

Whitesand Bay Practice Battery

<p>Commenced 1895 Completed 1897 Cost £ Map Reference Sx 406515 Position Whitesand Bay</p> <p>Type Coast Defence Practice Battery Ditch None Guns 8 Barrack Accom. small shelter Present use None</p> <p>History Volunteer practice battery</p> <p>Disposal Condition Fair. Cleared in 2010. Access Yes</p> <p>Sources Pye and Woodward "The Historic Defences of Plymouth"; Plymouth Precis of correspondence.</p>	<p>Armament</p> <p>1895 4 x 64pr RMLs 4 x 3pr QF 1903 4 x 12pr QF 1903- 1909 4 x 12pdr QF 2 x 5-inch BL on vavasseur mountings? 1912 12pdrs removed</p>
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History and Description

Whitesand Bay Practice Battery was constructed in advance of Whitesand Bay Battery to the southwest for the purpose of training volunteer artillerymen. It consists of two batteries of four guns and was first fitted with four 64pr R.M.L. guns in the eastern battery. Two of these were later modified (circa 1904) for vavasseur mounts to take 4-inch or 5-inch B.L. guns. (One source states 6-inch BL but this is rather large and very unlikely!) The Director of Artillery authorised surplus naval 4-inch and 5-inch guns to be mounted for practice purposes in coast defence batteries in 1898. The Western battery, added between 1896 and 1897, consists of positions to mount four 3pr QF guns. These were replaced by four 12pdr QF guns in 1903. This battery does not appear on any of the Plymouth armament returns for 1893-1903, emphasising its role as purely for practice purposes. The Naval slides were removed in 1909 and the QFs in 1912.

Both batteries of four guns survive intact and the original access track from the military road can be traced. The QF battery has a low concrete parapet with the two sets of mountings spaced alternately. Each QF position has a freestanding recess to the rear of the type found in most 1904 practice batteries such as the one at East Wear, Portland. To the rear of the battery is a small shelter/practice magazine which is in a poor state, but recognizable. The DRF pillars are still in place higher up on each flank.

The battery is mostly complete with the racers and pivots for the RMLs and QFs intact. At the turn of the century one of the 64pr RML positions was converted to take a 4 or 5-inch BL on ex-naval vavasseur mountings. The battery is to the seaward of Whitesand Bay Holiday Park.

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