

What's new and different?

Rochester High Street is home to a host of lively café bars, museums, independent shops and galleries with exhibitions of affordable original art and prints. You're welcome to browse and you'll find opportunities to buy anything from second-hand books and vintage clothing to a bespoke suit of armour or fossils.

On this trail, we'll introduce you to places where you can confidently commission a contemporary piece of furniture, jewellery worthy of heirloom status, or an original or personalised artwork, for yourself or as a gift. We believe you'll appreciate the quality and value on offer.

Those of all faiths, or none, are welcomed at the ancient Norman cathedral on the road to Canterbury, surrounded by stone or timbered buildings and at the castle known to Henry VIII, who first met Anne of Cleves here. Rochester can be pleasantly uncrowded on weekdays, allowing the visitor to enjoy a civilised and unhurried environment.

A short distance away at Fort Pitt, you can visit temporary

exhibitions at the Zandra Rhodes Gallery, found at the Rochester campus of the University of the Creative Arts.

In Chatham centre you'll find **Nucleus Arts Centre**, a recently opened converted mews, just off Chatham High Street, where local artists exhibit in the gallery and patronise an on-site café.

Follow signs in Dock Road to **The Historic Dockyard, Chatham**, on the banks of the River Medway. This is where Nelson's flagship HMS Victory was built. There's much to see,

including historic ships and a submarine; the naval pay office where Charles Dickens' father worked; a working ropery and a new museum, galleries and temporary exhibitions at No. 1 Smithery, opened in July 2010, in partnership with The National Maritime Museum and the Imperial War Museum.

Finally, if you want some cultural entertainment, you could take in **Dickens World**, or go shopping at the **Dockside Outlet Centre** next door, in a waterside listed building, once a boiler house for the dockyard.

Right: Number 1 Smithery, The Historic Dockyard, Chatham
 Below: Rochester



Rochester Arts and Crafts Trail

Rochester

More independent retailers

Here's a selection of retailers in Rochester High Street that have adopted a creative approach to merchandising and offer interesting goods with strong visual aesthetic. For opening hours call, or check the websites.

Dickens House Wine
 Fine wines and unusual artisan produced drinks, including rhubarb liqueur and English vodka. A quaint panelled former apothecary shop from the Victorian era.
53 High Street
01634 880887
www.dickenshousewine.co.uk

2B Green
 Organic, fair-trade, solar and recycled products, offering environmentally friendly alternatives to everyday items. Closed Monday.
68 High Street
01634 406969
www.2bgreen.co.uk

I Dig Dinosaurs
 Natural minerals and fossils, insects in amber, unusual soft toys and jewellery.
64 High Street
01634 406555
www.idigidinos.com

Rochester Armoury
 Bespoke helmets, suits of armour, swords, regalia and accessories for living history interpretation.
2b Crow Lane
01634 845526
www.the-rochesterarmoury.co.uk

The Candy Bar
 Traditional sweet shop, selling home-made fudge and other candy.
76 High Street
01634 843592

Camille Florist
 Providing flowers for all occasions. Unique designs tailored for the needs and requirements of customers.
162 High Street
01634 407676
www.camille-florist.co.uk

Thoroughly Wood
 Bespoke furniture, design and installation for dining rooms and studies, as well as kitchen, bedrooms and bathrooms, all crafted in solid wood in own workshop.
137 High Street
01634 843330/01227 780062(workshop)
www.thoroughlywood.co.uk

World of Difference - dolls house furniture
 Steiff teddy bears, soft toy collectables and teddy bear hospital repair service.
72 High Street
01634 817817
www.worldofdifference.co.uk

Food outlets

• Take away service

Café Mamma Mia, Italian pastries including Sicilian Cannoli. Eat in also available.
32 High Street
01634 407400

The Deli
28 High Street
01634 841009

Garden House Café and Deli
 Eat in also available, courtyard garden in season.
98 High Street
01634 842460
www.gardenhousecafe.co.uk

Morleys Bakers
125 High Street
01634 842393

Tony Lorenzo Deli and Café
 Eat in also available.
145 High Street
01634 402227
www.tonylorenzo.co.uk

• Eat in

Mrs Bumbles Tea Shop
 Work for sale by local artists.
132 High Street
01634 828259

