

West Wight Historic (Pub) Walk

ISLE OF WIGHT
CLASSIC
BUSES
BEER
& WALKS
WEEKEND



IW Branch CAMRA

An historic walk around the Western reaches of the Isle of Wight, visiting the pubs and enjoying the landscape that inspired and hosted the likes of Tennyson, Marconi and Julia Margaret Cameron.

Contents

An Introduction to the West Wight

Welcome to the West Wight, an area that inspired poets, scientists and adventurers; great thinkers and innovators that have influenced and changed our lives.

Background

The West Wight is rich in history, landscape and culture, with strategically located great pubs, linked by a network of footpaths and bridleways that show off its diverse and beautiful unspoilt setting. With beaches, cliffs, downland, a river, marshland and ancient woodlands, it can be little wonder that such famous people as Tennyson, Hooke, Fuchs and Julia Margaret Cameron found such inspiration for their works and deeds.

Once served by the Island railway network, the West Wight line terminated in Freshwater. It was, sadly, closed in 1953, but much of the old route remains as footpath and bridleway. How useful and appreciated that service would be today!

Almost an Island, Freshwater Parish originally comprised of five “tuns”, the names of which still exist: Norton, Easton, Weston and Middleton, with the exception of the tun of Sutton which is now called Freshwater Bay, a fishing haven, and one that would rival the most romantic Mediterranean setting for its beauty.

Landmarks

Yarmouth Pier, Yarmouth Castle, Yarmouth Mill and Estuary, Freshwater Causeway, Church Place and All Saints Church, Afton Marsh (SSSI), Freshwater Bay, Dimbola Lodge, St Agnes Church, Farringford, Tennyson Down and Monument, Moons Hill (Lime Kilns/ Ice Houses), The Needles, The Needles Battery and Rocket Launching Site, Alum Bay, The Broadway - Totland.

The Route Described

The following pages describe the various paths and routes, buildings and sites that we shall be talking about on our walk. Because the round is so extensive, and comprises of detours and alternative courses, we have divided the walk into sections, between pubs, listing the alternative routes and diversions.

Recommended Reading

Links: <http://www.yarmouthtowncouncil.co.uk/yarmouth-tc/Default.aspx>; <http://www.freshwater-parish.org.uk/>; <https://www.visitisleofwight.co.uk/explore>; <http://www.totlandparishcouncil.org.uk/>;

The Brewery History Society – (www.breweryhistory.com)

Formed in 1972 to research and record the history of brewing, the BHS has around 500 individual and corporate members who enjoy a range of visits and meetings throughout the year. The Society publishes Journals, Newsletters and a range of books

The Isle of Wight branch of CAMRA – (www.wightwash.org.uk)

CAMRA – The Campaign for Real Ale, was formed over 40 years ago and has since become one of Europe’s most successful pressure groups with almost 200,000 members. The Island branch holds social meetings, surveys pubs and publishes a quarterly magazine, Wightwash.

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Yarmouth Town Hall

The Old Gaffers festival at the end of May has been running for some 20 years, and is a whole town festival, although currently running bi-annually, it is a festival that typifies the spirit of Yarmouth.



A more modern addition is the **Wheatsheaf**, a former Whitbread house, now a busy dining pub.

Salty's bar and seafood restaurant, also serves Real Ale, although not always open.

Yarmouth Pier

Now the only remaining wooden pier in the British Isles, Yarmouth Pier has undergone many restorations. Built in 1876 to facilitate visiting passenger steamers and the ferry to Lymington, the pier still sees regular visits from the Waverley and Balmoral steamers; the Waverley being the last surviving seagoing paddle steamer in the world.

Yarmouth Castle

Built as an artillery fort by Henry VIII in 1547, this 100ft square format building remained in use right up until 1885, when it became a coastguard station, but was brought back to military occupation during the two World Wars.

Yarmouth Town

Yarmouth (formerly known as Eremue, or muddy estuary), is rival to the Country's smallest town. It was recorded as a settlement in Ethelred the Unready's record of 991. Around the turn of the 12th Century it had a hospital ascribed to the Knights Templar. Its grid street pattern was laid out by the Normans and in 1547 Henry VIII built the castle defence against repeated raids by the French.



Pubs

Once with its own brewhouse, **The Kings Head** is named after King Charles I, who was kept captive in Carisbrooke Castle from 1647 – 1648 before being tried and beheaded for treason in 1649.

