Medway takes its name from the magnificent river that flows through it and comprises of five towns – Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham and Strood.

In June 2017 Medway will commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Battle of Medway with a spectacular river event and a series of exhibitions and activities.

Rochester has a unique identity with its iconic Norman castle and cathedral, historic buildings and museums, as well as connections with Charles Dickens. Chatham’s maritime history includes The Historic Dockyard Chatham, an award winning attraction and the world’s most complete dockyard of the age of sail. The Dockyard’s defences include Upnor Castle, Fort Amherst, the Great Lines Heritage Park and the Royal Engineers Museum, amongst others. Many of these sites were involved in, or are a result of, the Battle of Medway.

The river itself is home to many marinas and yacht clubs as well as interesting historic vessels and river trips. The wider estuary provides the perfect habitat for thousands of breeding and migrating birds and wildlife. The area hosts more than 30 days of free festivals and events from bustling street festivals and open air concerts, to theatre performances and international sporting events.

This iconic anniversary commemorates one of England’s greatest naval disasters when the River Medway was engulfed in flames. In June 1667 the Dutch fleet sailed up the Medway and caught the English unprepared. This daring invasion brought the Second Anglo-Dutch War to an end.

Under Lieutenant Admiral Michiel de Ruyter, the Dutch captured the fort at Sheerness before entering the River Medway to attack the English fleet at Chatham. They broke through the defensive chain and, despite fire from Upnor Castle, towed away the Royal Charles, England’s flagship and burned a number of ships. To prevent their capture and block the channel the Royal Navy sank some of its largest ships.

Although the dockyard was spared by the arrival of troops and artillery, the attack was a humiliating defeat for the English. In The Netherlands, the action is also known as the Battle of Chatham, the highpoint of the Dutch Golden Age.

The historic naval battle will be re-told with a major Medway in Flames event taking place on 17 June 2017 on and around the River Medway.

In June 2017 Medway will commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Battle of Medway with a spectacular river event and a series of exhibitions and activities.

Welkom in Medway

Medway heeft een rijke geschiedenis vol militaire en maritieme tradities en is gevestigd aan de gelijknamige, prachtige rivier, die door de historische steden Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham en Strood stroomt.

Medway ligt ongeveer 50 km van London en is gemakkelijk bereikbaar vanaf de Engelse kanaalhavens en Londense vliegvelden.

In juni 2017 vindt in Medway de 350e herdenking van de slag bij Chatham plaats. Deze slag was een van Engeland’s grootste maritieme nederlagen. In Engeland noemt men dit ‘Dutch Raid’, maar in Nederland staat dit bekend als ‘de slag bij Medway’ of ‘de tocht naar Chatham’. In juni 1667 zeilde de Nederlanders vloot onder leiding van luitenant-admiraal Michiel de Ruyter de rivier de Medway op, vernietigde de Engelse vloot die daar voor anker lag en legde beslag op het Engelse vlaggenschip ‘HMS Royal Charles’.

De herdenking van deze slag wordt gevieren met een spectaculaire show op de rivier de Medway en er vinden diverse tentoonstellingen en andere activiteiten plaats.

Deze gids geeft u niet alleen informatie over deze evenementen, maar ook over de geschiedenis van Medway.
Medway’s commemoration of the 350th anniversary of the Battle of Medway will be two weeks of exciting and unique events.

Here is a taste of what you can expect to see.

The Historic Dockyard Chatham – 8 June
The official launch to the commemorations* and the opening of the dockyard’s new exhibition.

Medway Print Festival – 2 to 27 June
An art exhibition that spreads across the Medway Visitor Information Centre, Guildhall Museum, Rochester Cathedral and other venues.

Medway Libraries – 7 to 17 June
Look out for an exciting programme of events and lectures in our community hubs and libraries.

Medway Sports Festival – 17 June
A varied sporting events programme culminating in a spectacular Amsterdam to Medway Bike Ride.

Dickens Festival – 9 to 11 June
Celebrating the life and work of Charles Dickens. Enjoy street entertainment, parades, readings, competitions and much more.

The Dutch are Coming! 10 and 11 June
Step back in time to 1667 at Upnor Castle with living history events and activities telling the story of the Dutch Raid.

Chatham Maritime – 10 June
A variety of activities and entertainment taking place around Dutch and British warships.