Don Vincenzo Italian restaurant
108-110 High Street
01634 408373

Elizabets of Eastgate
154 High Street
01634 843472
www.elizabethofeastgate.co.uk

George Vaults
 Brasserie and bar, with garden terrace in season. Thirteenth century Vaults bar available for private hire.
35 High Street
01634 817165
www.georgevaults.com

Mamma Mia
 Italian restaurant
4 High Street
01634 827027
www.mammamia-restaurant.com

Pizza Express
23 High Street
01634 812171
www.pizzaexpress.com

Rochester Coffee Co
 Café serving light meals and champagne cream teas
146 High Street
01634 540032

Simply Italian
55 High Street
01634 408077
www.simplyitalian.co.uk

Topes
 Contemporary European fine dining restaurant
60 High Street
01634 845270
www.topesrestaurant.com



Art venues in Chatham

Nucleus Arts Centre, Chatham

The largest artist's studio complex in North Kent is a creative hub and proven incubator of local artistic talent. Visitors will find something to suit all tastes and budgets in the gallery, which can be hired for exhibitions and events, and there's a café, kiln room, and conference facilities on site.

272 High Street, Chatham, Kent ME4 4BP
Open: Monday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm. Closed Sunday.
Phone: 01634 812108
Visit: www.nucleus-arts.com

The Historic Dockyard, Chatham

Set in a waterfront estate, The Historic Dockyard features stunning Georgian architecture, interactive exhibits, museum galleries, historic ships, and a working ropery - all open to visitors.

No. 1 Smithery opened here in July 2010. This new museum experience and cultural centre is a unique partnership with the National Maritime Museum and the Imperial War Museum, featuring world-class maritime collections and a temporary exhibition gallery. Galleries close from 45mins before site closing time.

The Historic Dockyard, Dock Road, Chatham, Kent ME4 4TZ
Phone: 01634 823807
Visit: www.thedockyard.co.uk
Phone or visit website for opening times and prices

The Brook Theatre

Formerly Chatham Town Hall, The Brook Theatre is a stunning Victorian building in the heart of Medway. Today it's a thriving arts centre where you can explore theatre, dance, gallery exhibitions and arts workshops. Occasional art exhibitions take place at The Brook Theatre. The nearby Central Theatre hosts regular shows and performances throughout the year.

The Old Town Hall, Chatham, Kent ME4 4SE
Phone: 01634 338338
Visit: www.thebrooktheatre.co.uk

Zandra Rhodes Gallery

Zandra Rhodes, the world-renowned fashion designer, is a graduate of the Rochester campus and recently became the first Chancellor of the University of the Creative Arts (UCA).

A temporary exhibition space relating to UCA Rochester's specialist subjects, including fashion, photography and three-dimensional design; the gallery also showcases outreach in collaboration with other educational institutions and local businesses.

University of the Creative Arts at Rochester, Fort Pitt, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1DZ
Phone: 01634 888702
Visit: www.ucreative.ac.uk
Open: 10am to 5pm weekdays, closed weekends and bank holidays. Admission free. Please phone for dates and details on forthcoming exhibitions.



Getting to Medway

By road
 There is easy access from London and the Kent coast via the M2/A2 and M20 motorways.



By sea
 Medway is just an hour's drive from the port of Dover and the Channel Tunnel, Folkestone.

By rail
 Southeastern operates frequent services to Medway from all areas of the south coast and London. There are five stations in Medway: Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham and Rainham. Please check www.nationalrail.co.uk

Medway Visitor Information Centre
 95, High Street, Rochester, Kent, ME1 1LX
Phone: 01634 338141
Fax: 01634 847891
Email: visitorcentre@medway.gov.uk
 The centre is open daily: Monday to Saturday, 10am-5pm and Sunday, 10.30am-5pm
www.visitmedway.org

This information is available in other formats from 01634 338118. If you want to speak to someone in your own language the community interpreting service can help. Please phone 01634 335577. For visitors with physical disabilities a new accessible trail leaflet is available.



Cllr Jane Chitty, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Development, Economic Growth and Tourism, Medway Council

Rochester

Introduction

Art and culture are together making a real contribution to Britain's 21st century social and economic prosperity. The vibrant contemporary arts scene that has emerged in Medway in recent years is stimulating growing interest. It pays testament to the regeneration of an area, which is rapidly gaining international recognition.

