salty enough yet? Well don't worry; Sheppey has plenty of other nautical experiences on offer.

Head to page 5 for more.



# Getting Salty!

It's all about the sea after all...

Enjoy new views of the striking Isle of Sheppey as you leave land and head out for a perfect day on the deep blue. You may need to book some sessions in advance. Whether you are an old sea dog or a boson, you are sure to enjoy this leisurely outing on the waves.

Begin in Sheerness with sailing lessons from the Isle of Sheppey Sailing club run by voluntary Royal Yachting Association approved instructors. Learn your port from your starboard, and hitch knots from your bowline. For beginners there are over five square miles of safe, sheltered water. Sailing takes place directly off the club and conditions are rarely too severe to prevent sailing. You can indulge in sea, estuary or river sailing less than an hour from London and boasting some of the best sailing waters in the UK, it is sure to be an experience you will remember.

Once you are feeling ship-shape pop along to **The Ship on Shore** for a spot of pub lunch in a nautical theme. You could tempt yourself with traditional seaside fare or even a Sheppey special. There are sure to be plenty of friendly locals to retell your extravagant tales of a morning at sea.



After lunch, it is time to sit back and let the sea do the hard work. Charter a fishing vessel such as the Morgan James in Queenborough and head out to track down the catch of the day. There is nothing like the silence of the open sea and fresh sea air to let you kick back and relax. Watch the end of your rod for the all-important nibble and you will have the freshest fish and chips.

If you don't quite manage to catch your own fish supper, don't fret, The Napier Hotel is a perfect place to have some Fish and Chips. After this, you could take in the majestic sea views and mighty ships while walking along the sea wall between Sheerness and Minster.

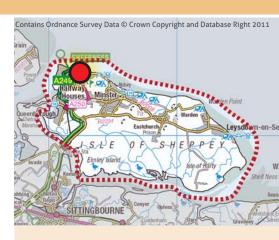
If one day at sea isn't enough you can also organise a day trip on the Thames Barge "Greta". The day's sailing out of Whitstable harbour circumnavigates the island giving you views of the naval fortifications, Deadman's island, the unexploded wreck of the USS Richard Montgomery and a real sense of maritime adventure.





#### Further Information

www.visitsheppey.com www.visit.swale.gov.uk www.iossc.org.uk www.charterboats-uk.co.uk www.greta1892.co.uk



#### **Getting There**

**Sheerness** is easily reached from the Sheppey Crossing following the A249 Brielle Way.

Several bus routes stop along Marine Parade, with route 367 being your best bet. See the map.

The nearest station is at Sheerness about a mile away where you can pick up the 367.



#### Extending your break...

Feel the need for some dry land under your feet?

Well wash the salt out of your hair and strap on your walking boots as you head to page 7.



### Round the Island

### Isle of Harty that is...

14 miles and a full day's hike make no mistake! The route follows footpaths, bridleways and some on road sections, so make use of the Explore Kent website and its interactive map to plan your route.

Start at the Car Park on Imperial Drive in Warden Bay and head up along the cliff tops towards Warden Point to enjoy fantastic sea views and note the dramatic cliff erosion and fossils that are uncovered here. Head through the area of shady woodland and onto Thornhill Road. Turn left into Warden Road to see the views over the Thames estuary.

Take a break in friendly family run inn, The Wheatsheaf for a cold beverage or some traditional pub grub. Make a note for later in the day as there are often evening discos, karaoke, quiz nights, where you can meet some of the locals, and spend an evening away from it all.

Opposite the Wheatsheaf is a bridleway heading south, take this downhill through fields and farmland until you meet the Leysdown Road where you cross to continue down Harty Ferry Road. Head along Harty Ferry Road to the Raptor Viewpoint at Capel Fleet. This raised area gives fabulous views of the surrounding bird nesting areas and is one of the best places in the UK to watch Marsh Harriers and other birds of prey.



Continue to The Church of St. Thomas the Apostle at Harty, a beautifully isolated historic building, set picturesquely in the tranquil countryside. Take in the beautiful waterside views and intricate stained glass.

Nearby **The Ferry House Inn** is one of the only eateries this far into the unspoiled marshlands. There is a varied menu and it is sure to have something to everyone's liking. Enjoy some local hospitality and then go forth again to explore more of Sheppey's hidden delight.

