

Gosport Waterfront Trail Guide

Welcome to the Gosport Waterfront Trail, a self guided walk through approximately 3km of historic Gosport. The Trail is paved with brick and stone and set into it is a chain motif which will guide you along the route. To complete the entire walk please allow approximately 1 hour. Your walk starts here.

Begin at the Royal Navy Submarine Museum.

1 Royal Navy Submarine Museum and Fort Blockhouse – The Museum is situated on the harbour waterfront and occupies part of the former submarine base. Attractions include a walk-through tour of HMS Alliance, museum galleries that tell the story of Britain's submarine service, the Royal Navy's first submarine Holland I and other submarine craft. Visit the new 'state of the art' John Fieldhouse Building with its interactive zones and history galleries. The 100 foot submarine escape training tower in Fort Blockhouse is visible from the museum. The Trail follows the path of the tramline used to transport the sick and wounded to Haslar Hospital.

Look ahead to Haslar Hospital.

2 Haslar Hospital – Note the magnificent 18th century façade. When completed in 1760, this was the largest new brick building in Europe with accommodation for over 2,000 sailors and provided the most up-to-date medical treatment at that period. Despite an uncertain future, limited medical facilities are still available to the local civilian population.

Follow the Trail back past the car park to Haslar Road. Turn right, noting the mosaic, which represents the terminology used by submarine services personnel. Pause at the next mosaic, which depicts the Motor Torpedo Boat.

3 The Joint Services Adventurers Sail Training Centre – HMS Hornet was the centre for the naval coastal craft, which became Motor Torpedo Boats (MTBs) and Fast Patrol Boats (FPBs). Hornet was a key establishment in the Second World War and particularly in the build-up to D-Day in 1944.

Continue ahead to Haslar Bridge.

4 Haslar Bridge – The present bridge dates from 1979 but previously there had been four other bridges. The first, erected in c.1795, was dismantled in the early 19th century. The bridge of 1832 was bombed in 1940/41 and the centre span removed to facilitate ships entering Gunboat yard for repairs. The pedestrian 'Pneumonia' Bridge spanned the creek for a post-war period. It was very high (to allow ships to pass underneath) and was given its name by locals who stated that, if you didn't have pneumonia before crossing the bridge, you certainly would afterwards!

On the right is Haslar Marina.

5 Haslar Marina – Haslar Marina was built in 1993 to cope with the large demand for marina berths in the Solent. It is one of the largest marinas in the area and can hold nearly 700 boats. The most prominent facility is the old Trinity House Lightship, which acts as the marina's clubhouse.

Turn right and follow the Trail passing a mosaic whose design relates to the town's inner defences. Pause just before a wooden bridge.

6 The moat and ramparts – Gosport was a fortified town until the early 20th century. The moat and ramparts here date from c.1803 and were put in place in the Napoleonic War period.

Look ahead to the two blocks of flats.

7 Harbour and Seaward Towers – Built in the early sixties, the flats have bold mosaic panels which were initially controversial, but are now recognised as providing an invaluable contribution to the Millennium Parade.

Between the flats is Timespace.

8 Timespace – This unique public time-piece and performing space draws a physical and spiritual link between Holy Trinity Church and Portsmouth Harbour. The design's inspiration is Albert Einstein's theory of relativity and his space-time cone diagram is represented within the paving. At the central point is a mast, which casts the shadow for the sundial. When the sun crosses the meridian, the line of True North marked on the paved surface, a small circle of light within the shadow not only indicates the sun time but also the date. The paving mosaic around the perimeter of Timespace depicts events and characters from Gosport's rich maritime history.

Behind Timespace and only a short walk away are:-

9 Holy Trinity Vicarage, Trinity Green and Holy Trinity Church – The Grade II listed Vicarage dates from 1795. In the early 19th century it was taken over as the headquarters for the Royal Engineers during the Napoleonic War period. The Green enclosed Holy Trinity Church, a fine Jacobean building dating from 1696. The building was remodelled externally in the 19th century and the campanile Bell Tower was added in 1887 to commemorate Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. The Church contains an 18th century organ used by the composer Frideric Handel. The plaster-covered columns in the nave are the original 'fourteen stout oak trees' sent from Farnham Common.

