

Why are the Goodwin Sands so important?

The Goodwin Sands are well known for the huge number of shipwrecks that lie buried there, earning them the nickname 'the shippe swallower'. More recently, they have become the final resting place of scores of young Allied and American airmen from WWII.

The Sands provide haul-out sites for a large colony of seals that is surveyed regularly by the Zoological Society of London. The sand banks act as a vital sea defence for the East Kent foreshore and create an area of calm water called The Downs that has been used for centuries as an anchorage for shipping.

Why do we need a Conservation Trust?

An application in 2016 to remove sand from the Goodwins spurred locals into creating a conservation group. Its purpose is to raise awareness of the importance of the Sands and to conserve them for the benefit of the public.

GOODWIN SANDS



Support us!

If you would like to learn more about the Goodwin Sands and the work of the Trust, please visit www.goodwinsands.org.uk

Goodwin Sands Conservation Trust
Goodwin Sands Conservation Trust
@SandsGoodwin

How were the Sands created?

It is thought that the sandbanks are all that remain of the ancient island of Lomea, lost in the great flood of 1099. They were apparently named after Earl Godwin Earl of Wessex, a local lord and father to King Harold, who was famously defeated by William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings.

The sandbanks lie four miles offshore, stretching for about ten miles between Ramsgate and St Margaret's Bay. They vary in width from one to two miles and at their deepest are about 80 feet (25m). Large expanses of the top 10 feet (3m) are exposed twice daily at low tide.

Environment and wildlife



Designated a Marine Conservation Zone in 2019, the Goodwin Sands possess a variety of protected habitats suitable for a wide range of micro-organisms as well as sand eels, Ross worms and blue mussels that all form an integral part of the food chain. Lobsters and crabs

make themselves happily at home in the remains of ships and aircraft that litter the seabed. The Sands create a favourable nursery and spawning ground for fish such as herring and Dover sole.

Recent surveys show that 450 grey and 180 harbour seals have been found hauled out to rest on the Goodwins after hunting for food, though not all of them will be there all year round. Only the harbour seals actually breed on the Sands, as the pups need to be able to swim from just a few hours after birth. The grey seals make the long trek to the beaches of Norfolk and Lincolnshire each year to give birth.

The Goodwins provide a natural sea defence for the unstable Kent coastline, absorbing the energy of the waves that pound onto the Sands from the north and south. At low tide these waves can often be seen breaking onto the sandbanks from the beach four miles away.



THE UNIQUE 51°14'05"N, 1°34'25"E GOODWIN SANDS

Four miles off the Kent Coast between Dover and Ramsgate

- A historical landmark
- The final resting place of countless sailors and airmen
- A natural defensive barrier for the coastline
- A haven for wildlife
- A fragile environmental balance

Goodwin Sands Conservation Trust
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Save Our Sands

Navigation

The Goodwin Sands have posed a navigational hazard to mariners for centuries. A primitive warning beacon was erected at North Foreland near Broadstairs in the 15th century followed by two at South Foreland over 100 years later. The first chart was drawn up in 1583 and the original East Goodwin lightship was installed in 1785.



COLIN VERRALL

Shipwrecks

Since the first recorded shipwreck in 1298 a further 2,000 have been reported, though the real number is probably nearer double. No one really knows how many people have perished there.

Protected Wrecks including the *Admiral Gardner* and the *Rooswijk* lie in the area as well as four Royal Navy warships *Northumberland*, *Mary*, *Restoration*, and *Stirling Castle*, which all perished in the Great Storm of November 1703 with the loss of 1,200 lives.

Strong tidal currents shift the sands daily, covering and uncovering sites to both the delight and frustration of archaeologists and divers alike. Wrecks remain extremely well preserved whilst covered with sand but once they become exposed their condition deteriorates rapidly. As a result of this, the Protected Wreck sites are monitored by Historic England.

Deal boatmen

Before the RNLI was established, Deal boatmen played an invaluable role in rescuing sailors from their sinking ships. Tales of unscrupulous salvage sometimes marred their repeated acts of bravery but it is fair to say that without the courage of these boatmen, many more lives would have

been lost to the treacherous Sands. Some of the boatmen took part in smuggling, hiding ribbons, silks, spirits and tea in the keels of their boats to evade the customs men. In an emergency, the contraband was weighted down and thrown overboard, to be retrieved later when the coast was clear.

Two World Wars

Collisions, mines and lurking German submarines were responsible for the sinking of a recorded 80 vessels - including steamships, trawlers and boats from the Dover Patrol - in and around the Goodwins during both World Wars. Four German submarines were also sunk in the area.

Research shows that during the evacuation of Dunkirk and the Battle of Britain nearly 60 aircraft and over 100 Allied aircrew were listed as missing in the area of the Sands. Only one plane, a Dornier 17, has ever been recovered but the evidence of other crash sites is still clearly visible on the seabed. The area is the final resting place of many brave men whose remains and aircraft are protected under UK law.



