

= Reculver =

Reculver is a village and coastal resort about 3 miles (5 km) east of Herne Bay in south @-@ east England , in a ward of the same name , in the City of Canterbury district of Kent . It once occupied a strategic location at the north @-@ western end of the Wantsum Channel , a sea lane that separated the Isle of Thanet and the Kent mainland until the late Middle Ages . This led the Romans to build a small fort there at the time of their conquest of Britain in 43 AD , and , starting late in the 2nd century , they built a larger fort , or castrum , called Regulbium , which later became one of the chain of Saxon Shore forts . The military connection resumed in the Second World War , when the sea off Reculver was used for testing Barnes Wallis 's bouncing bombs .

By the 7th century Reculver had become a landed estate of the Anglo @-@ Saxon kings of Kent . The site of the Roman fort was given over for the establishment of a monastery dedicated to St Mary in 669 AD , and King Eadberht II of Kent was buried there in the 760s . During the Middle Ages Reculver was a thriving township with a weekly market and a yearly fair , and it was a member of the Cinque Port of Sandwich . The settlement declined as the Wantsum Channel silted up , and coastal erosion claimed many buildings constructed on the soft sandy cliffs . The village was largely abandoned in the late 18th century , and most of the church was demolished in the early 19th century . Protecting the ruins and the rest of Reculver from erosion is an ongoing challenge .

The 20th century saw a revival as local tourism developed and there are now two caravan parks . The census of 2001 recorded 135 people in the Reculver area , nearly a quarter of whom were in caravans at the time . The Reculver coastline is within a Site of Special Scientific Interest , a Special Protection Area and a Ramsar site , including most of Reculver Country Park , which itself includes much of Bishopstone Cliffs local nature reserve . While nationally scarce plants and insects are found there , the location is also important for migrating birds and is of significant geological interest .

= = History = =

= = = Toponymy = = =

The earliest recorded form of the name , Regulbium , dates from the early 5th century or before and is Celtic in origin , meaning " at the promontory " or " great headland " ; in Old English this became corrupted to Raculf , sometimes given as Raculfceastre , giving rise to the modern " Reculver " . The form " Raculfceastre " includes the Old English place @-@ name element " ceaster " , which frequently relates to " a [Roman] city or walled town " .

= = = Prehistoric and Roman = = =

Stone Age flint tools have been washed out from the cliffs to the west of Reculver , and a Mesolithic tranche axe was found near the centre of the Roman fort in 1960 . This was probably an accidental loss , rather than suggesting a human settlement , evidence for which begins with late Bronze Age and Iron Age ditches . These indicate an extensive settlement , where a Bronze Age palstave and Iron Age gold coins have been found . This was followed by a " fortlet " built by the Romans during their conquest of Britain , which began in 43 AD , and the existence of a Roman road leading to Canterbury , about 8 @.@ 5 miles (13 @.@ 7 km) to the south @-@ west , indicates a Roman presence at Reculver from then onwards . A full @-@ size fort , or castrum , was started late in the 2nd century . This date is derived in part from a reconstruction of a uniquely detailed plaque , fragments of which were found by archaeologists in the 1960s . The plaque effectively records the establishment of the fort , since it commemorates the construction of two of its principal features , the basilica and the sacellum , or shrine , both being parts of the headquarters building , or principia :

this [was] the first time the inscribed phrase aedes principiorum [could] be ... identified with the

official shrine of [a Roman military] headquarters building , hitherto unmentioned in any inscription ... [It was] also the first certain ... application of the name basilica to [this element of the building] .

These structures were found by archaeologists , together with probable officers ' quarters , barracks and a bath house . A Roman oven found 200 feet (61 m) south @-@ east of the fort was probably used for drying food such as corn and fish ; its main chamber measured about 16 feet (4 @.@ 9 m) by 15 feet (4 @.@ 8 m) overall .

The fort was located on a low hill at what was then the north @-@ eastern extremity of mainland Kent , overlooking the sea lane later known as the Wantsum Channel , which lay between it and the Isle of Thanet : the fort 's location thus allowed observation from the fort on all sides , including the sea . It was probably built by soldiers of the Cohors I Baetasiorum , originally from Lower Germany , who had previously served at the Roman fort of Alauna at Maryport in Cumbria at least until the early 180s , since tiles recovered from the fort are stamped " CIB " . The Notitia Dignitatum , a Roman administrative document from the early 5th century , also records the presence of the Cohors I Baetasiorum at Reculver , then known as Regulbium . There must also have been a harbour nearby in Roman times , and , though this has not yet been found , it was probably near to the fort 's southern or eastern side .

The walls of the fort originally stood about 14 @.@ 8 feet (4 @.@ 5 m) high and were 10 feet (3 m) thick at their base , reducing to 8 feet (2 @.@ 4 m) at the top ; they were reinforced internally by an earthen bank . The entrance to the fort 's headquarters building faced north , indicating that the main gate was on the north side , facing the eponymous promontory and the sea . The north wall has been lost to the sea , along with the adjoining part of the east wall and most of the west wall ; the east wall is most complete and includes the remains of the eastern gateway and guard post . Parts of the surviving walls are all that remains of the fort above ground , and all have suffered from stone @-@ robbing , especially near the south @-@ western corner . The walls were originally faced with ragstone , but very little of this remains : otherwise only the cores of the walls are visible , consisting mostly of flint and concrete and standing only 8 @.@ 6 feet (2 @.@ 6 m) high at their highest .

