



Isle of Harty Trail

Imagine your perfect day cycling ... a lovely sunny day, sounds of childrens' laughter, gentle waves lapping at the shore, the smell of sea air, birds swooping across reed beds as you whizz past . The Isle of Harty Trail offers all this plus some fascinating history. Come and explore!

Have fun,
stay healthy!



The Isle of Harty Trail (9.5km) and the Sheerness Way (9km) are both flat and suitable for families. The majority of both routes are traffic free with some sections on road. At a moderate speed the routes can be completed comfortably in under an hour, depending on your fitness, but with young children it will take longer. Build in stops to enjoy the local attractions and you could easily spend the whole day exploring either trail.

On the Isle of Harty Trail some traffic free sections are on gravel paths so please take care of pot holes; routes

do go through working farms and reserves so occasional farm traffic should be expected.

On the Sheerness Way at Neptune Terrace please dismount and use the ramp to wheel your bike down a small flight of steps. Please also take care when crossing Marine Parade back to Barton's Point. This route is particularly good for walkers, prams and wheelchairs as well as cyclists.





Enjoy a Nostalgic Treat!

Leysdown is a small but lively seaside resort, with a fine sand and shell beach - perfect for families. Before you start your journey, treat yourself to a snack in one of the many cafes or have a go in the amusements. The trail is signed from the Spinney in the centre of Leysdown, so you can start your exploration here.

Find the Founding Fathers

In the early years of the twentieth Century the American Wright Brothers, pioneers of early flight, propelled the Isle of Sheppey into becoming a focal point of British aviation. They commissioned the Short Brothers to build six Wright Flyers. These three brothers: Eustace, Oswald and Horace Short, well known for their hot air balloons, set up a factory on land between Leysdown and Sheerness and turned their hand to powered flight.

Subsequently the brothers began to work to high standards providing aircrafts for Charles Rolls, the car manufacturer and JTC Moore-Brabazon. Brabazon was to become a noted World War I aerial photographer and the first British pilot to fly a circular mile in a British plane with a British engine on October 13 1909. In doing so he won the Daily Mail's £1000 prize - over £65,000 in today's money!

A farmhouse now known as Muswell Manor became the Aero Club Headquarters- it is now a Grade II listed building and holiday park. These headquarters were so important that in 1910 they became the Royal Aero Club of Great Britain, the name granted by King George V. The first pilot's licence was issued here.

Life on a Small Island

As the name suggests Harty was once an island, separated from the Isle of Sheppey by Capel Fleet. Did you know that the width of water between Sheppey and Harty Islands was once up to a mile?

Whilst enjoying views of the Swale Estuary and looking over to Whitstable, you cannot help but feel that



you are the only one there. Despite the sense of remoteness, Harty Church has been here for over 900 years. How can a Church survive down here in this remote corner? Look carefully and you will see that this Church is situated on the channel of the East Swale. It has seen people pass its doors upon every tide. Go inside to admire the Flemish Kist (a fourteenth-century wooden chest), carved with two jousting knights, which legend has it, was brought in on one of these tides.



“Alas I shall have to console myself with memories of the Church in its splendid isolation, with sea birds wheeling by and the Thames so wide as to be open sea, and air so fresh as to be healthier than yoghurt (unflavoured).”

former Poet Laureate, Sir John Betjeman, apologising for not attending a Harvest Festival at Harty Church

Another short ride takes you to The Ferry House Inn close to the Ferry Landing. Until 1947 a regular ferry used to cross over from the mainland to this very spot, meaning Harty was not as remote as it is today.

A Raptor Ride

Stop at the RSPB 'Raptor View Point', a spur from the main cycle circuit, to watch Marsh Harriers swooping over the reed beds from April to October. This is a premier site for watching birds of prey: from the Merlin to the Short-eared Owl. In particular look out for the Rough Legged Buzzard in winter months and the Hobby in summer.

For unrivalled wildlife visit the Swale National Nature Reserve, an internationally important site. Park your bikes and enter on foot. Keep your eye out for the range of rare plants, birds, butterflies and moths such as White Sea Kale on the beach, the Short Eared Owl, Clouded Yellow Butterfly and Bedstraw Hawk Moth.

