



2 Coastal Path Yarmouth to Brighstone

A long walk passing the famous pinnacles of chalk that mark the western end of the Island, the Needles. Also passing over downland affording spectacular views of this part of the Island and beyond.

Yarmouth to Brighstone Landmarks

Alum Bay is so called from the alum mining which used to take place here, dating back to 1562. It is now famous for the natural wonder of its coloured variegated cliffs.

The Needles are the jagged edge of a ridge of chalk which runs right across the Island to Culver Down and are the most westerly point of the Island. The Needles lighthouse stands 33 metres (109 feet) high and its light can be seen for 23 kilometres (14 miles) at sea level.

At Hanover Point there is a pine raft fossil forest visible at low tide, usually populated by cormorants and gulls. The 'raft' is the remains of an ancient pine forest, converted by time to lignite and mudstone with a time span of over 20 million years.

- 1** From the town centre, leave to the west, passing the ferry terminal to cross over Yar Bridge. Continue along the road the other side of the bridge and, as it bends to the left, turn right to the sea wall. Turn left and follow the sea wall to the end, then take the steps and a short length of path through woodland to emerge on Westhill Lane. Turn right along the road for a short distance before bearing left into Fort Victoria Country Park. The coastal path follows an old military road through woodland from Fort Victoria to Cliff End Battery.
- 2** Follow the path between fences to Monks Lane, where you turn left and follow the lane, turning right on reaching the access road to Brambles Chine Holiday Camp.
- 3** Follow the road into the holiday complex and on the far side take the signposted path to the left through the chalets to continue along a narrow path between hedges. Keep left along the farm track, passing Brambles Farm on your right, and then turn right on reaching the main road. After about 450 metres (500 yards) on the main road, opposite the Colwell Bay Inn, turn right down Colwell Chine Road and follow it to the slipway at the end. Here turn left onto the sea wall and follow it along to Totland Pier.
- 4** Pass the pier and remain on the sea wall past the Waterfront restaurant to the Lifeboat Station and up the steps through Widdick Chine. Turn right, continuing along Cliff Road, past the Hermitage Hotel on the right, then take the signposted footpath to Alum Bay, on your right. Follow the meandering path upwards through

the wooded cliff edge and, as you reach Headdon Hill, take the right fork to pass below the right hand side of the summit into Headdon Warren. Here the path becomes overgrown and sometimes indistinct with alternative routes but you should continue on a more or less level plane between the hill and the cliffs, eventually ascending into heather where the path becomes more clear.

- 5** From Headdon Hill descend to join an access road running down to meet the main B3322 road. Here turn right to the pleasure park at Alum Bay.
- 6** From the pleasure park, which is where The Tennyson Trail starts and follows the Coastal Path to Freshwater Bay walk southwards past the glass factory towards the down. Follow the lane to ascend the white cliffs towards the Needles. Leaving the lane before the Needles, the path crosses a stile and runs diagonally to the left up the down towards the Coastguard Cottages where, at a stile, the coastal footpath veers sharply left. However, a short detour to the Needles viewpoint is recommended by crossing the stile and proceeding a short way directly ahead.
- 7** Returning to the stile by Coastguard Cottages, cross and bear right before running along West High Down, keeping to the ridge for stunning views both left and right. Aim for the Tennyson Monument ahead which is reached by ascending Tennyson Down. Continue along the down in the same direction towards Freshwater Bay, keeping away from the cliff edge.
- 8** From the visible ancient earthworks, the path descends steeply to Freshwater Bay, around Watcombe Cove and along a lane. Turn right at the public toilets along the road to Freshwater Bay. Here The Tennyson Trail diverges to the left to ascend Afton Down. Walk around the bay on the sea wall and up the wooden steps at the far end to the cliff top path. The path climbs up along the

cliff leading up to a chalk bank running adjacent to the Military Road. Follow this to the coastal path sign F35, turning right over a stile and down steps to the cliff path towards Compton Chine. Cross a footbridge over the chine from which point the cliffs change from chalk to crumbling clays and sandstones. Continue along the cliff top, through the National Trust car park at Shippards Chine, passing Hanover Point.

- 9** Pass through two kissing gates then cross a footbridge, eventually reaching another kissing gate, into The National Trust car park off Military Road. Cross the car park into a field the opposite side then turn right onto the track and cross Brook Chine in front of Brook Green cottages to the old Lifeboat House.
- 10** Walk round behind the lifeboat house and, as you reach the cliff top, look back towards Brook to see Brook Hill House (the former home of J.B. Priestley). Cross a number of stiles as you continue along the cliff by the edge of Sudmoor. At Chilton Chine follow the footpath inland alongside the chine to the car park and the Military Road. Turn right and walk over the bridge then past Isle of Wight Pearl immediately turning right down the public footpath to the cliff top once more.
- 11** Continue on the seaward side of Grange Farm Camping Park. At the track leading down to Grange Chine, turn left through the farm to emerge on Military Road opposite the junction with Grange Road. Brighstone village is along Grange Road.

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ROUTE INFORMATION

- Start location: Yarmouth
- Difficulty: **Challenging**
- Walk distance: **14 miles**
- Places to stop for food & drink
- Viewing & rest stops on route
- Family friendly route

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