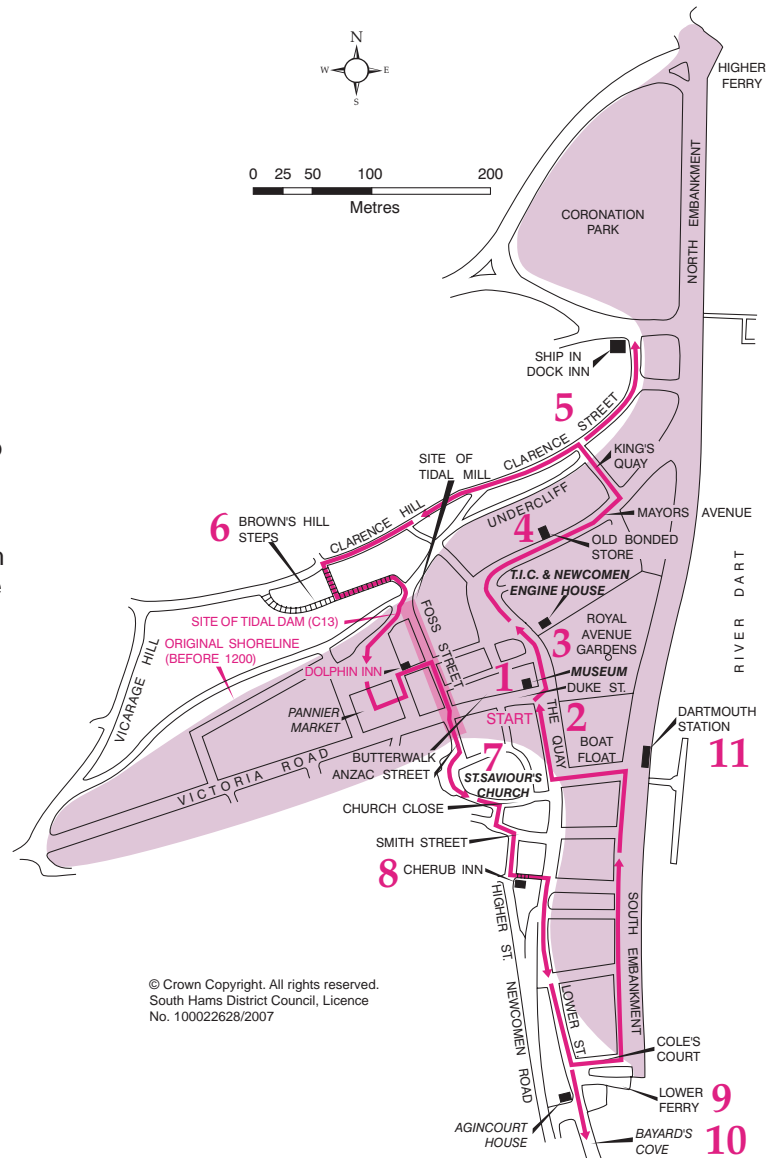


Dartmouth Town Trail

A 2 hour walk gentle walk around the town of Dartmouth taking in historic features of interest.

Start:	Duke Street
Distance:	1 mile. Approximately 1.5-2 hours walk
Circular Walk:	Yes
Grade:	Gentle
Terrain:	Level with a steep climb
Obstacles & Steep Gradients:	This trail includes a very steep climb up Clarence hill. All of the route is even surfaced pavements or roads.
Public transport:	Public transport available to and from Dartmouth. Public transport available to Kingsbridge. For information on public transport in South Hams please call Traveline on 0870 6082608 www.traveline.org.uk .
Refreshment stops:	The town has a wide variety of restaurant, cafés and pubs along the route.
Toilets:	Public toilets are situated in the Royal Avenue Gardens or at the Pannier Market
Parking:	Parking is available along South Embankment and the boat float, additional pay and display parking is available next to the Royal Avenue Gardens
Accommodation:	Please contact Dartmouth Information Centre on 01803 834224 or www.discoverdartmouth.com
Other facilities:	Carparking, many shops, pubs & restaurants, museum and churches, Tourist Information Centre
OS map:	Explorer 0L20
Grid Ref:	SX877513



