

Summary Description

The Poole Bay character area encompasses both Poole and Studland Bays. This relatively sheltered area of the coastline plays host to a range of marine traffic including commercial craft traversing to Poole and a large number of recreation craft including yachts, small powered craft and jet skis. The urban centre of Bournemouth lies in the centre of the area, however, there are no natural creeks or harbours in this study area.

Sea Surface

The area encompasses two natural sheltered bays. Situated at the mouth of Poole Harbour, Studland Bay and Poole Bay are sheltered from the prevailing south-western winds, providing a low navigational risk to traffic on the sea surface. Activity on the sea surface is dominated by marine recreation activities, most notably sailing, windsurfing, surfing, and water-skiing. The principle urban settlement in the area is Bournemouth, from which a number of marine recreation activities are practiced.

Ferry routes from Poole to Cherbourg, and the Channel Isles frequently pass through the area, together with commercial vessels bound for the commercial port at Poole Harbour. The area known as 'Little Sea' further in the coast of Studland has Brackish waters, although is still connected to the main channel.

The entire maritime area is designated for use as a military practice area, while few military craft are seen in the area today, Poole Bay was used for practice for the D-Day landings.

Seabed Surface

The physical appearance of Studland Bay and Poole Bay, form two crescent-shaped natural inlets. Although both feature sandbanks, those from Studland Bay are more extensive. Within the Bays themselves, sediments are fine grained, becoming sandier nearer the mouths of the inlets. The intertidal morphology of the bay areas, consequently mean they support extensive shellfish resources, primarily oyster beds. Distinctive navigational markers include the familiar chalk pillars towards Handfast Point, of Old Harry's Rocks, the eroded remains of the barrier that once protected the Solent river valley.

The local sandy beach at Studland is owned by the National Trust and the whole area has been designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), and a RAMSAR designated area. The presence of groyne stretching along the coast of Poole Bay, provide defence against erosion and further coastal inundation.

Two pier constructions still stand at Bournemouth and Boscombe, remnants of Victoriana.

The area features two designated post medieval wrecks - the 'Swash Channel Wreck' and the 'Studland Bay wreck' which their associated restriction zones. The Swash Channel site was recently located and is believed to date to the 16th century, the Studland Bay wreck also dates to the 16th century and is believed to be of Spanish origin. This site was archaeologically investigated in the 1980's for which a substantial archive is held by Poole Museum.

Around 30 to 50 wrecks and obstructions are located in the area, this has led to a high level of diving activity. The densest concentration of wrecks occurs around prominent headlands such as 'Handfast Point', and the narrow entrance to Poole Harbour.

Seabed Subsurface

Maintenance dredging of the entrance to Poole Harbour is known to occur in the area, along with beach replenishment at Bournemouth Beach. Although, not revealed through the available marine data sets there has been extensive research into the seabed subsurface in Poole Bay. The Oil and Gas Industry have undertaken prospection work and geophysical survey and research has revealed important traces of the old chalk ridge and associated subsurface stratigraphy which is adding to knowledge of the development of the Solent and the geomorphology of the whole region.



Coastal

The recreation constructions such as Bournemouth Pier, and the Groyne along Poole Bay are the most visible features of the coastal zone.

Archaeological Potential

The potential of the intertidal and seabed surfaces for the preservation and recovery of archaeological material has long been recognised. Studland Bay and Poole Bay have the advantage of being less industrialized with fewer naval installations and industrial constructions than its neighbouring Poole Harbour.

In terms of prehistoric submerged landscapes the area, the impact of eustatic and sea level change on human activity and use of marine resources, should be considered.

Maritime archaeological investigations in the area such as the Studland and Swash Channel protected wreck sites demonstrate the high archaeological potential of the shipwreck resource. Other notable recent maritime archaeological discoveries in Poole Bay include the Studland Beach Wreck timbers, found in 2000/01.

References

Calkin, J. Bernard. *The Bournemouth area in the middle and late Bronze Age, with the 'Deverel-Rimbury' problem re-considered*

Calkin, J. Bernard. *Discovering prehistoric Bournemouth and Christchurch : a record of local finds in the twentieth century*

A Natural History of Bournemouth and District, including archæology, topography ... and geology. By the members of the Bournemouth Natural Science Society. Edited by Sir Daniel Morris.

Francis Frith's Around Bournemouth (Photographic Memories) by Francis Frith (Author), John Bainbridge (Author)

Gutierrez, A. Williams, D. Hughes, M. J. *A shipwreck cargo of Sevillian pottery from the Studland Bay wreck, Dorset, UK International Journal of Nautical Archaeology 2003, VOL 32; No1, pages 24-41*

Hinton, David A., 1974 *The archaeology and early history of Wareham : an outline guide to the development of the town, written to co-incide with the excavations at St Martin's House, North Street, March-April 1974 / by David A. Hinton and Richard Hodges.* [Southampton] [c/o Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton]

Ladle, Lilian. *The Studland Bay wreck : a Spanish shipwreck off the Dorset Coast* pamphlet DA 690.P78 LAD

Links

Bournemouth Official Website - <http://www.bournemouth.co.uk/>

Bournemouth Tourist Information Guide - <http://www.bournemouth.com/>

Bournemouth Russell-Cotes Museum - <http://www.russell-cotes.bournemouth.gov.uk/>

A Brief History of Bournemouth - <http://www.localhistories.org/bournemouth.html>

Hengistbury Head: History and Geology - <http://www.hengistbury-head.co.uk/>

Old Map of Hengistbury Head and Area with Geology: Survey of 1867-87, partially revised in 1891 - <http://www.soton.ac.uk/~imw/jpg/2holdg2.jpg>

Hengistbury Head Walk - <http://www.strollingguides.co.uk/books/dorset/walks/hengestbury.php>

The British Museum: Iron Age Pottery at Hengistbury Head - <http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/science/hengistbury/hengist-p1.htm>

NT Studland Beach & Nature Reserve: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-vh/w-visits/w-findaplace/w-studlandbeachandnaturereserve/>

Photos from Studland and other parts of Poole Harbour: <http://www.surfbirds.com/blogs/DD>

Wareham Town Museum: <http://www.warehammuseum.fsnet.co.uk/>



ENGLISH HERITAGE



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

Images



Reference:	HWTMA Photo Archive
Character Area:	Poole Bay
Description:	Poole Bay
Photographer:	Gavin Stone
Date Photographed:	26 January 2006



Reference:	HWTMA Photo Archive
Character Area:	Poole Bay
Description:	Artefacts from the Studland Bay Protected Wreck
Photographer:	Julie Satchell
Date Photographed:	2 April 2005



Reference:	HWTMA Photo Archive
Character Area:	Poole Bay
Description:	Poole Bay
Photographer:	Gavin Stone
Date Photographed:	9 March 2006