

GET INVOLVED!

IDENTIFYING EVIDENCE OF SALTWORKING

Chichester Harbour contains evidence of saltworking from the Iron Age through to the post-medieval period. Salt was mainly produced through the evaporation of sea water.

Sea water was extracted and heated in salt pans; more sea water was gradually added during the heating process until the salt pans held a concentrated brine. This brine was then decanted into ceramic containers and boiled and dried slowly to remove all water leaving only pure sea salt. This was then used in a variety of ways including flavouring and the preserving of food stuffs.



Salt Mill at Fishbourne c.1910 © Chichester Record Office

The archaeological traces of salt production are varied. What are often found are the remains of the ceramic equipment used in the heating process and the remains of hearths and ovens.

These ceramic remains are often referred to as *briquetage*. Below are some examples of briquetage found in the region, made of very coarse clay and often quite fragmented. If you see briquetage it is very likely a salt working site is nearby!



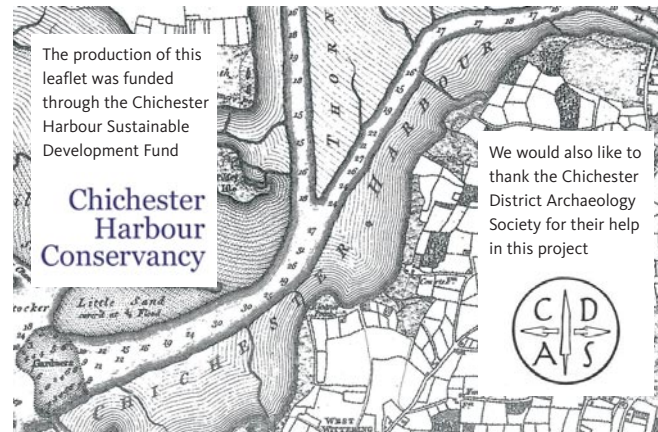
Fishbourne Roman palace

The coast of England is under constant threat from wind, waves and winter storms. These threats wreak havoc on England's varied coastal and intertidal heritage, not only exposing these sites but washing them away before they are ever seen.

Chichester Harbour contains a wealth of archaeological evidence from a time when the harbour was bustling with coastal industries, including saltworking, boat building, oyster farming and fishing. This evidence is now being threatened and new sites are being exposed as our coastlines are constantly changing.

The Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network (CITiZAN) has been set up in response to these dynamic threats to our island heritage. We are a community archaeology project working in the areas of England exposed at low tide but covered at high tide. We are actively promoting site recording and long-term monitoring programmes led by our active volunteers. To get involved please visit our website

www.citizan.org.uk



Heritage Trail – THORNHAM POINT TO CHIDHAM

3 Follow the foreshore north past the marina and boat yards. Here more evidence of Iron Age and possible Roman saltworking has been found, and it is still possible to see pottery and burnt material on the foreshore.



2 Just offshore from the Iron Age saltworking site are the remains of the old harbour wall thought to have been built to protect the nearby oyster beds (5)



1 Start at Thornham Point. There is a footpath by Thornham Marina which takes you to the harbour. In this area is evidence of Iron Age saltworking. Look out for pottery and burnt material on the foreshore.



Approximate distance: from site 1 – 8 = 2.5 miles (5 mile return)

Parking: street parking is available outside Thornham Marina and at Prinsted

4 Continue along the foreshore towards Prinsted. Numerous worked flints have been found in this region, including Neolithic scrapers, waste flakes and a core.



5 Continue around the harbour eastwards. Here are the remains of extensive oyster beds. It is possible to make out the gravel linears which bordered the rectangular beds and in some areas the remains of timber elements. The sluice which allowed the control of water into and out of the oyster beds, is also visible. The complex was one of the largest in the harbour and would have been a very important local industry.



Image courtesy of Channel Coastal Observatory

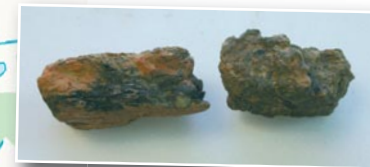
6 Just back from the old sea wall are the remains of an old mill. The site is now largely destroyed and overgrown but is one of many examples of how the harbour was once thriving with coastal industries.