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Dartmouth Town Trail

- The Sloping Deck:** Notice the Butterwalk opposite, a fine row of houses with columns, built in 1635. At that time ships from Newfoundland could sail to the back of the Butterwalk and ground on the beach, part of which has been reclaimed to build these houses. Their insecure foundations soon caused the rear to subside. Inside, fine original plasterwork and wainscotting can be seen on the first floors of the (well-named!) Sloping Deck Restaurant and the Dartmouth Museum. It is considered the finest room in Dartmouth, worthy of King Charles II who dined here in 1671. The latter is worth a separate visit for its interesting collection of maritime exhibits.
- The Quay in the Town:** Cross the road to the entrance of Royal Avenue Gardens on your right. The Quay was built on land reclaimed from the sea between 1588 and 1640 to meet the needs of the Newfoundland fishing trade. Although the houses at the far end of the Quay were rebuilt in the 19th century, those from the

Castle Hotel to the Butterwalk are much as they were in 1639 when their wealthy merchant owners could watch the ships moor right outside their windows. The Castle Hotel first became an inn in the 1730's. Turn towards the river with the boatfloat on your right. The embankment of 1885 cut off the quay from the river for large ships, with a bridge allowing only small boats to enter, so today the boat float is only used by small craft - and a resident group of swans.

3. **From Tidal Pool to Park:** On your left, the site of the Royal Avenue Gardens was reclaimed between 1670 and 1680 from mudflats, to provide additional walls to which ships could moor. In Victorian times it was laid out as formal gardens complete with bandstand. The gardens were relandscaped by South Hams District Council in 1991. For 200 years this was an island linked to the north corner of the new quay by a bridge.

Turn left, leaving Royal Avenue Gardens on the right and in a few yards you will see Dartmouth Tourist Information Centre and the Newcomen Engine House.

Inside is an atmospheric engine invented in Dartmouth in 1712 by Thomas Newcomen, a local ironmonger. It proved a key invention in the Industrial Revolution and was soon used to pump water out of coalfields all over Europe and America. Through colourful displays and a cartoon character, the story of Thomas Newcomen's life and invention is told, making the Engine House well worth a visit.

Walk on to the corner of the car park a plaque records the filling of the whole area in 1876-1877. Opposite this plaque, to the left of where the new clinic now stands, where once two mill wheels driven by the waters of the falling tide and attached to the old stone building which was the mill house. This was one of Dartmouth's worst areas. Rubbish and detritus emptied from windows of the mill house into a fetid disease-ridden pool.

4. **The Bonded Store:** Turn Right into Mayors Avenue, which was reclaimed about the same time.
- Until then, ships were built and repaired here. A short distance on from the supermarket, a warehouse with hooks to unload cargoes from ships can be seen. A vaulted customs bonded warehouse once used for storing dutiable spirits and tobacco lies behind Messrs Hawkes.
- Turn left into King's Quay and after 50 yards walk along Undercliff - a narrow park, originally the 'red light' area of the port. Ladies of the Night occupied hovels in spaces left on R.H.S. According to an 18th century doctor, this place was more violent and worse than the London slums. Turn right up Bakehouse Hill. R.H.S. Ancient seal of Dartmouth is set into the wall, depicting King Edward III and the new ship of the time, the 'cog'. Turn left up Clarence Hill.
5. **Sea Captains and Shipbuilders:** Clarence Street was a favourite place for sea captains to live, close to where the ships came in. At the end of Clarence Street is the Ship In Dock Inn which within living memory overlooked small shipbuilding yards on the edge of Coombe Mud. This area was filled in to form Coronation Park (on your right) in 1937 when the North Embankment was completed. Look up river at the floating bridge or higher ferry designed by James Rendell, which in 1831 provided the first vehicular crossing of the Dart below Totnes. To the left, uphill there is a good view of Britannia Royal Naval College. This is 1905 replaced the two ships 'Britannia' and 'Hindustan' which since 1864 had trained officers of the Royal Navy. Prince Charles and Prince Andrew followed family tradition in taking their naval training there. Return along Clarence Street and fork right up Clarence Hill. This is a medieval street, named after a visit in 1828 by the Duke of Clarence, later William IV. Mount Galpin, on the right was the town house of the Holdsworth family, the rulers of Dartmouth for over a century. They then looked down on the mill pool, where the lower town is now. The all-powerful Holdsworths (7 generations) at the forefront of triangular trade with Newfoundland and the Mediterranean - great prosperity resulted for Dartmouth.