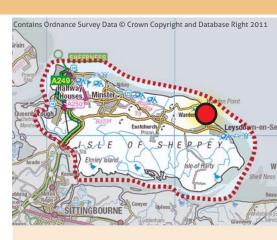
From here you can follow the footpath through the Swale National Nature Reserve to Shellness where you can spot waterfowl, avocets, owl's and other birds of prey, as well as rare butterflies and other wildlife. From Shellness head north along the beach to Leysdown and then onto Warden (look out for the seal population that have been noted along this area of the Sheppey shoreline). Finally, it is a short slope back to the car park.





#### Further Information

www.visitsheppey.com www.visit.swale.gov.uk www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent www.discoveringfossils.co.uk www.sheppeyfossils.com www.rspb.org.uk/marshharrier www.hartychurch.org.uk www.ferryhouseinn.co.uk www.naturalengland.org.uk



#### **Getting There**

Imperial Drive is reached from the Leysdown Road, take Warden Bay Road and follow it to the car park.

Several bus routes cross the island between Minster and Leysdown, with buses on route 362 being your best bet. See the map.

The nearest train stations are a in the west of the island. handily also on route **362**.

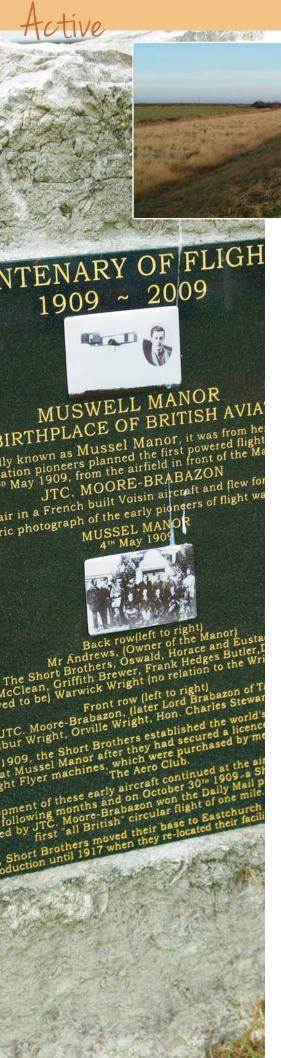


#### Extending your break...

Fancy a two wheeled challenge?

Page 9 has everything you need to know to follow the pioneers of aviation from the saddle.

Country Breaks in Kent



### Flying by bike!

### **An Aviation Cycle Tour**

Isle of Harty Trail

The Isle of Sheppey has a fantastic depth of history; and this 16 mile cycling route will explore its pioneering aviation past. You will also catch a glimpse of Sheppey's more modern flying residents as you pass through the nature reserves, which are said to be home to Britain's most varied species of birds of prey. Note this ride is described as moderate with several on-road sections.

Start your day at Muswell Manor the site of many aviation firsts, including; the first circular mile flown, the world's first aircraft factory where the Short brothers built the Wright flyer, and the very first pig to fly! From the manor take the Isle of Harty Trail south towards Harty. As you ride across the flat landscape so suitable for early aviators, you may be able to see the scars of historic salt works, and in the morning, the birds are at their most active. This might be a good place to have an al fresco breakfast with some great views and peace and quiet.

Next head to the remote **Church of St Thomas at Harty** and enjoy the views of mainland Kent across the Swale. When you've had your fill take the Harty Ferry Road north. Keep an eye out for wildlife as this is prime raptor country with Marsh Harriers in residence year round. On reaching the Leysdown Road turn west towards Eastchurch.



Stop for lunch at The Shurland Hotel, offering a brilliant selection of Italian cuisine in a building that dates back to 1821.

After lunch visit the **Memorial to British Aviation** opposite the hotel and the memorial window to the pioneers who lost their lives in All Saints Church, and make sure to stop by the Wright Flyer model at the Western entrance to the village.

With Eastchurch behind you cycle north to Warden and along the cliffs to Leysdown. You will be able to see the busy Shipping Channel and some of the enormous cargo ships delivering cars – our favoured modern transport. If you are still feeling energetic, you can keep going east to the isolated hamlet of Shellness along the shoreline path.

For some light food visit The Retreat Café on Shellness Road and then finish back at Muswell Manor for a drink and to see the extensive aviation exhibition in the bar, including an aweinspiring picture of all the aviation pioneers (including the brothers Wright and Short as well as Lord Brabazon and C.S. Rolls) collected in one place.

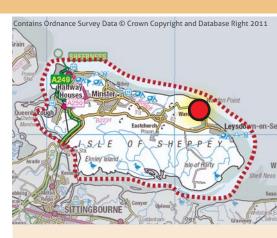




#### Further Information

www.visitsheppey.com www.visit.swale.gov.uk www.muswellmanor.co.uk www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent Isle of Harty Trail www.hartychurch.org.uK www.rspb.org.uK/marshharrier www.theshurlandhotel.co.uK

www.sheppeywebsite.co.uK



#### **Getting There**

From the Sheppey Crossing cross the island and through Leysdown to reach Muswell Manor

Several bus routes cross the island to Leysdown, with buses on route 360 being your best bet. See the map.