The George hotel, built in the 17th Century, by buccaneer turned governor Robert Holmes, as an extension to his then place of residence, the castle. The hotel has a public bar and fine dining facilities.

The 16th Century **Bugle** coaching inn is now an extensive free house offering rooms and accommodation.



Yarmouth – Freshwater (Red Lion - PO40 9BP) – 2 miles

Walking out of the town along St James Street, Past St James Church, where sits the statue of 17th century admiral Sir Robert Holmes, around whom there are many myths, this one holding that he obtained the unfinished sculpture of Louis XIV from a raid on a French ship and forced the sculptor to finish it in his own image, then cross the road to continue down Mill Road to catch the picturesque view of the old mill house (formerly owned by the famous historian AJP Taylor), on the side of the Estuary.



Station Road branches off Mill Road and takes you on a short diversion down to the nearby old station building, currently occupied by the popular restaurant, Off The Rails. Following the passage of the old railway line southwest, towards to Mill again, the bridleway Y19, runs into the F61, and arrives after 1 ½ miles at The Causeway in Freshwater, some 300m from the Red Lion in Church Place, which can be viewed on the right-hand-side, approaching The Causeway.



When leaving Yarmouth wetlands, after a short distance, to the east, is the Y1 leading to the 400yr old Mill Copse, a 14-acre ancient woodland, sourced for its timber in the day.

On reaching The Causeway the tower of the medieval All Saints church can be seen a short distance away, along the windy road, next which sits the Red Lion. The church hosts a marble memorial to the poet Alfred Lord Tennyson and the graves of his wife and children.

The railway track continues along the F61, at the side of the Yar for another 600 or so metres to the End of The Line Café at Honnor & Jeffrey Garden Centre, where the old terminus platform, closed on 21st September 1953, still remains in the outside yard (<http://www.disused-stations.org.uk/f/freshwater/>).

There are two WWII pillboxes, one situated at the western end of the causeway, on the route to the Red lion, the other in the carpark to Honnor and Jeffrey and The End of The Line café.

Red Lion (PO40 9BP) to The Vine (PO40 9UP) – ¾ mile

From the Red Lion, to the corner of Hooke Hill and Copse Road, where the F66 runs into the F17, then the F66, to take you in a straight, off-road line to School Green Road, exiting just beside The Vine.

The natural philosopher, architect and polymath Robert Hooke FRS was born in Freshwater in 1635. His father, John, was accurate at All Saints church.

The alternatives are to take the footpath, F58, from The Causeway, on the western side of the Yar, which exists in Hooke Hill, just above School Green Road, but this can be exceeding muddy in wet weather. Or, take the extension of the F61, as described above, following the route of the old railway line to it terminus in Afton Road, then follow the road up to Hooke Hill roundabout on to School Green Road, along to the Vine.





The Former Royal Standard Hotel

100yds back down School Green Road, just opposite the modern Sainsbury's, is the once celebrated Royal Standard Hotel, a former Burt's House, now sadly passing through successive hands, never fulfilling the promise of re-opening.



Detour to the Former Star, Camp Road

From halfway along School Green Road, the F21, cuts across to Camp Road, near the junction with Stroud and Victoria Roads (on the left). Turning to the right, on the corner of the lane to New Village, is the former Star pub (1881 – 1927), beautifully commemorated in its external restoration. The F39, further up, cuts across to Queens Road, and turn right to arrive back at the Vine.

The Vine (PO40 9UP) to The Waterfront (PO39 0BQ) – 1.1 miles



Totland Memorial Roundabout & The Broadway Inn

Crossing over to Queens Road, then turning to go along Clayton Road takes you to the T13, opposite the junction with Court Road, and leading into Colmar Way, with a left turn along uplands Road and right into Kendal Road onto The Broadway, Totland, where, just before the monument roundabout, is the former Broadway Inn, now Tea Rooms & Post Office, and which, in the time of Marconi was the Post Office of historical note.

In April, 1897, Signor Marconi walked into Totland Bay Post Office and asked the Postmaster (a Mr. Garlick) to help him in his experiments in wireless transmission, setting up a transmitting station at the Royal Needles Hotel (burnt down in 1910) – the rest is history! There is a monument to Marconi in Alum Bay.

