

Folkestone & Hythe District Heritage Strategy

Appendix 1: Theme Papers Introduction

Appendix 1, Heritage Themes - Introduction

Introduction to the themes

1 The heritage of the district is exceptionally rich, varied and extensive. It comprises thousands of known and recorded heritage assets and many more that are not known. Those assets occur in a number of forms: archaeology, built heritage, landscapes and townscapes, wrecks, customs, traditions and stories. Some assets are specifically protected by designation but the majority are not. In order to properly define and characterise these assets the heritage strategy has taken a thematic approach.

2 A thematic approach has considerable strengths:

- It allows a mixture of assets types to be brought together into a coherent and accessible story that explains their context and collective significance;
- It explains the contribution that the vast number of undesignated heritage assets can make to the overall significance of the district's heritage; and
- It allows broader links to be made across the district's heritage and heritage activity enabling co-ordinated effort, project development and promotion.

3 A list of the themes is included below. The theme papers themselves are included elsewhere in Appendix 1 of this strategy following.

4 In identifying a list of themes for this strategy consideration was given to those aspects that particularly contributed to local distinctiveness or have played an important role in shaping the character of the district. A more general description of the richness of the District's heritage is provided through the asset-based themes, considering the resource in terms of asset groupings.

5 The list of themes addressed in the Folkestone and Hythe District Heritage Strategy has been arrived at in conjunction with stake-holders at workshops before and during the course of the project. At an initial workshop in February 2015 stakeholders presented ideas for themes. These ideas were resolved into a draft list by the project team that was then presented at a further workshop in June 2016. As a result of that workshop an additional theme 'Transport' was added to the original presented list.

6 A theme of 'People' connecting the district with its history of notable residents and visitors was initially considered. This was in the end not taken forward as it was agreed that the 'People' are contributing to a range of themes and enhance their historical associative values.

7 The following themes were considered as part of the present study (due to the complexity of some themes these have been treated by individual sub-theme). Themes 11-13 are those that are asset-based:

Folkestone and Hythe District Heritage Themes

1. Landscape
 - 1a Romney Marsh
 - 1b North Downs & Greensand Vale
 - 1c Dungeness
 - 1d The District's Coastline
2. Coastal Heritage - Harbours & Ports
 - 2a Early Harbours
 - 2b Cinque Ports, Limbs & Connected Towns
 - 2c Folkestone as a Cross Channel Port
3. Coastal Heritage - Seaside Leisure & Tourism
 - 3a Folkestone & Sandgate as seaside resorts
 - 3b Dymchurch, St Mary's Bay & Romney Sands
 - 3c The Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway
4. Coastal Heritage - The District's Maritime Coast
 - 4a Fishing
 - 4b Safeguarding the coast
 - 4c Wrecks
5. Defence Heritage
 - 5a Invasion Coast
 - 5b Castles
 - 5c Napoleonic
 - 5d Great War
 - 5e Second World War

5f Camps, training grounds and ranges

- 6 Church
- 7 Settlement
- 8 Farming & farmsteads
- 9 Parks, gardens and estates
- 10 Transport
- 11 Archaeology
- 12 Built Heritage
- 13 Conservation Areas

8 It is recognised that there are significant heritage assets within the district that do not easily fall in to the above themes and that arguments could be made for additional themes which are important to the district. The thematic approach is flexible and can be added to through future studies and be applied at different scales perhaps focusing on a particular collection of assets or an area of the district.

Theme summaries

Theme 1a Romney Marsh

9 The Romney Marsh has a unique historic landscape that has evolved over thousands of years. It is now the largest coastal wetland on the southern coast of England and is well known for its natural beauty, diverse habitats and wildlife, rich heritage and extensive coastline. Its long and complex natural history is primarily one of land reclamation and the ongoing battle to manage and retain this land. A number of distinctive features are present throughout its iconic landscape that reflect a rich local heritage that is primarily centred on this battle for land drainage and coastal defence as well as a rich agricultural heritage, wartime defences, maritime heritage and the medieval churches of the Marsh. Its landscape is predominantly characterised by its openness and wildness and is unique in the county.

