

Magical Margate

A self guided walk around Margate in Kent



Follow the changing fortunes of a famous seaside resort
Discover why this Kent town became 'London's playground'

Explore miles of golden sands and try the seawater cure

Find out how Margate is being reinvented as a home for modern art

www.discoveringbritain.org

**the stories of our landscapes
discovered through walks**





Contents

Introduction	4
Route overview	5
Practical information	6
Detailed route maps	8
Directions	10
Credits	14

© The Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers, London, 2013

Discovering Britain is a project of the Royal Geographical Society (with IBG)

The digital and print maps used for Discovering Britain are licensed to the RGS-IBG from Ordnance Survey

Cover image: Sunset over Margate Harbour © Laura Shawyer

Magical Margate

Discover the reinvention of the Great British Seaside

Noted for its healthy sea air and sunshine, Margate became the pre-eminent coastal resort for Londoners fleeing the capital to escape the smog. This town on the North Kent coast became known as 'London's playground.'

On this walk you'll discover the origins of this traditional seaside resort and see how it evolved from a small fishing village to become the home of one of Europe's most influential art galleries.



Margate Sands in the 1930s
© Science & Society Picture Library

Discover how the town's location (close to the capital in one direction and the Continent in another) and its natural resources (long sandy beaches and fair weather) helped to shape its fortunes.



Reflecting on Margate's past and future
© Adam Bowie, Flickr (Creative Commons License)

Explore the historic old town with its curious alleyways and cobbled streets. Discover the genteel resort of Cliftonville. See a lady made of shells, amble through the valley of a lost river and walk in the footsteps of a Modernist poet and a Romantic painter.

The walk was created by Laura Shawyer who was born in Margate and has retained a strong interest and affection for the town.

Route overview



Practical information

Location	Margate, Kent, South East England
Getting there	<p>Train - Regular services run from London Victoria and London St Pancras</p> <p>Car - Margate is accessed via the A28 which leads off the M2</p> <p>Bus - The area is well served by local buses including the Thanet Loop which runs between Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate</p> <p>Bicycle - National Cycle Route 15/ Viking Coastal Trail</p> <p>Cycle hire is available in Margate from: The Bike Shed, 63 Canterbury Road, CT9 5AS Ken's Bike Shop, 26 Eaton Road, CT9 1XA Viking Coastal Trail Cycle Hire, Minnis Bay Car Park, Birchington</p>
Start & finish point	Margate railway station, CT9 5AD
Distance	3 ½ miles
Level	Gentle - An easy route following the seaside promenade
Conditions	It can be breezy on the coast so you might need to wrap up. Take care along the seafront between Margate and Cliftonville as there are no lifebuoys.
Suitable for	Families – plenty to entertain families from the long golden sands to the Turner Contemporary. Lots of family-friendly cafés. Note: there are steps along sections of the route so it may not be suitable for wheelchairs / pushchairs.

Refreshments

Several cafés in the old town (Stop 8), the Harbour Arm (Stop 13) and at Turner Contemporary (Stop 12). Walpole Bay Hotel in Cliftonville (near Stop 17) offers lunches and cream teas.

Picnic spots on Margate Sands and at Cliftonville bandstand

Toilets

- Margate Railway Station (Stop 1 & 2)
- Nayland Rock promenade shelter (Stop 3)
- Marine Terrace near the Clock Tower (by Stop 5)
- Harbour Arm (Stop 13)
- The Oval Bandstand (near Stop 15)
- Baby changing facilities at College Walk Shopping Mall (near Stop 8)

Places to visit

Margate Museum is open May-Sept at weekends & Weds, 11am - 5pm. Closed Dec & Jan otherwise open weekends only 11am - 4pm. margatemuseum.wordpress.com

The Shell Grotto, Grotto Hill, CT9 2BU. A mysterious underground cave covered in 4 million shells. Open daily Apr - Oct, weekends Nov-Mar. www.shellgrotto.co.uk

The Powell-Cotton Museum at **Quex Park**, Park Lane Birchington, CT7 0BH. Historic house with museum, gardens & family-friendly activities. www.quexmuseum.org

