

Southampton Water Western Approaches

Summary Description

The Western Approaches to the Solent and Southampton water are home to a wide variety of natural and cultural environments. The area includes the coast of the New Forest National Park, the north west coast of the Isle of Wight and the Western edge of Southampton water. This is home to a diversity of coastal features including the industrial complex at Fawley, marinas and yachting facilities and Calshot spit. In the marine zone a diverse range of ship and boat traffic can be seen.

Sea Surface

This busy stretch of water is home to commercial shipping, yachts, small craft and water sports. Ferries to the Isle of Wight run through the western edge of the area connecting Southampton to Cowes. Not surprisingly there are a host of navigational markers in the area ensuring that vessels do not stray into shallow water around the Solent margins.

Seabed Surface

This large area has a diverse range of seabed environments and features, included are sand and gravel banks, mudflats and saltmarsh. The shallow water environments are home to a variety of shell fishing and associated installations and dredging areas.

Around the intertidal margins and shallow water archaeological features are focused on industries and functions which have exploited this zone. Within the area are fish trap and oyster bed remains, jetties, wharves, causeways and reclaimed land. Archaeological sites which were once terrestrial from periods spanning the prehistoric to modern period can be found within this zone.

The maritime archaeological resource includes over 15 wreck sites and 16 charted submerged obstructions. The area is not used extensively for recreational diving due to the density of shipping traffic, however, some archaeological investigations have been undertaken (see below).

Seabed Subsurface

The area encompasses the western Solent channel that stretches from Pitts Deep and Stanswood Bay through up into Southampton Water, it terminates at Hythe prior to reaching Southampton Port and joining the river Test.

Principle activities impacting the seabed subsurface include oyster and shell fishing which use trawl equipment to gather their catch.

One of the most significant archaeological feature of the area are the submerged prehistoric landscape deposits which lie just off shore of the North West Solent coast line. Here two layers of peat deposits have been recorded and investigated off Pitts Deep. There is also potential for further deposits to be preserved on the Isle of Wight side where geological features and geomorphological processes are favourable.

These prehistoric landscape deposits are linked 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.

Coastal

The coastal area is home to a variety of shoreside structures and facilities supporting the various maritime industries. The most extensive modern industry is the Fawley oil refinery complex.

Less industrialised areas have been recognised for their nature designations with several area covered by Marine Special Area of Conservation designation. Prominent natural features include Calshot Spit with its historic castle on the point to guard the entrance to Southampton Water and the Bramble Bank which dried at extremely low tides when local people play cricket on the bank.

The coastal inlets of Ashlett and Newtown Creeks have revealed a range of archaeological evidence linked to their maritime development.



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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

Coad, J. G. (Jonathan George), 1945- *Calshot Castle : Hampshire*. London : Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, c1986.

Titheridge, Alan. *Hythe Pier and Ferry: a history. 2nd ed.* Southampton : Itchen Printers, 1986.

Links

Southern Life Article: The History of Calshot - <http://www.southernlife.org.uk/calshot.htm>

Calshot Activities Centre - <http://www.calshot.com/>

Calshot Sailing Club - <http://www.calshot-sailing.co.uk/>

Hampshire County Council Calshot Castle - <http://www.hants.gov.uk/discover/places/calshot.html>

English Heritage Calshot Castle - <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/ConProperty.175>

Hythe Online - <http://www.hythe-hants.org.uk/>

Hythe Ferry - <http://www.hytheferry.co.uk/>

National Trust: Newtown Old Town Hall - <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-vh/w-visits/w-findaplace/w-oldtownhallnewtown/>

Isle of Wight History Centre: Medieval Newtown <http://freespace.virgin.net/iw.history/nt/newtown.htm>

Isle of Wight Historic Postcards: Newtown <http://www.shalfleet.net/newtown/>



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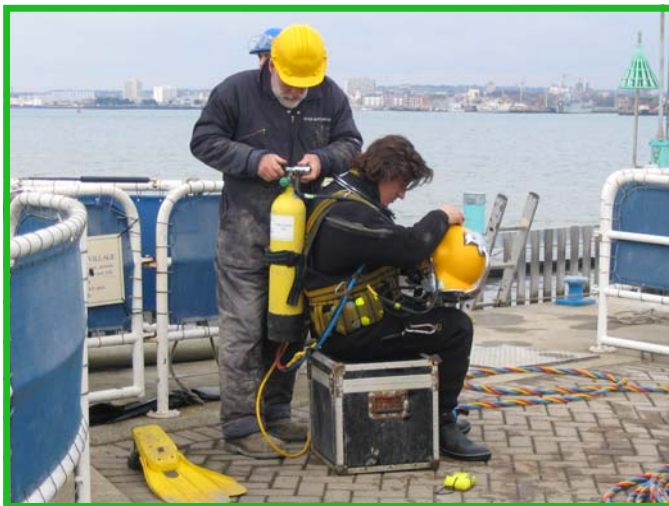


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Images



IoE number:	143419
Character Area:	Southampton Water Western Approaches
Description:	Calshot – Calshot Castle (originally built 1538-41 for Henry VIII's coastal defences)
Photographer:	Mr Alec Howard
Date Photographed:	23 March 2005
Date listed:	10 June 1987
Date of last amendment:	10 June 1987
Grade	II*



Reference:	HWTMA Photo Archive
Character Area:	Southampton Water Western Approaches
Description:	Hythe Marina
Photographer:	Julie Satchell
Date Photographed:	2 February 2005



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