



Needles
Battery



Education
Destination

NEEDLES OLD BATTERY & NEW BATTERY



FAST FACTS

*“Victorian coastal defence fort
and secret cold war rocket
testing site”*



Half Day



Low Cost



Picnic Space



Snack Bar
Tea room



Parking Nearby
15 minute walk



No Resources

ENQUIRE / BOOK



01983 216220



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Coastal Defences

Needles Old Battery is a Victorian coastal defence fort perched high above the Needles rocks at the very western tip of the Isle of Wight.

Find out how the artillerymen lived and worked in this remote and windy place!

Constructed between 1861 and 1863, the battery was equipped with six 7-inch guns, subsequently upgraded to 9-inch guns by 1893. These guns took 9 men to load and fire, with projectiles weighing 116kg.

In 1903 the guns were discarded by throwing them over the side of the cliff! They were later recovered and two are now on display at the Old Battery.

A deep ditch was dug into the chalk to protect the facility from ground attack, and a tunnel was dug towards the cliff face from the parade grounds. This tunnel is still navigable today, but the elevator that dropped to beach level is no longer there.

The “New” battery came about due to subsistence issued caused by the repeated firing of guns at the original site. This new site was further up

the cliff - 120m above sea level - and completed in 1895. Crews of 11 were needed to fire 9.2-inch guns with projectiles weighing 172kg.

Both batteries were manned during the two world wars. In World War II, anti-aircraft guns defended the Isle of Wight against air attacks and troops prepared for the D-Day landings on the neighbouring cliffs.

Rocket Testing Site

Needles New Battery was used in the 1950s for testing the *Blue Streak* missiles, as well as *Black Knight* and *Black Arrow* satellite launch vehicles.

FUN

70%

LEARNING

100%

