

DOWN TO THE TOWN

The Heritage Centre has interpretative panels on the flora and fauna of the lovely gardens. Close by is the Romano-British farm, an archaeologically correct reconstruction of the sort of building that might have stood here 2000 years ago. The thatched building is used by schools as a centre for educational activities.

Returning up the drive you can now cycle along the shores of Holes Bay passing Fergins Island. Originally this was known as Longfleet Bay, Parksstone Bay being low ground projecting into the great Harbour. The Tudor antiquary Ireland said of Poole that "it standeth almost as an isle in the haven". The view has changed greatly in recent years.

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A. Back of Upton House c.1920's - 1930's



We start at Upton House (Photo A), an early 19th century mansion which is a Grade II listed building set in over 100 acres of woodland, parkland and shoreline. (1) This was built for Christopher Spurrier, one of Poole's 'Merchant Princes' and MP for Bridport. The wealth of the Spurriers came from the Newfoundland trade which was based on salt cod. This trade went into decline at the end of the Napoleonic Wars and in 1830 Spurrier was declared bankrupt. It is said that he even lost the family silver in a bet on a maggot race. Subsequent owners included the Doughtrys and the Llewellyns.

A circular route between Upton Country Park and Poole Town Centre. Most of the route now forms part of the National Cycleway Route 25 from Frome to Poole. Throughout the tour, the numbers refer to points on the map. Look out for the penny farthing signs along the route.



POOLE HERITAGE CYCLE ROUTE

Poole Heritage Cycle Route



Poole Quay c.1911

We now pass along Green Road and Bmerson Road to emerge on the edge of Poole Harbour itself. This great harbour, one of the largest in the world, lies at the heart of Poole's history – it is from here that Poole traders, pirates and smugglers left to make their fortunes.

Cross the High Street (Photo C) is Around the corner in Lagland Street is the magnificent Victorian edifice of the Free Library. School of Art and Museum (£) given to the Borough by the redoubtable timber merchant JJ Norton in 1887. We cross the roundabout and enter Green Road via a cyclepath link.

Having passed along Vanguard Road under and then alongside the flyover, we emerge in North Street, and ahead one is faced with the impressive bulk of Beech Hurst (3) built for Samuel Rolles in 1798.

We enter the town under the Towngate Bridge(2), next to the railway station. (Photo B) The entrance to Poole used to be defended by a dyke and a fortified gate around here. These defences withstood the Royalist forces throughout the Civil War when Poole was staunchly for Cromwell and Parliament. Once we get to Baiter, on a clear day the Royalist stronghold of Corfe Castle can be seen nestling into the Purbeck hills across the harbour.



B. Men working on line at Poole station c1960

ALONG THE (LONG GONE) NORTHERN DEFENCES

Approaching the town, the Victorian houses to the left, on Sterte Esplanade show the historic shoreline, but these too are on land reclaimed when the railway arrived. To the right used to be timber wharfs, a relic of the Newfoundland trade, most now replaced. JJ Nortons yard has become the Asda store. You will also see the national headquarters for the RNLI, with their new national training centre and workshops. At the entrance to the Asda carpark, we need to cross the dual carriageway via the Toucan lights towards the Poole railway station, and turn right.

Poole Heritage Cycle Route
Upton Country Park to Poole Town Centre

Without tea or pub stops, the Heritage trail is around a one hour cycle, or a 3 hour walking route. We hope you will, however, take time to enjoy the heritage along the route, and explore beyond the sample of sites mentioned in this leaflet.

Both ends of the cycle trail link to the network of Poole Cycleways. A leaflet showing cycleways across the conurbation is available.

Poole Railway Station, on the London Waterloo to Weymouth mainline is on the route, and Hamworthy Station is a short cycle from the Upton Country Park terminus.

Car parks at Upton Country Park, Whitecliffe Park, Baiter, and Poole Park are convenient for the route. Parking charges may apply.

Many Wilts and Dorset Buses, www.wdbus.co.uk and the Yellow Bus numbers 1b,1c and 26 www.yellowbuses.co.uk run to Poole Town Centre, from where the route can be joined on foot. The red bus 128 stops at the Country Park.

There is also a walking 'Cockle' trail around the central portion of Poole Old Town.



Poole Studio portrait of two young ladies with bicycles c.1915



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Contacts: Poole Agenda 21 see website Borough of Poole Cycling Officer 01202 262066 Further information on cycling in Poole at www.boroughofpoole.com

A cycle ride of approximately 7½ miles, visiting places of historic interest.



D. Fishermans Dock looking east, showing old Lifeboat station, Gasworks and Baiter Peninsula c.1930s

BAITER PARK

Turning right at the end of Green Road, the cycleway leaves the road, and you can explore the open land of Baiter. Historically, Baiter was a narrow peninsula. (Photo D) The ancient maps of the area show a windmill (near 5) on Baiter and the town archives refer to a storehouse for gunpowder at a safe distance from the Old Town (6).

There was also an isolation hospital in use until 1936. The National Cycleway continues towards Poole Park (Photo E), Lilliput, and the Route 2 linking Bournemouth to Swanage and the Purbecks via the chain ferry, but we retrace our tyre tread at the foundations of what may have been the powder house.



E. Start of Cycle race, Poole Park c.1915

At low tide, the outline of the first public swimming pool can be seen (near 5). Built in 1890, salt water and tidal, it was replaced by one in Poole Park in the 1930s.

