

Botany Bay - Margate

Sunday, 23 May 2010

General

Botany Bay is located at Kingsgate on the north-eastern tip of Kent. It offers a long sandy beach with low cliffs, sand dunes and excellent clean waters. The area long used by naturists is to the north of the main beach. It involves a short walk and tends to be fairly quiet - apart from hot sunny weekends when some folk choose to avoid the masses on the main beach.

Thanet District Council attempted to discourage naturists by erecting "prohibition notices" in 2007. This was challenged and the general view is that the Council have no powers to enforce their attempted ban. The notices have now been removed.

In 2009 local naturists have promoted the idea that the dunes to the north of Kingsgate beach could be designated as an "official" naturist beach.

Google Maps

StreetMap

Getting There

Botany Bay is on the north-eastern-most tip of Kent. Getting there by public transport isn't particularly convenient. The nearest railway stations are Margate (3 miles away) and Broadstairs (2½ miles away), both with a poor bus service to Kingsgate.

Things are much better for car drivers who can usually find plenty of free on-street parking in roads close to the access to the beach. For those approaching from London, a suggested route is the A2, A299 (Thanet Way), A28 (to the outskirts of Margate) and B2052. At Kingsgate turn off the B2052 (now George Hill Road) into Botany Road, Percy Avenue or Kingsgate Avenue and park near the far end. Access to the main beach is via two paved slipways (one with toilets).

To reach the "naturist beach" from the main beach, turn left (i.e. northwest-wards) and walk about half-a-mile.

There is an alternative access via steps beside the coastguard station at Foreness Point but the bottom of these can be underwater and a problem at high tide. For those who choose this route, there's free on-street parking on nearby Palm Bay Avenue (the B2051).

Description

Botany Bay has two beach areas. The main (southern) beach is the one favoured by most of the public and especially families. It's close to their cars, has toilet and snacks facilities and is usually manned by lifeguards in Summer months. The "naturist beach" involves a short walk to the northwest and comprises a sandy beach with a narrow strip of sand dunes backed by low chalk cliffs.

Most naturists tend to settle on the edge of (or in) the dunes. Although the dunes can be overlooked from the clifftops and there are some walkers (often exercising dogs) along the waters edge, there are few (if any) problems about use of this part of the beach for naturism.

This part of the coast provides a good view of the busy shipping lanes serving traffic from The Thames, the North Sea and the English Channel, so there's plenty to see and a pair of binoculars can be useful.

Facilities

The only facilities at Botany Bay are:

* toilets on the access to the main beach; * a kiosk selling light refreshments on the main beach; and * a Thorley Taverns pub and restaurant on the cliff top about 150 yards from the beach access slipways.

There are no facilities on the area favoured by naturists.

Water Quality

In a word - excellent. This is the North Sea, though, so it can be chilly early in the season. The seabed is mostly sandy with few rocks - although non-swimmers need to be aware that the tides can create dips in the seabed sand.

Websites

If you want to see what Botany Bay looks like, there are some photographs at:

<http://www.kentcoast.org.uk/nforelandpeg.html>

The Beach Kiosk at Botany Bay also has a website at:

<http://www.thebeachkioskbotanybaykent.co.uk/>

Selected Visitor Comments

June 18, 2008 - "Please support the campaign to keep a small stretch of beach here open for naturists. Lobby the council and better still use it. Lovely beach and does not affect the huge amount of beach available for others. Not too difficult to access and not overlooked except by dog walkers and others who walk along the beach this far."

August 25, 2008 - "...don't be put off if you find that that the beach is exclusively textile when you get there. Just carry on and strip off as you normally would, and you'll be pleasantly surprised at how tolerant other beachgoers can be, provided you behave confidently and naturally. We need to remember that textiles have every right to use the same beaches that we enjoy. A beach can only be "lost" to naturism if we allow the presence of textiles to deter us from using the beach too. Botany bay"

2009

June 12 - "...lovely and well worth the easy walk to it. Free local parking, and glorious sand. In the recent warm weather several people were there of all ages enjoying it. "

June 28 - "Visited Botany for the first time, and its a wonderful beach - quiet, beautiful sand and easy to get to (but still secluded - although we were glad of a beach tent to keep out of the gaze of those on the cliffs)"

June 30 - "...this morning the sun was out and the tide just slipping away from the hide tide mark on this beautiful sandy

beach. Decided it was time for my first swim of the year and it was truly glorious. The water was clean and clear all the way to the sea bed, and not too cold at all... a continuous trickle of dog walkers mainly in groups.. on the main and popular part of the beach [dogs] are banned during the summer. Tolerance is the key to all aspects of life, including this."

August 05 - "Been to this beach the last few days while the weathers been hot. Hardly any nude people. So just went topless . Being overlooked by the cliff didn't make me feel good either. Much prefer somewhere like Studland with plenty of people about. Great beach though..."

August 07 - "As a resident of Botany Bay road it would be much appreciated if visitors would park their vehicles in such a manner that we can get our cars out of the driveway. The alternative will be double yellow lines."

August 13 - "Lots of comments and calls on Radio Kent about this lovely place... Important to remember among all the arguments that this is the dune end and not the place where most vistors congregate. Been lovely there this week and quite a few people around enjoying the rare sun and quietness. Try it if you haven` t been there before and make your views known if you want this beach to be official. (Oh and park at the Palm Bay end opposite the school and you won` t upset the residents!!) "

September 19 - "I have enjoyed a few visits there this year and met some very nice naturists while there. Some people walking dogs and playing on beach and no nastiness at all... really hope the council will see sense and make this official. Those who want to avoid it have miles of beach anyway and it could well attract more people to Margate etc which, lets face it, can only be good for the place!"

March 05, 2009 - "This is one of the loveliest beaches on this part of the coast and beats many a visit to many of the naturist beaches on the south west coast of GB. This beach could truly be a haven for naturists and also a draw for tourism if only Thanet District Council would be less conservative and utilise this lesser known and used spot. The small dune area makes for relatively secluded sunbathing (amongst the grass and dips), while the lower sand is soft warm and rarely gets covered by the tide in the summer. The swimming is excellent the water warm (on high tides due to it being heated by the hot sand)and generally clean. It is usually safe for swimming but can have large rollers and great body surfing waves often.

I have been using this beach with my wife for 3-4 years now, I have never been moved on by police, I have met some very nice regulars, and have seen naturist families, single men and women, and couples use this part of the beach usually quite close to other textile users. I have never witnessed any lewd behavior, or aggression. If only it was made into a official clothing optional or naturist tolerated beach it would be a benefit to both community and council."