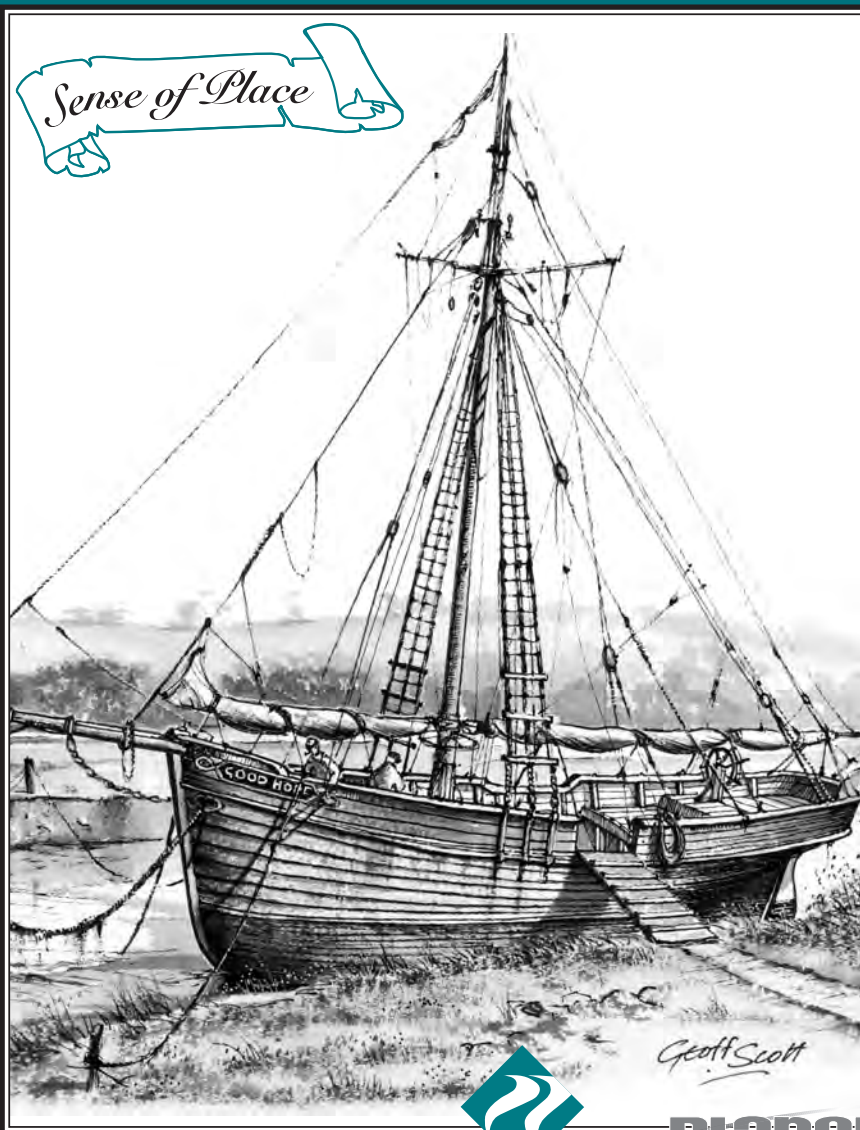# THE SECRET WATERWAY

Sense of Place

Pembrokeshire Greenways
Lonydd Glas Sir Benfro

The Secret Waterway

The Milford Haven Waterway has been described as one of the finest natural harbours in the world. It is internationally famous as a classic example of a Ria, a drowned valley. Millions of years ago, when the sea level was much lower than today, a river valley was formed along a fault line in the rock. At the end of the Ice Age, melting ice sheets released immense amounts of water to deepen the valley. As the sea level rose the valley flooded.

This broad sweep of water, sinuously curving its way into the heart of Pembrokeshire, has played a vital role in the history and fortunes of its people. Invaders and pirates have sought shelter in its hidden bays and creeks; medieval castles and Victorian forts dominate its shores; ancient villages and modern ports play host to ferries, fishing craft, oil tankers and yachts. The waterway also features landscapes of remarkable contrast. To the east of the Cleddau Bridge run the waters of the Daugleddau, meaning two Cleddaus, because here the eastern and western branches of the river meet. Its banks are clothed in ancient woodlands, birds call from quiet, sheltered inlets and the sense of tranquillity is profound. To the west of the Bridge, as it approaches the sea, the waterway widens. Here are busy townships, modern industries and historic fortifications, yet in all the hustle and bustle there are peaceful places here too. Tiny villages nestle in wooded valleys and in many of the winding tidal creeks, wildlife abounds. No wonder then, that for the most of its length the waterway lies within the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park.