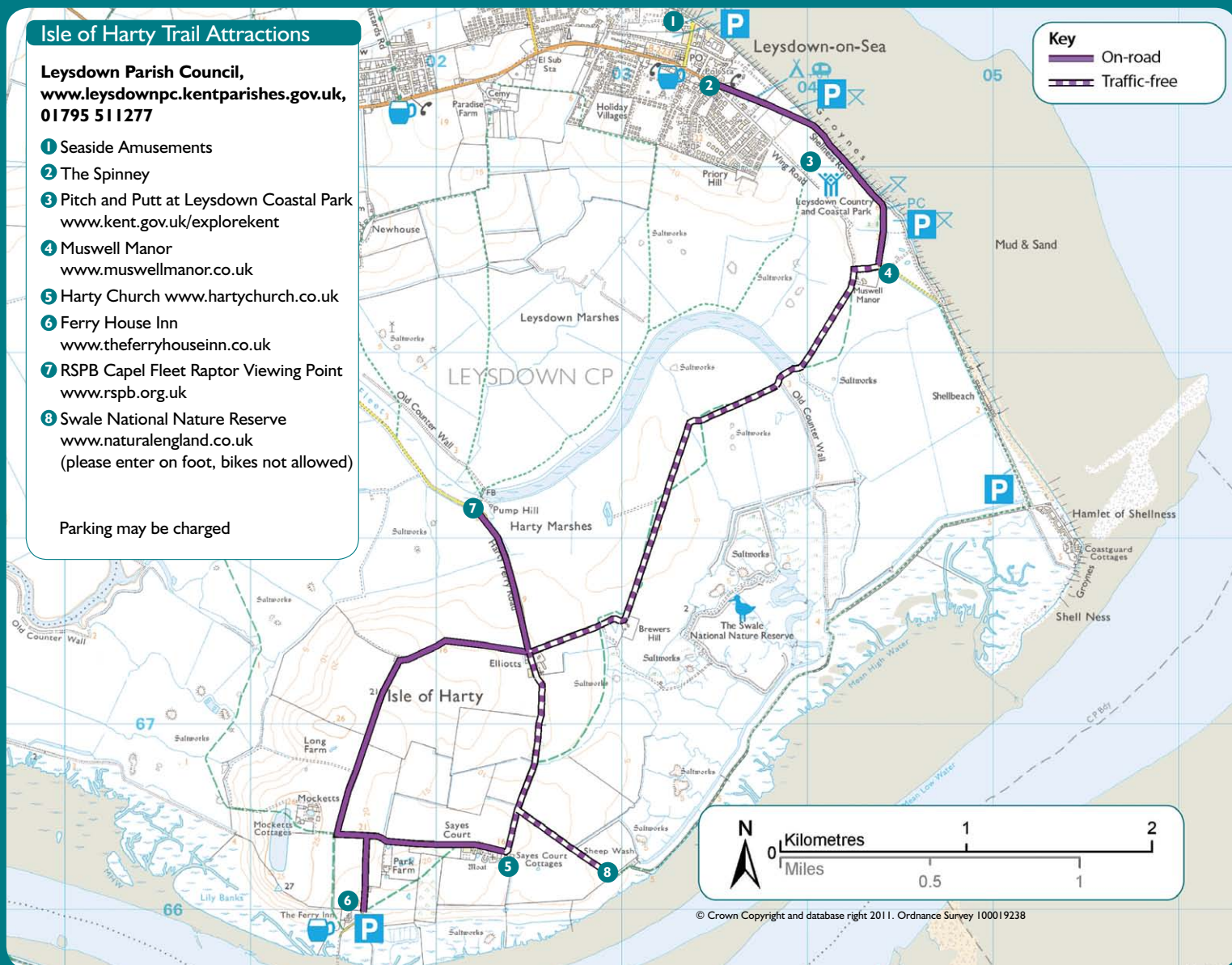
Have you enjoyed your tour? Check out the Sheerness Way, another exciting cycle ride on the Isle of Sheppey and discover the history of the Queenborough Lines, or spend more time on the beach enjoying the sea air.

Isle of Harty Trail Attractions

Leysdown Parish Council,
www.leysdownpc.kentparishes.gov.uk,
 01795 511277

- 1 Seaside Amusements
- 2 The Spinney
- 3 Pitch and Putt at Leysdown Coastal Park
www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent
- 4 Muswell Manor
www.muswellmanor.co.uk
- 5 Harty Church www.hartychurch.co.uk
- 6 Ferry House Inn
www.theferryhouseinn.co.uk
- 7 RSPB Capel Fleet Raptor Viewing Point
www.rspb.org.uk
- 8 Swale National Nature Reserve
www.naturalengland.co.uk
 (please enter on foot, bikes not allowed)

Parking may be charged





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Local Information

National Rail timetable:	08457 48 49 50
Nearest Train Station:	Sheerness-on-Sea
Arriva Bus Timetable:	0871 200 22 33
Interactive mapping:	www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent , www.sustrans.org.uk
Ordnance Survey Explorer map number 149:	to order call 08458 247 600
Nearby towns:	Minster-on-Sea, Eastchurch, BlueTown, Queenborough, Elmley
Sheppey Cycles:	214 High Street, Sheerness, Kent ME12 1UN Tel: 01795 667898
Vandal Bikes:	129 High Street, Sheerness, Kent ME12 1UD Tel: 01795 661564

Cycle Safety

It's important that your bike is in tip top condition and the right size. Before you start your journey, pinch the tyres to make sure they are not flat and test the brakes to make sure they work.

Use cycle lanes and paths where possible and follow traffic sign and traffic light instructions. Make sure you carry lights/reflectors and dress brightly and appropriately. Cycle helmets, water bottles and rucksacks are recommended.

Smart cyclists think ahead!

For further information contact:
Countryside Access Service,
Kent County Council,
Invicta House, Maidstone, Kent ME14 1XX
Tel: 08458 247 600
www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent
e-mail: explorekent@kent.gov.uk



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