



The Millennium Promenade



The Millennium Promenade takes you on a walk from the Historic Dockyard, through Gunwharf Quays and Old Portsmouth to Southsea. The first part of the route to Spur Redoubt is marked by a stone motif in the pavement and the promenade is lit by column-mounted lanterns.

The walk then extends along the promenade to Southsea Castle and is marked by plaques inset into the ground. The trail is approximately 2.6 miles long. There are also plaques inset into the ground through Portsmouth Historic Dockyard that you can follow when visiting the attractions.

Points of interest

 **Interpretation panel nearby**

2 Gunwharf Quays

A major leisure, retail and sailing development completed in 2001, Gunwharf Quays was originally the site of an old arsenal from the 17th century. Later – from 1923 to 1986 – it was the site of HMS Vernon, the Royal Navy's mine and torpedo establishment.



1 The Hard



Originally called the Common Hard, it was constructed around 1720 as a landing area for small boats. At the end of the road is Victory Gate, the main entrance to the Historic Dockyard.

→ Please note, there is a break in the chain here. As you walk away from the entrance to Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, walk along the pavement until you reach the pedestrian entrance to Gunwharf Quays under the railway arch. Walk into Gunwharf Quays and proceed straight down to the waterfront where you will pick up the chain at Spinnaker Tower.



3 Spinnaker Tower

The 170 metre Spinnaker Tower is the focal point for Portsmouth Harbour and the first landmark for millions of visitors arriving in the UK by sea. Three observation platforms offer breathtaking views of the harbour, a 23-mile panorama of the Solent, and beyond. Open all year as a visitor attraction.





4 Waterfront

The waterfront area of Gunwharf Quays offers 500 metres of berths for yachts and tall ships, and plays host to an exciting range of sailing events. There are also a wide selection of bars, restaurants and premium designer outlets, with stunning views of Portsmouth Harbour, Old Portsmouth and Gosport.

→ Follow the chain away from Spinnaker Tower along the waterfront. When you reach the footbridge turn left away from the waterfront and continue until you reach the Old Customs House on your left.



5 Vernon building or The Old Customs House

Built around 1800 as an office block, this Grade II-listed building has been converted into a pub. The elegant Georgian building was restored using traditional materials of the late 18th century by Gales brewery with the close involvement of English Heritage.

6 Vernon Creek

Running inland from the harbour, Vernon Creek is where ships were beached for repairs from the 12th century prior to the development of the dockyard. There are now attractive water features, including three torpedoes, which were found in a building on the site, and an old crane left by the Ministry of Defence when it sold the site, which is floodlit at night. Also alongside the creek is the Vernon Figurehead from a wooden ship. This is not the well-known Admiral Vernon but the Honourable George Vernon.

7 HMS Vernon Gate

Before crossing the creek you will see ahead of you HMS Vernon Gate. This Grade II-listed building was the main entrance through which thousands of sailors passed into the naval shore base. The building to the right of the gate was built in 1877 as a Police Office. To the left is the guardhouse, built in 1920.

→ Cross the creek.

8 Vulcan Building

Across Vernon Creek – opposite The Old Customs House – is the residential area of Gunwharf Quays. The Vulcan Building is the most impressive Georgian building on the site, built in 1814 as the Grand Storehouse. Originally U-shaped, the north wing was destroyed in World War Two and has now been restored. The building now houses the Aspex Gallery, along with homes and restaurants.

→ Follow the chain through Gunwharf Quays past the residences, exiting by the Wightlink Ferry Terminal, then head past the fish market to the Camber.



9 The Camber

The Camber is the original fishing settlement developed in the 12th century by the Normans, beginning the town of Portsmouth. Once a busy commercial dock, the Camber now has a small fishing fleet, fish markets, yachts and working boats. The Bridge Tavern stands on the dockside.

10 Broad Street

This street contains many houses of architectural interest.

→ Follow the chain up Broad Street.



11 The Point



This area was reputed to be the main meeting ground of press gangs who enlisted young men to sign up for the Navy, and was also notorious for its numerous ale houses. The Still & West was first listed in trade directories in 1784 as The Still Tavern. The name was expanded with '& West Country House' after it combined with the East & West Country House, another pub in Bath Square, in 1903.

A panel about the Spinnaker Tower is also located here.

12 Hailing Station

The Pier and Hailing Station next to Quebec House formed the Lloyds look out, where inbound and outbound vessels would have their names, cargo and destinations recorded and printed the following day on the Lloyds list.

13 Bath Square

Many fishermen and fishmongers lived here in the early 1800s. The square has connections with General Wolfe and the last fatal duel fought in England. Quebec House was built in 1754 as a public bathing house and is probably the only wooden-framed building to survive locally. Customs House, an 18th century HM Water-guard Office was extended in 1956 in the style of the original building.

