

Location & Access: Hurst Castle Spit is located at SZ 30 90. It can be accessed via the A337 road from Lymington to the north, or the A377 road from Christchurch to the west.

There are close-by railway stations at both Lymington and New Milton.

A ferry connection leaves from Keyhaven to Hurst Castle (weather permitting) - cost £3.50 single and £6.50 return.

The spit and castle cannot be reached directly by car, but there are car parks at Milford (SO41 OPY) and Keyhaven (SO41 OTP).



Shingle spit leading to Hurst Castle

Key Geography: Superb example of a shingle spit, 16th Century castle built by Henry VIII, examples of coastal management, views to the Needles stacks on the Isle of Wight.

Description:

To visit the spit, you can start a short walk from the car park at Milford (SO41 OPY). Head towards the sea front where a number of groynes control the movement of shingle on the beach), and then turn left (eastwards) along the pavement towards the spit. Follow the Solent Way path past Sturt Pond - where you can spot a rich bird population, including waders and wildfowl - and then onto the shingle spit itself. Walking on the shingle can be tiring, and it is possible to pick up a more solid path alongside the marshland to the north of the spit.

The Hurst Castle spit is actually a classic hook-shaped shingle bank formed from flint pebbles eroded from the cliffs to the west. It extends for a mile and a half from the town of Milford-On-Sea, and it's end is only three quarters of a mile from the Isle of Wight.

The spit has been declining in volume since the 1940s when coastal protection works in Christchurch Bay began to interrupt the flow of shingle along the coast. In 1989 the spit became so weak that it was in danger of being permanently breached. A stabilisation scheme was put into place between 1996-7 which rebuilt the spit with dredged shingle, as well as adding revetment protection from Norwegian larvikite boulders at the end of the spit near to the castle.

Hurst Castle itself is situated at the seaward end of the spit and is in a perfect location to defend the western approach to the Solent. It offers stunning panoramic views across to the Isle of Wight. The castle was originally built by Henry VIII as one of a chain of coastal fortresses and was completed in 1544. The castle was used as a prison for eminent

(continued overleaf)

Curiosity Questions:

- # The shingle spit consists mainly of flint pebbles. What is flint?
- # One of the common plants growing in the marshland behind the spit is glasswort. What uses did this plant have in the past?
- # What types of coastal management are evident on the seaward side of the castle?

Further information:

www.hurstcastle.co.uk

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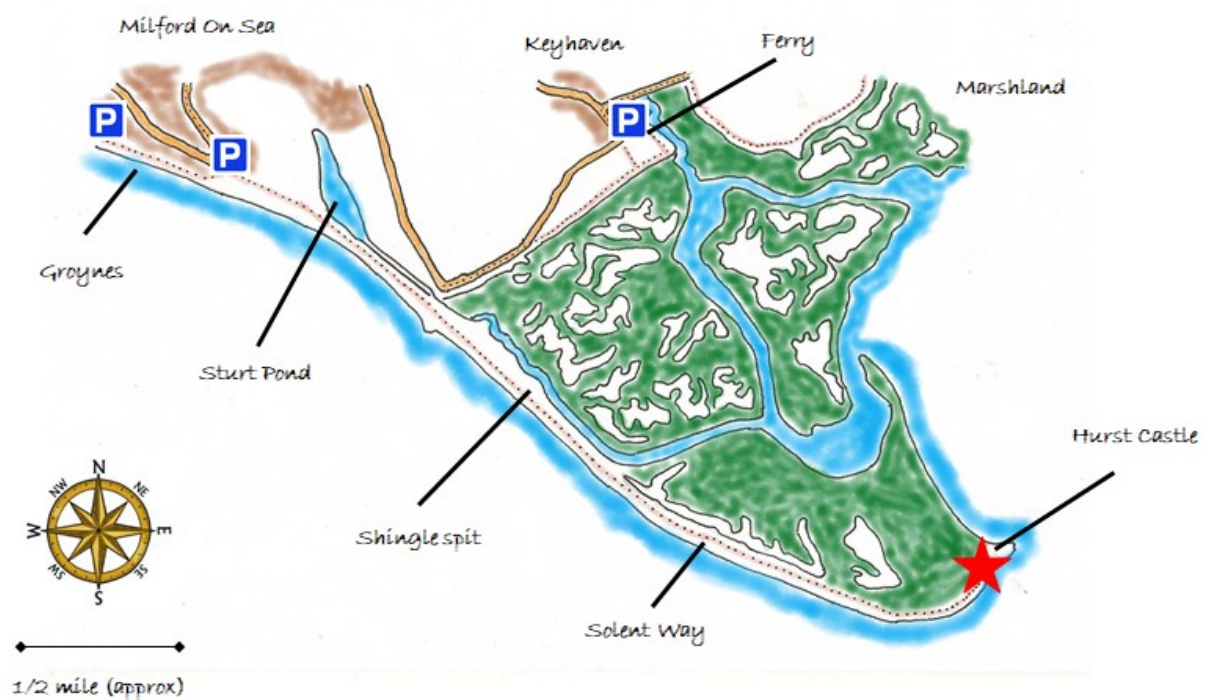
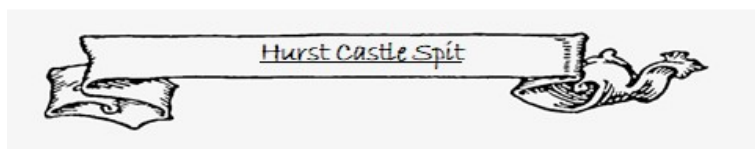
17th century captives, including Charles I. It was later strengthened during the 19th and 20th centuries and played a role in defending the western Solent from invasion threats from the Napoleonic Wars to the Second World War. The castle is managed by Hurst Marine on behalf of English Heritage, and is open to the public - £5.50 entrance fee.

Exhibitions around the castle piece together its long history, and you can climb steps to the first floor of the Tudor keep to see where Charles I was probably kept prisoner in 1648. From here, there are spectacular views across the Needles Passage to the Isle of Wight.

A well-stocked café provides refreshment before you retrace your steps back to Milford.



Coastal defences below the castle



Answers to Curiosity Questions:

The shingle spit consists mainly of flint pebbles. What is flint? (*Bands of flint are found in chalk, an upper Cretaceous rock laid down in sediments in tropical seas. When the chalk eroded away, the hard flint nodules remained. Flint is made of silica and breaks into sharp pieces*). # One of the common plants growing in the marshland behind the spit is glasswort. What uses did this plant have in the past? (*Glasswort is a smooth, fleshy salt-tolerant plant that grows up to 30 cm tall. Its common name comes from the use of its ashes in the 16th century to make glass and soap*). # What types of coastal management are evident on the seaward side of the castle? (*Wooden groynes and rock armour help to prevent coastal erosion here*).