Return to the Trail and walk to the end of the pier.

Far to the left is Portsdown Hill. With its exposed chalk face, it has been a natural barrier and repellent to invaders over the centuries. The crest of the hill has a variety of Palmerston Forts dating from the mid 19th century. Forts Southwick and Widley were the HQ for the massive 1944 D-Day operations. To the west of the Hill is Portchester Castle and to the east, Whale Island.

10 Haslar Marina Millennium Pier – The Pier opened in 2001. Look across the water to Old Portsmouth. On the right, and where the harbour narrows, is the Round Tower, dating from 1420. A chain once stretched between here and another tower on the Gosport side of the harbour and the mosaic at the entrance to the pier commemorates this chain of defence. Just behind the Round Tower is the Square Tower where gunpowder was stored until the 18th century. See text boxes for more sights across the water.

Return to the Trail and turn right to come to the ferry pontoon and landing stage.

11 The Gosport Ferry – There has been some sort of ferry service to Portsmouth since the 16th century and early services were maintained by watermen who worked their own boats. The ferry was complemented by a floating bridge which commenced service in 1840 and ran until 1959. The modern ferry service, which stops at Portsmouth Hard, dates from Victorian times, and the boats are updated and modernised at regular intervals.

Note the stone to the left just off the Trail and near to the red and white mine.

12 The French Boulder marks the twinning between Gosport and Royan, France. The link was established in 1959 and continues to be strongly supported with civic and sporting activities in the two towns.

Continue, pausing at the entrance to The Falkland Gardens.

13 D-Day Memorial – This commemorates the ships and troops who departed from this point in June 1944 en route for the Normandy beaches – Spithead being a major assembly point for the fleet for the Overlord operation.

Enter the Gardens.

14 The Falkland Gardens (formerly the Ferry Gardens) were developed in the mid-1920s as a result of land reclamation and infilling from the dismantled ramparts. The Gardens have remained substantially the same for over 75 years affording magnificent views over the Harbour. The Gardens were renamed the Falkland Gardens in commemoration of the fleet and the many thousands of troops who sailed from Portsmouth Harbour in 1982. The large mosaic (The Rondel), at the entrance commemorates those who left Gosport to serve in the Falklands conflict as well as the D-Day landings. The fountain responds to coins, with proceeds being passed to local charities. Look out for the bust of Admiral Fieldhouse.

Note the timepiece on the right.

15 Tide Clock – This unique stainless steel and toughened glass design, by Paul Best, denotes the state of the tides in the Harbour. The Clock was funded by the Gosport Ferry whose centenary is depicted in the mosaic close to the Tide Clock.

Across the Water is Portsmouth Dockyard (see text boxes).

