A Walk on the Wild Side

faversham.org/walking

FAVERSHAM - DAVINGTON - OARE - LUDDENHAM
Take a Walk on the Wild Side and discover one of Kent’s most beautiful wildlife havens on the doorstep of the historic market town of Faversham.

You’ll be bowled over by breath-taking views across farmland, sweeping pasture and glistening wetlands, and by an internationally important bird sanctuary, grazed by livestock as in days gone by. The scene is framed by the open sea and the local fishing boats that still land their catch here.

Echoes of the area’s explosive and maritime history are all around you in this unexpectedly unspoilt and fertile habitat, rich with wild plants and skies that all year round brim with birds.

Your route starts in Faversham’s bustling Market Place – a sea of colour, lined with centuries-old half-timbered shops and houses and presided over by the elegant, stilted Guildhall. On Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays traders selling fresh fish, fruit and vegetables, flowers and local produce vie for attention like their predecessors down the ages, while tempting tearooms entice you to sit back and admire the scene.

This is an intriguing town, with specialist food stores, restaurants and bars, and the pleasing aroma of beer brewing most days of the week at Shepherd Neame, the country’s oldest brewer. But soon the town centre will be left behind as you pass Davington Church – the oldest building in the area and part of the former Davington Priory – and then Oare windmill as you head for open country and the coast. Here, farming sits happily alongside the region’s diverse flora and fauna – a far cry from the days when this area’s rich harvest included brick clay and gunpowder. (Find out more about the area’s explosive heritage at the Oare Gunpowder Works country park, a short detour along the Western Link).

Today, Oare marshes are an unspoilt and tranquil haven for walkers, livestock and wildlife. Cattle and sheep graze the wetlands, following a centuries-old tradition that encourages a diversity of coastal plants, creating an internationally-important bird life sanctuary.

Your walk takes you through a 200-acre reserve managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust. You may even be lucky enough to spy one of the 14 different species of dragonfly and damselfly recorded here.

As you reach the coast and The Swale, take time to enjoy the fragrant sea air and look out for fishing boats that harvest this stretch of water. Locally-caught fish is a delicacy you can enjoy at restaurants in the area. From the coastline, you walk back through open countryside, where sheep graze in orchards and Luddenham Court lies ahead, with the church by its side. The butcher’s shop here sells beef, pork and lamb, much of it reared on the wetlands you have passed through.

Oare village, with its welcoming pubs, is then just a stroll away across the fields, providing an opportunity to stop for a drink or a meal and enjoy the open views across the creek. Or retrace your steps into the heart of Faversham, where you will find dozens of places to eat, many specialising in local Kentish produce.

Of course, there’s far more to Faversham than you can discover on this one walk – so why not stay a night or two at a local pub or guesthouse and explore the delights of this entrancing waterside haven and its surrounding countryside.
Planning Your Walk

Feel free to start your walk at any point: as this is a circular walk you’ll always return to where you began. Many sections of the walk end at a spot where you’ll find a pub, restaurant or teashop to help fortify you – or perhaps offer a welcome treat once you’ve finished the whole route.

There are several places to leave your vehicle if you are arriving by car, including the Queen’s Hall long-stay car park near the railway station in Faversham.

If not driving, you can take a train to Faversham. Local buses also run between Faversham and the village of Oare.

There are public toilets in Faversham at the car park behind Market Place, and you can also use those at the various ‘pub stops’ en route.

Use our directory to find a list of local accommodation, food producers, retailers and restaurants. Also, check out the wealth of additional information at Faversham.org/walking.

FAVERSHAM TO OARE

A1. Your walk starts in Faversham’s historic Market Place, presided over by the impressive Guildhall and home to Kent’s oldest market, selling fresh fish, fruit and vegetables, flowers and local produce on Tuesdays, Fridays and Saturdays.

From the busy Market Place, with its many cafés, head along West Street – lined with historic buildings and specialist food shops – and use the pedestrian crossing. Continue along West Street to Stonebridge Pond on your right, once part of the Home Works, one of Faversham’s gunpowder factories, and now a haven for wildfowl.

A2. Turn right at Stonebridge Pond and walk up Davington Hill. Continue straight ahead as you pass Davington Church on your left – the oldest building in the area and part of the former Davington Priory. Walk along Priory Row.

A3. Continue straight on, passing Davington School on your left, into Oare Road.

On your left you’ll pass former gravel pits, now teeming with fish, and on your right an 18th century windmill, in operation until 1919. The Marsh Works, a former gunpowder works, were also on your right. The GIST transport depot on your left distributes M&S food across south east England. Continue along Oare Road until you reach Oare itself – the Castle Inn is ahead and Oare Creek and boatyard on your right.

