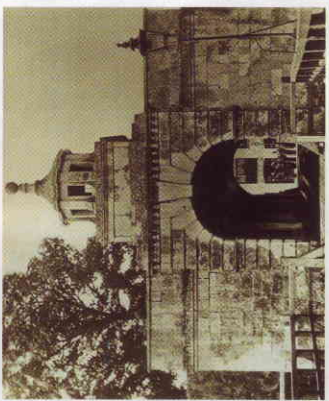


THE NELSON TRAIL



This trail takes you through parts of the old town of Portsmouth, highlighting places and buildings of interest relating to Vice Admiral Lord Nelson and Portsmouth around the time of the Battle of Trafalgar. There are four interpretation panels along the way that provide more detailed information.

Research and text by:

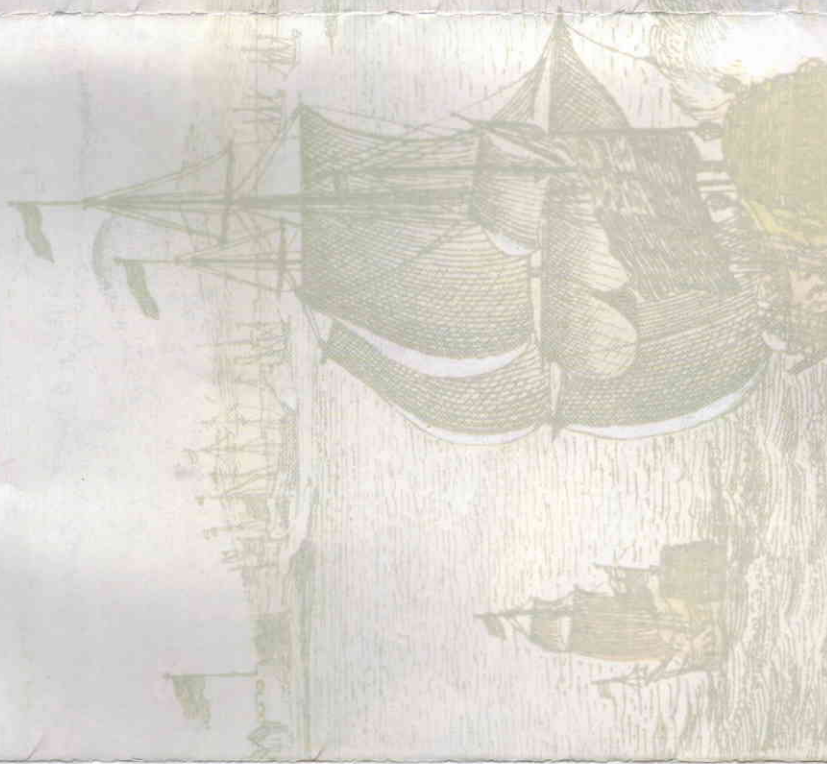
John & Sue Pike, Katy Ball, Laura Beard, Julie Barnes & Nick Brown

Further reading:

Nelson's Last Walk (leaflet) – Colin White
The Story of Nelson's Portsmouth (2005) – Jane Smith



THE NELSON TRAIL



Funding for Nelson's Bridge, associated access improvements, relocation of the statue and The Nelson Trail was provided by The Onyx Environmental Trust via Portsmouth & South East Hampshire Partnership



THE ONYX ENVIRONMENTAL TRUST



1. Landport Gate

Nelson would have entered Portsmouth through Landport Gate, as until 1875 it was the main gateway in and out of the town. On the morning of 14 September 1805, Nelson passed through this gate for the last time, on his way to join HMS *Victory*. It is the only town gate still in its original position.

Cross St George's Road at the zebra crossing and turn right into High Street.

2. The Portsmouth Grammar School

Founded in 1732, by 1805 the school was at what is now 30 Penny Street. It has occupied this site since 1926. Prior to that date, the buildings formed part of the Army's Cambridge Barracks, built in 1856. As with most schools of the period, the pupils would have been the sons of more prosperous families. Dayboys paid 12 guineas per year. In 1805, the original Theatre Royal stood just to the right hand side of the school archway. The theatre supposedly featured in the Charles Dickens novel, Nicholas Nickleby.

