



Borthwood Copse, Alverstone  
Road, Winford, Isle of Wight.  
PO36 0LD

TRAIL  
**Walking**

GRADE  
**Easy**

DISTANCE  
**1.25 miles (2km).**  
Total ascent is 100ft  
(30m)

TIME  
**40 minutes**  
approximately

OS MAP  
**Landranger 196;**  
**Explorer OL29**

#### Contact

01983 741020  
isleofwight@nationaltrust.org.uk

#### Facilities

**National  
Trust**

[nationaltrust.org.uk/walks](http://nationaltrust.org.uk/walks)

# See a red squirrel at Borthwood Copse walk

This short atmospheric walk in a secluded part of the Island takes you through woods that are home to an Isle of Wight speciality: the red squirrel.



## Terrain

There are no gates or stiles but the paths are uneven and can be muddy. Some of the undergrowth is fairly thick but the paths are well used. There are no signposts so it is easy to miss a path; however the wood is only 60 acres (24ha) in size so it is hard to get lost. Dogs are very welcome here, but please keep your dog on a lead around wildlife and take any mess home with you. There is a dog bin in the car park.

## Things to see



### Trees and traditional woodland management

Our walk takes you through beautiful ancient oak woodland which is traditionally managed with hazel coppice. Some of the oaks are several hundred years old. Scattered stands of old beech can be found in the northern half of the wood. Some areas of planted sweet chestnut are now being coppiced each year. Some of the oak and chestnut wood is used to make gate posts, fence stakes and gate hurdles for use elsewhere on our land. Some of the hazel coppice is used for stakes and binders in hedge laying.

### Flowers, butterflies and birds

Interesting flowers include wood anemone, common cow wheat, wood sorrel, primroses and foxgloves. In spring the woodland floor is carpeted with bluebells. Look out for woodland butterflies along rides and glades. These include brimstone, speckled wood and white admiral. Flowers and insects both benefit from the extra sunlight that is let in when trees are felled and coppiced. Various woodland birds can be seen such as great spotted woodpeckers, blackcaps, chiffchaffs, blue tits and great tits. Both the larger trees with rot holes and the younger growth from areas of coppice provide suitable nesting sites (direction 2).

### Red squirrels and dormice

This is a good site for red squirrels, especially following leaf fall, as they live in the tree tops and build their nests, known as dreys, high up in the branches. They don't hibernate but bury tree seeds, from pine, larch and spruce, as a winter food source. Their diet also includes nuts, such as hazel, sweet chestnut and beech, and shoots, leaves, fungi and insects. Unlike the larger grey squirrels (of which there are none on the Island), red squirrels cannot digest tannins in acorns. One of their main predators is the buzzard. Dormice are also common here in Borthwood, although rarely seen (direction 3).



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## Start/end

Start: Parish Council car park, off Alverstone Rd on Winford to Alverstone road, grid ref: SZ566843

End: Parish Council car park off Alverstone Rd, grid ref: SZ566843

## How to get there

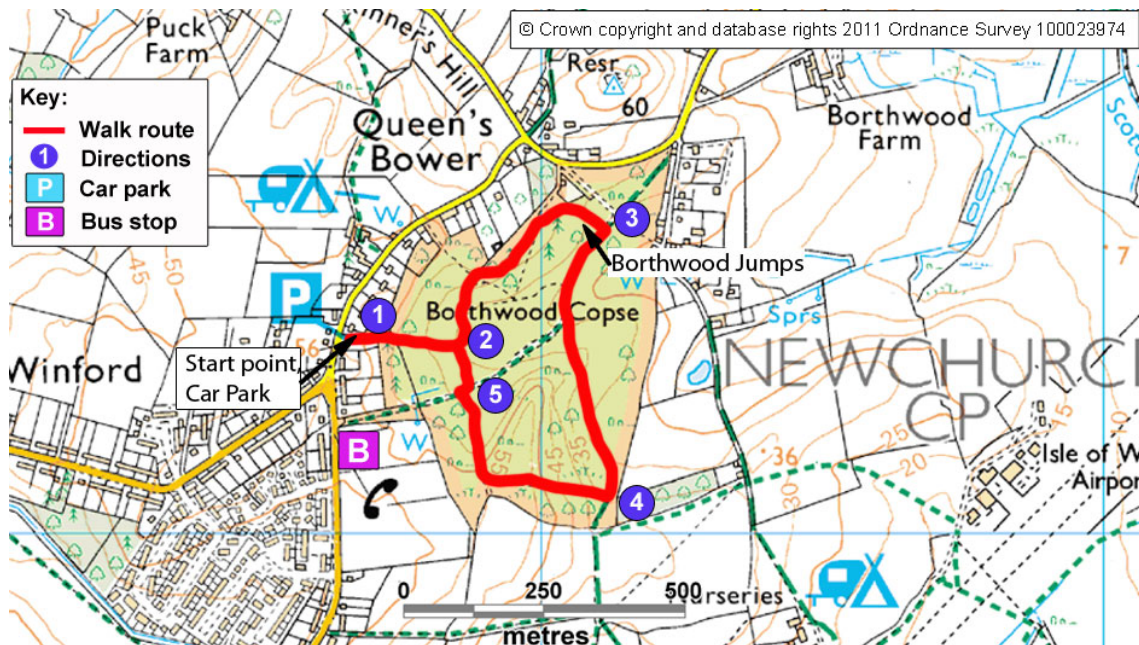
By foot: The way-marked Yar River Trail and Nunwell Trail pass within a mile of Borthwood Copse at Alverstone (follow the road north-east from route step 3)

By bike: 'Round the Island' Sustrans Regional route 67 passes the car park and National Cycle Route 23 (Reading to Sandown) passes Alverstone, 1 mile (1.6km) north east of step 3 (Blackwater)

By bus: Southern Vectis (tel: 01983 827000) service 8 from Newport to Ryde via Sandown, hourly: alight at 'Winford Hairpin Bend'

By ferry/boat: Fishbourne-Portsmouth (Wightlink, 0871 376 1000) 9 miles (14.1km); East Cowes-Southampton (Red Funnel, 0844 844 9988) 10 miles (16km)

By car: Take Alverstone Road from Apse Heath mini-roundabout on A3056 Newport/Sandown road. The Parish Council car park is just after Forest Rd, before a 'Queen's Bower' sign



1. Enter the wood and start to descend. The path soon reaches a cathedral-like clearing with fallen logs offering good places to sit.

2. Bear left immediately on entering the clearing and take a rising path, the left-most of two paths leaving the clearing at the same point. Pass through a holly thicket on the way to the top where it begins to open out near the edge of the wood. Turn right to descend again just before some house gardens. Bear left at a junction, following the line of the boundary of the gardens and soon the path broadens out in a clearing by an oak tree. Follow this track onwards and downwards till it meets an even wider crossing track, shortly after passing Borthwood Jumps on the right.

3. Turn right and follow this track almost to the edge of the wood, ignoring all side paths. Over its length, the path rises gently through a gully, then falls, and rises again.

4. Eventually a field is seen through the trees to the left. Just before a right bend which leads to a stile and out of the wood, turn right along a westerly path which follows the line of the edge of the wood. It rises gently, emerging shortly after another holly thicket close to a fence into a field on the left. Turn right here and follow the path downwards, past a fallen oak and yet more holly, to a crossing path.