Roman forts were normally accompanied by a civilian settlement , or vicus : at Reculver this lay outside the north and west sides of the fort , much of it in areas now lost to the sea , and was extensive , perhaps covering " some ten hectares [25 acres] in all . " In 1936 R.F. Jessup noted that " a Roman building with a hypocaust and tessellated [floor once] stood considerably to the northward of the fort " : this structure had been observed by the 17th- to 18th @-@ century antiquarian John Battely , and was probably " an external bath house ... relating to [an early phase of] the fort . " In the same area Battely described " several cisterns " between 10 and 12 feet (3 ? 3 @.@ 7 m) square , lined with oak planks and sealed at the bottom with puddled clay . He believed that these were for storing rainwater , and noted that a Roman strigil , which would have been used in a bath house , had been found in a similar cistern at Reculver ; he also observed that " such a multitude [of cisterns] has been discovered , almost in our memory , as proves that the ancient inhabitants of the place were very numerous . " In the 20th century twelve wells of the Roman period were identified to the west of the fort , ten of which were square ; all were cut into the hard layer of sandstone below the soft sandstone of the Thanet Beds , thus tapping into the water table . These and other 20th @-@ century finds from the Roman period extend to 1 @,@ 120 feet (341 @.@ 4 m) west of the fort , and date to a period between 170 and 360 , roughly coinciding with the period of occupation at the fort itself .

At least 10 infant burials were found within the fort , all of babies , of which six were associated with Roman buildings : five sets of infant remains were found within the foundations and walls of buildings , as were coins dating from 270 ? 300 AD . It was suspected that more such burials might be found in the walls of a building in the south @-@ western area of the fort if it were excavated further . A baby 's feeding bottle was also found in an excavated floor within 10 feet (3 m) of one of the infant skeletons , though it may have been unconnected with the burials . The babies were probably buried in the buildings as ritual sacrifices , but it is unknown whether they were selected for burial because they were already dead , perhaps stillborn , or if they were buried alive or killed for the purpose . A local tale subsequently developed that the grounds of the fort were haunted by the

sound of a crying baby .

Towards the end of the 3rd century a Roman naval commander named Carausius , who later declared himself emperor in Britain , was given the task of clearing pirates from the sea between Britain and the European mainland . In so doing he established a new chain of command , the British part of which was later to pass under the control of a Count of the Saxon Shore . The Notitia Dignitatum shows that the fort at Reculver became part of this arrangement , and its location meant that it lay at the " main point of contact in the system [of Saxon Shore forts] " . Archaeological evidence indicates that it was abandoned in the 370s .

= = = Medieval = = =

Reculver was part of a landed estate of the Anglo @-@ Saxon kings of Kent by the 7th century , possibly with a royal toll @-@ station or a " significant coastal trading settlement , " given the types and quantity of coins found there . Other early Anglo @-@ Saxon finds include a fragment of a gilt bronze brooch , or fibula , which was originally circular and set with coloured stones or glass , a claw beaker and pottery . Antiquarians such as the 18th @-@ century clergyman John Duncombe believed that King Æthelberht of Kent moved his royal court there from Canterbury in about 597 , and built a palace on the site of the Roman ruins . However , archaeological excavation has shown no evidence of this ; Æthelberht 's household would have been peripatetic , and the story has been described as probably a " pious legend " . A church was built on the site of the Roman fort in about 669 , when King Ecgrberht of Kent granted land for the foundation of a monastery , which was dedicated to St Mary .

The monastery developed as the centre of a " large estate , a manor and a parish " , and , by the early 9th century , it had become " extremely wealthy " , but it then fell under the control of the archbishops of Canterbury . In 811 Archbishop Wulfred is recorded as having deprived the monastery of some of its land , and soon after it featured in a " monumental showdown " between Wulfred and King Coenwulf of Mercia over the control of monasteries . In 838 control of all monasteries under Canterbury 's authority was passed to the kings of Wessex , by the agreement of Archbishop Ceolnoth in exchange for protection from Viking attacks . By the 10th century the monastery at Reculver and its estate were both royal property : they were given back to the archbishops of Canterbury in 949 by King Eadred of England , at which time the estate included Hoath and Herne , and land at Chilmington , about 23 @.@ 5 miles (37 @.@ 8 km) to the south @-@ west , and in the west of the Isle of Thanet .

By 1066 the monastery had become a parish church . However , in 1086 Reculver was named in Domesday Book as a hundred , and the manor was valued at £ 42.7s. (£ 42 @.@ 35) . Included in the Domesday account for the manor , as well as the church , farmland , a mill , salt pans and a fishery , are 90 villeins and 25 bordars : these numbers can be multiplied four or five times to account for dependents , as they only represent " adult male heads of households " . In the 13th century Reculver was a parish of " exceptional wealth " , and the considerable enlargement of the church building during the Middle Ages indicates that the settlement had become a " thriving township " , with " dozens of houses " . The parish was broken up in 1310 when chapelries at Herne and , on the Isle of Thanet , St Nicholas @-@ at @-@ Wade and All Saints were converted into parishes , though Hoath was still a perpetual curacy belonging to Reculver parish in the 20th century . Records for the poll tax of 1377 show that there were then 364 individuals of 14 years and above , not including " honest beggars " , in the reduced parish , who paid a total of £ 6.1s.4d. (£ 6 @.@ 07) towards the tax .

