



SUTTON  
HARBOUR  
PLYMOUTH'S HISTORIC WATERFRONT

# Harbour Heritage Trail



THE HARBOUR HERITAGE TRAIL IS THE BEST WAY TO DISCOVER EVERYTHING SUTTON HARBOUR HAS TO OFFER, FROM ITS HISTORY AND HERITAGE TO THE BEST PLACES TO EAT AND DRINK. THE ONE-MILE CIRCULAR ROUTE OFF THE SOUTH WEST COAST PATH REOPENED IN THE SUMMER OF 2013, AFTER WORKS WERE COMPLETED TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY AND SAFETY FOR WALKERS, WHEELCHAIR USERS AND PUSHCHAIRS.

With fantastic views of the harbour, a chance to learn more about Plymouth's maritime past and a brass rubbing plate trail for children to interact with on the way around, the Sutton Harbour Heritage Trail is a great day out for all the family.

## START:

Harbour Car Park, Lockyers Quay, Plymouth.

## FINISH:

Harbour Car Park, Lockyers Quay, Plymouth.

## LENGTH:

1.1 miles (1.7km).

## SUMMARY:

Sutton Harbour is the birthplace of the modern City of Plymouth. This walk follows the Heritage Trail around the Harbour, passing through centuries of fascinating history. Sutton Harbour today is a vibrant visitor destination, home to a wealth of restaurants, cafés, visitor attractions and shops. The walk is on level tarmac surfaces. There are many restaurants and pubs for a refreshment stop and plenty of opportunities to pause and reflect upon the busy marine activity all around you.

## NEAREST CAR PARK:

Harbour Car Park, Lockyers Quay, Plymouth PL4 ODX.

## NEAREST REFRESHMENTS:

There are plenty of restaurants, cafes and bars all around Sutton Harbour.

## ROUTE DESCRIPTION:

Sutton Pool, or Sutton Harbour as it is now known, is the birthplace of the modern City of Plymouth. In about 700AD Anglo Saxon settlers sailed here, making their first settlement on its shore and naming it Sutton, meaning South Farm or Town.

From here Sutton grew northwards and westwards, as trade in the port brought increasing wealth. In the 13th century documents start to refer to the port of Plimmue instead of Sutton; the name 'Plymouth' first officially appeared in the 1440 Charter of King Henry VI.

Sutton Harbour has been the site of a number of significant moments in history - in the 16th century Sutton Harbour was used as the base for the fleet that gathered to face the Spanish Armada and in 1620 the Pilgrim Fathers set sail for America from the Mayflower Steps at the western end of the harbour. Since 1989 Sutton Pool has been owned by Sutton Harbour Holdings PLC.

Families can look out for shield shaped plaques placed all around the Heritage Trail. They are intended as brass rubbing plates and tell the heritage trail story for the area immediately around them, helping to bring the history to life for young visitors.

The Sutton Harbour Heritage Trail begins at the Harbour Car Park.



# Harbour car park

## 1.

At the pedestrian entrance of the Harbour Car Park turn left and walk to the roundabout. At the roundabout carefully cross the road and take the new footpath on the waterside of the Lockyers Quay Inn, passing Johnson's Quay.

### NEAREST REFRESHMENTS:

Lockyers Quay Inn HERE, The China House, **3 MINS.**

### NEAREST PUBLIC WC'S:

Barbican Toilets on Quay Point **4 MINS**

### LOCKYER'S QUAY:

In 1833 Lockyer's Quay was built by Edmund Lockyer with a copper ore yard behind it. Edmund Lockyer was a director of the Plymouth & Dartmoor Railway who involved himself in many local ventures. Members of the Lockyer family - Edmund, Thomas, William and Nicholas - appear regularly on Plymouth's list of mayors from 1803 to 1844. Since the copper boom ended in 1879 the yard has been occupied by a lead works, a manure dump, used for fish storage, as a builders' yard, and for assembling components for the new lock and harbour wall. Johnson's Quay is named after two brothers, John and William Johnson who also owned King's Tor granite quarries on Dartmoor. They operated the Plymouth & Dartmoor Railway which brought stone down to the harbour for shipment. In 1848 they attempted to stop the South Devon Railway, a rival company, crossing their tracks by dumping large slabs of granite on their opponent's railway line.

### TURN THE CORNER AND WALK TOWARDS CHINA HOUSE.

The China House today is a pub and restaurant, but the building was first seen in a 1666 watercolour painting of Sutton Harbour by Sir Bernard Gromme and has been used for a variety of purposes over the years.