(To visit Oare Gunpowder Works, formerly Davington Mills, detour left and walk along the footpath by the Western Link. The entrance is some 400 yards on your right)

OARE TO HARTY FERRY

B1. At the head of the creek turn right just before The Castle, ensuring the creek is on your right, passing through a kissing gate on your right signposted to the Saxon Shore Way. Keep the creek to your right. Cross the meadow and pass through a kissing gate on to the sea wall.

You are now walking with ditches and farmland on your left and the creek on your right.

B2. Shortly after the confluence of Oare Creek and Faversham Creek, pass through a gate to Oare Marshes Nature Reserve (managed by the Kent Wildlife Trust) and follow the sea wall to the bird hide ahead. The habitat – managed by age-old farming traditions, including grazing by cattle and wild Konik ponies – is of international importance for overwintering and breeding wetland birds.

B3. At the hide, continue along the sea wall. On your right is The Swale, a tidal channel between the mainland and the Isle of Sheppey. The part of the island you see is the Isle of Harty. As you look out you may also see the local fishing boats that harvest this stretch of water, once home to the rich reserves of the Faversham Oyster Fishery Company – the world’s oldest company on record.

B4. Follow the sea wall until you pass through a gate, arriving at Harty Ferry. Look out for the artesian well near the car park, one of several drilled for the explosives factories. The water, naturally filtered through chalk, is cool, delicious and highly refreshing for the weary walker.

As the name suggests, there was once a ferry crossing here to the island.

The noticeboards by the car park are a useful guide to the birds that make their home here. Continue along the sea wall.
HARTY FERRY TO LUDDENHAM COURT

C1. The path bends sharply to the left at Dan’s Dock, with the remains of a jetty that served a brick and tile works. Leave the sea wall and the reserve and head inland along the straight track, the line of a former industrial tramway. Follow this restricted byway through grazing marsh, heading for a patch of woodland ahead.

C2. Keep going past Gate House Bungalows, following the purple restricted byway signs, and bear left along a dirt track with Forge Cottage on your right and left along a dirt track with Forge Cottage on your right and left.

C3. At the end of the track, with the entrance to Uplees Lodge on your right, cross the road and pass through the gate opposite into an orchard. Cross the orchard, heading for the kissing gate in front of you.

C4. Cross the bridge and walk towards the trees ahead, passing through the kissing gate.

C5. Follow the left hand edge of the field and pass through the gate to the left of Poplar Hall. Continue down the lane until you reach a kissing gate on your right. Go through the gate and head diagonally across the field towards farm buildings. Cross a wooden bridge halfway across this field and walk towards a culvert with a kissing gate on the left. Go through this gate and head towards another kissing gate to the left of the farm buildings ahead.

C6. Turn right through the kissing gate and head along the lane to Luddenham Court.

LUDDENHAM COURT TO OARE

D1. Turn left through the kissing gate in front of the pig sties and walk across the field heading for the kissing gate to the right of a farm building. Keeping the fence line to your left, leave the field via the kissing gate.

D2. Cross the road and enter the field opposite through the next kissing gate. Walk ahead along the concrete path through the field.

D3. When the path bends left, take the right hand path uphill across the field.

D4. At the kissing gate at the end of this field turn right and walk down The Street into Oare. Continue past The Three Mariners pub towards the Castle Inn to return to Oare Creek.

The Three Mariners, where local produce often features on a special walkers’ menu, and the Castle Inn both offer an excellent opportunity to stop for something to eat and drink.

Local fisherman Barry “Bluey” Walpole sells his fresh catch each weekend from his store just a short detour to your left by the Castle Inn.

As you have begun to discover on your walk, Faversham is filled with pleasures just waiting to be discovered, so feel free to stay a night or two in this delightful market town and surrender to its charms.

Shepherd Neame…

BRITAIN’S OLDEST BREWER

Faversham has been a centre of brewing for over 850 years and is home to Britain’s oldest independent brewer, whose business dates back to the 17th century. Shepherd Neame was also the first brewery outside London to install a stationary steam engine and to this day still uses pure water from its own artesian well. The countryside around Faversham is a prime location for growing the key ingredients of these beers - barley and Kentish hops. Brewery tours are available from the brewery’s Visitor Centre in Court Street, taking you through every step of the brewing process and ending with the opportunity for a tutored tasting of the award-winning ales and lagers for which Shepherd Neame is so famous.

Uplees Farm

Uplees Farm offers comfortable and private self-catering farmhouse accommodation in beautiful countryside, with breathtaking views across The Swale. The working farm, where chicken and ducks roam freely and sheep and goats graze in the fields, has a self catering cottage with accommodation for up to six people (four adults and two children). The 16th century farmhouse has been tastefully refurbished to enhance its original features. The farm is an ideal base for walkers and visitors to the nature reserves at nearby Harty Ferry or at Graveney. Oare village is just a mile away and historic Faversham is a five-minute drive.
Walk Overview

**Distance:** 7.5 miles (12.25 km); 3.5 hrs (no stops)

**Fitness level:** Suitable for all fitness levels

**Toilets:** Town centre short stay car park adjacent to the Market Place

**Refreshments:** Restaurants and pubs en route

**Transport:** Mainline railway station at Faversham. Bus from Faversham to Oare

**Pay phones:** www.traveline.org.uk

**Parking:** Faversham town centre and Oare.

Queen’s Hall long-term parking near Faversham railway station.