Cult hero Billy Childish and spiky haired chef Gary Rhodes are among celebrities who grew up here. Fashion designers Zandra Rhodes, Jeff Banks and Karen Millen, artist Tracey Emin, animator Tim Searle, British portraitist Humphrey Ocean and ceramicist and critic Emmanuel Cooper are among the most celebrated alumni of the University of the Creative Arts at Rochester. Together with other universities based at Chatham Maritime, they are all helping to drive interest in creativity, artistic endeavour, employment and education in the area.

Medway's location, halfway between London and the Channel ports, has ensured that a succession of royalty and other prominent visitors have made their mark en route to and from Europe throughout history. Its position near the heart of the UK motorway network, with links into Britain's first high-speed domestic and international railway between London and the Channel Tunnel, both bring benefits that continue today.

In addition, the River Medway's continuing maritime and trading traditions help to ensure that the area is open to new ideas and influences, within and beyond the shores of Britain. Will Adams, a native of Gillingham, used by James Clavell as a model for the hero of his novel *Shogun*, embarked on his oriental voyages from Medway. To this day close cultural links are maintained with Ito and Yokosuka in Japan, Valenciennes in France and Foshan near Guangzhou in the Guangdong province of China. Chinese New Year is celebrated in Medway on a scale exceeded in the UK only by London and Manchester and there are also a sizeable number of Italian-owned businesses within the local community.

Making a start

Our trail starts from The Guildhall Museum, Rochester. There's plenty of convenient parking in the city centre; or, if your visit is timed during one of the popular festivals, or on a Saturday, simply follow the signs to the free park and ride service that will take you into the centre.

The centre is only a short taxi ride, or a leisurely 5 minute stroll by turning to the right out of Rochester train station, making use of the pelican crossing, and, keeping Capons butchers to your right, crossing over at the traffic lights.

Planning your day

Raring to go? Start with breakfast, or a refreshing or warming drink, either at the Cathedral tea rooms or at Norma's coffee shop in Medway Visitor Information Centre (both open early).

We've designed the trail to make it easy for you to discover and enjoy Rochester's hidden gems and highlights. We've done all the hard work, leaving you free to decide the exact timing and route of your trip along Rochester High Street, and combine it with Chatham if you wish.

Rochester offers plenty of dining options, from full service restaurants to traditional bakers, candy shops, and delis. The choice is yours: eat in or take out, grab a Panini, enjoy a picnic, linger over a cappuccino, or while away an evening in stimulating company. If you find yourself in Rochester during the afternoon, there's an opportunity to splurge on a calorific cream tea; but perhaps with the added twist of a glass of champagne.

1. The Guildhall Museum

The Rochester Guildhall was built in 1687 and is one of the finest 17th century civic buildings in Kent. The exquisite Stuart interior of the council chamber remains as described by Charles Dickens in *Great Expectations*. Its staircase and main hall have magnificent plaster ceilings, given in 1695 by Admiral Sir Cloudsley Shovell, MP for Rochester at the time. The Guildhall Museum has a programme of art exhibitions throughout the year.



17 High Street
Phone: 01634 848717
Visit: www.visitmedway.org
Open: Tuesday to Sunday, 10am to 4.30pm.
Closed Monday

2. Baggins Book Bazaar

England's largest second-hand and rare bookshop. As you'd expect, there's a wide choice of books on most subjects, with thousands of titles in stock, plus a huge choice of works of fiction. You can benefit from expert advice, and there's a comprehensive book search service for out-of-print titles, with books supplied worldwide.



19 High Street
Phone: 01634811651
Visit: www.bagginsbooks.co.uk
Open: Seven days a week, 10am to 6pm

3. Northgate Jewellers

Unusual gifts and fine quality jewellery from Northgate's own hand-made classic or contemporary designs, also sold online. Commissions taken.

Rochester Crystals is Northgate's range of sterling silver jewellery set with CRYSTALLIZED™ - Swarovski Elements at prices from £8. Bespoke pieces can be tailored to individual needs, a service popular with brides as bridesmaids' gifts.



