

Portsmouth
the great waterfront city



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL



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 Clarence Pier 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 posts. The trail is approximately 2.6 miles long.

Points of interest



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.

→ *There is currently a break in the chain here. As you walk away from the entrance to the Historic Dockyard do not follow the chain right into the bus and train station. Instead 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.*

2 Gunwharf Quays

A major leisure, retail and sailing development completed in 2001. Originally the site of an old arsenal from the 17th century and later from 1923 to 1986 the site of HMS Vernon, the Royal Navy's mining and torpedo establishment.



3 Spinnaker Tower

To your right is the 170 metre Spinnaker Tower, the focal point for Portsmouth Harbour, becoming the first landmark for millions of visitors arriving in the UK on ferries, ships and boats. Three observation platforms offer breathtaking views of the harbour, a 23 mile panorama of the Solent and beyond.



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 the Spinnaker Tower along the waterfront. When you reach the footbridge turn left away from the waterfront and continue until you reach the Old Custom's 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, a local brewery, with the close involvement of English Heritage.



6 Vernon Creek

Running inland from the harbour, this 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 used as seating which were found in a building on the site and an old crane left by the MOD when it sold the site, 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 II and has now been restored. The building now houses the Aspex Gallery, along with residential homes and restaurants.

→ *Follow the chain through Gunwharf Quays past the residential homes, exiting by the Wightlink Ferry Terminal and then past Viviers' fish market to the Camber*

9 The Camber

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; on its outside wall is a large painting depicting the colourful way of life on the Point.

10 Broad Street

The street contains many houses of architectural interest including Fortitude Cottage, a public house until the 1920s, now a guesthouse.

11 Ben Ainslie Racing

In 2015 Ben Ainslie Racing opened their home base on the historic Camber. Showcasing the sport and its innovation, technology and sustainability.

→ *Follow the chain up Broad Street.*

12 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 ' & West Country House' section of the name was added after it combined with the East & West Country House, another pub in Bath Square in 1903. The Point was also known as Spice Island because it was once a major port importing exotic spices from around the world.



13 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.

14 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.

15 Tower Street

Tower House was the home of 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 a midshipman.

Excavation of chain



16 Capstan Square

The site of the capstan, a drum equipped with a ratchet, 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.

17 Caponier

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





18 Round Tower

Henry V ordered a wooden Round Tower be built at the mouth of the harbour in 1418, which was completed in 1426. Henry VIII 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. Outside the tower is the Hecla Stone, a hard rock boulder 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.

→ If you wish to see points 19 to 23 then leave the chain links for a short while and walk along the lower level.

19 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.

20 18 Gun Battery

The last section of Sir Bernard de Gomme's fortifications to be completed in the 1680s. Locally it is known as Hot Walls as 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!

21 Pioneer Heritage Foundation statue

Members of the Pioneer Heritage Foundation presented this life sized bronze sculpture, situated in front of the last Sallyport, to the city of Portsmouth on 27 August 2001. "A permanent legacy to the commitment of the Europeans who courageously left their native lands to create a new home in America".



22 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.

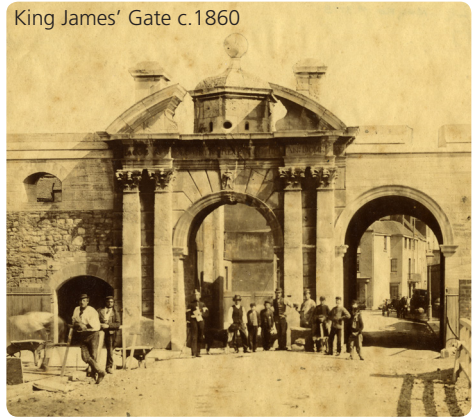


23 Square Tower

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 and Visitor Services and between 1979 and 1986 it was restored to its present condition.

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

King James' Gate c.1860



24 King James' Gate

The stonework on which the Millennium 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.

25 Victoria Pier

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.



26 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. There is a statue of Nelson to commemorate his link to the city.

Guard house Grand Parade c.1870



27 The Main Guard House

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



28 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. He passed over the spot where the statue stands and faces the place on the beach where he embarked for HMS Victory.

29 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. Owned by English Heritage and open to the public at various times throughout the year.



Entrance to Portsmouth Harbour from the Saluting Platform c.1850



30 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.

31 Long Curtain Battery

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

32 Spur Redoubt

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

→ *The chain now ends but continue along the waterfront, through the funfair to Southsea Castle following the directional posts.*



33 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 an air raid in World War II the pier closed until 1961 when it re-opened in its present form with funfair and is still popular with visitors today.



34 Hovercraft Terminal

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



35 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.

37 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.



36 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.



38 Southsea Castle

Built by Henry VIII in 1544, 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 September.





You can walk the route from
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