

## Stade Guided Walk - Fishing Quarter- Notes– August 2020

### Adapted to complement Hidden Nature for Heritage Open Days PowerPoint

Compiled by Alan Jeffries added to by Hastings Fishermen's Museum

Stade Guided Walk history - was started as part of the Stade Education project – 3 year heritage lottery funded programme. (2008-2011) Now run by the Fishermen's Museum - walks usually about one hour in length and is flat with some uneven ground – narrow pavements – busy road.– toilets are at the end of Rock A Nore road and by the Stade Hall.

Stade – is Anglo Saxon for landing place (Rock-a-Nore means 'Rocks to, or at, the North' (the sea is to the south)) each boat has its own 'Stade'– there has been some form of fishing here for over 900 years–there are some fishing families can trace themselves back that far.

Outside the museum is an open air living museum which at the moment is hosting a very interesting previous exhibition by the anchor:  
<https://www.ohps.org.uk/temporary-external-exhibition-bringing-the-inside-out/> due to the museum being on reduced opening hours.

Hastings has the largest beach launched fishing fleet in Britain/Europe – now 15 boats much reduced from the glory days when the boats would have been seen right across the seafront.

Originally the Stade would have covered an area right up to the new town – shipbuilding took place by Pelham Place until the start of the 20th Century, but is now confined to an area described in the 1947 Deed of Compromise signed between the fishermen and the council.

Starting/finishing point - Fishermen's Museum Fishermen's church of St Nicholas – 1854 – Kentish ragstone - chapel of ease never fully consecrated – still used for baptisms and for an annual Carol Service. After being used for storage in WWII, it was derelict, before becoming a museum in 1956 thanks to OHPS. (Old Hastings Preservation Society) – more in depth history here -  
<https://www.ohps.org.uk/hastings-fishermans-museum/history-of-the-fishermens-museum-by-steve-peak/>

Inside are - RX278 enterprise – last clinker built Hastings 1912. lugger (sailing boat with masts 2/3 sails). See inside for how this boat came to be in the church. You will see the Albatross on the east wall. Anything you ever want to know about fishing in Hastings is in there. Across the road, now Rock-a-Nore Kitchen, was the Tan House (now the Rock-a-Nore Kitchen)– fisherman called tanfrocks after smocks dipped in preservative for ropes and canvas. Everything was a brownish colour.

*Current opening times are Thurs-Fri 1-5pm and Sat-Sun 2-5pm but these are subject to change at short notice.*

External Exhibition of the Fishermen's Museum - Why RX? Fishing boats have to be registered to the nearest port, which to Hastings is Rye. All registrations take the first and last letter of the name e.g. Newhaven = NN, Dover = DR. Rye can't be RE because that's Ramsgate, so it's RX = Rye East Sussex

**RX 74 Edward and Mary – 1919 – one of first with engine**

**RX 90 – The Valiant - built in Newhaven in 1953 – demonstrates features necessary for beach launched fishing fleet e.g. clinker built wooden hull – from Viking long ships -makes stronger boats for landing on beaches and where wood is constantly expanding and contracting as it dries and gets wet again. (As opposed to carvel planking.) lute stern – when beached, stops waves breaking over stern and flooding boat. rails on bottom to aid launching/beaching steps on prow for men to enter boat after launching. RX 150 - Rebecca May of Lade - clinker built punt Rye in 1903. More details on the below on the boards - Beach plough – frapping stone Half sovereign cottage – smuggling Net Shops Store nets plus fishing equipment. They were not used for hanging nets up to dry since when made of natural materials like jute, they would have rotted. Nets were dried on the Net Shops late 19th Century - Nets are drying in front of them. beach or on the adjoining hillsides. Originally, would have been many structures on the beach to store equipment, but mostly on wooden or stone stilts or wheels to prevent sea damage. but with pressure on space, the council agreed with fisherman in 1835 that 8' square could be allocated. Ones by London trader pre-date 1835. (will be pointed out later.) Only rows L – W still exist. just raised to 2\* listed - 39 of them, 8' square due to lack of beach. – c.20 destroyed in 1846 fire – (when a fisherman fell asleep in one smoking a pipe), and many washed away. Tar painted (cheaply bought from Hastings Gas works opened in 1830 but not now, closed in 1969) - now use 'black tar varnish' paint.**