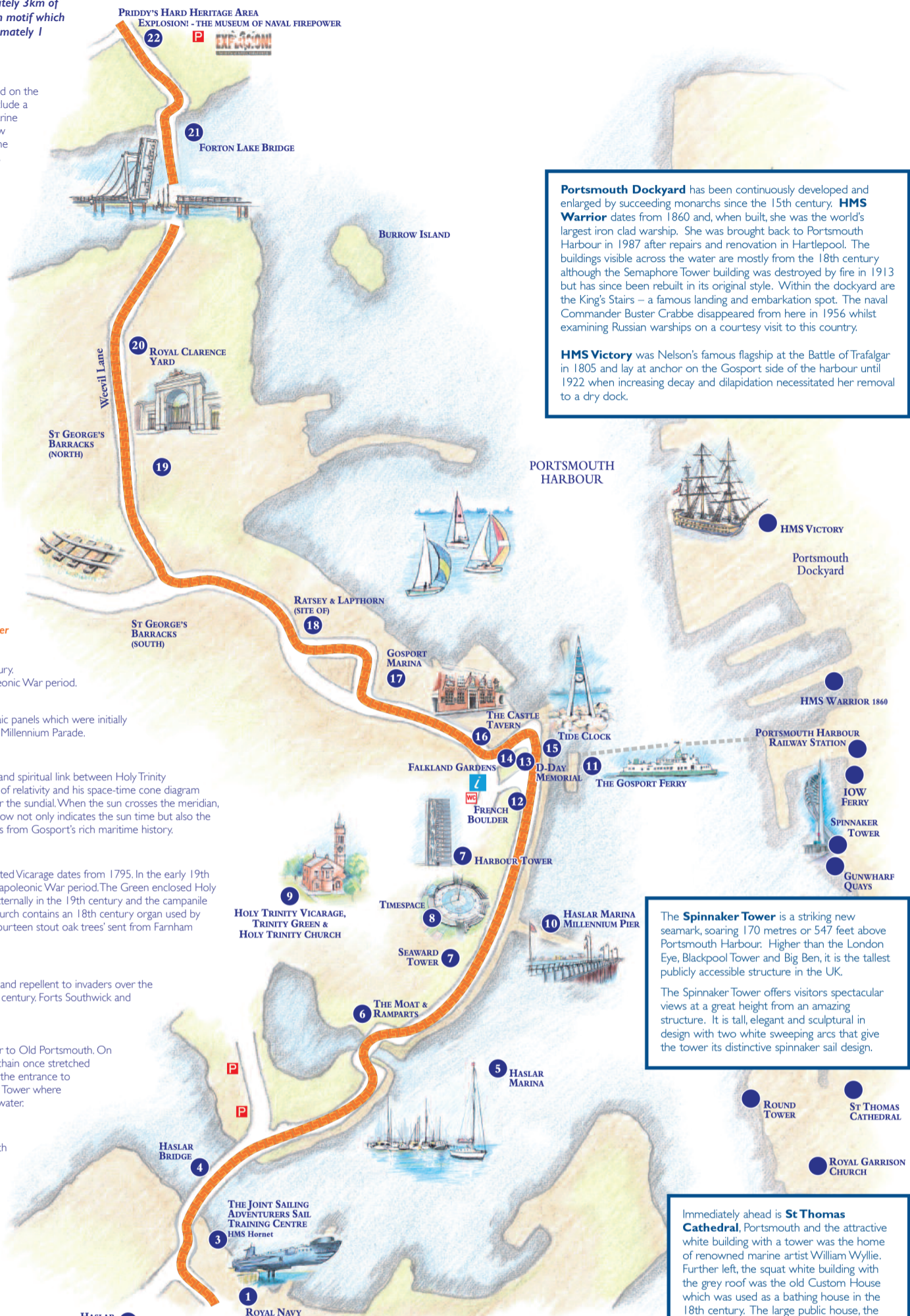
Leave the Gardens and turn right. Follow the road, keeping on the right hand side.

16 The Castle Tavern – Built on the site of the former Fort Charles (commemorated in the mosaic), which was built in the 17th century at the behest of Sir Bernard de Gomme, Charles II's chief engineer.

Keep walking ahead.

17 Gosport Marina, formerly known as Camper and Nicholson's, was established over 200 years ago (1782) by Francis Calense Amos who ran a ferry between Gosport and Portsmouth and began to build small trading boats. William Camper took over in 1820 and by 1855 Ben Nicholson became a partner and thus the famous company name was founded. The company became a world leader in the design and manufacture of high class racing yachts, including the famous J-class yachts that competed in the America's Cup in the inter war period, sailed by Sir Thomas Lipton, Tommy Sopwith, Edward VII and many society people. Several hundred local people were employed here and the firm was a major contributor to the Gosport economy. The mosaic at the entrance represents the famous Camper and Nicholson's yachts.

Keep walking ahead. Then turn right into Harbour Road and follow the road to the left by the Gosport Marina. Keep ahead then turn right opposite sign to White Lion Walk.



Portsmouth Dockyard has been continuously developed and enlarged by succeeding monarchs since the 15th century. **HMS Warrior** dates from 1860 and, when built, she was the world's largest iron clad warship. She was brought back to Portsmouth Harbour in 1987 after repairs and renovation in Hartlepool. The buildings visible across the water are mostly from the 18th century although the Semaphore Tower building was destroyed by fire in 1913 but has since been rebuilt in its original style. Within the dockyard are the King's Stairs – a famous landing and embarkation spot. The naval Commander Buster Crabbe disappeared from here in 1956 whilst examining Russian warships on a courtesy visit to this country.