3 Northgate
Phone: 01634 880488
Visit: www.northgatejewellers.co.uk
Open: 10am to 5pm. Closed Wednesdays and Sunday

4. City Books

A broad spectrum of second hand books including works of classic Victorian and Edwardian authors are available here, together with interesting collectables.

You can buy or receive advice about coins and other artefacts, dating from the Pre Roman era, right up the 20th century. There's also a book search service and overseas dispatch can be arranged.

Refreshments served in the courtyard café in summer.



41 High Street
Phone: 01634 815565
Open: Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm, Saturday, 9.30am to 7pm and Sunday 11am to 5.30pm

5. Nucleus Medway, Rochester

An affordable, commercially orientated gallery exhibiting the latest work by local creative talent staffed by volunteers, many who are exhibiting artists, designers or craftspeople. Don't miss the opportunity to rub shoulders with students, amateurs, emerging and established professionals of all ages. It's an eclectic mix.



75 High Street
Phone: 07735 598533
Visit: www.nucleus-arts.com
Open: Wednesday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm and Sunday, 11am to 5pm

6. The Deaf Cat Café Gallery and Studios

The eponymous cat was allowed to sit on Dickens' desk, calming, cheering and inspiring him. It sums up the relaxed atmosphere which attracts a bohemian and creative clientele here.

Enjoy anything from cappuccino to frappé, fresh sandwiches, pastries or a nice cup of tea, in a cosy and convivial atmosphere, where exhibits and furniture alike are interesting and for sale.



83 High Street
Visit: www.thedeafcat.com
Open: Monday to Saturday, 10am to 6pm, Sunday, 10am to 5pm

Rochester Arts & Crafts Trail



7. FieldStaff Antiques

FieldStaff Antiques specialises in quality antiques, collectables and vintage items, including clothing and costume jewellery.

Background music from the 1920s 30s and 40s plays, the atmosphere is best described as unstuffy and laid back, and browsers are welcomed. Come and see for yourself and be pleasantly surprised by affordable prices to suit all budgets.



93 High Street
Phone: 01634 846144
Visit: www.fieldstaffantiques.com
Open: Monday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm.
Closed Sunday

8. Medway Visitor Information Centre

A one-stop shop to help make the most of your visit. On the ground floor, along with a gift shop, you'll find Norma's Coffee Shop, serving everything from cappuccino to hot snacks and delicious cookies.

Rochester Art Gallery and Craft Case features changing exhibitions of contemporary art and craft by local, regional, national and international artists. Workshops, talks and family activities are also available. All exhibits for sale. Admission free. www.whatsonmedway.co.uk



95 High Street
Phone: 01634 338141
Visit: www.visitmedway.org
Open: Monday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm and Sunday, 10.30am to 5pm

9. Eastgate House

A turreted Elizabethan brick building dating from the late 16th century, it has a fine panelled interior and elaborate ceilings. Dickens' Swiss Chalet from his last home at Gad's Hill Place, stands in the grounds.

The house is now used for local, contemporary and traditional art exhibitions throughout the year.



Phone: 01634 338141
Visit: www.visitmedway.org

10. Art Argentio

Contemporary sterling silver jewellery, featuring hand-made designs, some set with semi precious stones, highlighting the Bulgarian tradition in silver jewellery.

Maden Stoyanov and Dora Stoyanova will spend time helping you choose silver jewellery best suited to you. Argentio works hard to offer its customers a wide choice of the latest on-trend styles, while continuing with established designs already recognised as classics.



137b High Street
Phone: 07979 851924
Visit: www.argentobg.com
Open: Monday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm.
Closed Sunday

11. Langley Galleries

Original contemporary art from artists such as Roy Gargett, Andrew Kennedy and David Daisy. Limited or open edition prints, and canvas prints from artists such as Banksy, Jack Vetriano, and Sue Howells.

Same-day framing is often possible, with bespoke service available for unusual objects such as sports shirts.



143 High Street
Phone: 01634 811802
Open: Monday to Saturday, 9am to 4.45pm.
Closed Sunday and bank holidays.

12. Pastures New

Charming hand-painted items of furniture made to order, including toy boxes and height charts inscribed with a child's name and decorative motifs.

A wide variety of utensils and cookware accessories are also available from this historic shop, which was once the paymasters office of Woodhams brewery.