Theme 1b North Downs & Greensand Vale

10 The North Downs and Greensand Vale constitute a diverse and unique landscape with many elements that are iconic features of the county, such as the White Cliffs of Dover, Folkestone Downs and Elham Valley. Many of these landscapes are also of national significance for their conservation value both for the diverse wildlife and habitats supported here as well as for their geological importance. The North Downs and Greensand Vale can also boast an exceptionally rich historic environment

with a number of heritage assets that are nationally significant and that also make key contributions to the local character and sense of place. In particular, these relate to the religious, farming and defence heritage of the area.

Theme 1c Dungeness

11 The historic landscape at Dungeness is a particularly distinctive part of the district and indeed of the entire country. It has a unique range of biological and geological features that are of national as well as international importance. These include extensive buried and exposed shingle ridges, the eroding and accreting coastline of the cusped foreland and a range of rare fauna and flora that are supported by habitats created by the diverse landscapes here. Its landscape is also uniquely sparse and remains relatively undisturbed by development and human occupation or activity. As a result, Dungeness is an area that is particularly attractive for its tranquillity, peacefulness and wildness with only a few buildings and dwellings which themselves are distinctive and reflect a strong local heritage. Overall it is a singularly special place that has a rich historic landscape and uniquely strong local character.

Theme 1d The District's Coastline

12 Folkestone and Hythe District contains exceptional coastal landscapes that are of national as well as international importance. These landscapes are incredibly varied and range from the desolate shingle expanses of the Dungeness Peninsula to the dramatic white cliffs and open chalk grassland of the Folkestone Warren along the Heritage Coast. The formation of the coastline is also a varied and often complex story of land reclamation as well as other coastal processes that have resulted in a diverse coastal landscape and rich historic environment. The many heritage assets that lie along the district's coastline reflect a number of significant historical events and human activities, primarily concerned with the district's military legacy as well as other more local histories such as smuggling, fishing and religious heritage.

Theme 2a Early Harbours

13 The district's proximity to the continent has meant that its history has been inexorably linked to the sea and maritime activity. This has led to the development of prominent early harbours beginning in the Roman period and going through to the early medieval period when two of its coastal towns were then established as head ports in the Confederation of Cinque Ports. These early harbours provide valuable evidence for the development of maritime activity and settlements across the district, as well as illustrating the close links to the continent. Whilst many of these early harbours have since been lost, their presence highlights important chapters in the development as a coastal district.

Theme 2b Cinque Ports, Limbs & Connected Towns

14 The Cinque Ports were an arrangement of ports along the Kent and East Sussex coast that provided vital ship service to the Crown from the 11th to the 16th century. As a predecessor of the Royal Navy, they were essential in the defence of the realm at sea against foreign attacks or invasion, and also contributed to fleets which were involved in major historical events such as the Hundred Years War and the Spanish Armada. Later known as the Confederation of the Cinque Ports, they were granted a number of privileges and rights in return for their ship service and at their height were amongst the most important ports in England. Two out of the five original Cinque Ports, Hythe and New Romney lie within the district, as well as a number of towns and former ports (Folkestone, Lydd, West Hythe, Old Romney) that were included in the Confederation as 'limbs'. Whilst the Confederation only exists today in name and as a ceremonial body, it has a long and rich maritime heritage that has largely shaped the nation's seafaring and naval traditions.

Theme 2c Folkestone as a Cross-Channel Port

15 Folkestone contains valuable heritage assets that relate to its status as a cross channel port. Historically, Folkestone has played an important role in international trade possibly going back as far as the Iron Age. It has also boasted a rich fishing heritage for many centuries and has acted as a port to support this industry as well as for continued international trade. The town's status as an important cross channel port was not established until later in the 19th century when the formal harbour was finally constructed and the railway arrived in the district. The assets that relate to this heritage highlight an important chapter in the town's history that saw Folkestone becoming a popular port for passenger and goods traffic crossing the channel to the continent. Folkestone Harbour is therefore significant in reconnecting people to the rich maritime heritage of the town as well as to its status as a prominent cross channel port. The harbour itself has played essential roles during a number of important historical events that include wartime, the arrival of the railway and the commencement of cross channel travel. This heritage has become integral to the local character of Folkestone and is now the subject of extensive regeneration and development work that hopes to revitalise many of these valuable assets.

