Ringstead Bay

Site Code 2.019

OS Grid Ref: SY 760 821 (Map 194)

GPS N50:38:19 W2:20:24

Owned by:	National Trust	Wind Direction	SSW – WSW (210° to 260°) Best: SW (225°)
Farmed by:	P & T Wilkinson Southdown Farm Ringstead 01305 852653	Height AMSL Top to Bottom	450ft (147m) 150ft (49m)
Nearest Phone:	Osmington, Sunray Inn	Pilot Grades	**HG Club Pilot:** coach to observe 1st 3 visits **PG Club Pilot:** take off ridge only. CP + 10 hrs for cliffs **Site briefing advisable**
Casualty Units:	Dorset County, Dorchester		

For your own safety warn the Portland Coastguard Helicopter (01305) 760 439

They have been known to low fly in this area

Edit by Alastair Florence

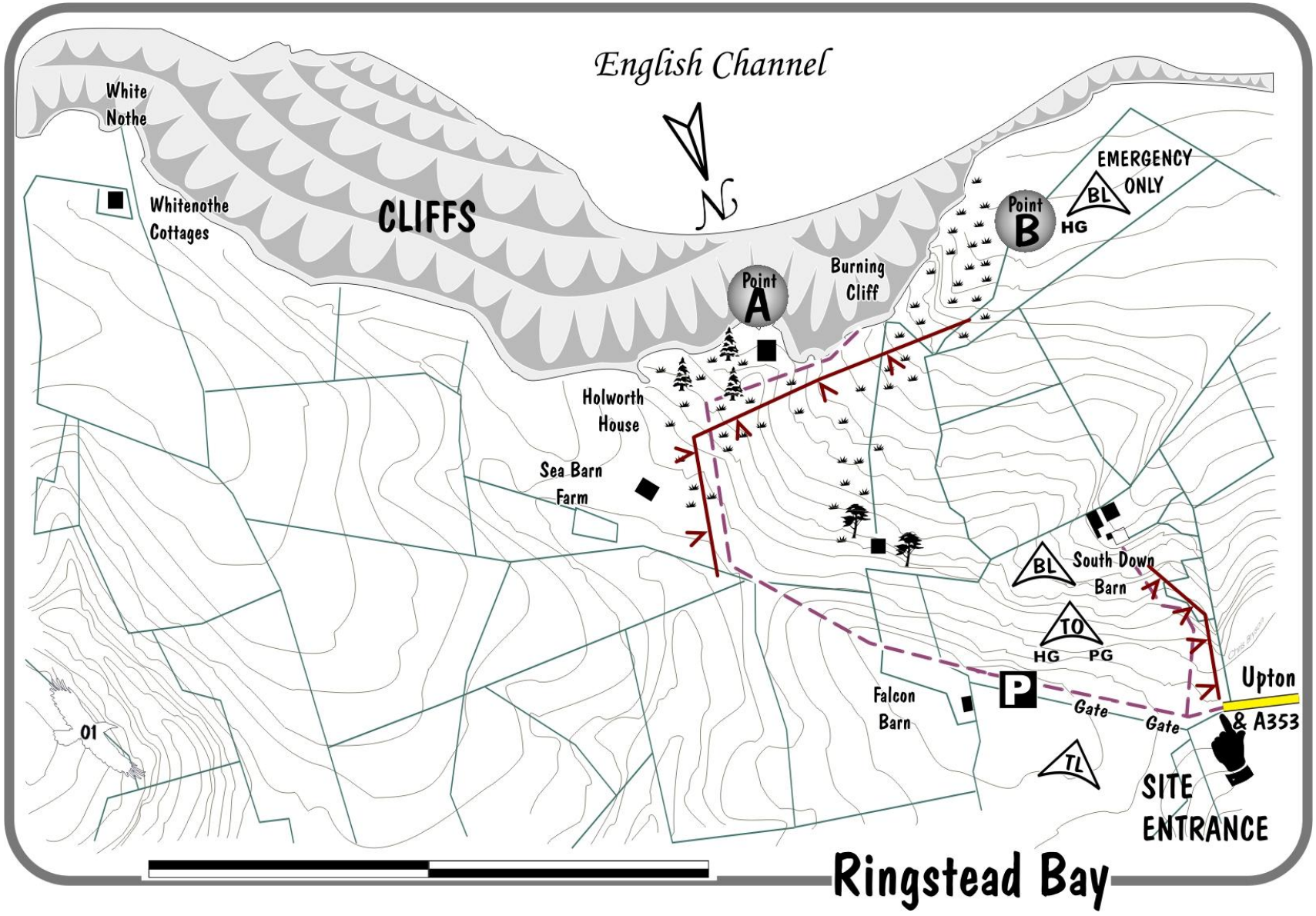
General Site Info

Ringstead is really two sites in one. The small take off ridge can be flown in its own right but owing to its size its use is limited.

