

Cliffsend

A Short History





Cliffsend Community today

The Village of Cliffsend is a civil parish and is some 2 miles south west of Ramsgate,

Cliffsend is bounded by the parishes of Minster to the west and south and by St Lawrence to the east.

The A299 to the north of the village provides the main road link to Ramsgate and Canterbury, whilst the A256 to the south provides the main road link to Sandwich through to Dover.

The main railway line to London and the west passes through the village at present, with stations at Minster and Ramsgate both some two and a half miles distant. Future plans are to put in a new high speed train link and station at Cliffsend between Ramsgate and Central London.

To the north of the Village on the A299 a bus service serves Canterbury and Ramsgate, to the south of the village on the A256 a bus service serves Sandwich.

Cliffsend, in this day and age, now falls within the jurisdiction of Thanet District Council, (The Planning Authority) and Kent County Council (The Highways Authority and County Council).

Cliffsend, to the west is set in open countryside, to the north by Manston Airport, to the east views of Ramsgate and Pegwell village, and to the south and south east panoramic views of Sandwich Bay and the French Coast. Most of the bay holds national and international nature conservation designations. These include the Sandwich Bay Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the Sandwich Bay Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area for birds (SPA), and the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay 'Ramsar Conservation Site', the Local Nature Reserve and Pegwell Bay Country Park all much appreciated by Cliffsender's, for walking and cycling.

The Parish is very fortunate to have a hairdresser shop, a Petrol station/ foodhall and Golf club, it also has an active Village Hall which provides venues for many meetings and events, including an Art group, Bowls, Dance and various Clubs and many other activities. .

'Marjorie Chapman Meadow' is situated behind the Village Hall and a children's play area. This area is intended for the recreational enjoyment of the Cliffsend community.

A peaceful area, in a peaceful village.

With grateful thanks to all contributors to this introduction to Cliffsend Parish and special acknowledgement to, R.K.I. Quested, "The Isle of Thanet Farming Community"
Margaret Nicholls
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Clyvesend of Cliffs-end

Thanet became an island sometime between 5000 and 8000BC, this is when the sea levels rose at the end of the last glaciation and covered the lowland, which now lies under the North sea and the straits of Dover, in those days this was a deep narrow salt water channel.

Early people settled near the shores of Thanet also on the downland slopes above Monkton, Minster and Cliffsend. It was thought that the central plateau was heavily wooded until about 400BC.

Thanet people were estimated at about 1,500 in the 5th-7th centuries.

Clyvesend or Cliffs End is a manor that takes its name from the situation at the end of the chalk cliffs, which continue from Ramsgate.

A Short History of Cliffsend

Cliffsend is a village and civil parish situated almost 2 miles (3 km) west of Ramsgate, Kent., in the Thanet local government district.

Cliffsend is a village with obvious boundaries of Manston airport and the sea, the Golf club, the Lord of the Manor road junction roundabouts and the Nature reserve. The Lord of the Manor roundabouts link Thanet with the A299 Hengist way (Canterbury/London), and the A256 Ebbsfleet way (Sandwich/Dover).

Hengist and Horsa landed near here in 410AD, and St Augustine in 597.

Pegwell Bay Country Park is located here. Also on permanent display on the cliff top at Pegwell Bay is a replica of the Viking longship Hugin, which sailed from Denmark to Thanet in 1949 to celebrate the 1500th anniversary of the invasion of Britain, the traditional landing of the two men, and the betrothal of Hengist's daughter, Rowena, to King Vortigen of Kent. The Hugin was offered as a gift to Ramsgate and Broadstairs by the Daily Mail for preservation.

The ship on the cliff top, sits on a large expansion of open grass, which contains a cafe and parking for visitors. This overlooks Pegwell Bay nature reserve. On a clear day, visitors can see a large expanse of east Kent to the West, Sandwich, Deal, and the northern tip of the French Coast. To the east, the cliffs curve round into the nearby town of Ramsgate.

The Anglican parish church of St Mary is in Foads Lane. Originally a Methodist church it was rented by the Church of England from the early 1930s, eventually being bought in 1956. St Augustine's Cross is situated before you get to the St Augustines Golf Club, (less than a quarter of a mile from the village). St Augustine's Cross, at Cliffsend near Ramsgate, is a commemorative Celtic-style cross carved by J Roddis of Birmingham. It was erected by Granville George Leveson-Gower, the second Earl of Granville and

Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, in 1884. The cross was erected to commemorate the landing of St Augustine near here in AD597. Augustine was a Benedictine monk who became the first Archbishop of Canterbury in the year AD597, he is considered the “Apostle to the English” and founder of the English Church. The stone cross is in the early Christian style, modelled on 8th to 9th century crosses found at Sandbach in Cheshire. It is about seven metres high set on a stepped base and has a tapered shaft surmounted by a circular top with a Celtic design. It is covered in carved decoration - on the west side is depicted the story of the Annunciation, the Virgin and Child, the Crucifixion and the Transfiguration. On the north side are the twelve apostles and on the south side the fourteen early Christian martyrs. The east side is decorated with runic motifs which continue down the shaft. The design then breaks into panels depicting St Alban, St Augustine and Ethelbert. Carved into the base of the cross is a Latin inscription, written by Dr Liddell, Dean of Christchurch, commemorating the meeting between Augustine and Ethelbert. This inscription describes the landing of St Augustine and his first sermon to King Ethelbert near where the cross is located.

