



What to Do

Key Activities in Elham Valley

Art s and Crafts

There are plenty of opportunities for getting creative in the Elham Valley and also for learning some traditional skills:

- [Annie Begley](#) in Wingmore, just outside Elham, runs creative and therapeutic sculpture workshops for groups, as well as residential workshops, pottery tea parties (for children or adults!), and regular monthly pottery workshops. These involve a four-week block of two-hour workshops (open to all ages and abilities), allowing time to create a finished piece of work, fired and hand decorated. Workshops are usually limited to six people, but in summer larger numbers can be catered for under the gazebo in the garden. Annie can suggest local accommodation. On the 4th Sunday of every month, Annie runs creative 'hands-on' pottery workshops at the Elham Farmers' Market, where you can design and make tiles, sculptures, pots and more. Your work will be fired and ready to collect at the next session.
- [Hilltop Spinning & Weaving Centre](#) in Lyminge runs one-to-one courses for beginners and improvers in a range of textile craft disciplines: hand spinning, weaving, dyeing with natural dyestuffs and felt making. Courses are tailored to suit the individual requirements of the student. Hilltop's Felted Jewellery Workshops are suitable for both adults and children.
- [Hode Pottery](#) in Petts Bottom is run by a husband and wife team who work closely together to produce garden pottery that is both decorative and functional.
- [Roseneath Ceramics](#) in Rhodes Minnis is a family-run business providing you with the opportunity to paint pottery and ceramics. No artistic ability or previous experience is necessary and activities suit all ages. Paints, brushes and readymade white unglazed pottery are provided for you to paint, then glaze and fire in the kiln.





Alternative Therapies/Health

The Elham Valley is a truly peaceful and tranquil place, so where better to treat body and mind through a range of therapies and beauty treatments:

- Caroline Barnes provides individual treatments and workshops using sound and voice for improving and restoring balance and wellbeing. Telephone 01303 840859 for details.
- [Charlton Park](#) in Bishopsbourne offers classes ranging from pilates, body conditioning and yoga to belly dancing, burlesque, ballroom and Latin. The dance classes are open to visitors whilst the pilates, body conditioning and yoga are booked in advance in blocks of six sessions. Massage can also be booked, as well as piano, singing and tennis lessons. See the website for further information and contact details of the various practitioners.
- Janene Moat is a beauty therapist based in the High Street in Elham, providing facials, manicures and pedicures, eyelash tinting, waxing and non surgical face lift facials. Janine also provides reflexology and aromatherapy. Telephone 01303 840052 or email janenemoat@supanet.com for details.
- [Wholistic Works](#) in Lyminge is a complementary health centre providing a range of podiatric services and complementary health therapies including aromatherapy, Hopi candles, hypnotherapy, reflexology, reiki and osteopathy.
- [Yoga 4 Freedom](#) provides Thai yoga massage and runs yoga workshops and retreats in the Elham Valley. Regular classes are held at Rhodes Minnis, Elham and Etchinghill village halls, whilst classes for the more experienced are held at St Paul's Church Hall in Sandgate. Two yoga retreats a year, in April and June, are held at Minster Abbey, near Ramsgate. (Please note 2010 dates are fully booked but book ahead for 2011.)
- [Yoga Nature](#) provides a range of health therapies at Broome Park and at Wootton, including aromatherapy, advanced Bowen therapy, reiki healing, Indian head massage, Hopi ear candles, Swedish massage and reflexology. In addition, workshops in shamanka, bead weaving, soap making and other natural products, Dances of Universal Peace and meditation. Meditation can also be booked privately.





