

What to do around Rosslyn Court

Our guests frequently ask for advice on places to visit, things to see, pubs and restaurants. So here are some places we and/or our guests have enjoyed visiting in the local area. We (or our guests) have tried all the places listed – usually many times - and have included them because we like them; none have sponsored us to recommend them or given us freebies or anything underhand like that. We have included basic web-links where we know them.

The obvious place to start in Margate is definitely the [Turner Contemporary](#) . It's completely free; it's accessible and friendly and the exhibitions are well set out and explained. Add a great shop, a lovely café with stunning views right along the coast and the biggest lift you are ever likely to ride in and what's not to like? Maybe the fact that it doesn't open on Mondays - make sure you catch it on one of the other six days a week when it is open (Tuesday to Sunday inclusive 10am-5pm)

When we come out of the Turner, we always take a walk along the [Harbour Arm](#). There used to be half a dozen friendly, quirky pubs and cafes and an art gallery, all with great views over the harbour to Margate. Some are currently being renovated, but you can still have a drink and a snack and borrow a guitar at the [Harbour Arms Pub](#) and serenade the passing crowd.

Returning onshore, we usually drop into the [Old Kent Market](#), in an old cinema. We'd particularly recommend the bakery. It's also good to see a bus parked indoors and speculate how they got it there.

The streets running inshore from the harbour make up [Margate Old Town](#). There are any number of shops selling art, clothing and other curios and it is a delightful place to browse around. Don't however feel obliged to buy anything before you have checked out the shops around us on Northdown Road where the prices are generally lower. The ice-cream parlour is well recommended.

There is an excellent pizza place along the front - [GB Pizza](#) down the Parade towards the Clock Tower. It does rustic and gluten-free pizzas and is a relaxing place to hang out. For seafood in the day and early evening we strongly recommend [Dory's](#) - also on the Parade. Reputedly its big sister [Angela's](#) (just around the corner) is also reputedly outstanding for seafood but booking is essential, and we haven't yet got a table there! Our guests have also recommended [Olivo's](#) and we every much enjoyed the recently opened [New Street Bistro](#). Both are very small and popular, so booking is again recommended. If we are not eating out or cooking, we get fish and chips from [Peter's Fish Factory](#) – also in the Old Town Parade. It's very good value and so you'll usually find a queue outside, but it's worth waiting as the service is quick and cheerful and the fish is cheap and delicious.

If you go up the High Street a little from the Old Town and you will come across the [Fez](#). This is Morag's favourite bar. There is a ukulele night there every Tuesday and Morag runs an acoustic night there on the last Thursday of each month. The bar is festooned with loads of fascinating memorabilia from a bygone age – mainly the fifties and sixties – but in fact the most unforgettable thing about it is its friendly atmosphere. It's pretty much impossible to go there alone and not end up talking to someone. Alternatively, and especially if you are looking to link up with the local gay community, try [Sundowners](#) overlooking the front at 1 Albert Street.

If it's too wet for the beach or for Dreamland, we'd recommend the indoor crazy golf at the [Flamingo Arcade](#) – it's underground in an old dodgem track and passes a harmless hour.

One other recommendation from the Margate frontage. If you walk along toward the station, past Dreamland and cross over to the sea-side of the road, you will pass the shelter where TS Eliot sat between the wars and wrote part of his poem "The Wasteland". Just beyond the shelter, on the front, is another old bus that has been converted into the [Bus Cafe](#). The food is brilliant – indeed award winning - and it's a great place for brunch. There are other eateries around it.

Having seen the best of central Margate, we'd suggest you spend an equal amount of time in Cliftonville, where we are located. In Margate's Victorian and Edwardian [heyday](#), Cliftonville was the smart end of town. With its exclusive hotels, grand department stores and luxury car showrooms it was the place to be seen, and ladies visiting for the season were advised to bring "not less than forty dresses" so that they could promenade in style. Those days had gone, and Cliftonville had in the recent past fallen on very hard times indeed, with its hotels and villas becoming cheap lodgings. However, now it is well on the road to recovery and its ornate and generous architecture houses any number of new and exciting ventures.

Starting from the Turner Gallery, you can walk to Cliftonville along the coast in the daytime. You will pass what little is left of the ruins of Margate Pier where steamships used to dock, then the Winter Gardens which was built as an alternative up market venue and then the Cliftonville [Lido](#). Although this is now largely abandoned, it still has hidden in its centre a huge ornate Victorian pleasure dome, with steam and sea water baths and whence horse-drawn bathing carriages emerged to carry wealthy women down to the sea where they could bath in covered modesty. All that now remains visible from the outside is the later iconic Lido beacon. However, it is worth coming up from the prom to see this, as you can then also visit [Roost](#) (a relaxed and recommended burger bar) and a couple of interesting shops. Continuing east along the coast (either along the front or on the upper level) you will come to [Newgate Gap](#), where Sweyn Road runs down to the sea. If you go up onto the bridge and look out to sea, you are likely to see a large amount of shipping. [Ships](#) anchor in the calm shallows around Margate before they enter the ports of Dover and Tilbury and to shelter in stormy weather. You can also see two of the largest of the UK's offshore windfarms and you may catch one of the dramatic sunsets that attracted the artist Turner to Margate.

