



View from the Coast Path

This footpath takes you down a steep, uneven descent to join the disused railway line below. This unique landscape altered by landslips and quarrying is rich in archaeology and wildlife. Keep a look out for the herd of feral British Primitive goats which have been reintroduced to help

control scrub. To avoid the steep path you can continue along the Coast Path at the top with excellent views of the weares, railway and Purbeck coast.

On reaching the railway line turn right as left will take you to a Portland Port fence with no access. Follow the route along past Durdle Pier, an 18th century stone shipping quay with an old hand winch Derrick Crane. Passing impressive cliffs you will eventually join the Coast Path down to Church Ope Cove where you can return to the main road or continue south. The railway line is not a designated right of way but is within an area of open access land.



Portland goats

fold along dotted line

# Weymouth to Portland Railway Walk

As walked on BBC TV's 'Railway Walks' with Julia Bradbury

This leaflet provides a brief description of the route and main features of interest. The whole length is very rich in heritage, geology and wildlife and this is just a flavour of what can be seen on the way. We hope you enjoy the walk and that it leads you to explore and find out more.

The 6 mile (approx.) walk can be divided into three sections, each one taking in very different landscapes and parts of disused railways along the way.



- 1** The Rodwell Trail and along the shores of Portland Harbour
- 2** The Merchants' railway from Castletown to Yeates Incline
- 3** Joining the disused railway line along the east coast

## For more information:

The Friends of Rodwell Trail can be contacted on 01305 838297.

A Portland Stone Experience Book with a selection of walks is available at the Chesil Beach Centre and at the Portland Bill Visitor Centre. There are also a number of books available by local historian Stuart Morris.

If you need more specific information on access or conservation management please contact the Portland Ranger, Portland Coast and Countryside Project on [ldcooch@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:ldcooch@dorsetcc.gov.uk) or 07973 907760.

The Portland Coast and Countryside project supported by a partnership of organisations, Natural England, Weymouth and Portland Borough Council, Dorset Wildlife Trust, Dorset Countryside and Portland Gas, aims to promote conservation, awareness and enjoyment of the island's wildlife and landscape for local people and visitors.



For each section there is map, a brief description of the route and main interest features.

The nature of the terrain has also been included.



Julia Bradbury



## 1 The Rodwell Trail and along the shores of Portland Harbour

The first part of the walk starts at the eastern end of Abbotsbury Road in Weymouth and runs along the Rodwell Trail, following the track of a railway built in 1865 to carry passengers and Portland Stone between Weymouth and Portland, the line was closed in April 1965. The route is a valuable wildlife corridor with lots to see, migrating birds in spring and autumn and butterflies such as Speckled Wood and Gatekeeper in summer. It provides level walking and is suitable for wheel chairs and push chairs.

fold along dotted line

At Ferrybridge, the walk leaves the Trail and follows the pavement across the 'Ferry Bridge' to rejoin a footpath following the line of the railway across common land, alongside Portland Harbour. This area is in a Site of Special Scientific Interest with many coastal plants. When the thrift is in flower from April it is a 'sea' of pink.



Sea Pink



Ferrybridge

At the road the walk follows a permissive route through Osprey Quay and past the sailing academy to Portland Castle.

## 2 The Merchants' railway from Castletown to Yeates Incline

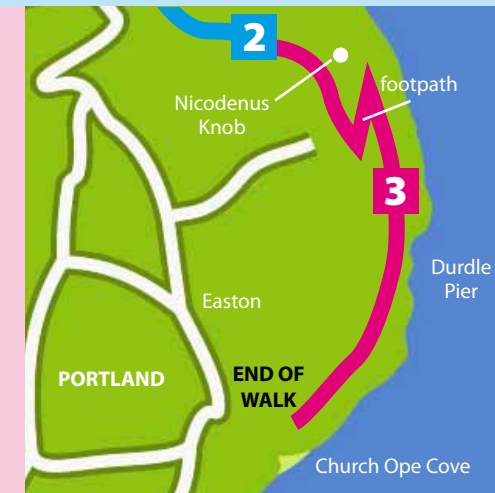
This section of the walk follows in the footsteps of quarrymen and their wagons of stone on the original horse drawn Merchants' railway, constructed to transport stone not passengers!



## 3 Joining the disused railway line along the east coast

This part of the walk takes you out to the east coast of the island to rejoin a section of the disused railway line which ran to Easton, making its last journey in 1965.

At the top of Yeates Incline, follow the footpath that skirts the edge of the High Angle Battery to your left and passes an active quarry on your right. Continue south along the Coast Path track passing Nicodemus Knob, a pinnacle of unquarried rock on your left and an old engine shed currently being restored by Portland Gas Trust for an interpretation centre. The walk takes you past the Young Offenders Institute on the road to a footpath sign on your left. (cont.)



The Verne

Skirt the garages and houses at Tillycombe to join the bottom of the Yeates Incline which brought stone down from the quarries. It is a steep climb and can be slippery at the top where the track has been revealed.

From Portland Castle, join the main Castletown Road and turn left. Across the roundabout, hidden between two large blocks of flats, is a footpath rising steeply straight ahead. This is the Merchant's incline built in 1826 to transport stone. The weight of the laden trucks descending pulled the empty ones up using a chain on a drum. Teams of horses transported the stone at either end of the incline.

At the top, continue under the subway along the tracks of the railway, marked in places by old stone sleepers, into the Verne Local Nature Reserve. Follow the lower line as this

joins up with the Yeates Incline. Volunteers have been opening footpaths and revealing original features such as stone water troughs for the horses and track surfaces. The Verne Citadel, now a prison dominates the landscape as well as the three bridges in a row which mark the Yeates Incline.



Top of Yeates Incline