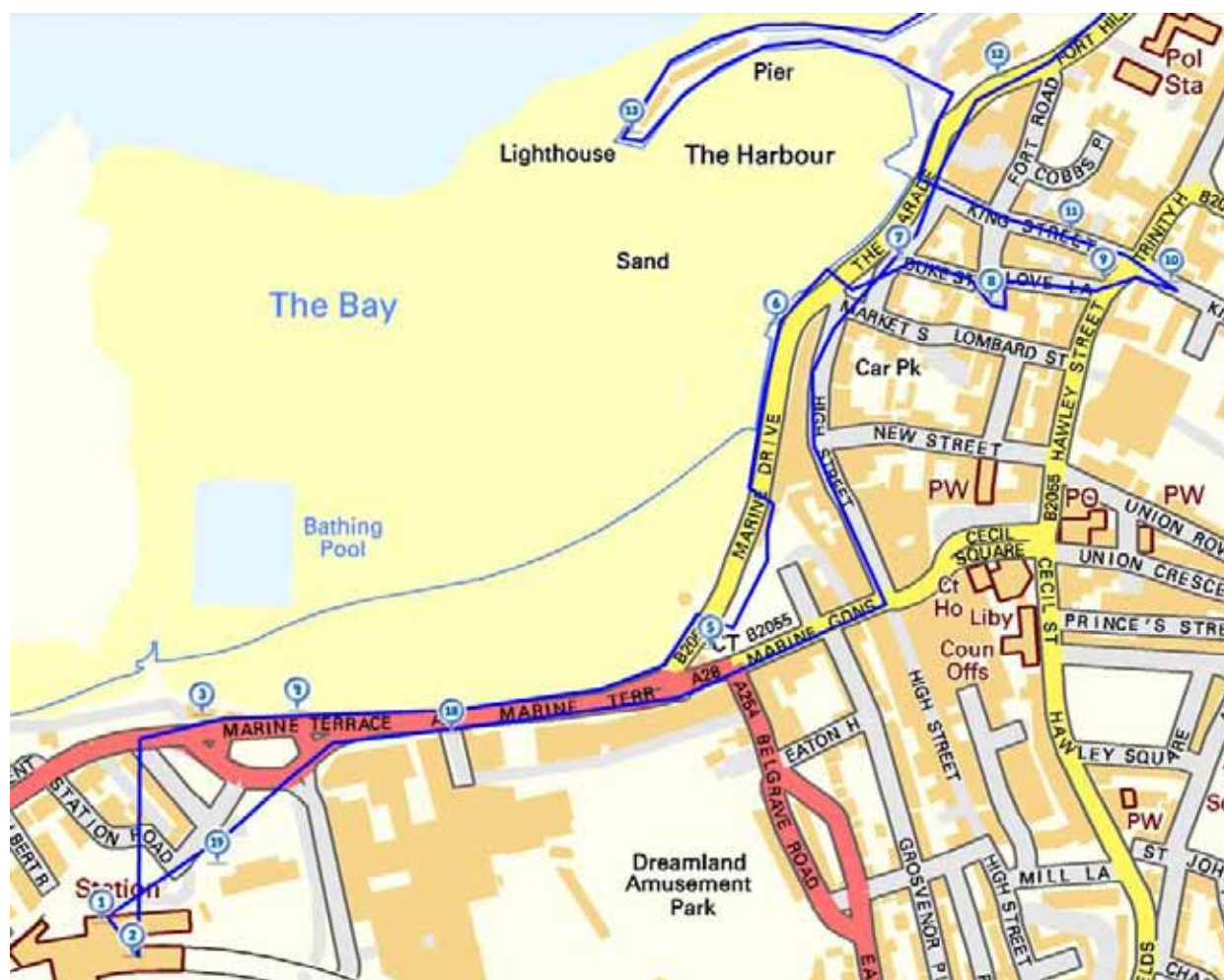
Tom Thumb Theatre, 2A Eastern Esplanade, CT9 2LB. One of the world's smallest theatres, music & comedy venues. www.tomthumbtheatre.co.uk

Turner Contemporary (Stop 12) is open Tue - Sun 8am -6pm. Free entry except special exhibitions. www.turnercontemporary.org

Tourist information

Thanet Visitor Information Service is at The Droit House (Stop 12), Stone Pier CT9 1JD www.visitthanet.co.uk/