Continue on this side of High Street to view Buckingham House.

3. Buckingham House

As the Spotted Dog Inn, this building would have been a familiar sight to Nelson on his visits to the town and would have appeared much as it does today. The building has Tudor origins with Georgian external alterations and additions. George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham, was assassinated here on 23 August 1628. In 1661, during a stay in Portsmouth, Samuel Pepys visited the room where the Duke of Buckingham was killed. At that time Pepys lodged at the Red Lion, which stood in the High Street on or near the site of Cathedral Green.

Enter the garden to John Pounds Memorial Church.

4. John Pounds Memorial Church

At the rear of the garden is a reconstruction of John Pounds' workshop that existed in nearby Highbury Street (then known as St Mary's Street) a narrow road further along High Street. John Pounds would have been living in this property in 1805 working as a cobbler. The memorial explains his significance as a kindly man who helped many poor children in Portsmouth learn to read and write.

Before leaving the garden look across to the framed view of 12-16 High Street.

5. 12 – 16 High Street

This is a collection of typical Georgian houses, reminding one of how High Street would have looked in 1805 when Nelson passed by on his final journey to the George Inn. Although some of the windows have been altered, the houses give an idea of the general appearance of High Street as Nelson would have seen it. Sadly many of the other fine Georgian buildings were destroyed during World War II.

As you walk further down High Street, on your right is Highbury Street.

6. Highbury Street

John Pounds' workshop was located on the right hand side of the street, almost as far north as Gunwharf Road. Another famous resident of this street in the late 18th century was Admiral Lord Howe, who won many sea battles then, culminating in 1794 with victory in the battle known as the 'Glorious First of June'. Howe died in 1799 but Nelson was a great admirer and referred to him as 'our great master in tactics and bravery'. The site of his house is some distance down on the right hand side of the street, just beyond the junction with St Thomas's Street.

Cross High Street to the site of The George Inn.

7. The George Inn

On 14 September 1805, Nelson ate his last breakfast on English soil at The George. Crowds had gathered outside the inn on the morning of his departure to join HMS *Victory*. To avoid them, Nelson chose to go out through the back door into Penny Street. From here he began his final walk to the beach to be rowed out to the ship. The room Nelson stayed in was preserved as a tribute to him until the building, known at that time as the George Hotel, was destroyed on 10 January 1941, during the worst air raids to hit the city.

Leaving the site of The George, cross Pembroke Road and (if open) enter The Dolphin.

8. The Dolphin Hotel

The Dolphin was well established and popular during Nelson's life. Hanging on the wall inside is a window bearing his initials "H N", scratched into the glass, alongside many others. The glass was originally from the Star and Garter Inn at Broad Street but was salvaged following its demolition in 1956. The Dolphin was first licensed in 1716 and has been in continuous use as a public house since that time.

Cross High Street and enter the cathedral.

9. Portsmouth Cathedral

The cathedral would have been familiar to Nelson and the other naval officers who frequented the town. In 1805, it was the parish church of St Thomas and only about half the size of the present building, completed in the early 1990s. It would have been entirely screened from High Street by buildings, long since demolished. The cathedral houses many treasures, including a cross made of timber from HMS *Victory* and a piece of the flag that was laid on Nelson's coffin at his funeral on the 9 January 1806.

Cross High Street and note Wishart House, Monks Bar and the Sallyport Hotel, all of which would have existed in something like their present form in 1805. You are now approaching the Square Tower.

10. Square Tower

Constructed in 1494 as a residence for the governor of Portsmouth, the Square Tower has had many uses. In Nelson's day, the building was used by the Admiralty as a meat store; beef could be conveniently shipped out to the fleet moored at Spithead from the pier on the seaward side, known as the Beef Stage. A semaphore tower was erected on top of the building in 1822, allowing messages to be sent swiftly to and from London and the fleet. Just to the right is the Sally Port (a gateway through the fortified wall); the point of departure for many naval heroes, including Nelson, although not on 14 September 1805 due to the crowds in High Street.

