

completed in 1906. Continue along the road, and then walk diagonally across the car park where you will find a path which leads, after 30 yards, to a kissing gate, go through this gate and then turn immediately right.



Whitecliff Bay is now in front of you, and the path should descend rapidly, the surface is generally good under foot, though loose gravel may cause you an occasional slip. If the tide is out you will have an opportunity to see Bembridge Ledge extending out from the coast in front of you. Cross the stile at the bottom of the chalk track, and

continue down the path, ignoring the footpath sign to your left. After a while the path opens out into a field, keep close to the right hand edge of the field, and after 20 yards go through the gap in the hedge to rejoin the well defined path. You are now entering a part of Bembridge subject to frequent landslips and erosion. Soon you will come across Information Board no 8, detailing the geology of the area. Looking towards the cliff you may see one or two layers of brown lignite coal, which was dug from the cliff as recently as the nineteenth century.

Continue along the footpath until you reach a concrete path which you must cross, pausing if you wish to look at the information board outlining the prehistory of the area. Some 20 yards to the NE there is a gap in the hedge where you rejoin the path, which forks at this point. You want to take the path which goes through the wooded area with the cliff on its right hand side. Take care here, as erosion occurs on the edge of the path, leaving the cliff edge quite close in places. The flora to your side is quite diverse with hawthorn, oak saplings, gorse, home oak, and sloes. After a while on the left you will see Information Board no. 9 and the buildings of Bembridge School, which was founded in 1919. The school was sold

to Ryde School in 1995, and in 1997 all teaching at Bembridge School ceased. Follow the path inland leaving the school buildings to the right. After passing the large green building the path takes a sharp left, and soon opens up into a wider path - Jenny Streets Lane. After a short distance, if you look to the right, you may see the tower of Bembridge School Chapel. At the end of the lane turn left onto the road, and walk downhill.

Keep to the right hand side of the road and after 80 yards you will find the final Information Board. Turn right onto footpath BB22, and continue through the wood. Take care when crossing the road, and continue along the path until you get to a junction, turn right, at which point you will start to climb up the hill back to Bembridge Windmill, and the end of the Culver Trail.

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The Culver Trail

A 3.75 mile circular walk, which should take between 1.5 and 2 hours. There are a number of stiles, and a few steep sections of this trail.

Ten Information Boards give details along the walk.





The Culver Trail



The route starts at Bembridge Windmill following public bridleway BB36. Information board no.1 is fixed to the side of the National Trust kiosk, and gives a guide to the Trail as well as details of the windmill itself, which was built in the early 1700's from local limestone. The tower stands 38ft in height. To start the trail descend the hill, leaving the windmill to

your right. Directly in front of you is Culver Down, topped by the Yarborough Memorial, the furthest point of The Culver Trail. As you descend the hill you may glimpse through the hedge to the right Brading marshes, now an important RSPB nature reserve. The flat land was reclaimed from Brading Haven, a large natural harbour which used to extend all the way up to the town of Brading. Much of the harbour became silted up and was finally enclosed by the embankment which was built when the railway was extended to Bembridge.

At the bottom of the hill the path enters Steyne Wood, a deciduous wood containing many ancient trees. After 50 yards there is a fork in the path, ignore the left hand fork and walk straight on to Information Board no.2. There has been continuous woodland cover here since at least 1600, and in spring numerous bluebells turn the woodland floor into a kaleidoscope of colour. Centuries of sustained management by local people, coppicing the smaller species such as hazel and maple, have helped create and maintain the complex ecosystem in the wood. At the end of the wood go through the gates and bear immediately right, avoiding the main road. A short walk up a good path leads you to views over Bembridge Airport where you will find Information Board no. 3 detailing the history of the airport.

Keeping the white rail fence to your right walk 20 yards, before crossing the road and walking into Commonwood Lane. At the far end of this lane turn right, taking care to avoid any traffic. After 20 yards, just before the start of the hedge you get a good view down the whole length of the

concrete runway of the airport. Continue along the road until the signpost for byway BB37, here you will find Information Board no. 4. Cross the road to pause at the duck pond to view the wildlife. The nearby farms have used this pond for centuries as a source of water for horses and cattle. Now continue up Peacock Hill, part of the old byway which has been in existence since the thirteenth century. The farm cottage to the right, as with many in the village, is made from Bembridge limestone which used to be quarried from Bembridge Ledge. Continue along Peacock Hill until it takes a sharp right turn, at which point you will find Information Board no.5.

Climb over the stile by the information board, and cross the field, pause by the stile at the far side of this field, and turn round to look back from where you came. Directly ahead of you is the entrance to Bembridge Harbour, and you should be able to see No Man's Land Fort in the middle of the Solent. Turn round and cross the stile, immediately ahead of you is a chalk pit, created by quarrying the stone. Take the steeply climbing path to your left. At the top of this track there is a wooden post, you may need to pause for breath at this point, and you will be rewarded by views back over Bembridge & St Helens, and on the horizon, above the track you have just climbed, the spire of a church in Ryde.

At this point head directly for the obelisk on the top of the down, the good news is that at this point you have now reached the highest point of the walk. Cross through the kissing gate at the edge of the road and turn right, past the kiosk selling snacks, to Information Board no. 6. You will be rewarded by panoramic views over Sandown Bay, with Ventnor & St Boniface downs in the distance.

Turn back and walk along the road past the Culver Haven pub. At the edge of the car park you will see an information board giving details of the wartime role of Bembridge Down. Continue along the road until it forks, the Culver Trail takes the right hand fork in the road, and you need to take care of any oncoming traffic. (On the mound immediately in front of where the road forks is Information Board no. 7.) You will soon come across the remains of two gun emplacements, in the second one there is a board giving details of Culver Battery which was