

The Goodwin Sands Education Project

What and where are the Goodwin Sands?

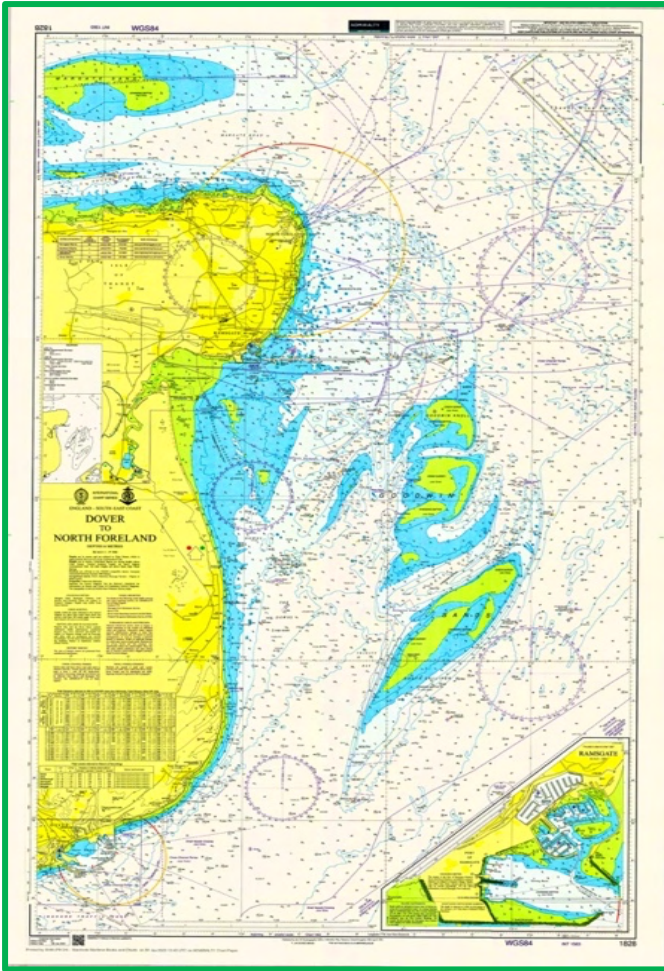
The Goodwin Sands are a ten-mile-long sandbank situated four miles out into the English Channel. When the tide is high, the sea covers them and they are completely submerged underwater. When the tide is low, large parts of the Sands are exposed like a wide beach sitting in the middle of the sea. Sometimes, when the tide is low and the sea is stormy, you might be able to see the waves crashing on the Goodwin Sands. Seals climb on to the Sands to digest their food and rest. Some seals even give birth there which means the pups have to learn to swim very quickly!



South Goodwins by Richard Taylor-Jones

At the time of the first Roman invasion of England in 55BC the Goodwins were one of three islands off the East Kent coast. This island was called Lomea or Low Island; the other two were Rutupiae and Thanet. We don't know if anything actually grew, or if anyone lived on Low Island.

In 1099 Lomea was flooded leaving the sandbanks we see today. The Goodwins are thought to be named after Earl Godwyn, a local feudal lord and father of King Harold who was killed at the Battle of Hastings. Another idea is that the name came from the Anglo-Saxon word 'gōd wine' meaning 'good friend.'



The sandbanks are constantly changing shape because of the movement of the strong currents. Research has shown that they slowly rotate on a NE / SW axis in an anti-clockwise direction.

The north sandbank is known as North Caliper and the south one as South Caliper - this is because people thought they looked like the claws of a crab or lobster. There is a channel between them called Kellet Gut - small boats can go through here but they have to be careful as the tide can be very strong.

The green areas are those that dry out at low tide.

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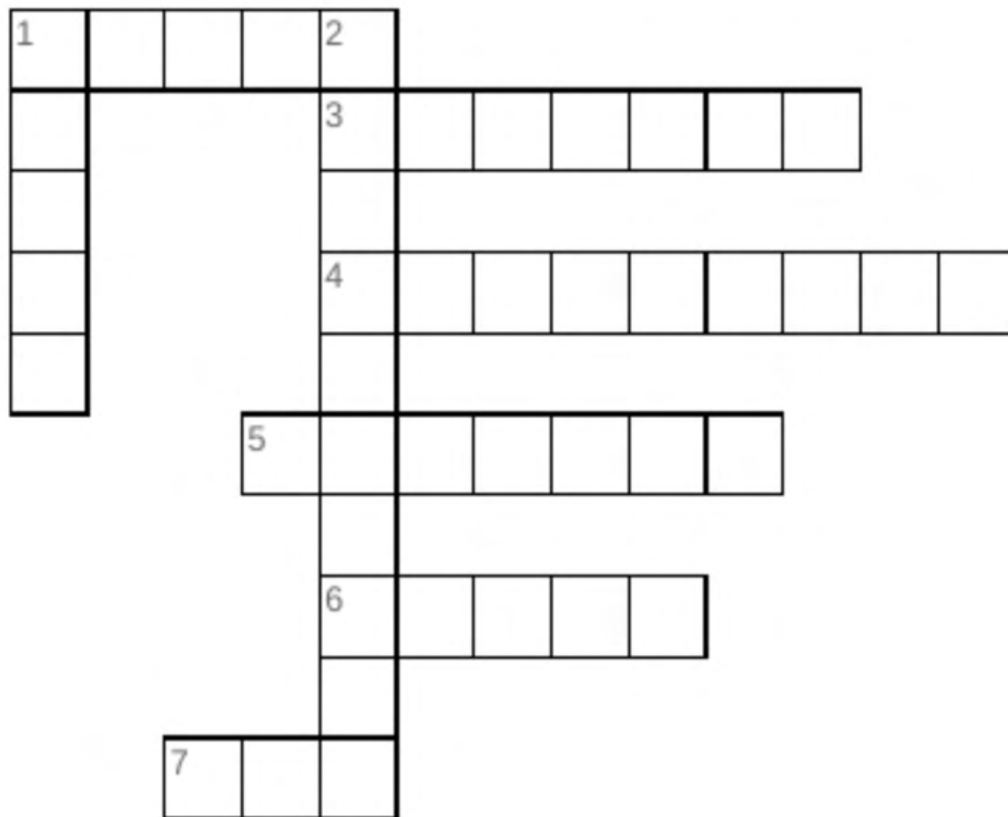
In 2012 an idea to build London's fourth airport on the Goodwin Sands was proposed. It seemed so ridiculous that local people thought it was a practical joke. Goodwin Airport was to be built on top of the sandbanks with walls holding them in place and was to have four or five runways. It was to have road, rail and ferry links to the mainland and was hailed as the perfect location for a new Eurohub. Luckily for environmentalists, the projected cost of over £40 million was considered to be far too expensive.



Proposed Goodwin Airport by Beckett Rankine



Activity: Find the answers for the crossword from the passage. The number in the brackets tells you how many letters are in the word.



Across

1. What changes constantly about the Sands? (5)
2. What did the government propose to build on the Sands in 2012? (7)
3. The Romans named the Goodwins this (3, 6)
4. When the tide is high, the Goodwins are completely ... (7)
5. When the tide is low, you might see these crashing on the Goodwin Sands (5)
6. How many miles long are the Goodwin Sands? (3)

Down

1. These animals rest and some give birth on the Goodwin Sands (5)
2. The Goodwins may be named after this man (4, 6)