**Stop 2 - Shipwreck Museum – Unfortunately closed until Spring 2021 but can be contacted here: <https://shipwreckmuseum.co.uk/> Semi derelict Victorian stables – horse winch – opened in 1986 – shipwrecks, geology, climate change. – wrecks – Amsterdam a 1749 east Indiaman – 2/3 remains in sand at Bulverhythe–**

**Anne – part of Pepys navy – Battle of beachy head 1690 – Primrose – last Rye barge built in 1885. – free but donations are welcomed –**

**Hidden Nature – both the Anne and Amsterdam can be found in the sand/clay of the beach which is surrounded by prehistoric forest in both areas**

**<http://www.discoveringfossils.co.uk/hastings-east-sussex/> and the <http://shipwreckmuseum.co.uk/>**

**Blue Reef Aquarium £5m refit in 2008 – seahorses, local and tropical fish and octopus – not a charity – entrance fee applicable.**

**Hidden Nature – the fishermen's museum has a fossilised seahorse that was found on the beach. See if you can find it in our natural history corner – clue, it's very tiny!**

**Stop 3 - The Cliffs Rock-a-Nore**

**Hidden Nature - Local geology – sandstone of Hastings beds lower Cretaceous age 120m old- unique in south east – rest is chalk cliffs – formed when area was a huge river estuary – fossils have been found of iguanodon (a footprint is in the Shipwreck Museum) and baryonyx; horsetails, ferns, cycads fairly soft sandstone which weathers easily and breaks down – toe of cliff - plus shingle beach is unique – unusual birds, plants e.g. thrift and sea cabbage and is a SSSI and Special Area of Conservation (European) country park – jackdaws, fulmars, crows, ravens, peregrine falcons, 12 pairs of black redstarts (25% of UK population). Stopping point for migratory birds Three 'glens' – never freeze in winter, cool in summer; contain ancient woodland that established itself when last ice age retreated. Farm on top**

now managed for wildlife as opposed to intensive dairy farm to attract even more birds.

Hastings Fishing Fleet Largest beach fishing fleet in UK/Europe even now at around 15 boats when in 80's used to be 45. A few years ago we had Hugh's Fish fight against throwing fish back seen here in YouTube clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHw0OI66kgU>.

Different types of fishing - Trawling (scraping fish from sea bed), drifting (boat and nets drift) and trammel and gill nets (nets are left out overnight in chosen spots. Clinker built wooden boats being replaced by fibre glass and metal. Larger trawlers need to be winched in and out at high tide, smaller boats by tractor at any tide. Note troes (traditionally greased blocks of wood, but now plastic rollers, for putting under boat and dans - the black flags (easier to see in sea). GPS often used now.

Hidden Nature - (MSC Marine Stewardship Council) awards for herring, mackerel, Dover sole – means premium sales. (fish stocks must be at healthy, sustainable levels, fishery effectively managed and methods mustn't damage environment.) At different times of year - Bass (all year), cod (winter), cuttlefish (April, May, June), herring (Oct-Nov), plaice (spring-summer), Dover sole (spring & summer), sprats(Nov-Dec), whelks(all year). Also some scallop fishing. Cuttle Fish are often caught to supplement income. You can see the large square traps on the beach.

New initiative Hastings Fish - <https://hastingsfish.org.uk/> on this website you will hear it from the 'fish's' mouth! This website is controlled by the local fishing community and has directories for you to find where you can eat Hastings' fish in restaurants and what shops sell the locally caught fish.