= = = Decline and loss to the sea = = =

The thriving medieval township depended partly on its position on a maritime trade route through the Wantsum Channel , already present in Anglo @-@ Saxon times and exemplified by Reculver 's membership of the Cinque Port of Sandwich later in the Middle Ages . The importance of the Wantsum Channel was such that , when the River Thames froze in 1269 , trade between Sandwich

and London had to be carried out overland . Historical records for the channel are sparse after 1269 , perhaps " because the route was so well known as to be taken for granted [in the Middle Ages] , the whole waterway from London to Sandwich being occasionally spoken of as the ' Thames ' " . But silting and inning had closed the channel to trading vessels sailing along it by about 1460 or soon after , and the first bridge was built over it at Sarre in 1485 , since ferries could no longer operate across it .

Reculver was also diminished by coastal erosion . By 1540 , when John Leland recorded a visit there , the coastline to the north had receded to within little more than a quarter of a mile (400 m) of the " Towne [which] at this tyme [was] but Village lyke " . Soon afterwards , in 1576 , William Lambarde described Reculver as " poore and simple " . In 1588 there were 165 communicants ? people taking part in services of holy communion at the church ? and in 1640 there were 169 , but a map of about 1630 shows that the church then stood only about 500 feet (152 m) from the shore . In January 1658 the local justices of the peace were petitioned concerning " encroachments of the sea ... [which had] since Michaelmas last [29 September 1657] encroached on the land near six rods [99 feet (30 m)] , and will doubtless do more harm " . The village 's failure to support two " beer shops " in the 1660s points clearly to a declining population , and the village was mostly abandoned around the end of the 18th century , its residents moving to Hillborough , about 1 @.@ 25 miles (2 km) south @-@ west of Reculver but within the same parish .

Concern about erosion of the cliff on which the church stood , and the possible inundation of the village , had led the commissioners of sewers to install costly sea defences consisting of planking and piling before 1783 , when it was reported that the commissioners had adopted a scheme proposed by Sir Thomas Page to protect the church : the sea defences had proven counter @-@ productive , since sea water collected behind them and continued to undermine the cliff . Before this , according to John Duncombe , " the commissioners of sewers , and the occupiers who pay scots , [had] no view nor interest but to secure the level [ground] , which must be overflowed when the hill is washed away . " By 1787 Reculver had " dwindled into an insignificant village , thinly decked with the cottages of fishermen and smugglers . "

[At about this time ,] from the present shore as far as a place called the Black Rock , seen at lowwater mark , where tradition says , a parish church once stood , there [were] found quantities of tiles , bricks , fragments of walls , tessellated pavements , and other marks of a ruined town , and the household furniture , dress , and equipment of the horses belonging to the inhabitants of it , [were] continually found among the sands ...

In September 1804 a high tide and strong winds led to the destruction of five houses , one of which was " an ancient building , immediately opposite the public house , and had the appearance of having been part of some monastic erection " . The following year , according to a set of notes written by the parish clerk John Brett , " Reculver Church and willage stood in safety " , but in 1806 the sea began to encroach on the village , and in 1807 the local farmers dismantled the sea defences , after which " the village became a total [wreck] to the mercy of the sea . "

A further scheme to protect the cliff and church was proposed by John Rennie , but a decision was taken on 12 January 1808 to demolish the church . By March 1809 , erosion of the cliff had brought it to within 12 feet (4 m) of the church , and demolition was begun in September that year . Trinity House intervened to ensure that the towers were preserved as a navigational aid , and in 1810 it bought what was left of the structure for £ 100 and built the first groynes , designed to protect the cliff on which the ruined church stands . The vicarage was abandoned at the same time as the church , or a little later , and a replacement parish church was built at Hillborough , opening in 1813 .

After the sea undermined the foundations of the Hoy and Anchor Inn at Reculver in January 1808 , the building was taken down and the redundant vicarage was used as a temporary replacement under the same name . Although it was reported in 1800 that there were then only five or six houses left in the village , a new Hoy and Anchor Inn was built by 1809 , and this was renamed as the King Ethelbert Inn by 1838 . Further construction work is indicated by a stone over the doorway to the inn bearing a date of 1843 , and it was later extended into the form in which it stands today , " probably ... in 1883 " .

Today the site of the church is managed by English Heritage , and the village has all but disappeared . The present appearance of the cliff below the church , a grassy slope above a large stone groyne , was in place by April 1867 , and the sea defences there continue to be maintained by Trinity House . In 2000 the surviving fragments of an early medieval cross that once stood inside the old church were used to design a Millennium Cross to commemorate two thousand years of Christianity . This stands at the entrance to the car park and was commissioned by Canterbury City Council .