From the War Memorial roundabout, pass along Madeira Road down into the bay. Ahead is the newly restored Pier Café at the front of the derelict Victorian pier. To the left, along the



beach-path, on the water's edge, sits the Waterfront, which under the present management, has become somewhat of a destination, not least for its Real Ale, atmosphere and hospitality.



Alternative - The Vine (PO40 9UP) to The Highdown (PO39 0HY) – 1.1 miles

Crossing over to Queens Road, passing Clayton Road, take the F22 on the right, just before the junction with Brookfield Road (on the left), which exists onto the road called Middleton.

From Middleton you can either turn right, leading along Summers Lane until your reach the stunning Romanesque style church of St Saviours, built in 1923, replacing the chapel to Weston Manor at the behest

of the Ward family, who once owned land stretching from Northwood House, in Cowes, to Weston Manor, Totland (opposite the Highdown Inn). From here, turn into Weston Lane, which leads right up to the junction with Alum Bay Old Road and Moons Hill, and the Highdown Inn.

Alternatively, turn left, along Middleton, and follow the road on, turning right into Moons Hill.

Look out for the peculiar hive-shaped buildings in the bank on the right-hand-side, said to have been lime kilns, or ice houses. At the top of Moons Hill, past the gates to Weston Manor, sits the Highdown inn.



The Waterfront (PO39 0BQ) to The Highdown (PO39 0HY) – 1 -2 ¼ miles



From the Waterfront, follow the coastal path T31 along the beach until it ascends, via T33, to Cliff Road then taking the T16 on the corner, or T17 just around the corner, to the head of Headon Warren, where you can, either, follow the T16 to

Warren Farm, then take the T26 leading into the T25 to the Tennyson Monument on the High Down, and the T27 down to Highdown Lane, at the bottom of which is the Highdown Inn. Or, the shorter route, taking the T20 from the top of Headon Warren, crossing Alum Bay New Road to take the T29 to Alum Bay Old Road then carefully follow the road down to the Highdown Inn.



The Needles & Alum Bay



To take the diversion to Alum Bay, with its famous coloured sands, and The Needles, take the T17 on Headon Warren, which takes you down to Alum Bay Chine and the chair lift and the Needles Pleasure Park.

From there take the T24a from the head of the carpark entrance up to the historic Needles Battery and the site of the Black Knight and Black Arrow rocket launching site between 1956 and 1971.

The current Needles Lighthouse was built in 1859, and automated in 1994, there was an earlier lighthouse on the cliff top.

The Highdown (PO39 0HY) to The Red Lion (PO40 9BP) – 2.6 miles



Walking up Highdown Lane to the chalkpit car part, the T24 follows down towards Freshwater Bay area running in to the F46a and F46, exiting at St Agnes Church, opposite Blackbridge Road, the only thatched church on the Island, built on land donated by Tennyson's son, Hallum. The building on the corner is the former Starks Hotel.

Just after the bridge on Blackbridge Road is the F74, which branches with the F75, both leading to the F14 which exists to cross Afton Road onto the T61 diagonally opposite, that leads to The Causeway with a short Walk to the Red Lion in Church Place.

Via Freshwater Bay – 3 miles

Instead of going down Blackbridge Road, turn down towards the Bay, past Dimbola Lodge, the former home of the famous photography pioneer Margaret Cameron (and now of a Jimmy Hendrix statue, commemorating the 1970 pop festival) and The Square, where, on the southern internal corner is situated an archway dedicated to Sir Vivian Foulkes, renowned explorer.

From the bay, follow the road round to Afton Road and the F52 leads into the F36 that runs through Afton Marsh and Blackbridge Road, across which is the F75, as detailed above.



The Legend of The Fat Cat

In the early years of this century the Fat Cat Bar at the Sandpipers Hotel was legendary for its beer choice, hospitality and beer festivals. Sadly, a victim of its plans to expand and the circumstances that ensued, it is still fondly remembered.

The Red Lion (PO40 9BP) to Yarmouth – 2 miles

The Red Lion, situated as it is, in Church Place, is what you might call a traditional English pub, with all the charm and character that one might expect from such an establishment. One of its former landlords was the Warwickshire cricketer official in the MCC, Michael Mence.

The local Victorian maltster and brewer John Emberley is commemorated in the name of two cottages in Church Place.