The ridge provides a means of access to the main cliff. The cliff provides reliable soaring in a scenic landscape. Excellent height gains can be achieved here and exciting coastal runs can be attempted by experienced pilots.

The site has had more than its fair share of accidents over the years proving that Ringstead has many hazards and must be treated with respects.

Ringstead Bay



Ringstead Bay

Directions

From Weymouth – On the A353, 0.7 miles after passing through Osmington, turn right signposted Upton and Ringstead. Continue on this road for 1.4 miles (going straight on as the road to Ringstead turns right) to the NT Car Park area.

From Dorchester – Follow the A352 to the roundabout 2.5 miles past Broadmayne turning right towards Weymouth on the A353. Take the second turning on left after Poxwell village, signposted to Upton and Ringstead. Continue as above.

From Wareham and Wool – Follow the A353 to the roundabout 1.2 miles past Owermoigne and turn left towards Weymouth on the A353. Take the second turning on left after Poxwell village, signposted to Upton and Ringstead. Continue as above.

Parking

Park to the left of the track, about 100m from the white gate at the far (eastern) end of the car park. Only drive on the main track and not on the grass.

Caution

- One of the most potentially lethal mistakes to make on this site is to fly east of White Nothe, the highest point of the main cliff where the cottages are on the cliff top, unless conditions are perfect (i.e. significantly off to the south). The cliff angle changes here and you may find that as you round the end you begin to sink and find you are flying into a head wind as you try to get back. There is no bottom landing for some way once you round the headland and you will probably be doomed to a water land with most likely fatal consequences.
- It is imperative that all pilots who fly this site completely understand the theory of sea breeze, the hazards of cliff flying and are totally comfortable with the collision avoidance rules.
- Pilots should understand that, despite its benign appearance, there are an inordinate number of accidents here. If you are questioning you flying skills, or lacking in confidence, this is not the place to have a go.
- This site is used by large numbers of the general public and their safety must always come first. The consequences of a member of the general public being injured by a pilot would be horrendous.
- Do not set up near people or vehicles and don't inflate your glider if someone wanders behind it.
- The 10-hour club-pilot grade to fly to the cliffs isn't there to be restrictive - it's for your safety.

Before you fly here, reflect on the fact that we have had many accidents here and that it is a site that must be approached with caution. Incidents over the years have included a fatal sea landing, landing on inaccessible beaches (requiring recovery by boat), landing in the trees before the cliffs, landing on the under cliff, being dragged into cars and the fence behind take-off and at least one reserve deployment. A number of incidents have required Air Ambulance evacuation of casualties.

Do not attempt to take off directly from the cliff top..

Hazards

The obvious hazard is the sea, which can be lethal no matter what kind of wing you fly. The beach, which offers emergency landings, varies between narrow and very narrow depending on tide states. Be extremely cautious.

When the wind is westerly, the take-off ridge is turbulent with little lift available. When southerly be aware that it is possible that the cliffs will not be soarable even though the take-off ridge may be. It may be difficult to reach the cliffs with the increased headwind component, so leave the ridge with extra height.

Wind socks on and behind take-off do not necessarily indicate true direction.

There is rotor at all points behind the cliff top extending back many tens or event hundreds of metres. **Note that the emergency landing areas are also affected.**

When flying the cliffs, watch out for mist blowing in off the sea and orographic cloud. Both can arrive/form **very** quickly and obscure the land beneath you, making a return to the top landing impossible. Wind streaks can be seen clearly on the surface of the sea as can white horses; orographic formations can be observed drifting from Portland prior to reaching White Nothe.

The take-off area can be hazardous due to the close proximity of members of the public and parked cars. Do not attempt to launch near them and be aware of the risk of being blown back - the venturi on the hill is likely to be stronger than you expect. West of take-off is a gully behind the Farm, with trees and the potential for rotor.

Under normal circumstances this ridge is used as a launch point to gain height to enable transition to the cliffs. Pilots not intending to fly to the cliffs should avoid preventing other pilots from doing so by occupying the takeoff ridge for extended periods of time.

Beware also of the likelihood of a wide variation in conditions - even between days that may at first seem identical. Often this is due to 'wave' off Portland and is also the reason that this site requires three 'supervised' days of flying experience to be logged before hang glider Club Pilots can go fully solo.

Paragliders: If the glide to the cliffs is looking marginal, land early. Pilots have been rotored into the trees and power lines just short of the cliffs.

Aero modellers use the western end of the takeoff ridge; try not to over-fly them deliberately. Before flying, it would be polite to have a talk with them to let them know of your takeoff plans and needs. Whilst flying the ridge, watch for hang gliders wishing to launch. Please clear the area to the left of launch when you see that a hang glider is about to launch, since their preferred route after launch is an immediate turn to the left, remaining close to the hill.

