



## Portsmouth Millenium Promenade

This walk starts from the car park next to Clarence Pier in Portsmouth. From Emsworth, take the A27 west and come into Portsmouth on the M275. Follow the brown signs for the seafront, and when you emerge at the northwest end of Southsea Common, you will see Clarence Pier and its funfair in front of you.

Just before the buildings is a roundabout where you need to turn right and into the Pay-and-Display car park. There really is no alternative to paying for parking, so don't waste time looking.

*Leave the car park onto the promenade next to the sea and turn right over a bridge. On the far side of the bridge, the trail starts and is indicated by a chain motif in the pavement. From here on, just follow the chain motif in the footpath to the Spinnaker Tower.*



Your walk takes you along the seafront towards the harbour entrance. If you look across the sea, you will see the Isle of Wight, and the spire you can see on the island is in Ryde.

Continue along past the Square Tower, and the path leads you through a small doorway into the old fortifications surrounding the Round Tower.

If you want to divert at this point and walk to the top of the Round Tower, you get superb views of the harbour entrance and the Solent. This tower and the Square Tower were built by Henry VIII.

The path takes you down some steps and across a small yard and through a doorway past Tower House. This carries a plaque dedicated to the famous maritime artist W.L.Wyllie who lived here until 1931 and painted many pictures of the harbour.

The trail now follows the road down to the end of what is known as Spice Island. The end of this peninsular is possibly the best place to see the inner harbour, looking across to Gunwharf Quays and the Spinnaker Tower, and across the harbour to the fortifications at Gosport.

Conveniently there is a pub here if you wish to spend some time watching the ships and boats coming in and out of the harbour.

Leaving Spice Island, heading down past the Round Tower again, you will see some entrances opening through the fortifications through to the sea. These are the Sallyports. It was at Sallyport that Henry VIII is reputed to have met Anne of Cleves and declared her to be a 'Belgian mare'. With the sinking of the Mary Rose as well, the king had some bad days in Portsmouth.

The footpath turns between some houses and around Camber Docks, with the Bridge Tavern on its edge. These docks are where the fishing fleet docks, and it is hard pass through without the odour of fish making that clear.

The path then turns down the side of the ferry terminal for the Isle of Wight ferry and into Gunwharf Quays

This is a huge retail and residential development that opened in 2001, and has since been one of the most successful

retail developments of its type. It includes around 95 retail outlets, 27 bars and restaurants, a 14 screen cinema, a bowling complex, casino etc. etc. etc.

The highlight of the development is the Spinnaker Tower, opened in 2005, it has now become the symbol of Portsmouth. It has two viewing decks accessed by lift, and on a clear day is a truly incredible view.

*At the Spinnaker Tower, when I last walked the walk, you could not get behind the train station. Instead, go to the main concourse through Gunwharf Quays which emerges on the seafront, and follow it through the shopping centre and through an underpass below the railway line onto The Hard.*

*Turn left, then keep left as the road leads up to the entrance of the Harbour Station. There you pick up the chain motif again.*

As you walk down from the station entrance to The Hard you are on an elevated walkway. When I was young, we would throw pennies off here into the mud below, and the 'mudlarks' would pick the coins out of the mud.

*Follow the chain to its end at a small capstan next to the entrance to the Historic Dockyard.*

Just behind the capstan is a new sculpture of a 'mudlark', coin in hand and the

promenade was, in part, dedicated to these children, most of who probably have died now from the pollution in the black harbour mud.

*At this point you have completed the Millenium Promenade.*

*Turn around and head back down The Hard, this time going straight on past the underpass to Gunwharf Quays.*

*Pass under the railway bridge cross the road and head south on St George's Road.*

As you walk down this road, you get a sense of the enormous scale of the Gunwharf Quays development, which is surrounded by the original Royal Naval dockyard walls, with their distinctive sentry posts high on the wall.

*Continue round St George's road as it turns left at a roundabout, and head south east. Cross the road at the pedestrian crossing and when you reach the roundabout, turn right onto High Street.*

Here you pass Portsmouth Grammar School, principal independent Grammar school on your left hand side.

*Cross over High Street at the pedestrian crossing and continue south west until you turn left into Pembroke Road heading south east.*

As you turn the corner, look across the road and you will see the Church of

England Cathedral. Portsmouth is one of those rare places that has two Cathedrals. You will have driven past the Catholic Cathedral when you drove down to the start of the walk.

*Take the first right into Penny Street, which leads down past the Royal Garrison Church, Domus Dei.*

The Royal Garrison church was badly damaged during the German bombing of Portsmouth in 1941, and the nave has been left as it was after the bombing as a memorial to the 930 civilians who died in the Portsmouth Blitz during that war. The chancel remains intact.

*Keep to the footpath as it swings round to the left next to the Royal Garrison Church and heads south east below the ramparts along the sea wall.*

*On your right at the end, you will come across a display board, and you need to pass through the narrow tunnel across Nelson's bridge.*

The bridge crosses the moat next to Long Curtain Battery, which is part of the original defensive wall and moat of the original garrison town in Portsmouth.

*At the end of the bridge you have to follow round to the right, but then come back on yourself across the first bridge you crossed, bring you back to the car park and your starting point.*