



Old Harry Rocks

4 Mile Circular Walk

- **Distance:** 6.5km / 4 miles
- **Time:** 1.5 - 2 hours
- **Elevation Gain:** 201m
- **Difficulty:** Easy-Moderate
- **Accessibility:** No styles, one kissing gate (avoidable if necessary). Varied terrain types including uneven dirt and loose-stone paths, and grass tracks. Moderate incline most of the way followed by a steeper descent. Some of the walk follows country roads with no pavement.
- **Parking:** Paid parking at South Beach Carpark in Studland (BH19 3AU) – free for National Trust members or £5 for 4 hours (£7 all day).

Step 1 (25 minutes)

Walk out of the car park and turn right. Follow the road down hill past the Bankes Arms pub. At the bottom of the hill, you will see a path on the left leading to the beach, followed by a small white brick building containing public toilets.

Next to the toilets is a gravel and stone track signposted for Old Harry Rocks. Turn left to follow this track uphill in the shade of tunnelling trees. The walk to Old Harry Rocks is one mile and takes around 20 minutes. Simply keep following the path.

As you climb out of the trees enjoy incredible views across Poole Harbour towards Bournemouth on your left.

After about 20 minutes the path opens out onto a grassy headland with Old Harry Rocks in front of you. Spend some time here walking around the cliffs and admiring the rock stacks from different angles.

Step 2 (15 minutes)

Once you're done with Old Harry, follow the grass track up the other side of the headland. Simply keep the sea on your left and climb uphill. After about 15 mins you will come to a wooden gate. Turn around here for an exceptional view of the Pinnacle Stack.

Step 3 (12 minutes)

Don't pass through the gate. Instead, take the path to its left and continue straight uphill with the fence on your right and the sea on your left, following the Council Public Footpath waymarker. At Ballard Point, the coast path begins to curve to the right. Across the bay head of you is the quaint seaside town of Swanage. This marks the endpoint of the Purbeck Way, a 27 $\frac{3}{4}$ mile long-distance walking trail from Wareham to Ballard Down. Follow the stone marker for the Coast Path and keep on the gravel path as it climbs uphill over the back of Ballard Cliff.

Step 4 (20 minutes)

After another 10 mins or so you will reach another wooden gate. Here you can enjoy a splendid view of Swanage and the Bay. Head through the gate following the green Purbeck Way arrow marker.

Ahead of you is a short stone Monument at the entrance to Ballard Down. Head past this and follow the gravel, then grass, track straight forwards across Ballard Down. To your right are exceptional views of the beaches at Studland, with Sandbanks and Brownsea Island beyond.

Pass through a second wooden gate and continue heading straight uphill following the stone marker for The Obelisk, ignoring the coast path and the Purbeck Way which drift away to the left here. Just through the gate are two round barrows highlighted by an arrangement of stones. These are burial barrows dating back to the Bronze Age.

As you climb, you will pass a stone marker for Ulwell next to a very windswept tree on your right, then a small stone bench.

Step 5 (12 minutes)

Shortly before you reach the top of the hill, you'll come to a crossroads of grassy tracks, where you'll find a very old stone bench with initials carved into it dated 1852.

Standing on the crossroads looking at this bench, turn right and follow the grass track downhill towards Studland. The path cuts diagonally downhill toward a small hamlet.

Step 6 (12 minutes)

Towards the foot of the hill, you'll pass through another wooden gate, then the path becomes a road. Follow this road downhill past the Glebeland Estate with the sea ahead of you, keeping straight past any turnings until you reach the crossroads at Manor Farm Tearooms.

Step 7 (5 minutes)

Go straight on at the crossroads, heading left and uphill. It's quite confusing here so look out for the white-painted 4-way sign and follow the one for "church only". It's a short lane leading to a picturesque church.

Pass through the little wooden gate and take the path to the left of the church. Immediately after the church, before the path leads into the churchyard, take the right turning to cut across the footpath towards a metal kissing gate on the far side.

Head through the kissing gate and follow the dirt track down to where it meets back up with the carpark.