Walk past the houses in Battery Row and you will see the statue of Nelson. In amongst the benches on the right is a stone lectern with a descriptive plaque.

11. The Nelson Statue

In 1951 Dr H. Aldous donated this statue of Nelson to Portsmouth. It was designed by F. Brook Hitch, who also created the Royal Navy Submarine Service War Memorial on Victoria Embankment, London. The plaque on the south-east side of the monument records Nelson's brief stay at the George Inn, and the plaque on the north-west side shows Nelson's last prayer. The statue was relocated from Pembroke Gardens in 2005 to mark the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

Walk across to the church with no nave roof and enter if open.

12. Royal Garrison Church

Founded as a medieval hospice in 1212, this building and its ancillary buildings, which have now been demolished, have had many uses. In Nelson's time it would have housed the military governor of Portsmouth. Buried inside the Garrison Church are the remains of Admiral Sir Thomas Foley; there is a memorial plaque in the chancel. He served with Nelson at the battles of Cape St Vincent, The Nile when he led the fleet into action, and at Copenhagen when he was flag captain for Nelson on board HMS *Elephant*. Foley became Commander-in-Chief at Portsmouth in May 1830 and died here on 9 January 1833. He is buried in a coffin made from fragments of oak from the *Elephant*, saved when the ship was broken up. There is a seat in the chapel dedicated to the memory of Nelson. The roof to the Nave was destroyed by 'enemy action' during World War II. There are many fine features and memorials to see in the chancel.

Walk along the footpath between the church and the grassy bank of the ramparts. After passing the church, look across Governor's Green. In the far right hand corner is the former guardhouse to King William's Gate (c1834-67); now a house. The site of Trafalgar House is opposite, at 29-31 Pembroke Road, part of a terrace of post-war houses.

13. Trafalgar House

It is claimed that Nelson's favourite sister, Mrs Matcham, bade her brother goodbye in a house in Pembroke Road. It was named Trafalgar House in his honour. The front doorstep survives in the City Museum's collection and is inscribed 'It was here Lord Nelson spent his last hours in England'. The house was destroyed during World War II.

Continue along the path and turn right into the tunnel.

14. Nelson's Bridge

It is thought that, on 14 September 1805, Nelson walked over a wooden drawbridge in this very location as part of his last walk on dry land. The new bridge was constructed in 2005 to commemorate the bicentenary of the Battle of Trafalgar.