The Protected Waterway

The waterway is characterised by steep wooded banks and small sheltered inlets (known as pills). The shoreline, with its salt marsh vegetation and tidal mud flats, provides a rich habitat for plants and animals and important winter feeding for wading birds and waterfowl.

Goldeneye, red-breasted merganser and curlew are all attracted here, as are shelduck, cormorants, herons, kingfishers and many other fascinating species.

The waterway also boasts some of the best deciduous woodland within the National Park. Oak, ash and sycamore support a variety of woodland birds and animals - from woodpeckers and tawny owls to bats, badgers and elusive otters.

In spring and summer, roadside hedgerows become ablaze with a bouquet of wild flowers - primroses, early purple orchids, bluebells, red campion, honeysuckle and foxgloves. In recognition of the Daugleddau's remarkable diversity of flora and fauna, 2189 sq hectares of the waterway have been designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The Waterway at Work

The serenity of the Daugleddau belies a history coloured by centuries of maritime trade and the toil of coal miners and quarrymen. In Tudor times Lawrenny was famous for its oysters. By the 19th Century sailing vessels of all shapes and sizes - brigantines, ketches, sloops, schooners and coasters - were busily importing and exporting coal, culm, grain, limestone, timber and general goods. Towards the latter part of the century, Willy Boys - flat, barge-like craft, carried local produce and ran a shuttle service between sea-going vessels and the Daugleddau's shallower upper reaches.

Quarrying

The poor acidic soils of west Wales made lime a valuable and highly saleable commodity. Limestone was quarried at West Williamston, Garron Pill and Llangwm Ferry and burned in hundreds of kilns along the waterway and coastline, from South Pembrokeshire to Cardigan Bay. The remains of several kilns are still visible.

Coalmining

The band of carboniferous coal measures which runs across Pembrokeshire from Saundersfoot to St. Brides Bay cuts through the uppermost reaches of the Daugleddau, and mining around Landshipping was at its height in the first half of the 19th Century - particularly after the introduction, around the 1800s, of the first steam engine to be used in the Pembrokeshire coalfield. The high quality anthracite was in great demand, however, a tragic accident at the Garden Pit near Landshipping in 1844, and a series of insurmountable geological problems which plagued the coalfield throughout its working life, led to a rapid decline in this industry by the early 20th Century. The last colliery to work, at Hook on the Western Cleddau, was closed in 1949.

Shipbuilding

The waterway's rich oak woodlands helped encourage boat building: cutters, smacks and schooners were built at yards and quays along the Daugleddau. At Lawrenny and Cosheston about 60 sailing vessels were built during the first half of the 19th Century. The Royal Naval Dockyard was established at Milford Haven in 1796 and moved to Pembroke in 1814. Other industries flourished too - from a chemical works at Whalecomb to a furnace and forge at Blackpool.

Fishing

During the 19th Century over 100 men earned their living compass net fishing - a traditional method, which required considerable skill and courage and was suited to fast-flowing tidal currents. When Milford Haven Docks opened in 1888 the first boat to enter was the steam trawler 'Sybil'. By 1908 over 300 fishing boats were using the port with 40,000 tons of fish sold in the fish market annually. The Great Western Railway marketed Milford as 'the place where the fish comes from!'

The Riverside Communities of the Secret Waterway

Dale

Dale is a popular centre for water sports enthusiasts and walkers, but during the 16th century, it was a thriving seaport, one of the largest settlements on the waterway, with 20 households. In 1609 the pirate Thomas Salkeld raided the village, looting and burning houses. More than a century later, smugglers operated out of Dale. The house known as The Brig was used to store contraband. Ships were built at the top of the beach and were launched at high tide. Dale Fort and West Blockhouse were built in the 1850's to protect the harbour. Henry VII landed at Mill Bay to begin his march to Bosworth Field and English Crown. The present St Anns Head Lighthouse rebuilt in 1844 proudly guides shipping safely through the mouth of the Haven.