FISHERMANS DOCK

Returning towards the town we pass through the hard of Fishermen's Dock. Here are the modern inheritors of a tradition that goes back over 2000 years.



F. U.S. Coastguard vessels, Poole Quay c.1944

Opposite is Brownsea Island off which an Iron Age logboat (dated 300 BC) was discovered in 1964.

Next we pass Poole Old Lifeboat Station (7) built in 1882. It now houses the retired lifeboat – the Thomas Kirkwright – which served Poole from 1939 to 1962 and participated in the Dunkirk evacuation. The museum is open daily. Close by is a

memorial plaque to the United States Coastguard a flotilla of which was based on Poole Quay during World War II saving many hundreds of lives. (Photo F)

THE QUAYS

Poole Pottery, known around the world, used to stand on the site of Dolphin Quays on our right. This is followed by the Fish shambles, a modern reproduction, but a covered market historically stood on the same site. Now we are on Poole Quay a delightful mix of historic pubs and warehouses punctuated by narrow alleys. Ahead rises the modern sculpture, Sea Music (8), by Sir Anthony Caro. Opposite are the boatyards and Quays of Hamworthy reminding us that Poole is still a working port. Steel, timber, oil and gravel are offloaded, but much of the quay is now devoted to building Sunseeker Speedboats, famously used in James Bond films, and exported worldwide.

The Environment Agency have built a sea defence wall along this stretch. The practical purpose is to prevent waves in winter from overtopping the quay wall, but it incorporates seating and some interesting carvings of items associated with Poole and the sea. A contraflow cycleway takes us along the New Quay to the bottom of the High street. Ahead lies the third Poole lift bridge, built in 1927.

Shortly after Sea Music, between the Harbour office and the magnificent Custom House (9), we turn right into Thames Street. We immediately pass between the ancient Town Cellars on the right and the King's Hall of the King Charles on the left. Once this was one building – the longest medieval

storehouse known in Northern Europe. The Town Cellars are now part of Waterfront Museum (10) where you can learn more of the story of Poole.

MANSIONS OF OLD POOLE

Thames Street takes us into the heart of Georgian Poole. If we pause at the junction with Church Street we can see a group of buildings that form a testament to the prosperous days of Poole's dominance of the Newfoundland trade in the 18th and early 19th centuries. This trade saw goods and men shipped from Poole across the Atlantic. Off Newfoundland the most prolific fishing grounds in the world were exploited for millions of cod which were dried and salted. Poole ships then took the salt cod to the West Indies to feed the slave plantations and to the Catholic countries of southern Europe. Back came wine, salt and olive oil to the port of Poole. Vast fortunes were made by families such as the Lesters who built the Mansion House (11) and the Slades who built West End House (12) at the far side of the square.

Turning right to go up Church Street we have St James Church (13) on the left. This was built in 1820 to replace a medieval church. Inside the structure is supported by giant pillars made up from the trunks of massive pine trees brought back from Newfoundland. On the other side of Church Street is the old Church School bombed in the Second World War.



G. Market Street showing Guildhall and old Police Station to right

Church Street is a delight of Georgian domestic architecture with occasional medieval buildings such as St George's Almshouses (14) with origins in the 15th century. We pass seamlessly into Market Street

(now a one way street) to be faced by the Guildhall (15) an elegant Georgian building of 1761. (Photo G) Originally the arches under the Guildhall were open and the ground floor used for market stalls. The impressive room above was used for Council meetings and courts, and then when the town fell on hard times, the building was rented to a farmer to store hay. It has now been restored and put to good use as the Poole Registry Office.

We fork right at the Guildhall steps and follow the side of the building to the corner by the main road. This is the site of the assassination of Alderman Horatio Hamilton, a one-time mayor of Poole, shot by a discontented water pilot in 1886. The sunken garden to the right contains the town maypole – a modern revival of an old Poole tradition, also in early May, Market Street hosts the Poole Cockle Festival.

Note: If following the route in reverse, you are advised to continue to the High Street, turn right and right again into New Street. Pause at the junction with Market Street to admire the Guildhall, then turn left towards the church.

LEAVING THE OLD TOWN

Cross the main road (New Orchard), and through the gap to Hill Street and left into Dear Hay Lane. We see ahead the Blue Boar pub (16) once the home of the Adey family of wine merchants. Cross Dear Hay Lane to reach Market Close passing the Lodge of Amity on the left – home of the oldest Masonic Lodge in Dorset. Further up the close, on the right, is Sir Peter Thompson's House (17) – Dorset's finest Georgian town house built in 1749, and used as the Town Hall before 1923.

Love Lane takes us down to busy West Street. Be careful as you cross here and also when you cross West Quay Road. We pass alongside the headquarters of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (18) an honoured Poole resident. On West Quay Road, we pass between the training centre and workshops (on the left), and headquarters (on the right) of the Royal National Lifeboat Institution. If you climb the steps to the viewing platform, you'll be surprised to be just above the swimming pool surface, and may witness trainees and equipment being put through their paces.

There will be more change in this area soon, the new Poole Twin Sails Bridge will provide a second crossing link to Hamworthy. West Quay Road takes us back to the Town Gate roundabout and so to the cycle track back to Upton House. We hope that you have enjoyed this glimpse of Poole's rich heritage.

