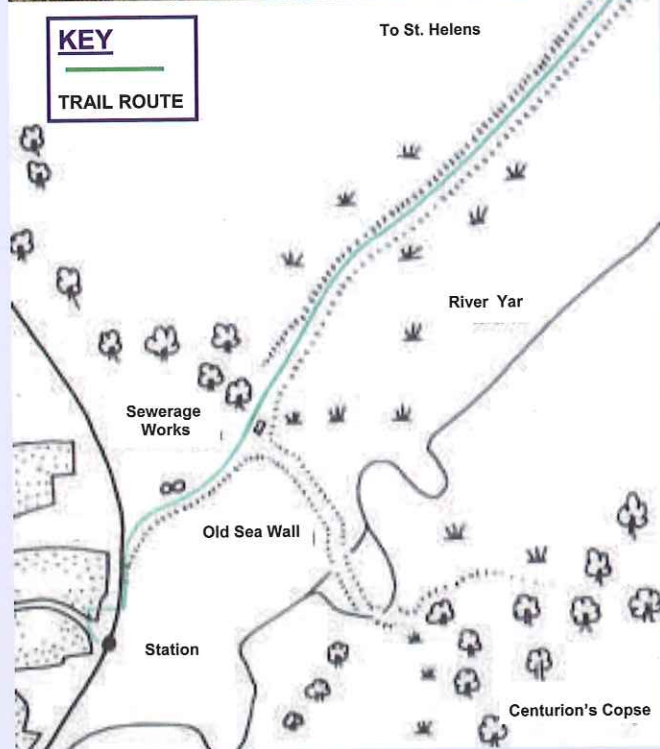


ST. HELENS BRANCH LINE



UPDATED BY
BRADING
TOWN COUNCIL

FUNDED BY THE A.O.N.B
SUSTAINABILITY FUND



WALK ONE

Leave Brading Station through the exit gate and cross the car park towards the brown footpath signs "1 & 2". Walk through the housing estate following the signs and cross the railway line (beware of the trains). Turn left along the track of the old line towards St. Helens.

The path is easy to walk on and because it is made up land, there are good views across the flat land of the marsh. The sea once used to come up to the edge of Brading town. Up to 1594 the quay at Brading lay alongside the present High Street. Between 1594 and 1881 (when the final embankment to Bembridge was constructed) the quay was situated at the eastern end of Quay Lane and at the Brading end of the Oglander / Richards embankment built in 1594. Evidence of the second Quay can still be seen as the footpaths diverge either to follow the embankment to the right to Centurions (St Urian's) Copse or to the left along the old railway track to St. Helens.

The path passes the sewerage works and even this is worth a second glance as birds often gather to feed here. The path comes out at a junction where Quay Lane ends, (one goes right over to the old sea wall). Our way passes down a narrow route between the brick wall and the wooden fence of a house. The railway track opens up again and fine views over Brading Marsh can be seen.

Although there is no right of way across the marshes which now belong to the RSPB, much of the birdlife can be heard as well as being seen from the track. In the summer months the reeds are alive with the rasping sound of Sedge and Reed Warblers. In the winter months duck, geese and wading birds are seen as the water level rises.

On the hillside to the right, a clump of trees hide Bembridge Fort. Further left along the ridge is the Yarborough monument. Much of the downs here are owned by the Isle of Wight Council and the National Trust. The National Trust also owns a windmill seen in the distance above Bembridge.

The railway track eventually turns off right into private land. However, a footpath does go past some buildings and past St. Helens Laundry, with a view through to a small lake frequented by water fowl, before joining the road to St. Helens. The country part of the walk finishes here at the road junction and, by re-tracing your steps, you can return to Brading.

The walk takes approximately one and a half hours.