If you turn right up Sweyn Road, you will soon arrive back at [Rosslyn Court](#). If you continue along the coast, you will come to [Walpole Bay Tidal Pool](#), a secluded area to swim. The hardiest of our neighbours come here for a traditional dip on New Year's Day! We have had a couple of guests brave the water this February and they claimed to have enjoyed the experience, but we save ourselves for the summer! However, whether you have been in the sea or not, be sure to visit the [Walpole Bay Hotel](#) just up the steps from the beach. Built at the turn of the last century, it has retained all its Edwardian fittings, including a bird-cage lift. It is now popular with local artists many of whom have painted table napkins. These are on display in the hotel, including a couple in the dining room by Tracey Emin (decorously hidden behind modesty screens to protect unwary diners!). Walking back towards us along the Eastern Esplanade will take you past the [Tom Thumb Theatre](#), a tiny working theatre and music venue set in an old coach house. We have caught lots of good events there – music, comedy, drama and so on and there is a very welcoming bar on the first floor. Beyond that is the Cliftonville Oval, where there is on the last Sunday of the month an excellent farmers' market and occasional community events. Opposite it in distinctive black and gold is the [Albion Rooms](#), a hotel and recording studio being developed by the Libertines.

If you walk the other way from Rosslyn Court, down to Northdown Road, there are numerous shops of interest and indeed the imposing architecture of many of the frontages bear witness to the road's past grandeur. We mention a few of the places we frequent; but there are many others. If you turn left at the

end of Sweyn Road, you will soon come to [Urchin Wines](#) at no 236. It is an off-licence, a café, a gallery and a venue. Almost opposite at 262 is [Sunny's](#) with a great collection of vintage and retro stuff. Then on the corner of Prices Avenue is the highly praised [Bangkok Thai](#). We have never managed to get a table, but one of our guests who was Thai himself and so blagged a table at short notice was most complimentary. If you can't get in, they will do you a take away which, if you ask nicely, they might let you eat it three doors down Price's Road in the [Tap Room](#) – a friendly little micro pub well worth a visit in its own right. Continuing west along Northdown Road brings you to [Cliffs](#), (a cafe, record shop, yoga studio, hair salon and coffee roastery - so they have most things covered). We'd recommend their Fish Friday evening meal (by advance booking only) when a local chef works wonders with local caught seafood. Almost opposite is the delightful [Grain Grocer](#) store and café – environmental mentalists they call themselves! Back on the South Side visit [Mar Mar](#) at no 80. It's a cafe and plant shop and has been called Margate's most Instagrammable venue. We also rate the equally Instagram-friendly [KG Winters](#) at number 68 – not only do they do vegetables but they have a good range of pottery and houseware.

Now you have got this far down Northdown Road, turn left down Bath Road and left again into Bath Place for two bizarre local attractions. Firstly [Scotts](#) at the old Ice Factory. It has three floors, two yards and warehouse upon warehouse over spilling with old furniture, architectural salvage and every bygone that the mind could imagine. Amazing! It is however equalled in weirdness by [Margate Shell Grotto](#) just down Grotto Hill – two thousand square feet of mosaics made from over four million shells in an underground chamber accessed by yards of underground passage. Nobody knows for sure what it was or whence it dates – ancient temple or 17th century folly? Take your pick! If you then make your way back to us via Dalby Square to enjoy the architecture and you can also visit the [Dalby Café](#) on Dalby Road– our local friendly greasy spoon where we hung out while we were renovating and before we had a kitchen and which Pete Doherty put on the national map when he aced their daunting [mega-breakfast challenge](#)! There is also another extensive cave system in the area, [Margate Caves](#), which is due to open to visitors soon.

If you feel you want a bit more to do and have some time to spare, we'd recommend the lovely [walk](#) along the coast to Broadstairs, ideally followed by an ice-cream in [Morelli's gelateria](#) when you get there. It's just over 5 miles – keep an eye on the incoming tide if you chose to walk along the beach rather than on the headland. The exceptionally convenient and frequent [Loop](#) bus will bring you back to the end of our street. If you want to explore further, another three miles walk (or the Loop bus) will take you to along to [Ramsgate](#), where there is lots to see. We particularly recommend a walk round the harbour and then a visit to the Ramsgate [Tunnels](#) where residents sheltered during World War 2.

If you want to know more about Thanet's wartime history, there are two interesting and adjoining museums on Manston airfield – the [Spitfire Museum](#) (free) and the [RAF Manston Museum](#) (small charge). We found both documented interesting social history as well as exhibiting the planes and equipment, so you don't have to be totally mechanically minded to enjoy them. You do however probably need to have your own transport to reach them. More reachable but a bit more niche is the [Hornby Visitor's Centre](#) in Margate. Good if you like model railways and Airfix models!

Hope that is helpful insight into what has particularly attracted us and our guests locally. There are obviously loads more things to do in Thanet; they are well written up on the [local tourist site](#).

Morag and Christopher - August 2019