

Press release

Summer 2009



Messing about on the water in the Heart of Kent

We have been promised some record-breaking temperatures this summer and the Heart of Kent tourism partnership has highlighted some of the best places where you can get away from the heat and out onto the water.

The Heart of Kent has 21 years experience in promoting Kent and has many special itineraries, which help visitors make the most of what's on offer in the true Garden of England.

Maidstone Millennium River Park

The Maidstone Millennium River Park is a 10km walk along the banks of the River Medway from Allington to Teston and along the way you can see the various uses of the River Medway over the years. However, why not take in the scenery in a more leisurely way aboard one of the pleasure boats, the 'Kentish Lady' and 'Allington Belle'. The Kentish Lady runs 3-hour day and evening cruises upriver through Farleigh Lock and onwards under Farleigh, Barming and Teston Bridges.

www.kentishlady.co.uk The Allington Belle is a Mississippi style paddleboat, which can hold up to 50 people and runs from Maidstone Town Centre to Allington. The Allington Belle also offers 2-hour evening cruises on Wednesdays and Fridays throughout July and August. **Tel: 01622 661064**

www.allingtonbelle.co.uk

Just half a mile from Maidstone Town Centre, Whatman Park, in the centre of the Millennium River Park, combines woodland and meadow with adventure play areas, a treetop walk, skatepark and the riverstage performance area; both the Kentish Lady and Allington Belle will stop at Whatman Park Wharf on request. www.millenniumpark.org

Ightham Mote near Sevenoaks

A rare example of a moated medieval manor house dating back to the 14th century. The house has many special features including the Great Hall, Crypt and Tudor Chapel and is surrounded by a beautiful garden complete with water features, lakes and woodland. Much of its charm comes from the constant sound of running water. There are three waymarked self-guided walks around the estate with picnic sites and cycling is permitted. The estate is open all year from dawn until dusk.

01732 811145 (Infoline) www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ighthammote

Hever Castle

Hever Castle is home to a stunning lake and for the first time since 1939, visitors can now walk the entire distance around it. Along the way look out for bird boxes that are home to owls, blue tits, robins and woodpeckers and see if you can spot the kingfishers, swans, herons and crested grebes on the lake. For a more relaxed view of the lake, rowing boats are available for hire at weekends (£10 for an hour) from the boathouse on the lakeside near the Loggia; also available at weekends and school holidays from 1st April. (dependant on weather conditions)

For the more energetic among us, the **Splashing Water Maze**, situated on Sixteen Acre Island, consists of a series of concentric stepping stone walkways sitting over water. The stones tilt at intervals when stood on and hidden water jets are ready to soak the unsuspecting. The aim is to reach the stone grotto in the centre without getting wet; although, few visitors are successful, it is still great fun for young and old alike. **Open between April and October (weather permitting). Opening times: 1 April - 31 Oct: Daily. Gardens open 10:30am Castle opens 12 noon. Last admission 5pm. Final exit 6pm.** For prices visit www.hevercastle.co.uk

Bewl Water

The largest lake in the south east, beautiful Bewl Water is the place to indulge in a wide range of activities on water and on land. Set in an area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and one of the Seven Wonders of the Weald, Bewl offers everyone the chance to participate in a variety water sports, whatever their ability. After time on the water you can relax on Bewl's brand new sandy beach, or test your nerves on the new high adrenaline activities, which include hydroballing across the water. **'The Swallow'** passenger boat is one of the more relaxing ways to explore Bewl Water and sails daily from the Visitor Centre jetty from April to the end of September and then weekends only in October - and half term week - subject to weather. The trip takes approximately 40 minutes and 'The Swallow' has refreshments and a bar on board. For groups of 20 or more the **'Cruise & Vineyard Tour'** offers a cruise on board the 'Swallow' to enjoy the fine views across the reservoir followed by a buffet lunch in

the Look-Out Restaurant and then a brief journey by coach to Lamberhurst or Biddenden Vineyards for a guided tour, wine tasting and cream tea. **Price: £19.80 per person (20-55 people)**

New at Bewl Water, is Jeremy Fishers Pool, which is open for mini trout and coarse fishing. Children can try their hand at fishing in the tranquil setting for free – rods and life jackets will be provided. At the Fishing Lodge everyone is welcome and the friendly staff will give you information and advice and newcomers will receive all the assistance they need. The Lodge stocks a wide range of flies, tackle, waterproof clothing and Wellington boots and is open 7 days per week from 8:30am to 6pm during the season, which starts on 21st March. Bewl Water is open daily from 9am until sunset. **Standard admission charge on non-event days, Easter to October 31st: Adults £3 Children £2.** www.bewl.co.uk