Theme 3a Folkestone & Sandgate as seaside resorts

16 At the beginning of the 19th century Folkestone was little more than a small fishing village focused around the mouth of the Pent Stream. This was all to change with the coming of railway in 1843 and by the end of the century Folkestone, along with neighbouring Sandgate, had developed into a fashionable seaside resort, with luxurious hotels and seaside amenities. Despite the interruption of two world wars and changing fashions, the town's prosperity as a seaside resort continued into the 1960s. The growth of leisure time, increased disposable income and cheap foreign holidays in the second half of the 20th century was to change the face of Folkestone. The town,

as with many of the country's coastal resort towns entered a period of decline. The story of Folkestone and Sandgate as seaside resorts reflects the national picture of changing seaside vogues.

Theme 3b Dymchurch, St Mary's Bay & Romney Sands

17 Dymchurch, St Mary's Bay and Romney Sands are popular destinations along the coastline for holidaymakers and day-trippers. Their attractive beaches, holiday parks and various other attractions have drawn in visitors and holidaymakers for a number of years and continue to do so today. The history of these areas is largely linked to the complex natural history of the Romney Marsh and the reclamation of land from the sea that has occurred over a number of centuries. The Romney Marsh today is now rich in heritage and natural biodiversity that constitutes a distinctive local landscape. The growth in seaside tourism and leisure time during the 19th century resulted in a rise in coastal resort towns along the coastline and by the 20th century Dymchurch, St Mary's Bay and Romney Sands all had popular holiday camps that were easily accessible by the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway that was opened in 1927. All of these areas continue today as popular seaside destinations and boast attractive beaches as well as a number of valuable heritage assets that relate to its history of smuggling, farming and defence of the coast.

Theme 3c The Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway

18 The district has a number of valuable heritage assets that enhance the local tourism and economy such as the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway. The 15in gauge light railway that runs from Hythe to Dungeness has continued to act as a popular tourist attraction throughout its 90 years of operation and forms an important part of the local character. The Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway has played an important role in the development of the railway network across the district and was also important in the defence of the Kentish coast during the World Wars. The development of coastal tourism during the first half of the 20th century and the holiday parks that now line much of the local coastline have further contributed to the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway's continued success and it is now considered to be one of the district's most popular tourist attractions.

Theme 4a Fishing

19 The district's coastline is rich in heritage assets that reflect its relationship with the sea. As part of this heritage, fishing has played a significant role in the local economy for many of the district's inhabitants going back as far as the Roman period. Many of the district's former ports, in particular the former Cinque Ports have heritage that relates to their fishing history. Today this heritage continues to shape the local identity of many of the coastal towns whilst continuing to form a small part of the local industry and recreation. The district's fishing history is celebrated through events such as the 'Blessing of the Fisheries' and the 'Trawler Race' at Folkestone.

Theme 4b Safeguarding the Coast

20 Being so close to continental Europe the history of the district has been inexorably linked with the maritime use and crossing of the Channel. The district's coastline is rich in heritage assets that reflect these maritime links, such as the Roman Saxon Shore fort at Lympne, the rich smuggling heritage evident across the Romney Marsh, through to the coastguard and lifeboat stations of the 19th and 20th centuries. These varied assets help to tell the story of the district's connection with the sea and the ways in which structures have safeguarded the coast as well as seeking to preserve life.

Theme 4c Wrecks

21 The Channel and Strait of Dover is one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. They have been the setting for a range of maritime activities and events going back to ancient times that also reflects the growing importance of various ports along the Kentish coastline, such as the Cinque Ports. The Channel has seen the arrival of invasion fleets and raiding vessels going back to the Roman period, and has been the scene of a number of naval conflicts. It has often acted as a frontline defence during times of warfare, and then in times of peace is an important trading route for both visiting vessels and those on route to other national and international ports. It is therefore unsurprising that the waters off the coast of the district have a wealth of wreck sites. These wrecks are an immensely valuable resource which testifies to the prolonged importance of the region for maritime trade, transport and defence and the long history of navigation through and across the Channel and Strait of Dover.

Theme 5a Invasion Coast

22 The district's proximity to the continent along Britain's south eastern coast has continually placed it on the front line against foreign invasion. In particular, the flat and accessible coastline of the Romney Marsh has provided a relatively easy access point into the country for many centuries. A strong legacy of coastal defence is represented by the remains of various fortifications found along the Kentish coastline and inland going as far back as the Iron Age and continuing through to the 20th century. They form an outstanding collection of assets that represent the nation's responses to foreign threats and the defence strategies that were employed as a result. The invasion coast of the district can currently be dated back to the Roman period with a handful of important sites that illustrate early defence strategies that were utilised along the coastline.

