

Seymour Slip to Fort Henry and back

Short Walk

This is a simple beach walk offering wonderful sea views with Gorey Castle dominating the bay. Always remember to check the state of tide before setting out making sure that it is either on the ebb or at least an hour and a half before high water to give you time for the return journey.



Starting Point

Seymour Slip.

Public Transport

Bus Route 1.

Difficulty

This walk has been attributed an easy rating.

Duration

1 hour.

Directions

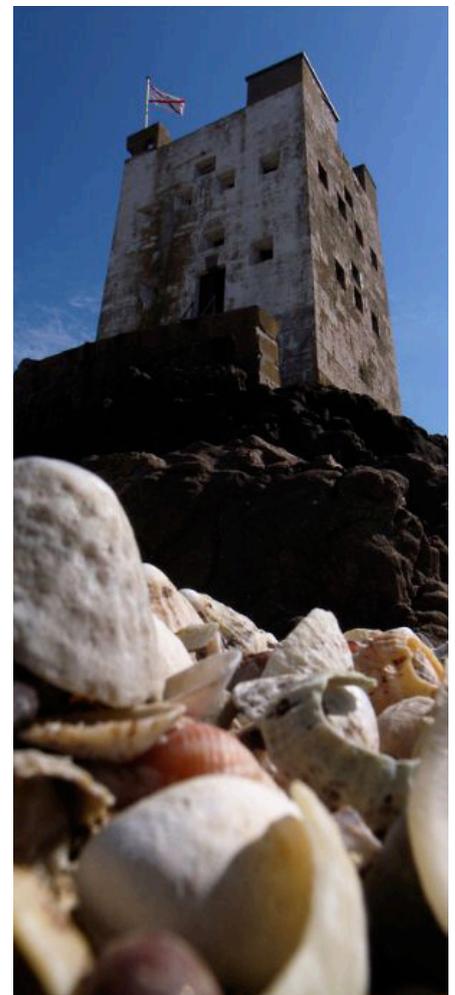
Walk down the slipway that was built in the 1800s to facilitate the extraction of Vraic "seaweed" as well as the removal of quarried stone from the surround reef noting that the beach is much higher on the right side of the slip than the left.

This is caused by the islands gyratory tidal system whereby there is a dominant flow from west to east till an hour and a half after high water. As the water flows against and over the slip it slows down and so losing much of the sands carried in suspension. The cobbles set into the floor of the slip would once have been set at a steeper angle than today to give traction to the horse and carts as they hauled their loads off the beach. Some of the large edging blocks of granite have thumb sized cut outs along their edge caused during the quarrying process when a series of drill holes would have been made to aid splitting the rock.

If you have brought your canine companions with you, please remember that there will be large numbers of shore birds busy feeding and it is crucial that they are not disturbed so keep to the upper beach zone collecting any plastics that you can along the way for disposal.

Although your main focus is likely to be the beach and immediate surroundings, it is worth casting a critical eye on the Round Towers spread along this section of coast. Construction of these towers was ordered by General Seymour Conway to defend the island from French invasion and though of a standard design, vary in the type of materials used in their construction especially relating to the window apertures and machicolations (the sticky out bits at the top) where some are brick and some granite.

The next slipway you pass is Le Hurel a very common name in Jersey that stems from 'hure' (high, rocky, stony, barren ground). Built in a similar manner to Seymour slip, though here some of the stone in its construction and that of the immediate sea wall comes not from the reef but a large rock outcrop that used to exist in a field off of Rue du Pont near to St Pierre de la Rocque Chapel that also contains some of the same stone.



Those with a keen eye will note that the sands and gravels change slightly as you move toward Gorey becoming finer. Again this is due to the tidal drift depositing finer lighter material as it slows up nearer the harbour. Although up until where the golf course starts, the coast is heavily built up (thank goodness for the golf course), it was once all sand dunes and low rocky outcrops and of course that too is what the golf course is built on. It is at this point that the sea wall changes to concrete being built by Organisation Todt the German civil and military engineering division during the Occupation. On the rare occasions when stormy

weather strips away the sands and lowering the beach, it is possible to see the outlines of old field boundaries dating back to the Iron Age. As you near your turning point at Fort Henry - if the beach level is low you will come across large round timbers sticking up out of the beach. These are all that is left of the bridge that supported a railway built by the occupying forces to transport stone from the hillside above Le Chemin des Maltières. Fort Henry is the large square structure situated just inland from the sea wall and was constructed at a similar time to the Round Towers. *Turning back, one of the structures that draws the eye is Seymour Tower built in*

1781 on the outer rim of the Violet Bank to protect the island from French invasion.

Another is the 'refuge tower' that lays further ashore and is placed there for those that take no notice of incoming tides. The lower beach here is dominated by oyster beds, proof if needed, that our nutrient rich local waters are perfect for the rapid growth of these much sort after shellfish.

Remember to leave nothing but your footprints on the beach while keeping the memory of the walk.