St Anns Head Lighthouse
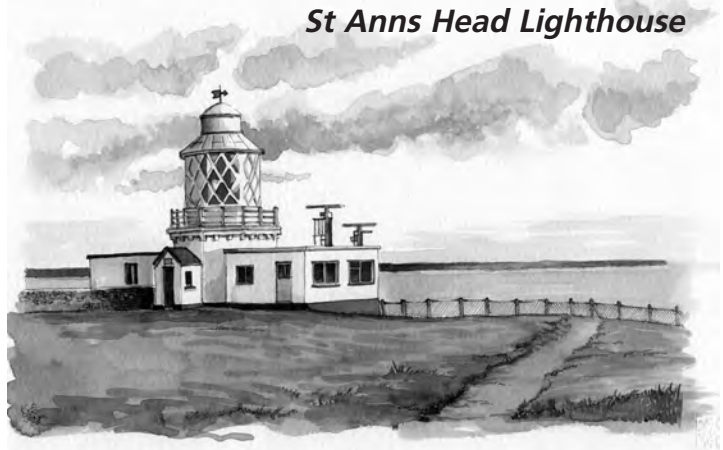
St Ishmael's

Nestling in a fold in the landscape, St Ishmael's is much older than it appears. The remains of a Norman motte, St Ishmael's Tump, stands on the outskirts of the village. The lovely little church lies further down the valley, near the sea, where an early monastery once stood. During the dark ages, this was one of the seven Bishop Houses of Dyfed. Within the church, its churchyard divided by a stream, are 10th century carved gravestones. Footpaths lead from the church through a wooded valley to the sea, linking with the coastal footpath.

Herbrandston

The cottages of Herbrandston cluster around the village green, once the scene of an annual Hiring Fair. Local legend suggests that in 1101, Flemish settlers first set foot in Pembrokeshire at Sandy Haven, an unspoiled tidal inlet beyond the village. To the south of the village, South Hook Fort stands sentinel on the cliffs. Built between 1859-65, the fort housed 20 guns and a garrison of 180 men. Another fort was built during the same period on Stack Rocks, with a similar armament and garrison. The forts were part of a chain of defences built along the Waterway to protect the Royal Dockyard at Pembroke Dock.

Milford Haven and Hakin

During the Civil War Pill Fort or 'The Gunkle', as it was known locally, was built by the Royalists to defend against the Parliamentarians. The remains of the rampart were removed in the early 1990s. The land on which Milford stands was once owned by Sir William Hamilton. In 1790 he was granted an Act of Parliament to build a town upon the site. A group of Quaker

Milford Docks
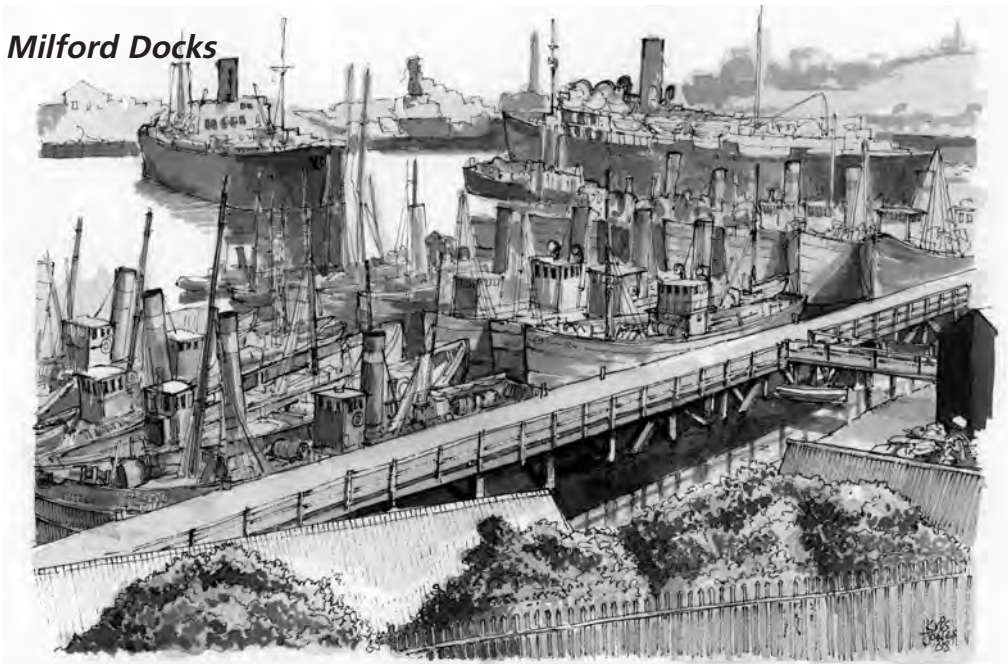
whalers from Nantucket was persuaded to settle here, the settlers cottages can still be seen on Cellar Hill; whaling ships sailed from the port for more than two decades. A Royal Dockyard was also briefly established. Several private shipbuilding yards occupied the Milford shore of Hubberston Pill.

