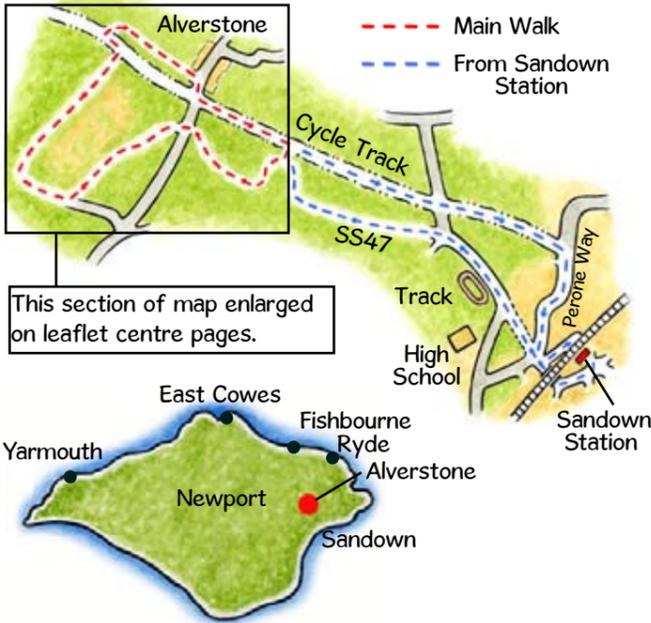


The Nature Reserve Trail (2.1 miles, red dashes) can be started at a number of places. However there is limited car parking in Alverstone and consideration should be given to local residents. It is suggested that the walk is started at Sandown station car park. This extends the walk to 4.4 miles. This is a fairly level walk with no stiles to cross. From the car park, enter the station at platform 2 and cross to the opposite platform using the subway. Take the exit along a concrete path with murals. At the road, take the pedestrian crossing and turn right for 10 yards then turn left onto the footpath passing a green to reach a road. Follow the road verge passing a sports ground on the left and eventually a water-works on the right. Follow the road round an 'S' bend and turn left onto a track, the Nunwell Trail SS47, and enter woodland. After 700 yards go through two gates and follow the path NC44 right as it follows the outside of a wildflower field, Skinners Meadow. The path widens and at a house turn right into Alverstone Mead Nature Reserve (then follow the trail from point 3 on main map).



Having completed the main walk at point 2, marked in red, return to Sandown Station on the cycle way through marshes and eventually emerge onto Perowne Way near the Spar shop. Turn right and follow the road back to a pedestrian crossing by Sandown Station. Turn left through a subway and then go left to the station car park.

Photos marked CE are by Chuck Eccleston.



Peacock Butterfly (CE)



Southern Marsh Orchid (CE)



Great Spotted Woodpecker (CE)



Red Squirrel (CE)

Bretts Meadow is an ideal habitat to find wetland and other plants including at least three species of orchid - southern marsh, early purple and common spotted.

The carpet of wood anemones on the western edge of the copse in spring is one of the best on the Isle of Wight. Birds in the copse include great spotted woodpecker, pheasant, treecreeper, blackcap, chiffchaff, willow warbler, coal tit, little owl and barn owl.

YOUNGWOODS COPSE and BRETT'S MEADOW
The copse is comprised mainly of oak with some silver birch. An understory of holly and hazel can be found in various parts of the wood. To the eastern side, can be seen several native wild service trees. The wild service tree was one of the first trees to colonise Britain after the ice age but is now uncommon.

Red squirrels are resident in the wood and measures have been taken to further encourage them, including the planting of hazel. Other mammals include dormouse, fox, badger and several species of bat including the serotine bat.

Please follow the Countryside Code and help to protect the wildlife in these nature reserves:

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people

The Isle of Wight Ramblers

The "Access for All" project aims to encourage everyone to take up walking and to make it easier for people of all abilities to access the countryside. This project includes the provision of gates and boardwalks. This will assist less mobile people, dog-walkers, and pushchair users. For more information visit www.iowramblers.com.



Wight Nature Fund

Set up in 1990 to purchase and manage land for nature conservation and people. Wight Nature Fund has worked with the local island community and other organisations to conserve those parts of the Island threatened by development or neglect. Representatives from the major conservation organisations found on the Island are working together to bring about real awareness of the local countryside. For more information visit www.wightnaturefund.org.uk.

The Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE LEADER) is funded by Defra and the EU. The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD): Europe investing in rural areas

This leaflet was produced by the Isle of Wight Ramblers and Wight Nature Fund with assisted funding from the Leader Fund.



EASY ACCESS RAMBLES

The Old Station House, the course of the former railway marked by the white gate.



