

Welcome to the Slapton Time Line

Middle Car Park

3 ¼ miles long and over 10,000 years old
Strete Gate 100,000 years ago



100,000 years ago
18,000 years ago
10,000 years ago
3,000 years ago

100,000 years ago



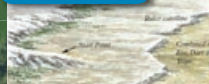
Slapton cliff edge & plains are grazed by elephants, hyenas & giant deer, with open sea beyond.

18,000 years ago



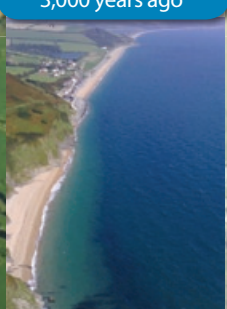
Ice sheets use so much water that sea levels fall dramatically. The coast is approx 35km further out. A chalk & flint beach forms.

10,000 years ago



Ice is melting, sea-level is rising, & the British Isles are reforming. Rising waters bring with them the chalk & flint shingle beach.

3,000 years ago



The shingle stretches around Start Bay, a ridge forms from Strete Gate to Torcross. Freshwater draining off the land builds up behind, Slapton Ley is born.

Slapton

1737



Fishermen's stores or *cellars* are on this site. There is also a lime kiln & cottages, & by 1831 a pub which becomes the Royal Sands Hotel.

1824



A hurricane rips across the south west on 24th November, leaving devastation along the coast. Slapton Line is breached & hundreds of wrecks recorded.

1856



New coast road for coaches & horses opens between Kingsbridge & Dartmouth. Miners tunnel an overflow for the Ley under Torcross, until then it overflowed most winters making the road impassable.

1897 - 1901



Expansion of Plymouth Docks needs shingle to mix with concrete. Permission is granted to dredge Hallsands beach between high & low water (1½ miles south of Slapton Line).

1903



A storm hits & Hallsands suffers wind & wave damage. The impact of dredging on the village is becoming clear & a sea wall is built.

1917



In January Hallsands devastated by massive storms largely falls into the sea! 13 of Salcombe's lifeboat crew are lost.

1921



Herbert Whitley hears Slapton Ley is threatened with drainage so a holiday resort can be built. He buys it as a wildlife sanctuary.

1939



Royal Sands Hotel closes & in 1940 it's damaged when 'Pincher' a dog triggers off 6 landmines causing severe but not irreparable damage, & is finally destroyed by naval gunfire & bombers during exercises in 1944.

1954 / 55



Slapton Ley, largest freshwater lake in South West declared a Site of Special Scientific Interest because of special plants & animals living around its shores. Herbert Whitley dies & leaves his Estate to Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust. Field Studies Council lease the land in 1959 for education & scientific purposes.

2001



A storm hits, a section of road is badly damaged. Devon County Council is forced to close it. 3 months later a temporary single track opens. The monument has to be moved inland.

1993



Slapton Ley is designated as a National Nature Reserve.

2003



Slapton Line Partnership appoint consultant engineers to assess the future of the road. After 2 years research they conclude it will survive for 30 to 50 years if 'soft' protection & realignments are made where possible, 3 more shingle bastions are built. They also recommend work to support communities in adapting to change.

2007



Slapton Line Partnership wins funds for *Living with a Changing Coast* a 3 year community adaptation project designed together with the community.

Torcross



1737 1824 1856 1897 1901 1903 1917 1921 1939 1940s 1943 1944 1954 1955 1993 2001 2002 2003 2007 THE FUTURE

1943



Slapton Sands become a training ground for D-Day landings. They are similar to Normandy's beaches. On 16th August the Royal Navy put the first American soldiers ashore.

1940's



Slapton Line road is tarred for the 1st time by locals then repaired by American soldiers after damage caused in the D-Day practices.

1943



Residents given 6 weeks to move out, allowing more realistic training! Farmers have the extra worry of evacuating livestock. All must be gone by 20th December. 3000 people are involved. Evacuation lasts 12 months.

2001



Slapton Line Partnership is created to consider the road's future & provide community support.

2002



Bundles of willow are discovered whilst building a new section of road 21 metres inland. They date to the 1850s & were laid on the shingle as a base for the cracked stones of 1st road. 12,000 tons of shingle are taken from Strete Gate to make 2 bastions to protect the Line.

the future



What's in store? More frequent repair to the road after storms & eventual closure. Coastal communities prepare for the challenge of living with a changing coast. Maybe in 100 years the sea will break through the beach, normal evolution for a barrier beach. Whatever happens it will be a great place to enjoy yourself!

Hallsands 1.5 miles south on coast →