Maggies fish and chip restaurant can be found by the miniature railway and up the steps above the fishmarket. People come from far and wide to visit Maggies for the large portions and freshest fish but is also a favourite with the fishermen. Walking along the Winch Road to the lifeboat station are the Fish stalls –'boys ashore' or 'Ship's Husband' (not always boys!) These are the crew that didn't go out to sea but are a vital member of the crew making sure everything is ready to launch and for coming ashore. They bring catch in from the boats and take it to market. They are paid a share of the catch which they can sell to earn money.

Lifeboat Station 1995 – first with visitor centre. D class inshore (Richard Francis) and Shannon class all weather lifeboat (Richard & Caroline Colton) (£2.2m) plus Slars launching rig £1.3m. This was funded by the auction of 2 of the world's rarest Ferraris when Richard Colton died. The all weather lifeboat is capable of 25 knots, has waterjets for propulsion rather than propellers and is highly agile being capable of moving sideways. It has seats for 6 crew and 47 survivors. How is it funded? Certainly not by the government – by donations and public collections and fund raising. It costs c.£500,000 per day to run whole of UK. All volunteers apart from coxswain/mechanic is the only paid member but he is full time and on call – about 100 other people- what happens on requests? – 999 to coastguard – pagers. (3-5m for inshore), (12-15 m for offshore)- 45-50 launches of both boats per year-

Hidden Nature \_the most dramatic footage can be seen following the link in the PowerPoint from February 2020 in storm Ciara when even this amazing Shannon Class boat was nearly lost to the sea.

## Harbour Arm

Hidden Nature -The Harbour Arm is the remains of an attempt to rule the sea but all efforts have failed due to (in very, very simple terms) the Bourne Stream that runs underground down into the sea and causes eddies. This thwarted the last attempt to build a harbour in 1896.

East Cliff House above Webbe's Restaurant at the end of Rock-a-Nore Road was built in 1761 by Edward Capell – first gentleman's villa facing the sea (unusual because at the time properties faced the road) – censor of plays and Shakespeare critic – copied out works 10 times –

Hidden Nature - a particular friend of Capell's was the actor David Garrick – he visited often and brought a mulberry tree cutting from Shakespeare's garden which is still there to this day. You used to be able to see it when you walked up the Tamarisk Steps and look through a gate but unfortunately that has been covered. It is actually listed on the website [www.mulberrytrees.co.uk/locations/](http://www.mulberrytrees.co.uk/locations/) and if you scroll down on this blog link you will see pictures of the mulberry tree.  
<https://www.hastingsbattleaxe.com/2019/07/hastings-old-town-open-gardens.html>