= = Bouncing bombs = =

During the Second World War , the coastline east of the village was used to test prototypes of Barnes Wallis 's bouncing bomb . This area was chosen for its seclusion , while the clear landmark of the church towers and the ease of recovering prototypes from the shallow water were probably also factors . Different , inert versions of the bomb were tested at Reculver , leading to the development of the operational version known as " Upkeep " . This bomb was used by the RAF 's 617 Squadron in Operation Chastise , otherwise known as the Dambuster raids , in which dams in the Ruhr district of Germany were attacked on the night of 16 ? 17 May 1943 by formations of Lancaster bombers . On 17 May 2003 , a Lancaster bomber overflowed the Reculver testing site to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the exploit .

Two prototype bouncing bombs , about 6 feet (2 m) long and 3 feet (1 m) wide , lay in marshland behind the sea wall until about 1977 , when they were removed by the Army . Other prototypes were recovered from the shoreline in 1997 , one of which is in Herne Bay Museum and Gallery , a little over 3 miles (5 km) west of Reculver . Others are on display in Dover Castle and in the Spitfire & Hurricane Memorial Museum at the former RAF Manston , on the Isle of Thanet .

= = Governance = =

In the 10th @-@ century charter by which King Eadred gave Reculver to the archbishops of Canterbury , the boundary of the mainland part of the estate was about the same as those for the adjoining parishes of Reculver , Hoath and Herne in the 20th century , and the estate included part of the Isle of Thanet . In 1086 , Domesday Book named Reculver as a hundred , meaning that it was probably the meeting @-@ place for the local hundred court . The hundred included Hoath and Herne , and it may also have included the neighbouring area of Thanet . In 1274 ? 75 the local hundred was much larger : it was then named after Bleangate , in a detached part of Chislet parish , and was divided into northern and southern halves ; it also included part of Thanet . By 1540 Bleangate hundred no longer included land on Thanet , its members being listed then as Sturry , Chislet , Reculver and Herne for the archaic taxes known as " fifteenths and tenths " , and in 1659 they were listed as Chislet , Herne , Hoath , Reculver , Stourmouth , Sturry and Westbere . In 1808 the members of the northern half @-@ hundred , or " Bleangate Upper " , were listed as Herne , Reculver , Stourmouth and Hoath . The constable for the northern half @-@ hundred was chosen at the court leet of the manor of Reculver , which by 1800 was usually held at Herne .

The parish was represented by two tithings ? known in Kent as " borghs " ? in the Hundred Rolls of 1274 ? 75 and , 400 years later , for the purposes of the Hearth Tax , levied between 1662 and 1689 . In 1274 ? 75 these borghs appear as Reculver borgh and Brookgate borgh ; in 1663 they appear as Reculver Street borgh and Brookgate borgh , which were recorded under a parish heading for Reculver , together with Hoath borgh ; and in 1673 Reculver borgh and Brookgate borgh were recorded under a heading for Herne parish , while Hoath was recorded under its own parish heading . However , borghs in Kent , and tithings generally , were related to the manorial and hundredal administration of the county , rather than to the parishes in which they lay .

The parishes of Herne and , on the Isle of Thanet , St Nicholas @-@ at @-@ Wade were created from parts of Reculver parish in 1310 , although they continued to have a subordinate relationship with their original parish into the 19th century , while Hoath remained a perpetual curacy into the 20th . Thereafter Reculver 's parish boundary , enclosing an area of about 2 square miles (5 km²) ,

remained the same for both ecclesiastical and civil purposes until 1934 , and included the settlements of Hillborough , Bishopstone and Brook , now Brook Farm . The parish extended west almost to Beltinge , in Herne parish , and to Broomfield in the south @-@ west , where the boundary with Herne parish ran along the centre of the main thoroughfare , now Margate Road ; it was bounded in open country on the south @-@ east and east by the parish of Chislet . In 1934 the civil functions of the parish were merged into the civil parish of Herne Bay . Conversely , Reculver is now in an electoral ward of the same name , in the local government district of Canterbury , which includes Beltinge , Bishopstone , Brook Farm and Hillborough , and extends into the eastern part of the town of Herne Bay . This ward has three seats on Canterbury City Council , and , in the local elections of 2011 , they were won by the existing councillors Jennie Edwards , Gillian Reuby and Ann Taylor , all Conservative .

At the national level Reculver is in the English parliamentary constituency of North Thanet , for which Roger Gale (Conservative) has been MP since 1983 . In the general election of 2015 , Gale won 23 @, @ 045 votes (49 @. @ 0 %) , giving him a majority of 10 @, @ 948 ; the United Kingdom Independence Party won 12 @, @ 097 votes (25 @. @ 7) and the Labour Party won 8 @, @ 411 votes (17 @. @ 9 %) ; while the Green Party and the Liberal Democrats each won fewer than 2 @, @ 000 votes , the Green Party performed slightly better of the two . For European elections Reculver is in the South East England constituency .

= = Geography = =

The ruins of the Roman fort and medieval church at Reculver stand on the remnant of a promontory , a low hill with a maximum height of 50 feet (15 m) , which is the " last seaward extension of the Blean Hills . " Sediments laid down around 55 million years ago are particularly well displayed in the cliffs to the west . Nearby Herne Bay is the type location for the Thanet Sand Formation , or Thanet Beds , consisting of a fine @-@ grained sand that can be clayey and glauconitic and is of Thanetian (late Paleocene) age . It rests unconformably on the Chalk Group , and forms the base of the cliffs in the Reculver and Herne Bay area . Above the Thanet Sand are the Upnor Formation , a medium sandstone , and the sandy clays of the Harwich Formation at the Paleocene / Eocene boundary . The highest cliffs , rising to a maximum height of about 115 feet (35 m) to the west of Reculver , have a cap of London Clay , a fine silty clay of Eocene age . The surface consists mainly of flint gravel with some areas of brickearth , both of which are glacial deposits .