Rochester Cathedral – 17 June
Experience a fascinating guided tour around England’s second oldest cathedral.

Medway in Flames – 17 June
Chatham Maritime comes alive with a programme of family entertainment including a fun fair, and food, drink and trade stalls.

A River Pageant will sail past The Historic Dockyard Chatham and Upnor Castle providing a unique opportunity for boat owners, visitors and river users to show off their wonderful vessels. Water activities will take place in Basin 2 including dragon boat racing, rowing displays, fly boarding and jet ski displays. Live English and Dutch folk music, walkabout entertainment and clog dancing performances will run throughout the evening.

Turn to pages 8 and 9 to find out more about the Medway in Flames spectacular river finale.

*Please note, the official civic launch is by invite only.
In addition to our exciting programme of events Medway is telling the different stories of the battle at many of our heritage sites, highlights include:

**The Historic Dockyard Chatham**
The most complete dockyard from the age of sail anywhere in the world
Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4TZ
01634 823800
dockyard.co.uk

From 8 June to 3 September 2017 The Historic Dockyard celebrates the 350th anniversary of the seismic events of 1667 by presenting Breaking the Chain, a once in a lifetime chance to see the Battle of Medway story told through art. The exhibition shows wonderful Dutch and British contemporary art, literature, historic manuscripts and extraordinary objects drawn from collections at The Royal Museum Greenwich, Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Dutch National Maritime Museum, the Michiel de Ruyter Foundation and the British Library.

To tell the story of The Historic Dockyard Chatham is to tell of how one nation launched the world’s greatest naval power for generations to come. It is also a place that tells the story of one of Britain’s greatest naval disasters! A story of Dutch daring that left the Medway in flames, the capture of the English flag ship and a nation licking its wounds. The Historic Dockyard Chatham offers unrivalled access to the ships that shaped the world, and the stories of the people who made them. From 8 June to 3 September you can discover the ingenuity and daring of the people who tried to destroy them!

**Upnor Castle**
High Street, Upper Upnor, ME2 4XG
01634 718742
visitmedway.org

This attractive turreted fortress, built to protect Queen Elizabeth’s warships when anchored in the Medway, is set in a picturesque village, backed by rolling wooded hills on the banks of the River Medway. Its importance matched the growth of the dockyard in Chatham. The castle played an important, but ultimately ineffective role in June 1667, when Admiral De Ruyter sailed his ships up the Medway to attack the dockyard.

To commemorate the Battle of Medway, Upnor Castle will be home to a new and exciting visual display, putting the events of 1667 into context. This interpretation will allow visitors to learn about the daring Dutch masterplan that led to a devastating naval defeat for England, and the resulting programme of ship-building that led to a golden age of British maritime supremacy.

**Guildhall Museum**
High Street, Rochester, ME1 1PY
01634 332900
visitmedway.org

Built in 1687, the Guildhall is one of the finest 17th century civic buildings in Kent. Colourful and informative displays record more than 250,000 years of Medway history. Visitors can see what life was like during the Napoleonic period by walking through a reconstruction of a Medway prison hulk and learn about the terrible living conditions the prisoners endured. They can learn about the life and works of Charles Dickens, one of England’s greatest novelists, in the Dickens’ Discovery Rooms.

The Guildhall Museum will present a special exhibition of their collection of historic Dutch prints and maps that are part of this story. They will be displayed alongside the plans of the fortifications built by the English to defend Sheerness and Chatham in the wake of this unprecedented naval disaster. Acclaimed artist Kevin Clarkson has painted a series of meticulously researched images of the Battle (one of which is shown on our front cover), and these will give a vivid recreation of the dramatic events of the day. The exhibition will run from 6 May to 12 November 2017.

**Jetstream Tours – River Trips and Water Transport**
jetstreamtours.com
Jetstream Tours operates regular boat trips from Rochester Pier, but during the Battle of Medway festival will offer an additional pier stop for Upnor Castle. This is a great way to get around Medway and a chance to discover the river’s strategic fortifications. All cruises offer an informative commentary with a spectacular opportunity to see Upnor Castle and The Historic Dockyard Chatham from the water. Hop-on hop-off opportunities with local river taxis will also be available along with Jetstream’s high speed jetboat services from Sun Pier.
Medway in flames
17 June 2017 • Chatham Maritime

Water screens, digital projection, characters from history, pyrotechnics, special effects and fireworks will bring the Battle of Medway to life.

