

The Needles Battery Access Statement

Contact details

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Introduction

The Needles Headland is situated at the extreme western end of the Isle of Wight. Positioned on top of the 'Headland' at the western point is the Needles 'Old Battery', constructed between 1862- 1866 and part of a strategic coastal defence network which was instigated by Lord Palmerstone, the Prime Minister of the time.

The Needles Batteries cover the historical period from the Victorians to the Cold War looking at both the military and social history affecting this superb coastal site. With tales of secret tests, shipwrecks and the men and women based here.

The New Battery was built further uphill of the Old Battery in 1893- 1895 to take the larger guns and later in 1956 was the site of British rocket and satellite development.

- The headland is an area of open access in the care of the National Trust since 1975 with the Battery at the end of a $\frac{3}{4}$ mile well surfaced pathway but does have sheer cliff drops, steep paths and uneven surfaces so care must be taken.
- All dogs are welcome including assistance dogs, please keep on short leads due to the terrain and number of children visiting.
- There is a manual wheelchair available for loan during your visit, please ask a member of the reception staff on arrival.
- Mobile phone reception is not very good across the site. In an emergency please speak with one of the members of staff or ring 01983 754772.
- Caution should be taken when using the spiral staircase which leads to our searchlight tunnel and is not suitable for pushchairs or dogs.

Arrival & Parking Facilities

- Follow brown signs for The Needles Landmark Attraction.
- On arrival parking for able drivers is at the Needles Landmark Attraction car park – not National Trust charges do apply.
- No parking on site, there is limited disabled parking by arrangement (tel the above number) these parking spaces have a small incline, are tarmacked and situated just outside the Old Battery front gate.
- The Battery is reached by walking approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ mile along a well surfaced road/pathway
- The Needles Breezer run by the local bus company services the Old & New Battery every hour between March and the end of October (every half hour Easter to the end of August) reduced fare by showing NT membership card.
- Cycle racks are available at the Old Battery for visitors use.
- The New Battery is further up the hill from the Old Battery and reached by walking along the road or by a number of steps, take care as uneven none standard size.

WCs

- Limited toilets are situated at the Old Battery just past the visitor reception & shop, the gents & ladies have an 18cm step access, have LED lighting, tiled floors, hand basins and paper towels.
- The disabled toilet is wheelchair accessible, alarmed and right hand transfer with LED lighting. There are no adult changing facilities but baby changing facilities are available here.

Visitor Reception

- Just inside our entrance gate is a wooden constructed 'sentry box' manned by a member of the welcome team where NT membership cards can be scanned or entry tickets purchased.
- Further along the entrance tunnel is the original guardroom which is now used as the visitor reception and gift shop. This is a brick building with a wooden floor and lit by LED strip lighting and a single window. There is a single 10cm step doorway which is wide enough for manual wheelchair access. The door is pinned back open during open hours. The member of staff can assist with admission tickets, membership sales and retail purchases.
- An induction loop operates at the till point.
- A manual wheelchair is available for loan, please ask a member of staff if required.

Parade Ground & Searchlight Tunnel

- The parade ground is an open area of loose gravel and concrete slab pathways leading to the WC's, Port War Signal building now housing the tearoom, searchlight tunnel entrance and the Needles viewing platform, some of the pathways are uneven so care should be taken.
- On leaving the Visitor reception and entering the parade ground area two original 9" rifled muzzle loading guns are still in their original positions and can be seen overlooking the solent sea passage. An ideal photo opportunity.
- On the parade ground there is a wood and metal constructed replica/representation 1940's Anderson shelter and a number of wooden, wheelchair friendly picnic benches.
- Entrance to the searchlight tunnel is also from the parade ground via a narrow 19 step 50cm wide metal spiral staircase, visitors with mobility or a visual impairment may find access difficult.



- There is then a 70 Metre tunnel ending in an area approx. 168cm wide which has superb views over the Needles rocks, lighthouse and the Solent. The tunnel has a gradual downward slope is approx. 90cm wide and 210cm high, constructed of brick with a concrete floor. The end viewpoint has a metal safety grill. The exit is by returning along the tunnel and back up the spiral staircase. The tunnel is lit by a number of LED lights strategically positioned and also has LED emergency lighting in the event of a power cut.

- Just past the tunnel entrance is the Needles viewing platform, access is along the main pathway, the platform is made from galvanised metal and has a none slip surface, is wheelchair friendly with a hand rail on the left side and is 600cm long with a 2 brick high wall end stop. Views of the Needles rocks, the lighthouse, solent and Dorset coastline can be gained from this platform.



