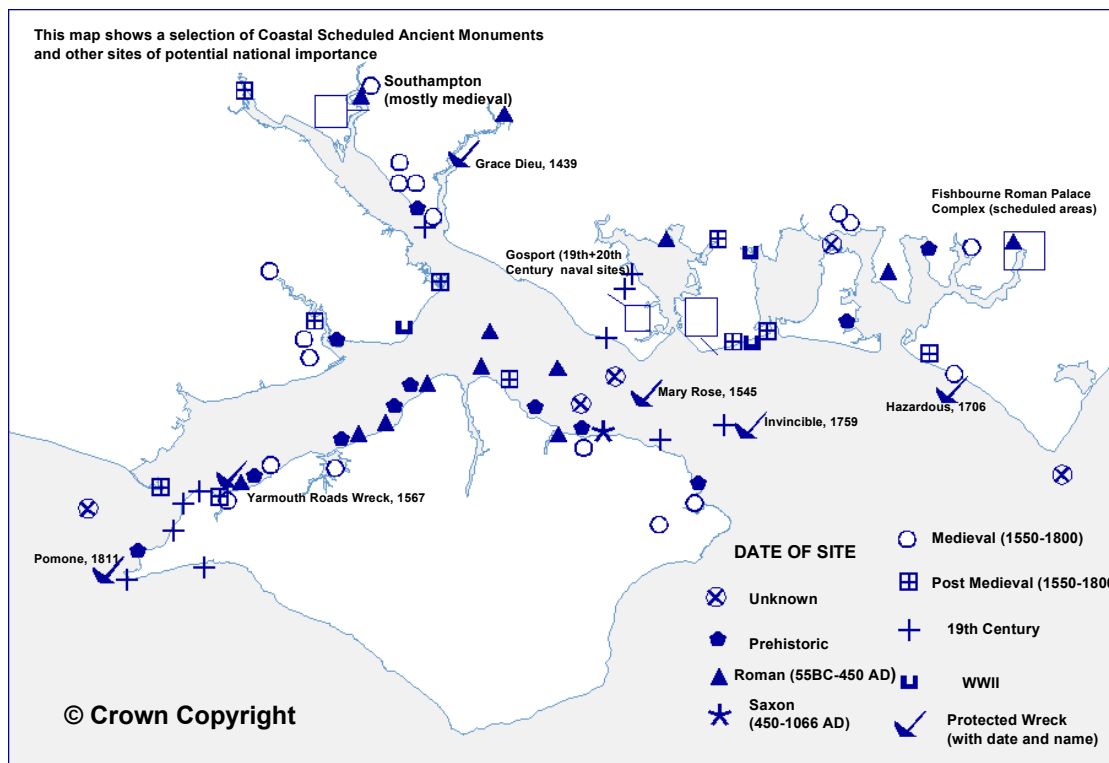


## HISTORIC HERITAGE AND MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY

Long-term aim: ‘to identify and protect the archaeological and historic heritage of the Solent, and promote its understanding and enjoyment, ensuring equal attention to sites on land and underwater’.



### KEY FACTS:

- The Solent is a unique, nationally important focus for Maritime Heritage and Archaeology.
- Out of a total of 42 UK sites, 6 protected wrecks are within the Solent.
- Over 800 archaeological sites are currently recorded in the Solent and Wight waters.

## The Position

The Solent's historical and archaeological sites are one of its most important assets, and represent a nationally significant resource of buildings, landscapes and artefacts on land and underwater.

There are three particular aspects which are of interest:

- historic buildings and structures associated with the maritime history of the region. The Solent contains the most important concentration of coastal defence heritage features in the UK, important sites associated with the history of commercial activity and coastal settlement, and a large number of shipwreck sites below high water mark;
- submerged archaeological evidence of past landscapes and land uses at times of lower sea level;
- archaeological remains and historic structures under particular threat, including those put at risk by coastal erosion.

The archaeological resource has a continuity that takes it from land through the intertidal zone and out to sea. This is shown by relic prehistoric landscapes, where contemporary features survive on both dry land and the sea bed. It can also be seen in the maritime cultural landscape where ship wrecks, their ports and associated industries may be represented by archaeological remains and historic buildings.

