

## Maidstone

With a thriving town centre surrounded by glorious Kentish countryside, Maidstone has a wealth of attractions offering the perfect mix of history, culture, leisure and entertainment!



## Facts about Maidstone

### *Did you know about....??*

#### History

Maidstone began as a Saxon village. From the 10th century it was owned by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The architecture that today is still reflected around All Saints Church and Archbishops Palace. In 1549 Maidstone was given a new charter, which made it an independent borough.

By the 13th century Maidstone grew into a town. Situated on the Medway it was ideally situated for transporting vegetables and fruit from Kent by water to London. It was also the market town for a large part of Kent, and people would come from all over Kent and from London to buy and sell at a Maidstone fair.

William Hazlitt the famous essayist was born in Maidstone in 1778, the theatre still bears his name The Hazlitt Theatre.

After the decline of the wool trade in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, the brewery and thread trade was introduced. The number of breweries increased as the river was useful for transportation. The town had a distinctive smell during its brewery days. Locally grown flax which was used for thread making and clothing was also made in Maidstone, it also supported the brewing industry for its use as hop twine for hop bags.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> century the paper industry bloomed. The paper mills, known locally as "the treacle mines", also grew near the river. Paper was produced at places such as Turkey Mill and Hayle Mill.

In 1801 the population of Maidstone grew rapidly. It gained its first police force in 1822, but it wasn't until 1870 when a network of drains and sewers was created.

During the 19th century other manufacturing industries grew up in the town. Making farm implements and machinery, as well as food processing such as jam and bottling mineral water.

The first electricity was generated in Maidstone in 1901, followed by electric trams and Maidstone's first cinema in 1910. In the 1920s and 1930s the first council houses were built in Maidstone. Later the Hazlitt Theatre opened in 1955 and still operates today.

In the late 20th century the old industries of paper making and brewing declined. In common with other towns Maidstone lost much of its manufacturing but service industries became more important. Today tourism is a major industry in Maidstone. Retail is another important industry and led to the Chequers Centre was being built in 1976.

Today the town is ranked in the top five shopping centres in the south east of England for shopping yields and has more than one million square feet of retail floor space, including the new shopping area Fremlin Walk.

## Countryside

**Just outside of Maidstone town centre and away from the hustle and bustle, visitors will find picturesque villages and varied rural landscapes to enjoy.**

**Bearsted** features one of the oldest cricket greens in Kent. The village retains its rural identity through the timber-framed houses, village shops, pubs, restaurants and Oasthouses facing the green, with views of the nearby Kent Downs.

**Boxley** is the largest parish, famous for its weather boarded and redbrick houses. Boxley Abbey was once the home to the 'Rood of Grace' – a crucifix with a figure. Now the private 12th century barn can be seen from the footpath.

**Detling** village is located on the ancient Pilgrim Way and is a base for walking along the North Downs Way. Detling Hill is also the location for the Kent County Showground and Exhibition Centre.

**Leeds** is best known for **Leeds Castle** which hosts many events throughout the year. It is often confused with the city of Leeds, in the north of England. The small village features attractive cottages and original timber framed houses.

**Lenham** is a large village is close to the North Downs and is an excellent location to start exploring the surrounding countryside. Used as a market place for many hundreds of years, the square remains the focal point of the village, flanked by medieval houses, shops, restaurants and public houses.

**Marden** was part of a Royal Hundred with its own courthouse that is located in the centre of the village – recalling the times when it was exempt from the jurisdiction of the county sheriff. The old stocks are now in the south porch of the 13th Century church of St Michael and All Angels.

**Headcorn** charms are reflected in this ancient Wealden village by the neatly kept medieval cottages and High Street, which cunningly conceals a considerable shopping centre to cater for nearly every need.

**Yalding** is met by three rivers - the Beult, Teise and Medway, and are crossed by three medieval bridges. It is one of the largest hop growing parishes in England and is surrounded by orchards and Oasthouses.

**Sutton Valence** hosts the ruins of Sutton Valence Castle, the home of William de Valence half-brother to Henry III who granted William the area of Sutton. The small village has beautiful views over the Kent Downs countryside.

**Otham** is famed for its late medieval timber-framed houses such as **Stoneacre** a small 15th Century Yeoman's house. The village enjoys an elevated position southeast of Maidstone and overlooks spectacular views of the countryside.

**Thurnham**, this small village has a fascinating Norman history. The ruins of the mote and bailey castle can still be seen within the White Horse Wood.

