



National Trust, Ventnor Dairy,
Down Road, Ventnor, Isle of
Wight, PO38 1AH

TRAIL
Walking

GRADE
Hard

DISTANCE
**2.6 miles (4.2km).
Total ascent is 600ft
(185m).**

TIME
1½ to 2 hours

OS MAP
**OS Landranger 196 or
OS Explorer OL29**

Contact

01983 741020
isleofwight@nationaltrust.org.uk

Facilities

Nearest toilets in Ventnor town,
0.5 miles (0.8km) away.

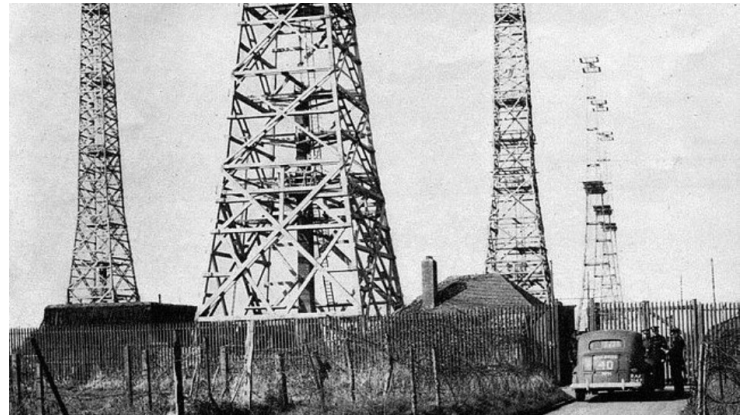
Nearest refreshments also in
Ventnor town.

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<http://nationaltrust.org.uk/walks>

Ventnor Downs: pre-history to Cold War walk

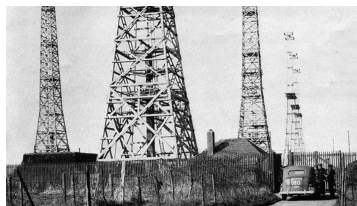
See some history in the landscape on this short but challenging walk on the south side of the Isle of Wight.



Terrain

The path down to the old Ventnor railway station is one of the steepest on the island, so this is a short but strenuous walk. Mostly on grassy paths. No stiles but some kissing gates. Can be slippery in wet weather and muddy in winter so care is needed. The exposed downs can be very windy. Dogs are welcome, but please keep on a lead around wildlife and livestock, and take any mess home with you.

Things to see



RAF Ventnor

A radar station established in 1937 to warn of German aircraft and flying bombs approaching across the channel. The station played an important part in the Battle of Britain and Ventnor was heavily bombed in 1940. The site is now used by National Air Traffic Services to communicate with civil aviation. During the Cold War there was an underground nuclear operations room hidden underneath a bungalow. This has been filled in, but its entrance was where a square manhole cover can still be seen to the left of the entrance gates. More information about RAF Ventnor at <http://www.ventnorradar.co.uk/>



Bronze Age burial barrows

In this area you are entering a Bronze Age cemetery which may have contained 21 round barrows dating back to around 2000BC, some of which are still visible. Continue along the path towards the main car park. About 90 yards (85m) north of the car park, beside the main track, you will see some quite large and distinctive barrows.



Isle of Wight Rifles

The Isle of Wight Rifles were established in 1859 with part-time volunteers, but by the Second World War they were conscripted men and formed part of the Hampshire regiments. They fought at Gallipoli in Turkey 1915 and the regiment was virtually destroyed when 800 men died at the Battle of Gaza in 1917. Coombe Bottom was used as a training rifle range and pistol butts, where remains of their targets can be seen. The rifle targets were placed on a raised bank facing west and the pistol targets were on a brick wall, parts of which remain. More information about Isle of Wight Rifles at <http://woottonbridgeiow.org.uk/rifles/index.php>.



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Start/end

Start: By car: start and end
from Point 1: Ventnor Down
car park, grid ref: SZ565785.
The nearest Post Code is PO38
1YL. On foot: start and end
from Point 8: Ventnor Industrial
Estate grid ref: SZ561779
End: Circular walk back to start
at Ventnor Down car park, grid
ref SZ565785, or industrial
estate grid ref SZ561779 .