Detail of the first and last sections of route

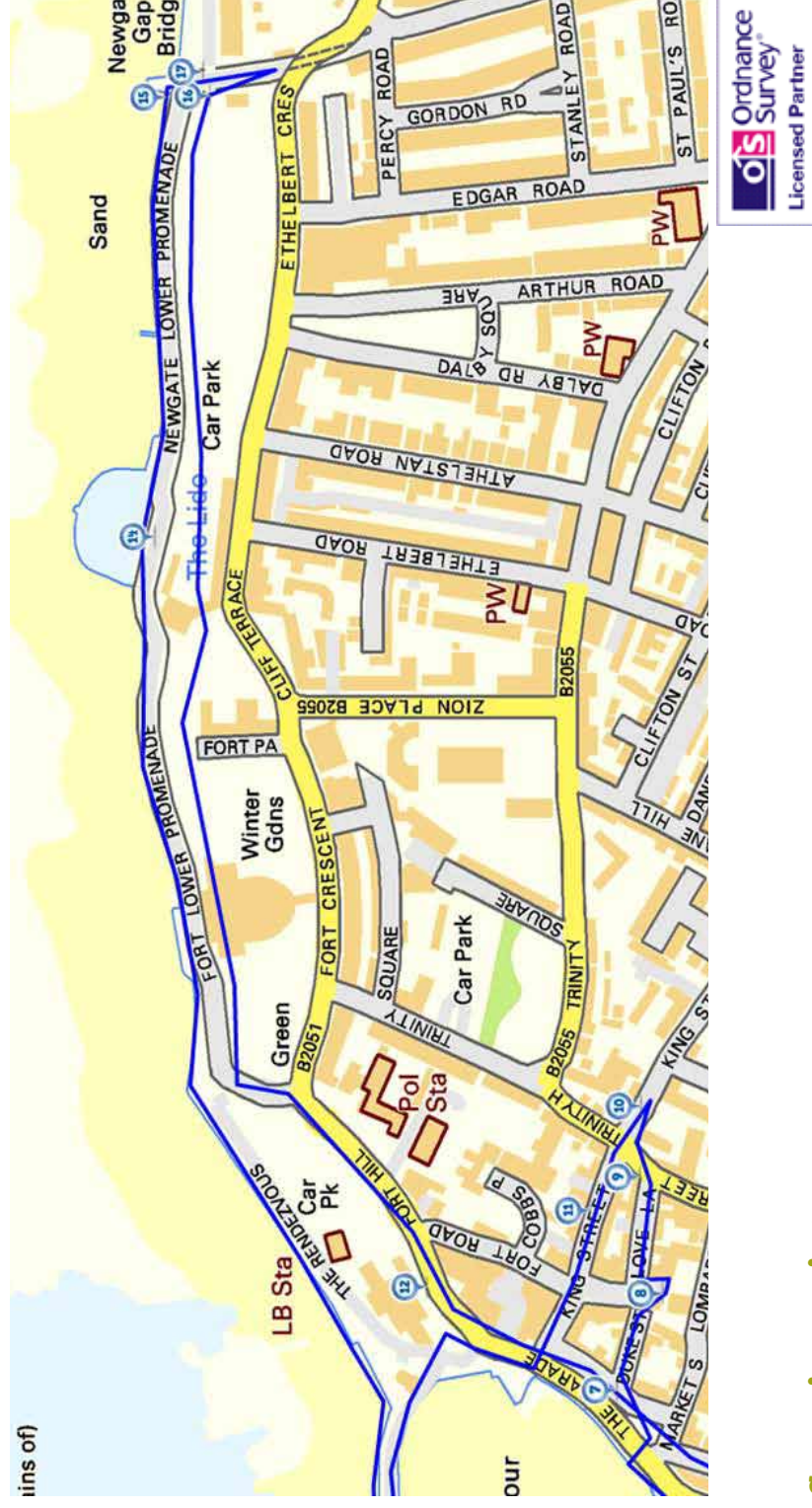


OS Ordnance Survey
Licensed Partner

Stopping points

1. Entrance to Margate Railway Station
2. Water Tower, Platform 1
3. Nayland Rock promenade shelter
4. Boardwalk seating, Margate Main Sands
5. Margate Clock Tower, Marine Gardens
6. Steps of flood scheme, Marine Drive
7. The Ruby Lounge, Duke Street
8. The old town, Market Square
9. Corner of Love Lane and Hawley Street
10. The Tudor House, King Street
11. 21 King Street
12. Turner Contemporary, The Rendezvous
13. The Shell Lady, end of the Harbour Arm
18. Dreamland site, Marine Terrace
19. Stone art-circle by The Promenade pub

Detail of the middle section of the route



Stopping points

- 13.** The Shell Lady, end of the Harbour Arm
- 14.** The Lido, Newgate Lower Promenade
- 15.** Newgate Gap cutting, Lower Promenade
- 16.** Newgate Gap Bridge, Cliftonville
- 17.** Walpole Bay bathing pool

Directions

Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

1. Welcome to Margate

Margate railway station

Directions 1

Begin the walk from Margate railway station. With your back to the station booking-hall, face the train tracks and turn left. Continue to the end of Platform 1 and look at the redbrick tower next to the bicycle racks. Listen to Track 2.

2. An achitectural gem

Water tower, Margate railway station

Directions 2

With the station entrance behind you, bear slightly right and walk past the (boarded up) Flag and Whistle pub and Railway café. Turn left to walk down Buenos Ayres past the guesthouses. Cross the busy road and head for the long white shelter. Sit facing the sea and listen to Track 3.

3. On Margate Sands

View from Nayland Rock promenade shelter

Directions 3

Facing the sea, turn right and walk along the promenade for a short distance. Stop by a boardwalk seating area that juts out over the beach. From here you can enjoy views over Margate Main Sands. Listen to Track 4.

4. The Sun Deck

Boardwalk seating overlooking Margate Main Sands

Directions 4

Facing the sea, turn right and walk along Marine Terrace (passing the entrance to the former Dreamland amusement park on your right) until you reach a crossing opposite the Clock Tower. Cross here and walk into Marine Gardens where you'll find a bench to sit on. Listen here to Track 5.

5. The sands of time

Margate Clock Tower, Marine Gardens

Directions 5

Take the left hand path up through the gardens until you come to a cream-coloured terrace on the left. You might like to stop for a moment and look out to sea. It's been said that this spot was popular with local landladies who would watch for boats of tourists alighting at the harbour and entice them to stay at their boarding houses. Walk down the steps through the terrace to emerge onto Marine Drive. Cross the road and stop by the long, white concrete steps to listen to Track 6.

6. Battling the tide

Flood and Coastal Protection Scheme, Marine Drive

Directions 6

Continue along the seafront with the large silver/white Turner Contemporary art gallery in sight ahead. Turn right and take the crossing by a building called Marwell House. Now turn left and go into the cobbled plaza area to enter the Old Town. Go diagonally across the plaza to a side street called Duke Street and stop by a building called The Ruby Lounge. Listen to Track 7.

7. Dunkers and dippers

The Ruby Lounge, The Plaza

Directions 7

Turn down Duke Street and into the heart of Margate Old Town. Walk towards the old Town Hall. When you reach it, turn right and then left under a walkway. You should be near the entrance to the Margate Museum. Stop outside the Museum and listen to Track 8.

8. Bohemian quarter

The old town, Market Square

Directions 8

Feel free to wander round and soak up the atmosphere of the old town before returning to the museum. With your back to the museum, turn left to walk to the end of Market Square and turn right into Love Lane. At the end of Love Lane stop outside block of yellow brick flats and find the blue plaque commemorating the site of Coleman's School. Listen to Track 9.

9. A bright pupil

Site of Coleman's School, Love Lane

Directions 9

You are now standing at the crossroads of Hawley Street and King Street. Cross over the road and take note of the name of the local brewery 'Cobbs Beer' written on the window of the Ambrette Indian restaurant. Turn right into King Street to stop at the black-and-white timbered house in front of you to listen to Track 10.

10. A lost river

The Tudor House, King Street

Directions 10

Cross the road and walk ahead down King Street. Pass Cobb Court then stop outside Number 21 which features a blue plaque listing it as the home of the Cobb family. Listen to Track 11.

11. The King of Margate

21 King Street

Directions 11

Continue to the end of King Street. At the end, turn right and cross the road at the traffic lights. Stand near the slipway of Margate Harbour in front of the Turner Contemporary. Listen to Track 12.

12. Art for art's sake

Turner Contemporary art gallery, The Rendezvous

Directions 12

Facing Turner Contemporary, turn left and walk out along the Harbour Arm until you reach the statue of the Shell Lady right at the end. Listen to Track 13.

13. She sells sea shells

The Shell Lady, Harbour Arm

Directions 13

Go up the steps to the lighthouse. At the top of the steps walk along the top section of the wall. Pass the lighthouse and head towards the steps which lead down to the lower walkway. At the bottom of the steps bear left and start to walk along the Fort Lower Promenade which passes the back of the Turner Contemporary art gallery, Lifeboat House, the Margate Yacht Club, and the Winter Gardens pavilion. This part of the walk gives you a chance to stretch your legs, enjoy the sea air and the invigorating tides. Stop when you reach the derelict Lido bathing pool. Listen here to Track 14.

14. Faded glory

The Lido, Newgate Lower Promenade

Directions 14

Continue along the promenade with the sea on your left. Stop when you get to the first gap in the chalk cliff and a pathway through the cliff. Listen to Track 15.

15. A cut above

Newgate Gap cutting, Lower Promenade

Directions 15

Now walk through the cutting in the cliff rock to follow the path uphill. Take a sharp right up a small flight of steps to emerge at the cliff top. As you walk up the cliff steps, look closely at the rock. This isn't natural but an artificial rockery known as Pulhamite (named after creator James Pulham). Walk past the blue shelter and turn right to stop on Newgate Gap Bridge. Listen to Track 16.

16. Poets' rest

Newgate Gap Bridge, Cliftonville

Directions 16

Look out to sea and to your right to make out the red and white poles marking out the 1930s bathing pool. Listen to Track 17.

17. Nature's tonic

Walpole Bay bathing pool, Newgate Gap Bridge

Directions 17

Walk back towards Margate, keeping the sea on your right. Stay on the Upper Promenade. Pass a children's playground and crazy golf, head towards the orange tower of the lido. Go through the lido car park and complex then up steps through an orange tiled archway. Emerge at a triangular green with a parade of houses in front of you. Continue along the seafront past the rooftops of the Winter Gardens. Pass the Turner Contemporary then cross over the road. Go through the cobbled area in the Old Town called The Parade, heading towards the tall, curved yellow building ahead.

Go up Margate High Street (left of the tall yellow building) past the row of single storey shops which used to be changing rooms for sea bathers. Continue to the crossroads of Queen Street and Marine Gardens. Turn right down Marine Gardens with the clock tower ahead. Pass the clock tower and the Flamingo amusements. Stop outside the tall brick building with a sign that reads 'Dreamland'. Listen to Track 18.

18. Past and future dreams

Dreamland site, Marine Terrace

Directions 18

Continue along Marine Terrace. Near the end of the road by Arlington House tower block, notice that the buildings are now empty to make way for a proposed new supermarket. However, there has been a lot of opposition and so the fate of this development is still in progress. Just past the boarded-up retail establishments, stop at the stone art-circle just before the station. Listen to Track 19.

19. From Waste land to Dreamland

Stone art circle, in front of The Promenade pub

Directions 19

We hope that you have enjoyed the walk. You are now a short distance from the railway station where we began the walk. You may like to return to the beach, explore the old town or visit some of the local attractions, such as Margate Museum, the Shell Grotto or Turner Contemporary.

Credits

The RGS-IBG would like to thank the following people and organisations for their assistance in producing this Discovering Britain walk:

- **Laura Shawyer** for creating the walk, providing photographs and the audio commentary
- **Caroline Millar** for editing the walk materials, acting as narrator and providing photographs
- **James Brazier** from the **Margate Civic Society** for providing archive images and script consulting
- **Lynda Smith** from **Margate Civic Society** for her assistance with historical details
- **Rory Walsh** for compiling the walk resources
- **Margate Civic Society, Suzannah Foad** and **the National Railway Museum / Science & Society Picture Library** for permission to include archive images
- **Adam Bowie, Andrew M Butler, Pam Fray, JJ Harrison, Katie Hunt, Richard Mills, Max Montagut, Oast House Archive, Bjørn Christian Tørrissen, Alan D Wilson** for additional images



Britain's landscapes are wonderful.

There is a tremendous variety within our shores – whether in the countryside, in towns and cities or at the seaside. And every landscape has a story to tell about our past and present.

Discovering Britain is an exciting series of geographically-themed walks that aim to bring these stories alive and inspire everyone to explore and learn more about Britain. Each walk looks at a particular landscape, finding out about how forces of nature, people, events and the economy have created what you see today.

The self-guided walks are fun, informative and inspiring. Prepare to discover something new, to be surprised and to find the unexpected.

Visit www.discoveringbritain.org to

Send your review of this walk

Search for other walks

Suggest a new walk