Cycling

- The [Coast to Cathedral](#) route, using Regional Routes 16 & 17, passes through the Elham Valley. Download a route guide at [Explore Kent](#), and a route description is also provided by [Downland Cycles](#).
- [Downland Cycles](#) has a large fleet of bikes for hire in sizes to suit all riders – male, female and children. They have also compiled a number of routes in the area, utilising national, regional and local routes and a lot of local knowledge!
 - **‘The Country of the Magic River’** (12.5 miles/21 km) – using an orchard route, out to Patricbourne where you can take a short diversion and visit Howletts Wildlife Park at Bekesbourne. From there return to Patricbourne and follow the River Nailbourne through the village of Bridge to Bishopsbourne.
 - Quite an ambitious **‘Three Day Ride’** from Canterbury to Sandwich through the Lower Stour Valley, on through Deal and Kingsdown. On day 3, you explore the Elham Valley, passing through the villages of Elham, Kingston, Barham, Bishopsbourne, Bridge and Patricbourne. (The total three-day ride is 57 miles/94 km).
- [Explore Kent](#) provides information on published cycling routes in Kent on their website, and in the downloadable brochure entitled [Explore Kent by Bike](#). The national cycling charity [Sustrans](#) also provides information on all national and regional cycling routes.
- The [Kentish Stour Countryside Project](#) has published two ‘Bike Trails by Rail in the Stour Valley’, which take in parts of the Elham Valley. Contact the office on 01233 813307 to request copies. Entitled ‘Typically Kent along Country Lanes’, it gives you a choice of two routes:
 - Canterbury East Station through Lower Hardres, Bridge and Patricbourne (20 miles).
 - Bekesbourne Station through Bishopsbourne, around Lynsore, Covert Wood, Bossingham, Pett Bottom and Bridge (15 miles).
- The [White Cliffs Countryside Project](#) leads occasional guided easy afternoon cycling rides through Lyminge Forest. Children over nine with an accompanying adult are welcome. Check the Project’s website for details of dates and times.





Exploring Nature and Wildlife

- The [Kent Wildlife Trust](#) owns and manages a number of sites in the area, all rich in flora and fauna. The chalk grassland of the Kent Downs is noted for its abundance and variety of orchids. Go to the Kent Wildlife Trust website for directions, public transport, maps and details of guided walks and other events at which you can learn about these special areas.
 - [Denton Bank](#) is 2 miles (3.2km) south of the village of Denton, and is made up of almost 10 acres of ancient chalk grassland and woodland. Here you will find typical chalk grassland flora and fauna and the woodland at the top of the slope is rich in bird life. Access is via Tappington Hall Farm.
 - [Park Gate Down \(Hector Wilkes Reserve\)](#) including Madam's Wood, consists of 20 acres of chalk grassland and woodland fringe on the east side of the Elham Valley and is close to the village of Elham. It is easily reached on the public footpaths and features in the Elham Walks which you can purchase at the Rose & Crown and Village Stores in the village.
 - [Spong Wood](#) is made up of 18 hectares of ancient woodland, 0.5 miles (0.8 km) northeast of Elmsted Village. The woodland is regularly coppiced to maintain a rich diversity of flora and fauna, details of which you will find on the Kent Wildlife Trust's website. Limited car parking is available outside the village church, and waymarked paths provide an ideal route round the reserve.
 - [Yocketts Bank](#) is a large reserve of 57 acres of SSSI ancient woodland on a chalk escarpment near Yocketts Farm, 2 miles south of Petham. Regular coppicing maintains the biodiversity of woodland plants and animals, as does maintaining areas of open chalk grassland, making this one of the best sites for the lady orchid. You will also see colonies of other orchids, spring flowers, a great variety of birdlife and reptiles. Visit the Kent Wildlife Trust website for details.
- Covert Wood adjoins Covert Wood on its western side and is owned and managed by the Forestry Commission. There are various public paths through the wood and access can be obtained via Covert Lane in Kingston.