Rocks such as these are easily washed away by the sea . It has been estimated that the Roman fort was originally about 1 mile (1 @. @ 6 km) from the sea to the north , but the cliffs are eroding at a rate of approximately 3 @. @ 3 feet (1 m) per year . Coastal erosion had washed away most of Reculver village by 1800 , leading residents to re @-@ locate to Hillborough , within Reculver parish . A plan is in place to manage this erosion whereby some parts of the coastline such as the country park will be allowed to continue eroding , and others ? including the site of the Roman fort and the medieval church ? will be protected from further erosion . New sea defences were built in the 1990s , including covering the beaches around the church with boulders .

The warmest time of year in Kent is in July and August , with average maximum temperatures of around 21 ° C (70 ° F) , and the coolest is in January and February , with average minimum temperatures of around 1 ° C (34 ° F) . Average maximum and minimum temperatures are about 0 @. @ 5 ° C (0 @. @ 3 ° F) higher than they are nationally . Locations on the north coast of Kent , like Reculver , are sometimes warmer than areas further inland , owing to the influence of the North Downs to the south . Average annual rainfall in Kent is about 728 millimetres (28 @. @ 7 in) , with the highest rainfall from October to January . This is lower than the national average annual rainfall of 838 millimetres (33 in) . Occasional drought conditions can lead to the imposition of Temporary Use Bans to conserve water supplies , and it was announced in 2013 that a water desalination plant was to be built at Reculver to increase supplies .

= = Demography = =

In the census of 1801 the number of people present in the parish of Reculver , enclosing an area of about 2 square miles (5 km²) and including the settlements of Hillborough , Bishopstone and part of Broomfield , was given as 252 , and this figure remained roughly stable until the 20th century when a dramatic increase was recorded : in the census of 1931 , the number was given as 829 . But this included holidaymakers , and in 2005 the number of people at Reculver was estimated to increase to " over 1 @, @ 000 at the height of the [summer] holiday season " .

In the 2001 census the relevant census area covered 2 @. @ 79 square miles (7 km²) and included only Reculver and outlying farms and houses , in which 135 people were found , almost a quarter of whom were in caravans . All were born in the United Kingdom except for three individuals from the Republic of Ireland and three from South Africa . Gender was given as 69 female and 66 male , and the age distribution was 12 individuals aged 0 ? 5 years (8 @. @ 8 %) , 16 aged 6 ? 16 years (14 %) , 30 aged 17 ? 35 years (22 @. @ 2 %) , 14 aged 36 ? 45 years (10 @. @ 3 %) , 44 aged 46 ? 64 years (32 @. @ 5 %) and 21 aged 65 years and over (15 @. @ 5 %) . Half (67) of all the individuals recorded were described as economically active , with 58 of these having employers and nine being self @- @ employed ; none were recorded as full @- @ time students or unemployed . Twenty @- @ four people (17 @. @ 7 %) were described as retired . Of those aged 16 ? 74 years , 14 (12 @. @ 8 %) were placed at the highest level for education or qualification . Christianity was the only religion represented , by 99 individuals , with 22 recorded as having no religion and 14 whose religion was not stated . From April 2001 to March 2002 the average gross weekly income of households in the electoral ward of Reculver was estimated by the Office for National Statistics as £ 560 , or £ 29 @, @ 120 per year ; this was below the average for the south @- @ east of England , excluding London , which was £ 660 , or £ 34 @, @ 320 .

In the 2011 census the relevant census area was identical to the electoral ward , an area of 3 @. @ 55 square miles (9 km²) , and produced information for the area as a whole . Therefore , while the total resident population of the ward at the 2011 census numbered 8 @, @ 845 , detailed information comparable to that of the 2001 census is unavailable .

= = Economy = =

In the Middle Ages , probably beginning in the 11th century , Reculver was one of several members , or " limbs " , of the Cinque Port of Sandwich . Like other limbs at Fordwich , Deal , Sarre and Stonar , it was then involved in maritime trade , and it shared in the Cinque Ports ' duty to supply ships and men for the king 's use , in return for concessions such as tax exemption . In 1220 King Henry III granted the archbishop of Canterbury a market to be held weekly at Reculver on Thursdays , and an annual fair was held there on Saint Giles 's Day , 1 September .

