

Press Diary 2009

Issued on behalf of Visit Kent

GREAT FAMILY DAYS OUT IN KENT

A must-do line up of events for 2009 proves that Kent is *the* county for great family days out. Take your pick from magic, wildlife, spooks, Easter Egg hunts, quad bikes, jousting, festivals, kites and exhibitions. There's something for everyone so get ready to explore!

For a full list of Kent's events and visitor attractions go to www.visitkent.co.uk

JANUARY

Two Worlds Exhibition, Dickens World - until April 19: the second part of a costume exhibition from TV's most important drama series features the BBC's Little Dorrit starring Tom Courtenay, Amanda Redman, Robert Hardy, Alun Armstrong, Annette Crosbie and Ruth Jones. Charles Dickens' novel centres on the notorious Southwark prison The Marshalsea where his own father was imprisoned for debt. Exhibition included in admission price of adults £12.50; children (five to 15) £7.50 and concessions £10.50. Go to www.dickensworld.co.uk

Superabundant: A Celebration of Pattern, Turner Contemporary Project Space, Margate – January 24 – March 22: a fascinating exhibition featuring the work of nine artists, many of whom have created new and in some cases site-specific work for Turner Contemporary. Pattern and decoration are illustrated in a variety of different ways. Call 01843 280261 or go to www.turnercontemporary.org

FEBRUARY

A day out with Thomas, Kent & East Sussex Railway - February 14, 15, 21 & 22: meet Thomas and his friends at Tenterden Town station. To book seats (adults £12; children 18 months to 15, £9.50) call 01580 765155 or go to www.kesr.org.uk

The Big Dig, Leeds Castle - February 14 – 22: be an archaeologist for the holiday and dig in hidden holes and sand boxes to unearth the history of the castle. You can also enjoy the maze, exotic birds, grotto, and a Knights' Realm playground. With a 'key to the castle' ticket you can return as often as you like to Leeds. Call 01622 765400 or go to www.leeds-castle.com

February Fairy Tales, The Hop Farm Family Park - February 14 – 22: there's magic and mystery in the air for young visitors who can track down five mischievous goblins in the Great Goblin Hunt; catch a ride on the Victorian Galloper carousel; take part in the activities at the craft and pottery centre and marvel at the amazing tricks of England's first Magic Factory. There's also a new adventure play area inside Happy Hoppers plus the popular children's driving school. Call 01622 870821 or go to www.thehopfarm.co.uk

Wildlife Week, Sissinghurst Castle - February 16 – 20: a series of events in the castle garden. Features a family ramble and culminates in a Wildlife Workshop on February 20 from 10am – 3pm when you can join John Hammond for a morning on the estate, walking and collecting natural treasures, and the afternoon investigating the discoveries. Suitable for eight year olds and over. Children £6.50; accompanying adult *free*. Car park £2 per day for non NT members. (Free on Wednesdays and Thursdays). Call 01580 710701 or go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst

Ramble and Roast, Chartwell - February 22: an organised walk through the woodland and estate at Chartwell finishing up at the restaurant for a traditional roast lunch in the Mulberry Room. 10am – 3.45pm. £15. Booking essential on 01732 863087 or go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chartwell

MARCH

Big Sky Motocross - March 7 & 8: spectacular quad and motorbike event on Margate Main Sands. Call 01843 297350 or go to www.margatetownpartnership.org.uk

Science Stations at Down House - March 7, 8, 14 & 15: go on a voyage of discovery participating in various Science Station activities and experiments. Call 01689 859119 or go to www.english-heritage.org.uk

Big Day Out - March 28: a celebration of Kent's unique and diverse tourist attractions with thousands of free vouchers to a range of places. Go to www.visitkent.co.uk

APRIL

25th Anniversary Party Time!, Historic Dockyard Chatham – April 1: a 25-gun salute at midday and a piece of celebration cake and bubbly (or juice) during the afternoon for all visitors to mark the dockyard's 25th. Plus the launch of the special anniversary exhibition on the mezzanine floor of 3 slip. Usual admission prices apply. Call 01634 823800 or go to www.thedockyard.co.uk

Easter Treats at The Hop Farm Family Park - April 4 – 19: a chance to see some cute spring lambs and watch fluffy chicks hatch before joining in the daily Easter Egg hunts and other fun activities. Call 01622 870821 or go to www.thehopfarm.co.uk

Spring Sensations, Scotney Castle – April 7: discover the sights and smells of spring in the garden and on the estate by joining in creative activities for younger visitors. Booking essential. £2. Go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/scotney

Easter Trail, Chartwell - April 10 -13: celebrate Easter with a fun children's trail. 11am – 5pm. Normal admission charge plus £2. Go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chartwell

Easter Weekend, Hever Castle - April 10 – 13: annual family Tudor event including Easter egg trail and brass bands from 10am – 4pm. Go to www.hevercastle.co.uk.

Easter Trail, Knole - April 11: visitors can follow the clues on this fun and informative trail through the famous deer park and claim their chocolate prize at the end! 11am – 3pm. Normal admission charge plus £2. Go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/knole

Medway Festival of Steam and Transport - April 12 & 13: new for 2009, the Extreme Globe Riders Show – a high energy display of acrobatics-on-motorbikes in a huge metallic sphere which has captivated audiences in 16 countries. Plus vintage cars, classic motorbikes, commercial and military vehicles, steam traction engines and locomotives, sideshows, vehicle parades and an area dedicated to vehicles of the 80s in recognition of the dockyard's 25th anniversary. For prices Call 01634 823800 or go to www.thedockyard.co.uk

Emmetts Garden Easter Trail - April 14 – 17: the Emmetts version of the great egg hunt from 11am – 5pm. Normal admission charge plus £2. Go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/emmetts

Scotney Easter Egg Trail - April 13, 15, 16 & 17: follow the trail and claim your chocolate prize!