- [Covert Wood](#) is under Forestry Commission and private ownership, and is also managed by the [Kentish Stour Countryside Project](#). The Elham Valley Way winds its way through Covert Wood and there are a number of public footpaths which can take you deeper into the wood (refer to OS Explorer map 138). See the KSCP website for details of the flora and fauna you can expect to see here. Parking and main access is 1.5 miles west out of Barham village.
- [Jumping Downs Local Nature Reserve](#) belongs to the Jumping Downs Trust. It is managed jointly by the trustees, who purchased the site from a local farmer in 2000, and the [Kentish Stour Countryside Project](#). It lies adjacent to Covert Wood and comprises 14 acres of south-facing chalk downland containing a rich diversity of chalk downland flowers, birds, small mammals and reptiles. You can access the reserve along the Elham Valley Way. Details of events, surveys and children's activities taking place here can be obtained from the KSCP. Call the office on 01233 813307 for details.
- Lyminge Forest is a large area of mixed woodland on an ancient woodland site, owned and managed by the Forestry Commission. It includes West Wood, Park Wood and extends to Beveridge Bottom Wood. It is possible to explore West Wood and Park Wood on public footpaths (see OS Explorer map 138). The [White Cliffs Countryside Project](#) is developing a series of cycling trails and leads a number of cycle rides through the forest during summer months. Check the WCCP website for details.

Exploring Nature and Wildlife – Activities

- The grounds and woodland of [Charlton Park](#) lend themselves to archery tournaments, team building activities, nature talks or camp-fire suppers (weather permitting). See the website for details of activities and contact information.
- The [Kentish Stour Countryside Project](#) works closely with landowners and local communities to promote both landscape and nature conservation, and develop opportunities for appropriate countryside access and informal recreation. It also gets involved in a variety of arts-related projects. A number of events are organised on the sites that KSCP manages, including guided walks, wildlife surveys and volunteering activities.





- [Natural Pathways](#) provides a broad variety of Survival Bushcraft and Nature Awareness Courses for children and adults, including learning about fire and shelter. The courses are held in woodland around Barham and range from flint knapping and wildlife tracking to Wilderness Family Camps and a Women's Discovery Course.
- The [White Cliffs Countryside Project](#) was set up to help conserve and enhance the special coast and countryside around Dover and Folkestone, and make it accessible to all. With the project you can see wildlife, go walking, enjoy cycling, take part in special activities for children (the Green Gang) or join with local people helping care for the local environment. The project's website provides a wealth of information on what you can do and see in the area – remember to check the events programme entitled [Guided Walks Spring/Summer 2010](#) which you can download here, or call the WCCP office on 01304 241806 and request a copy by post.

Riding

Promoted Riding Routes

- The [Lower Hardres Rides](#) follow permissive off-road riding routes linked to public bridleways through woodland and open parkland, making for stunning circular rides near the historic cathedral city of Canterbury. View the interactive map at [Explore Kent](#).
- The [Alkham Valley Ride](#) (8.5 miles/13 km) explores the peaceful countryside around the village of Alkham in the neighbouring valley, with woodland, chalk streams, downland and grassland found along the way. View the interactive map at [Explore Kent](#).
- Riders should note that a new bridge crossing the A2 now links the North Downs Way with the Elham Valley. This bridge at Kingston is for horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians only.
- Further information on riding routes, facilities and services throughout the county is available at [Explore Kent](#) and in their downloadable brochure [Ride Kent](#).





Riding Holidays

Bring your own horse and [Have Horse Will Travel](#) will organise everything for you – stabling, accommodation in local b&bs, food and drink and a guide for the duration of the holiday. The three-day ride incorporates the Elham Valley, Crundale Downs and Lyminge Forest (approx 52 miles), taking you through beautiful valleys, forest and across open downs. The majority of riding will be on tracks and bridleways but where this is not possible you will be travelling along quiet and minor roads. Where main roads have to be crossed support and assistance will be on hand. The pace will be dictated by the desires and abilities of the riders and usually includes a mix of all speeds to suit the group.

Have Horse Will Travel is strongly committed to responsible tourism, and to making their rides in Kent environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. See their Responsible Tourism Policy for details.