14 Tower Street

Tower House was the home of the marine artist William Wyllie. Black Horse Cottage was part of the Black Horse Tavern, said to have been frequented by Prince William – later King William IV – when he was a midshipman.



15 Capstan Square



Here is the site of the capstan, a drum equipped with a ratchet that was used for drawing taut the iron chain boom between Gosport and Portsmouth to protect the harbour entrance. The chain was first recorded in the 16th century and last renewed in the 18th century.

16 Caponier

This is a bombproof fortified passageway which led from Point Barracks into the Round Tower to protect troops whilst moving between buildings.



17 Round Tower



Henry V ordered a wooden Round Tower be built at the mouth of the harbour in 1418; it was completed in 1426. Henry VII had the Round Tower rebuilt out of stone and a Square Tower was also built. Henry V ordered the construction of the tower and another across the harbour at Gosport after the French had invaded Portsmouth six times during the Hundred Year War.

18 Point Barracks

By 1850 all the original buildings on this site had been cleared to make room for artillery barracks. The arched sections are the surviving part of the soldiers' quarters. The barracks were demolished in the 1960s and the area opened to the public.



→ If you wish to see points 20 to 23 then leave the chain links for a short while and walk along the lower level.



19 Hotwalls



The last section of Sir Bernard de Gomme's fortifications to be completed in the 1680s, Eighteen Gun Battery is locally known as the Hotwalls. This is because it was reputed to be where hot shot was prepared during the Spithead Mutiny of 1797. However, a more likely story is that they form a sun-trap for sunbathers! Below the historic arches have been transformed into artist studios.

20 Pioneer Heritage Foundation statue

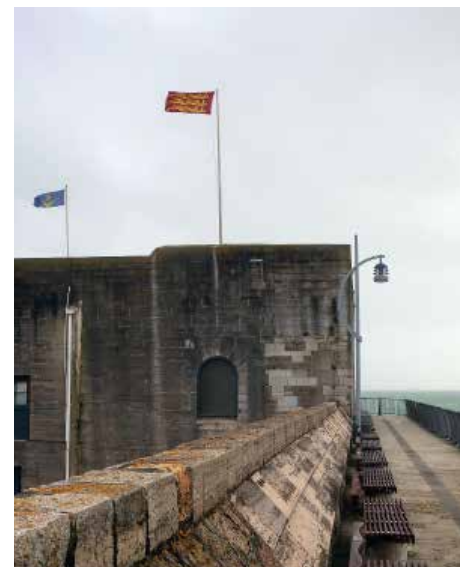
Members of the Pioneer Heritage Foundation presented this life-sized bronze sculpture to the city of Portsmouth in 2001.



21 Sallyports

The Sallyports or openings in the fortifications gave access through the defences to the beach and the sea and were often used by sailors waiting with their boats for orders.

Nearby is the Hecla Boulder, a hard rock used during the 1854 Russian War by two sailors from HMS Hecla as cover to keep the enemy at bay, assuring the safety of the whole crew.



22 Square Tower



Built and designed as a gun platform in 1494, the Square Tower was one of Portsmouth's first defensive structures. It was later used as the military governor's residence, a powder magazine and a meat and water store. In 1823 the Admiralty installed a semaphore station on the top of the tower which remained until 1848. Now administered by Portsmouth Museums, it was restored to its present condition between 1979 and 1986.

→ Re-join the chain links again on the upper level by King James' Gate.



King James' Gate c.1860

23 King James' Gate



The stonework on which the Millennium Promenade panel stands formed part of the original King James' Gate, built in 1687 to give access to Point from the Old Town. The gates stood on the site of the present road and to the north a drawbridge would have crossed a moat. The moat was filled in the mid-nineteenth century and the gate was removed in 1865.

24 Victoria Pier

Victoria Pier was built on the site of an earlier jetty, from which gunpowder and later meat was ferried to wooden ships anchored at Spithead. In 1817 the steam packet service to and from the Isle of Wight began. Most of the present pier was washed away in heavy seas in 1925.

25 Grand Parade

Until the 1870s, when most of its defences were removed, Old Portsmouth was a fortified garrison town, surrounded by walls and a deep moat. The army was at the centre of town life, providing the residents with not only security but also with spectacular parades and pageantry on Grand Parade.



26 The Main Guard House

The red brick outlines on Grand Parade are the fortifications of the town's main guardhouse, which was demolished in 1883. There is a plaque here to tell you

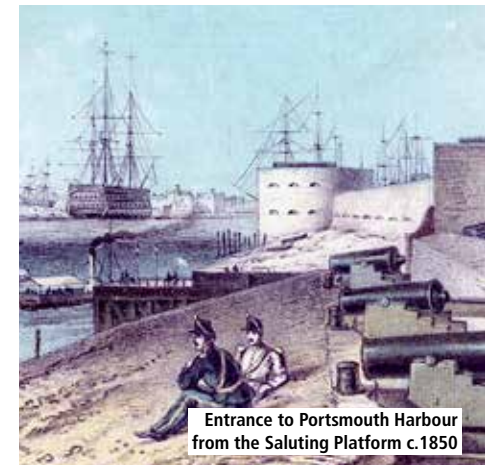
27 Admiral Lord Nelson Statue

The statue depicts Nelson in the undress uniform he wore when leaving from Old Portsmouth for the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.