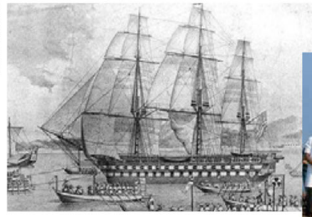
FOX PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES

The enduring legacy of the Goodwin Sands

"The Goodwin Sands are loved as much for what they represent as for the physical presence they are. They are a still-living history that connects us to a past and present too easily forgotten." WILLIAM HORWOOD, AUTHOR



Seals haul out to rest on the Sands when they are exposed twice daily at low tide.



HMS Stirling Castle wrecked in 1703



GEOFFREY CONNER

TOM MORRIS



Visitors walking over history For a few days each month in summer, visitors can spend an hour or so appreciating this beautiful, surreal landscape, accompanied only by curious seals and fellow explorers. Recreational divers have just a few hours at slack tide to explore the area's extraordinary maritime history.



DANIEL BURROWS

On the Goodwin Sands by William Edward Frost

Pilot Officer Keith Gillman was only 19 when he was shot down over the Goodwin Sands in his Hurricane on 25th August 1940. Neither he nor his plane has ever been found. One week after his death, this photograph was published on the front cover of Picture Post.

TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

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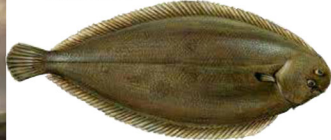
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SOLE IMPORTERS

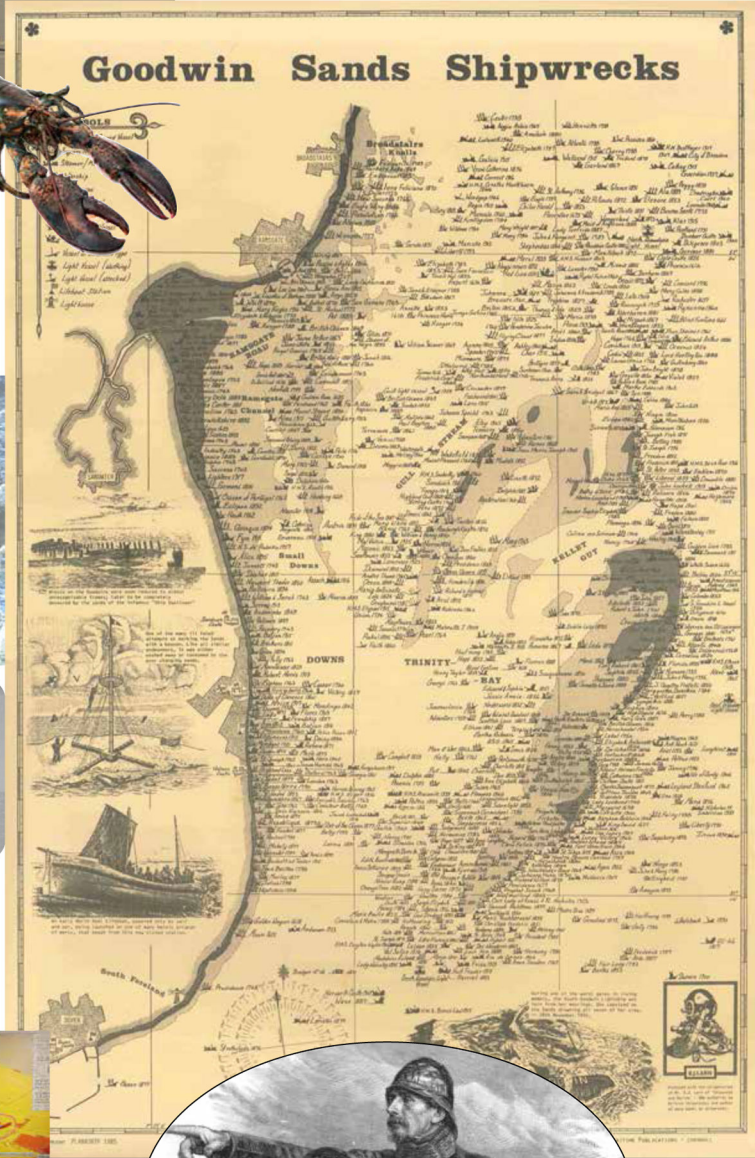
Aircrew including Keith Gillman relaxing at RAF Hawkinge, Kent August 1940

The shape of the Sands The Goodwins are a 'closed system', which means that their volume remains the same. The strong tidal currents rotate the sand in an anti-clockwise direction, so the shape of the sandbanks is constantly changing.

Fish and shellfish The Goodwins are an important fishing ground with catches being landed at Ramsgate and some on the beach at Deal.



Save Our Souls
www.goodwinsands.org.uk



Art and literature
The Goodwin Sands have been the subject of paintings, plays and novels for centuries. JMW Turner, William Shakespeare and Daniel Defoe are just some of those who have captured the essence of the Sands in their work.

WH FRANKLIN



Rescue on the Goodwin Sands by the North Deal Lifeboat by EW Cooke

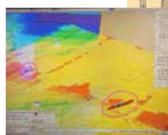


BRIEF LARBY/PICTURE POST/GETTY IMAGES



Wreck detection

Geophysical surveys are used to detect shipwrecks and aircraft crash sites but they can also show up on ships' radar if they are lying on the seabed.



Cricket On The Goodwin Sands by JMW Turner

DOVER SEAL SAFARI

AMANDA MOUNT

JULIAN SIMMS