



Ventnor Old Dairy, Down Lane,
Ventnor, Isle of Wight, PO38
1AH

TRAIL
Walking

GRADE
Hard

DISTANCE
4.5 miles (7.5km)

TIME
**2 hours to 2 hours 30
minutes**

OS MAP
**Landranger 196;
Explorer OL29**

Contact

01983 714020
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Facilities

**National
Trust**

nationaltrust.org.uk/walks

Down south: Luccombe and the Landslip walk

Combine downland and coastal walking on this invigorating walk in the south of the Island, with splendid far-reaching views to Culver Downs in the east. For those who enjoy strenuous walking, join this walk to the Ventnor Down National Trust trail, which starts from the car park next to the radar station.



Terrain

Many steps, nine stiles, three gates and steep slope down Nansen Hill. Total ascent is 975ft (300m). Can be slippery in wet weather and muddy in winter so care needed. The exposed downs can be very windy. Dogs welcome, but please keep your dog on a lead around wildlife and take any mess home with you.

Things to see



Poet, priest and polar explorer

In spring the downs are carpeted in bluebells a truly breathtaking sight. Algernon Swinburne, the romantic poet, spent his childhood at East Dene in Bonchurch and is buried in the graveyard of Bonchurch New Church. St Boniface Down is named after the Saxon priest who is believed to have come to the Isle of Wight in the 8th century. Nansen Hill takes its name from Fridtjof Nansen, the Norwegian explorer who led an expedition to the North Pole in 1919.

The rocks under your feet

The extensive Ventnor Downs are composed of a number of different rock types which suit a variety of wildlife and vegetation. Acid-loving plants such as gorse, heather and bracken thrive on the flint gravel caps, while chalk grassland plants favour the shallow chalk soils of the slopes. The Bonchurch Landslip was formed when blocks of sandstone slipped over Gault clay, known locally as blue slipper. The landslip area is now heavily wooded with sycamore, oak and hazel.

Birdlife

Haddons Pits, adjacent to the coast, is home to birds such as whitethroat and long-tailed tit which breed in the scrub. Peregrine and raven nest nearby. It's a good place to see swallows and house martins migrating south in their thousands. The tangle of bramble, hawthorn and elderberry provides shelter for many birds and insects but the scrub is kept under control by cattle grazing.



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Start/end

Start: Luccombe Down car park, grid ref: SZ573787
End: Luccombe Down car park, grid ref: SZ573787

How to get there

By foot: Isle of Wight coastal path passes along sea front at Ventnor, 0.5 miles (1km) away, then several steep paths up to trail

By bike: 'Round the Island' NCN Regional Route 67 passes Down Lane in Upper Ventnor

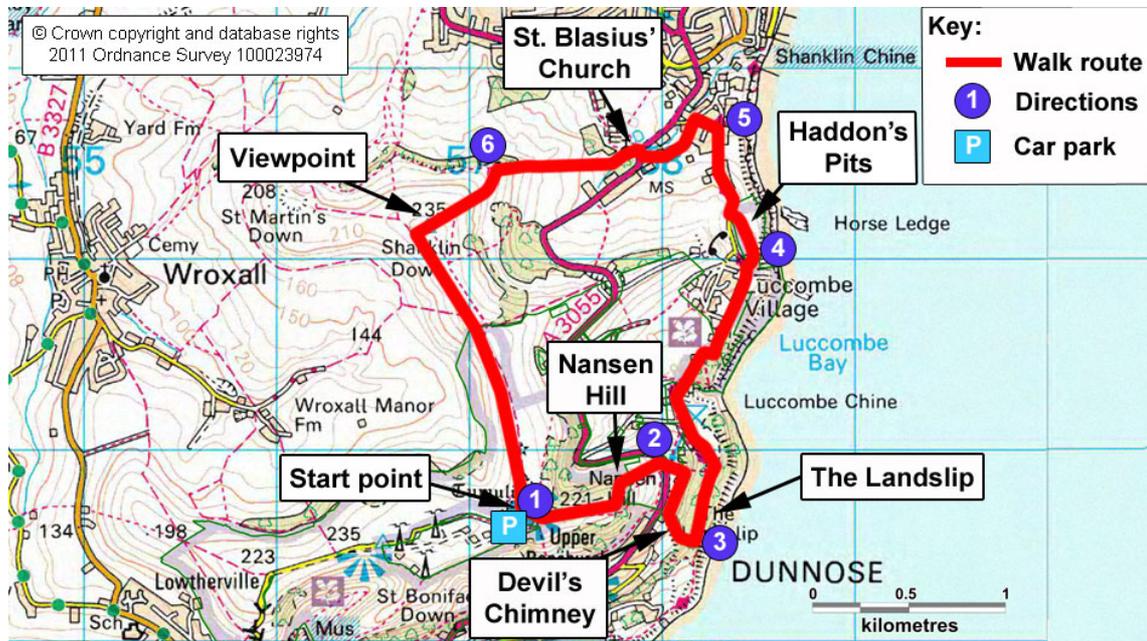
By bus: Southern Vectis (01983 827000) 3, Newport and Ryde to Down Lane, half-hourly

By ferry/boat: Fishbourne to Portsmouth (Wightlink, 0871 376 1000) 13 miles (21km); East Cowes-Southampton (Red Funnel, 0844 844 9988) 15 miles (24km)

By car: Take Down Lane off B3327 from Wroxall to Ventnor road in Upper Ventnor. Car park at Luccombe Down, nearest post code: PO38 1YL

National Trust

nationaltrust.org.uk/walks



1. Start from the bench and National Trust plinth just beyond the car park. Turn right for 20yds (20m) then bear left along the top of the ridge. Start to descend and pass through trees. Cross the stile and carefully go down the steep and grassy Nansen Hill to the gate onto the main road.
2. Cross the road and take path V65 towards the back right of the car park. When you reach a wall turn right. Do not descend, but keep to the immediate right of the wall. There's a brief path diversion along the lower end of the Smugglers Haven tea-rooms. Take the steep steps downwards through the Devils Chimney, a narrow cleft in the cliff. Bear right and continue down two more flights of steps to a seat. Bear left and up four steps then down many more to reach the coastal path. Handrails are provided where the steps are steepest.
3. Bear left and follow the twisty path through The Landslip, eventually emerging at Rosecliff Lodge. Carry straight on the track, ignoring the left branch, and follow the coastal path past a few houses in Luccombe, eventually reaching a tarmac road at Highcliff.
4. Turn right just after Highcliff to reach the Haddons Pits information board. Follow a meandering path through this open area in the Shanklin direction, but rejoin the road at the stile at the top left corner. Turn right and follow the road downwards towards Shanklin. Turn left into Priory Road opposite a large white block of apartments.
5. Take footpath SS91 on the left into Vaughan Way. Follow the road into the estate, but bear right along the grassy track at a left-hand bend. Cross the main road with care and pass through the lych gate of St Blasius church. Take the tarmac path to the left of the church and cross over the boundary wall. Continue over two fields and three stiles to reach some trees. Climb more steeply past Holme Copse, cross a stile by a gate, and finally another stile leading into a meadow.
6. Turn sharp left keeping the fence on your left, pass through a gap in the crossing hedge and then head diagonally right up the hill to the trig point. There are fine west-east views from Tennyson Down to Culver Down. Continue onwards crossing a pair of stiles in the hedge in front.
7. Turn left onto the crossing track, soon reaching a gate and signs indicating Luccombe Down. Go through the gate and follow the wide ridge-top track with fine views. When the track starts to bend right towards the radar station, take a left fork to return to the car park.