Barn Owl (CE)



Bank Vole (CE)



Grey Heron (CE)



There has been a long history of traditional farm management in this area. Maps from 150 years ago show the same features and habitats that are seen today. The name of the reserve Alverstone Mead is taken from the 1830 tithe map.

Bird watching is popular in the area.



The woodland is of two types, firstly wet willow and alder carr with ferns, sedges, marsh marigolds and other wetland flora. On the higher slopes at Borthwood Lynch, there is oak, hazel and cherry. The fauna of these woods is rich and varied, including red squirrels, woodcock, water rail, wood crickets, dormice, white admiral butterflies and woodpeckers.



Marsh Cinqufoil (CE)

This reserve consists of 25 hectares of mixed habitats, including wet meadows, woodland, and wild flower meadows. The water meadows adjacent to the eastern Yar are a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), with scarce and interesting flower species and invertebrates, especially dragonflies. The marsh cinquefoil is locally rare. The meadows with their old ditch drainage systems are hunted by barn owls, kingfishers and herons, with other wintering wildfowl such as snipe and teal. The water levels are managed to preserve and enhance the wildlife. There is also traditional summer grazing by farm animals without the need to use any chemicals.

ALVERSTONE MEAD
This reserve consists of 25 hectares of mixed habitats, including wet meadows, woodland, and wild flower meadows. The water meadows adjacent to the eastern Yar are a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), with scarce and interesting flower species and invertebrates, especially dragonflies. The marsh cinquefoil is locally rare. The meadows with their old ditch drainage systems are hunted by barn owls, kingfishers and herons, with other wintering wildfowl such as snipe and teal. The water levels are managed to preserve and enhance the wildlife. There is also traditional summer grazing by farm animals without the need to use any chemicals.



This tranquil area, just a mile or so from Sandown, is a haven for wildlife.

Welcome to Alverstone Mead and Youngwoods Copse Nature Reserves.

1 Go onto the cycleway towards Sandown and cross a metal bridge. Continue, passing an information board and in 200 yards reach a field gate on the right. (At this point to continue to Sandown Station follow the blue route to Perowne Way)

2 Go through the field gate and cross the small field to reach another gate opposite Skinners Meadow. Go through the gate and turn right following the track as it goes left to reach houses.

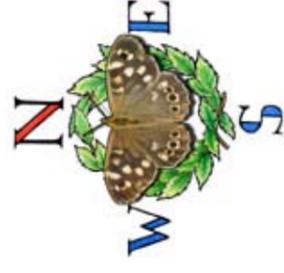
3 Turn right into Alverstone Mead Reserve on path NC17. Take a stroll over the elevated walkway to reach a wildlife hide where red squirrels are usually seen. Disabled access is provided from Burnt House Lane and a RADAR padlock provided at the gate. Return to the reserve path and follow this to two kissing gates and a long length of stepped boardwalk in the Scotchells Brook valley crossing this marshy area. Leave the reserve at another kissing gate at Alverstone Road.

4 Cross the road and follow the rough track, bridleway NC42. At a house, take the track left towards Queen's Bower to reach a road.

5 Cross the road and take the right hand path NC12 which descends by the side of gardens to reach a tree with a sign Bretts Meadow. Take the left gate into Bretts Meadow where there is a seat in memory of Dave Green, who was a voluntary warden and cared for the copse for several years. This affords a wonderful view north to the downs, and an excuse for a rest. Return to the tree sign.

6 Go through the other gate on NC50 into Youngwoods Copse, a remnant of ancient woodland which stood where Alverstone Garden Village is today. The copse was purchased by Wight Nature Fund in 1996, and the adjoining Bretts Meadow, a fine example of unimproved wet meadow, was added a year later. Walk through the copse on footpath NC51. In spring, the ground is a carpet of bluebells and anemones, and red squirrels may be glimpsed among the trees. The warden and volunteers have planted hazel to supplement food for the squirrels, and Wild Service saplings have been planted, from an old tree that was growing in the copse, a rare example this far south on the Island. Another seat commemorates Barbara Aze, a long-standing member of the Isle of Wight Ramblers. Opposite the entrance from Webster Way is a browsing rail erected by the warden, Rodney Harris, another good place to pause for a rest. The path now descends to a boardwalk. This area is part of the Alverstone Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest. The boardwalk crosses deep peat deposits and permission to use the path has been given by Wight Nature Fund. Please do not leave the path; dogs must be kept on a leash. Go through a kissing gate and over a bridge to join a cycle track.

7 Turn left on the cycle way and then right onto footpath B54 through a gate and along the edge of a river to reach The Mill. At a road, turn right to reach the cycleway crossing at two white gates.



--- Nature Reserve Trail
 --- Route to and from Sandown Station