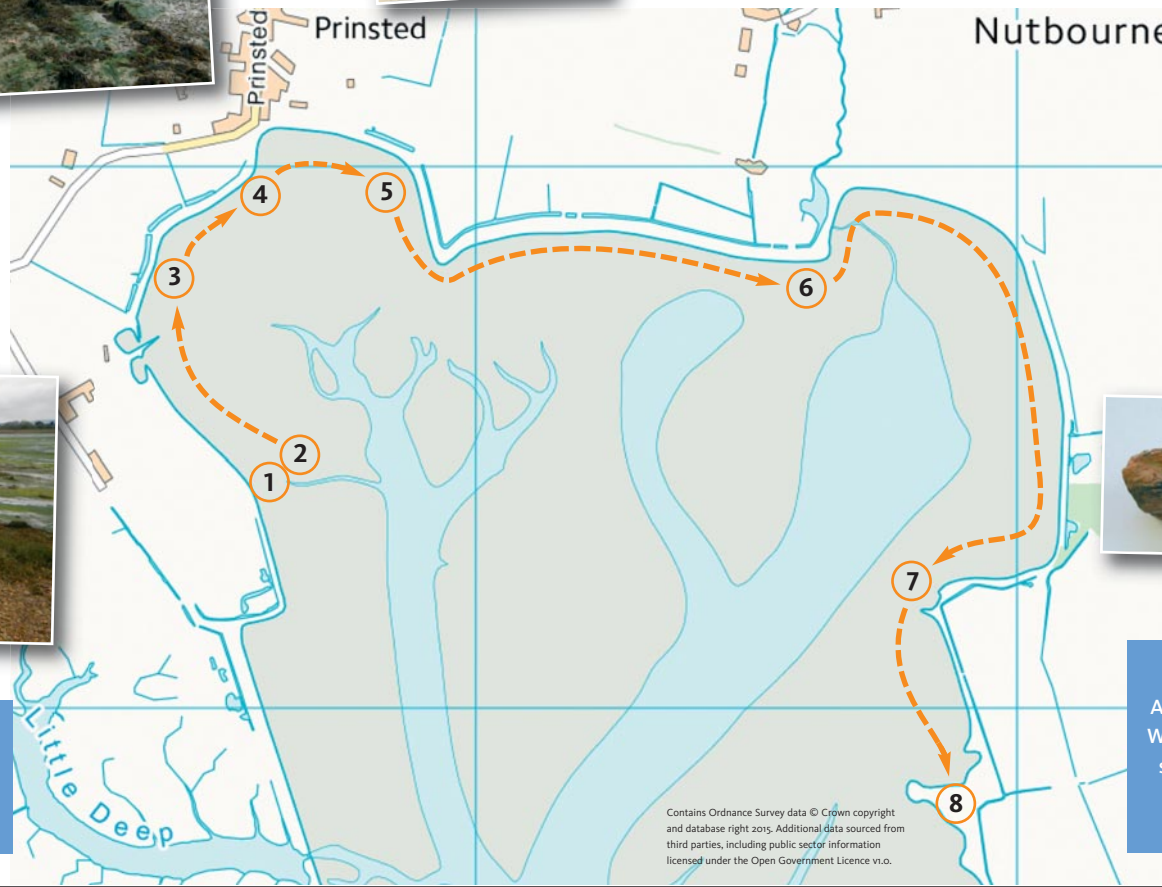
7 This area was excavated in 1989 and contains the remains of a large Iron Age/Roman saltworking site. Large amounts of pottery and briquetage were discovered and although the site may have been damaged by erosion it is likely that some artefacts may still be visible on the foreshore.

8 This site was also excavated in 1989 and contains the remains of another Iron Age/Roman saltworking site.

Briquetage and ceramics were found across a large area with a probable Roman burial.



Fishbourne Roman palace



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SAFETY FIRST
 Always check the tide times before visiting the foreshore. Wear appropriate footwear as the foreshore is uneven and slippery, and take a mobile phone in case of emergency.
 For more information visit citzan.org.uk/health-and-safety