**Staplehurst**, a large village is surrounded by fields of hops, corn, vine and wheat, making it home to **Iden Croft Herb Garden**.

## Places to visit

### Estates & Houses:

**Kits Coty & Little Kits Coty**  
Blue Bell Hill (Off A229),  
Nr Maidstone, Kent

**Stoneacre**  
Stoneacre Lane,  
Otham,  
Maidstone, Kent, ME15 8RS  
Tel: (01622) 862157  
Email: [stoneacreNT@aol.com](mailto:stoneacreNT@aol.com)  
Website: [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

**The Friars**  
Aylesford,  
Kent, ME20 7BX  
Tel: (01622) 717272  
Fax: (01622) 715575  
Email: [enquiry@thefriars.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@thefriars.org.uk)  
Website: [www.thefriars.org.uk](http://www.thefriars.org.uk)

### Museums:

**Lashenden Air Warfare Museum**  
Headcorn Aerodrome,  
Headcorn,  
Kent, TN27 9HX  
Tel: (01622) 890226

**Maidstone Carriage Museum**  
Mill Street,  
Maidstone,  
Kent, ME15 6YE  
Tel: (01622) 602838

**Maidstone Museum & Bently Art Gallery**  
St Faith's Street,  
Maidstone,  
Kent, ME14 1LH  
Tel: (01622) 602838  
Email: [museuminfo@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:museuminfo@maidstone.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.museum.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.museum.maidstone.gov.uk)

**Kent Life**  
Cobtree, Lock Lane,  
Sandling,  
Maidstone,  
Kent, ME14 3AU  
Tel: (01622) 763936

### Churches:

**All Saints Church**  
Mill Street,  
Maidstone,  
ME15 6YE  
Tel: (01622) 843298  
Email: [admin@maidstoneallsaints.freereserve.co.uk](mailto:admin@maidstoneallsaints.freereserve.co.uk)  
Website: [www.maidstoneallsaints.freereserve.co.uk](http://www.maidstoneallsaints.freereserve.co.uk)

### Castles:

**Leeds Castle**  
Hollingbourne,  
Nr Maidstone,  
Kent, ME17 1PL  
Tel: (01622) 765400  
Fax: (01622) 735616  
Email: [enquiries@leeds-castle.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@leeds-castle.co.uk)  
Website: [www.leeds-castle.com](http://www.leeds-castle.com)

### Walking, Cycling & Activities:

**Go Ape**  
Leeds Castle  
Tel: 0845 094 8449  
Website: [www.goape.co.uk](http://www.goape.co.uk)

**Len Valley Walk** (12 miles)  
Between Maidstone and Lenham  
Tel: (01622) 602169  
Fax: (01622) 602519  
Email: [mailto:tourism@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:mailto:tourism@maidstone.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.tour-maidstone.com](http://www.tour-maidstone.com)

**Harrietsham Walk** (5 miles)  
Off A20, North Downs Way

**Sutton Valence Walk** (5.2 miles)  
Between Sutton Valence & Greensand Way

**The Stour Valley Walk** (51.5 miles)  
Running from the source of the River Stour at Lenham to the sea at Pegwell Bay near Sandwich.

**Hollingbourne North Downs Way Lost Landscapes Heritage Trail** (8 miles).  
A circular route from Hollingbourne railway station

Fax: (01622) 662024  
Email: [enquiries@museum-kentlife.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@museum-kentlife.co.uk)  
Website: [www.museum-kentlife.co.uk](http://www.museum-kentlife.co.uk)

Details can be found at:  
[www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture](http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-culture)

## Parks & Gardens:

### **Iden Croft Herb Gardens**

Frittenden Road,  
Staplehurst,  
Kent, TN12 0DH  
Tel: (01580) 891432  
Fax: (01580) 892416  
Email: [idenCroftHerbs@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:idenCroftHerbs@yahoo.co.uk)  
Website: [www/herbs-uk.com](http://www/herbs-uk.com)

### **Tyland Barn & gardens**

Kent Wildlife Trust  
Sandling, Maidstone,  
Kent, ME14 3BD  
Tel: (01622) 662012  
Website: [www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk)

### **The Hop Farm Country Park**

Beltring, Paddock Wood,  
Tonbridge,  
Kent, TN12 6PY  
Tel: (01622) 872068 / 0870 0274166  
Fax: (01622) 872630  
Email: [info@thehopfarm.co.uk](mailto:info@thehopfarm.co.uk)  
Website: [www.thehopfarm.co.uk](http://www.thehopfarm.co.uk)

