

Welcome to the Slapton Time Line

Torcross Viewpoint

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

1824
 1856
 1898
 1897-1901
 1903

1917

1940s
 1943

1963
 1976
 1990

2001
 2002
 2003
 2007

THE FUTURE

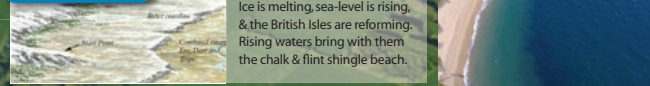
Torcross

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



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

1824



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

1898



Stokeley Estate including Slapton Ley is sold to pay death duties. Advertised as a 'residential & sporting estate' the catalogue boasts 'the bag in Coots alone for one day has numbered 1500'.

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.

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 extra worry of evacuating livestock. All must be gone by 20th December. 3000 people are involved. Evacuation lasts 12 months.

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.

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 tonnes 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 and 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 →

1897 - 1901



Expansion of Plymouth Docks needs shingle to mix with concrete. Permission is granted to dredge Hallsands beach between high & low water (1 ½ 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.

1963



Slapton Ley freezes over & Dartmouth's Britannia Royal Naval College cadets hold an ice hockey tournament on it.

1976



Slapton Ley dries out in long hot summer leaving only muddy puddles in the middle.

1990



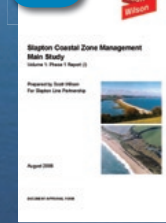
Barbara Butler donates Torcross Viewpoint to South Hams District Council as a butterfly conservation area. Planting is designed to attract butterflies. Impressively over 20 species have been recorded.

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.

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.