

# Bracklesham Bay

## Summary Description

This gently curving bay borders the eastern edge of the Solent and is the most easterly within the Seascapes study. Directly open to the prevailing south westerly winds the bay is popular for windsurfing and water sports. The exposed nature of the area also means that a number of wrecked ships have come to lie within the bay.

## Sea Surface

The most frequently seen activities in this area are windsurfing, kite surfing, swimming and SCUBA diving. The sheltered and shallow waters of the bay are ideal for use by the large numbers of tourists who holiday in the area.

Further offshore there are faster currents, particularly near Selsey Bill, which makes swimming hazardous. There are numerous yachts and pleasure craft which utilised the area.

## Seabed Surface

Groynes are frequent features all along the coastline of this rapidly eroding shore, these stretch into the fully marine zone. The area features the sandy coastal bay which is backed by shingle. The infamous Bracklesham fossil beds are exposed at low tide.

There are 14 wrecks and obstructions charted in the area, this includes the designated historic wreck site of Warship Hazardous, a 4<sup>th</sup> rate ship of the line sunk in 1706. The small number of charted sites are only a minute proportion of the number of recorded losses in the area.

The nearshore zone features a series of semi-circular sandbanks, shoals, and rocks, known as 'The Mixons', it has been suggested that a number of these features may be related to Roman use of the area prior to sea level rise.

## Seabed Subsurface

There is nothing charted or recorded within the currently available marine datasets for the seabed subsurface.

## Coastal

East Wittering is characterised by caravan parks and residential housing. These buildings stretch along the sea front linking with those at Bracklesham to form a continuous ribbon of beachside development.

Selsey holds evidence of Roman occupation. This low-lying headland attracts many holiday makers. East beach is the resort's main centre, it is protected by a sea wall and many groynes, has a car park and boat park, with a wooden ramp down to the beach. East Beach keeps much of the seafaring flavour of old Selsey, with fishing boats offshore, lobster pots in heaps along the sea-wall, and stalls selling locally caught crabs, whelks, cockles, and fish.

## Archaeological Potential

The archaeology of this area is dominated by the shipwreck resource. However, the potential for the survival of submerged prehistoric landscapes should be highlighted. Such deposits can reveal important evidence of sea level and climate change and the development of Britain as an island.

There is also the potential for the features off Selsey to be associated with Roman use of the intertidal and formerly terrestrial zones which are now drowned.



ENGLISH HERITAGE



National Oceanography  
Centre, Southampton  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON AND  
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

## References

Allen, Edward Heron. *The 1672 Map of Selsey Bill ... Reprinted from "Sussex Archæological Collections."* London, 1934.

Allen, Edward Heron. *A Hoard of Roman Coins from a Villa-Site at Selsey ... Reprinted from "Sussex Archæological Collections."* Selsey, 1933.

Mee, Frances. *A history of Selsey*. Chichester : Phillimore, 1988.

Shaw, Francis Cecil Longden. *East Wittering and Earnley. A short history*. pp. 12. Graham Cumming: Ramsgate, [1962.]

Stephens, William Richard Wood. *The south Saxon diocese, Selsey – Chichester*. Cambridge : Chadwyck-Healey Ltd., 2004.

## Links

West Wittering Beach - <http://www.westwitteringbeach.co.uk/>

West Wittering Sailing Club - <http://www.wWSC.co.uk/>

Selsey - Probable Romano-British settlement - <http://www.roman-britain.org/places/selsey.htm>

Selsey Bill and the Manhood Peninsular - <http://www.selseybill.com/>

Selsey Bill sub-aqua club - <http://www.selseybill-subaquacub.co.uk/>

Selsey Community Website - <http://www.selsey.org.uk/>

The Lifeboat Museum, Selsey Bill - <http://www.allaboutsussex.co.uk/default.asp?id=placestovisit181>



ENGLISH HERITAGE



National Oceanography  
Centre, Southampton  
MEMBER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON AND  
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL

## Images



Reference:	Haz Archive
Character Area	Bracklesham Bay
Description	Bracklesham from the water
Photographer:	Iain Grant
Date Photographed:	2004



Reference:	HWTMA Archive
Character Area	Bracklesham Bay
Description	Cannon pile on Warship Hazardous
Photographer:	Garry Momber
Date Photographed:	2002



ENGLISH HERITAGE



**National Oceanography Centre, Southampton**

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON AND  
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH COUNCIL