



St Catherine's Down and
Knowles Farm, Blackgang
Road, Blackgang, Isle of Wight.
Nearest postcode PO38 2JB

TRAIL
Walking

GRADE
Moderate

DISTANCE
2.75 miles (4.6km)

TIME
2 hours

OS MAP
**Landranger 196;
Explorer OL29**

Contact

01983 741020
isleofwight@nationaltrust.org.uk

Facilities

**National
Trust**

nationaltrust.org.uk/walks

Shedding light on the tip of the Wight walk

Discover an ever-changing landscape boasting panoramic views and a wealth of wildlife, at this most southerly point of the Isle of Wight. See the Island's only surviving onshore lighthouse and explore the area where Marconi made some of his early experiments in radio.



Terrain

This short but challenging circular walk is very steep in places (ascent of 520ft (160m)), with steps at some points and many stiles. Seats are available at viewpoints. Dogs are very welcome, but please keep your dog on a lead around wildlife and take any mess home with you.

Things to see



The Undercliff

This large area of coastal landslips was formed over many hundreds of years. The benefits of such an active landscape include bare ground and temporary pools for insects and amphibians. The fact that it is ever-changing means that varied scrubby vegetation is created, providing a good habitat for migrating and breeding birds. Look out for migrating and breeding birds such as whitethroat (pictured on the right) and other warblers. Grazing cattle help to restore the more stable flower-rich grassland with flowers such as hoary stock (shown on the left) and birdsfoot trefoil.

Knowles Farm and St Catherine's lighthouse

Knowles Farm is one of the few places on the Island where drystone walls mark the field boundaries. It was from here in 1901 that Guglielmo Marconi, the inventor of the radiotelegraph system, succeeded in transmitting radio signals a record 186 miles (300km) to the Lizard Radio Telegraph Station in Cornwall. The concrete base of Marconi's communication mast still lies in the field south of the farmhouse. The present three-tier octagonal lighthouse was completed in 1840, following the shipwreck of the Clarendon in Chale Bay. However, the tower was later lowered as its light was often shrouded in mist.

The Landslip

These old postcard views of the Undercliff show Windy Corner before (left) and after (right) the landslide of 1928. 20,000 tons of falling rock destroyed the Niton to Chale road and landslips continue in this area today. Peregrine, raven and fulmar today nest on Gore Cliff above The Landslip.



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Start/end

Start: Car park at end of Old
Blackgang Road, grid ref:
SZ494758

End: Car park at end of Old
Blackgang Road, grid ref:
SZ494758

How to get there

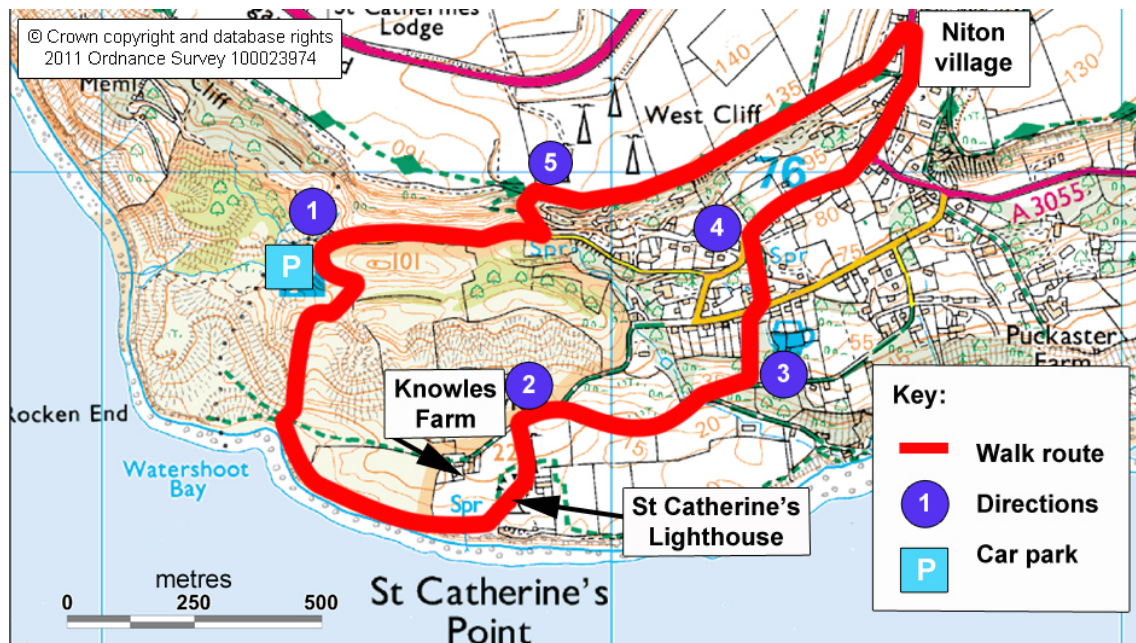
By foot: This trail follows the
Isle of Wight coastal path
between Niton and point 5 on
the map

By bike: Sustrans 'Round the
Island' regional route 67 passes
along the A3055 and through
Niton

By bus: Southern Vectis (tel:
01983 827000) No. 6 service
from Newport to Ventnor
passes through Niton, two-
hourly

By ferry: Fishbourne-
Portsmouth (Wightlink, tel: 0871
376 1000) 14 miles (23km);
East Cowes-Southampton (Red
Funnel, tel: 0844 844 9988) 15
miles (24km)

By car: National Trust car park
on the old Blackgang Road, a
minor road now a cul-de-sac
near St Catherine's lighthouse
off the A3055 in Niton undercliff



1. From the car park, go through the furthest kissing gate and turn left along a grassy track, keeping level and then bearing right. Walk along the top of the ridge and descend steeply to a fence straight ahead. Follow a steep, rough path downhill, with a fence on your right. Cross the stile at the bottom and follow the grassy path straight ahead. This soon bends leftwards, parallel to the sea. The lighthouse will come into view ahead. Cross a stile and follow the path in the direction of the lighthouse. Turn left at the white boundary wall and follow the wall to a gate. Go through the gate and turn left up the road.
2. After 110yds (100m) go through a gate on the right flanked by stone pillars, sign-posted NT40 to Castlehaven Lane. Keep to the top of the field with the hedge on your left, then cross through a gap in the fence, continuing in the same direction. The path rises gently and goes through a kissing gate on the left after which the path bends right.
3. After 25yds (25m) the path emerges onto a road. Continue uphill and after 20yds (20m) turn left up a tarmac path with steps and handrail. You will come to a road almost opposite the Buddle Inn. Turn right onto the road for 45yds (40m) before turning left up a tarmac path, by the phone box. Take the path upwards.
4. Turn right onto another road (watch out for traffic as there is no pavement) and at its end at a Y-junction, fork right. Cross the busy A3055 main road to a grassy area and follow the footpath on its right up Barrack Shute towards Niton village. Take the first turn on the left (which looks like a driveway, but is Boxers Lane) and follow the path gently upwards to a kissing gate. Go straight on and follow the grassy coast path along the top of the cliffs.
5. Turn left at the signpost pointing down the steep cliff just before a seat, and descend the steep steps to the road, taking care since these can be slippery. At the road, turn right and follow it back to the car park.

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