

# - THE - SHELL GROTTO MARGATE

## **Access Statement**

Discovered in 1835, Margate's Shell Grotto is a subterranean structure with 21 metres of winding underground passages and decorated with 4.6 million shells.

The physical nature of the Grotto means access is limited. The Grotto is also Grade I listed which ensures the preservation of the site but prevents us from introducing facilities to improve physical access. However, we are still committed to continuing to improve accessibility where possible.

This Access Statement aims to accurately describe the accessibility of the Shell Grotto, and the services and facilities we offer, without personal opinion as to its suitability for individuals. Historic sites can be dangerous and visitors enter at their own risk.

You can find our Visual Story and Sensory Map at [shellgrotto.co.uk/visit](https://shellgrotto.co.uk/visit).

## **Contact**

If you have any questions or require further advice or assistance, please call 01843 220 008 or email [info@shellgrotto.co.uk](mailto:info@shellgrotto.co.uk).

Updated: February 2024

## Travel

Our address is The Shell Grotto, Grotto Hill, Margate, Kent, CT9 2BU.

### By Road

Margate has excellent road links, with the M20 and M2 motorways providing easy access to London and wider Kent.

To plan your route, visit [theaa.com/route-planner/route](http://theaa.com/route-planner/route) or use your preferred route planner. Our postcode is CT9 2BU.

### By Train

The nearest railway station to the Grotto is Margate which is 0.9 miles from the Grotto and takes approximately 21 minutes to walk. Taxis are available at the station.

Margate has excellent rail links from London and Canterbury.

A high-speed train service operates frequently between Margate and London St Pancras International Station. Slower services are available from London Victoria, London Waterloo East and London Charing Cross

For train timetables, station access and travel information, visit [nationalrail.co.uk](http://nationalrail.co.uk) or [thetrainline.com](http://thetrainline.com).

### By Bus

The nearest bus stop to the Grotto is Cliftonville, Athelstan Road which is located at the top of Grotto Hill, on Northdown Road. It is 0.2 miles from the Grotto and takes approximately 3 minutes to walk. There is a shelter and seating at the west-bound stop but not at the east-bound stop.

Cliftonville, Athelstan Road is served by The Thanet Loop and the No. 8A bus.

The Thanet Loop runs daily, on average every 8 minutes, connecting Margate to Broadstairs and Ramsgate. The No. 8A bus runs between Margate and Canterbury.

More bus services are available from Cecil Square. Cecil Square is 0.4 miles from the Grotto and takes approximately 9 minutes to walk.

For bus timetables and travel information, visit [stagecoachbus.com/plan-a-journey](http://stagecoachbus.com/plan-a-journey).

National Express operates coaches from London Victoria Bus Station to various stops in Margate. For bus timetables and travel information, visit [nationalexpress.com](http://nationalexpress.com).

## **Parking**

The Grotto is located in a residential area of narrow roads. There is no on-site parking and there are double yellow lines immediately outside the Grotto. If you park on a nearby street, please do so considerately.

There are several pay and display car parks nearby. The closest car park to the Grotto is Trinity Square Car Park (CT9 1HR) is 0.4 miles from the Grotto and takes approximately 10 minutes to walk. (Long Stay, 92 spaces including 6 Blue Badge bays.)

Market Street Car Park (CT9 1EU) is 0.5 miles from the Grotto and takes approximately 11 minutes to walk. (Short Stay, 67 spaces including 2 Blue Badge bays.)

Mill Lane Car Park (CT9 1LB) is 0.5 miles from the Grotto and takes approximately 11 minutes to walk. (Long Stay, 384 spaces including 17 Blue Badge bays).

Car parks are managed by Thanet District Council. For more information, visit [thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/car-parks](http://thanet.gov.uk/info-pages/car-parks).

There is an electric vehicle charging station at Mill Lane Car Park (CT9 1LB).

## **Arrival**

The Shell Grotto is situated on a steep hill with narrow pavements.

There are 2 steps from the pavement leading to an entrance porch. The steps are 185 cm wide and between 5 - 12 cm deep. There is a further step through the main entrance door. This step is 86 cm wide and 12cm deep. The entrance door is not automatic and is 86 cm wide.

There is no step-free access.

## **Reception and Shop**

The reception and shop are situated on the ground floor. This area is evenly and well lit. The floor surface is tiled in linoleum and level throughout.

The reception desk is 91 cm tall. There is no lowered desk or hearing loop system installed. Please ask a member of our team for assistance.

Products in the shop are displayed at a height of between 0 cm - 170 cm.

Pets and pushchairs are permitted in the shop. A water bowl for pets is available on request.

## **Toilets and Changing Rooms**

There is one public toilet located on the ground floor with level access from the shop. The door opening is 72 cm wide. Our toilet has baby-changing facilities and an automatic hand dryer. Space in the toilet is restricted.

There is no disabled toilet.

## **Catering**

There are no on-site catering or refreshment facilities.

Eateries can be found throughout Margate, particularly on Northdown Road and in Margate Old Town. Northdown Road is 0.2 miles from the Grotto and takes approximately 3 minutes to walk. Margate Old Town is 0.4 miles from the Grotto and takes approximately 10 minutes to walk.

For places to eat and drink, visit [visitthanet.co.uk/stay-and-eat/eating-and-drinking/](http://visitthanet.co.uk/stay-and-eat/eating-and-drinking/).

## **The Museum**

The museum tells the story of the discovery of the Grotto and recounts some of the theories regarding its origin.

There are 7 steps leading from the shop to the museum. The steps are 120 cm wide and 17 cm deep. Anti-slip treads are installed and there are handrails on both sides. There is no step-free access to the museum.

The floor surface of the museum is tiled in carpet and level throughout.

Within the museum, there are objects on display at a height of between 26 cm – 160 cm. Lighting is low-level to aid preservation of the exhibits.

Interpretation boards are mainly in large text and have pictorial representation where applicable. Braille is currently not available.

## **The Grotto**

There are 9 steps leading from the museum to the Grotto. The steps are curved and are between 89 cm – 100 cm wide and between 12 cm – 22 cm deep. Anti-slip treads have been installed and there is a handrail on the left side. There is no step-free access to the Grotto.

The Grotto extends for approximately 31.5 m (104 ft) and has a downhill gradient. It is 80 cm wide at its narrowest point and 203 cm tall at its lowest point. The flooring is uneven and has a slight camber. Visitors are advised to take care and wear appropriate, sturdy footwear.

The Grotto is dimly lit and there are no handrails or seating inside the Grotto.

Pets are not permitted in the Grotto except for registered assistance dogs. If the Grotto is quiet, we are happy to look after pets at reception during your visit.

Pushchairs, backpacks, food and drink are also not permitted in the Grotto. These may be left with a member of the team at reception.

Children under 16 must be accompanied by an adult throughout their visit. Please ensure your child is aware of, and adheres to, all safety precautions.

Visits last approximately 15 - 20 minutes. There is no guided tour but a paper guide is available from reception. Paper guides are available in English, French, Spanish and German. You can also download a guide from our website ([shellgrotto.co.uk/visit](http://shellgrotto.co.uk/visit)).

Noise-cancelling headphones, torches and large print information packs are available on request.

There is only one way in and out of the Grotto.

### **Additional Information**

Address: The Shell Grotto, Grotto Hill, Margate, Kent, CT9 2BU

Telephone: 01843 220 008

Email: [info@shellgrotto.co.uk](mailto:info@shellgrotto.co.uk)

Website: [www.shellgrotto.co.uk](http://www.shellgrotto.co.uk)