

CURIOUS

COAST

A celebration
of the seaside
in drawings

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Special thanks to Trevor Clapp, fellow traveller and photographer. He is as curious as I am.



Intro

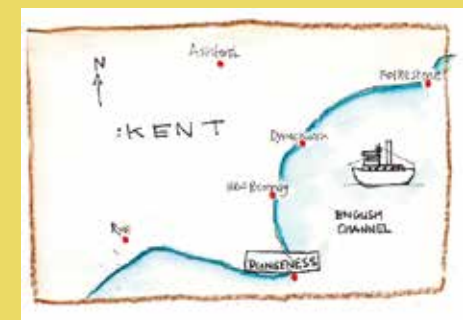
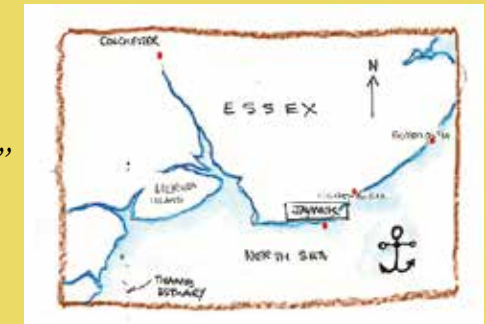
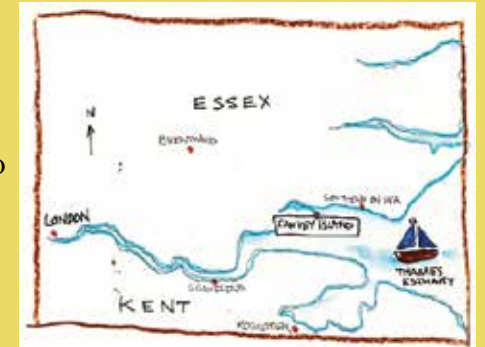
On the train into London the other week I was sitting next to my friend Trevor. Across from us an acquaintance asked “*Yes but why these places in particular?*”

We looked at each other and shrugged “*Don’t know really*” - Me “*It’s because they are a little strange*” said Trevor.

The idea for this book was born. Trevor and I are fascinated by the offbeat, kiss-me-quick atmosphere of the British Coast.

Trevor brings his camera on these jaunts. His implacable architectural eye has created some memorable photos, which should make a separate book.

Hopefully *Curious Coast* might make you inquisitive to visit these places.



CANVEY ISLAND

The home of the rock band Dr Feelgood. Canvey Island is a town which is connected to Essex via a causeway and a land of gas and oil silos.

Architecturally speaking there is little to commend the place. Homes with sea views have had these snatched away from them when a high con-

CANVEY ISLAND South towards the old pier

We arrived on a grey mid-morning, ideal for beach combing amongst the cockles and mussels and oyster shells. Looking out to sea we saw the Kent coast on the other side of the Thames Estuary. By midday the sky was a lot less glum. The sun was shining and being the half-term holiday, people were starting to emerge from their homes.