Hengest and Horsa Landing in England

Hengist and Horsa were brother chieftains from Jutland, who led the first Angles, Saxons and Jutes bands which settled in England. They were called in by the British King Vortigern to defend him against the Picts and other enemies. The place of their landing is said to have been Ebbsfleet in Kent, probably sometime around 450 A.D.. Hengist and



Horsa were at first given the island of Thanet as a home, but they soon

quarrelled with their British allies, and gradually possessed themselves of what became the kingdom of Kent. In 455 the Saxon Chronicle records a battle between Hengist and Horsa and Vortigern at a place called Aegaels threp, in which Horsa was slain. Thenceforward Hengist reigned in Kent, together with his son Aesc. There later followed three subsequent battles, which resulted in the expulsion of the Britons from Kent. There are several legends associated with Hengist and Horsa. It is said that Hengist married off his beautiful daughter Rowena to Vortigern, which gave him great power over the British king, but angered the sons of Vortigern. There are stories of several more battles and incidents of treachery between the Saxon invaders and the Britons, and other stories which tie the early Saxon invaders to the legend of King Arthur. The truth is that the arrival of the Saxon hoards led to a long period of chaos, anarchy, and civil war in Britain, and the specifics of the matter are not known with any reliability. The first few centuries after the Saxon invasion are known as the 'dark ages' in British history, because the Saxon invaders were largely illiterate and kept few permanent records until they were converted to Christianity in the seventh century.

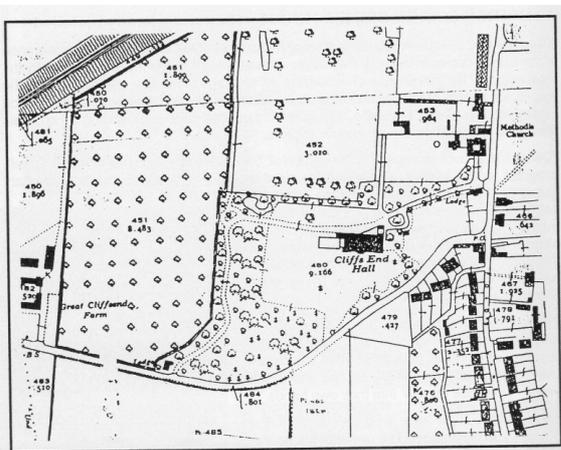
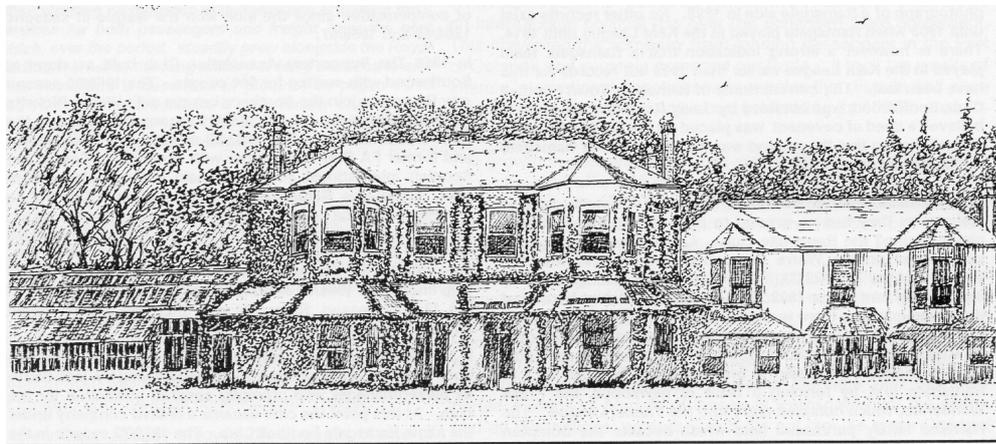
Bearing in mind that the Thanet villages lie now in what was the sea, it may come as a surprise that some of the oldest farmsteads were in such areas too, and those surviving farms around Cliffsend and Pegwell were Little Cliffsend Farm and Cliffsend (Bethlehem farm).

A great boost to farming was given by the retreating of the sea from the Wansum channel, the first land that retreated from the sea was around Stonar, and this appeared around the eighth century, after it had dried out enough to support building a Church, Town and harbour. Unfortunately this was fairly short lived, and in 1365 it suffered from sea floods, this is when three miles of lowland as far as Cliffsend was inundated, and to finally reduced it to nothing, in the year 1385 it was burned down by the French, and became abandoned until the 20th century.

It was during the Tudor Period that Thanet ended as a real island, for according to Hasted, an Act in 1485 permitted a bridge to be build over the Wansum at Sarre.