### **Maidstone Millennium River Park**

Website: [www.tour-maidstone.com](http://www.tour-maidstone.com)

### **Mote Park**

Park Avenue, Maidstone, Kent  
Tel: (01622) 602188  
Website: [www.tour-maidstone.com](http://www.tour-maidstone.com)

### **Yalding Organic Centre**

Benover Road,  
Yalding, Maidstone,  
Kent, ME18 6EX  
Tel / Fax: (01622) 814650  
Website: [www.yaldingorganics.com](http://www.yaldingorganics.com)

### **Quarry Wood Nature Reserve**

Near West Farleigh, Kent  
Website: [www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk)

### **Teston Bridge Picnic Site**

Teston, Maidstone, Kent

### **Blue Bell Hill Picnic Site**

Common Road, Blue Bell Hill, Kent

### **Vinters Valley Nature Reserve**

From Bearsted Road, near M20 junction 7, Kent  
Tel: (01622) 693557  
Email: [vintersp@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:vintersp@yahoo.co.uk)  
Website: [www.boxleyparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.boxleyparishcouncil.co.uk)

### **Brenchley Gardens**

Behind Maidstone Museum,  
St Faith's Street,  
Maidstone, Kent

### **Westfield Wood Nature Reserve**

From the A229, Maidstone – Chatham Road  
(Blue Bell Hill), Kent  
Website: [www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk)

### **Burham Down Natural Reserve**

West of the A229  
Common Site, Blue Bell Hill, Kent  
Website: [www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk)

### **Iden Croft Herb Gardens**

Frittenden Road,  
Staplehurst,  
Kent, TN12 0DH  
Tel: (01580) 891432  
Fax: (01580) 892416  
Email: [idenCroftHerbs@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:idenCroftHerbs@yahoo.co.uk)  
Website: [www/herbs-uk.com](http://www/herbs-uk.com)

### **Burham Marsh Nature Reserve**

On the eastern banks of the River Medway,  
north of Aylesford and west of Burham, Kent  
Website: [www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.kentwildlifetrust.org.uk)

## Boat Trips:

### **Kentish Lady Cruises**

Undercliffe Boathouse,  
Maidstone,  
Kent, ME15 6XG  
Tel/Fax: (01622) 753740  
Mobile Phone: 07973 866971  
Email: [boattrips@kentishlady.co.uk](mailto:boattrips@kentishlady.co.uk)  
Website: [www.kentishlady.co.uk](http://www.kentishlady.co.uk)

### **The Allington Belle**

Fords Marine, Allington,  
Maidstone,  
Kent, ME16 0BP  
Tel: (01622) 661064  
Email: [enquiries@allingtonbelle.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@allingtonbelle.co.uk)  
Website: [www.allingtonbelle.co.uk](http://www.allingtonbelle.co.uk)

## Steam Trains:

### **Bredgar & Wormshill Light Railway**

The Warren, Bredgar,  
Sittingbourne,  
Kent, ME9 8AT  
Tel: (01622) 884254  
Fax: (01622) 884668  
Website: [www.bwlr.co.uk](http://www.bwlr.co.uk)

## Shopping:

### **Maidstone Town Centre**

Website: [www.maidstonetowncentre.com](http://www.maidstonetowncentre.com)

### **Broadway Shopping Centre**

Tonbridge Road, Maidstone.

### **The Mall, Chequers Centre**

The Mall Maidstone, Pads Hill,  
Maidstone, Kent, ME15 6AT  
Tel: (01622) 691 130  
Fax: (01622) 692 110

### **Fremlin Walk**

Fremlin Walk Centre Management Suite,  
62 Earl Street, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1PS  
Tel: (01622) 356580  
[www.fremlinwalk.co.uk](http://www.fremlinwalk.co.uk)  
[info@fremlinwalk.co.uk](mailto:info@fremlinwalk.co.uk)

## Leisure Centres & Entertainment:

### **Maidstone Leisure Centre**

Mote Park, Off Willow Way,  
Maidstone,  
Kent, ME15 7RN  
Tel: 08451 552277  
Fax: (01622) 672462  
Website: [www.maidstoneleisure.com](http://www.maidstoneleisure.com)

### **Lockmeadow Entertainment Centre**

Barker Road  
Maidstone  
Tel: (01622) 764410  
Web: [www.lockmeadowcentre.co.uk](http://www.lockmeadowcentre.co.uk)