In 1768, William Cockworthy, a successful Plymouth pharmacist and Quaker minister made the first hard porcelain produced in England. Made from china clay, it was known as Plymouth Porcelain. It is thought that his factory may have been on this site before he moved the works to Bristol, hence the name The China House. After china operations ceased, the building was used as a gun wharf and a hospital for ailing mariners.

On the site of the China House car park a Victorian shipyard was founded in 1823 by shipwright Mr William Shilston, who in August 1858 launched the first floating dry dock in the west of England. Measuring 150 feet long by 40 feet wide it was said to be capable of taking vessels of up to 800 tons.

The dry dock was moored at his yard but when required taken to a deeper part of Sutton Pool. It was first used in October 1858 when a schooner and a smack were docked at the same time 'without the least difficulty'. The largest vessel he built was the 370 ton "Earl of Devon". Mr William Shilston died in 1904 at the age of 82. Although his sons were connected with the business, it seems to have folded within a year of the old man's death.



# China house

## 2.

Before you reach China house turn right across the car park and regain the waterfront at Marrowbone Slip.

### NEAREST REFRESHMENTS:

The China House.

### NEAREST PUBLIC WC'S:

Barbican WC's on Quay Point **7 MINS.**

### BRASS RUBBING PLAQUE:

"Marrowbone Slip" – located South of Marrowbone slip and North of the China House.

Marrowbone Slip housed the ship breaking yard of Demellweek and Redding. In 1957 they broke up the famous "HMS Amethyst", a ship launched in 1943 and deployed during the war on anti-submarine patrols. On 20 April 1949, she was on her way from Shanghai to Nanjing when she was fired upon by the People's Liberation Army. This started the Amethyst Incident, with HMS Amethyst trapped in China for over 3 months. HMS Amethyst was brought out of storage to play herself for the 1957 film *Yangtze Incident: The Story of HMS Amethyst* and was then scrapped at Marrowbone Slip shortly after filming was finished.

### CONTINUE ALONG NORTH EAST QUAY AND NORTH QUAY.

### BRASS RUBBING PLAQUE:

"North East Quay" - located by the quay edge.

Work started on the North East Quay in early 1878-9, costing £12,000, and was built across the line of Friary Quay named after the medieval Carmelite Friary that once stood north of this harbour. The wall to the quay had a concrete backing, dressed with limestone facings and granite copings.

The remains of a railway line can be seen, which was laid from the terminus of the London and South Western Railway's Sutton Harbour branch right around North Quay and Sutton Quay to a goods shed on Sutton Jetty. This turning quay is located where Tin Quay House stands today. Space would not allow the line to be curved so turn-plates were installed at the corners of the quays. Look closely at the quay wall to see the tunnel arch of the Horsewash. Carters had always led their horses down a slipway to the beach to wash them in the sea and a tunnel was incorporated into the quay to enable this age-old activity to continue.

### BRASS RUBBING PLAQUE:

"North Quay" - located quayside on North Quay opposite North Quay House in the centre of a circular metal bench.

North Quay was built in 1849 and 1850 with noted railway engineer Joseph Locke involved in its design and construction. The line of the present quayside was completed in 1850, enclosing earlier developments.

In its heyday the quayside was busy with shipping and cargo. Dock labour would gather here waiting for work and there were coal stores, transit sheds and goods yards storing wines, spices, potatoes and tobacco. Today, in North Quay House's car park, coloured brickwork marks the position of the older waterfront buildings constructed after 1650. These include what became known as Ceely's Salthouse. The remains of Old Tree Slip are also under the car park running alongside the later Hawkins Avenue. On your right halfway along North Quay is Hawkers Avenue, a road which takes its name from the Hawker Family, wine importers for over 300 years.



# Tin Quay House

## 3.

The road directly in front of you as you reach Tin Quay House is Tin Lane. This is the site of Tin Quay. Walk behind Tin Quay House. Turn left to follow Sutton Quay passing Looe Street on your right.

### NEAREST REFRESHMENTS:

Meze Bar & Grill, The Dolphin House Brazerie and Quay Cafe.

### NEAREST PUBLIC WC'S:

Bretonside Bus Station 7MINS.



### BRASS RUBBING PLAQUE:

Brass Rubbing Plaque: "Sutton Wharf" - located on Sutton Wharf at the northern end on the East Facade. The plaque is in the wall outside the office of n9 design.

At the bottom of Looe Street the Dung Quay was created in 1639 where all Plymouth's waste was collected. The adjacent Sutton Wharf was built between 1813 and 1815 by the Sutton Pool Company. In 1972 70 yacht moorings were laid off the Wharf. Soon all the spaces were taken, and two years later there were 200 moorings. Today there are some 462 berths catering for all sizes of vessels.