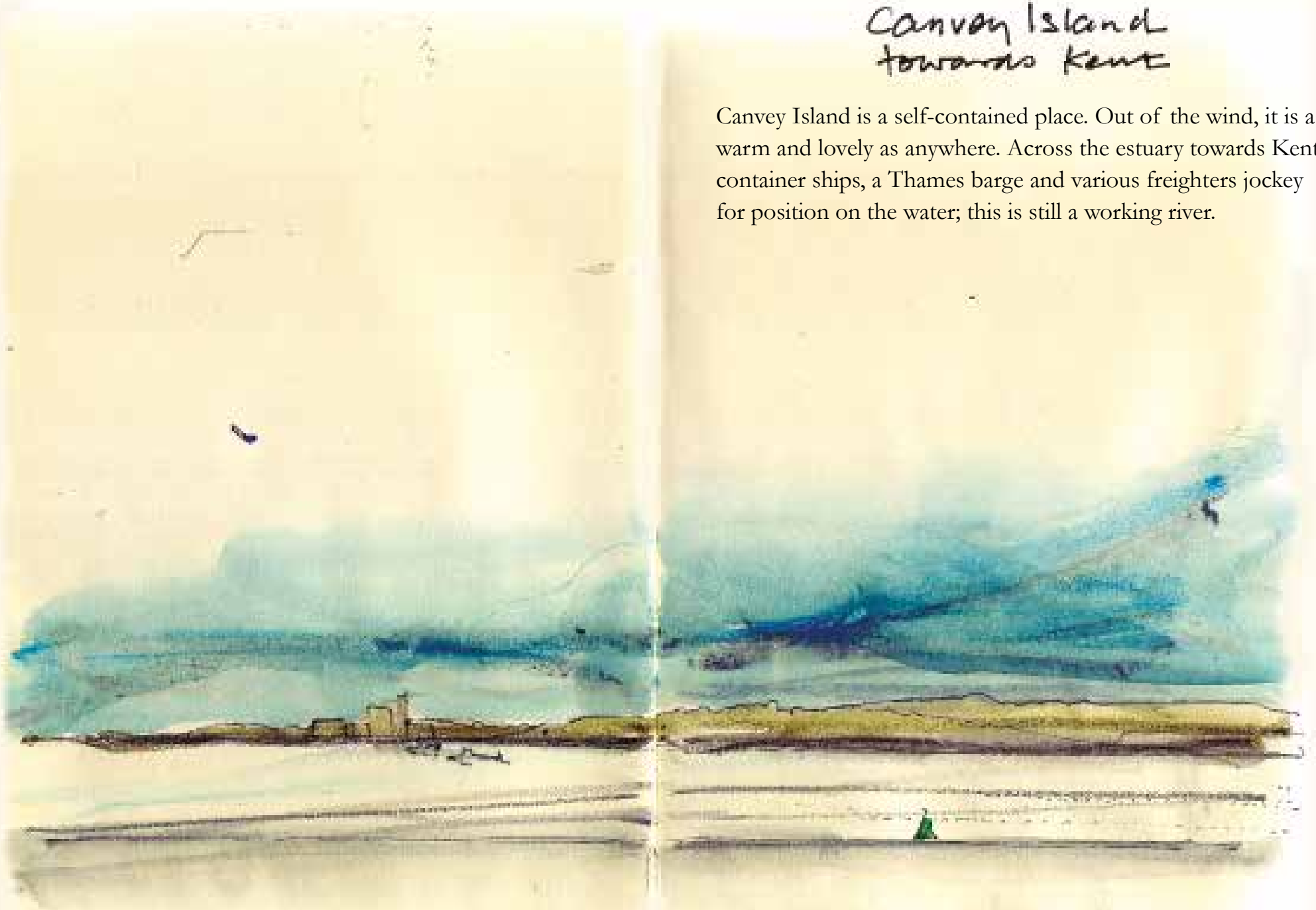


We went to Concord Beach on the Eastern Esplanade. It was alive with families having fun. The Concord Beach Café provided excellent fish and chips and cups of tea. Replete, we sat back to enjoy the view. The sounds of kids, mums and grandparents drifted across our table.



Canvey Island towards Kent

Canvey Island is a self-contained place. Out of the wind, it is as warm and lovely as anywhere. Across the estuary towards Kent container ships, a Thames barge and various freighters jockey for position on the water; this is still a working river.



11.0Z | Barely visible - the Kent coast -

31 MAY 2013



On the Beach CAMVEY ISLAND

31 MAR 2013 3:00 Noon

A semi-sunny day and Trevor and I travelled through the yellow rape fields of east Essex to the coast, to Jaywick. The town was planned in the 1930s as a holiday village for Londoners and is now on record as one of the most deprived places in England.

Parking easily we headed down The Broadway, the main street, and into the arms of Phrills Diner. We chatted with Mr and Mrs Phrills.

This excellent establishment is open all year round.

"It's for our regulars" said Mrs P.

JAYWICK



Eventually we walk out onto the sands, clouds scudding across the sky, a multitude of telegraph wires and sand blown across the roads and paths.