**Map:** OS Explorer 149
Directory of local businesses

FOOD, DRINK AND PRODUCE
A J Barkaway Butcher, Faversham ME13 7JE 01795 532040. Find us on faversham.org
Lamberhurst Farm Dairy, Dargate ME13 9DS 01227 751741 www.cheesemakersofcanterbury.co.uk
Grow, Brogdale Farm ME13 8XZ 01795 531888. www.brogdaleonline.co.uk
Maggade Fine Foods, Faversham ME13 7JE 01795 534497/53737. Find us on faversham.org
Moor Organics, Deerton Street ME9 9JJ 01795 521341. Find us on faversham.org
Pine Trees Juice, Dodington ME9 0AX 01795 886266. www.pinetreesfarm.co.uk
Seasalter Lamb, Eastling ME3 0BD 07891 044474. www.seasalterlamb.co.uk
Snod Farm, Otterden ME3 0DD 01795 890700. Find us on faversham.org
SW Doughty Butcher, Dodington ME9 0BH 01795 886255. Find us on faversham.org

PUBS AND RESTAURANTS
Albion Taverna, Faversham ME13 7DH 01795 890327. Find us on faversham.org
Anchor Inn and Crabbshak, Faversham ME13 7BP 01795 536471. Find us on faversham.org
Ardennes Restaurant, Faversham ME13 7JB 01795 890008. Find us on faversham.org
Black Lion, Lysted ME9 0JR 01795 521229. Find us on faversham.org
Courtyard Restaurant, Brogdale Farm ME13 8XZ 01795 530013. www.courtyard-restaurant.co.uk
Elephant, Faversham ME13 7JN 01795 590157. Find us on faversham.org
George Inn, Newnham ME9 0LL 01795 890327. Find us on faversham.org
Ostera Posillipo, Faversham ME13 7LD 01795 590580. Find us on faversham.org
Phoenix Tavern, Faversham ME13 7BH 01795 591462. Find us on faversham.org
Plough, Stalisfield Green ME13 0HY 01795 880256. Find us on faversham.org
Plough Inn, Lewson Street ME9 9JU 01795 521348 Find us on faversham.org
Provenance, Faversham ME13 8PE 01795 539508. Find us on faversham.org
Read's, Faversham ME13 8XE 01795 533344. Find us on faversham.org
Rose and Crown, Perry Wood ME13 9RY 01227 752214. Find us on faversham.org
Shipwrights Arms, Hollowshore ME13 7TJ 01795 590088. Find us on faversham.org
Spice Lounge, Faversham ME13 8NU 01795 533322. Find us on faversham.org
Sun Inn, Faversham ME13 7JE 01795 535098. Find us on faversham.org
Three Horseshoes, Hernhill ME9 1AX 01227 750842. Find us on faversham.org
White Horse Inn, Boughton ME13 9AX 01227 751343. Find us on faversham.org
White Lion, Selling ME13 9RQ 01227 752211. www.thewhitelion-selling.com
Woodrose Restaurant, Hernhill ME9 1TX 01227 751168. Find us on faversham.org

ATTRACTIONS
Beech Court Gardens, Chaldock TN25 4DJ 01223 740735. Find us on faversham.org
Belmont House, Thorley ME13 0HH 01795 890202. Find us on faversham.org
Brogdale Farm, Ospringe ME13 8XZ 01795 536250. Find us on faversham.org
Dodington Place, Dodington ME9 0BB 01795 886101. Find us on faversham.org
Farming World, Boughton ME13 9SP 01227 751144. Find us on faversham.org
Fleur Museum, Faversham ME13 8NY 01795 535452. Find us on faversham.org
Faversham Swimming Pools, ME13 8PW 01795 532426. Find us on faversham.org
Sailing Barge Greta, Standard Quay, Faversham 07711 657919. www.greta1892.co.uk
Mount Ephraim Gardens, Hernhill ME13 9TX 01227 752102. Find us on faversham.org
St Mary of Charity Church, Faversham ME13 8JZ 01795 530599. Find us on faversham.org
Shepherd Neame Brewery Tours, Faversham ME13 7AX 01795 542016. Find us on faversham.org
Shire of St Jude, Faversham ME13 7SE 01795 539214. Find us on faversham.org

The Countryside Code
Respect – Protect – Enjoy
If you follow the Countryside Code wherever you go, you will enjoy walking in Kent and help protect the countryside now and for future generations. Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs. Leave gates and property as you find them. Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home. Keep dogs under close control. Consider other people.

For further information please visit www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk or Tel: 08451 003298

Remember to always follow the Highway Code.