

## ISLE OF WIGHT

# The monk and the merchant walk

Take a circular walk passing the Oratory, with views of the Hoy Monument. Discover Wydcombe woods and spot rare wildlife that lives in the habitat including the orange ringed dragonfly. Find out more about the monk and the merchant as you complete this trail.



## Information

Address: Blackgang Viewpoint car park, Blackgang Road, Blackgang, Isle of Wight. Nearest postcode is PO38 2JB, what3words: ///ignore.payback.bulbs.

OS map: Landranger 196, Explorer OL29

Activity: Walking

Moderate: Paths through woodland, fields and the downs. For further information, please see Terrain section.

Dog friendly: Dogs are welcome. Please keep them on a lead around wildlife and livestock, and take any dog waste home with you.

Full trail: Miles: 4.6 (km: 7.36)

Access: Challenging

Duration: 2 hours - 2 hours 30 mins

## Terrain

This walk has an ascent of 250m (800m). A high and exposed headland can be very windy and covered by low cloud or mist. Paths can be very muddy and slippery.

## Total steps: 5

Start point: Blackgang Viewpoint car park, grid ref: SZ490767

1. From the car park, cross the road and go up the steps and through the kissing gate. Follow the clear path which first goes diagonally left then straight up the hill towards the Oratory. Then up to a kissing gate on the skyline. Go through the gate, then immediately turn left and away from the Oratory. You can visit the Oratory at the end of the trail. Follow the grassy track leading gently downhill towards Chale and the sea, following the line of the hedge on the left. Soon the path bends right, and this leads into an area with a small ridge on the left and old chalk quarries on the right. Follow a line through the valley between them and eventually you'll reach an open area. Go straight across following the main track, and pass through the bridge gate next to a field gate straight ahead. Go onto St Catherine's Down. Bearing left at first, follow the wide, grassy path to the Hoy Monument, keeping to the ridge top.
2. Turn left and go through the gate in the fence by the plinth. Turn immediately right and downhill, then right at the T-junction signed C3. After 40m turn right, and go through two more gates. Take a straight line across the field aiming for the right-most gate in the boundary at the right-hand edge of the tree belt, leading onto a road. On a clear day you can see Culver Down to the east and Tennyson Down to the west, the whole length of the island.
3. Turn right at the road, then left onto the path GL26 by the wall of The Hermitage. Follow the path round the copse until it reaches a track by a house. Turn left through a metal gate taking path NT78. Then go through another metal gate and down a hill until you reach a junction. Turn left for 25m, then right through a gate. Keep the fence to your left and follow the path, continuing across a field on the track heading down the valley.
4. Just before a spoil heap about 45m before the farm and wood yard, take a path on the right, turning immediately after a marker post with yellow footpath sign. This crosses through the hedge by a footbridge and gate. Keeping the fence to your left, continue on the path bending above Wydcombe House. Go through the gate and down to a

track. Turn left and follow the track as it bends left again. At the junction just past the little bridge, turn sharp right to skirt Wydcombe House on a path to the right of the driveway to the house, which soon becomes grassy. Bear right by the second and larger ornamental stone arch and after 20m follow the path straight ahead for 15m. Then take the path which bends diagonally right downwards towards the banks of a stream. Go over the footbridge and follow the very stony tree-lined track straight ahead. When the path leaves the valley it emerges into a field by a stile. Cross through the gap in the hedges about 20m in front, and cross the field to the top right-hand corner. Just before a pair of stiles in the bracken, take a path bearing right and follow a slowly-rising diagonal path onto Head Down.

5. Bear left at the top of the slope and pass between stiles on the left and right to reach another stile 20m away. Cross this and turn right onto a level green track and eventually pass through a gate to the left of a field gate and continue onwards. After 135m aim left off the track, aiming to skirt the old quarry edge on its right and then upper edge. You are aiming for a gate on the skyline almost in line with the radio mast. The path is hard to distinguish on the ground, but the target gate is easily visible. Go through the gate then head straight uphill towards St Catherine's Oratory. Go through the kissing gate by the trig point to the Oratory. Head downhill to pass through a kissing gate and follow the outward route back to Blackgang Viewpoint car park.

End point: Blackgang Viewpoint car park, grid ref SZ490767

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