The wide, clean sandy beach is quite unspoilt. Friendly locals responded to greetings from two strangers; one carrying a Mole-skiene, the other a huge camera. Jaywick has become a bit of a mecca for writers and filmmakers because of its isolation and despair and its strange disposition.

We headed to the south-western outskirts to the Martello Holiday Park: acres and acres of trailer homes with shops, a laundrette and key-pad gates; a complete city-state.



The sun was now out and the ice cream van had kindly parked right next to us so we were really obliged to relish a 99 Flake before making our way back home.



We stopped for coffee and bourbon biscuits at LJ's Beach Bar and had a good chinwag with the LJs.

Mrs LJ was polishing the already spotless counter and Mr was perfecting a cheese toastie intended for Mrs LJ.

Jaynick

11 APR 2014

An autumnal trip with Trevor to Ipswich to collect a sail for his boat turned into another coastal jaunt. Leaving Ipswich we drive under the Orwell Bridge. This is a huge concrete span across the broad grey estuary of the River Orwell.

A better view of the bridge is afforded just along the road from the posh Suffolk Food Hall's coffee shop. We are now on the peninsula of Shotley. Farther along towards the village of Shotley, flat lands run up to the estuary's edge, patrolled by curlews, oystercatchers and cackling gulls.

THE SHOTLEY PENINSULA



Shotley was once home to HMS Ganges, the naval training establishment. It was decided by the Admiralty to close HMS Ganges in 1976. The white ensign was lowered for the last time on 28 October that year. Now the place is desolate and overgrown.



*Felixstowe looks
Suffolk.*



8 NOV 2019

12:45pm SHOTLEY towards Harwich Docks

SUFFOLK.

Looking out across the water you get two ports for the price of one view: Felixstowe and Harwich; Suffolk and Essex. Along both waterfronts gigantic ships with Asiatic names bear impossibly large numbers of containers on their broad decks.

Shotley village is barely awake. All is down at heel; old sailing dinghies nestle up to one another, their shrouds flapping. An old cassette player lies disembowelled on the shoreline.



DUNGNESS

Dungness 09:40



Close to the Sea Two huts and

boats. Dungness iconography

20 MAR 2015

Dungeness 10.05

DUNGENESS, ANOTHER EDGE OF THE WORLD.

Travels with My Architect continued into 2015.

Trevor and I drove down to the Kent coast, to Dungeness; Britain's only desert. Trevor's wife Jane (architect and gardener) joined us, primarily to see Derek Jarman's cottage.

It was Jarman's cottage that started a movement of some five hundred thousand people who now visit annually. Dungeness is out of the way, an incredibly flat landscape with two power stations. And last year, so Dungeness Ranger Owen told us, there were 143 film or photo-shoots taking advantage of the shingle, rusting boat winches and collapsing fishing huts that adorn the beach.



DUNGENESS
Two figures on a shoreline

20 MAR 2015



BOATS ON THE BEACH - DUNDEE

The Power Stations almost always
in view and being forgotten. 20 MAR 2015

Some of the houses which line the single road are now galleries and those with taste and money have arrived, settled and breathed style on their single-storey homes. Grey skies and a stiff breeze made perfect weather for this place.

Desperate to get out of the wind we went to the Britannia Inn for an excellent morning coffee and a warm welcome from the Landlord. Quite the cleanest pub on the planet and large enough to accommodate the torrent of summer visitors.



Artist
Paddy Hamilton's Studio

We visited the home of Paddy Hamilton who has converted three small huts into a gallery. It houses a wonderful collection of woodcuts, found objects and postcards.

DUNGENESS...
and raggedy flags flap
a welcome in the breeze.

After the gallery it was lunch at The Pilot Inn. Cod and chips for me, Jane had the skate, Trevor the haddock (they swapped half-way through) as I sailed through my delicious plateful. If you like fish and chips, this is the place for you.



hugle pingled my
fat Hen

20 MAR 2015



Tim in White T-Shirt Trevor in Black T-Shirt

Curious Coast will be continued as Trevor and I are planning to go farther into Suffolk. I am hoping to persuade him to go all the way to Skegness in Lincolnshire. We will continue to seek out odd places and obsess about them through photography, drawings and faltering prose.



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