ST LAWRENCE HERITAGE TRAILS
THE COASTAL TRAIL

These heritage trails relate some of the history of St. Lawrence through its remaining buildings. In Norman times the area was used as a hunting park and Old Park dates back to the 14th Century. The old church dates to the 12th Century and may have some earlier Saxon elements. Home Farm could be the site of the Norman manor house.

From 1881 to his death in 1889, the German industrial chemist, William Spindler, attempted to develop St. Lawrence as a resort to rival Ventnor. In that short time he had an enormous influence, but he alienated some local people by criticising their laziness. His legacy is a number of grand Victorian houses and the remains of the sea wall in Binnel Bay.

The late 19th Century also saw the construction of a new church, a village school and the arrival of a railway. Those buildings are included on the **Village Trail**.

The St. Lawrence heritage trails come in two parts. One part is this **Coastal Trail** and the other is the **Village Trail** for which there is a separate leaflet.

ACCESS

There is roadside parking in most parts of the village but no bus service except a community bus from Ventnor (No.31) that operates mornings only Mon-Fri.

REFRESHMENTS

Tea and coffee are usually available at St. Rhadagunds Holiday Centre on Undercliff Drive. The Parish Church provides fruit juices and biscuits in return for a small donation.

You can start and end these trails at any point but the details that follow start from Spindlers Road. The numbered locations appear on the map.

This **Coastal Footpath Trail** (5.4k/3.4 miles) requires suitable footwear and can be wet and slippery after rain. Reasonable fitness is required. There are some steep steps on footpath V124 at Binnel Bay and its junction with V99 is prone to erosion by a small stream. There is a permissive path (PP on the map) that joins the Old Park Hotel to Binnel Bay. This trail will take 2 hours and offers the best views of some notable St. Lawrence buildings.

1. CRAIGIE LODGE

built as St.Lawrence Lodge for William Spindler in 1889. His artist son Walter remodelled the interior in 1898 for the novelist and dramatist Pearl Craigie who used the house to write and read. She was the daughter of John Morgan Richards of Steephill Castle and wrote under the name John Oliver Hobbes. Richards re-named the house Craigie Lodge after her death in 1906.

Continue down old Park Road, 91mtrs on the right is:

2. QUEEN MARY COTTAGE

– William Spindler built the water pumping station over the spring in this cottage garden. In the 1930s a pumping station engineer, 'Brisher' White, lived here and created an ornamental hedge in the shape of the Cunard ocean liner Queen Mary (1936-1967). This became a tourist attraction and raised donations for mariners' charities until its accidental destruction by a pumping station vehicle in 1976.

Proceed down Old Park Road past the entrance to Hunts Road. Follow signs for Old Park Hotel and, after a right turn, take the left fork at the 'No Entry' sign. 91mtrs on the left is part of:

3. RAF ST. LAWRENCE

was a relay station during WW2 for the much larger RAF Ventnor site on St. Boniface Down. The large bunker can still be seen here and the bases of the radar transmitters are also visible near the Coastal Path beyond (6). More information on this is at www.ventnorradar.co.uk/RAFStL.htm

Turn right at Old Park Farmhouse, past the 'All traffic' sign, and down the drive into:

4. OLD PARK HOTEL

– The history of this site dates back to the 14th Century and the name may derive from the Norman hunting park in this area. It was later owned by the Worsley family for 200 years. Purchased by Thomas Haddon in 1820 and converted into a gentleman's residence. Extended in 1865 by Sir John Cheape, it was purchased in 1882 by William Spindler. Hotel history is at www.child-friendly-hotel.com/history.htm
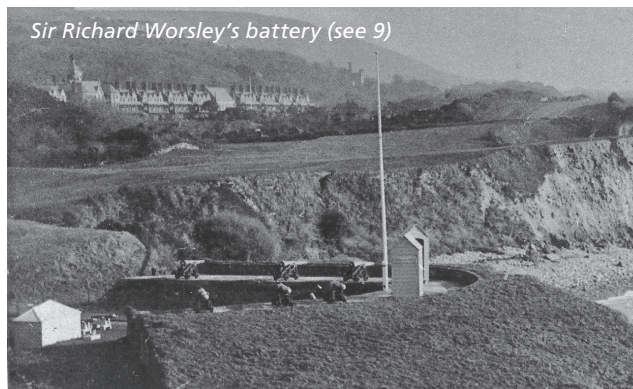
Queen Mary hedge (see 2)

Return to Old Park Farmhouse, pass through the gates and turn left. Continue along this Permissive Path through a gate and you will get a good view of the original Old Park building over the hedge on the right. At the junction of footpaths turn left and straight past the Public footpath sign. There are now some steep steps going down to the shore at Binnel Bay.

