



Canterbury's Woodland

An Active Break in...

The Blean

Canterbury's Ancient Woodland

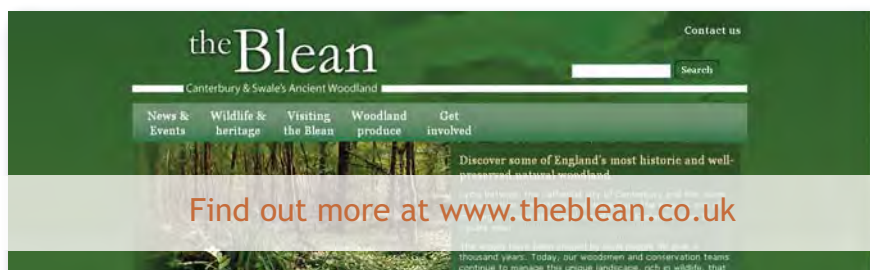
This Country Break explores the woodlands and villages of **The Blean**, the area of ancient woodland between; Canterbury, Faversham, Whitstable, Herne Bay and the Marshes of Thanet.

Woodlands form the heart of **The Blean** covering over 3,000 hectares and it remains as one of the most extensive woodlands in the south east of England. This is ancient woodland and is particularly rich and diverse in wildlife, so much so that large areas are specially protected as Nature Reserves or Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The Blean's very nature makes it superb for plenty of outdoor activities, but it really is a walking haven, But cyclists aren't forgotten here either with not only the **Crab & Winkle way** (part of National Cycle Route 1), but also plenty of great rides through the woods and beyond to the coast. There are a number of routes allowing you to discover many of the less well known parts of the Blean too and you don't need to provide your own bikes, local company **Canterbury Cycle Hire** provides a range of bikes for all needs. You can hire a bike per hour, day or week, one way or return to any of their hubs in Canterbury, Whitstable and Herne Bay.



Oak leaves



Find out more at www.theblean.co.uk

An Active Break

This break is based on exploring the Blean by bike, which you can hire from **Canterbury Cycle Hire** in Canterbury, Herne Bay or Whitstable. **Downland Cycles** - also based in Canterbury have a full sales/repairs/service offer and in addition have compiled a number of routes in the area, utilising both national and local promoted routes and a lot of local knowledge!

Here we suggest several over a couple of days which allow you to take in the Blean in virtually its entirety, all the routes start and end in Canterbury or Whitstable but could easily be tailored if you are staying anywhere in the Blean.



Getting There

The Blean is easily reached from Canterbury and the A2 or M2.

Several bus routes operated by Stagecoach cross the Blean between Canterbury, Whitstable, Faversham and Herne Bay.

There are several rail stations all with connections to London and points beyond



Great Stour Way



Blean Woods

Further Information

- www.theblean.co.uk
- www.canterbury.co.uk
- www.faversham.org.uk
- www.seewhitstable.com
- www.visitkent.co.uk
- www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent
- www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk
- www.wcch.co.uk
- www.downlandcycles.co.uk



Where to start...

Start with something easy, plan a short break to take on the **Crab and Winkle Way**, its a mostly off-road route and suitable for just about all abilities.

Find out more on page 3.



Cycling Through the Woods



The Crab and Winkle Way

The

Crab & Winkle

a 15 mile roundtrip of great cycling...

Starting from Whitstable, take an early morning visit to the town to stock up on picnic provisions. If you get the chance visit the **Whitstable Farmers Market** for some really special local produce.

The Market is held 2nd & 4th Saturdays of the month in St.Mary's Hall. Then head back down to Harbour Street and hire some bikes from **Whitstable Cycle Hire** at the Captains House before saddling up and tackling the **Crab and Winkle Way** to Canterbury.

The route follows the line of the disused railway from Whitstable Station and through the heart of the Blean woodlands, before dropping down to Canterbury some 7.5 mostly traffic-free miles later. It's a relatively easy ride but you'll have to do a little pedalling on a few of the hills.