The supporting workshops were located on the opposite side, in the old fishing village of Hakin, where the Observatory is all that remains of the 'College of King George the Third'. Intended to teach mathematics, engineering and nautical skills, it was never completed. Hubberston Fort at Gelliswick was built in the 1860s. One of a number of forts in the Haven known as Palmerston's Follies, it was used by the Americans during in the Second World War. The building of the docks across Hubberston Pill was completed in 1888. Milford soon became one of the largest fishing ports in Britain. Over 4,000 people were employed in the industry. Two fish trains left daily to carry the catch to markets across England and Wales. Despite a record catch of 59,000 tons in 1946, there was a steady decline and the last of the locally owned trawlers moved to other ports in 1991. Milford Haven developed as a major oil port from the late 1950s and is now a major energy port importing both oil and liquefied natural gas. The docks now contain a marina, shops, flats, restaurants, galleries and a museum.

Isambard Kingdom Brunel

Neyland

Until the 1850's, Neyland was a fishing village on the shore of Westfield Pill. A shipyard existed in the eighteenth century which

produced two warships, as well as smaller vessels. Another yard near Neyland Point specialised in the building tea clippers. In 1852, the South Wales Railway built its western rail terminus at Westfield Pill. Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the company's chief engineer, chose the site. A new town grew up on the hillside to accommodate the workers and their families. By 1856, there were regular sailings to Ireland to link with the train services. In 1906, the Irish service was transferred to Fishguard. A fish market opened on Neyland Quay in 1908. The catches were auctioned on the site and were sent by train to destinations across Britain, but the modernisation of the docks at Milford in 1914 meant that the industry ended in 1975 with the opening of the Cleddau Bridge. Westfield Pill now contains a marina with modern facilities.

Llanstadwell
Llanstadwell stretches along the shore line between Neyland and Hazelbeach. The 15th century tower of St Tudwal's church was a landmark for mariners. Records show that in 1394, prior to the King's crossing to Ireland, the vicar of Llanstadwell hosted Richard II here at a cost of 40 shillings. During the 19th and early 20th centuries, the inhabitants made their livelihoods from boat-building, fishing or in the Royal Dockyard at Pembroke Dock. At Hazelbeach, cargoes of grain, coal, culm and limestone were transferred from small ships beached at low tide to horse-drawn carts for delivery in the neighbourhood. At Scoveston is another of the Victorian forts, differing from the others in that it lies within a circular earthen bank.

Burton
The village has long sea-faring history. Several small shipyards operated here in the 18th and 19th centuries. The large timer jetty was built in the Victorian period by Trinity House as a depot to serve fleet tenders. When the foundations for the Cleddau

Bridge were dug in 1969, the skeletons of several sailors were discovered. They may have died of plague. Wrapped in their hammocks, they were buried on the shore, to be lapped twice a day by the tide. At the top of the hill stands the old Toll House where coaches paid 6d to pass through and horses 1d. St Mary's Church dates from the 13th century. A number of sign-posted footpaths cross the parish, including several from Sardis leading to the Hanging Stone, a Neolithic burial chamber.

Llangwm

Llangwm

Thought to have been a Flemish settlement in the middle ages, its inhabitants made their living from fishing and harvesting shellfish. In the 16th century, oysters were exported from Llangwm by boat and pack horse across south Wales and the Welsh borders. Smugglers were said to have hidden contraband in a cave in Knap Lane. The village was famous for the independent spirit and industriousness of its womenfolk, who in Victorian times travelled on foot to Haverfordwest and Tenby to sell fish or oysters, carried in large panniers on their backs.

