

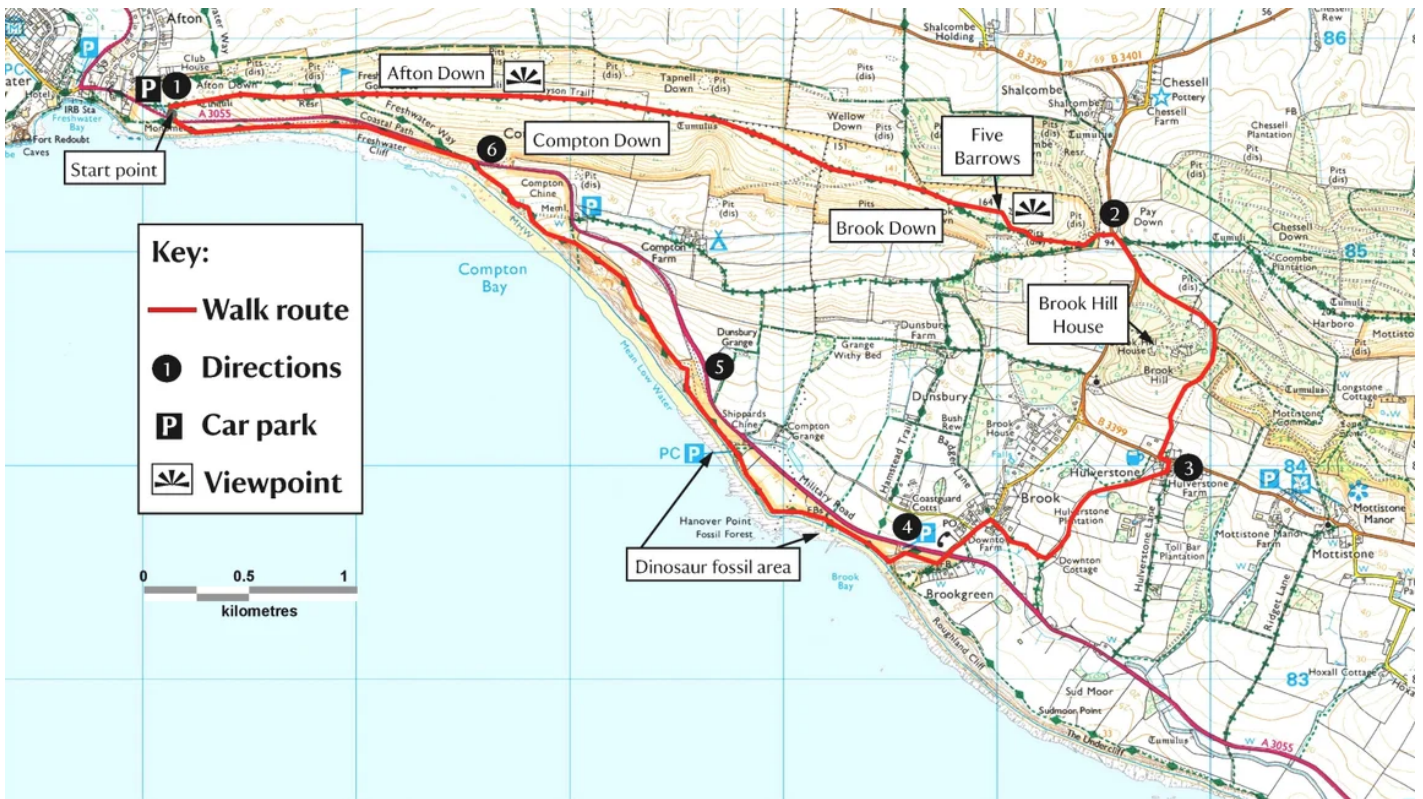
ISLE OF WIGHT

Compton Bay and Downs walk

Enjoy far-reaching views on this walk over the ridge of Afton, Brook and Compton Downs. Follow in the footsteps of the dinosaurs and look for their fossilised remains as you stroll back along the coast.

⚠ Be careful near cliff edges

Part of the walk takes you near cliffs with sheer drops. Take care when walking on these exposed sections, especially in windy weather.



Information

Address: Freshwater Cliffs, Freshwater Bay, Isle of Wight.

OS map: Landranger 196, Explorer OL29

Activity: Walking

Moderate: Includes cliff-top and beach sections.

Dog friendly: Dogs are always welcome, but please keep them on a lead around wildlife and livestock. Please take any dog waste home with you or to the dog waste bins provided at Brook and Shippards Chine car parks.

Full trail: Miles: 7.5 (km: 12)

Access: Challenging

Duration: 3 hours - 3 hours 30 mins

Terrain

Total ascent is 290m (950ft). It can be very windy up on the downs, and the chalk path from the top of Brook Down can be slippery. Keep an eye open for stray flying golf balls as you pass through Freshwater Bay Golf Club.

Don't go near the cliff edge and, if walking along the beach, please do not damage the cliffs in search for

Total steps: 6

Start point: Car park at Freshwater Cliffs, 400m east of Freshwater Bay on the A3055, grid ref: SZ350856

1. Take the well-defined track heading uphill, which passes close to the back of the car park, and leads between golf course tees and greens. This is part of the Tennyson Trail, which follows the ridges over the downs. Follow the trail for 2.5 miles (4km), going through one gate. 110yds (100m) after a lone bench on the left, take a detour to the left to reach the highest point and visit the Five Barrows and trig point. Rejoin the track and head downwards. Pass through a gate to reach a road.
2. Turn right and follow the road for 160yds (150m). Turn left up a tarmac drive towards Brook Hill House on footpath S39. Where the private drive swings right, go through a kissing gate. 15yds (15m) before the next kissing gate, turn right where you see the sign 'Private woodland, please keep to path'. Go down through the wood, through a kissing gate into a field. Continue on and cross two more stiles to reach the road at Hulverstone after a kissing gate.
3. Turn left and walk for 45yds (40m) and then right along the lane. After 65yds (60m) step over a wall on your right, signed BS47 Brook, heading for the sea. Follow the path over five stiles, passing to the right of a pond. Join a track and follow it as it bends right into Brook village. Turn left at the road and continue along to the junction with the busy Military Road. Cross over with care, then turn right and follow the clear path over the open area which runs parallel to the Military Road and leads to the National Trust car park.
4. From Brook car park there are two good options. If you prefer a cliff walk or if the tide is high or the beach steps are out of action following a landslip, take the coast path on

fossils.

the far side of the car park. The path crosses a footbridge and soon reaches the car park at Shippards Chine. Alternatively, if the tide is low enough for walking on the sand and the steps at Shippards Chine are open, go left down the path and concrete ramp onto the beach. Follow the coast for about a mile to the right, around the headland. This stretch is the best area to look for dinosaur footcasts. Climb the wooden steps to Shippards Chine to rejoin the coast path.

5. Follow the coast path to Compton Chine. Don't go through the kissing gate that leads back to the road. Instead, follow the path to the left of a fence, then go over a stile and footbridge to cross the ever lengthening chine (ravine), and rejoin the coast via another stile.
6. Meet the road after some steps and a stile. The path continues to the left of the road, bending coastward after the crest of the rise. Just after a memorial stone to ELM, bear right and return to the car park on the other side of the road.

End point: Car park at Freshwater Cliffs, Freshwater Bay, grid ref: SZ350856
