

# BEAUTY BY BUS

The Island is a beautiful place with a rich tapestry of different landscapes from rolling downs to sweeping bays, trickling streams to towering cliffs. About half is officially designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We think much of the rest of the Island is almost as outstanding! Here we've picked out just a handful of the many easily accessible places you can feast your eyes on the Island's beauty. You can reach all of them by bus, which we think is a great way to see the Island.

**Top Tip: You'll get better views from the top deck of a bus than driving a car and you don't have to keep your eyes on the road! Several of these sites are accessible on an open top bus for an even better view.**



Image © Southern Vectis

**All the sites listed in this leaflet are free to access except Ventnor Botanic Gardens and Shanklin Chine which have admission fees.**

*Disclaimer: All information is believed to be correct at the time of going to print, however we strongly recommend you check details of bus times, routes and attraction opening times before travelling.*



Image © Visit Isle of Wight

**Southern Vectis runs the local buses on the Isle of Wight with frequent services between the main towns and many of the villages around the Island.**

For occasional travel you can buy single tickets onboard, but many visitors find the 24 and 48 hour Rover or seven day Freedom tickets are a better bet, offering unlimited travel for one price. You can buy them on any bus or from the Newport Travel Shop.

During the summer months additional services run in popular locations, including three open-top buses and the Island Coaster route which runs round the coast from Ryde to Yarmouth.

For full timetable information, latest travel information and details of current fares visit [www.islandbuses.info](http://www.islandbuses.info) or scan the QR code with your smartphone.



# BEST BY BUS BEAUTY BY BUS



Image © Visit Isle of Wight

**A guide to some of the best places to visit on the Isle of Wight**



# STEEPHILL COVE AND VENTNOR BOTANIC GARDENS



**Route:** 6  
**Stop:** Botanic Gardens

or



**Walk from stop:**  
Two minutes

**Route:** 3  
**Stop:** Boots

**Walk from stop:**  
Twenty minutes



**We like crab pasties!**



Image © Martin Gibson

Steephill Cove exudes gentle beauty and harks back to a simpler time. A traffic-free hamlet nestles above a pretty cove with an esplanade walk linking the cove with Wheelers Bay and onwards to Ventnor. It's no museum piece though, Steephill is still an active fishing community. The Boathouse seafood restaurant overlooks the sea and a small coffee shop sells refreshments and can also furnish you with a bucket and spade to enjoy the beach. The Crab Shed is a beach side café offering crab and lobster landed each morning (Summer only).

A steep path and steps links Steephill Cove with Ventnor Botanic Gardens which nestles in the undercliff and its distinctive microclimate. The gardens are home to a range of sub-tropical and exotic plants that would normally only survive in glasshouses. Admission to the gardens is chargeable.

[www.botanic.co.uk](http://www.botanic.co.uk)

## OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

It's hard to avoid beauty on the Isle of Wight. Virtually everywhere you go there is a view worth taking in, wildlife to admire, or architecture to intrigue. The Island's coastal path is a great way to see the Island's stunning maritime landscape and many people find the bus is the perfect link to walk the path in sections. The Island Coaster follows the coast from Ryde in the north-east via Sandown to Freshwater and Yarmouth in the West Wight and provides a great way to link up sections of the coastal path or just enjoy the scenery. Open top buses run on three routes around the Island providing some of the best views from the comfort of your top-deck seat.

## Better by bus

Hopping on a bus is a great way to see the Isle of Wight, whether you're popping over as a foot passenger on one of the fast-ferries, looking for a car-free holiday or just fancy leaving the car behind for a relaxed day out. You can get to some great places and see plenty on the way, with some of the best views you'll find from the top deck of a bus.

## Get on board

Buses stop outside ferry terminals at Yarmouth, Cowes, East Cowes and Ryde Hoverport. From Fishbourne there is a ten minute walk to the nearest stop. If you arrive at Ryde Pier Head you can either stroll down the pier or catch the train to the bus station. Wightlink, Red Funnel and Hovertravel sell combined ferry and bus tickets from their mainland ticket offices. Pick up a bus timetable from Yarmouth, Newport or Ryde bus stations or download one at [islandbuses.info](http://islandbuses.info)

## Extra summer services

During the summer Southern Vectis runs a number of visitor-focused extra services; three open-top buses - Downs Breezer, Shanklin Steamer and Needles Breezer plus the Island Coaster bus which runs along most of the Island's coasts. Check timetables for the dates these services run.