6. **A Stepped Packhorse Track:** Continue up Clarence Hill, then turn left where the road forks uphill and go down some steps to your left. A stepped lane lined by attractive cottages, Brown's Hill was once the main packhorse route out of the town before roads existed for wheeled traffic. At the bottom, turn right and cross the road into the square. Here the old Pannier Market is crowded with shoppers every Tuesday and Friday. When you have explored the Pannier market, leave with the Dolphin Inn on your left, to go through to Foss Street which was built in the 13th century as a dam across the tidal creek to power the mills. Today Foss Street is an attractive pedestrian shipping precinct. Turn right, crossing Victoria Road into Anzac Street.

7. **The Wine Merchants' Church:** Ahead, on the left, lies St. Saviour's Church, consecrated in 1372, which contains many treasures of great beauty. It was built by Dartmouth merchants who had become rich in the Bordeaux wine trade, like the famous John Hawley whose brass lies in the chancel. The original church of the town St. Clemant's at Townstal, was at the time far from where most people lived. The town's earliest fire engine once stood in the churchyard, along with the ducking mast and stool to plunge cheats and nagging wives or 'scolds', over the churchyard wall and into the river. John Hawley (together with Newcomen) Dartmouth's most important and influential citizen. He met Jeffery Chaucer here and was almost certainly the model for The Shipman in 'The Canterbury Tales'.

8. **From Criminals to Cherubs:** From the church door, look left down Church Close with its 17th century houses. Turn right past the Seven Stars Inn into Smith Street, with Higher Street at right angles to it. This was the commercial centre of the town from medieval times. The pillory stood in the square. The three fine timbered 17th century houses to your left were, until Victorian times, the shambles, or butchers' shops. Turn right along Higher Street. Further on is the Cherub Inn which still retains its 14th century timbers and an original window. Once a row of similar houses stood opposite, but only one remains to show the original width of the street. Go down the steps beside the Cherub and turn right into Lower Street, which was once on the edge of the Dart. Every building between it and the river stands on reclaimed land. The Harbour Bookshop was established by Christopher Milne, the original Christopher Robin. Further on, on your right, a ramped stone wall bears a plaque to Thomas Newcomen, whose house on this site was demolished to make Newcomen Road.

9. **The Horse Ferry:** At the far end of Lower Street look left to see the lower ferry slipway. The site of the earliest row-boat ferry to Kingswear, it was replaced in 1834 by the 'horse ferry' - also rowed, but capable of taking two horses and carts. Straight ahead, where the road narrows to its original medieval width is Agincourt House, a 14th century building recently restored. Inside it is a good example of a merchant's house, with internal courtyard and kitchen at the back.

10. **Actors and Pilgrims:** Ahead lies Bayards Cove, with its quay and castle dating from the early 16th century. A plaque commemorates the visit of the Pilgrim Fathers here in 1620 en route for New England. The cobbled quay formed the setting for several films including 'The Onedin Line'.

11. **Steamers and Steam Trains:** Return past the ferry slipway and turn right along Coles Court which leads to the South Embankment, built in 1885 when Dartmouth was expanding as a bunkering port for steamers. Continued silting up of the river led to the embankment being widened by 6 metres in 1987. Have a close look at the Russian cannon, a trophy of the Crimean War. Walk left along the embankment, past Dartmouth Hospital, to Dartmouth Station, (now a restaurant) which never had a railway line to it. It sold tickets which included the ferry crossing to Kingswear Station opposite. Return to the start by turning left and walking along the Quay to Duke Street.