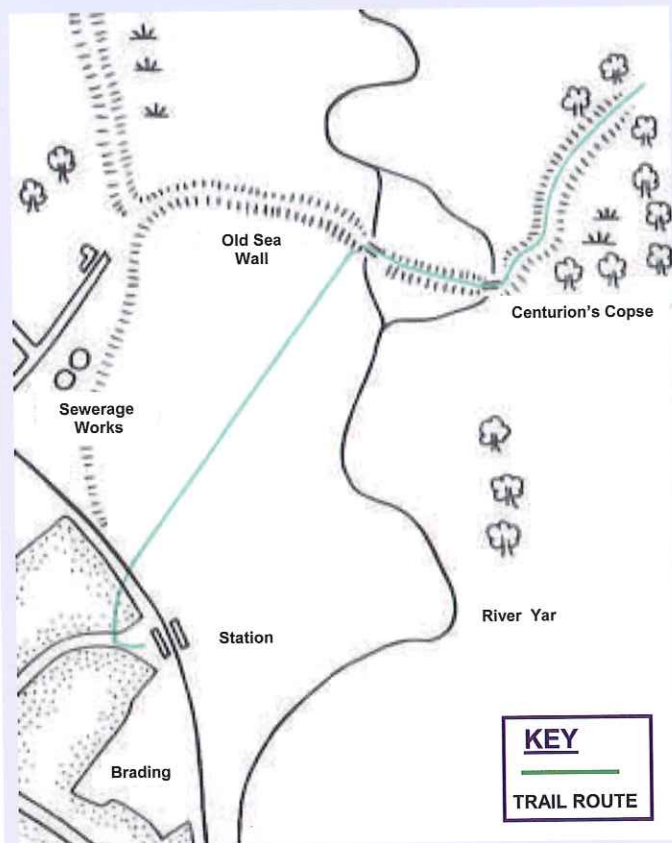


CENTURION COPSE & OLD SEA WALL



UPDATED BY BRADING
TOWN COUNCIL

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SUSTAINABILITY FUND



WALK TWO

Leave Brading Station through the exit gate and cross the car park towards the brown footpath sign "1 & 2". Walk through the housing estate, following the signs across the railway line (beware of the trains) to the white wicker gate. Passing through this gate the path crosses the fields to a distant bridge (Middle Sluice) upon an embankment.

The fields you are walking over were once flooded, subject to tidal ebb and flow, as the sea came up to the town of Brading. The river Yar has since been tamed. As you approach the bridge, so the view over Brading Marsh opens up in front of you. You are now standing on the sea wall and much of this encircles the marsh. The sea wall was the third stage of draining land for agricultural use in this part of the Island.

Prior to this, Sir William Russell had reclaimed land between Sandown and the Yar Bridge by building a causeway in 1338 between Yaverland and Brading. In 1562 Sir George Oglander of Nunwell and German Richards (Vice - Admiral of the Island), reclaimed 126.5 acres of land at North Marsh lying to the north east of town between the track of the disused Brading to St. Helens railway branch line and Carpenters Road, just north of Brading.

The third major reclamation was again constructed by Sir George Oglander and German Richards who, by the time the causeway was built, had become Lord of Yaverland Manor. Brading Quay, which had up until then been situated just behind the eastern side of the High Street, had become silted up and there was a need for berthing place for larger ships. Thus a stone embankment topped by a narrow road was built from the 'New Quay' situated at the southern end of the North Marsh embankment to a point on the other side of the valley, north of Yaverland Manor. Three sluices were constructed in the embankment and were designed to control the outfall of the Yar. Two of these sluices, Middle Sluice and Great Sluice, nearest to Yaverland, can still be seen clearly today at the wooded (southern) end of the embankment. When the final embankment, incorporating another sluice, was built across Brading Haven in 1881, the branch line from Brading to St. Helens was soon extended to Bembridge. This final embankment ensures that, today, the marshes are not flooded by sea water and any floodwater from the River Yar can be released into the sea.

The minor hill to the south-east has a clump of trees that hides Bembridge Fort; adjoining this hill are Bembridge Down and Culver Down on the skyline.

Cross over both sections of the Eastern Yar via Middle and Great Sluice and follow the sea wall, passing extensive reed beds on the right, to where the ground rises and the sea wall ends. Nightingales are heard during the day, much against popular belief! The path now rises over Centurion's (or St. Urian's) hill. At the signpost, unless you want to visit Culver down a mile or so away, follow the signs to Bembridge and enter Centurions Copse.

The Copse contains ancient earthworks and remains of the town of Wolverton which was looted and destroyed by fire in 1340 during a French attack.