Oysters from the " Rutupian shore " ? the shoreline around Richborough , a little over 8 miles (13 km) to the south @- @ east ? were noted as a delicacy by the 1st ? 2nd @- @ century Roman poet Juvenal , and in 1576 oysters from Reculver itself were " reputed as farre to passe those of Whitstaple , as Whitstaple doe surmount the rest of this shyre [of Kent] in savorie saltnesse . " An enclosed area of salt water known as the Dene was leased for the breeding of oysters and lobsters in 1867 ; as of 2014 there is a hatchery for oysters in saltwater ponds on the eastern side of Reculver belonging to a seafood company which is based there . Young oysters are transplanted from the hatchery to the sea bed at Whitstable . In May 1914 , Anglo @- @ Westphalian Kent Coalfield Ltd drilled a borehole at Reculver in search of coal , since it had found a seam of coal 48 feet (14 @. @ 6 m) thick at nearby Chislet and was developing a colliery there ; possible samples of coal were retrieved from the borehole at a depth of 1 @, @ 129 feet (344 @. @ 1 m) , but it was abandoned , no workable seam having been found .

Today Reculver is dominated by static caravan parks , the first of which appeared after the Second World War . Also present are a country park , the King Ethelbert public house , which is a free house , and a nearby shop and cafe . Reculver was defined as a " key heritage area " in 2008 , and there are plans for its development as a destination for green tourism . Canterbury City Council 's Reculver Masterplan , adopted in 2009 , envisaged the creation of 100 touring pitches in its caravan park , south @- @ east of the Roman fort , which was then leased to the Camping and Caravanning

Club . That caravan park was closed by 2015 , when Canterbury City Council undertook a consultation on its incorporation into the country park .

= = = Community facilities = = =

Reculver Church of England Primary School is adjacent to the church at Hillborough . The school 's site also hosts Beltinge Day Nursery and Reculver Breakfast and Afterschool Club . The nearest school for older children is Herne Bay High School .

The nearest post office is in Beltinge , about 1 @. @ 9 miles (3 @. @ 1 km) to the west @- @ southwest . The nearest general practitioner (GP) surgery is about 1 @. @ 4 miles (2 @. @ 3 km) to the south @- @ west , between Bishopstone and Hillborough , with others in Beltinge , Herne Bay , Broomfield and St Nicholas @- @ at @- @ Wade . While the nearest general hospital is the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital , about 2 @. @ 5 miles (4 km) to the west in Herne Bay , the closest hospital with an Accident and Emergency (A & E) department is the Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital , about 8 @. @ 2 miles (13 @. @ 2 km) to the east in Margate . The nearest community centre is Reculver and Beltinge Memorial Hall , about 1 @. @ 9 miles (3 @. @ 1 km) to the west @- @ southwest .

= = Landmarks = =

= = = Ruined church of St Mary = = =

The medieval towers of the ruined church of St Mary are Reculver 's " most dominant features " . They were added in the late 12th century to a church founded in 669 , when King Ecgberht of Kent granted land to Bassa the priest for the foundation of a monastery . The church was sited near the centre of the Roman fort , and was built " almost completely from demolished Roman structures " . In 692 the monastery 's abbot Berhtwald was elected archbishop of Canterbury , and King Eadberht II of Kent was buried inside the church in the 760s . The church building was considerably enlarged over time , the last additions being made in the 15th century . But it retained many prominent Anglo @- @ Saxon features , including a triple chancel arch and a stone high cross , though this had been removed by 1784 .

The church was demolished in 1809 , in what has been described as " an act of vandalism for which there can be few parallels even in the blackest records of the nineteenth century " . Archaeological excavations in the 19th and 20th centuries established the building sequence of the church , and areas of missing wall are marked on the ground by concrete edged with flint . The ruins are now in the care of English Heritage , and the sea defences protecting them have been maintained by Trinity House since 1810 . Fragments of the cross , and two stone columns that had been part of the church 's triple chancel arch , are on display in Canterbury Cathedral .

A byname for the towers is the " Twin Sisters " , and an account of how this first arose was current about a hundred years after its supposed happening in the late 15th century , but in its usual form , for example in a 19th @- @ century travel guide , it is mostly an invention created around " pseudo @- @ historical detail " . The Ingoldsby Legends includes a re @- @ invention of the story in which two brothers , Robert and Richard de Birchington , are substituted for the two sisters .

= = = Country park = = =

Reculver Country Park is a nature reserve managed by Canterbury City Council and the Kent Wildlife Trust . It covers 64 acres (26 ha) and comprises a narrow strip of protected , cliff @- @ top land about 1 @. @ 5 miles (2 km) long , running from the remaining enclosure of the Roman fort west to Bishopstone Glen . Most of the cliff @- @ top and all of the foreshore in this area are included in the Thanet Coast SSSI , the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA and the similarly named Ramsar site ; most of the Country Park is also part of the Bishopstone Cliffs local nature

reserve , which covers 166 @. @ 5 acres (67 @. @ 4 ha) of the coastline between Beltinge and Reculver . In winter brent geese and wading birds such as sanderlings and turnstones may be seen ; during the summer months the largest colony of sand martins in Kent nests in the soft cliffs , on top of which fulmars were also reported to have begun nesting in 2013 , and wading curlews may be seen at any time . The grasslands on the cliff top are among the few remaining cliff @- @ top wildflower meadows left in Kent , and are home to butterflies and skylarks . Also present are the nationally scarce hog 's fennel and two species of digger wasp , *Alysson lunicornis* and *Ectemnius ruficornis* . The coastline here forms part of the " key on @- @ land Palaeocene site in the London Basin " , and is the only location in the Woolwich Beds to contain wood . The foreshore displays a " rich invertebrate and vertebrate fossil fauna ... and the section has been extensively studied over many years . " The park first won a Green Flag Award in 2005 , and it is estimated that over 200 @, @ 000 people visit it each year , including up to 3 @, @ 500 students for educational trips . Canterbury City Council 's Reculver Masterplan envisages purchasing farmland to the south of the country park to replace land lost to the sea through coastal erosion .