HMS Victory was Nelson's famous flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805 and lay at anchor on the Gosport side of the harbour until 1922 when increasing decay and dilapidation necessitated her removal to a dry dock.

The **Spinnaker Tower** is a striking new seamount, soaring 170 metres or 547 feet above Portsmouth Harbour. Higher than the London Eye, Blackpool Tower and Big Ben, it is the tallest publicly accessible structure in the UK. The Spinnaker Tower offers visitors spectacular views at a great height from an amazing structure. It is tall, elegant and sculptural in design with two white sweeping arcs that give the tower its distinctive spinnaker sail design.

Immediately ahead is **St Thomas Cathedral**, Portsmouth and the attractive white building with a tower was the home of renowned marine artist William Wyllie. Further left, the squat white building with the grey roof was the old Custom House which was used as a bathing house in the 18th century. The large public house, the Spice Island House, dates back to c.1700 when it was known as the 'Still Tavern'. **Gunwharf Quays** is a shopping and entertainment complex built on the site of the HMS Vernon Torpedo School. Further to the left is the Camber, a small commercial port and car ferry terminal, and the Railway Jetty – departure point for Fast Cat passenger services to the Isle of Wight.

18 The large building on the right once housed **Ratsey and Lapthorn** – a long established sailmaker, working in close collaboration with Camper and Nicholson's. The firm employed many women working on the huge sails demanded by the yachts of the period. The Spinnaker Tower's shape echoes the work of these women who worked on the spinnaker sails. The mosaic represents the site of the forge of Henry Cort who pioneered the iron refining process in the 18th Century.

Continue along road until the brown and white tourist sign to **Explosion!** On the left and ahead is the site of **St George's Barracks South and North** and the nearby mosaic commemorates the **20th Maritime Regiment** gaining the **Freedom of the Borough**. Turn right onto **Weevil Lane**.

19 The Royal Clarence Yard, opened in 1827, was one of the country's premier naval victualling establishments. It contained a rum store, a granary, a bakery with nine vast brick ovens, and a slaughterhouse. Royal Clarence Yard suffered some bomb damage in World War II but continued working, supplying the huge armada of troops and ships in the Solent awaiting D-Day in June 1944. The establishment closed in 1994 and is now undergoing major refurbishment for modern use. Many of the buildings are Grade II listed as of national importance and are being carefully renovated for domestic, commercial and leisure use. On the left is a railway track, once part of Queen Victoria's private railway, that ran to a station where she would alight and embark by boat to the Isle of Wight. The mosaic commemorates the passing of the Queen's funeral train in 1901. Current excavations are uncovering the remains of Samuel Wyatt's 1782 brewery and John Smeaton's Horse Pump Engine House, both formerly on this historic site.

Follow route for a few minutes to the stone gateway decorated with a lion and a unicorn.

20 This was the original 1827 entrance to Royal Clarence Yard and the gates date from that year. Inside, the two fine white buildings to the left were the Governor and Deputy Governor's residences. The large red brick building behind was the granary.

Continue to Forton Lake Bridge.

21 Forton Lake Bridge is constructed in high quality reinforced concrete and lightweight steel and has an opening span, which allows vessels to sail between Forton Lake and Portsmouth Harbour. The mosaic, just before the bridge, represents the workers of Priddy's Hard and, in particular, workers whose hands were stained when handling cordite – hence the yellow gloves. On the right of the bridge is Burrow Island. Affectionately known as Rat Island, it once housed Fort James, one of the three forts (with Fort Charles and Fort Blockhouse) which defended the harbour entrance.

22 Across the bridge is **Priddy's Hard Heritage Area**, contained within 18th Century ramparts where the Royal Navy's Armaments depot was sited from 1770-1989.

Now it is the site for

Explosion! The Museum of Naval Firepower – The Trail ends at Explosion! whose unique collection of armaments ranges from the age of gunpowder to the modern missiles. The award winning interactive museum is set on the waterfront in historic buildings that include the original gunpowder magazine of 1771. The Grand Magazine is Gosport's only Grade I listed Building.