Conningbrook Lake, Ashford

This angling lake, once an old gravel pit, can be found at the end of a footpath from Great Bromley Farm just off the A2070 Willesborough Road. Famous for the number and sheer size of its Carp, the anglers who fish this water on a regular basis know that the next run could be a new British record. The biggest freshwater fish ever caught in the UK, weighing in at 67lb, was caught at Conningbrook by John Bird. Dug in the early eighties, Conningbrook was originally stocked with the fish from the Mill Pool in Faversham and also holds some very nice Pike. **For information on fishing tickets/rights please contact Mid Kent Fisheries www.midkentfisheries.co.uk Tel: 01227 730668**

Chiddingstone Castle

One of the many unspoilt features of Chiddingstone Castle near Edenbridge is its lake. Over 3.5 acres, the lake is naturally stocked with Bream, Perch and Carp and fishermen (and women) of all ages are welcome here. The only criteria are that you must have a licence, fish with barbless hooks and follow a few simple rules to ensure that the lake remains safe and beautiful for all. **Fishing Season 16th June to 15th March. Open every day during the fishing season 7am –6.30pm (strictly no night fishing). £10* (Up to 2 rods) * Free if under 14 and accompanied by an adult. Chiddingstone Castle – dates: 10 April – 27 September 2009 11am – 5pm. Sun, Mon, Tue and Wednesday Adults: £6 Children £4 (under 5 years free) family season pass £38.50 (family of four) please visit www.chiddingstonecastle.org.uk for more information.**

Haysden Country Park

For the last three years Haysden Country Park has been a [Green Flag Award](#) winning park. The Park has two lakes and a stretch of the River Medway running through it. The water features add to the Park's individuality and result in a variety of wildlife throughout the year, including an array of colourful dragonflies. Sailing boats are welcome at Haysden Water, for details on how to join in, contact Tonbridge Town Sailing club 01732 354841. Fishing is also welcome (Barden Lake only) and day tickets can be purchased from the park bailiff. [Tonbridge & District Angling & Fish Preservation Society](#) controls the fishing in the park, for details about membership of the Society contact

01732 359385. *Located in Tonbridge, lower Haysden Lane. Dates: Open daily all year, from 7.30am to dusk. Daily closing times are displayed at park entrance. Admission: Main car park (including the oversized bays outside the height barrier at the entrance) 60p up to 4 hours, £2.40 over 4 hours. Visit www.tmbc.gov.uk*

Leybourne Lakes Country Park

Leybourne Lakes Country Park is an award winning park offering an idyllic setting for visitors who can enjoy a variety of water sports and day sailing on the lake. Beginners and experienced sailors are welcome on the lake. The range of water sports available include windsurfing, scuba diving, kayaking and canoeing; all equipment can be hired from the centre and beginners can take advantage of the many training lessons available. **Leybourne Lakes Water Sports - May – September Tuesday – Sunday 10am - 8pm. October – April weekends 10am to dusk. www.leybournelakewatersports.co.uk**

Dunorlan Park, Tunbridge Wells

Once a private landscaped garden, Dunorlan Park has been transformed into an historically important and much-loved public park. Visitors can enjoy the wide grassy slopes and magnificent views across the park's lake. The café's veranda also has views over the park and lake. During the summer months rowing boats, pedaloos and canoes are available to hire on the lake. **Rowing boats from £5.50 per half hour, pedaloos from £6.00 per half hour and canoes from £3.50 per half hour. (Life jackets provided) . For details about boating in Dunorlan Park visit www.dunorlanparkboats.co.uk. The park is open 7.30am until dusk. Dunorlan Park is on the A264, 15 minutes' walk from the town centre, for more details visit www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk**

The Heart of Kent promotes Kent as a holiday and short break destination as well as somewhere to enjoy great days out. Their website and holiday guide has detailed information on accommodation and attractions, along with information on events happening at attractions throughout the year, visit www.visitheartofkent.org.uk

For more information about the Heart of Kent or for images please contact Caroline Edmunds on 01892616647 or email caroline@penningtonpr.com

Editor's Notes

1. For more information please visit www.visitheartofkent.com
2. The Heart of Kent consortium was created in 1988 as a tourism marketing partnership between Maidstone Borough Council, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Sevenoaks District Council. Ashford Borough Council joined the consortium in 2002.
3. The five local authorities work together to market and promote the five Heart of Kent towns and the surrounding countryside to visitors. As well as producing the Heart of Kent website, the consortium

publishes an annual Holiday Guide, available through the website and from the tourist information centres, and works closely with other tourism enterprises in Kent and the South East of England on numerous other marketing activities for the area. The consortium also supports a network of Tourist Information Centres to meet the needs of visitors once they have arrived in the Heart of Kent area.