## Theatres & Arts:

### **Hazlitt Art Centre**

Earl Street,  
Maidstone,  
Kent, ME14 1PL  
Admin: (01622) 753922  
Box office: (01622) 758611  
Fax: (01622) 602194  
Email: [hazlitt@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:hazlitt@maidstone.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.hazlittartcentre.co.uk](http://www.hazlittartcentre.co.uk)

### **Graham Clarke Studio**

Up the Garden Studio  
White Cottage, Green Lane  
Boughton Monchelsea  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME17 4LF  
(01622) 743938  
Website: [www.grahamclarke.co.uk](http://www.grahamclarke.co.uk)  
Email: [info@grahamclarke.co.uk](mailto:info@grahamclarke.co.uk)

### **Teapot Island Exhibition**

Hampstead Lane,  
Yalding, Nr Maidstone,  
Kent, ME18 6HG  
Tel: (01622) 814541  
Email: [sue.blazye@btinternet.com](mailto:sue.blazye@btinternet.com)  
Website: [www.teapotisland.com](http://www.teapotisland.com)

### **Royal Star Arcade**

The Royal Star Arcade offers a range of specialty clothing and gift shops under one roof.

### **Market Buildings**

A variety of independent specialist shops.

### **Maidstone High Street shopping**

Just off of the main High Street is Bank Street, Earl Street, Gabriel's Hill, King Street, Pudding Lane, Week Street and Union Street. Each street provides a range of different shops, restaurants and cafés. Many of the streets feature historical buildings that feature original architecture.

## **Markets:**

### **Lockmeadow Market**

Tel: (01622) 602258

From 0700 until 1430 on Tuesdays and 1330 on Saturdays.

### **Market Hall**

Thursdays between 0800 and 1800 Furniture Sales.

On Fridays between 0700 and 1300 Fruit and Vegetable Sales every other week.

## **Tourism Figures: Key headline figures for Maidstone for 2006**

- It is estimated that around 386,162 overnight tourism staying trips were made to Maidstone in 2006. Of these trips, domestic visitors made 84% of trips (325,161) and overseas visitors made 16% of trips (51,001).
- The total nights stayed by visitors was 1,281,001 nights, with £58,627,109 spent by staying visitors on their trip
- 3,027,003 tourism day trips were taken to Maidstone in 2006, with £100,466,227 spent by tourism day visitors on their trip.
- In total, around £159,093,336 was spent on trips to Maidstone in 2006 by staying and day visitors. 26% of this expenditure was made by domestic staying visitors; 11% by overseas staying visitors and 63% by day visitors.
- In addition, expenditure by friends and relatives on visitors, and visitors spend on second homes generates a further £11,917,000. With the addition of other expenditure tourism activity generated £171,010,336 expenditure.
- Of this expenditure, £160,436,000 translates into direct income for local business; and a further £48,130,800 of income is generated through indirect and induced effects (a total of £208,566,800 business turnover).
- This income supported 3,476 FTE jobs and 4,754 Actual jobs. Overall it is estimated that tourism expenditure supported 7% of local employment.

## Accommodation in Maidstone:

Type of Accommodation	Bedrooms/ Units/Pitches	Bed spaces
Caravan & Camping	390	1,780
Group (Hostels & shared accommodation)	8	53
Self catering (Cottages, Barns & Houses)	49	197
Serviced (Hotels, B&B's & Inn's)	1,235	2,610

\*Information sourced by Tourism South East

## To find out more visit your local Visitor Information Centre:

### Maidstone Visitor Information Centre

Town Hall, High Street,  
Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1TF

Tel: (01622) 602169

Fax: (01622) 602519

Email: [tourism@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:tourism@maidstone.gov.uk)

Website: [www.tour-maidstone.com](http://www.tour-maidstone.com) / [www.maidstone.gov.uk](http://www.maidstone.gov.uk)

## Useful Tourism Contacts:

### Maidstone Borough Council

Maidstone House

King Street

Maidstone

ME15 6JQ

Tel. 44 (0)1622 602510

Website: [www.tour-maidstone.com](http://www.tour-maidstone.com)

[www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk](http://www.digitalmaidstone.co.uk)

### Heart of Kent

Website: [www.visitheartofkent.com](http://www.visitheartofkent.com)

### Visit Kent

Kent County Council

Invicta House

County Hall

Maidstone

Kent, ME14 1XX

Tel: +44 (0) 1622 671411

Website: [www.visitkent.co.uk](http://www.visitkent.co.uk)

[www.visitkent.co.uk/business](http://www.visitkent.co.uk/business)

