

Agglestone Rock and Ballard Down

Walk 17

Distance - 5 or 7 miles

South Beach car-park at Studland is situated close to the Bankes Arms, just off the B3351 road.

The walk takes in a gigantic ironstone outcrop known as Agglestone Rock which is located on the wildlife rich Godlingston Heath. Look out for reptiles - all six known British reptiles are known to frequent the heath.

Start/car parking - South Beach Car Park, Studland

Note: It would be a great help to future walkers if you could record any inaccuracies you come across during this walk and report them to reception so that appropriate amendments can be made. Thank you for your help. Happy walking!

WALK

Depart from South Beach car-park, join the road and turn left. Follow the road passing the 'Pig on the Beach Hotel' to reach a junction. At the junction veer left for a few paces to enter a waymarked track on the right. Initially the track descends within the woodland surrounds before rising to reach a main road.

Turn right at the road, then after 200 yards (bus stop) cross over and enter Wadmore Lane and access (eventually) to Godlingston Heath. Several signposts to Agglestone Rock appear along the lane which should be followed slavishly until reaching a metal gate beyond which lies a footbridge.

Cross the bridge, swing left and with the rock in sight leave the main track at the first obvious opportunity (between birch and oak trees) and head across the heathland, directly towards the objective. Sand becomes problematic as the rock is approached!

Having enjoyed the views and inspected the gigantic rock, set out across the heath, maintaining the previous line (ignore a right turn soon after leaving the rock) to pass through a metal gate (signpost - Studland Road). Initially the path skirts around the golf course perimeter, but after passing a vantage point (red and white pole) the path merges with a more prominent one. At that point turn right and stay with the broad track, soon passing five short, upright poles (clubhouse away to right) to arrive at a gate and the Studland road. Immediate objective - the obelisk, in sight!

Turn left along the road for 25 yards to re-enter the golf course - stile. Cross the fairway following the wayward posts, then descend along a clear path which crosses a stile en-route to meet the road. At the road turn left. Walk on the wide verge to reach a waymark, then cross

over and the ascent to the obelisk commences. The area is known as Ballard Down - a verdant landscape that exhilarates, excites and possibly exhausts, the weary rambler!

Oddly enough the obelisk wasn't erected at the highest point on the ridge. It stands at 489 ft above sea level, a good distance from the actual summit. The plaque reveals that the obelisk was manually demolished during the dark days of 1941 and reconstructed 32 years later. Another inscribed stone tablet refers to the Swanage Water Act - 1883.

An exhilarating ridge walk ensues. Breathtaking vistas all the way. Just stride out until reaching the stone seat (inscribed Rest and be thankful). Those feeling energetic and adventurous could elect to refer to walk 10 and continue along the ridge towards Old Harry rocks. This option adds about two miles.

The original route swings left at the stone seat and descends from the ridge towards a gate. Turn right, follow the road passing the Glebelands estate.

To return to Studland simply walk along the road emerging near the village cross. At that junction continue straight on to visit the Norman church dedicated to St. Nicholas.

The headstone of Sgt. William Lawrence, is close to the church door. Not to be confused with Thos. Edward Lawrence (of Arabia) 1888-1935. His grave is at Moreton, 8 miles west of Wareham.

To conclude the outing walk around the church, exit via a small gate and return to the car-park.

Agglestone Rock and Ballard Down

Distance - 5 or 7 miles

Walk 11



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