

## St Helen's Roads

### Summary Description

Lying off the north east corner of the Isle of Wight St Helen's Roads takes advantage of sheltered conditions. It is adjacent to the main Naval anchorage at Spit Head and has a strategic view over the Eastern Solent.

### Sea Surface

The sea surface features five designated anchorage area. Navigational markers can be seen across the area related to shipping channels and yacht racing. Craft engaged in a range of marine recreational pursuits are frequent visitors to the area.

A navigation light from the coast can be seen from the approaches.

### Seabed Surface

The area stretches from Seagrove Bay to Nodes Point, and incorporates St Helens Fort, Horsecastle Point, and Priory Bay. The coastline is characterised by cliff faces in the southern portion and sand and shingle in the northern stretch. In Priory Bay a Palaeolithic flint assemblage has been discovered in the inter-tidal area.

St Helens Fort, one of the grade II listed Spithead Forts is a seabed feature.

Seabed features include submerged rocks off Horsecastle Point, the shallow rocky approach to Seagrove Bay and Big Ben a prominent rock found off a plateau of rocks that extends a third of a mile south from Nettlestone Point. These features are hazards to navigation and have helped contribute to the 13 charted wrecks and obstructions in the area. Recorded losses include the *Heather* and *Viola*, but these are not recreational dive sites.

### Seabed Subsurface

There is little charted or recorded within the currently available marine datasets for the seabed subsurface. However, recent research into the development of the English Channel is beginning to reveal evidence for the potential for survival of submerged prehistoric landscape deposits within the seabed.

### Coastal

Coastline is characterised by remains of ancient woodland and navigation light at St Helens Point.

### Archaeological Potential

The coastal archaeological resource adjacent to the study area includes Palaeolithic stone tools find and a variety of sites and finds dating from the Palaeolithic to Modern periods.

Offshore 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.

St Helens Fort - <http://www.palmerstonforts.org.uk/gall/gal13.htm>  
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environ/fcd/futurecoast.htm>. Shoreline Behaviour Study

<http://www.solentforum.hants.org.uk/forum/intro.html>: Solent Forum

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



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## Images



IoE number:	409864
Character Area:	St Helen's Roads (Offshore)
Description:	St Helen's Fort
Photographer:	Dr Barry Senior ARPS
Date Photographed:	17 April 2005
Date listed:	18 May 1972
Date of last amendment:	18 May 1972
Grade	II



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