In 2011 it was found that the shoreline in the Herne Bay area , including Reculver , had come under threat from an invasive species , the carpet sea squirt (*Didemnum vexillum*) , also known as " marine vomit " . First recorded in UK waters in 2008 , the carpet sea squirt is indigenous to the sea around Japan , but it has been carried to other parts of the world , including New Zealand and the USA , on boat hulls , fishing equipment and floating seaweed . Carpet sea squirt can overgrow other , sessile species , " potentially smothering species living in gravel and affecting fisheries . "

= = = Centre for renewable energy = = =

A visitor centre in Reculver Country Park re @- @ opened in 2009 as the Reculver Renewable Energy and Interpretation Centre , " marking 200 years of the moving of Reculver village " . The centre features a log burner fuelled by logs from the Blean woodland , solar and photovoltaic panels provide electrical power , and there are displays describing the history , geography and wildlife of the area .

= = Transport = =

Reculver is at the end of an unclassified road , Reculver Lane , and is about 2 miles (3 @. @ 2 km) by road from the nearest major junction of the A299 , or Thanet Way . From Roman times there was a connection to Canterbury by road , the presence of which is reflected in parish boundaries for much of its length . An estate map of 1685 shows the Reculver end of this road as " The King 's highe Way " , which may have been in use until 1875 , when it was reported that a public road had been diverted because of a cliff fall near Love Street Farm . Remains of a Roman road leading to the east gate of the fort have also been found , which were " substantial ... consisting of a sandstone platform [10 ? 13 feet (3 ? 4 m)] wide and at least [11 inches (30 cm)] deep . "

In 1817 the nearest coaching route was that running between London , Canterbury and the Isle of Thanet , which passed through Upstreet , about 4 miles (6 @. @ 4 km) south of Reculver , before entering Thanet . In 1839 coaches and vans ran daily from Herne Bay to Canterbury and on to destinations on the southern and eastern coasts of Kent , with access to the English Channel , at Deal , Dover , Sandgate and Hythe . In 1865 transport from Herne Bay was available by " fly " ? a type of one @- @ horse hackney carriage .

As of 2014 a bus service , route 7 / 7A , connects Reculver directly with Herne Bay and Canterbury daily except Sundays and bank holidays . Other destinations on this route include Reculver Church of England Primary School at Hillborough , Broomfield , Chislet , Hoath and the railway station at Sturry , on the Ashford to Ramsgate line . Route 36 connects Reculver with Herne Bay and Margate daily except Sundays . Other destinations on this route include Reculver Church of England Primary School at Hillborough , Beltinge , Birchington @- @ on @- @ Sea and Westgate @- @ on @- @ Sea . The bus stop at Reculver is adjacent to the King Ethelbert Inn .

The nearest railway stations are at Herne Bay , about 3 @. @ 8 miles (6 @. @ 1 km) to the west ,

and Birchington @-@ on @-@ Sea , about 4 @.@ 5 miles (7 @.@ 2 km) to the east . Both stations are on the Chatham Main Line , running between London 's Victoria station and Ramsgate , on the south @-@ eastern coast of the Isle of Thanet . The railway first reached Herne Bay from the west in 1861 and was extended to Ramsgate Harbour railway station by 1863 , but no provision was made for public access from Reculver , although purchase of land for a station there had been envisaged and a short @-@ lived goods station was opened in 1864 . In the same year a passenger station was proposed for Reculver , primarily to serve tourists , but it was not built . In 1884 the South Eastern Railway proposed building a branch line from its station at Grove Ferry on the Ashford to Ramsgate line to join the London , Chatham and Dover Railway 's Chatham Main Line at Reculver , thereby linking Canterbury and Herne Bay . The Canterbury and Kent Coast Railway Bill was presented to a select committee of MPs in January 1885 : the London , Chatham and Dover Railway objected to it , particularly the junction with their main line at Reculver , so the Bill was rejected and the line was not built . Rudimentary houses were erected by the East Kent Railway company on nearby marshland in 1858 for the navvies who constructed the line through the area ; these had been taken over by enginemen of the South Eastern and Chatham Railway by October 1904 , when they were replaced by cottages .

There is no provision for access to Reculver from the sea , but there were maritime connections from at least the 1st century , when the Roman fort of Regulbium had a supporting harbour . The quantity and variety of coins found at Reculver dating from the 7th century to the 8th are almost certainly related to its location on a major trade route through the Wantsum Channel ; there was probably still a harbour in Anglo @-@ Saxon times , and the monastery may well have operated a " fleet of ships and its own boatyard . " Details in the 10th @-@ century charter in which King Eadred gave Reculver to the archbishops of Canterbury suggest that there was then an island immediately to the north , creating a " mini @-@ Wantsum [Channel that] could have provided a sheltered channel for beaching and berthing ships " ; the present day Black Rock beyond the shoreline may be a remnant of this island .