### BRASS RUBBING PLAQUE:

"Vauxhall Quay and Sutton Jetty" - located at the Junction of Vauxhall Quay, Sutton Jetty and Sutton Wharf, outside Sutton Harbour Marina main entrance.



# Vauxhall Quay

## 4.

At the corner turn right along Vauxhall Quay leaving the waterfront to walk briefly along Vauxhall Street before turning left back to the waterfront.

### NEAREST REFRESHMENTS:

Dolphin House Brazerie, Meze, The Stable.

### NEAREST PUBLIC WC'S:

Bretonside Bus Station **5 MINS.**

### CONTINUE AROUND GUYS QUAY. THE CUSTOM HOUSE IS ON YOUR RIGHT.

### BRASS RUBBING PLAQUE:

“Guys Quay” – near to Three Crowns Pub on Guys Quay.

Guy's Quay was originally called Gaye's Quay and dates back to the mid-1600's. The natural shore actually followed the line of Vauxhall Street where quays, houses and warehouses were already being built. Many of the waterfront stone warehouses were destroyed by bombing in the Second World War.

The large open space of the parade was originally called Newquay. The ground beneath your feet may feel solid but this area was reclaimed from the sea in the late 1500's. Between 1755 and 1783 it served as the Parade Ground for the Royal Marines (Plymouth Division) which gives the area its name.

Built in 1820, The Customs House is probably the most imposing building on The Barbican. White's 1850 History, Gazetteer and Directory of Devonshire states that the Custom House is “a large and handsome structure, built of granite in 1819-20 at the cost of £8,000, in lieu of the old one which was small and inconvenient. It contains a long room 52 feet by 26, and all other necessary offices for the business.”

The heroes of Elizabethan Plymouth were Francis Drake and John Hawkins - but like most merchants and explorers of the time, their trading methods may surprise us today. The great Elizabethan adventurers were all pirates, and many were slave traders too. The infamous slave trade was actually founded in Plymouth by Hawkins and Drake and both men made a fortune from it.

Sailors discharged here after the Napoleonic Wars were signed up by the smuggling gangs and put to work on the many boats running illegal goods through Cawsand Bay - the headquarters of Devon smuggling.

At the beginning of the 19th Century it was reported that each year more brandy and rum was smuggled into Devon, Dorset and Cornwall than was imported legally into London.

Elizabethan ships' captains including Drake himself would have paid dues on their imported goods at the Customs House. Back then customs officers received no salary, but were able to earn vast fortunes from the fees they charged ship owners.



# Quay Road

## 5.

Follow the waterfront along Quay Road turning the corner and passing West Pier.

### NEAREST REFRESHMENTS:

The Ship Inn, Jazz & Blues Bar, Rockets & Rascals, Bacaro, Seafood & Pasta, Bar Rakuda, Bitz and Bites, Quay 33, Morgans plus many more in the historic Barbican.

### NEAREST PUBLIC WC'S:

Barbican Sutton Harbour WC's at Quay Point **1 MIN.**

### BRASS RUBBING PLAQUE:

Sutton Pool was originally a natural and sheltered anchorage. Some of the first people to settle on these shores were fishermen, and the small fishing community quickly grew to become the medieval town of Plymouth.

In the late 1500's and 1600's, large numbers of local fishermen sailed across the Atlantic from here to fish the rich cod banks off the east coast of the New World. Fishing has always been important here, and it is said that in the busiest times it was possible to walk from this pier to North Quay across the decks of fishing boats and trawlers.

Today this whole area is known as 'The Barbican'. A Barbican is a fortified entrance and here it refers to the waterside gateway of Plymouth's long-gone medieval castle that stood on Lambhay Hill. The Barbican has a street pattern that Drake, Hawkins and Raleigh would recognise, boasting the largest concentration of cobbled streets in England with over 100 listed buildings, many dating back to Tudor and Jacobean times.

### CONTINUE ALONG THE QUAYSIDE TOWARDS THE MAYFLOWER STEPS.

### BRASS RUBBING PLAQUE:

"Old Fish Market" - located on the quayside between Edinburgh Woollen Mill and the water near the Barbican WC's.

The old fish market was built between 1892 and 1896 where the Glassblowing House Restaurant now stands. It was a purpose-built harbourside fish market where a 900 foot quay was formed involving dredging a portion of Sutton Harbour. The old quay boundary can be seen where the cobble stones change direction.

