

# Chichester Channel Approaches

## Summary Description

This area stretches across Hayling Bay past the entrance to Chichester Harbour. This area is dominated by shallow water which is traversed by a variety of small watercraft. The narrow entrance to Chichester Harbour is dominated by Yacht traffic, which navigates carefully to avoid the Chichester Bar. These waters have been utilised since before the Roman occupation which has resulted in a wealth of recorded shipwreck losses.

## Sea Surface

The Chichester Harbour Approaches includes, to the south the main navigation channel for vessels approaching main eastern Solent ports and to the north the channel for vessels entering Chichester Harbour. The Eastern Solent Channel is dominated by commercial shipping and ferry traffic, while towards the Harbour sailing and motor boat traffic is most frequent.

The area is designated as a caution area due to the high volume of shipping traffic.

Navigational bouys are placed to guide vessels around the shoals and sandbanks along the main shipping route and into Chichester Harbour.

The shallow water areas off Hayling Island host a variety of leisure activities, particularly through the summer months. This includes bathing, jetski's, wind surfing and kite surfing. Slightly further offshore the bay is popular for fishing – both leisure and commercial.

## Seabed Surface

The area stretches from just before the eastern side of Chichester harbour entrance at West Wittering, to East Winner Bank on its western edge, incorporating Hayling Bay, and extending seaward out to the Spithead Anchorage area. Chichester Bar and Eastoke Point mark the entrance to Chichester harbour. Chichester Bar is dredged to maintain navigable depth as it poses a risk to navigation.

There are a wealth of maritime archaeological sites in this area, this includes the protected wreck site of HMS A1, an early submarine with an interesting history of loss and recovery, which was eventually lost while on tow in 1911.

The available digital dataset from UKHO recognises more than 15 other charted wrecks and obstructions, however, due to the number of recorded losses the actual figure is likely to be much higher.

## Seabed Subsurface

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

However, recent research into the development of the Solent and Chichester Harbour is beginning to reveal evidence for the potential for survival of submerged prehistoric landscape deposits within the seabed.

## Coastal

The coastal environment is dominated by leisure and tourism features. The Hayling Island coast hosts caravan parks, hotels and activity parks. Due to the open nature of the coast there are groynes and a sea wall features which have been used to maintain the frontage on Hayling Island and at West Wittering.

Archaeological evidence from along this coastline feature a number of find spots from a broad range of periods.

These reflect both prehistoric occupation when the area would not have been bordered by the sea and later historic occupation which was more maritime focused.

## 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. The potential to encounter the remains of crashed aircraft must also be considered, with many recorded losses which date to the Second World War.

## References & Links

Pritchard, Martin and Kendall McDonald, 2001. *Dive Wight and Hampshire: A Diver Guide*: Middlesex, Underwater World Publishing Ltd.

[www.chimet.co.uk](http://www.chimet.co.uk)—Weather Reports from Chichester Bar



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## Images



Reference:	HWTMA Photo Archive
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