Catering

- In the parade ground is the Port War Signal Station which houses the 1940's themed tearoom. Access is by two concrete steps which has a left hand side handrail, it has two doors which are pinned back during open hours and has none slip flooring, a moveable ramp is available for wheelchair access by asking a member of staff.
- Food and drink purchases are made from the upstairs counter, staff are happy to carry trays downstairs on request and there is a menu board in the downstairs room.
- Ice creams are on sale in the visitor reception/ gift shop.
- Just outside the building there are wooden picnic benches which are wheelchair friendly.
- Inside on the ground floor, is a compact foyer area where there are two small tables and a room which has four more tables and chairs, this area is suitable for wheelchair users requiring indoor seating. There is a menu board in this room with food ordered from the counter upstairs on the second floor, a member of staff will come down to take orders if required. Please make a member of staff aware at the reception point on arrival if you require assistance.



- Upstairs is reached by 11 concrete steps with two half 1 metre square landings and a further 7 steps and has a right handed rail, pushchairs and wheelchair access is not possible upstairs.
- The 90cm high counter is reached through a standard door and on the left hand side as you go into the room which has a further central table and chairs.
- There are 12 stools around the side of the room which is approximately 370cm x 350cm in size and has windows giving superb views of the surrounding area.
- Cakes and traybakes are on show on the counter with a further selection of food available to order. Menu boards are positioned on the back wall behind the counter.



- There is a hearing loop at this till point.
- There are large handled cutlery, double handled mugs and straws available on request.
- The floors have non slip surfaces and the rooms are lit by standard light bulbs and has six windows.
- There is further seating in a side room which is lit by standard light bulbs and has a window.

Retail

- There is a small selection of retail items for sale in the tearoom at the counter.
- National Trust food, gifts and souvenirs can be purchased from the visitor reception/ gift shop.
- There is a hearing loop at this till point.
- Staff are happy to assist reaching down items to view if they cannot be reached and inform visitors of prices.
- Postage stamps are available at all main till points.

New Battery

- Positioned further up the headland reached as a continuation of the main headland road and serviced by the Breezer bus, alternatively from the Old Battery by means of a number of steps, take care as they are uneven none standard size. A safety fence runs the right hand side of the steps.
- There are many uneven surfaces and slopes being an outdoor area and countryside location. Care must be taken, children supervised at all times and dogs should be kept on a lead.
- There is no charge to enter the New Battery which is open 11am – 4pm, dates as the Old Battery.
- The Breezer bus stops and turns round at the New Battery.
- Constructed of concrete and stone with concrete floors.
- Lighting is LED strip lights and being underground there are no windows.
- Wheelchair access to the refreshment point only is via a second entrance with a slope the opposite side to the step entrance.
- Wheelchair or pushchair access to the lower rooms is not possible due to the historical nature of the buildings construction.
- Access to the lower display rooms is by 3 concrete steps with a hand rail on the left hand side and then a further 7 wooden steps, hand rail on left hand side.
- Paper copies of the display boards in the lower display rooms are available to view on request from a member of staff in the refreshment room.
- There is a small refreshment room selling take away hot, cold drinks, ice cream, snacks and a selection of National Trust food, gifts and souvenirs.
- There is a hearing loop at this till point .
- There is a separate small room (unheated) with stools for consuming food and drink which also has a small TV playing a subtitled version of the DVD showing in the lower display room.

WCs

- There is a portaloos available during open hours from Easter to the end of October.
- There are no adult changing facilities or baby changing facilities.

Tennyson trail

- Access to the Tennyson trail is further uphill from the New Battery, follow the sleep uphill roadway until it levels out then walk over a small grass area between the holiday cottages and aerial mast compound towards a wooden gate in the fence.

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Date 3rd April 2019

Map

Key			
1. The Bridge and Winch Chamber	6. The Guardroom / Gift Shop	11. Tea-room	16. Fire Command Post / Ariel view of Master Gunners House
2. The Cartridge Store	7. Guns and Gun Emplacements	12 & 12a. Position Finding Cell	17. Barrack Block Foundations
3. The Shell Store	8. Anti Aircraft Gun Position	13. Fire Command Post / Needles Viewpoint	18. Ditch Buildings (no public access)
4. The Laboratory	9. Entrance to the Tunnel	14. Ramp and Searchlight Directors Station	19. Master Gunners House Foundations
5. The Lamp and Ventilation Passage	10. Royal Engineers Office	15 & 15a. Position Finding Cell / Scratchells Bay	20. Steps to Needles New Battery