In the 17th century an inlet to the north @-@ west was described as " anciently for a harbor of ships , called now The Old Pen " . In the 18th century there was a place for landing passengers and goods at the village , and the former name of the King Ethelbert Inn , the " Hoy and Anchor " , makes reference to hoys , a local type of merchant sailing vessel . These continued to serve the coastline of northern Kent in the mid @-@ 19th century . In 1810 a canal was proposed to run from the coast between Reculver and St Nicholas @-@ at @-@ Wade to Canterbury , with a harbour for sea @-@ going vessels at the northern end , which would be accessible from Reculver by a new road beginning at the inn , but none of this was built . Passenger steamships called at Herne Bay pier on their route between London and destinations along the north coast of Kent from 1832 , but this service ceased in the first half of the 20th century . A travel guide of 1865 advised that

[the] best way to visit Reculver from Margate is by means of a sailing or rowing boat ... [although] Herne Bay is by far the most convenient place to get to Reculver from , as you can be rowed to the foot of the twin towers in little more than half an hour ... [after which] we run the boat on the beach , and plant our foot on the famous " Rutupian shore , " sung by Juvenal ...

Coastguards were stationed at Reculver from the mid @-@ 19th century until they were withdrawn in the mid @-@ 20th century , but the towers of the ruined church remain a landmark for mariners , both practically and through their use to mark the division between areas covered by Thames Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) and Dover MRCC .

= = Religion = =

A new Anglican parish church was built at Hillborough , about 1 @.@ 25 miles (2 km) south @-@ west of Reculver , as a replacement for the old church of St Mary . The new church was given the same dedication to St Mary and , standing on a plot of land bought for £ 30 , it was consecrated on 13 April 1813 . A " miserable little [church] ... built in a rough and poverty @-@ stricken style " , it had a leaking roof and was already decaying by 1874 , and was replaced by the present structure , begun in 1876 and consecrated on 12 June 1878 .

The church begun in 1876 was designed in the Gothic Revival style by the architect Joseph Clarke , who was surveyor for the diocese of Canterbury at the time . It has seating for about 100 people , and is a " simple and relatively plain building " , though it incorporates stonework from the old church at Reculver . The medieval baptismal font in the church is probably from the former chapel of All Saints , Shuart , on the Isle of Thanet , which was demolished in the 15th century . A war memorial stands at the edge of the churchyard , facing into the adjacent Reculver Lane , and records the names of 27 parishioners who died fighting in the First World War and the Second World War .

= = Notable people = =

King Eadberht II of Kent was buried in the church at Reculver in the 760s . His tomb was in the south porticus of the church , adjacent to the chancel , though this later became part of the church 's south aisle . This was traditionally believed to be the tomb of King Æthelberht I of Kent , and was " of an antique form , mounted with two spires " . Simon of Faversham , a 14th @-@ century philosopher and theologian , was appointed as rector but was forced to defend his appointment to the Pope , and died in France , either on his way to the papal curia in Avignon or after his arrival , some time before 19 July 1306 .

The first recorded owner of Brook , about 0 @.@ 8 miles (1 km) south @-@ southwest of Reculver , was Nicholas Tingewick , physician to King Edward I and rector of Reculver until 1310 , when he became its first recorded vicar . He was regarded as the " best doctor for the king 's health " , and there are more records of his medical practice than there are for " most physicians of his time . " Brook subsequently passed to James de la Pine , sheriff of Kent in the early 1350s . His grandson sold it to an ancestor of Henry Cheyne , who was elected knight of the shire for Kent in 1563 , and was created " Lord Cheyne " in 1572 . He had sold all of his possessions in Kent by 1574 to " finance his extravagance " , and Brook subsequently became the property of Sir Cavalliero Maycote , who was a leading courtier to Elizabeth I and James I. He had a " handsome monument [on the south wall of the chancel in the church at Reculver] representing Sir Cavalliero and Lady Maycote , with their eight children , all in alabaster figures , kneeling " . Brook is now Brook Farm , where there is a remnant of Maycote 's home in the form of a gateway , which is a " very rustic Elizabethan affair " , all of brick , with mouldings .

Thomas Broke , alderman and MP for Calais in the mid @-@ 16th century , may have been a son of Thomas Brooke of Reculver , as well as being a " religious radical " . Ralph Brooke , officer of arms as Rouge Croix Pursuivant and York Herald under Elizabeth I and James I , died in 1625 and was buried inside the church , where he was commemorated by a black marble tablet on the south wall of the chancel , showing him dressed in his herald 's coat .

Robert Hunt , vicar of Reculver from 1595 to 1602 , became minister of religion to the English colonial settlement at Jamestown , Virginia , sailing there in the ship Susan Constant in 1606 , and celebrated probably " the first known service of holy communion in what is today the United States of America on 21 June 1607 . " Barnabas Knell was vicar from 1602 to 1646 : during the English Civil War his son Paul Knell , born in about 1615 , was chaplain to a regiment of Royalist cuirassiers , to whom he preached a sermon , " The convoy of a Christian " , at the siege of Gloucester in August 1643 . An estate map of 1685 shows that much of the land around Reculver then belonged to James Oxenden , who spent much of his life as an MP for Kent constituencies between 1679 and 1702 .