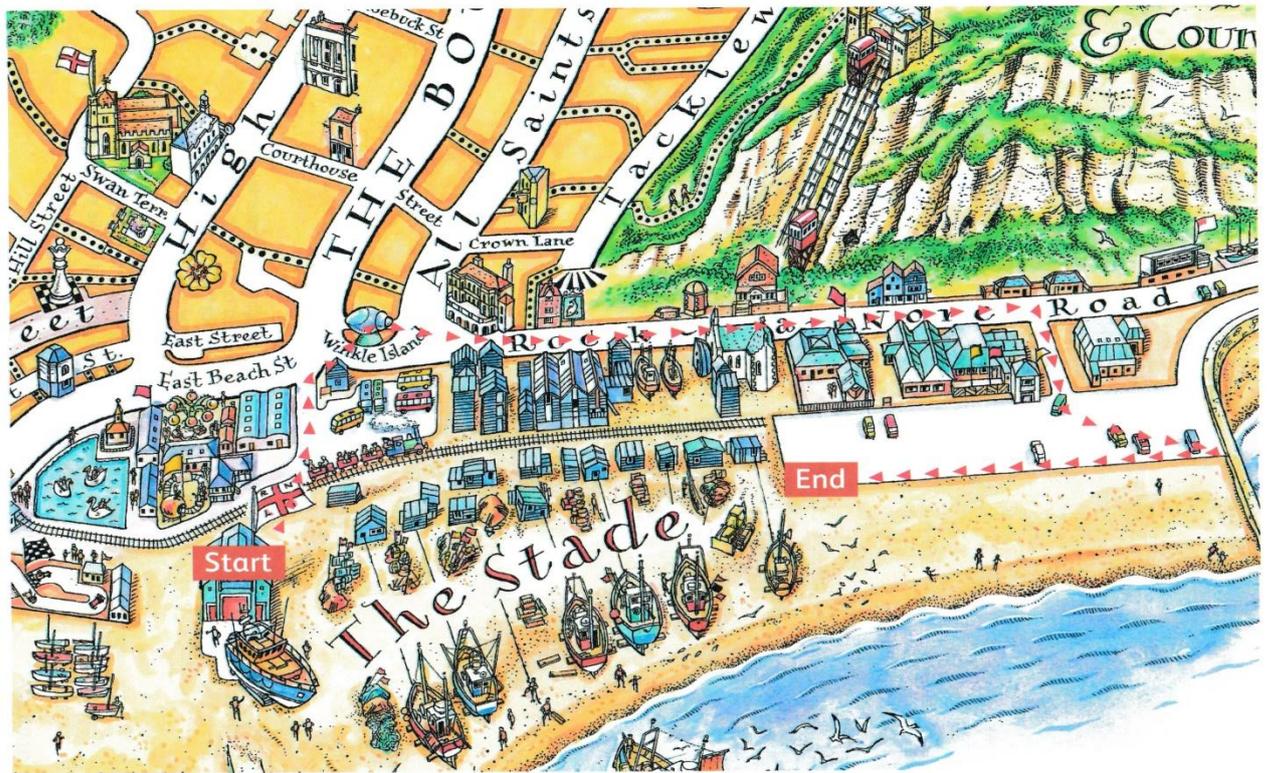
Hastings Country Park (see slide 20 for map) isn't so hidden as maybe unexplored as there is 853 acres of it! It is a Special Area of conservation. You can reach the Country Park by using Tamarisk Steps, of which there 220 that lead up to Tackleway as seen on the map below, then up to the hill. You can find them by the side of the Dolphin Inn. The East Hill lift has been closed so this may be your only way up. Tamarisk Steps mark the end of the Saxon Shore Way which is 163 miles from its start at Gravesend. (Please see the slide in the presentation for links to more information.) In his autobiography the inventor of television, John Logie Baird describes how he walked the cliffs from here to Fairlight Glen and while doing so worked out in his mind how he could create 'seeing by wireless'. He returned to the house he was staying at in Hastings and built the world's first television camera and viewer. There is a lovely exhibition in the Hastings Museum and Art Gallery on Bohemia Road about his work.

East Hill Well on Rock-a-Nore Road was originally the only source of fresh water on the Stade – spring water until the East Hill lift was built which destroyed the supply – used for drinking and washing – the brick structure was built from remains of public subscription from 1846 fire. You can still see the water seeping through the walls by the well.

*For more information please visit the Hastings Fishermen's Museum, The Shipwreck Museum (in Spring 2021) also in the link within the PowerPoint will be more information. Also the museum has a book selection here:*

*<https://www.ohps.org.uk/products-for-sale/products-page/> the books aren't on display at the moment but you can go in and ask for a copy.*

*The Hastings History House on Courthouse Street is also worth a visit opening times are Thurs-Sat 11am-4pm*



This was the original Stade Walk map created by David Hobbs. The walk used to meet outside the Lifeboat Station but now they meet outside the Fishermen's Museum and go in the opposite direction to the arrows seen here. You will also notice that the Hastings Contemporary (formerly Jerwood Gallery) was not built at the time of this map nor the Ice House doctor's surgery and flats.