Take a break at **Greyfriars Chapel** and the Franciscan garden and indulge in that local produce picnic. Greyfriars Chapel is the only building now remaining of the first English Franciscan Friary built in the years following the arrival of the first Friars in 1224, today it's a wonderfully tranquil spot within the bustle of the city, and just the ticket for some time away from the saddle.



Download the ride details at www.kentishstour.org.uk

Ease your lunch down by taking a gentle stroll around the city, there's plenty to see. You could stop by the **Cathedral** or just relax by the river.

When you're ready saddle up and beat a path back along the **Crab & Winkle Way** to the coast at Whitstable. If your legs start complaining then break the journey with a stop at the **Winding Pond**, a great spot where the trains used to take on water for the climb up to Clowes Wood. When you do make it to Whitstable you can enjoy a cooling dip (depending on the temperature!) or simply a late afternoon wander on the beach.

For dinner? Take it easy with some fish & chips on the beach in proper old fashioned chip wrapper style or try some great fresh seafood at one of many eateries lining the beachfront or the harbour.



Getting There

Whitstable is a simple hop, skip and jump from the A299 Thanet Way and lies only minutes from the M2.

Buses on Stagecoach **Routes 638, 4, 5 and 6** will take you out across the Blean.

Whitstable rail station is on the mainline from London and includes High Speed options.



Historic Canterbury



Further Information

www.theblean.co.uk

www.whitstablefarmersmarket.co.uk

www.wcch.co.uk

www.sustrans.org.uk

www.kentishstour.org.uk

www.kent.gov.uk/explorekent

www.eastbridgehospital.org.uk

www.canterbury.co.uk

www.seewhitstable.com



Cycling at Whitstable

Extending your break...

Take on something more challenging! There's plenty of great routes all across the Blean.

Try another route from Canterbury to Whitstable on page 5



Taking the Oyster Bay Trail to Reculver

A

Visit to Herne Bay

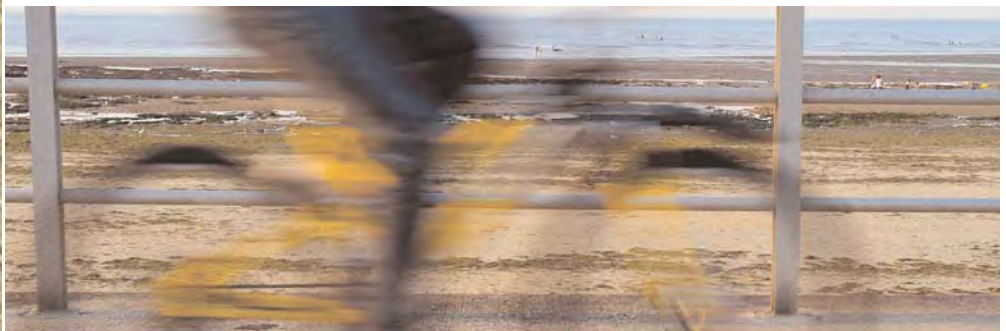
23 miles round the Eastern Blean

Starting and finishing in Canterbury, this is a 23 mile ride visiting the seaside resorts of Herne Bay and Whitstable and giving you the option of visiting the ruins of the **Abbey and Roman Fort at Reculver**. On the ride you will pass through the villages of **Broad Oak, Sturry** and **Hoath** before riding along the esplanade at Herne Bay and on into Whitstable. The return route uses the the Crab and Winkle Way, following in parts the second oldest passenger railway line in the world.

Start your day by picking up bikes from **Canterbury Cycle Hire**, located at the **Goods Shed** near Canterbury West Station (you could also use this opportunity to stock up for lunch in the Goods Shed itself). Fully prepared head east out of the City towards Broad Oak.

Pass through Broad Oak with its two pubs, the **Royal Oak** and the **Golden Lion** (watch out for the Dragon beam on the corner of the Golden Lion), and then skirt the edge of Sturry before following Maypole Road (once a Roman Road) North through the village of Hoath and under the Thanet Way.

At this point you can head east on a 2.5 mile detour to visit the **Abbey and Roman Fort at Reculver**, well worth a visit!



Download the ride details at www.downlandcycles.co.uk



The Goods Shed

Whether you choose to make the trip to Reculver or not, the route continues westwards winding its way through **Herne Bay** to the seafront esplanade.

