

Features of unknown date

There are a number of features in the AONB whose date is unknown. These features are discussed here.

The most important of these is known locally as the Wadeway (Fig 19). This causeway (Hants SMR 23,433.00 and 31,778.00; 472077 104712 and 472200 104500) connects Langstone to Hayling Island. The Bronze Age was a period that saw rising sea levels and by 800 BC the sea had cut Hayling Island off for at least part of the day, so it is therefore possible that it could date to the late Prehistoric. The date of the Wadeway is recorded in Hants SMR as 'Early Iron Age to Post Medieval, 800BC – AD 1552'. It first appeared on a map of AD 1552. Only the northern part of the Wadeway is shown on the modern OS map. However, aerial photographs taken in 2000 show fragments of the southern part survive (Aerial photo (m); NMR 18705/24). This southern part heads due south, then curves slightly to the east to meet the channel marked on the modern OS as 'New Cut'. It then twists southwest to meet the promontory on Hayling Island that lies immediately east of Langstone Bridge.

A survey of the Wadeway was undertaken by the Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology (Satchell 2000). This found that the causeway was constructed with various materials, those visible predominantly gravel and wood. The surveyor says: 'It was clear from a site visit that there were numerous phases of building and repair involved in the construction of the Wadeway. The main traces of this are various timber complexes and the building of small stretches of walls. The condition of the Wadeway as a whole varies along its length, to the north it is relatively intact and it is still possible to walk along it. Further south the path drops lower and has a covering of mud, then widens out into a large shingle bank the edges of which are not obvious.'

The survey found that the Wadeway descended from a high point at Langstone village, sloping down as it reached further into the harbour. It was built of long horizontal boards laid on edge and held in position by small uprights; the boards held the material that formed the Wadeway surface in place. In the best surviving part north part of the Wadeway this was compact gravel. The line formed by the boards was discontinuous in places. Vertical uprights were also observed, and these may have been intended as a guide to the correct path for walking. One upright was a 4.1m long tree trunk, recently dislodged by ice action. The surveyors say that: 'There is further work needed to complete the survey of the structure, the southern end of the Wadeway remains to be surveyed topographically'.

A mound, north of Conigar Point (Hants SMR 23,495.00; 473400 105300) is thought to be a saltern. The mound is c 30m by 20m and up to 0.3m in height. There are also salt working sites of unknown date at Wickor Point on West Thorney (Chi SMR 168; 474830 103960). Undated hearths, east of Gutner Point, may also be associated with salt working (Hants SMR 54,710.00, 54,711.00; 473627 101952, 473602 101898 respectively).

On Hayling Island, a round barrow of unknown date (Hants SMR 23,585.00; 473240 1005900) was dug into in the late 19th/early 20th century revealing a 'pebble pavement', a hollowed out tree trunk thought to be a coffin, flint artefacts and medieval finds. The barrow mound is approx 30m in diameter and 0.7m high.

Undated skeletons were recovered near West Wittering (Chi SMR 60; 478200 100400). A Roman inhumation is also known from this area (see above). A life-sized, cast bronze thumb (Chi SMR 3360; 481500 104200) found near Bosham could be Roman. An undated bronze buckle was also found nearby (Chi SMR 2355; 480000 104000).

At Southbourne a 'Bible Christian chapel' is marked on the 1st edition OS mapping (Chi SMR 3503; 478619 105401).

Augering at Tournerbury Farm failed to locate any waterlogged, peat or appreciable alluvial deposits (Hants SMR 37,048.00; 473060 099970).

Most of the features identified by aerial photography have been ascribed an approximate period in this report. However, there are some that cannot be dated with any degree of certainty. One of these is a feature that seems to consist of a series of timbers in the sub-tidal mud (Fig 9). It runs north-south from the rectangular premonitory just north of Northney Holiday Village (Aerial photo (e); NMR 18705/26, taken in 2000). The feature is centred on 473530 104105. It may be a causeway or wharf of unknown date. It is not shown on the 1st edition OS mapping. The modern OS mapping shows a 'Landing Stage' nearby, but this is shorter with a different orientation and seems unlikely to be the feature identified in the aerial photo.

A possible cropmark can be identified in a college playing field west of Fishbourne (Aerial photo (jj); Chi SMR aerial photo taken in 2001). Centred on 483213 104700, it is not shown on the 1st edition OS mapping. Faint, possibly circular cropmarks can be seen in a field south of Warblington (Aerial photo (mm); Hants SMR air photo Run 44 159 772, taken in 1971) and near Conigar Point (Aerial photo (nn); Hants SMR air photo Run 38 1284 180, taken in 1984). These very uncertain cropmarks are centred on 472600 105340 and 473270 105230 respectively.

Research questions

The date for the Wadeway is not known, although it could date to the Bronze Age. Further survey to build on the work of HWTMA and a focus on dating the feature perhaps through dendrochronology of well-stratified timbers would add to its understanding.