

# Southampton Water Eastern Approaches

## Summary Description

The Eastern Approaches to Southampton water are home to a wide variety of natural and cultural environments. The area includes the northern Solent coast including Titchfield, Lee-on-the-Solent, Netley, the entrance to the Hamble and the northern edge of Southampton water. This is home to a diversity of coastal features including the nature reserve at Titchfield, sailing clubs and facilities. In the marine zone a diverse range of ship and boat traffic can be seen.

## Sea Surface

The eastern approaches to Southampton Water are wide and deep; they are well marked for navigation purposes. Two major channels form the shipping routes, the Solent channel and the North Channel which branches off at Lee Point. Two main estuaries join the channel at Hamble and the River Meon. Three main anchorage areas are present in the sheltered waterway of Southampton Water.

Activity on the sea surface is characterised by ferries, tankers, container vessels, and car transporters using the North Channel. A high volume of yachts, motor boats and dinghies also travel to and from the Hamble.

At Lee-on-the-Solent there are public slipways for launching boats. This area is safe for bathing, and water skiing.

## Seabed Surface

In the marine zone the environment is home to pout, bass, mullet and Pollock which are fished from a variety of locations. Shell fishing is also undertaken in the area.

Hazards to navigation are few in the well marked North channel and primarily consist of Hamble Spit. The eastern side is mainly mixed gravel and mud beaches with sand and shingle at Gosport and Lee-on-the-Solent.

The maritime archaeological resource includes over 14 recorded wreck sites and submerged obstructions. Of these the *Luciston*, a British steamer sunk in 1917 and LCT no 9 are noted as dive sites.

## Seabed Subsurface

Traces of submerged prehistoric landscapes have been identified through a program of geophysical survey. These prehistoric landscape deposits are linked to the development of the Old Solent river into a fully marine tidal waterway. Such deposits are revealing important evidence of sea level and climate change and the environment used by early human populations.

Modern activities impacting the seabed subsurface includes shell fishing.

## Coastal

The coastal habitats in the area include wetlands and floodplain grazing. Important features include Titchfield Haven Nature Reserve, the pebbly shore at Netley which lies adjacent to the Royal Victoria Country Park and the 12<sup>th</sup> century ruins of Netley Abbey.

Hill Head was a centre for smuggling in the 18th century, this small village resting on low cliffs, regularly had quantities of smuggled goods seized. There is good swimming from a shingle beach which shelves steeply to a flat sandy bottom, at low tide it is possible to walk out over the sands and collect cockles.

At Lee-on-the-Solent the site of HMS Daedalus Fleet Air Arm base is situated, here helicopters are kept in readiness to answer calls for assistance from coast guards and police along the south coast.



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## Archaeological Potential

The traces of submerged prehistoric landscapes in this area are highly important archaeologically. However, the known and potential shipwreck resource should not be overlooked. There is also the potential to encounter the remains of crashed aircraft on the seabed, many of which are Second World War losses.

## References

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- Netley Marsh. Parish Council. *100 years of parish life : reminiscences of the New Forest village of Netley Marsh 1894-1994*. [Netley Marsh] : Netley Marsh Parish Council, 1994.
- Light, F.W. *A short history of Warsash*. 2nd ed. Warsash : Warsash Nautical Bookshop, 1992.

## Links

- Netley Abbey - <http://www.netleyabbey.info/>
- Netley Abbey Community - <http://www.netleyabbey.com/CMS/index.php>
- Netley Sailing Club - <http://www.netleysc.org.uk/>
- Royal Victoria Military Hospital, Netley - <http://www.garanc.co.uk/netleyhospital.php>



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## Images



HWTMA Photo Number	HWTMA Archive
Character Area	Southampton Water Eastern Approaches
Description	Bait diggers at Titchfield looking over Eastern Solent
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