



Headon Warren, Isle of Wight.
Nearest postcode PO39 0EP

TRAIL
Walking

GRADE
Moderate

DISTANCE
4.25 miles (6.8km).
Can be shortened to
3 miles (4.8km) by
missing out Alum Bay

TIME
2 hours

OS MAP
Landranger 196;
Explorer OL29

Contact

01983 714020
isleofwight@nationaltrust.org.uk

Facilities

**National
Trust**

nationaltrust.org.uk/walks

Points of view: Headon Warren walk

Head on up Headon Down – a breathtaking walk with splendid views of the mainland, and a Bronze Age burial mound.



Terrain

Ascent of 800ft (250m). Two stiles, one gate and many steps. Paths can be very slippery, both from chalk on the Warren and mud in the wood, so boots are recommended. Please keep to the paths to avoid erosion. Dogs are welcome, but please keep on a lead around wildlife and take any mess home with you.

Things to see



Headon Warren

About 5,000 years ago trees on the Warren were cleared to provide grazing for cattle and sheep, leaving acid heathland which is now a small but important site for heather on the Island. Look out also for Rosebay willowherb, centaury, dwarf gorse and tormentil. You may even see the rare Dartford warbler which breeds here. There was a warren here in the 15th century when rabbits were farmed for their fur and food. Today's rabbits keep the turf short and prevent the heath reverting to woodland.

Hatherwood Battery

In the 19th century the Warren was home to a fire command station for all the gun batteries in the area, although now only the concrete foundations of Hatherwood Battery remain. The battery never saw active service.

The Needles

The chalk ridge which crosses the Island from Culver Cliff in the east once extended almost 20 miles (32km) to Swanage on the Dorset coast but it is thought that, after many years of erosion and sea level rise, the ridge was finally breached about 5,000 BC. The Island split from the mainland, leaving the jagged chalk stacks of the Needles and Old Harry Rocks at either end of the breach. The Needles get their name from a thin 120ft (37m) high pinnacle of chalk known as Lot's Wife which fell into the sea in 1764.



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Start/end

Start: Turf Walk, Cliff Road
Totland, grid ref: SZ322868
End: Turf Walk, Cliff Road
Totland, grid ref: SZ322868

How to get there

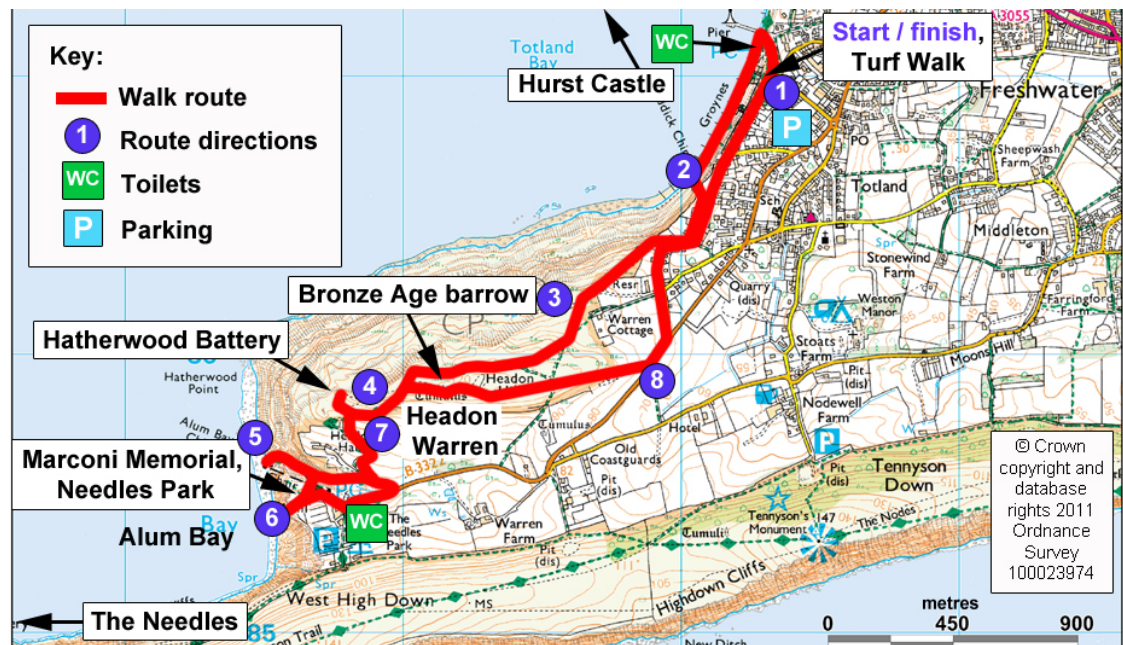
By foot: This trail follows the Isle of Wight coastal path between Totland and Alum Bay

By bike: Sustrans Regional 'Round the Island' route 67 passes through Yarmouth, 2.5 miles away

By bus: Southern Vectis 7 service from Newport to Totland War Memorial, hourly

By ferry/boat: Yarmouth-Lymington (Wightlink 0871 376 1000) 5 miles (8km); East Cowes-Southampton (Red Funnel 0844 844 9988) 16 miles (26km). Yarmouth harbour has moorings for private boats

By car: Cliff Road is near Totland War Memorial, on the A3054 from Newport via Yarmouth. Nearest post code is PO39 0JU



1. Turn right along Turf Walk to its left-hand corner, cross the bridge, go down the steps towards Totland pier. Turn left along the seafront.
2. Climb the wooden steps just after the Old Lifeboat Station, turn right at the top and follow the road. Take the footpath signed to Alum Bay on the right beyond Cape House. Entering National Trust land, go through the wood and continue uphill when reaching open land to an information panel.
3. Bear right just after the panel, and keep right at junctions, mostly on the level. Emerge into a clearing by a seat, and walk along the ridge for a fine view of The Needles. Backtrack to the seat before descending and bear right and downwards towards Alum Bay. Follow the path to a junction near a stunted pine and detour right to visit Hatherwood Battery.
4. Rejoin the downward path to Alum Bay by the stunted pine, bearing right by the information panel. (For a shorter walk, bear left just after the stunted pine, and skip to direction 7 below). Cross the road by a gate and take the track opposite. Go right down to the shore at Alum Bay, culminating in some steep wooden steps close to the chairlift.
5. Return back up the steps, but half way back along the track, climb yet more wooden steps on the right to reach The Needles Park. Turn right under the chairlift for 40yds (35m), then left and right by the sign to visit the Marconi Memorial and viewing platform.
6. Cross through the pleasure park to the road, and turn left along the Coastal Path which follows the road for 220yds (200m). Take the first road on the left to the gate passed earlier, and rejoin the outward path back up the hill to the information panel. Bear left at the panel, but take the path to the right about 27yds (25m) before the stunted pine, following the outward route.
7. The path follows the boundary fence but soon bends left and upwards back to the seat. Take the path to its right to the Early Bronze Age barrow. Take the path to the right of the barrow as far as a finger post, then turn right as indicated and descend along the public footpath. Cross two stiles to reach a road.
8. Turn left, and left again along the first minor road. Follow this road back to Turf Walk.

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