Normal admission charge plus £2. Go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/sissinghurst

MAY

Kent County Fair - May 2 – 4: quality trade stands, shopping mall, dedicated family zones, music, dance, and a rabbit and poultry show at The Hop Farm Family Park. Go to

www.thehopfarm.co.uk.

Chartwell Pudding Club - May 8: Chartwell's own version of the celebrated Pudding Club is the ideal opportunity for anyone with a sweet tooth to savour the delights of traditional classic puddings. £18. Booking essential on 01732 863087 or go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/chartwell

Merrie England Weekend, Hever Castle – May 23 – 25: kick start your bank holiday in grand style as Henry VIII arrives at the castle by boat, along with members of his court. Traditional Tudor music sets the scene as the king's household entertains him with a series of playlets. The king's men will display their bow skills in archery contests and aspiring archers can test their own skills in 'have-a-go-archery'. Open 11am – 6pm. Adults £12; children £6.50; family ticket £30.50.

Go to www.hevercastle.co.uk

Pirates Play Days, Historic Dockyard Chatham – May 23 – 29: week-long celebration of pirates for the whole family! Young visitors can soak up the delights of the Pirates Play Place with storytelling, puppet shows and costumed characters including Captain Flint – the mischievous pilfering pirate parrot who is always on the lookout for treasure to steal! Plus treasure trail, party games with prizes and arts and crafts. Go dressed as a pirate to add to the fun. Usual admission prices. Call 01634 823800 or go to www.thedockyard.co.uk

Henry VIII's Jousting Tournament - Leeds Castle, May 26 – 31: medieval jousting tournament, with thrilling twice-daily jousts from knights on horseback, set against the backdrop of the 1,000 year old castle. Go to www.leeds-castle.com.

Tudor Fun for the Kids - Hever Castle, May 26 – 31: have fun dressing the knight and dressing up in Tudor costumes. Go to www.hevercastle.co.uk

Food Glorious Food - Ightham Mote, May 28: a fun day out for the family joining in a home-grown vegetable ID game, choosing your favourite veggie, planting a seed to take home or browsing the mini-market for local produce. Go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ightham

Rochester Dickens Festival - May 29 – 31: journey back in time through street entertainment, parades, and song and dance for the 31st festival commemorating the life and works of one of Rochester's favourite sons, Charles Dickens. Call 01634 843666 or go to www.medway.gov.uk/events

JUNE

Margate's Big Event - June 20 & 21: winning combination of land-based festival and spectacular air displays plus live music, food and drink village and other attractions. Call 01843 577167 or go to www.visitthanet.co.uk

Broadstairs Dickens Festival - June 20 - 24: popular seaside festival celebrating the life, times and works of Broadstairs' most famous patron and holiday-maker, Charles Dickens. More details at www.broadstairsdickensfestival.co.uk.

JULY

Big Sky Jazz Festival - July 17 - 19: Margate Piazza provides the stage while the setting sun provides the backdrop. Contact Margate Town Partnership on 01843 297350 or go to www.visitthanet.co.uk

Jousting Tournaments, Hever Castle - July 25 & 26: cheer on your favourite knight in this thrilling series of full gallop jousts performed by the 'Knights of Royal England'. Go to www.hevercastle.co.uk.

AUGUST

Broadstairs Folk Week - August 7 - 14: this internationally-acclaimed event is a heady mix of top line concerts, dance music from around the world, workshops and much, much more. Enough to satisfy the seasoned folkie as well as luring a new audience. Call 01843 604080 or go to www.broadstairsfolkweek.org.uk.

Have a Go Archery - Hever Castle, August 8 & 9: fantastic demonstration of archery plus have-a-go archery and a spectacular display of birds of prey. Go to www.hevercastle.co.uk

Smugglers, Historic Dockyard Chatham – August 30 & 31: team up with the smugglers in some exciting themed activities as they come out of hiding and share their treasures with you. Event includes Spot the Smuggler Trail and children's smuggled goods lucky dip. Usual admission prices. Call 01634 823800 or go to www.thedockyard.co.uk

SEPTEMBER

Big Sky Kite Festival - September 19 – 20: top kite flyers from across the globe will be heading for Margate Main Sands for this international kite bonanza, now in its third year. The event is expected to attract thousands of enthusiasts. For further information call Visitor Information on 0870 264 6111 or go to www.visitthanet.co.uk

Salute to the 40s, Historic Dockyard Chatham – September 19 & 20: step back in time to the 1940s as the dockyard is brought alive by wartime vehicles, uniforms, music and activities that typified Britain at war. There's also a Street Party with entertainment. For prices call 01634 823800 or go to www.thedockyard.co.uk

OCTOBER

Half term Spooky Fun, Hever Castle - October 24 – November 1: Pumpkin trail, walks, games, workshops and scary stories. Go to www.hevercastle.co.uk

DECEMBER STOP PRESS

Dickensian Christmas, Rochester – December 5 & 6: seasonal celebration with street entertainment, readings, song and dance, candle-lit parade and carol concert. Call 01634 843666 or go to www.medway.gov.uk/events

Christmas at Hever Castle - December 12 – 23: see the castle with twinkling trees, festive decorations and spectacular illuminated gardens, husky dogs, Father Christmas' grotto and gifts galore in the shops, music and carols. Go to www.hevercastle.co.uk

For further information on events in Kent go to www.visitkent.co.uk

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Press enquiries:

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We can also assist with:

- Digital images
- Reader competitions
- If you would like to a personalised press trip we can arrange a bespoke package including your accommodation and sightseeing.