This spectacular finale will depict the events leading to the raid on the Royal Dockyard at Chatham, Upnor Castle and the ships of the English Royal Navy anchored on the River Medway.

Celebrating 350 years of friendship and co-operation between our two nations since the conclusion of the Anglo-Dutch wars, Medway in Flames will be a sensational finale to our festival of cultural, sporting and educational events.

Artist impression for guidance only.
Detail and content subject to change without notice.
When visiting Medway don’t forget to explore the many other historic sites and family focused attractions we have on offer.

Rochester Cathedral
Founded in 604AD, the cathedral is the second oldest in England. It’s been a place of pilgrimage and worship for over 1400 years.

The Precinct, Rochester, ME1 1SR
01634 843366
rochestercathedral.org

Temple Manor
A 13th century house belonging to the Knights Templar to provide lodgings, food and fresh horses for the Knights travelling to and from the crusades.

Knight Road, Strood, ME2 2AH
01634 845609
visitmedway.org

Rochester Castle
Rochester Castle is one of the best preserved and finest examples of Norman architecture in England. Spectacular views of the area can be enjoyed from the castle’s keep.

Castle Hill, Rochester, ME1 1SW
01634 332091
visitmedway.org

Restoration House
A city mansion where Charles II stayed on the eve of his restoration, and the inspiration for Satis House in Charles Dickens’ Great Expectations.

Crow Lane, Rochester, ME1 1ER
01634 848520
restorationhouse.co.uk

Royal Engineers Museum
The museum provides a fascinating insight into Britain’s explosive military history and the part our soldier engineers have played in this.

Prince Arthur Road, Gillingham, ME4 4XG
01634 822839
re-museum.co.uk

Six Poor Travellers House
A Tudor-founded charity house that provided board and lodgings for six poor travellers, right up until the Second World War.

High Street, Rochester, ME1 1LX
01634 845609
visitmedway.org

The Huguenot Museum
The only museum of Huguenot history in Britain, telling the story of Britain’s first refugees, the crafts, trades and skills they brought with them.

High Street, Rochester, ME1 1LX
01634 789347
huguenotmuseum.org

The Old Brook Pumping Station
Listed as an ancient monument, the pumping station was incorporated into Chatham’s main drainage system from 1929 to 1980.

Solomons Road, Chatham, ME4 4AL
01634 362847
olbrookpumping.co.uk

Fort Amherst
The fort was built in 1766 to protect the Royal Dockyard at Chatham from landward attack. It houses a fascinating network of tunnels and underground chambers.

Dock Road, Chatham, ME4 4UB
01634 847747
fortamherst.com

Rochester Castle
Rochester Castle is one of the best preserved and finest examples of Norman architecture in England. Spectacular views of the area can be enjoyed from the castle’s keep.

Castle Hill, Rochester, ME1 1SW
01634 332091
visitmedway.org

Royal Engineers Museum
The museum provides a fascinating insight into Britain’s explosive military history and the part our soldier engineers have played in this.

Prince Arthur Road, Gillingham, ME4 4XG
01634 822839
re-museum.co.uk

Copper Rivet Distillery
One of the few places in England that you can experience the entire distillation process from grain to glass. Enjoy a range of spirits, experience a botanicals masterclass or distill your own gin.

Leviathan Way, Chatham ME4 4LP
01634 931122
copperrivetdistillery.com

Eastgate House and Chalet
A Grade I listed building that featured in the works of Charles Dickens.

In the grounds stands Dickens’ writing chalet where the author wrote some of his most famous novels.

High Street, Rochester
01634 332900
visitmedway.org

Meoway is surrounded by a stunning natural environment and has a wide variety of parks, wetlands and green spaces to explore. With over 75 miles of cycle routes, seven Green Flag parks and stunning coastal paths there is much for those who love the open air to enjoy.

Visit medway.gov.uk/parks to find out more.

Meet Samuel Squeaks
For our younger visitors we have our very own friendly rat character, Samuel Squeaks.