From here you enjoy a mile or so of seafront riding, before coming back inland to join the B2205 into **Whitstable** where you'll reach the 16 mile mark at just about the harbour.

To return to Canterbury, follow Northwood Road and then Castle Road back out of town and under the railway, before joining the **Crab and Winkle Way**. At this point you have about 6 miles of relatively easy riding through **Clowes wood** and down into Canterbury.

Please Note - This ride is described as moderate with one or two small sections where you may encounter some traffic.



Getting There

Canterbury is easy to reach from the M2/A2

Buses on **Stagecoach routes 4, 5 and 6** run regularly between Canterbury and Whitstable.

Regular trains run into **Canterbury East** and **Canterbury West** stations, including high-speed trains to and from London



Cyclists at Reculver

Further Information

www.theblean.co.uk

www.downlandcycles.co.uk

www.thegoodshed.co.uk

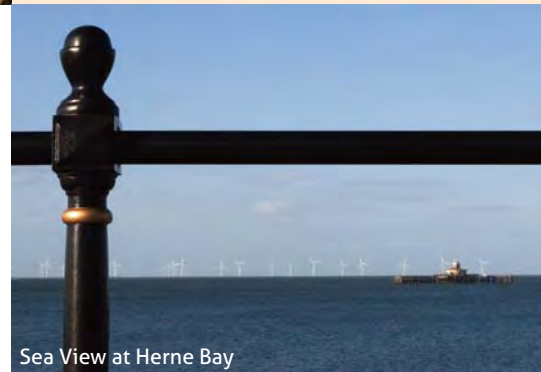
www.wcch.co.uk

www.english-heritage.org.uk

www.seewhitstable.com

www.kentishstour.org.uk

www.canterbury.co.uk



Sea View at Herne Bay

Extending your break...

You've seen the Eastern Blean by bike, so why not try the other half?

All the details you need for some **Oysters and Hops** is on page 7



Kentish Hops

Oysters & Hops

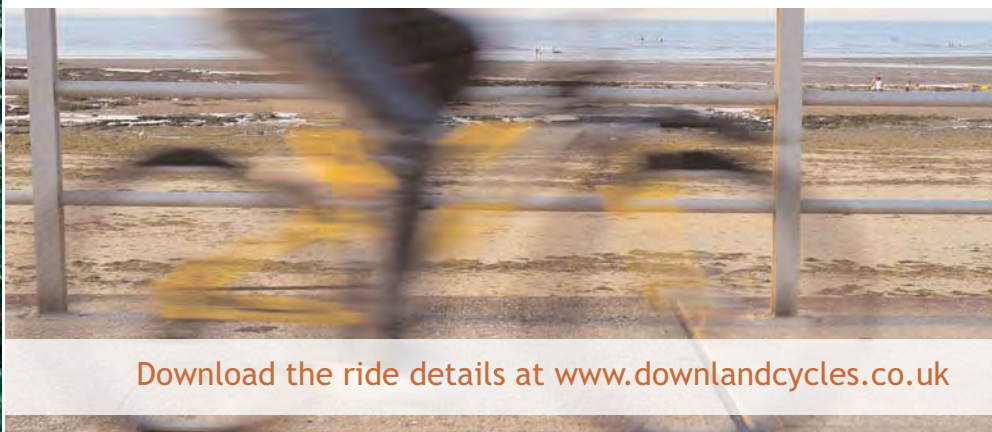
The Western Blean and Kent Downs by Bike

This 23.5 mile route lets you see two things Kent is famous for, its hop fields and Whitstable Oysters. The route follows the valley of the River Stour past Chartham to the picturesque village of **Chilham** and then through orchards and the villages of **Boughton, Hernhill**, Dargate and Yorkletts to the North Kent coast and the port of **Whitstable**. Your return route uses the **Crab and Winkle** Cycle Path.

If you don't have pedal power already, get started by picking up bikes from **Canterbury Cycle Hire**, located at the **Goods Shed** near Canterbury West Station.

