

### What is the Shipwrights Way?

It is a new long-distance route which will link villages and towns in east Hampshire through some beautiful countryside. The route will run from Alice Holt Forest near Farnham, down across the South Downs to the sea at Portsmouth and will be open to walkers and cyclists and, where possible, horse-riders and people with disabilities.

### Where does it go?

As much as possible, the route is off-road, using rights of way and permissive paths. Starting from Alice Holt Forest, it passes through Bordon, Liphook, Liss, Petersfield, Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Staunton Country Park, Havant, Hayling Island and via ferry into Portsmouth, finishing at the Historic Dockyard - around 50 miles in all, and including seven rail stations. It will form part of the Sustrans National Cycle Network route 22 linking London to Portsmouth. The first two sections were launched in March 2011 and at the moment the route is open from Alice Holt Forest to Queen Elizabeth Country Park (although with a gap at Bordon); the rest of the route southwards is being waymarked and will almost all be open by March 2013. This will include the section which touches SGSCP.



### Why 'Shipwrights'?

The name reflects the journey of oak grown at Alice Holt to dockyards such as Portsmouth for medieval shipbuilding; the route will finish at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, home of the Mary Rose and HMS Victory.

### How is the project being delivered?

The project is a strong partnership between East Hampshire District Council, Hampshire County Council, the Forestry Commission and South Downs National Park Authority, who have pooled their resources and expertise.. Representatives of each of these organisations

together form the steering group which is directing the project; Cath Hart is the Shipwrights Way Project Officer reporting to this group. A wider stakeholder group, including Councillors, Parish Councils, land managers and users, meets less often to help inform the project.

### Where did the project start?

It was long-held Forestry Commission aspiration to provide a long-distance route linking two large areas of woodland - Alice Holt Forest near Farnham and Queen Elizabeth Country Park near Petersfield. This idea was discussed and then developed by the Hampshire Action Team (HAT) for East Hampshire - a feasibility study was carried out in late 2009 which showed that the project was achievable and the partnership was then established.

### Telling the Story of the Landscape

The project is currently working with an artist, Richard Perry, who has been talking to communities along the Shipwrights Way in the last three months in order to inspire around twenty sculptures which 'tell the story of the landscape'. These will be carved mainly in creamy Portland stone and will be around waist high and approximately 18 inches square and will be sited along the route. They are being funded through a combination of HCC Arts funds, S106 and South Downs National Park's Sustainable Communities funding.

We've run six of the seven workshops so far, and the response has been very positive, with lots of enthusiasm and ideas on what to depict, ranging from a pick-axe head with a (rare and rather pretty) cheese-smail crawling across it in Buriton chalk pit to a re-creation of a statue of the goddess Venus found at a Roman villa en route, to Brent Geese, oysters and Mulberry Harbours in Hayling Island. Locally to SGSCP, we held a workshop with the Rowlands Castle brownies (who knew an impressive amount about their local history!) and members of the public—ideas included depicting aspects of the brickworks, droveway, fairs, gypsies, deer (peripheries of the Forest of Bere), lots of wildlife and the blacksmith's tree at Finchdean.

QR codes next to each sculpture will link to more information, perhaps images of old maps or of people living/working there in the past, oral history recordings, birdsong or even playlets or story trails to recreate past events.

Richard has a blog, at: <http://shipwrightswaymarkers.wordpress.com> and anyone who would like to be involved can contact him at [shipwrightswaymarkers@gmail.com](mailto:shipwrightswaymarkers@gmail.com)

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