On land, the body of knowledge about the extent and nature of archaeological and historic sites is generally good, and is increasing steadily. There are a number of nationally important archaeological sites, some of which are recognised as Scheduled Monuments (SM). However, such scheduled sites only make up a comparatively small proportion of the total archaeological resource. Sites which are not scheduled are offered protection through the planning system via the local authorities' Sites and Monuments Records (SMR). The most important historic buildings are identified as Listed Buildings, whilst larger urban areas of historic significance may be identified as Conservation Areas. The designations of SM, Listed Building and Conservation Area provide a level of statutory protection for sites through the planning system.

The importance of the Solent as a focus for maritime heritage has long been recognised, particularly that associated with the 'Defence of the Realm' in Portsmouth and, to a growing extent, Gosport. In terms of maritime archaeology, the Solent has been recognised by the Government's heritage agencies as an area of high interest and potential. However, the extent of information on archaeological sites is markedly less than that on land, and the level of statutory protection afforded to them is also lower. Both of these factors mean that the Solent's maritime archaeological heritage at sea is at greater risk of damage than that on land. There is also widespread recognition of the significance of the historic sites and the need for their protection - both as direct evidence of the long maritime history of the Solent, and as a prime element of the attraction of the area. The Solent's historic sites have an economic value by providing significant tourist attractions, and giving the region a high profile and identity which assist in marketing initiatives and attracting investors.

The coverage of archaeological and historic sites on land by the appropriate designation continues to grow. In the past some important sites have been lost or damaged through development and, whilst planning policies have now been strengthened, there is a continued need to ensure that important sites are given adequate protection. However the reuse of historic buildings, which may require sensitive redevelopment, is also important if they are to have a long-term life and not become derelict. The number of large, significant sites poses a difficult issue about how to adapt or convert them to uses which are appropriate to their historic heritage, and will give them a viable and well-maintained future. The release of Ministry of Defence sites around Portsmouth Harbour is a case in point, where a strategic overview is essential if the maximum benefits of the sites are to be combined with imaginative and effective long-term use and protection of historic buildings and features.

The national level of awareness of submerged archaeology has grown rapidly in the last twenty years, particularly with the raising of the Mary Rose in 1982. Since that time, the extent of knowledge about the range of archaeological interest underwater has expanded, highlighting not just shipwrecks, but also the extent of evidence of past settlement of the Solent shores at times of lower sea levels, and the nature, scale and pace of coastal change. Even so, the extent of knowledge is significantly less than that on land.

The Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology was formed in 1991, and has established itself as a particularly important focus for research and advice within the Solent. Maritime archaeology now attracts considerable attention within policy making in both national and local government, with the emphasis on how the same attention and protection can be afforded to underwater archaeological interest as that on land. In the absence of statutory protection, useful voluntary approaches have been developed, most notably the 1995 Code of Practice for Seabed Developers, produced by the Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee (JNAPC) in conjunction with key industry bodies (see box page 24).

A further joint initiative by the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England and the Nautical Archaeology Society has been the production of the form - 'Dive into History'. This enables amateur divers to pass on their knowledge about shipwrecks, crashed aircraft and other man-made objects on the seabed. This information is entered into a national database.

## What do we need to do?

### 1. Continue to protect historic and archaeological sites from development

Local authority planning policies need to maintain a consistent and co-ordinated approach to the conservation of historic and archaeological sites on land, and to protect sites from damage by development, including both destructive development and inappropriate uses. Where damage to sites is unavoidable and is permitted, full provision for archaeological excavation and recording should be made.

**LEAD ROLE:** Local authorities.

### 2. Give increased protection to archaeological sites underwater

In contrast to the situation above low water mark, there is little statutory protection for archaeological sites underwater even though such sites may be of equivalent and sometimes greater quality than those on land. Whilst voluntary codes of practice are welcome, and the partnership between developers and conservationists appears to be working well, the lack of long-term statutory protection must be of great concern to the Solent, given the unique importance of its archaeological resource. Four key points require action:

i) The JNAPC code of practice provides a useful and positive framework within which sea-bed development should be carried out, and its widespread promotion and recognition by sea-bed developers should be continued and encouraged.

**LEAD ROLE:** JNAPC and its members, sea-bed developers.

ii.) The whole of the Solent is of high archaeological potential, and there is a need to assess the nature of the impacts from any significant sea-bed development on archaeological resources prior to proceeding. In the immediate future the limited extent of knowledge of the sea-bed means such assessments will need to be reactive, and archaeological organisations will need to work together with developers to secure the necessary information.

**LEAD ROLE:** Archaeological bodies, sea-bed developers

iii.) Underwater sites should be afforded equivalent protection from development to those on land.