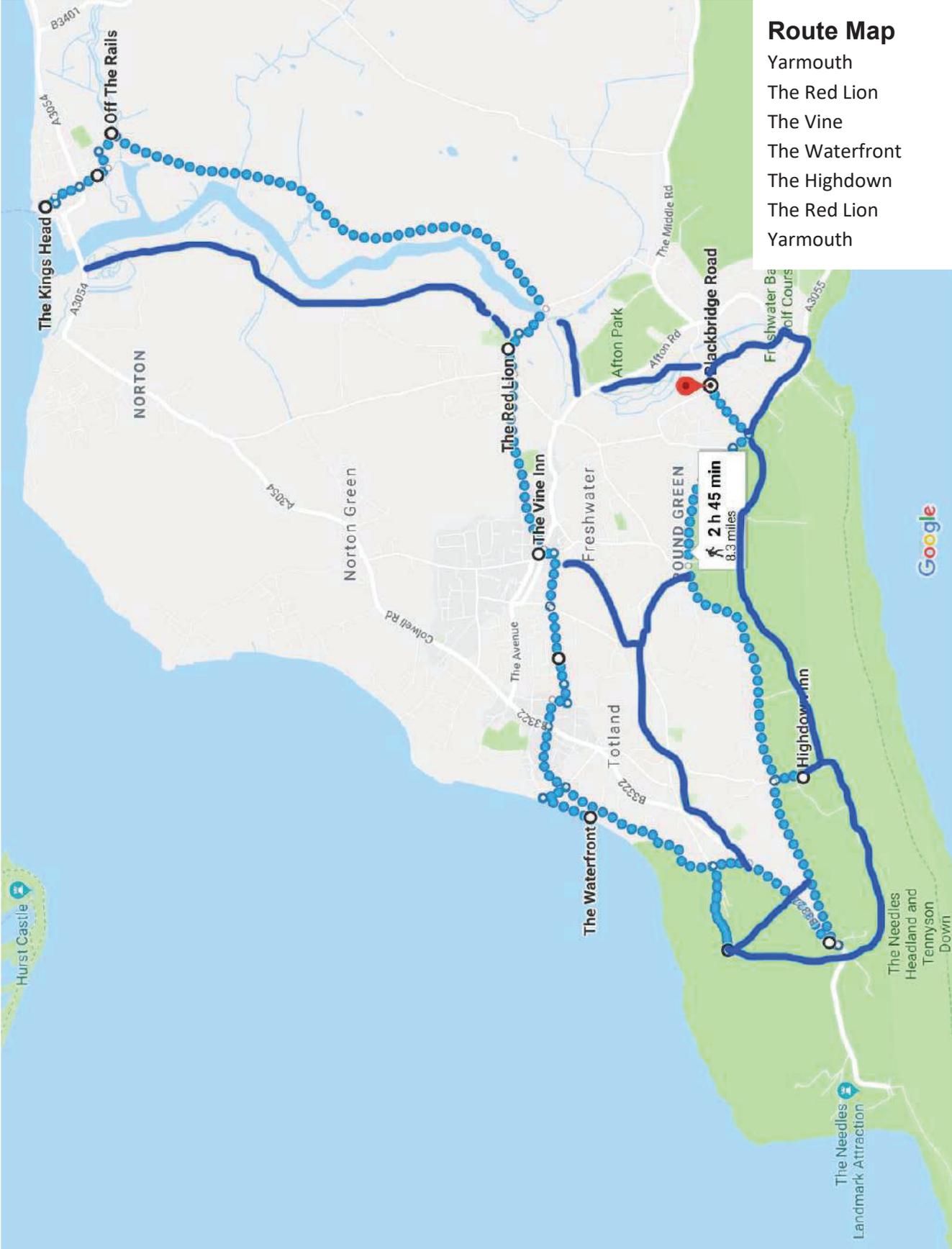
Between The Red Lion and the church is the footpath F1, which leads to the western side of Yarmouth Bridge, a couple of hundred metres from the town.

At the beginning of the footpath, from Church Place, is a plaque that celebrates the strange storey of a local smuggler, one Manny Young.

Completing the Round

If you have followed these sectional walks, detours and alternative routes in sequence, this will return you to Yarmouth, where we started, but, the selection, direction and order of route is your choice.





Route Map

- Yarmouth
- The Red Lion
- The Vine
- The Waterfront
- The Highdown
- The Red Lion
- Yarmouth