

# The Spring

## Self-led Heritage Walk: 3,000 Years of Changing Landscapes – A walk around Langstone

This walk explores how landscapes change through time. Like all of our heritage walks, the aim is to help you discover evidence of the past in the modern landscape and, by providing a little explanation and interpretation, enable you to understand what you are looking at – all while enjoying a healthy walk!

This is a circular walk of around 3.5 miles and should take around 90 minutes.

Directions are provided together with some information at key points.

The walk starts and finishes at The Spring Arts and Heritage Centre.

### Start at The Spring, PO9 1BS

#### 1 - The Hayling Billy Line

The first part of the walk will follow the Hayling Billy track public footpath towards Langstone. The Hayling Railway Company was formed in 1860 and the first section, to Langstone, was laid in 1865. This carried freight only (passengers were first welcomed in 1867). You will see the beautiful, clear, Lymbourne stream to your left for much of this section.

**Now walk down the slope to the lower car-park (east of The Spring) and turn right, following the footpath until you reach the main road to Hayling. Cross over and turn left, pausing at the junction of Mill Lane and the main road.**



*Langstone Railway Crossing*

This is where the railway crossed the main road. Long queues of traffic formed in the summer months as the steam trains made their way to and from Langston station (the railway never added the additional 'e'!)

**Now take the path through the small wooded area, just south of Mill Lane and continue walking until you reach Hayling Bridge.**

## 2 - Langstone Harbour

As you walk from Mill Lane through the small wooded area you will pass the site of the first station south of Havant on the Billy Line. This was Langston station.

Continuing down the footpath you will, eventually, see Langstone harbour to your right. This is an example of what geographers call a 'drowned landscape' – an area of land inundated with sea-water. During the Neolithic period (4,000-2,500BC) the area now covered with water might have been used to graze cattle in open fields. Around 1,000 BC (the late Bronze age) sea water began to fill up what were then shallow river valleys to the west and east of what is now Hayling island (where the Lymbourne and Brockhampton streams flowed to the sea). The evidence for this comes from the discovery, by archaeologists, of several Bronze Age burial urns out in the harbour. Burials of this sort are often found near streams and rivers and would not have been made in the middle of a harbour.

These changes in the landscape prompted further changes. A salt- making industry grew up on Hayling, using the evaporation of sea-water captured in shallow pools. Oyster beds were created – an industry that lasted many centuries. The area around The Ship in developed in to a busy working quay. The presence of water also required the construction of crossings to reach the new island.

Three of these crossings can be seen. First, the brick piers of the railway bridge can be seen. The bridge was built of wood and had a limited weight-carrying capacity. In 1962 it was found that the central swing section (which could be moved to allow taller vessels to pass through) needed replacing but was prohibitively expensive. The last service on the line ran on 2 November 1963 but it was not until 1966 that the track was taken up and the wooden bridge removed.



*The original wooden road bridge to Hayling*

The current road bridge to Hayling opened in September 1956. This replaced a wooden road bridge constructed in 1824. This also had weight restrictions that became problematic as mechanized transport grew in volume. Bus passengers, for example, were required to get off the bus and walk across the bridge, rejoining the vehicle at the other end of the bridge! Depending on tides the remains of a wadeway might also be seen (but more on this later).

**Now walk over Hayling bridge to the petrol station and make your way to the car park to the left of the building. Here you will find a footpath. Take this, following it as it turns left and continue past buildings on the left until the hedge on your right finishes and you have clear sight of a large open field to your right.**

### **3 - The Temple**

For several centuries a large and significant temple stood around 400 metres south from where you now stand. The first temple was constructed during the first century BC. This Iron Age structure had an outer wall or fence, roughly 25 metres square, with an inner enclosure and a pit. Around 50-70 years later a circular, thatched, structure was placed over the pit. Finally, in AD 70, the temple was extended, a large stone tower replaced the thatched structure over the pit and a colonnaded outer wall was built. Archaeology has revealed votive offerings at the site and a stone altar raised in memory to a soldier. The Roman-era expansion in 70 AD has been linked with the construction of the Roman palace at Fishbourne. The temple declined around 270 AD.



*Hayling Romano-Celtic temple, revealed by aerial photography*

**Now retrace your steps back to the garage, then cross the road and pause looking across the harbour to the mainland.**

If the tide is right the remains of a wadeway from Langstone to Hayling may be seen (in the form of a dark, gravel bank). The current structure has been dated to the 14<sup>th</sup> century, a period of severe flooding along the south coast that may have prompted its construction. It

is likely that, for many centuries before this structure was built, people, goods and livestock crossed the harbour at low tides. Domesday Book records the village of Wade, just to the east of Langstone, suggesting that this area was the site of such crossings. The wadeway was, eventually, cut through as part of the construction of the Portsmouth to Arundel canal. The route ran from a site near the current Arundel Street shopping precinct, out through lock gates, across Langstone harbour and on to Ford, the river Arun and eventually, the Thames. Opened in 1823 the canal was closed in 1847 due to the advent of rail transport.

**Now walk across Hayling bridge and make your way to The Royal Oak pub, next to the Windmill tower at Langstone.**

#### **4 - Langstone**

Langstone is full of interesting buildings. For example, if you wander up the high street a little, the large building on the left (around 100 metres up from the shore) is part Georgian and part Victorian. It was used as an auxiliary military hospital in WW1, then by Neville Shute's company, Airspeed Ltd, in WW2 and, later Minimodels (which became Scalectrix) in the 1950s. The building incorporates a chapel, dedicated to St Nicholas, built in 1869 by Henry Jeans in memory of his wife's cousin, Thomas Temple Silver.

To the east of the Royal Oak pub stand the remains of two mills. The windmill was built in 1730 and the remains of the tower can be clearly seen. Next to it (the white building with the three windows in the lower section) is a tide mill. Behind the building is a large millpond fed by the Lymbourne stream and by sea-water, captured by one-way valves in the millpond wall as the tide rises. Wind and tide power was particularly useful when water power reduced due, for example, to drought.



**Now walk along the coast path behind the windmill, with the millpond on your left, until, after around half a mile, you reach the first footpath to the left. Take this, passing a set of buildings to your left and farm buildings to your right until you reach the last house on your right where you will see a path running diagonally to you left. Take this and, when it re-joins the Hayling Billy track, turn right and retrace your steps to The Spring.**