174 High Street
Phone: 01634 847936
Open: Monday to Saturday, 9.30am to 5.30pm. Closed Sundays

13. Francis Iles

The largest quality gallery in Kent, with extensive fine art galleries over two floors, showing more than 700 works. Bespoke framing, and a full restoration and conservation service is available on-site. Francis Iles Artworks is a specialist supplier of art and craft materials and equipment for creative hobbies, located in another listed building across the street from the gallery.



103 & 104 High Street
Phone: 01634 843081 (Gallery), 01634 843881 (Artworks)
Visit: www.artycat.com
Open: Monday to Saturday, 9.30am to 5.30pm
Note: 104 is the art shop

14. Rochester Cathedral

The treasures of Rochester Cathedral include The Wheel of Fortune medieval wall painting and a contemporary fresco on the theme of baptism by Fyodorov, the first such work created for 800 years. A highlight for many visitors is the unique audio visual experience (additional charge applies), which combines video projection synchronised with headset commentary.

Coffee shop and garden terrace (in season). Open daily for breakfast, lunch (daily hot specials) and cream teas from Monday to Saturday, 8.30am to 4.30pm and Sundays, 10am to 4.30pm.



The Precinct
Phone: 01634 843366
Visit: www.rochestercathedral.org
Open: daily for service details visit website

15. Hometown

Hometown was opened in Rochester in 2008 by Marion Haslam, who has worked as a textile buyer and as global product developer in textiles at IKEA.

Marion organises workshops and short courses on quilting and patchwork. Her shop stocks an eclectic range of hands-on creative kit, fabrics, craft books, and a stylish range of textile gifts and accessories.



74 High Street
Phone: 01634 838880.
Open: Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm.
Closed Monday and Sunday

16. Capture the Castle

Capture the Castle sells Nordic and country style home accessories and exclusive gift items with friendly service at affordable prices. Stock is sourced internationally from Denmark, France, Germany, India and Morocco and is ethically produced wherever possible. The in-house Coffee Corner serves hot and cold beverages, cakes, sandwiches, soups and salads daily from 10.30am until 4.40pm.



46 High Street
Phone: 01634 826100
Visit: www.capturethecastle.co.uk
Open: Tuesday to Saturday, 10am to 5pm and Sunday 12noon to 4pm. Closed Monday

A. Rochester Castle

Subjected to a long siege by King John in 1215 against rebel barons who had forced him to sign the Magna Carta - immortalised in the movie *Ironclad*, directed by Jonathan English.



The castle is open to visitors and the grounds are used as a venue for open-air concerts in summer. Admission charge. Audio tours available. Phone **01634 335882** or visit www.visitmedway.org

B. Restoration House

A magnificent Elizabethan house, where Charles II spent the night on his return from France in 1660. In the novel *Great Expectations* (1861) it served as home to Miss Havisham. Dickens borrowed the name Satis House for it, from a house in Bakers Lane, opposite Rochester Castle.



Open Thursday and Friday from May to September only. Admission charge. Phone **01634 848520** or visit www.restorationhouse.co.uk

C. Six Poor Travellers' House

A Tudor charity house founded 1563 by Sir Richard Watts, providing free lodgings for up to six poor travellers passing through Rochester at any one time, the last passing through in 1940.



In a Charles Dickens Christmas story, Dickens became a seventh traveller and transported a Christmas meal from the nearby Bull Hotel to the travellers, an event recreated annually during the Dickensian Christmas festival. The house is open to visitors and free to visit. Phone **01634 845609** or visit www.visitmedway.org

Medway Visitor Information Centre

Medway Visitor Information Centre in Rochester, is the ideal first port of call for visitors to the area. The centre is in the heart of historic Rochester. It is fully wheelchair accessible and offers a full tourist information service, art gallery, public toilets and a café serving hot and cold refreshments, with inside and outside seating areas.

Pop into the centre to pick up information on local attractions, books, postcards and souvenirs to take home. If you are looking for a place to stay, we can give advice and assistance to find accommodation to suit your requirements and budget.

Medway Visitor Information Centre

95 High Street
Rochester
Kent ME1 1LX
Phone: 01634 338141
Fax: 01634 847891
Email: visitor.centre@medway.gov.uk
Web: www.visitmedway.org

