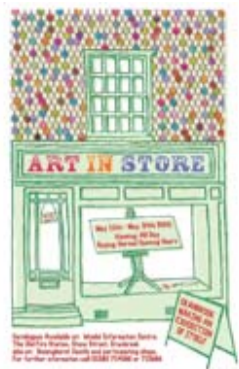


Cranbrook Annual Events



Cranbrook Events

Cranbrook commemorates its vibrant artistic tradition with two popular art shows.

ART IN STORE: Cranbrook Making an Exhibition of Itself brings art to the street with many local shops exhibiting paintings, sculptures and other works in their windows for a two week period in May each year.

The long established and very popular **CRANBROOK ART SHOW** is held each year in November.

Cranbrook Farmers Market 4th Saturday of each month in Vestry Hall.



An **Apple Festival** is held on an annual basis in Cranbrook town centre to pay tribute to this versatile fruit so closely identified with Kent.

CRANBROOK APPLE FAYRE will take place in October.



Cranbrook is a town within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), more information available at www.highweald.org

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Cranbrook Getting here & around



Getting Here

Railway station: Staplehurst **Buses:** 297 Tunbridge Wells to Ashford, 4 & 5 Maidstone to Hastings **Traveline:** 0870 6082608 **Car:** Midway between A21 (London - Hastings) and M20 (London - Folkestone) with connections to M25

Where to Stay Accredited accommodation in Hotels, Inns, Guest Houses, Bed & Breakfast, Campsites and Self-Catering Cottages can be booked at:

Weald Information Centre

The Old Fire Station, Stone Street, Cranbrook TN17 3HF

01892 554291

www.visit-cranbrook.co.uk

Converted farm buildings, quaint cottages and oast houses are amongst the choices available to rent through:

Kent & Sussex Holiday Cottages

15 High Street, Cranbrook TN17 3EB

01580 720770

info@kentandsussexcottages.co.uk

www.kentandsussexcottages.co.uk

Getting Around Cranbrook is easy to see on foot. There are regular bus services from Maidstone, Hastings, Tunbridge Wells and Ashford all with stops in the surrounding villages. Those travelling by car will find plenty of **FREE** parking in 3 centrally located car parks. Parking on the High Street is restricted to one hour and strictly forbidden on double yellow lines. There are many footpaths, cycle routes and bridle paths in the area.



Visit Cranbrook Heritage & Shopping 2011/12

Vita Sackville-West wrote in 1955

“if I wanted to show an overseas visitor a sample of a small and very English country town, I need not go further than Cranbrook, with its legacy of history behind it.”



www.visit-cranbrook.co.uk

Cranbrook Shopping

The picturesque market town of Cranbrook has retained its centuries old appeal as a hub of commercial activity in the Wealden countryside. Vita Sackville-West would still recognise the “air of busy peace” on shopping days.

The shops of Cranbrook are chiefly located on the High Street and Stone Street within an attractive mix of medieval and Georgian buildings. A remarkable number of individual, specialised shops draw customers from all over the county.

Designer clothes, traditional country clothes, unusual imports and country pursuits - the choices in Cranbrook are unexpectedly eclectic.

Easily seek out gorgeous women’s fashion whilst men are well provided for as well.

Cranbrook has an exceptional range of shops which supply gifts - fun, quirky items, luxurious soaps and bath oils, beautiful scented candles, jewellery, fine china and glass.

Enjoy browsing in the endless variety. The raw materials for all manner of creative endeavour and wonderful examples of original work keep Cranbrook’s artistic tradition alive in the little galleries. Heaps of inspiration for the house and garden can be found along the High Street and Stone Street too.



Stationery, newspapers, postcards are on sale at the local newsagents situated centrally in the town.

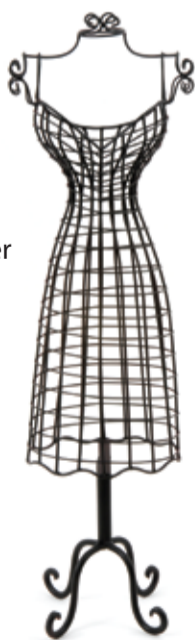
Food & Drink

There are good choices in Cranbrook for different budgets and palates all within walking distance of the shops.

International gourmet delights, health foods and fresh produce, scrumptious sandwiches, soups and Italian goodies are there for the indulging.

Local specialities are on offer as well as international and Indian fare not to mention the local brews and wines.

Traditional coffee, tea, scones and cakes are aplenty in a number of locally owned independent cafés for a taste of a typical English afternoon tea.



