

# Langstone Harbour

## Summary Description

Langstone Harbour is the central of the three major harbours of the Eastern Solent. Lying to the east of Portsmouth modern activity is dominated by vessel activity from fishing, military training and pleasure craft. In the inter tidal margins and beneath the current water level the remains of many archaeological sites are preserved, these include prehistoric forest remains and peat deposits, a wealth of stone tools finds, bronze age settlement and burial remains, Roman pottery and salt working evidence, Saxon watercraft and fishing related structures and a number of more modern shipwreck sites.

## Sea Surface

The Harbour encompasses some 23km<sup>2</sup> and is situated between Portsmouth and Chichester Harbours, and fringed by Portsea and Hayling Islands. Activity on the sea surface is dominated by commercial shipping. The presence of two aggregate wharves: Kendall's Wharf and Bedhampton Wharf, within the harbour, make it a busy commercial area. The entire inlet is designated for use as a military practice area. A small local fleet of commercial fishing vessels still operates out of the port, providing local industry. A local ferry crossing connects the mainland to Hayling Island. The harbour is a popular site for marine recreation activities, most notably sailing, windsurfing, and water-skiing.

## Seabed Surface

The entrance to Langstone harbour has two long curving shingle spits. East Winner, an offshore sand bank at the mouth of Langstone and Chichester Harbours has been dredged for aggregate extraction (Future Coast, 2002). Within the Harbour itself there are very extensive intertidal mudflats and salt marshes, especially surrounding the numerous small islets. The sediments become sandier near the mouth of the inlet. These extensive sandbanks: East Sinah Sands and Sword Bank, Mallard Sands, and East Winner, are considered high risk navigational hazards (hazards report).

The intertidal morphology of the harbour consequently means it contains extensive shellfish resources, primarily oyster beds. Salt extraction for the salt making industry is evident in the presence of numerous salterns. Commercial fishing is represented in the Bass nursery areas. The whole harbour area has been designated as a Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA), and a RAMSAR designated area.

The presence of the strong sea wall structure provides defence against erosion and further inundation, however is contributing to the process of coastal squeeze.

There are a number of wreck sites within the harbour that are regularly dived. The remains of a Mulberry Harbour is a very prominent feature close to the Harbour entrance. The most intact wrecks within the Harbour are the *Withern*, a 1920's bucket dredger and the *Excelsior*, a barge.

The enigmatic 'Sinah Circle' stake feature has revealed evidence of what is assumed to be shell fishing, a radio carbon date for the structure was AD980-1180.

## Seabed Subsurface

The remains of submerged prehistoric landscapes feature heavily within the Seabed Subsurface, trace of these are indicated by buried peat deposits and relict submerged forests (Allen and Gardiner, 2000). The Portsmouth-Arundel canal was cut through the northern part of the harbour in 1822, and was later abandoned. Geophysical survey undertaken as part of the 'Langstone Harbour Project' identified details of buried channels and stratigraphy.

## Coastal

The commercial concrete harbour constructions are the most visible features of the coastal zone, and provide facilities for commercial activity.

Four designated nature reserves feature around the coast of the harbour— Farlington Marshes, RSPB, Kench Local Nature Reserve, West Hayling (Oysterbeds).

Reclaimed land features around the margins of the Harbour, particularly on the western edge.



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## Archaeological Potential

The potential of the intertidal and seabed surfaces for the preservation and recovery of archaeological material has long been recognised (Allen and Gardiner, 2000). Langstone Harbour also has the advantage of being less industrialized with fewer naval installations than its neighbouring Portsmouth Harbour.

When describing the archaeological potential of the harbour, the impact of eustatic and sea level change on human activity and use of marine resources, should be considered. Ancient exploitation of seascape resources were similar to modern, with evidence of fishing, shellfish harvesting, birdlife, recovery of salt, and the use of the creeks and channels as anchorages.

Archaeological investigations of the Langstone Harbour area from the 1970s- present have revealed a rich resource. Specific flintworking areas dating from the Palaeolithic to the Late Bronze-Age have been recorded. The archaeological data implies the area had been dry land until at least the middle Bronze-Age. The two relict submerged forests identified revealed radiocarbon dates of ca. 3350-2910 cal BC (Allen and Gardiner, 2000).

The principle activities noted around the shallow harbour during the Iron Age and Roman periods were salt production, brick making, oyster farming, and fishing. A Roman road to the north of Langstone featured sporadic villas but no major waterfront development has yet been identified. It was a site of a Roman crossing point to Hayling Island, the remains of this causeway can be seen.

Some of the most notable archaeological features of the harbour include: the Long Island Anglo-Saxon logboat, the Sinah Circle stake structure, thought to have been an Oyster farm installation, and a Bronze-Age causeway, recently excavated at the northern point of harbour.

## References

- Defra, 2002. Futurecoast: Shoreline Behaviour Study. Unpublished CD Rom. Halcrow Group Ltd.  
Adam, Neil J. *The Langstone Harbour archaeological survey project : second interim report, 1994.* [Winchester] : Hampshire County Council, c1995.  
Allen, Michael J. *Our changing coast : a survey of the intertidal archaeology of Langstone Harbour, Hampshire.* York : Council for British Archaeology, 2000.  
Tweed, Ronald. *A history of Langstone Harbour and its environs in the County of Hampshire.* [S.I.] : R. Tweed, 2000.

## Links

Shoreline Behaviour Study - <http://www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/fcd/futurecoast.htm>.  
Solent Forum - <http://www.solentforum.hants.org.uk/forum/intro.html>:

Sediment Transportation database - <http://www.scopac.org.uk/>

Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology - <http://www.hwtma.org.uk/>

Langstone Sailing Club - <http://www.langstonesc.org.uk/>

Langstone Harbour Board - <http://www.langstoneharbour.org.uk/>

RSPB Langstone Harbour Nature Reserve - <http://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves/guide//langstoneharbour/index.asp>

Portsmouth and Langstone Sailing Association - <http://www.plsa.org.uk/cgi/page.pl?page=index>

Tudor Sailing Club - <http://www.tudorsailing.org.uk/Homepage/Home.htm>

Emsworth Online - <http://www.emsworth.vir.co.uk/>

Emsworth Village Online - <http://www.emsworthonline.co.uk/>

Emsworth Museum - <http://www.emsworthmuseum.co.uk/>

The Emsworth Heritage Project - <http://www.emsworthheritageproject.org.uk/start.html>

The Emsworth Memorial Trail - <http://www.emsworthmemorialtrail.org.uk/>

The Brook Meadow Conservation Group - <http://www.hants.gov.uk/brook-meadow/>

Emsworth Yacht Harbour - <http://www.emsworth-marina.co.uk/>



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## Images



HWTMA Photo Number	LLB03 – B22
Character Area	Langstone Harbour
Description	Langstone Harbour Intertidal environment where logboat was discovered.
Photographer:	Julie Satchell
Date Photographed:	September 2003



IoE number:	135395
Character Area:	Langstone Harbour & Approaches
Description:	Langstone – Watermill & windmill
Photographer:	Mr Glyn Edmunds EFIAP,AMPA,ARPS
Date Photographed:	25 October 1999
Date listed:	21 July 1975
Date of last amendment:	06 February 1984
Grade	II



HWTMA Photo Number	LML – B20
Character Area	Langstone Harbour
Description	Langstone Harbour - Milton Lock remains in foreground
Photographer:	Julie Satchell
Date Photographed:	2002