15. Spur Redoubt

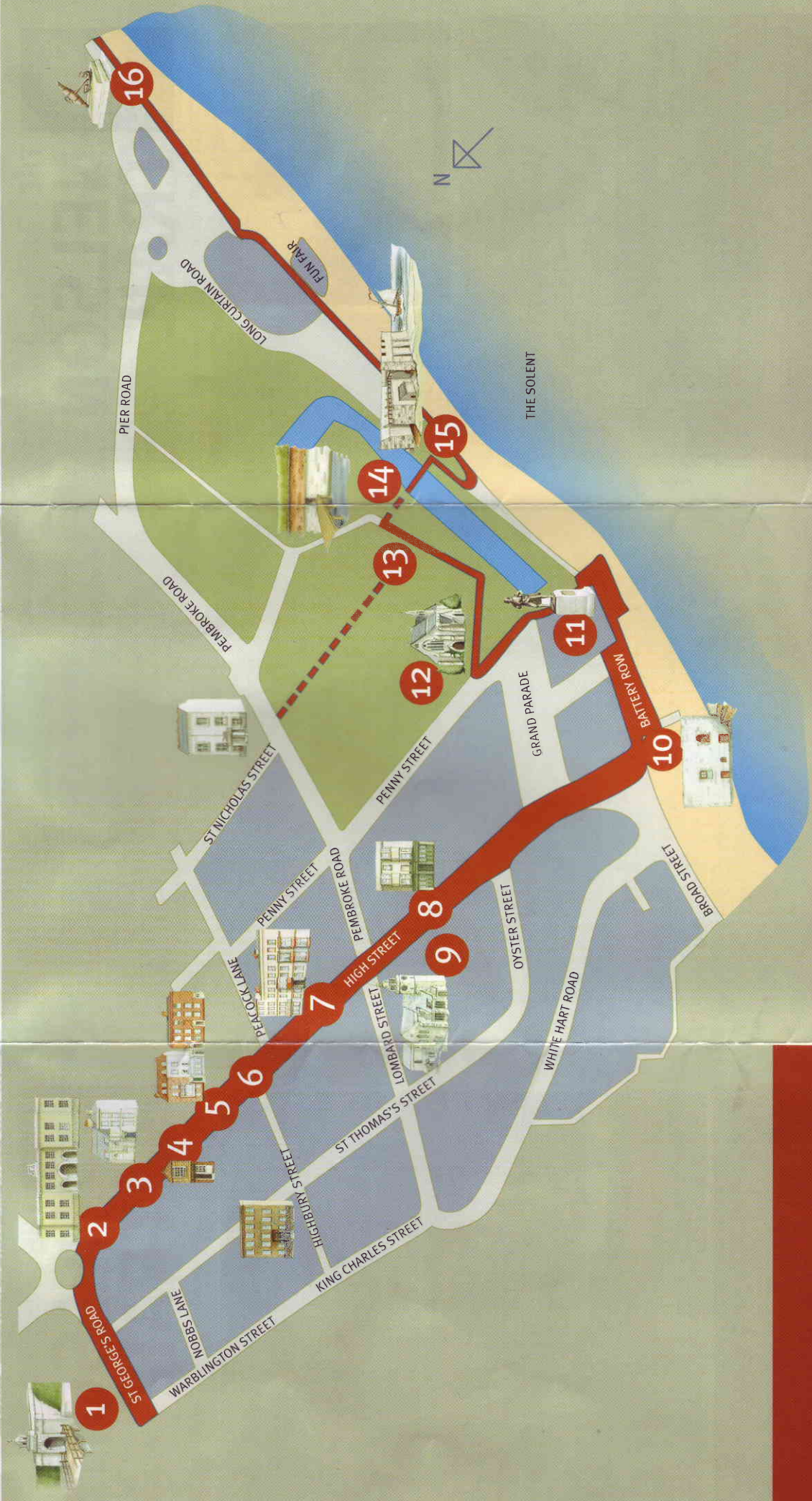
The remains of the Spur Redoubt – a small fort forming part of the town's defences – are on the seaward side of the moat across the bridge. It is thought that Nelson's last walk took him through a sallyport (a gateway) and out onto the beach somewhere just to the east of the redoubt. Here he boarded the barge that carried him to HMS *Victory*. Large crowds gathered to see him off. An American, Benjamin Silliman, described the scene:

"...by the time he had arrived on the beach some hundreds of people had collected in his train, pressing all around and pushing to get a little before him to obtain a sight of his face. I stood on one of the batteries near where he passed and had a full view of his person. As the barge in which he embarked pushed away from the shore, the people gave three cheers which his Lordship returned by waving his hat."

*Walk up the ramp onto the wooden footbridge and look towards the fun fair. The beach between the redoubt and the fun fair is where Nelson left England for the last time. Look out to sea. To the left of the eastern tip of the Isle of Wight is St Helen's, where HMS *Victory* was anchored on 14 September 1805. Continue along the promenade through the fun fair to the *Victory* anchor alongside the hovercraft-landing pad.*

16. The *Victory* Anchor

The anchor from Nelson's flagship at the Battle of Trafalgar, HMS *Victory*, was preserved as a monument to the fallen hero and all those that perished in the battle. Its location has changed several times since it was first positioned in 1852. In the late 1880s it was moved to its present location that is probably not historically correct in marking the position where Nelson left England for the last time.



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