



Gibraltar Point is a nature reserve - please keep to the paths for your own safety and for the protection of the habitats and wildlife.



-  - Railway loop walk—This path may be closed at certain times of year for grazing
-  - Information point

Special thanks to Barrie Wilkinson, whose research into the history of Gibraltar Point provided the information and historical photos. If you enjoyed this trail look out for his forthcoming book about the history of Gibraltar Point (available 2017).

# Gibraltar Point Heritage Trail

Plan your route: nine information stops are marked on the map on the back page.

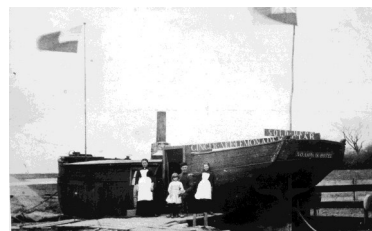
- Information in this leaflet is organised into three time periods, some stops have information for more than one of these time periods. The full trail is 2.5 miles.
- All nine information stops are on surfaced paths that are accessible for all. The railway loop walk however is not but the modifications to the dunes can be seen from stop 8.
- The railway loop marked in red on the map may be closed at certain times of year due to grazing animals in the area.

## Gibraltar Hamlet and Wainfleet Haven

Wainfleet Haven (River Steeping) has been a busy shipping hub since the Middle Ages, used for transporting wool, grain and salt from Wainfleet. The spit at Gibraltar Point provided a safe sheltered area for ships to moor. By the 18th century the Haven had become an important stop for the larger ships whose cargo would be offloaded to smaller barges which would then travel up and down the River Steeping. The last commercial boats left in 1914 when the river became silted up.

### 1a - The Ship Inn/Gibraltar House

The Ship Inn was located next to the lone sycamore tree by the hump and opened at Gibraltar Point in 1730. With busy shipping activity on the Wainfleet Haven, the offer of food and drink was welcomed. The Inn stayed in business until its licence expired in 1869 when it became a private home.



### 1b - Noah's Ark

Noah's Ark Hotel was an old pilot vessel that ran aground on the mud somewhere on the saltmarsh between the hump and the nearest part of the river. James Perrin, the then Master of the Buoys and Beacons lived there from around 1870. He and his wife served ginger ale, lemonade and honey and even sold pictures of the Ark as souvenirs.



### 2a - Coastguard Station

Coastguards moved to Gibraltar Point to monitor the goods being transported along the River Steeping and to prevent smuggling. The wall which ran around the station created a garden, in which the men and their families stationed here would have grown their food. When it was built, the tide would have come right up to this wall. At the top of the tower, the brickwork changes. The top section was added during World War Two to provide better views.

## World War II

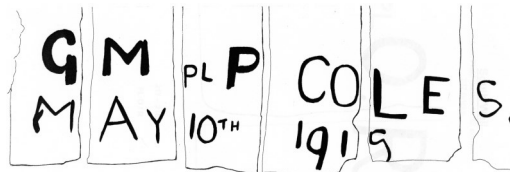
### 3 - TTD Posts

Story has it that in the 18th century, Thomas Tyrwhitt Drake and Lord Bayning were in dispute over the ownership of the saltmarsh. Both wanted to use the area for wildfowling, they took it to court and it was agreed the boundary should be marked by three boundary posts, this one, one in the West Dunes and one further along this path. These posts still mark the local parish boundary.

## World War I

### 2b - Scout Graffiti

During the summer of 1915, a group of scouts from Northampton who knew flag semaphore signalling were employed by the Admiralty to help man the Coastguard Station. This was discovered when the graffiti they etched into the wall was researched.



219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224.  
G M PL P COLES  
MAY 10<sup>TH</sup> 1915

### 4 - South Marsh Road Bridge

If you look off the side of the bridge, you can see the old supports from the first bridge built by the Scouts over the creek during the First World War. The view from the Coastguard Station was becoming obscured by the formation of the East Dunes, so the bridge was built to access the East Dune where a better view could be had of the North Sea.



### 5 - Mill Pond Road and Square Pond

Along Mill Pond Road you can still see signs of a First World War rifle range. The targets would have been on the landward side (west) of Mill Hill, the height of which was increased to stop bullets going onto the beach. The firing locations were at different distances back along Mill Pond Road heading away from the beach. At Square Pond the bank on the left marks the 300 yard (274m) firing position.

### 2c - Anti-tank Defences

The concrete cubes you can see on the other side of the wall are known as Dragon's Teeth and were laid across the main saltmarsh creek to prevent tanks and amphibious vehicles coming up the beaches and invading the coast.



### 6 - Wash Viewpoint

This building was built as a Coastal Artillery Searchlight (CASL). The window side of the building would have been open with a large search light scanning out into The Wash. A second light was positioned in the East Dunes. By using the two together; gunners could be given the position of any enemies attacking. This location was also used in filming The Dam Busters (1955) as a substitute for the Thames Estuary, where the tests of the bouncing bombs were actually made.

### 7 - Pillbox

A number of pillbox lookouts, a first line of defence, were set up over the reserve, many of which were removed when the army left the site, however a few do remain.

### 8 - Railway loop

This path was part of a railway line with a driverless engine pulling a wooden outline of a tank which was mounted on a trolley. The gun placement for firing at this target was in the West Dunes. If you look along this path you can still see where the dune height was adjusted to create low flat areas and high mounded areas for the target to appear and disappear behind as it travelled along. Some railway ballast can be seen on the path. The railway drops down to the north end where it wasn't visible, it then circled back around Mill Hill before coming back into view as a target along the top of the East Dunes. This path may be closed at certain times of year for grazing.



### 9 - Yacht Club

During the wars, Sykes Farm was taken over by the army and accommodation was built around the paddock area, now the plantation. Most of these buildings have now gone. The Yacht club would have been the NAFFI building, used for recreation. In the right light you can still see the pattern of the camouflage painting that covered it. Please take care of vehicles if walking along the side of the road to see the front of the Yacht club and return back to the path to follow the rest of the trail.

