

## **Spyway Access Statement**

Durnford Drove, Langton Matravers BH19 3HG

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### **Introduction**

Spyway is located on the south Purbeck coast within the village of Langton Matravers. This car park is used as a base for adventures along the coastline: walking, running, climbing, coastering and swimming. There are lots of footpaths that run north to south, with east/west access along either the South West Coast Path or Priest's Way bridleway. There are short walks around the plateau, with long walks available to Swanage/Worth Matravers and beyond. A lot of people park here to access Dancing Ledge. In recent years the number of people visiting this landscape has increased and this access statement has been written to try to provide the visitor with enough information to make an informed choice about whether they have the skills, physical capability and equipment to visit safely – before they arrive.

### **Steep and uneven paths**

Whilst the car park is located on flat, level land, and a track leads out to interpretation at Spyway Barn, access around this landscape isn't straightforward. The track gives way to fields, which become very muddy when wet. To access the dramatic coastline of limestone cliffs and flower rich grassland you'll need to walk down a steep slope with an uneven stone surface changing to slippery grass. Apart from the gradient the route gets even harder in wet or frosty weather.

### **Muddy in winter**

This stretch of the South West Coast Path between Durlston and St Aldhelm's Head can get very difficult to walk in winter, when the clay soils become waterlogged – in particular the stretch between Dancing Ledge and Durlston.

### **Dancing Ledge is a 2.5m climb down/up.**

In order to get down to Dancing Ledge (the destination for a lot of visitors) there is 2.5m climb/drop down a rock face. It isn't for the faint hearted and it isn't straightforward. We believe that there is information out there that steps exist – they don't.

### **Would Durlston or Worth be a better place to start?**

We advise that if you are unsure of your capabilities, or have any mobility concerns, that you first access this landscape from either Durlston Country Park or Worth Matravers Car Park (walking out to St Aldhelm's Head). Both these places offer great experiences for beginners and first time visitors. You can then gauge your skills and visit Spyway next time.

### **Dogs**

This area is a working farm and the cattle grazing it are helping maintain some of the most orchid-rich fields in the country. Please keep your dog on a lead, and pick up any mess.

### **No mobile reception**

Mobile phone reception is usually available from the car park but disappears before you start descending the slopes towards the cliffs. It is best to assume that you don't have any

reception. In the event of an emergency you will need to come back to a point close to the car park to get back into reception. Dial 999 and ask for the coastguard.

## Arrival & Parking Facilities

The car park entrance is along a bumpy track at the end of Durnford Drove, accessed from a turning off the B3069 (indicated by a brown sign). The main car park surface is firm with a top layer of loose gravel, the overflow is grass.



There is a payment machine at the car park. The cost to park is £3, or free for National Trust members.

Access from the car park to Spyway Barn (400m), footpaths and bridleways is along a stone track.



No refreshments or toilets are available in the car park. In the village of Langton Matravers there is a pub and shop (opening times vary) and public toilets, provided by the village, are available at Putlake Adventure Farm – BH19 3EU. These are not managed by the National Trust but visitors are welcome to use them.

## Trails

We have suggested walks on this website. These are not marked on site but should be relatively easy to follow. Most footpaths run north to south (from village to coastal quarries – originally for carrying stone or smuggled goods), with the Priests Way running east to west from Swanage to Worth. If you ever get lost, head inland on one of the footpaths and get your bearings from the well signed Priests Way.

**Dinosaur footprints** requires a one mile walk along the stone surface of the Priest's Way in the direction of Worth Matravers. After passing the working quarries, look out for a gate on your right. Crossing a grass field, you access the footprints via another gate. Access is relatively straightforward.

## Dancing Ledge

The most popular destination is Dancing Ledge and access here is not as straightforward.

From Spyway Barn cross a couple of meadows to the top of the plateau, where there is a resting point. This path can be really muddy in late autumn, winter and early spring.



From here the path descends a slope which is steep. The path is at first uneven stone and then short grass. The stone parts requires care so as not to trip and the grass part can be very slippery in wet weather and particularly when frosty.





To access the ledge you'll need to cross a stile and find your own way down to the ledge itself. Note the warning signs.



The way down to the ledge itself is not provided by the Trust. The photo below demonstrates how difficult it can be when making your own way down. You need to assess your own skills and capabilities – and remember it is easier to get down than get back up.



Further information about trails around the property is available on our main website.  
<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/spyway>

## **Contact details for more information**

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**Date July 2021 – Tom Clarke, Senior Community & Volunteering Manager**