Heritage Plaques

The Heritage Trail has been augmented by a series of Green Plaques that identify points of interest around town. The sites of these plaques are marked on the trail with a green symbol.

- a Vestry Hall:** Built for the parish in 1859 replacing the George Inn as Cranbrook’s court house. The Old Fire Station was below.
- b St. Dunstan’s Church:** “The Cathedral of the Weald”. Wealth from the cloth industry enabled successive enlargements of the medieval church in the 15th and 16th Centuries.
- c Church House:** Formerly Dence’s School. Built in 1567 by Alexander Dence. An elementary school for 300 years.
- d Cranbrook Museum:** Restored 15th century house. Formerly part of the rectorial farm.
- e Site of the ‘Great Fire’ of 1840:** Timber-framed shops were rebuilt in brick after the disaster.
- f Cramp Institute Club:** Built in 1807 as the General Baptist Chapel.
- g Webster House:** Thomas Webster (1800-1886) doyen of the Cranbrook Colony of artists lived here.
- h Congregational Church:** Built in 1858 replacing the Independent Chapel on The Hill.
- i White Lion Inn later the Post Office:** The Royal Observer Corps originated in its telephone exchange in 1925.
- j George Hotel:** Late medieval inn. Queen Elizabeth I was received here in 1573.
- k Hat Factory:** Formerly William Tooth’s hat manufactory. Built in 1817.
- l Cranbrook School:** Thomas Blubery (d1518) bequeathed funds for a ‘frescole howse for all the poor children of the towne’. Received a charter from Queen Elizabeth I in 1574.
- m Old Coffee Tavern:** Formerly a temperance coffee house with reading room. Built c1890 by Clement Cramp (1816-1894) for working men.
- n Old Lock-up:** Two cells with a room between for a constable. Built in 1850 and used until the move to Waterloo Road in 1864.
- o Strict and Particular Baptist Chapel:** Converted from two cottages and used for worship since 1787.
- p Hill House:** Medieval clothier’s house with later refacing. Door-case is early 18th century.
- q Union Windmill:** England’s largest smock mill. Built in 1814.
- r Chapel on the Hill:** Site of the former Presbyterian Chapel. In existence at least by 1710 making use of earlier cottages.

Cranbrook Heritage trail

3. The Museum, Carriers Road (d)

Housed in a splendidly restored 15th Century Building, the Museum charts the history of the region from early Roman settlements to the present day. The commercial and social life of Cranbrook is richly illustrated with a fascinating collection of artefacts ranging from important relics to modest ephemera. Explore the warren of rooms to discover different periods and incidents in Cranbrook's past brought vividly to life. Valuable archives are available for ancestral research.

Turn right outside the Museum and right again to go up the High Street.

On your right – the brick building incorporating three shops - is the site of the Great Fire of Cranbrook (e) in 1840. Further up on the right the red brick Cramp Institute Club was originally built as a Baptist Chapel in 1807 and is now known as the Cramp Club. (f)

Opposite, across the street is



4. The Old Studio and Broadcloth Cottage, High Street

Now divided into two, this was once the Studio shared by Frederick Hardy and Thomas Webster who formed the nucleus of a group of 19th Century Artists known as The Cranbrook Colony. Their subjects were mostly romanticised images of the countryside and sentimental scenes of rural domesticity, which were avidly collected by rich industrialists particularly in the Midlands. Another member, J C Horsely, is famous for having invented the Christmas Card in 1843.



Further up the High Street, opposite Webster House (g), concealed behind thick yew is Shepherds, once a school. A frequent visitor in the 1790's was Thomas Clarke, a shoemaker from Canterbury, who wrote Methodist hymn tunes with the help of John Francis, a master of the school. In 1805 Clarke published the tune 'Cranbrook' which became famous later in the Century when adopted as the tune for the Yorkshire folk-song "On Ilkley Moor Baht 'At"

Back down the High Street past Lloyds Bank, a Clothier's House with original medieval interiors. Further down (h) The

Congregational Church, a reminder of Cranbrook's non-conformist tradition and (i) The former White Lion Inn, now Lloyds Pharmacy and round the corner on the right is

the site of the Great Fire.

1. The Old Fire Station and Vestry Hall, Stone Street (a)

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal opened the Weald Information Centre in December 2005 and it is the ideal starting point for a walking tour of Cranbrook. The Centre has a vast fund of local knowledge and information with up-to-date details of opening times for all the attractions in the town and surrounding villages.