## Try the train

Some destinations in the leaflet are accessible by train, look out for the train icon.

## Visitor information

Visit [visitisleofwight.co.uk](http://visitisleofwight.co.uk) 01983 813813 or drop into the Visitor Information Centre, Guildhall, Newport.

This leaflet is one of a series, look out for **Beaches by Bus**, **Birds by Bus** and **Beasts by Bus**. They have been produced by Natural Enterprise to help you explore the Island by sustainable means. Find out more at [naturenterprise.co.uk](http://naturenterprise.co.uk).

## THE NEEDLES AND TENNYSON DOWN



**Routes:** 7, 12, Island Coaster, Needles Breezer  
**Stop:** Alum Bay



**Walk from stop:** Twenty minutes (The Needles Breezer will also take you right to the Needles Battery, cutting out the walk)

One of the most iconic Isle of Wight landmarks; a set of rock stacks at the far west tip of the Island with a lighthouse at the end. The open-top Needles Breezer Bus will take you closer to the Needles than a car and is one of the most spectacular bus routes in the country. From the Needles you can enjoy a beautiful walk to the Tennyson Monument enjoying sweeping panoramic views of the Island, the English Channel, the Solent and the mainland beyond. The downland is open-access so you can wander freely but do take care as there are open cliff edges with dramatic views but equally dramatic drops!

The Needles Landmark Attraction has a viewing platform to look at the Needles, a chairlift to the beach at Alum Bay and a range of shops, cafés and attractions on the cliff top.

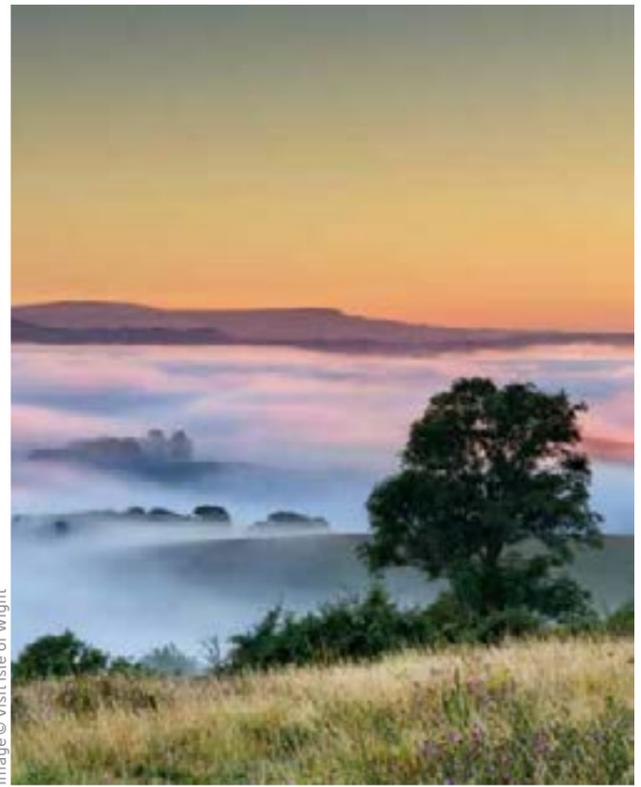
[www.theneedles.co.uk](http://www.theneedles.co.uk)



**We like popping in to the tea room at the Old Battery for cakes and stunning views.**



Image © Visit Isle of Wight



## ST CATHERINE'S ORATORY



**Routes:** 6, Island Coaster  
**Stop:** Viewport Car Park/St Catherine's Down



**Walk from stop:** Ten minutes

The tower affectionately known as "The Pepperpot" tops St Catherine's Down. It is the only surviving medieval lighthouse in England and is a steep climb up from the bus stop (the path is just opposite the viewpoint car park) but you will be rewarded by a sweeping panoramic view across the 'Back of the Wight', the fabulous beaches and soft-cliffs arc round towards Freshwater Bay and the Needles and mainland beyond. If you want to soak up the views, take a longer walk along the ridge line away from the coast; at the other end you will find the Hoy Monument.