Leave the city westwards following the Cycle Route 1 signs to Whitehall Road where you can access the new **Great Stour Way** multi-use path which takes you along the banks of the Stour all the way to the village of Chartham.

From Chartham you follow winding lanes towards Mystole before dropping down to join the A28 just outside the picturesque village of **Chilham**. Take some time to explore the village with its medieval square and timber framed houses. If you are looking for a break why not try the **White Horse**, **Woolpack Inn**, **Shelley's tea rooms** or **Badgers Hill Farm and Cidery**?



Download the ride details at www.downlandcycles.co.uk

Chilham Square

Leaving Chilham its a good five miles north on country lanes before you reach **Hernhill** and **Mount Ephraim Gardens** (which makes for a lovely afternoon stop off).

Leaving Hernhill continue north along lanes to reach Dargate and the hamlet of Yorkletts, shortly after which you can cross under the Thanet Way and drop down to Seasalter before bearing eastwards into Whitstable.

To return to Canterbury, follow Cromwell Road and then South Street back out of town and under the railway, before joining the **Crab and Winkle Way**. At this point you have about 6 miles of relatively easy riding through **Clowes wood** and down into Canterbury.

Please Note - This ride is described as moderate with several sections where you may encounter some traffic.



Getting There

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Taking a break



Mount Ephraim Gardens

Further Information

www.theblean.co.uk

www.downlandcycles.co.uk

www.thegoodshed.co.uk

www.wcch.co.uk

www.enjoychilham.org.uk

www.mountephraimgardens.co.uk

www.seewhitstable.com

www.kentishstour.org.uk

www.canterbury.co.uk



Extending your break...

You've ridden around the edges of the Blean, so why not take a real ride in the woods through its heart?

All the details you need for a visit to **Mount Ephraim** is on page 9



Blean Woods

Mount Ephraim

Through the Blean Woods by Bike

Again starting and finishing in Canterbury this 18 mile circuit takes you out of the city and on a wide gravel track through the heart of **Blean Woods National Nature Reserve**, and over hills and valleys (with some great panoramic views) to Boughton and **Mount Ephraim Gardens**. The return route runs via the villages of Hernehill, Dargate, through Denstroude and back to Canterbury via Tyler Hill.

As usual organise your trusty steeds by visiting Canterbury Cycle Hire at the Good Shed, Your first challenge is getting out of Canterbury, heading to Rough Common and finding your way into Church Wood and the RSPB reserve of **Blean Woods**.

Once in the woods follow the wide gravel path up as far as Denstroude farm before turning down into Dawes road towards Boughton. Shortly you'll have a fantastic panorama of Boughton and the hop gardens. Continue downhill into Boughton where you will find **Mount Ephraim Gardens** on your right.

The Gardens are open from 11am to 6pm except Tuesdays, and it makes a fine change from the saddle to wander the Edwardian gardens or pause for lunch on the terrace at the **Woodrose Tearooms**.



Download the ride details at www.downlandcycles.co.uk

Leaving Hernhill continue north along lanes to reach Dargate before turning back south past Denstroude Farm to join the A290 into the village of Blean.

Pass the church of **St.Cosmus and St.Damian** and head along Tyler Hill road to the village of the same name. You could stop at the **Ivy House** pub for refreshment or if you prefer push on downhill past the university and back into Canterbury.

Please Note - This ride is described as moderate with several sections where you may encounter some traffic.



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Tea on the terrace?



Further Information

www.theblean.co.uk

www.downlandcycles.co.uk

www.thegoodshed.co.uk

www.wcch.co.uk

www.rspb.org.uk

www.mountephraimgardens.co.uk

www.woodroserestaurant.co.uk

www.bleanchurch.net

www.canterbury.co.uk



Extending your break...

Tired yet? Well if you have energy to spare there is plenty more to do and see in the Blean.

Why not try some walks in our **Outdoors Breaks** guide and take a more leisurley pace...