At the request of the owners, please do not linger by the lowest house on the cliff at Point A on the map, and please fly as far from the house as the conditions and your height permit, making your way to the main cliff as quickly as possible

Launching

Other than the points mentioned above, the launch is fairly straight forward with a gentle slope that rapidly steepens.

Paragliders: On stronger days launch part way down the steeper slope to avoid pulling up your wing directly into venturi.

Hang-gliders: Modern gliders will reach the cliffs easily direct from take-off, but it's best to use some VG to aid penetration if you have it. If conditions are a little marginal or you are on a lower performance glider, it can be good to top up with a couple of beats over the take-off ridge to gain a little height. Even an extra 20 metres or so above take-off can make it a lot more comfortable on the way out to the cliffs.

Top Landing

It can be difficult in strong westerly conditions to reach the top landing area from the cliffs. It is best to fly into wind (to point B on the map) then turn cross-wind to the landing area – height permitting.

Do not climb over the fence from the top landing area. Use the gates.

Hang-gliders: No top landings in front of the fence. The top landing area is behind the fence in the large field. The minimum required to comfortably get back to the top landing area is approximately 100 metres or so above take-off. If you arrive too high, lose height over the take-off ridge (avoiding the aeromodellers) and additionally there can be turbulence in the up-wind area of the field due to the car parking area, so it's best to land a little further back.

Paragliders: Top landings are only allowed in the top landing field or on the slope. No landings to be made on the flat area in front of the track where the hang-gliders rig and members of the public are present. Several pilots have been dragged back onto the fence or cars after attempting to land here.

Bottom Landing

All bottom landings are for EMERGENCIES ONLY. No deliberate top to bottom flights.

The National Trust bans beach and under cliff landings. However, in an emergency, landings on the beach are best achieved by approaching from the east.

Carry back up to the top via the track marked on the map, or to the car park at the end of the toll road. No cars are allowed past the car park. Please do not cut through private property under any circumstances.

All bottom landings between the take-off and the cliffs should be made to the left in a southeast direction, regardless of the wind direction, as the land falls away to the west. (There is usually very little wind in this valley anyway).

Coastal Runs, XC

There is a technical coastal run down the cliffs to the east, but please consult an experienced local pilot before attempting. In places there are no bottom landing areas at all and a great deal of sea! Do not go past the White Nothe below cliff top height.

Heading east - 28km to Durlston Head, Swanage. Also Corfe and Ballard Down.

If you manage to go over the back, be aware of the Winfrith Prohibited Area immediately downwind and the Dorset Gliding Club just north of Wool.

Flying Generally

The prime attraction of this site is the excellent cliffs where it is possible to get height gains of 1000ft or more.

The transition to the cliffs is a flight where conditions dictate your approach and is also fraught with hazards. It is important for each pilot to be aware of every element of the site guide and to seek a full and comprehensive briefing, in the absence of a club coach you may gain relevant information from an experienced pilot, that is a pilot who has flown the site regularly over a period of time.

Observation on the day of other pilots can sometimes help the decision making process, remember to have alternative flight plans in case you need to get back to take-off without bottom landing. The major physical hazard on the transition to the cliffs are the power-lines immediately before the cliffs; ground speed and air speed are critical in deciding if you can actually make it to point A on the site map. Consideration of having to abort and return is of utmost importance.

When crossing to the cliffs it is usually best to fly STRAIGHT to point A on the map (identified by a rounded, grassy bowl, with pine trees and a house to the east). If you reach the edge low, soar the bowl in front of the houses until you are level with the main cliff before crossing on to it. If you have plenty of height on approach then fly East of the house and continue to the cliff, this will help avoid upsetting the residents.

The house at point A is the normal turn point, immediately east is the second house (Holworth House). This has a small area of cliff face and is a useful place to build some height before proceeding further along the cliffs. After Holworth House, there is a rising elevation - it is advisable to have the wing above this part of the cliff and to remain in front of the cliff face whilst gaining further height. It is sensible to remain in front of and above the cliff face at all times.

Hang-gliders: With the right conditions you may glide directly from the take-off ridge to the cliff.

Paragliders: Getting across to the cliffs is not guaranteed! Even high performance paragliders are not always able to make it in a single glide from take-off.

Thermals rising from the fields and farm in front of the take off ridge in summer can provide a welcome height gain prior to heading for the cliffs. Always make

sure that you have sufficient altitude to drop back to the take-off ridge.

There are conditions that allow an effortless flight to the cliffs; do not be fooled, the hazards still exist. Where there is lift, there is sink: always be cautious. Orographic cloud can form very quickly and cover the cliffs. The lift on the cliffs can deteriorate in a very short space of time. Be prepared and observe the actions of more experienced pilots. If pilots are leaving the cliffs, perhaps you should be doing the same.