Hook and Freystrop

The area was once the centre of a thriving coal industry. Anthracite coal was mined from the fourteenth century and was exported as far as Spain. Legend relates that the Spanish sailors bartered daffodil bulbs for coal. The early workings were shallow shafts, four to six metres deep, but, by the 19th century, deep mines such as the Old Aurora and Amen pits had opened. A tramway was built to carry coal to Hook Quay for shipment. By 1931, 35,000 tons of coal was exported by rail and water. Thereafter production declined and following flood damage in 1948, the last of the pits closed.

Boulston

The Modern Parish of Boulston consists of scattered farmsteads and tiny hamlets. The ancient manor of Boulston, now an overgrown ruin on the banks of the Western Cleddau was once the home of the Wogan family. The nearby 13th century church was abandoned over a century ago.

Blackpool Mill

Trader at Blackpool Mill

At the tidal limit of the Eastern Cleddau is Blackpool Mill. Iron ore was mined from the local area and by 1760 an iron forge was in operation. From here boats would transport grain and flour to and from local villages and the port of Milford Haven.
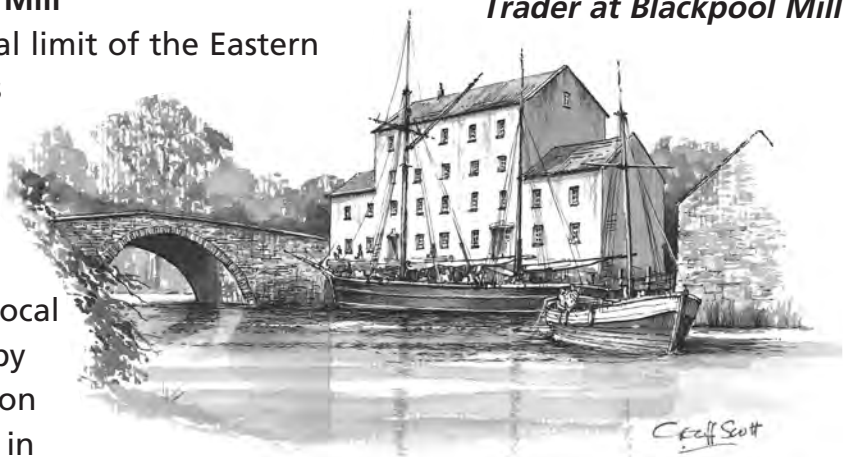
The Rhos

The Rhos developed as an estate village connected to nearby Picton Castle, which still remains the village's focal point. Picton Ferry stands directly opposite Landshipping Ferry offering superb views of the estuary and a perfect spot for bird watching.

Landshipping & Landshipping Quay

The isolated village of Landshipping is a haven of peace and tranquillity, belying the village's busy industrial heritage. A ferry operated between Landshipping Quay and Picton in the 1700s although the quay was built for the coal industry. The coalmines have long since closed and the quays lie quiet offering the ideal spot for bird watching and other quiet pastimes.

Landshipping Quay

Lawrenny

Much of the working life of The Daugleddau centred around Lawrenny Quay. During WWII a marine air base was established here. It was the permanent home for the fleet of 'Walrus' seaplanes which were sometimes moored on the river between Lawrenny and Coedcanlas. Today Lawrenny village, with its well-restored cottages and church still has many of its medieval features and tranquil old world charm. A National Park picnic site, which stands on the former site of Lawrenny Castle, offers superb views over the Carew and Cresswell rivers.

Cresswell Quay

At Cresswell Quay you can relax and enjoy some of the many waterbird species which feed in full view. A quiet contrast with the activity of the past when anthracite coal was exported from here. The ruins of Cresswell Castle lie across the river, converted

Cresswell Quay

into a fortified mansion in the 16th century; it may have been the property of the Augustinian Priory at Haverfordwest during the medieval period.

West Williamston

Limestone quarrying was for centuries the backbone of this small community. Canals were cut into the march flats of both the Cresswell River and Carew River to provide docks for the barges which transported the limestone. Today its riverbanks are designated a nature reserve.