5. SPINDLER'S FOLLY in Binnel Bay. This was the sea wall, built by William Spindler but soon destroyed by the sea. It can be difficult to distinguish these large sections of the old seawall from the surrounding rocks, but the large building blocks can still be identified.

Turn left across a small stream and follow the coastal path(V99) Eastwards. The large Victorian mock-Tudor house on the left is 'Inglewood'.

6. RAF ST LAWRENCE – Small bunkers, sheltering the gun emplacements, and the bases of radar transmitter masts. The large bunker (3) can be seen in the trees behind.

Continue along the Coastal Path until you come to a gate. Turn left at the gate towards a blue Coastal Path sign. The impressive building with white balconies, above the Coastal Path sign, was once the St. Lawrence Hotel. Follow the path Eastwards with the coastguard cottages on your right.

Sir Richard Worsley's battery (see 9)

7. WOODY BAY – The coastguard station moved from Orchard Bay in 1855 and the cottages still remain. The deep track that leads down to Woody Bay (V98) was part of a carriageway to the shore built by the 2nd Earl Yarborough. In 1857 he sold part of the St. Lawrence estate in 46 development plots and advertised these as "of interest to capitalists and builders for the erection of Marine Residences – with the possibility of letting the houses at high rents."

Pass through the gate by the next blue Coastal Path sign and on the left is:

8. WOOLVERTON MANOR FARM – The original manor was built by one of the de Wolvertons, possibly in the 14th Century. Owned by the Worsley family from 1774 and later by the Twining tea family. Next to the manor farm, which is not visible from here, is Tower Lodge with its dominant clock tower. The grounds here contain the ruins of a very small 12th/13th century house or hunting lodge. In Norman times the whole of the Undercliff was used as a hunting park.

Take the road back towards the coast, past the side of the cottages, and turn left on V95.

VIEWPOINT A – The coastal path just East of Woody Bay offers a fine view of some notable St. Lawrence buildings. Tower Lodge, with its clock, is visible in the centre foreground. Above it, to the right, is Woolverton House and then, above that, again to the right, is the tower and roof of St. Rhadagunds.

VIEWPOINT B – Other notable buildings that come into view from the coastal path here are the Village Hall with its pointed tower, Home Farm with its conservatory, and the bell tower of the Parish Church.

9. MOUNTS BAY also known as **BATTERY BAY** – Sir Richard Worsley built a gun emplacement here during the Napoleonic Wars, but nothing of it remains to be seen.

After crossing a small stream that passes under the path, the fancy chimneys and bargeboards of Lisle Combe come into view. This is No. 9 on the Village Trail.

10. ORCHARD BAY – Smuggling was a popular activity in the Undercliff and Orchard Bay was the site of the original Preventative Station, built in 1818 to obstruct smuggling operations in the area. The men and their families lived in the old barracks built a little way inland. The station was moved to Woody Bay in 1855.

Follow the concrete road past Orchard Bay house and turn left on another concrete road which is V91. Go past Bank End Farm and then up to the road. Turning left on the road will take you back to Spindlers Road in about 20 minutes. There are some interesting buildings on this route which are included in the Village Trail. A right turn at this point would soon bring you to the Ventnor Botanic Garden which offers refreshments.

THE COASTAL TRAIL MAP

Ventnor Botanic Garden ▶

Pelham Woods

Bank End Farm

St Lawrence Shute

Village Hall

Well

Old Station

V 91

Seven Sisters Road

Undercliff Drive

Old Church

9

10

Spindler's Road

Parish Church

Orchard Bay

Undercliff Drive

2 1

Post Office

Woolverton Road

Mounts Bay

V 93

Old Park Road

8

B

Hunts Road

Sir Richard's Cove

V 97

V 96

V 95

A

Old Park Road

3

V 98

7

4

Woody Bay

V 124

PP

6

V 99

V 124

5

Binnel Bay

1. **CRAIGIE LODGE**	6. **RAF ST. LAWRENCE**
2. **QUEEN MARY COTTAGE**	7. **WOODY BAY**
3. **RAF ST. LAWRENCE**	8. **WOOLVERTON MANOR FARM**
4. **OLD PARK HOTEL**	9. **MOUNTS BAY**
5. **SPINDLER'S FOLLY**	10. **ORCHARD BAY**