The nearest train stations are in the west of the island, handily also on route 360.



#### Extending your break...

Tired yet? Hopefully not as we have another walk in store for you as we explore Sheppey's heritage on foot.

All you need to know is on page 11.

Country Breaks in Kent 10





Hogarth's Queenborough

### Little England

### Sheerness & Queenborough by foot...

The Isle of Sheppey has such an array of different environments that you can almost experience the habitats of Britain in one day and as a bonus this walk can be completed using public transport. It will take you through marshlands, by waterways, along the coast, through industry and agriculture, with chances to spot wildlife, uncover history and see Britain's working docks. Don't worry about getting lost as a large part of this walk follows the **Sheerness Way cycle route** that is well way marked.

Starting at Sheerness train station, head south down the High Street to the beautifully decorated Clock tower (built in 1902) before turning left along the Broadway past Trinity Church and the imposing Catholic Church of St. Henry & St. Elizabeth. Follow the seawall out of town along Marine Parade as far as Barton's Point Coastal Park, this path is bicycle and dog friendly and offers some great views out across the Thames estuary.

Stop for a tea break at **the Napier Hotel** or at **Barton's Point Boat House Café**, there are plenty of activities to do in the Country Park (including Kayaking and Aquazorbing), so you could book sessions for later in your trip. Take the path along the side of the canal and follow the **Queenborough lines**, these manmade waterways were part of a mid 19th century ditch and mound fortification built to protect Sheerness Naval Dockyard from attack from inland, but remain today for wildlife to inhabit.





Considering the time of day you could grab lunch at The Golden Fish Bar and enjoy them down by the harbour.

Take the opportunity to visit the Queenborough Guildhall Museum and the Castle Site, or take a break from the walking and stop by Castle Connections, who have regular art exhibitions by local artists, finds from recent archaeological digs and brew a mean coffee. Take some time and wander down to the harbour and along the Hard to Crundall's Wharf to get a sense of this historical little port.

You can finish at Queenborough station, or return on the coastal path past the jetties then take the inland road and head up to the Lappel to Sheerness. If you have time take a detour to either the Sheerness Heritage Centre or the Blue Town Heritage Centre, both offer a great way to wind down and make sense of all the sights you've seen.

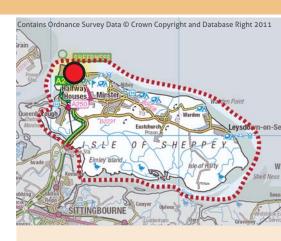
Finish for dinner in one of Sheerness High Street's many eateries before heading back to the station.





#### Further Information

www.visitsheppey.com www.visit.swale.gov.uk www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent Sheerness Way www.sheppeywebsite.co.uk www.bartonspointcoastalpark.co.uk/ www.castleconnections.co.uk www.sheernessheritagecentre.com www.bluetownheritagecentre.com



#### **Getting There**

**Sheerness** is easily reached from the Sheppey Crossing following the A249 Brielle Way.

Several bus routes run from Sheerness and provide links to Sittingbourne, and beyond. See the map.

**Sheerness station** is situated at the top of the High Street, trains run via Queenborough to the rest of Kent.



#### Extending your break...

Hankering for more history?

You're in luck, we've compiled a whole series of Heritage Itineraries to help you uncover the very best Sheppey has to offer!

Active

# More Information

Listings & Details



Attractions	Listing	3 d Detaits	
Name	Telephone	Website	Address
Queenborough Castle Site	N/A	http://www.sheppeywebsite.co.u k/index.php?id=86	Queenborough
Queenborough Guildhall Museum	01795 667295	N/A	High Street, Queenborough, ME11 5AA
Bluetown Heritage Centre	01795 662981	http://www.bluetownheritage- centre.com	69 High Street, Bluetown, Sheerness, ME12 1RW
Muswell Manor	01795 510245	http://www.muswellmanor.co.uk	Shellness Road, Leysdown-on-sea ME12 4RJ
Church of St.Thomas the Apostle	01795 875146	http://www.hartychurch.org.uk/	Harty Ferry Road, Harty, ME12 4BQ
Swale National Nature Reserve	0845 600 3078	http://www.naturalengland.org.u k/ourwork/conservation/desig- natedareas/nnr/1006143.aspx	Shellness Road, Shellness, ME12 4RJ
Memorial to British Aviation	N/A	http://www.sheppeywebsite.co.u k/index.php?id=72	High Street, Eastchurch, ME12 4DA
Church of All Saints, Eastchurch	01795 880 205	N/A	High Street, Eastchurch, ME12 4DA
Sheerness Heritage Centre	01795 663317	http://www.sheernessheritage- centre.com/	10 Rose Street, Sheerness, ME12 1AJ
RSPB Capel Fleet Raptor Viewpoint	01795 665969	http://www.rspb.org.uk/re- serves/guide/e/elmleymarshes/	Harty Ferry Road, Harty, ME12 4BQ

