



Compton Bay and Downs,
Shippards Chine, Military Road,
Brook, Isle of Wight, PO30 4HB

TRAIL

Walking

GRADE

Moderate

DISTANCE

5 miles (8.6km)

TIME

2 hours to 2 hours 30 minutes

OS MAP

**Landranger 196;
Explorer OL29**

Contact

Facilities

**National
Trust**

nationaltrust.org.uk/walks

Paradise on the Isle of Wight, butterfly walk

Butterflying does not get any better than this; walking along the chalk ridge that runs through the middle of the Isle of Wight you will find an abundance of flora and insect life, pure escapism into the real world! This is a great site for Adonis blue and chalkhill blue butterflies, with large populations of small lue, dark-green fritillary and Glanville fritillary. Brown argus and grayling can also be spotted. In late summer you can often catch a glimpse of the clouded yellow.



Terrain

There are moderate slopes with cattle terracettes, but the main track along the crest of the downs. Total ascent is 900ft (280m). The exposed downs can be windy, and the chalk is slippery in wet conditions. Dogs are welcome, but please keep your dog on a lead around wildlife and take any mess home with you.

Things to see



The Downs

'For words, like Nature, half reveal And half conceal the Soul within' wrote the poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson, who lived for many years just west of Freshwater and loved these downs. His neighbour, the celebrated Victorian photographer Julia Margaret Cameron, lived at Dimbola Lodge, which can be found along the B3322 in Freshwater. The Lodge museum garden also contains a life-size statue of Jimi Hendrix, who famously headlined the Isle of Wight Festival in 1970.

Downland Management

Since the 1940s, Brook and Compton downs have been grazed by a free-ranging herd of Galloway cattle, run by the Trusts tenant farmers at Compton Farm. The cattle are well adapted to the challenging environment and graze the slopes perfectly for the flowers and insects. Gorse is also controlled by cutting and burning.

Brook Down

The quarry slopes here are good for spotting butterflies; Glanville fritillary often breeds amongst cut or burnt gorse above the quarry and the main track up to the crest of the downs is also a great viewing point.



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Start/end

Start: Compton Chine/Afton
Down car park, grid ref:
SZ367854

End: Compton Chine/Afton
Down car park, grid ref:
SZ367854

How to get there

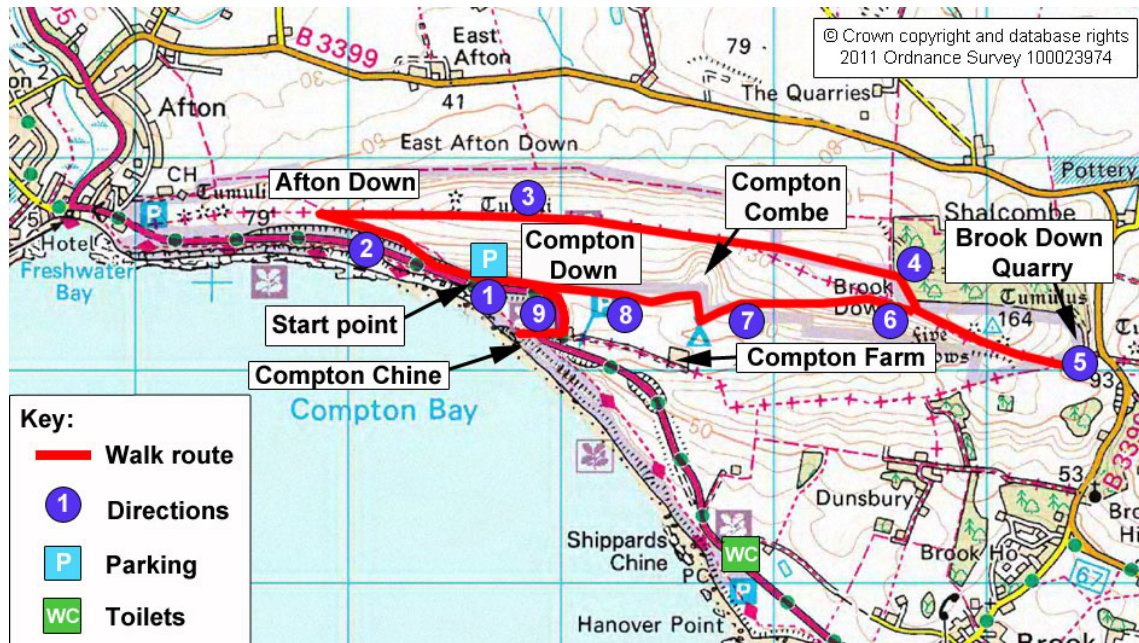
By foot: The Isle of Wight
coastal path passes Compton
Chine (route step 9) and a short
distance from the car park

By bike: 'Round the Island'
Sustrans Regional route 67
follows the A3055 Military Road
past the start car park

By bus: Two-hourly Southern
Vectis (tel: 01983 827000)
service 12 from Newport to
Totland passes the car park.
Alight at Compton Chine

By ferry/boat: Lymington-
Yarmouth (Wightlink, tel: 0871
3761000) 6 miles (9.5km);
Fishbourne-Portsmouth
(Wightlink, tel: 0871 3761000)
16 miles (26km); East Cowes-
Southampton (Red Funnel, tel:
0844 8449988) 17 miles (27km)

By car: Compton Chine/Afton
Down car park is in an old
quarry site, east of Freshwater
Bay and west of Shippards
Chine on the A3055 Military
Road. Nearest Post Code is
PO30 4HF



1. Start in Whiteways quarry car park (National Trust sign reads 'Afton Down car park') by the main road. This is usually great for blues.
2. Turn right out of the car park and onto the downs, heading up the Freshwater Way footpath on Afton Down to the summit. This area is a golf course.
3. Head eastwards on the bridleway along the summit of the downs. Dark-green fritillary abounds amongst the burnt and cut gorse areas.
4. Continue along this path until you reach another path; drop down to join the path and follow it easterly to the car park at Brook Down.
5. From Brook Down Quarry, explore the quarry slopes and gorse glades, before heading west back towards the main track and dropping down to the cattle tracks along the lower south-facing slope. Look out for the Adonis blues.
6. Head west along the lower slopes towards Compton Combe. Clouded yellows are often seen here and on the upper slopes of the camp-site field.
7. Blue butterflies are usually best found in and around Compton Combe, above Compton Farm.
8. Carry on westwards along the lower slope, crossing the fence into the un-grazed section. This area is best for graylings, green hairstreaks and small blues.
9. During the Glanville fritillary season (June to early August), detour to Compton Chine via the road verge. Go south along cliff top and then down the wooden steps. Enjoy! Its a great bathing beach. From here carry on heading west until you reach your starting point at Compton Chine car park.

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