

## The Goldfinger route



From St. Margaret's go via Deal and the A258 to Sandwich. Follow the A256 to Ramsgate harbour, then the A253 and A299 to Reculver. Then take the A2 to Faversham, Chatham and Rochester. James Bond drove from London to Sandwich in the reverse order of course.



Ramsgate Harbour

*"He had chosen the A2 in preference to the A20 to Sandwich because he wanted to take a quick look at Goldfinger-land—Reculver and those melancholy forsaken reaches of the Thames which Goldfinger had chosen for his parish. He would then cross the Isle of Thanet to Ramsgate and leave his bag at the Channel Packet, have an early lunch and be off to Sandwich."*

### Reculver / Ramsgate

*"Another five miles and Bond was through the dainty teleworld of Herne Bay. The howl of Mansion sounded away on his right. A flight of three Super Sabres came in to land. They skimmed below his right hand horizon as if they were diving into the earth. With half his mind, Bond heard the roar of their jets catch up with them as they landed and taxied in to the hangers. He came up with a crossroads. To the left the signpost said RECVLVER. Underneath was the ancient monument sign for Reculver church. Bond slowed, but didn't stop. No hanging about. He motored slowly on, keeping his eyes open. The shoreline was too exposed for a trawler to do anything but beach or anchor. Probably Goldfinger had used Ramsgate. Quiet little port. Customs and Police who were probably only on the look-out for brandy coming over from France. There was a thick clump of trees between the road and the shore, a glimpse of roofs and of a medium-sized factory chimney with a thin plume of light smoke or steam."*



Reculver Towers

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Behind Auric Goldfinger's house at Reculver, The Grange, was the factory from which he ran his gold smuggling business. Here the gold imported from India by his trawler into Ramsgate was moulded into new door panels for his Rolls Royce Silver Ghost.

### Sandwich

May really does seem to have been Ian Fleming's favourite month in East Kent. The bluebells and celandines still flower on the high road to Challock and the larks still sing over the links at Sandwich Bay.



Royal St. George's was Ian Fleming's club. In **Goldfinger** it features as Royal St. Mark's. The golf match between Bond and Goldfinger is one of the most memorable episodes in all the Bond books. It was written from the heart and occupies two whole chapters of **Goldfinger**, stroke by stroke, hole by hole. Fleming describes it simply – *"a game of golf on a beautiful day in May with the larks singing over the greatest seaside golf-course in the world."*



Royal St. George's

Ian Fleming had played at Royal St. George's since his bachelor days. Then he stayed at the now demolished Guilford Hotel at Sandwich Bay with his bridge and golf friends who formed a group called Le Cercle – or more significantly for the plots and detail of many of his future James Bond books - Le Cercle gastronomique et des jeux de hasard, to give it its full title. After the war he would drive down from London in his Ford Thunderbird to Royal St. George's on a Friday and play 9 or 18 holes before tea. This would be taken in the clubhouse using his favourite leather-backed wing chair to the left of the bay window, until six o'clock struck, when it would be time for those famous dry martinis – *"Shaken, not stirred"*.



Everything at Royal St. George's is much as it was in Ian Fleming's time. As with the name of the club, he barely bothered to disguise the name of the professional – Alfred Whiting in real life, Alfred Blacking in **Goldfinger**. The bay-windowed clubhouse, the thatched-roof shelters, the fairways – perhaps even in the changing room.

*"... the same tacky smell of old shoes and socks and last summer's sweat. Why was it a tradition of the most famous golf clubs that their standard of hygiene should be that of a Victorian private school?"*

The golf game in **Goldfinger** is a classic and, luckily, can be traced well enough from the public footpath which runs across the course from the town of Sandwich to the sea. The course itself is the private property of the club, but from the footpath enough can be seen to provide a very enjoyable walk. In the town of Sandwich the path starts conveniently at the Quay car park. Alternatively a shorter walk across the course starts from the beach at Sandwich Bay, accessible by car through the Toll-Gate.

Royal St. George's was central to Ian Fleming's later life. He had been elected Captain of Royal St. George's for 1964/5 and had attended a committee meeting there on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1964 when he had a heart attack. He died in Canterbury the following day. The club's flag was lowered to half-mast.



Sandwich



Simplified **Goldfinger** route map – more detailed map inside