How to get there

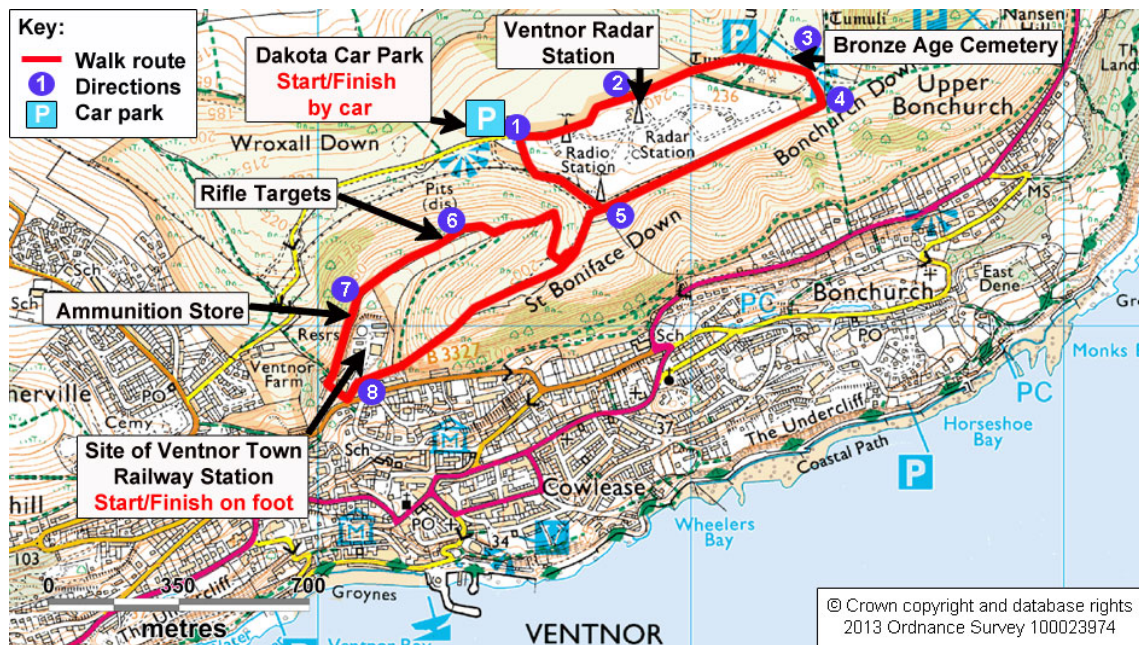
By foot: The Isle of Wight
coastal path passes along the
sea front at Ventnor, 0.5 miles
(0.8km) away, from where there
are a number of steep paths up
to the trail

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

By bus: Southern Vectis (01983
827000) service 3, Newport and
Ryde to the Old Station stop in
Ventnor, half-hourly

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

By car: Take Down Lane off
B3327 from Wroxall to Ventnor
road in Upper Ventnor. Nearest
postcode is PO38 1YL



1. The car park has a plaque commemorating the Channel Airways Dakota that crashed here in fog in 1962. As you follow the road east you will notice a number of Second World War brick structures on the left.
2. You are at the entrance gates for the National Air Traffic Services (NATS). This was the location of RAF Ventnor. Continue along the road by the NATS fence until you pass a water trough on the left. Then take the path to the left which soon divides. Follow the path to the right which passes through three Bronze Age burial mounds.
3. From the car park turn south towards the footpath signs and kissing gate at 4, another 90 yards (85m).
4. From here follow path V122 west along south fence of NATS until you reach a tall mast and another kissing gate at 5. Go through the kissing gate.
5. From here proceed downhill and west for about 125 yards (115m) and follow the track to the right which zig-zags down into the bottom of the coombe. As you reach the bottom you will see the remains of the rifle range and pistol butts 6.
6. Proceed down into and along the coombe keeping to the right. About 100 yards (95m) before the trees at the far end the path divides. Take the path to the right and follow it around the wire fence from 7.
7. To the right you will see the remains of the ammunition store. Continue along the path by the wire fence and proceed through the kissing gate and down to the road. Then turn left into the Industrial Estate 8.
8. About 30 yards (30m) on the left there is a blue plaque outside the Coastguard Rescue Station that says this was the site of Ventnor railway station. With your back to the plaque you are looking at the Terminus Hotel on the corner to the right. In front of you is the Ventnor Gas and Water Company building of 1883. Just behind the Terminus Hotel building there is a steep flight of stone steps on path V1. Take this up to the kissing gate at the top and then continue up the steep slope of St. Boniface Down, through another kissing gate, until you reach the mast at 5. From there you turn left and follow the path beside the wire fence until you get to the car park at 1.

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