The building itself looked like a railway station and was designed by Sir James Inglis, who left in 1895 to work for the Great Western Railway. Opened on February 1st 1896, the market remained in use until 1995, when a new fish market was opened on the opposite side of the harbour where it operates from today.

While the old market was being built the fish market was held on the Parade. This was not popular because the fish slime soaked between the cobblestones and produced a terrible smell. It also sank into the storm water chamber under the Parade. The build-up of sewer gas often caused manhole covers to be blown off. The lamp-post in the centre of the Parade is a disguised ventilator put up to deal with the sewer gas.



# West Pier

## 6.

Turn left at the end of West Pier

### NEAREST REFRESHMENTS:

Real Food Kitchen, Cobbles Ices, Glassblowing House, Quay 33, Rockfish Sutton Harbour plus many more within the Historic Barbican

### NEAREST PUBLIC WC'S:

Barbican Sutton Harbour WC's at Quay Point **1 MIN.**

In 1890 a stone bearing the inscription 'Mayflower 1620' was set in the ground remembering the Pilgrim Fathers who left from here bound for the New World. They stayed in Plymouth because the Speedwell, Mayflower's companion ship, became unseaworthy, but they were well received and when they arrived in America, they named their landing point Plymouth Rock.

Many people, locals and tourists alike, wonder about the meaning behind the strange sea creature which looks out over Plymouth's famous Barbican. Designed by Brian Fell of Glossop in Derbyshire and installed as part of an Arts Council initiative it is an amalgamation of various fish and marine life. It has a cormorant's feet, a plesiosaurus's tail, the fin of a John Dory, a lobster's claws and the head of an angler fish. The pole supporting the fantastic sea creature, which is manufactured from mild steel coated with copper paint giving it its attractive colouring, is decorated with plaques describing other sea creatures. Named "The Leviathan" and sitting 33 feet above the West Pier the imaginative sculpture has become an icon of Plymouth, affectionately nicknamed the Barbican Prawn.

### CROSS THE HARBOUR ENTRANCE BY MEANS OF THE FOOTBRIDGE OVER THE LOCK.

Since 1989 Sutton Pool has been owned by Sutton Harbour Holdings PLC. They have overseen the transformation of the decaying port into a vibrant waterfront with sustainable uses. The installation of lock gates created a depth of water to accommodate fishing boat movements and a larger marina with the potential for a harbour which did not dry out at low tide.

Lock gates to control the tide were first proposed in 1845. However, work on the lock gates only started in January 1992 with the 10,000 ton concrete lock chamber finally sunk into place on the site of the East Pier in April 1993.

Teats Hill is the rocky promontory on the eastside of the harbour. For centuries it was a centre for rope-making, ship building and ship repair. The harbour entrance was originally a narrow opening through the natural limestone 'breakwater' or Cause which could be walked across at low tide. The entrance was widened in the 1790's when the East and West Piers were improved, however after the harbour entrance was widened it was only possible to cross by boat.

### IN FRONT OF YOU IS THE NATIONAL MARINE AQUARIUM.

The National Marine Aquarium opened in 1998 and is the UK's largest aquarium. It is a charity which receives no revenue support and is totally dependent on visitor income to cover its costs. There are over 4,000 marine fish in the Aquarium and almost 400 different species with a large proportion coming from local waters.

The new fish market, relocated to the eastern side of the harbour and opened in 1995 at a cost of £3 million, has re-established Plymouth as a major fish auction centre. After the fishing boom years of the 1970's, the 1980's saw a general decline, with Newlyn and Brixham gaining ground. From a low point in 1994 when just £800,000 worth of fish passed through Plymouth fish market, fish landings have steadily grown to over £17m in 2012.

### BRASS RUBBING PLAQUE:

"East Pier and Harbour Entrance" – located at the entrance to the lock bridge between east and west piers near to Rockfish Sutton Harbour.



# The National Marine Aquarium

# 7.

Keep to the right of the National Marine Aquarium building. Follow the South West Coast Path alongside the building back to Lockyers Quay and the Harbour Car Park.

## **NEAREST REFRESHMENTS:**

Rockfish Sutton Harbour, Real Food Kitchen, Cobbles Ices, Glassblowing House, plus many more in the historic Barbican within 3 minutes walk.

# Map

- |   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
|  HARBOUR CAR PARK |  TIN QUAY HOUSE |  QUAY ROAD |  NATIONAL MARINE AQUARIUM |
|  CHINA HOUSE      |  VAUXHALL QUAY  |  WEST PIER |  BRASS RUBBING PLAQUE     |