Within the centre, The Addison VC Conference Room pays tribute to Reverend William Addison from Cranbrook who was awarded the Victoria Cross for selfless gallantry in 1916.

The Vestry Hall, with its polygonal bay window, was built in 1859 with profits made from the successful management of Sissinghurst Estate by Trustees of the Poor Relief Fund.

Outside the Weald Information Centre climb the steps to the Churchyard



2. St Dunstan's Church, Churchyard (b) and Church House (c)

The golden sandstone of St Dunstan's provides a striking contrast to the preponderance of white weatherboarding and red bricks and tiles in the town. The size of the chancel testifies to the prosperity of Cranbrook during the 14th and 15th Centuries when St Dunstan's emerged as "The Cathedral of the Weald". Several Vicars of this Church were sympathetic to the Puritan movement. One installed a dipping font to enable full baptismal immersion. Another's sons sailed to America on 'The Handmaid' landing in Plymouth in 1630. Eddys, Sheafes and Chittendens were amongst the number of Cranbrook families who helped establish early settlements in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Later émigrés established Cranbrook towns in Australia and British Columbia and Cranbrook Schools in Sydney and Michigan. The wife of the American revolutionary philosopher, Thomas Paine, is buried in the churchyard. Elizabeth Paine moved to Cranbrook to live with her brother Thomas Ollive, a clockmaker, after her marriage failed.

Church House, opposite the West Door, was originally a school endowed by Alexander Dence to teach poor children of the parish "writing, reading and casting accounts".

Leave the Churchyard by the Northeast corner where the massive Turkish Oak was planted to commemorate the wedding of the Prince of Wales to Alexandra, Princess of Denmark in 1862.

Turn left through the car park and cross Carrier's Road to the Museum



5. George Hotel, Stone Street (j)

One of the oldest buildings in town, the 14th Century George Hotel can boast a visit from Queen Elizabeth 1st in 1573 when Cranbrook was enjoying great prosperity thanks to its thriving cloth industry. The longest surviving hostelry in Cranbrook – a town which at one time had at least 24 Public Houses - the George continues its fine tradition of hospitality.

Carry on down Stone Street and an alleyway to the right takes you to



6. Providence Chapel, off Stone Street

This impressive polygonal building was erected in 1828 having been brought to Cranbrook from London in wagons. The front is faced with timber grooved to look like stone.

Return to Stone Street and the next narrow alleyway, adjacent to Weavers Cottage dated 1600, leads to the site of a nineteenth century hat factory that supplied the neighbourhood with renowned beaver hats. (k)

Continuing down Stone Street, the celebrated Windmill dominates the skyline above the rooftops. Cross the road and take the left fork, Waterloo Road. A short walk past a row of weatherboard cottages brings you to

7. Cranbrook School, Waterloo Road (l)

A bequest by John Blubery backed up by a Charter from the Queen in 1574 saw the establishment of the Queen Elizabeth Grammar School whose scholastic excellence continues today in Cranbrook School. The 18th Century School House and 19th Century Big School, with its pretty cupola, have been augmented by 20th Century buildings to create a lively campus that includes The Queen's Hall. Touring productions, Cranbrook Operatic and Dramatic Society and the Cranbrook Film Club all perform here to the delight of residents and visitors alike.

Back down Waterloo Road, turn left into St David's Bridge - under which runs the eponymous Crane Brook (m) - proceed up the hill and on the right stands Old Coffee Tavern is on the left, now Raffles and further up is Spring Cottage, the Old Lock Up (n)



8. The Particular Baptist Chapel, The Hill (o & r)

The round headed windows and simple gravestones in the front are the only indication that this is something other than a humble weather-boarded cottage. Converted in 1787 after a schism among the General Baptists, it is still in use today.

Further up the hill on the right is



9. Hill House, The Hill (p)

A splendid example of one of the many fine houses and halls built by the wealthy clothiers of Cranbrook, Hill House has a stunning tile clad front with a spectacular 18th Century doorway and beautifully carved Corinthian capitals.

Cross the road to approach



10. Union Windmill, The Hill (q)

Cranbrook's most prominent landmark, the Union Windmill is a smock-mill set on a brick base. It was built for Henry Dobell by James Humphrey in 1814 and was fully operational until 1958 providing tangible evidence of the shift in importance from cloth production to agriculture in the town's economy. The Windmill has been restored to full working order and is now a living museum filled with machinery and equipment to demonstrate the process by which crops become flour. At 72 feet high, the Windmill affords amazing vistas of the town and countryside. It is the largest smock-mill in England and can justifiably claim to be the finest example in the country.

