

Lepe Beach – D-Day Embarkation Remains

The coastline between Calshot Spit and Lepe on The Solent was, in 1944, the scene of major preparation for D-Day (Grid Ref. SZ 466991). You can still see remains of structures where some sections of Mulberry Harbour caissons were fabricated and launched, to then be towed across the Channel to Arromanches.

Also, it is still possible to see (albeit on private land) some of the roads from inland built to drive tanks and trucks to the shore for embarkation. The tanks, motorized vehicles and troops had been part of the build up to the invasion – this was last stage of their journey from all over the New Forest and further afield. Two pierheads stand forlorn and rusting where ships would have moored alongside and embarked troops; concrete ramps moulded from “chocolate blocks” allowed tanks to be reversed on to landing craft. The concrete chocolate blocks allowed drainage and flexibility as they were effectively built straight on to the beach sand. Much of the cliff shows evidence of reinforcement with now-solidified sand and concrete bags.

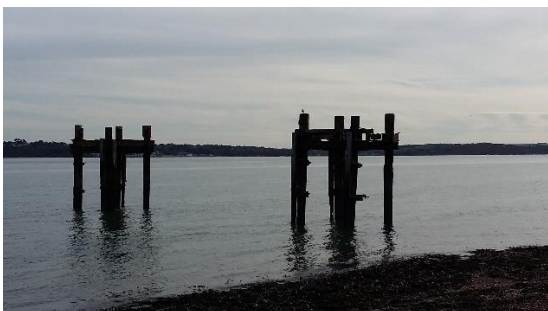
The Mulberry caissons were built on a production line, east to west. As they were completed they were moved towards the western end of the site which had mechanisms to haul the caisson down the beach into the sea, much like a sideways launching of a ship.

You can even see some of the pipelines sticking out of the cliff (though the actual PLUTO pipeline is no more) which ran over to the Isle of Wight.

Access is open and free (car park is charged at either Calshot or Lepe). Further information can be seen at <https://nfknowledge.org/contributions/d-day-at-lepe-beach>.



“Chocolate block” construction



Embarkation pierheads



Remains of a pipeline
in the cliff