28 Royal Garrison Church – Domus Dei

Originally a pilgrims hospice founded around 1212, it is also the place where Charles II married Catherine of Braganza in 1662. The nave of the church was badly damaged by bombing in 1941, resulting in its roof being completely destroyed. Today it remains open to the sky as a tribute to those who lost their lives during the war. It's owned by English Heritage and open to the public at various times throughout the year.



28 Saluting Platform and Ten Gun Battery

Constructed in the late 15th century to provide elevated gun sites near the harbour mouth, the platform overlooks the outline of the main guardhouse, Grand Parade, and the Garrison Church. Originally a simple wall joining the Saluting Platform to the Square Tower, the battery was adapted in the 18th and 19th centuries to serve as an additional defence and consisted of ten guns.

30 Long Curtain Battery and Bridge

This is the only surviving section of the ramparts and moat, which once enclosed the old town.



Spur Redoubt, 1810

31 Spur Redoubt

A small triangular-shaped fort or redoubt, this was built in 1680 by Bernard de Gomme to strengthen a possibly vulnerable area in the fortifications of Portsmouth town. It's believed to be the point from which Nelson set sail for the Battle of Trafalgar onboard HMS Victory.

→ The chain now ends, continue along the waterfront through the funfair and arcades to join the seafront promenade. From here you can follow plaques in the ground to Southsea Castle.

32 Clarence Pier

Opened in 1861, the pier was initially a landing place for passenger steamers. Over subsequent years the pier grew to include a pavilion, sun deck, café and concourse hall. Heavily bombed during World War II, the pier closed until 1961 when it re-opened in its present form with a funfair, which is still popular with visitors today.



33 Hovercraft Terminal



Hovertravel is the world's longest running commercial hovercraft service and provides the only scheduled passenger hovercraft service in Europe.



Southsea Common

34 Clarence Esplanade

Constructed in 1848 to prevent coastal erosion and to provide a promenade along the beach, the esplanade is named after Lord Frederick Fitzclarence, a Lieutenant – Governor of Portsmouth who encouraged and supported its creation.



Clarence Esplanade

35 Southsea Common

Southsea Common was bought by the town from the government in 1923. This green space is popular for picnics, kite flying and a range of sporting activities. The common is also home to the Royal Naval War Memorial.



My Portsmouth by drone

36 Bandstand Field

The earth banks around Bandstand Field were gun batteries defending the entrance to Portsmouth Harbour. They form a natural amphitheatre with an outstanding sea view, now a popular venue for outdoor events in the summer months.



37 Southsea Castle

Built in 1554 to a design reputedly by Henry VIII, the castle is one of a series of forts built along the south coast. The castle is open free of charge each year from April to October.



38 The D-Day Story

The plans for Operation Overlord – D-Day – in World War Two were finalised just north of Portsmouth at Southwick House. The D-Day Story museum gives a fascinating insight into the events of that momentous day and includes the landing craft LCT7074, one of the last surviving landing craft tanks from D-Day, and the 83 metre long Overlord Embroidery.

The Solent



As you walk along the promenade you have great views across the stretch of water called The Solent to the Isle of Wight. On a clear day you can see all four of the circular Solent Forts. These forts were commissioned by Lord Palmerston in response to the threat of a French invasion under Napoleon. The forts were designed by civil engineer Sir John Hawkshaw and built – between 1865 and 1880 – to protect the narrow shipping channels to Portsmouth Harbour.

Portsmouth Harbour has been home to the Royal Navy since 1194. Looking from left to right the four forts are named: Horse Sand, St Helens, No Man's Land and Spit Bank.

From Southsea Castle area you can also view the yellow buoy marking the wreck site of the Mary Rose, Henry VIII's famous flagship, which sank in battle with a French invasion fleet on 19 July 1545.

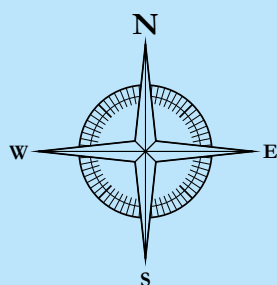




The **purple numbers** on the map indicate that there is an interpretation panel near this point.

Unfortunately, the panels in Southsea are not indicated as these are changing during the ongoing Southsea Coastal Defence works.

You can walk the route from The Hard heading south or from Southsea Castle heading north.



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