Samuel will be popping up at various locations to help children understand the story of the Battle of Medway. He’ll be explaining how he grew up in London during the plague, how he fled the great fire, and how he ended up on board a ship on that fateful day in June 1667. They’ll also find out about Samuel’s friend – a rather flamboyant Dutch rat called Andries, and how their friendship grew.
Charles Dickens' long association with Medway area began when the Dickens family moved to a small house in Chatham. Dickens’ father, John, was originally a clerk in the Navy Pay Office in Portsmouth Dockyard, and was transferred to Chatham in 1817. Dickens' most impressionable childhood days were spent in Medway and it was the place where he found inspiration for some of his works greatest characters and settings. Many of the buildings found on Rochester's historic high street carry plaques detailing how the author incorporated them into his novels. Take a gentle stroll around the local graveyards and you will discover where he found names of many of his characters. Many heritage buildings in Rochester are featured in the works of Dickens. These include the Guildhall Museum, Restoration House, Eastgate House and Gardens, and Six Poor Travellers House. To discover more about Dickens and his association with Medway visit the Guildhall Museum where a dedicated exhibition and informative film is on permanent display. A self-guided walking trail with map is available from the Medway Visitor Information Centre. Or you can join a guided walking tour with members of The City of Rochester Society or Footsteps in Time. Find out more at visitmedway.org

Along the river there is a fascinating array of yacht clubs, marinas and boatyards offering a wide range of mooring facilities. Public pier access is available at Rochester and Sun Pier, Chatham where a variety of river trips operate from. To find out more about how you can use and enjoy our river go to visitmedway.org/battle-of-medway.

Getting out on the water is a unique way to experience what makes the Medway estuary one of Britain's most important maritime heritage destinations.

Looking for a place to stay? Whatever your taste or budget, you’ll find accommodation to suit your needs in Medway. Details of many hotels and guest houses can be found at visitmedway.org

Temporary campsites will operate during the Battle of Medway celebrations throughout Medway. For details visitmedway.org/battle-of-medway
A visit to Medway couldn’t be easier. We’re just 30 miles from London and 40 miles from the Channel ports and Eurotunnel.

**By road**
When travelling by road, there is easy access from London and the Kent coast on the M2/A2 and M20 motorways, linking with the M25. There are direct links from the A2/M2 to Rochester/Chatham/Gillingham via the A289 Medway Tunnel. If travelling by car, to find out about town centre parking visit medway.gov.uk

Regular National Express coaches run from London Victoria to the area. For more information visit nationalexpress.com

**By rail**
Medway has five mainline rail stations – Strood, Rochester, Chatham, Gillingham and Rainham. All have frequent services from London mainline stations. The high-speed train from St. Pancras takes just 35 minutes to reach Medway. Rail travel from Europe to Medway is faster and easier by Eurostar. To plan your rail journeys phone 08457 848950 or visit nationalrail.co.uk

**By air**
Medway is within an hour’s drive of Gatwick, London City and Stansted airports. Heathrow and Luton are just 90 minutes drive. There are excellent road and rail links to all airports.

**Public transport (buses)**
A majority of bus services in Medway are provided by Arriva, although some services are provided by ASD coaches, Nu-Venture and Chalkwell. For details on bus routes throughout Medway and timetables visit medway.gov.uk/buses

**Medway Visitor Information Centre**
The ideal first port of call is our centre in the heart of Rochester Wheelchair accessible and offering a full tourist information service, with gift shop, café, art gallery and public conveniences. Call in to find up to the minute information on all local attractions. If you are looking for a place to stay, the centre can provide advice and assistance. 95 High Street, Rochester, ME1 1LX 01634 338141

**Places of interest**

1. Temple Manor
2. Rochester Castle
3. Goldhill Museum
4. Rochester Cathedral
5. Huguenot Museum
6. Six Poor Travellers’ House
7. Eastgate House
8. Restoration House
9. The Central Theatre
10. Old Brook Pumping Station
11. The Brook Theatre
12. Fort Amherst
13. The Historic Dockyard Chatham
14. Copper Rivet Distillery
15. Royal Engineers Museum, Library and Archive
16. The Great Lines Heritage Park
17. Medway Park
18. Ranscombe Farm Reserve
19. Diggerland
20. Upnor Castle
21. Capstone Farm Country Park
22. Riverside Country Park and Berengrave Nature Reserve
Battle of Medway 1667-2017
Tocht naar Chatham

medway.gov.uk/BoM

All information correct at time of going to press.
Details of specific events are subject to change, for current details please check social media channels.

Photographs courtesy of Simon Kelsey (Praxis Design) and Medway Council.
Front cover painting by Kevin Clarkson from a collection owned by the Guildhall Museum.