Name	Telephone	Website	Address
Isle of Harty Trail	N/A	http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_a nd_culture/countryside_and_coas t/cycling/cycle_routes/isle_of_ha rty_trail.aspx	Start on Leysdown Promenade
Sheerness Way Cycle Route	N/A	http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_a nd_culture/countryside_and_coas t/cycling/cycle_routes/sheer- ness_way.aspx	Start at Barton's Point Coastal Park
Minster Windsurfing Academy	07713122068	http://www.minsterwindsurfa- cademy.com/	Shingle Bank, MInster-on-Sea, ME12 2TE
Barton's Point Coastal Park	07909 994196	http://www.bartonspointcoastal- park.co.uk/	Marine Parade, Sheerness, ME12 2BX
Roy Shepherd Discovering Fossils	N/A	http://www.discoveringfossils.co. uk/isle_of_sheppey_fossils.htm	N/A
Sheppey Fossils	N/A	http://www.sheppeyfossils.com/ home.htm	N/A
Layzells	01795 876560	N/A	The Broadway, Minster-on-Sea, ME12 2DF
Isle of Sheppey Sailing Club	01795 663052	http://www.iossc.org.uk/	Cheyney Rock, Marine Parade, Sheerness, ME12 2BE
Morgan James - Charter Boat	07879 074 894	http://www.charterboats- uk.co.uk/morganjames-isleof- sheppey/	Queenborough Harbour, ME11 5EL
Thames Barge "Greta"	01795 534 541	http://www.greta1892.co.uk/	Whitstable Harbour, Whitastable, CT5 1AB



Active Food & Drink

Name	Telephone	Website	Address
The Ferry House Inn	01795 510214	http://www.theferryhouseinn.co. uk/	Harty Ferry Road, Harty, ME12 4BQ
Boat House Cafe at Barton's Point	07909 994196	http://www.bartonspointcoastal- park.co.uk/	Marine Parade, Sheerness, ME12 2BX
The Retreat Cafe	N/A	N/A	Shellness Road, Leysdown-on-sea, ME12 4RH
The Shurland Hotel	01795 881100	http://www.theshurlandhotel.co. uk	79-81 High Street, Eastchurch, ME12 4EH
The Playa	01795 873059	http://www.the-playa.com	The Leas, Minster-on-Sea, ME12 2NL
Muswell Manor	01795 510245	http://www.muswellmanor.co.uk	Shellness Road, Leysdown-on-sea ME12 4RJ
Castle Connections	01795 661277	www.castleconnections.co.uk	Railway Terrace, Queenborough, ME11 5AY
The Ship on Shore	01795 662880	N/A	155 Marine Parade, Sheerness, ME12 2BX
The White House Restaurant	01795 877008	http://www.thewhitehouse- restaurant.com	The Broadway, Minster-on-Sea, ME12 2TE
The Napier Hotel	01795 662731	N/A	1 Alma Road, Sheerness, ME12 2NZ
The Wheatsheaf	01795 880318	N/A	Warden Road, Warden, ME12 4HA
Golden Fish Bar	01795 664803	N/A	6 Railway Terrace, Queenborough, ME11 5AY

General Information
Name Talen

Name	Telephone	Website	Address
Sheppey Greeters	N/A	http://www.visitkent.co.uk/greete rs/	N/A
Sheppey History Website	N/A	http://www.sheppeywebsite.co.u k	N/A
Leysdown-on-Sea	N/A	http://www.leysdownonsea.com/	N/A
Explore Kent	N/A	http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure_a nd_culture/countryside_and_coas t.aspx	N/A
Visit Sheppey	N/A	http://www.visitsheppey.com	N/A
Visit Swale	N/A	http://www.visit.swale.gov.uk	N/A
Visit Kent	N/A	http://www.visitkent.co.uk	N/A

# For more on The Isle of Sheppey

and across Kent...

Family Heritage Dutdoors Pickn' Mix



Supported by:









