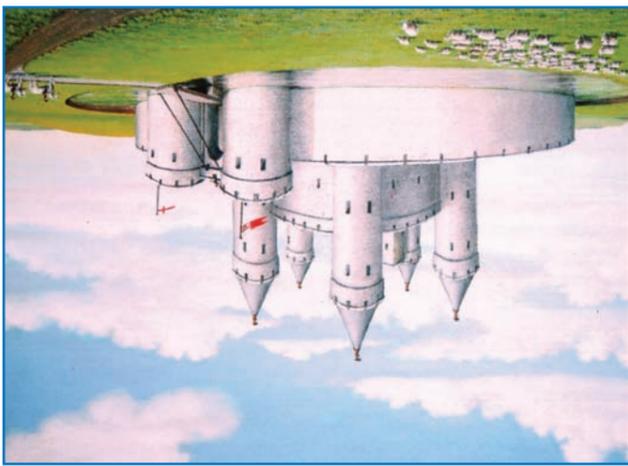


Queenborough Castle



The heritage can be seen at the Guildhall Museum. Rushenden is a small outlying area of Queenborough that is home to a small housing estate and various light industries, however a significant regeneration project is underway which will dovetail with the best of local heritage. Halfway, on the old main road between Queenborough and Sheerness, comprises predominantly of a growing number of streets of houses surrounding an old inn, The Halfway House.

Queenborough owes its existence to Edward III who founded a castle and adjacent town, completed in 1368, on the site of the modern borough. Unfortunately the castle, which gave the town its main purpose, was demolished by Parliament in 1650. Queenborough, thereafter, would remain for many generations a small impoverished community relying on its fishing industries for survival. In the first quarter of the nineteenth century the town was reduced to a state of starvation when the tyrannical Mayor Greet seized control of the town's oyster beds. The recovery of the town from this grim period was greatly helped by the coming of the railway in 1860 and by a Cross-Channel passenger service, which started in 1876 between Queenborough and the Dutch port of Vlissingen, and continued up until the First World War. During the Second World War the town played an important role as a base for the Royal Navy's minesweepers.

QUEENBOROUGH

EASTCHURCH, HARTY & ELMLEY

The quiet parish of Eastchurch is surrounded by enjoyable country walks with some beautiful views across the Swale and to the north Thames estuary. However it is also steeped in history. Eastchurch is the home of early aviation. 100 years ago in 1909 Eastchurch became a leading centre in this Country for the race to fly machines that were powered and capable of being controlled, not at the discretion of the wind, but at the will of the pilot of the airplane.

The aerodrome used during those exhilarating and inspiring times was used in both World Wars. There's a memorial to all this opposite the peaceful 14th century church, and it was at nearby Shurland Hall (that is currently being restored) that Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn visited in 1532.

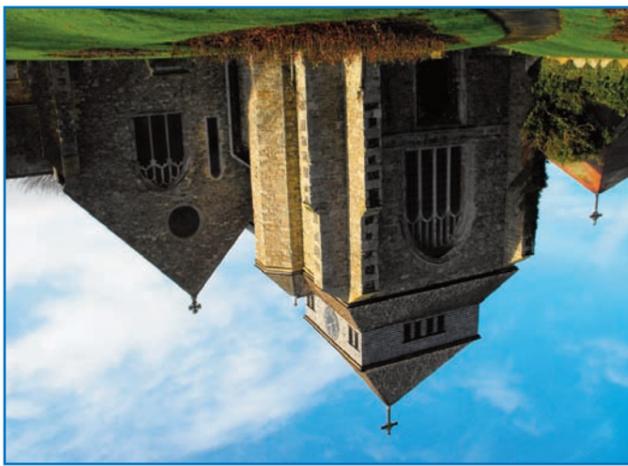
Nearby, Harty is really a separate island, and until comparatively recently the neighbourhood was known as the "Isles of Sheppey", which included the main Island and the smaller ones of Elmley and Harty. Visiting Harty one cannot but feel the remoteness of the place in fact the little St. Thomas the Apostle Church has been described as Kent's most remote church famous for its annual Harvest and Flower festival. However, if you thought there was no wilderness left in the south east, come and have a look at Elmley Marshes! The RSPB Reserve has windswept salt marshes that are inhabited by many breeding wetland birds, marsh frogs, insects, birds of prey and aquatic plants, plus much more and certainly worth a visit.

RSPB members are free but there is a small charge for non members. Parking and toilets are available. For more information call 01795 665969/01634 222480 or log on to the website: www.rspb.org.uk/reserves



Elmley Bird Reserve

Minster Abbey



Minster-on-Sea, as it is now known, is by far the largest parish on the Island and one of the largest in Kent.

Benedictine Abbey began here in medieval times. From the earliest times of which we have any authentic historic record, or even tradition, the whole interest of the Isle of Sheppey centres in, and radiates from Minster. There is evidence of people living in Minster as far back as Roman times and during the Anglo Saxon period the history of Minster becomes very interesting when the Saxons swarmed onto the Isle of Sheppey, threw up fortifications, and settled themselves in the neighbourhood of Minster guarding the mouth of the Thames. Queen Sexburga, and the ruling monarch King Egbert built and endowed the Minster Abbey for the maintenance of nuns and was the paramount manor over all Sheppey. The hilltop church and twelfth century gatehouse remind you that a

Minster is Sheppey's highest point so the views here are wonderful. The ruined Abbey and its well preserved church, the oldest of its kind in the kingdom, occupy the site of this ancient natural fortification. The hill upon which this fortress was erected has a plateau that offers extensive and delightful views not only of the whole of the Island but also over the North Sea, the Swale and the Nore; with the Kentish hills on the other. Its panoramic effect is impossible to eclipse by any other part of the English coast.

MINSTER

SHEERNESS

Sheerness is the gateway to the Island by rail and sea. It is the main shopping and commercial centre.

In the middle of the seventeenth century Sheerness was just an uninhabited promontory of marshland. That would all change in 1665 when Charles II decided to construct a fort there for the defence of the navy anchorage up the Medway, and build an accompanying dockyard. In the years that followed a small collection of houses grew up adjacent to the dockyard. This little collection of dockyard workers' homes would become known as Blue Town supposedly after the colour of the paint, originating from dockyard sources that was used to decorate the buildings' exteriors. The beginning of the nineteenth century would witness a total rebuilding of the dockyard on a much enlarged scale and requiring a greatly increased workforce. This produced a need for much more housing and, to the east of the original naval quarter, the modern town of Sheerness began to grow. The eventual closure in 1960 of the dockyard and garrison, the main sources of prosperity in Sheerness, was a huge blow to the town.

The High Street has many local shops as well as several national companies. The leisure centre and swimming pool, sand pit and paddling pool are situated by the beach and within easy walking distance from the bus and train stations



Sheerness Dockyard

Shellness Beach



Now you can visit Muswell Manor for a meal or a drink and view lots of early aviation memorabilia.

T.O.M. Sopwith together with many others. the Hon CS Rolls; Griffith Brewer; AV Roe; Frank McClean and where historical names from the past met; TTC Moor-Brabazon; Also, on this site, the world's first airplane factory was built field at Shellbeach and conducted their flying experiments here. headquarters at Muswell Manor where they acquired a flying flight". The Short Brothers and the aero club headed up their aeronautical history – for Shellness is the birthplace of the "first

Today Leydown, Warden and Shellness are known as traditional seaside resorts, with long sandy beaches, amusements, night clubs, camping and caravan sites, and good food that offer a whole range of tastes for the summer visitor. It has the added attraction that it is also within easy driving distance from London and the main towns of the South East.

LEYSDOWN, WARDEN & SHELLNESS

Welcome to

The Isle of Sheppey



Your Guide to the Towns & Villages of Sheppey



The Isle of Sheppey

TOURIST INFORMATION FOR SHEPPEY

Find out about tours of the Island, local events, history talks & walks as well as places to eat and visit



Tourism Information at:
Blue Town Heritage centre
69 High Street, Blue Town



Sheerness, Isle of Sheppey ME12 1RW
01795 662981

Email: bthcc@btconnect.co.uk
www.bluetownheritagecentre.com



The Sheppey Crossing is 1.27 km long, rises to a height of 34.7m above the Swale. This gives 29m clearance for shipping above high water level. It is 21½ metres in width and carries two lanes of traffic in each direction.



- 1. Abbey Gatehouse Museum
- 2. All Tide Landing Stage
- 3. Blue Flag Beach
- 4. Blue Town
- 5. Clock Tower, Sheerness
- 6. Eastchurch Church
- 7. Garrison Point Fort
- 8. Harty Ferry Inn
- 9. Historic Dockyard
- 10. Kingsferry Bridge
- 11. Minster Abbey
- 12. Minster Cliffs
- 13. Muswell Manor
- 14. Naturist Beach
- 15. Queenborough
- 16. Queenborough Church
- 17. Queenborough Guildhall Museum
- 18. Richard Montgomery Wreck
- 19. RSPB Bird Reserve
- 20. Shurland Hall
- 21. Site of Early Flight
- 22. Site of Queenborough Castle
- 23. St Thomas at Harty
- 24. The Creek - Queenborough
- 25. The Grotto
- 26. The Sheppey Crossing