

South and South West England - Salinas, Salt Marshes and Cornish Sea Salt



The South and Southwest region has salt making remains dating from the prehistoric to the present day. At Lymington the warm dry climate of the Solent allowed partial-solar salting, producing an environment reminiscent of the French solar sites, coupled with very English brick-built salthouses. A modern salt making company has established itself in Cornwall close to the Celtic site of Trebarveth but historic sites in Devon can now only be found in documents.

Helston Museum, Cornwall



www.museumsincornwall.org.uk/museums/helston-folk-museum

Helston Museum has a display case dedicated to the excavations at Trebarveth. Also an excellent local history museum with salt boxes, salting troughs and a rare copper salt saw.

Trebarveth, Cornwall



www.historiccornwall.org.uk/a2m/rom_british/salt_making_site/trebarveth/trebarveth.htm

Excavated in 1979 the Roman salt making site is being eroded into the sea. A short walk along the coastal footpath from Coverack. This site was the inspiration for the creation of the new Cornish Sea Salt Company.

Newtown, Isle of Wight



www.everytrail.com/guide/landscape-walks-newtown

There are two lagoons where salt pans operated from medieval times through to the late C19th. There are brick remains of the former saltworks where brine from the lagoons was pumped into vats and heated to evaporate water and create salt. Today the salt pans provide an important habitat for rare species such as Lagoon Shrimps and Brittle Stars.

Field monuments of Roman salt making practices can be found on the Somerset levels with more recent activities at Dunbell Salt Works, Puriton where coal was brought over the Bristol Channel from South Wales. Museums at St. Barbe, Lymington and Helston, Cornwall display and interpret their local salt making heritage. Many salt marshes are now protected as nature reserves and some are looked after by the RSPB, such as at Arne in Poole Harbour, Dorset.

Poole Harbour, Dorset



www.dorsetaonb.org.uk/wildlife/199-arne.html

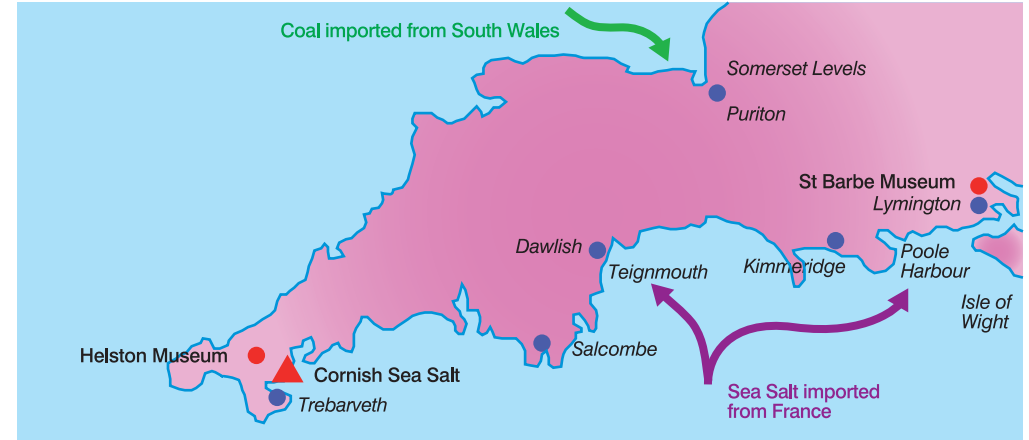
At the RSPB Arne Reserve you can experience the environment of Poole Harbour with its varied bird and animal life. Discover the long history of the area which had salt works from the Iron Age at the developing interpretation centre and events programme.

Lymington, Hampshire



www.stbarbe-museum.org.uk/
www.lymington.org/history/thesaltindustry.html

Salt works stretched along the coast from Lymington to Hurst Spit, mainly around Oxy and Pennington marshes. Today this area is part of a Nature Reserve.



At Lymington, many of the evaporation basins of former salterns have now been re-landscaped to form larger 'brackish lagoons', which are a highly specialised habitat and are rare both in Atlantic Europe and in the UK.

These sheltered aquatic habitats are colonised by an assemblage of invertebrate species that are particularly tolerant of a wide range of salinity that is distinct from estuarine and other marine ecosystems. Species include the lagoon cockle (*Cerastoderma glaucum*), ragworms and various crustaceans such as the lagoon sand shrimp (*Gammarus insensibilis*). The spectacular starlet sea anemone (*Nematostella vectensis*) is found at very high densities within some of the lagoons. Although species diversity is low, high densities and biomass of invertebrates provide important prey for over-wintering migratory birds, such as Black-tailed Godwits and breeding birds such as Terns and now Avocets.

The brine tanks and possibly the evaporating basins of the Lymington salterns were once a home for the brine shrimp or 'sea monkey' (*Artemia salina*) which is characteristic of the fauna of evaporating basins and crystallisation ponds of active salinas in southern Europe.



Historic salt making sites and salt marsh environments are important ecosystems that provide essential food, refuge or habitat for fish, invertebrates and birds. The flowering plants that live there are very specialised, as only a few species can tolerate the salty conditions.



Brine shrimps brought to the attention of the scientific community were specimens from Lymington. They were drawn in 1756 by Schöser and classified by the great taxonomist Carl Linnaeus in 1758.

Photographs by Roger Herbert, David Cranstone, Andrew Fielding and Brian Irving.
Brine shrimp image © Hans Hillewaert | CC-BY-SA-3.0