

Pagham Church - Beating the Bounds 2-6th May with Alison Blenkinsop

As we tour the boundary, we thank God for Pagham and pray for the residents of our lovely village.

Day 1

Pagham Beach to Aldwick (undertaken on 3rd May, a cool cloudy day)

We start at the Yacht Club (photo from 2nd May), which was founded in May 1964. Twelve years later, after much fundraising, the bungalow at 1 West Front Road became the clubhouse and was officially opened in May 1977. It is one of only a handful of freehold yacht clubs on the south coast, and we thank God for its role in bringing joy to Pagham residents and local sailors. Read more of its history here:

<http://www.pyc.eclipse.co.uk/history/index.html>.



Opposite the Yacht Club stands the granite memorial to Pagham's contribution to Operation Overlord, and the famous Mulberry Harbour project. One of the 6000-ton Mulberry Harbour caissons, originally stored offshore before D-Day, is visible around two-thirds of a mile out.

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1452912>



Many of the houses on East Front Road have been built around old railway carriages. Most of them were brought to Pagham from Bognor Regis station, when old rolling stock was being replaced after the first world war ended in 1918, for holiday homes. Now several are occupied all year round. These residences are now in danger from the loss of shingle and encroaching sea, but Pagham residents are working hard to save our village. Revd Mark Eminson, our former vicar, was a Trustee for Pagham Flood Defence Trust. <https://www.savepaghambeach.org/>

The outflow pipe at the end of East Front Road beach (on the right of the photo) helps to prevent rainwater backing into the sewage system. It's a popular place to meet for a swim. Bathing water at Pagham is normally tested by the Environment Agency during the summer, and 2019's rating was 'excellent'.

On clear days, one can see the coastline beyond Brighton, and the Downs behind. The Rampion Wind Farm, comprising 116 turbines offshore at Worthing, is often clearly visible. It has been operational for two years, and provides enough renewable energy for about half of Sussex homes.



In the summer, the beach is covered with flowering plants.

Several of the houses have boats, but the shortened beach frontage and its steep slope makes launching difficult.

We are now at the junction of Pagham beach and Aldwick beach, off Viscount Drive.

The front of the Yacht Club used to look rather like this, before storms in 2014 devastated the seating area. Parts of the broken concrete can be seen after heavy storms, but the shingle is usually replaced by heavy machinery within a few days, to reduce risk of injury to beach visitors.



<http://paghambeach.blogspot.com/2014/11/unsafe-seating-area-outside-pagham.html>

At the end of The Dunes in Aldwick Bay Estate, there is a sundial (in the photo on the right) to show the distance to local towns such as Chichester and Portsmouth. Across the Channel, the nearest large French coastal town is Le Havre. Large container ships and ferries between Portsmouth and Europe are often seen on the south-west horizon.



We end the first section (actually Alison's second walk) by the roundabout at The Fairway in Aldwick Bay Estate. According to the company which manages this area, the story began in 1928 when WHB Fletcher, Lord of the Manor of Aldwick, sold his 575-acre Pagham Farm estate at auction at the Dolphin Hotel, Chichester (now Waterstones) for £29,000. 100 acres of this prime land, situated in 'The Bay', was bought by a London-based property developer. He conceived the idea of creating 'an outstanding example of land development' – now the Aldwick Bay Estate.



During the second war, an invasion along the South Coast was a constant fear, necessitating defences on the beach and Estate. Rumours of spies and fifth columnists abounded, and at least one house was raided. The Fairway, Manor Way and Bay Walk became home to Canadian forces in Nissen huts. A couple of famous visitors during this period were Lord Alexander of Tunis, and Douglas Bader who was billeted on the Estate. <https://www.aldwickbaycompany.com/>

Don't miss next week's thrilling instalment – Aldwick to Lagness