Carew

Probably the most spectacular spot along the secret waterway is Carew Castle. The land was part of the dowry of Princess Nest, daughter of Rhys ap Tewdwr, her husband Gerald of Windsor built the original timber palisade castle after their marriage in 1100. Carew is worth exploring a little further to uncover hidden delights such as an ancient Flemish chimney, the French Mill and a magnificent parish church at Carew Cheriton. The WWII Air Control Tower at Carew Cheriton Airfield has been extensively restored and is now open to the public.

Milton
The Village of Milton is bisected by the busy main road but if you get off the beaten track and explore a little further you will discover the tranquil riverside with its abundant flora and fauna. High tides bring salt water into Radford Pill, salt marsh plants such as Cord Grass and Sea Aster may be found on the mudflats, which are a feeding ground for wading birds such as Curlew and Redshank.

Cosheston
Cosheston is part of the medieval manor of Cosheston. The village is a typical linear development surrounded by a medieval enclosed strip field system. The fields further out have been amalgamated into larger modern field systems. The older houses in the village are mostly 19th century; Cosheston church is built on medieval foundations. Upton Castle Gardens, which is open to the public, is home to an arboretum with a collection of exotic plants.

Pembroke Dock
Pembroke Dock is a modern town, built in 1814 because of the transfer of a Royal Naval dockyard from Milford Haven. By the mid-nineteenth century it had become one of the principal shipbuilding yards in Britain. A variety of warships, as well as several royal yachts, were constructed here. Changes in technology and the development of the dreadnought battleship meant that the dockyard became inadequate. It closed in 1926. A gun tower known locally as the 'Martello Tower' was built in 1849 to defend the dockyard. During the Second World War, the town was a base for all three military services, especially the Sunderland Flying Boats that patrolled the Western Approaches. Today, Pembroke Dock is the terminus for the Irish Ferry. The town's museum, housed in the Martello Tower describes the history of the dockyard, whilst several of the elegant Georgian dockyard buildings are being refurbished.
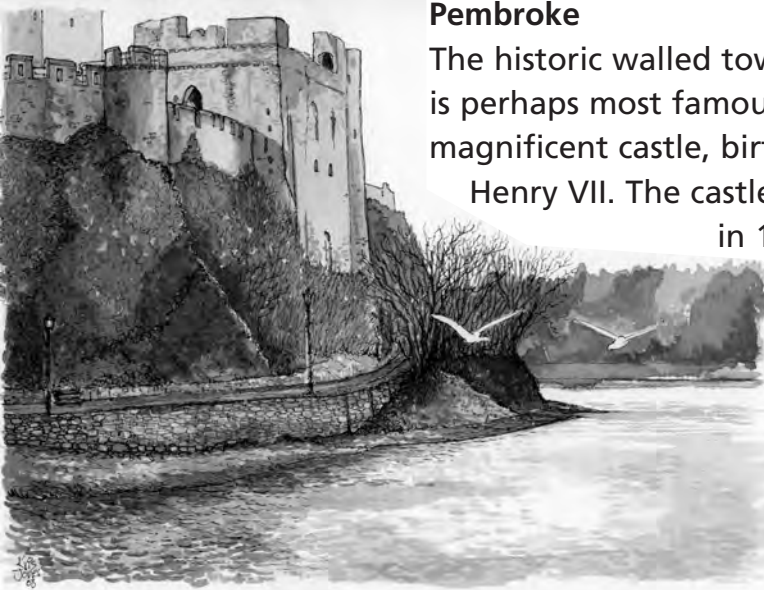
Pembroke Castle

Pembroke

The historic walled town of Pembroke is perhaps most famous for its magnificent castle, birthplace of Henry VII. The castle was established in 1093 by Roger de Montgomery. The original structure was a timber palisade which was replaced by stone from 1189 onwards.

Princess Nest's Husband, Gerald of Windsor, was Constable of Pembroke based at the Castle. In 1170 Nest's sons joined Strongbow, the Earl of Pembroke, in the Norman invasion of Ireland. During the Civil War Pembroke sided with the Parliamentarians but later switched sides, it was Oliver Cromwell who ordered that the castle be destroyed. The castle lay in ruins until 1928 when Sir Ivor Phillips of Cosheston began the restoration. The town of Pembroke developed in conjunction with the castle. Pembroke had been an administrative centre since 1138 and became the official county town when Pembrokeshire was created in 1536, although Haverfordwest became the county town in 1543. The Pembroke and Tenby Railway was completed in 1863, it had its own police force in the early years because of the sensitive cargos to and from the Naval Dockyard at Pembroke Dock.