Important archaeological sites below low water mark can theoretically be designated as Scheduled Monuments, however, the remit of English Heritage (the body that recommends sites for scheduling) does not extend to the territorial sea. The practical problem of scheduling sites below the low water mark needs to be addressed as a national policy issue. In addition, there is a system of statutory protection for Wreck sites under the *Protection of Wrecks Act, 1973*; however, this is infrequently deployed.

**LEAD ROLE:** English Heritage

iv.) English Heritage should be added as a statutory consultee for the sectoral systems of development control below low water mark. The Government has already consulted on this proposal, and a decision is awaited. Given the importance of the submerged archaeological resource within the Solent, it would be particularly appropriate for a statutory requirement for archaeological consultation to be in place, coupled with statutory protection for important sites (iii, above). This would provide the

necessary regime to ensure protection of the resource in the long term. As with English Nature's role with regard to nature conservation, the advice provided by English Heritage in response to applications would need to be subject to public scrutiny, and the impacts of the change in regime should be the subject of monitoring after 3 - 5 years.

**LEAD ROLE:** English Heritage.

### 3. Improve the information base - particularly underwater

Identifying the existence of important archaeological and historic sites is fundamental to their protection. There is, therefore, a priority need to increase the body of knowledge about coastal and maritime archaeology within the Solent. In particular, there is a need to bring the identification and recording of submerged archaeology in the Solent to the equivalent of that on land, making effective use of national and local expertise. This goal is a long-term project, and must be resourced accordingly. It is proposed as one of the Strategic Priority Projects within the implementation of the Strategic Guidance.

**LEAD ROLE:** Hampshire & Wight Trust for Archaeology, in conjunction with other key archaeological interests.

The main sources of information about historic and archaeological sites are the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the Listed Buildings Register, which are available from local authorities. The SMRs for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight both contain details of known underwater sites within the Solent and are national examples of good practice in that regard. A high priority should be afforded to the continued maintenance and development of these systems, and to making their contents widely available.

**LEAD ROLE:** Local authorities.



**SOLENT FORUM ACTION:** The Solent Information Network (Flagship Project 1) could assist in disseminating archaeological information. It should make sure that appropriate links are put in place with the SMR, historic buildings register, and other archaeological databases.

There is a need to monitor progress in recording and protecting important archaeological sites within the Solent, and the development and monitoring of an appropriate set of indicators should be progressed.

**LEAD ROLE:** English Heritage, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments of England.

### 4. Recognise the importance of maritime archaeology within coastal defence policies

Future shoreline management policies could have a significant impact on archaeological and historic resources, and Shoreline Management Plans and other coastal zone and estuary plans need to ensure that full consideration of historic and archaeological sites is made within both information collation and policy formulation. The recognition and protection of intertidal resources from damage by sea defence works will be required.

**LEAD ROLE:** Local authorities, Environment Agency, SCOPAC.

Archaeological information should also be utilised in forming sustainable coastal defence policies. One of the most interesting findings of maritime archaeology is the evidence of the nature, scale and pace of past coastal change. This information provides a firm picture of the evolution of the coastline, and could be particularly valuable in predicting future changes.

**LEAD ROLE:** Coast Protection Authorities, Environment Agency, SCOPAC.

### 5. Take a strategic approach to the protection and use of historic buildings and sites

The long-term future of historic buildings within the Solent relies on securing appropriate uses for them which recognise and support their character and, where possible, provide some level of public access. Without such uses these buildings are likely to fall into a progressive state of disrepair. The large number of sites and buildings poses a strong challenge to local authorities, and there is a need for the body of sites to be approached 'in the round' and for strategic priorities to be established. The Solent Environment and Access Initiative (Flagship Project 2) provides some ability to address this

issue, but the resources necessary for the re-use of sites released by the Ministry of Defence around Portsmouth Harbour and the existing range of unused forts and other buildings cannot be met by the project alone. There is a need to integrate the use and management of historic sites within urban regeneration, environmental improvement schemes and the provision of public access. The potential role of the Heritage Lottery Fund within the overall strategy needs to be carefully evaluated.

**LEAD ROLE:** Local authorities, English Heritage.

## 6. Promote widespread support for archaeological conservation

Whilst there is a reasonable level of public awareness and profile of maritime archaeology through such projects as the 'Mary Rose', 'Defence of the Realm' and the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, there is a continuing need to exploit opportunities to promote greater public understanding of the historic heritage and archaeology of the Solent, recognising the value of these resources to tourism and economic development. Many of these actions need to be taken by individual organisations, and Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology, and the County and Unitary Councils have a particularly important role to play.