The reformation brought so many changes to Thanet by 1540, both in the closing of St Augustines Abbey and Christchurch Priory which at the time were owned by purely landlords, to being passed over to the Crown or the Priory lands to the Archbishop of Canterbury. After the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the property and land of Cliffs End was in the hands of the Crown, after being seized by Henry V¹¹¹. The Manor of Cliffs End Farmhouse, was in the early 1700's sold to a James Petley and his heirs, who while occupying the house and cottage also farmed the land. the Petley's

owned a great deal of land around Cliffs End & Sandwich during the next century. Around 1875, A Colonel Whitehead purchased the Farmhouse and together with additional land he enlarged and built 'The Hall'. the total estate then covered 27 acres and was classed as a noble country house fitted in a most luxurious style. In subsequent years it became known as Cliffs End Hall, and was owned by Miss Derry from the famous Department Store 'Derry and Toms', she planted up the gardens with trees from all over the world. In 1921 Colonel and Mrs Sceales bought Cliffs End Hall, where they made many improvements to the gardens, complete with a Lake and sunken garden plus a Peter Pan statue. The hall was at least 400 years old and one of Thanet's most elegant homes. Many people came to visit the hall including Haile Selassie, Emperor of Ethiopia, from 1930-1974. Servicemen also occupied the hall during WW2, Tragically their son was killed in Italy, a few months before Armistice day. The interest in the revival of the hall was lost after the war, which was sold and Old Hall Estates built from 1973 to 1978. Many fought hard to preserve many of the trees which were sadly uprooted when the foundations of the new houses were dug. The lake was filled in and many of the natural springs were diverted. Cliffsend Hall was no more, save for the Gardeners lodge and entrance in Cottington Road .



Cross Channel Services

from the Pegwell Bay Hoverport began in 1969 and finished in 1982. All the buildings were eventually completely demolished; however, the hovercraft pad, car marshalling area and approach road are all still clearly identifiable.

Hoverlloyd started crossings between Ramsgate Harbour and Calais on 6th April 1966, using small, passenger only SR.N6 hovercraft.

In 1969, much larger SR.N4 hovercraft capable of carrying 30 vehicles and 254 passengers were delivered to Hoverlloyd. Due to the increased size and capacity of the craft, the company moved operations to a purpose-built 'Hoverport' at Pegwell Bay. 'Flights' to Calais generally took 40 minutes, less than half the time the crossing took on a traditional ferry.

The hovercraft also had a very fast turnaround time, with the ability to embark/disembark cars at both ends. There were also passenger doors on both sides. Between 1969 and 1977, Hoverlloyd took delivery and operated a total of four SRN4 hovercraft on the Ramsgate-Calais link. These were named "Sure", "Swift", "Sir Christopher" and "The Prince of Wales".

After a merger in 1981 with competitor Seaspeed (creating Hoverspeed) Hoverlloyd's services were withdrawn from service and the four ex-Hoverlloyd craft were thereafter based at Dover until their withdrawal from service between 1983 and 1993.



About Pegwell Bay Country Park



A brief history of Pegwell Bay Country Park

Pegwell Bay was a popular destination for Victorian holiday-makers, fossil hunters and rock poolers.

In the 19th Century, a pleasure pier was built to establish a seaside resort to rival nearby Ramsgate. This was not a success, however, and it was dismantled before the end of the century.

The park is on a former landfill site. After the site closed, the area was capped and landscaped and was re-opened as a picnic site by Kent County Council in 1983.

Nestled on the east coast of Kent, Pegwell Bay Country Park commands stunning views of Sandwich and Deal to the west and the cliffs of Ramsgate to the east. With a play area, picnic spot and mobile refreshments on top, it is a great destination for a family day out. The main park path is also perfect for bracing coastal walks and bike rides.

The park acts as the entrance to a nature reserve and the rare flora and fauna here make this an area of national importance. This stretch of windswept coastline includes chalk cliffs, mud flats, saltmarsh and sand dunes, and is an important habitat for bird species.

The Nature Reserve

The Nature Reserve is a Ramsar Site of International Importance and is a wonderful place to explore with lots to see at different times of the year. In the summer the grass is dotted with wild flowers such as orchids and broomrapes. In the winter the foreshore and mudflats attract thousands of wading birds, including dunlin, sanderling and grey plover. Birds of prey, such as Merlin, can also be seen at the site. Birdwatchers can use the public bird hide, which is also accessible for disabled visitors.

Sandwich and Pegwell Bay is home to spectacular bird life that is designated as a protected area under UK and EU legislation and is also considered a world class wetland.

However, people can easily disturb birds and prevent them feeding, resting or breeding. Authorities and local people need to work together to make sure the area continues to be a haven for the world's birds.

Accessibility and easy access paths

The main path at Pegwell Bay is flat and wheelchair-friendly and allows you to navigate most of the park.

Walks

The main coast path from the car park is surfaced and flat and provides a great route for taking in the views of the bay. As part of the wider Sandwich and Pegwell Bay National Nature Reserve, it is also the perfect starting point to explore some of Kent's most diverse wildlife.

Dog walking

Dogs are welcome at the site. When arriving in the car park dogs must be kept on leads. They are not permitted in the play area Dogs are allowed off the lead in other areas of the park but due to the sensitive nature of this important National Nature Reserve, they must always be kept under close control.