Riding Schools and Centres

If you don't have three days to spend in the Valley but would like to either learn to ride or hone your skills, there are a number of riding schools in the area including:

- Bourne Park Riding School, Bishopsbourne – riding school, hacking
- [Bursted Manor Riding Centre](#), Pett Bottom – riding school
- Coombe Wood Stables (BHS), Hawkinge – riding school, instruction on riding and jumping
- Dairy Farm Riding Establishment, Lower Hardres – riding school
- [Limes Farm Equestrian Centre](#), Hawkinge – riding school and horse riding holidays
- [Maberdan Riding Centre](#) (BHS), Stelling Minnis – riding school, livery and hacks

Accommodation for riders and Horses

Little Shuttlesfield Farm in Acrise will open in spring 2010 and will provide self-catering accommodation and b&b for horses.





Village Sports

- The [Elham Valley Petanque Club](#) holds mêlées on the Pétanque Terrain, The Triangle in Elham on the 2nd & 4th Sundays of the month throughout summer and autumn. These club events start at 11am and are open to everyone, of all age groups and abilities, including beginners. You do need to bring your own equipment so remember to dust off your pétanque boules and bring them with you. The Triangle is a public space, so it is open for play at any time.
- To watch a game of cricket, check the fixtures at:
 - Bishopsbourne Cricket Club at Charlton Park, Bishopsbourne
 - [Canterbury Cricket Festival](#), 3rd–5th August 2010
 - [Elham Valley Cricket Club](#) in Elham
 - [Selsted Cricket Club](#), Selsted near Swingfield
 - [Sibton Cricket Club](#) in Lyminge
 - [Street End Cricket Club](#) at Lower Hardres (between the Lower Hardres Farm Shop and the Granville)

Walking

- The [Elham Valley Way](#) is a long-distance route passing through the Elham Valley where it follows a seasonal chalk stream called the Nailbourne, taking you through some of the most enchanting countryside in the Garden of England. From the glories of Canterbury to the seaside at Hythe, this walk meanders through ancient woodlands, secret byways and charming, unspoilt villages. The Elham Valley Way joins the [North Downs Way](#) into Canterbury at the northern end of the Valley, and the [Saxon Shore Way](#) at its southern end.
- [La Via Francigena](#), designated a European Culture Route, follows the ancient road between Canterbury and Rome which in the past was used by pilgrims. The English section of the route follows the North Downs Way between Dover and Canterbury, passing through Bridge. Walking holidays including the Kent stretch of the Via Francigena can be booked through [Walk Awhile](#).





- [Walk Awhile](#) is a Kent-based family-run tour operator organising pre-planned, self-led or guided walking holidays with luggage transfers available throughout the year for walkers of all abilities. 'Discovering Rural Kent' is a seven-day, six-night circular walking holiday, with five full days of walking starting and finishing at the cathedral city of Canterbury. The trail passes through Bridge, Elham, Lyminge and Postling before continuing on to Wye. Walk Awhile has achieved a [Green Tourism Business Scheme](#) Silver award and is featured on www.responsibletravel.com.
- [Walks in East Kent – Elham](#) is a two hour walk starting at the medieval church in Elham, winding through pasture and chalk grassland. It climbs open fields offering views across the valley, with church spires, villages and patchwork fields stretching into the distance. Information on the walk can be found at [Explore Kent](#).
- The leaflet entitled [Elham Country Break](#) features an historic walk around the village, highlighting the numerous historic and listed houses you will see in the Square and on the surrounding streets and lanes.
- **Elham Walks** – a set of eight circular walks in and around the village of Elham taking in large parts of the Valley have been compiled and published by local walker John Buss, who looks after the public rights of way in the Valley. You can purchase these walks, available in two packs, at the Rose & Crown and Elham Valley Stores in Elham.
- **Kingston Walks** – a set of five circular walks in and around the village of Kingston ranging from 2.5 to 6 miles can be downloaded from the [Kingston village website](#).
- **'A Guide to Footpaths in the Parish of Bridge'**, featuring three routes, can be downloaded from the [Bridge](#) village website.
- The Shepway Footpaths Preservation Society holds guided walks in the area on Saturdays and Sundays throughout the year. Visitors are welcome. To find out where the next walk is taking place call Carol or Richard Wood on 01303 274267.