Greater Spotted Woodpecker

More Information

Listings & Details



Attractions

Name	Telephone	Website	Address
Whitstable Farmers Market	N/A	http://www.whitstablefarmers-market.co.uk/	St.Mary's Hall, Oxford Street, Whitstable, CT5 1DD
Whitstable Cycle Hire	07791 114529	http://www.wcch.co.uk	56 Harbour Street, Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1AQ
The Goods Shed	01227 459 153	http://thegoodshed.co.uk/	Station Road West Canterbury CT2 8AN
Canterbury Cycle Hire	07791 114529	http://www.wcch.co.uk	Station Road West, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 8AN
Greyfriars Chapel	01227 471688	http://www.eastbridgehospital.org.uk/canterbury/greyfriars-introduction.htm	25 High Street, Canterbury Kent CT1 2BD
Whitstable Harbour	01227 246086	http://whitstableharbour.org/visiting-the-harbour	Whitstable, Kent, CT5 1AB
Reculver Towers & Roman Fort	01227 740676	http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/daysout/properties/reculver-towers-and-roman-fort/	Reculver, Kent, CT6 6SS
Mount Ephraim Gardens	01227 751496	http://www.mountephraimgardens.co.uk	Hernhill, Kent, ME13 9TX
Blean Woods NNR	01227 455972	http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide/b/bleanwoods/index.aspx	New Road, Rough Common, CT2 9PB
St.Cosmus & St.Damian	01227 763373	http://www.bleanchurch.net/	Blean, CT2 9EZ

Food & Drink

Name	Telephone	Website	Address
The Royal Oak Broadoak	01227 710448	http://www.royal-oak-broadoak.co.uk	14 Sweeneygate, Broadoak, Kent, CT2 0QP
Golden Lion Broadoak	01227 710454	http://www.goldenlion-broadoak.co.uk/	Mayton Lane, Broadoak, Kent, CT2 0QJ
Prince of Wales Hoath	01227 860338	http://www.princeofwaleshoath.co.uk/	Maypole, Hoath, Kent, CT3 4LN
The White Horse Chilham	01227 730355	www.thewhitehorsechilham.co.uk	The Square, Chilham, Kent
The Woolpack Chilham	01227 730351	www.woolpackchilham.co.uk	High Street, Chilham, Kent
Shelley's Tea Rooms	01227 730303	http://www.shellystearooms.com	2 The Square, Chilham, Kent
Badgers Hill Farm and Cidery	01227 730573	N/A	Maidstone Road, Chilham, Kent
The Three Horseshoes	01227 750842	http://www.shepherdname.co.uk/pub/faversham/three-horseshoes.aspx	Staple Street, Hernhill, ME13 9UA
Woodrose Tearooms	01227 751168	http://www.woodroserestaurant.co.uk	Mount Ephraim Gardens, Hernhill, Kent, ME13 9TX
The Ivy House	01227 472200	N/A	27 Hackington Road, Tyler Hill, CT3 9NE

Walks & Rides

Name	Distance	Website	Start & Finish
Crab & Winkle Way Cycle Route	7.5 Miles	http://www.kentishstour.org.uk/C&W_way_lft.htm	Canterbury to Whitstable
A Visit to Herne Bay Cycle Ride	23 Miles	http://www.downlandcycles.co.uk/bike_pdf/A%20Visit%20to%20Herne%20Bay.pdf	Canterbury

Oysters and Hops Cycle Ride	23 Miles	http://www.downlandcycles.co.uk/bike_pdf/Oyster%20and%20Hops.pdf	Canterbury
Mount Ephraim and Blean Woods Cycle Ride	18 Miles	http://www.downlandcycles.co.uk/bike_pdf/Mount%20Ephraim%20Gardens.pdf	Canterbury

General Information

Name	Telephone	Website	Address
Kent Downs	01303 815170	http://www.kentdowns.org.uk/	West Barn, Penstock Hall Farm Canterbury Road, East Brabourne, Kent , TN25 5LL
Chilham Website	N/A	http://www.enjoychilham.org.uk	N/A
Downland Cycles	01227 479643	http://www.downlandcycles.co.uk/	The Malthouse, St Stephens Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 7JA

For more in The Blean

and across East Kent...

Family Romantic Outdoors Pick N' Mix

www.visitkent.co.uk/explore/coast-natural2.asp



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