

Summary Description

Lying on the exposed west coast of the Isle of Wight, Brightstone Bay has been the location of many shipwrecks. This dramatic area is characterised by the natural chine features and open coves.

Sea Surface

The location of this area means it is exposed to the wind and other erosion factors. The south-western most region of the water surface is designated as a caution area due to its numerous navigational hazards. Activity on the sea surface is dominated by navigation markers, yacht races and other marine recreational pursuits. Anchorage is permitted in the bay area, although a caution area further seaward is marked. The bays area are popular with bathers.

Seabed Surface

The area stretches from Freshwater Bay southwards to Brightstone Bay. The coastline is characterised by cliff faces and the seabed features partially and fully submerged offlying rocks. These submerged hazards to navigation comprise primarily of Brook Ledges, Ship Ledges, and Hardmans Rock. Additionally sandbanks pose a moderate hazard to navigation.

Seven wrecks and obstructions have been recorded in the area: two of which are known popular dive sites: *War Knight* an armed steamer sunk in 1918 and *Juno* a Dutch frigate wrecked in 1786. These sites only represented the charted examples, the numbers of recorded losses in the area is much higher.

Remnants of prehistoric peoples in the form of flint implements have been found at Shipmans Ledge and in the marine zone just off Freshwater bay caves.

Seabed Subsurface

A fossil forest exists at Hanover Point and at nearby Hanover Point the 'Pine Raft', fossilised remains of an ancient forest, forms rock flats, both features are visible at low tide. Research into the development of the English Channel and the Solent is beginning to reveal evidence for the potential for survival of submerged prehistoric landscape deposits within the seabed.

Coastal

Freshwater Bay is a horseshoe shaped cove with a pebbly beach and a short promenade. A few hundred yards inland is the source of the Yar. To the west is Tennyson Down, a grassy chalk ridge rising 480ft above sea level.

At Brook there is a chine with a sandy beach with some pebbles. Many chine features cut through the cliffs along the south coast of the Isle of Wight. The word 'chine' which means ravine, is derived from Anglo Saxon 'cinan' meaning crack.

Archaeological Potential

Offshore the archaeology of this area is dominated by the rich shipwreck resource. Due to the dynamic nature of the marine zone and geological features it is unlikely that submerged prehistoric landscape features will be located close to the shore, however, early landscapes features may be buried under the present day sea floor. The potential to encounter the remains of crashed aircraft must also be considered, particularly as there is document evidence of a WWII aircraft crash in the area.

Links

Freshwater Bay Residents' Association - <http://www.fbra.org.uk/>
HWTMA Brook Bay - <http://www.hwtma.org.uk/projects/brook/index.htm>
UK Fossils Brook - <http://www.brook.ukfossils.co.uk/>
WightStay: Brook - <http://www.wightstay.co.uk/context/brook.html>



Images



Reference:	393102
Character Area	Brightstone Bay Area
Description	Freshwater – The Old Sand House, Halletts Shute
Photographer:	Mr Thomas Olding
Date Photographed:	26 August 2006



IoE number:	393240
Character Area:	Brightstone Bay Area
Description:	Freshwater – Tennyson's Down Beacon
Photographer:	Dr Barry Senior ARPS
Date Photographed:	18 April 2005
Date listed:	18 January 1967
Date of last amendment:	18 January 1967
Grade	II



ENGLISH HERITAGE



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