Theme 5b Castles

23 Folkestone and Hythe District contains an important collection of castle buildings and remains that can be dated to various points across the medieval period beginning at the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 AD. They are valuable examples of this type of building and demonstrate the complex and varied role of the

castle. As a county, Kent has a relatively high density of castles that survive in significant form and range from simple earthworks to large masonry fortifications. Those that survive within the district are varied in both form and utility and can illustrate the changing functions of the castle over time. These buildings, whilst often acting in a strategic or defensive capacity, were also important in conveying the social, economic and aesthetic values of the medieval period as well as the values and authority of their owners.

Theme 5c Napoleonic

24 The district contains an exceptionally significant collection of Napoleonic period fortifications. Notable works of this period include the great programme of Martello building, construction of the Grand Redoubt at Dymchurch and the cutting of the Royal Military Canal. The collection of Napoleonic period defences in Folkestone and Hythe District form a group of sites of outstanding importance.

Theme 5d Great War

25 As the closest county in England to continental Europe, Kent played a crucial role during the First World War. Its coast and inland routes became heavily defended being the most likely target for an invasion by the Central Powers. The district was home to important training grounds and camps such as the Hythe School of Musketry and Shorncliffe Army Camp which made valuable contributions to the war effort. Important remains throughout the district, including practice trenches and sound mirrors highlight the dawn of modern warfare. Folkestone Harbour acted as an important departure point for soldiers bound for the Western Front as well as being a main port for wounded soldiers returning home and refugees from countries such as Belgium. Overall the district contains a number of significant remains that demonstrate the important role that it played in the First World War.

Theme 5e Second World War

26 The district contains a wide collection of Second World War heritage assets, including sites associated with air defence, coastal defence, troop support and supply, anti-invasion works, and civil defence. Together these assets help to tell the story of Britain's changing fortunes in the war, from initial preparations, through the dark days of the Battle of Britain and a time of very real invasion threat after the Dunkirk evacuation, and eventually to a period of offensive planning leading ultimately to the Normandy Landings and Victory in Europe. As a group the Second World War heritage assets in the district are of considerable importance.

Theme 5f Camps, Training Grounds and Ranges

27 At various points throughout their history, towns such as Folkestone, Hythe and Lydd have played an important military role and become major garrison towns. Large numbers of soldiers, officers and military families have been accommodated in various barrack accommodation within camps such as Shorncliffe and Sandling, or billeted

across the local towns and villages. Training grounds and ranges have developed which have served important purposes in the training of troops and officers for the war effort and in the defence of this country. Together they are an important collection of assets relating to the defensive heritage of the district and in many cases, continue to illustrate the historical role that many towns played when the district was again physically and symbolically placed on the front-line during times of war and unrest.

Theme 6 Church

28 The district has a rich religious heritage that is highlighted in a wide range of significant religious buildings, ruins as well as buried archaeological remains. These religious assets reflect not only the long and often dramatic history of Christianity in East Kent, but also the significance of Kent as the closest part of England to continental Europe making it the gateway through which new influences from the continent entered. Beginning with Augustine's mission to England in AD 597 through to the Reformation and progressively increasing liberalisation of religious practice, the religious heritage assets are significant in following the progress of Christianity in Kent and the development of religious institutions within the district.

Theme 7 Settlement

29 The settlement pattern of the district is very much a response to its varied and changing landscapes. It includes the evidence for early settlement including the major Roman port of entry Portus Lemanis now land locked at Lympne. Important Cinque Ports and their limbs developed on its medieval coastline only to eventually suffer from the changing coast line and development of the marshlands. Later the coastline saw the development of fashionable seaside towns and resorts, the major cross channel port of Folkestone and the development of the unique settlement at Dungeness. Settlements expanded to accommodate the garrisons of the areas defences and those training before departure to conflicts abroad. These are supported by a pattern of villages and small towns scattered through the North Downs, Romney Marsh and Greensand Vale. The settlement of the district has a rich history and heritage that illustrates the story of the place.

