



# Welcome to Westgate Parks

## Look Out!

For the five bronze plaques in the grass, marking the line of the old Roman City Wall.



Enjoy the peace and quiet, wildlife, heritage and play.

### Top five things to see at Westgate Parks:

- Oriental Plane Tree **1**
- Physic Garden **2**
- Roman Road **3**
- Rheims Way Mural **4**
- Canterbury Bull **5**

To discover more about the park's heritage and wildlife look out for the on-site interpretation panels.

### Get involved!

For information on events, outdoor learning visits and volunteering in the Westgate Parks check out the noticeboards in the park or visit our website.

[www.westgateparks.co.uk](http://www.westgateparks.co.uk)

River Great Stour



Roman city wall trail markers



Toilet



Toddler's Cove pay and display car park



Play area and green gym



Westgate Towers to Bingley Island, approx. 15 minute walk.

Picnic area



Noticeboard/Interpretation panel



Cycle and pedestrian path



Footbridge



Kickabout area



Byelaws apply in this park, visit [canterbury.gov.uk](http://canterbury.gov.uk) for details.

Dogs should be kept under control at all times. Please keep the park tidy by picking up any dog foul.

Cycling is not permitted through the Westgate Gardens.

Put litter in the bins provided or take it home with you.

No BBQs, camping, fires or loud music permitted.

Ball games in the kick about area only.

The park is managed by Canterbury City Council and maintained by Serco.

For maintenance enquiries call Serco on **0800 031 9091** or email [help.canterbury@serco.com](mailto:help.canterbury@serco.com).

In an emergency call 999.





### Take in the wonders of Westgate Gardens

These stunning ornamental gardens were originally created by the Williamson family who lived in Tower House. Bought by Stephen Williamson in 1886, Tower House was given to the City of Canterbury in 1936 by his grandson Stephen and wife Catherine. The gardens are steeped in history. Tower House incorporates one of the ancient city wall bastions and hidden beneath the lawns and borders lie part of the Roman city wall, a section of Roman Watling Street and London gate. The amazing Oriental Plane tree (*Platanus orientalis*), recognised by its distinctive trunk, is believed to be over 200 years old and rumoured to have swallowed a circular bench which once surrounded its base.



### Hours of fun to be had at Toddler's Cove

Toddler's Cove has been a place of leisure and family enjoyment for decades. This site was transformed into an open air swimming pool in 1876. The pool was very popular, and remained so until well into the 20th century. Up until the 1970's Toddler's Cove provided the city with its own 'riviera.' As well as the swimming pool, there was a boating lake and paddling pool. There was a beach made of sand brought in from Margate – complete with donkey rides. Thanks to Heritage Lottery Funding the area is now state-of-art Roman themed children's play area and riverside picnic site. There is a kick about area and outdoor gym facilities for adults. For many, Toddler's Cove has become a starting point for the Great Stour Way, a path shared by pedestrians and cyclists which follows the river to Chartham.



### Discover the Canterbury Bull of Tannery Field

As its name suggests Tannery Field was once part of St. Mildred's Tannery. The Tannery was owned by the Williamson family. They gave Tannery Field to the City in the 1930s, along with Tower House and the Westgate Gardens. The Canterbury Bull was designed by sculptor Steven Portchmouth to remind us of the field's industrial past. It was once covered in a foul smelling pile of waste products from the tannery and was known as 'Slub Bank'. The tanning industry may be gone, but it's not forgotten. When transforming the space into a wildflower meadow in 2014, Westgate Parks volunteers uncovered part of the tannery rail track. The bull sculpture reminds us what the tannery produced: tanned animal hides – in other words, leather.



### Explore the nature reserve at Bingley Island

'Bingley' which means 'within a river' is an area of protected grassland formed between two branches of the Great Stour and a connecting channel. Together with Whitehall Meadow it is designated as a Local Nature Reserve. The area has a willow copse, man-made pond and is characterised by damp-loving grassland plant species. Bats, common reptiles, dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies are just some of the wildlife that has been seen in the meadows. Sit quietly and enjoy the bird song of the reed warbler, blackcap and chiffchaff as the moorhens scuttle by.

## Explore further...

Westgate Gardens  
Canterbury  
Kent  
CT1 2DB

- Friends of Westgate Parks
- @WestgateParks
- westgate.parks@kent.gov.uk

For nearby car parks visit [cantebury.gov.uk/parking](http://cantebury.gov.uk/parking)

For an alternative format of this document, please phone Canterbury City Council on **01227 862 000**

[www.westgateparks.co.uk](http://www.westgateparks.co.uk)



## Explore a riverside landscape rich in wildlife and history...

Situated alongside the River Great Stour in the historic city of Canterbury, the Westgate Parks are four unique green spaces all linked by surfaced paths accessible to everyone. Together they form a delightful linear park which follows the river from the heart of Canterbury's busy city centre into the countryside.

Enjoy the riverside walks from the medieval Westgate Towers located at the end of Canterbury City centre's bustling high street. Walks begin in picturesque formal gardens and wind through picnic sites, a Roman themed children's play area to water meadows and a local nature reserve.

You can enjoy this beautiful park throughout the seasons. In the spring and summer admire the ornamental planting of the Westgate Gardens and the array of colour in the Tannery Field wildflower meadow. Watch the grey wagtails skim across the river, look out for ducklings hiding in the vegetation and for fish as you cross the bridges. In the autumn stroll alongside the river and admire the changing colour of the trees. Search out the hidden heritage; including a Norman archway, Roman Watling Street, the site of the

Roman City London Gate and the war memorials of the Burma Star and the Italy Star Association. Benches in the Westgate Gardens and Toddler's Cove provide the ideal setting in which to pause and enjoy a tranquil moment. In Toddler's Cove there is space to play games and picnic by the play area. Canterbury City Council in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund and The Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership are currently restoring and revitalising the park (2013-18) at a cost of £1 million.



parks guide & map