**LEAD ROLE:** Archaeology lead bodies, Solent Project.

There is a need to develop closer links with sports divers and fishermen. Both these groups have the potential to assist maritime archaeology by reporting finds. In the case of sports divers, there may be interest in assisting properly regulated research and excavation, and to raise awareness of diving practices which may damage archaeology. A considerable workload could be involved, and the Hampshire & Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology is well placed to lead, provided resources are available.

**LEAD ROLE:** Hampshire & Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology.



**SOLENT FORUM ACTION:** Improved public information about maritime archaeology should be provided within the delivery of 'Solent Outreach' (Flagship Project 4, section 6).

### The Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee code of practice for seabed developers

1. Seabed developers acknowledge the potential scientific value of archaeological evidence on, or concealed within, the seabed and will make every effort to report, promptly unexpected discoveries encountered.
2. The practice of developers making provision for archaeological survey and investigation in advance of development on land is supported by Government, the CBI and local authorities. Seabed developers should therefore take account of the need for co-operation to record and assess the nation's maritime heritage.
3. At the earliest opportunity the developer should seek informed archaeological advice to establish whether potential development programmes would be likely to affect a site of archaeological interest. Normally the developer will consult appropriate archaeological bodies.
4. The above bodies will make available to the developer information contained within the appropriate National Monuments Record and the coastal section of the Sites and Monuments Record maintained by the appropriate local authority or equivalent. This will enable the developer and the licensing authority to give due consideration to Government's desire to see archaeological sites physically preserved or recorded.
5. Where such consultation or the developer's own research indicate that important archaeological remains may exist, the developer may make provision for the carrying out by appropriately qualified archaeologists of an underwater survey of the area. The survey will be designed to ascertain the archaeological potential before development commences and what action should be taken to preserve any important archaeological remains located.
6. Consideration will be given to the physical preservation of important archaeological remains in line with the Government's archaeological policies. Where development is unavoidable because of

economic or social needs and physical preservation is not possible, archaeological survey and investigation may be an acceptable alternative. Such work will include the establishment of a site archive and the publication of the results of the investigation and survey according to the recommendations in "The Management of Archaeological Projects" published in 1991 by English Heritage or an equivalent standard.

7. Seabed developers and archaeologists will recognise the laws relating to sites, including the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973, and the issues of reporting and ownership of finds under the Merchant Shipping Act 1894.

8. In co-operation with the Receiver of Wreck, seabed developers will ensure that archaeologists may, for the purposes of study and analysis, retain artefacts and records for a reasonable time. Seabed developers will also recognise the desirability of depositing all artefacts and records in an appropriate museum as a complete permanent archive for future study. Copies of all site records should be sent to the relevant local authority Sites and Monuments Record or equivalent and to the appropriate National Monuments Record.

9. The archaeologists will be conscious of the potential public relations benefits to developers of publicising their work, and that in any publicity, financial or other support from the developer should be recognised in a manner agreed by the developer.

10. The developer will present to the licensing authority a copy of the advice provided by archaeological bodies consulted along with his own proposals for accommodating any archaeological constraints which have been identified.

**KEY ORGANISATIONS: HISTORIC HERITAGE & MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY**

**Lead organisations:**

English Heritage  
Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England  
Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology  
Hampshire County Council  
Southampton City Council  
Portsmouth City Council  
Isle of Wight Council  
West Sussex County Council

**Other key organisations:**

Department of Culture, Media and Sport  
Department of Trade and Industry (licensing role)  
Department of Environment Transport and Regions (licensing role)  
Ministry of Defence  
Crown Estate

New Forest District Council  
Eastleigh Borough Council  
Fareham Borough Council  
Gosport Borough Council  
Havant Borough Council  
Lymington Harbour Commissioners  
Beaulieu River Management  
Associated British Ports  
Queen's Harbour Master  
Langstone Harbour Board  
Chichester Harbour Conservancy  
Yarmouth Harbour Commissioners  
Cowes Harbour Commissioners  
Bembridge Harbour Company  
Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee  
Nautical Archaeology Society  
British Sub-Aqua Club  
Sub Aqua Association  
Solent Protection Society  
Southampton University  
University of Portsmouth  
Archaeological and Historical Societies and Interest Groups