Theme 8 Farming & Farmsteads

30 The historic farmsteads and farming heritage of the district illustrate the distinctive character of Kentish agriculture and its rural landscape. Kent is renowned for its topographical diversity and this has given rise to distinctive settlement patterns, land-use and husbandry practices going back centuries. The varied land-types, a gavelkind tenure system, where land is divided between heirs, and various other influencing factors over time have resulted in a distinctive agricultural character in the county that is especially demonstrated within East Kent. Various farming practices are represented including sheep farming on the Romney Marsh and important arable farming highlighted by the surviving windmills and other arable-based farmsteads. Farming heritage within the district forms part of a unique collection of agricultural

traditions and is significant in highlighting the rich farming history of the local area and the wider county.

Theme 9 Parks, Gardens & Estates

31 The district contains a rich natural heritage and has a number of valuable parks and gardens. Whilst the current estates are smaller parts of once much larger landholdings, the heritage of these surviving parklands and their associated buildings and gardens often have significant time depth and demonstrate the distinctive manorial and agricultural experience of Kent. Two of the parks in the district are listed on the Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest in England, and there are many more that whilst not listed are in excellent condition and continue to be integral to the identity of the district. As a coastal district, the area has played an important role in the formation of the 'coastal garden' seaside resort and has retained excellent examples of striking landscaped gardens and horticultural quality. Small green spaces and tree-lined avenues within urban centres are also important to the local character and act as natural oases throughout many of the towns. The district's green spaces are special as they vary from gardens in the Elham Valley to the unique shingle estate of Dungeness. These parks and gardens are also incredibly beneficial for the mental and physical health of local inhabitants as well as visitors and continue to encourage a reconnection between people and their natural landscape.

Theme 10 Transport

32 The district has a valuable collection of heritage assets relating to various means of transportation. For centuries a number of the districts coastal towns have been important ports and continued to provide cross channel links with continental Europe. The development of the district and its towns and villages have been impacted and influenced by new means of transport, and many of these have now become iconic features of the local character. Means of transportation have played an important role in the local economy and tourism which are notable in Kent due to its proximity to London and the continent. These assets are significant to local identity and offer opportunities to experience parts of the district's history.

Theme 11 Archaeology

33 The district is rich in archaeological evidence beginning from the first occupations by early humans in Britain 800,000 years ago through to the 20th century. The archaeological remains are in many forms such as ruins, standing monuments and buried archaeology and all attest to a distinctive Kentish history as well as its significant geographical position as a gateway to the continent. Through the district's archaeology it is possible to track the evolution of Kent as well as the changing cultures, ideas, trade and movement of different peoples into and out of Britain. The district's role in the defence of the country is also highlighted in its archaeology and forms an important part of the archaeological record for this part of the British southern coastline. The district contains outstanding archaeological remains that bring the past

to life for its local residents and visitors alike and continues to be explored today. The story of the district is rich and closely linked to a number of nationally and internationally significant events, such as the earliest conversions to Christianity and the First and Second World Wars. Many of the remains are well preserved and continued research shows that there will likely be more important discoveries in the future adding to the excellent archaeological record for this district.

Theme 12 Built Heritage

34 The built heritage is an outstanding resource that stands as a visible reminder of the area's rich history. The district contains an exceptionally varied collection of built heritage assets, representing a wide range of periods and architectural styles. The built heritage of the district makes a major contribution to local character and distinctiveness through the varied use of materials and the way that buildings of different dates and types relate to each other as well as to the surrounding landscape and settlement. The district's built heritage has an important role to play in regeneration proposals, the promotion of sustainable development and for the future economic and social wellbeing of the district.

Theme 13 Conservation Areas

35 The twenty one Conservation Areas in the district include the historically important former Cinque Ports of Hythe and New Romney and their limbs of Lydd and Old Romney; the important former channel port and fashionable seaside town of Folkestone and its neighbour Sandgate; coastal settlements, villages of the Romney Marshes and the North Downs; as well as the unique and nationally significant coastal landscape and settlement at Dungeness. This nationally significant collection of heritage assets includes within its archaeology and built heritage evidence that can contribute to a better understanding of the development of early ports and their demise due to landscape change, the transformation of the Romney Marshes into a nationally significant centre for sheep farming, the rise of smuggling in the 18th and 19th centuries and aspects of many of the other themes covered in this heritage strategy. The assets have considerable aesthetic value and are highly valued by their communities and visitors to the area.