Main Street is the ideal place to potter amongst craft and antique shops, cafes, restaurants and pubs.

Hundleton

The name Hundleton may come from 'Hounds Farm'. This old village, on the edge of Pembroke town, is close to Orielton House, a Georgian mansion now used as a field study centre. A ferry once operated between Bentlass and East Pennar; a fateful accident occurred in 1889 when nine people were drowned.

Angle

Strategically placed at the entrance to the waterway, Angle has several notable military defence features such as Thorn Island and Chapel Bay Forts. The East Blockhouse was begun in the reign of Henry VIII and in the early 20th Century saw the development of batteries for heavy guns. Other interesting features include the lifeboat station, a medieval fortified residence known as the Tower House, a dovecote, 15th Century Angle Hall and rare examples of the Norman strip system of farming. Recent archaeological excavations have uncovered medieval stone lined cist burials at West Angle Bay which lends credence to the suggestion that the original settlement was on the headland not inland as it is today.

East Angle Bay

Walking along the Secret Waterway
The long distance South of the Landsker and Landsker Borderlands
Trails and reveal a succession of delights, from the evocative ruins
of magnificent Carew Castle to the ancient woodland of Minwear
and its fascinating medieval remains at the Sisters House. These
footpaths offer access to many other intriguing historic sites such
as Upton Castle and the restored mills at Carew and Blackpool. The
Milford Haven Walks encompass an area which is at first glance a
predominately industrial landscape, but look closer and you will
discover the beautiful inlet of Sandy Haven and the impressive
fortifications at Gelliswick and South Hook. Milford Haven Marina
is alive with restaurants, cafés, activity centres and galleries. The
Pembrokeshire Coast Path National Trail follows the coastline of
Pembrokeshire from Amroth in the south to Poppit Sands in the
north. The Coast Path crosses the Daugleddau over the Cleddau
Bridge, from here you have a fantastic view of the surrounding
landscape. We could tell you more, of course, but that would only
spoil the enjoyment of uncovering the area's many hidden
treasures for yourself and whatever your method of exploration,
the secret waterway will provide endless relaxation and enjoyment.

Buses
The following buses serve the Secret Waterway area.
Information on the following services is available from
Traveline Cymru 0870 241 2216 www.traveline-cymru.org.uk
Pembrokeshire County Council Timetable Booklet 0800 7831584
Silcox Coaches 01646 683143 (SC)
Edwards Brothers 01437 890230 (EB)
Richards Brothers 01239 613756 (RB)
Bloomfield House 01834 860293

300 - Milford Haven Town Circular - SC
308 - Haverfordwest to Llangwm & Burton - EB

315 Puffin Shuttle - Milford Haven to Haverfordwest - EB
356 Milford Haven to Monkton - SC
357 Monkton to Haverfordwest - SC
361 Pembroke Dock to Tenby - SC
387 Coastal Cruiser - Pembroke Dock - Angle - Stackpole - SC
388/364 Coastal Cruiser - Pembroke Dock - Stackpole - Angle - SC
400/315 Puffin Shuttle - St Davids - Milford Haven - St Davids - RB
Tues & Fri - Bloomfield Walkers Bus -
Martletwy/Landshipping/Lawrenny/ Cresswell Quay.

Trains
There are Railway Stations at Pembroke and Haverfordwest.
Information is available from National Rail Enquiries on 08457 48
49 50, Welsh Language 0845 60 40 500, Text Phone 0845 60 50 600.

Waterbus
For further information contact Pembrokeshire Greenways on
01437 776313.

Cyngor Cefn Gwlad Cymru
Countryside Council for Wales

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Lawrenny Quay

Herbrandston

St Ishmaels

Dale

Milford Haven

Llanstad

Angle

St Ann's Head

F

Blackpool Mill

The Rhos

Boulston

Landshipping

Freystrop

Hook

Landshipping Quay

Llangwm

Lawrenny

Cresswell Quay

West Williamston

Burton

Neyland

Cosheston

tadwell

Carew

Pembroke Dock

Milton

Pembroke

Hundleton

Pembrokeshire Coast Path