[www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)



Image © Visit Isle of Wight

## QUARR



**Routes:** 9, 4, Downs Breezer  
**Stop:** Quarr Abbey



**Walk from stop:** Five minutes

A Benedictine monastery on the north coast of the Island just outside of Ryde. In fact there are two abbeys on the site, the ruins of a Cistercian abbey founded in 1132 and the new abbey built between 1907 and 1914. The imposing buildings form a key landmark, visible from land and sea. They are set within 200 acres of beautiful pasture, gardens and woodland, giving lots of opportunity for gentle walks around the grounds and surrounding footpaths. There is a tearoom and shop selling a variety of produce grown on Quarr's allotments. There is also a visitor centre and monastery shop if you want to learn more about the abbey and monastic life.

[www.quarrabbey.org](http://www.quarrabbey.org)



Image © Martin Gibson



**We like winter hot chocolate in front of the wood-burning stove in the café.**

## BRADING DOWN



**Routes:** 2, 3, Island Coaster, Downs Breezer  
**Stop:** Brading Bull Ring



**Walk from stop:** Ten minutes



**Other travel options:** Island Line (Brading Station)

Steep and steeped in history, Brading Down is a fascinating place to explore and a great vantage point to view Sandown Bay's sweeping sandy beaches and the River Yar as it winds its way towards the sea at Bembridge Harbour. If you descend the hill from the parking area you'll find peaceful woodland and hidden chalk pits absolutely teeming with butterflies. On the other side of the main road from the car park is a small woodland and if you explore this you'll be rewarded with a second dramatic view, this time across Ryde to the Solent and the mainland beyond.

Top Tip: If you haven't got time for a proper visit, the Downs Breezer open top bus passes along the top of Brading Down with fabulous panoramic views from the top deck.

The nearby town of Brading has a range of shops, pubs and cafés.

Brading Down is managed by Gift to Nature which provides accessible nature sites for everyone to enjoy.

[www.gifttonature.org.uk](http://www.gifttonature.org.uk)



**We like the ice cream van – usually to be found in the viewpoint car park.**

## SHANKLIN/BROOK, CHURCHILL AND COMPTON CHINES

### For Shanklin



**Routes:** 2, 3, Island Coaster, Shanklin Steamer  
**Stop:** Library or Daish's



**Walk from stop:** Five minutes

### For Brook, Churchill and Compton

**Routes:** 12, Island Coaster  
**Stop:** Brook Chine/Compton Farm

**Walk from stop:** Two minutes

Chines are fascinating features of the Isle of Wight's landscape. Each one has its own character from the vertical, canyon-like walls of Whale Chine to the leafy ravine that is Shanklin Chine. They are real 'windows in time' – their steep walls erode so regularly that the rocks are easily visible, throwing up evidence of dinosaurs, swampy deltas and ancient civilisations. They are also favourite spots for wildlife. Often missed by visitors it is well worth spending some time exploring the Island's chines. Some are difficult to access but others are really easy, with great views possible from both the beach and cliff.

Shanklin Chine has been a popular visitor attraction since 1817. Explore the three-acre site with its waterfalls, bridges and interesting plant-life. There is a tea room, gift shop, nature hide and nature trail. Admission charges apply.

From Brook you can walk along the cliff or beach (check the tides carefully first) to see a number of chines in various stages of development. The one-way walk of around 1.5 miles has bus stops at either end. At Brook Chine you can still see the remains of a lifeboat station. Heading west you will come to Churchill Chine (pictured), a dramatic angled fissure in the cliff face, with a series of small waterfalls. Shippards Chine also provides beach access, though the chine itself has all but disappeared. Then follow the cliff path along to Compton Chine, where the soft cliffs give way to chalk.

[www.iwchines.org.uk](http://www.iwchines.org.uk) [www.shanklinchine.co.uk](http://www.shanklinchine.co.uk)



Image © Martin Gibson



**We like butterfly spotting!**