



The Purbeck Way



Wareham to Chapman's Pool or Ballard Down



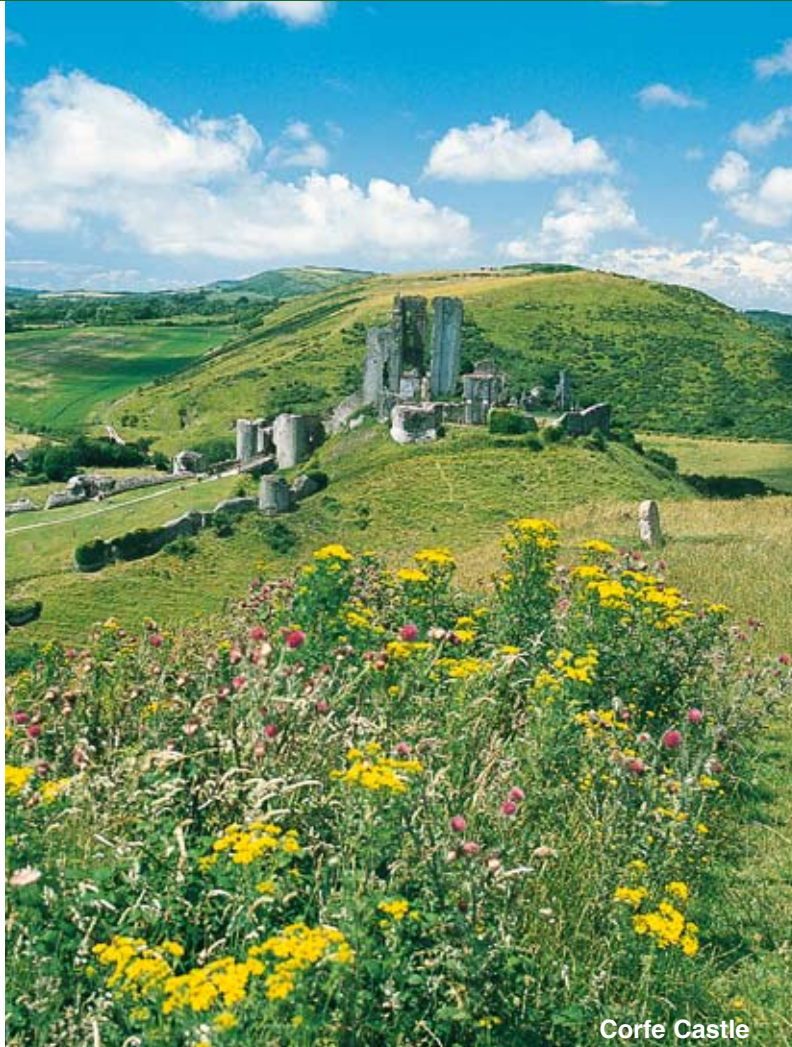
Wareham



Chapman's Pool



Ballard Down



Corfe Castle

The Purbeck Way

The Purbeck Way passes through some of the most varied and spectacular scenery in Britain. After leaving the River Frome and its water meadows, the route continues through heathland, woodland and downland before arriving at the dramatic scenery of England's first natural World Heritage Site, the 'Jurassic Coast'. Here the route continues along the South West Coast Path from Ballard Down to Chapman's Pool. North of Wareham there are links with the Wareham Forest Way and beyond to Blandford and Christchurch via the Stour Valley Way.



Old Harry Rocks

Geology and Wildlife

The geology of the area is outstanding. The route from Wareham to Chapman's Pool includes eight major rock types, each shaping the landscape in a different way, providing a rich variety of habitats with their own characteristic wildlife. As the seasons progress, an ever-changing array of wildlife appears from autumn migrants and wintering wildfowl to spring orchids and summer butterflies.

Species

Many nationally rare species have their British stronghold in Purbeck and this is reflected in the many special designations bestowed on the area. Fortunately much of the area is managed by sympathetic landowners or conservation bodies like the National Trust, so its future is in safe hands.



Adonis blue butterfly

Following The Purbeck Way

Although much of the route is fairly easy walking, some sections are remote and quite rugged, especially in winter. Plan your route carefully and wear suitable clothing and footwear. The route is waymarked with various signs and markers, some showing the distinctive logo below. Although this leaflet includes a map, you are advised to take along Ordnance Survey Explorer Map for Purbeck (No15).



Bee orchid

Public Transport Information

Wilts and Dorset Buses - Number 40 Poole to Swanage via Wareham and number 44 Swanage to Worth Matravers. Telephone 01202 673555

A waymarked walk through spectacular landscapes with a wealth of wildlife and heritage to enjoy.

Designed by Purbeck District Council

Circular routes along the way

Eastern route (approx 8 3/4 miles of walking)

Corfe Castle to Swanage

From this imposing Royalist ruin, walk along the ridge to the South West Coast Path at Ballard Down. Follow the path down into Swanage, stopping perhaps at the beach before taking the steam train from Swanage Railway Station back to Corfe Castle or Norden Park and Ride. Parts of this route are steep, please take care.

Northern route (approx 5 3/4 miles of walking)

Corfe Castle to Wareham

Walk from the Castle across Creech and Stoborough Heaths and then along the River Frome to Wareham Quay. Take the time to wander around this historic town and perhaps stop for lunch. Then catch the bus from Wareham Quay back to Corfe Castle. This route can be wet in winter, please wear suitable footwear.

Southern route (approx 12 miles of walking)

Corfe Castle to Swanage via St. Aldhelm's Head

Walk from the Castle south towards the coast at Chapman's Pool, then take the South West Coast Path past Durlston Country Park and down into Swanage. Stroll along the restored Victorian Pier and take in the panoramic views before boarding the steam train back to Corfe Castle through the beautiful Purbeck countryside.

Keeping Purbeck Special

The Purbeck countryside is a special place. Please help to conserve it by observing the key points of the Countryside Code.

- Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs
- Leave gates and property as you find them
- Protect plants and animals, and take your litter home
- Keep dogs under close control
- Consider other people



St. Aldhelm's Head

Wareham Train Station - 10 mins walk from the northern end of Purbeck Way. Trains run east to London Waterloo and west to Weymouth every half an hour (approx.)

Telephone: 08457 484950

Swanage Railway - Travel by steam train between Norden Park and Ride, Corfe Castle and Swanage. During the summer months trains run every 40mins (approx.)

Telephone: 01929 425800

Purbeck Heritage

The Purbeck Heritage Committee who produce this leaflet was formed in response to the challenge to maintain Purbeck as a healthy and thriving environment which can be enjoyed by residents and visitors in years to come. It brings together representatives from conservation, tourism, local authorities and landowners, and seeks to:

- Conserve the natural beauty of Purbeck
- Promote the enjoyment and understanding of the area
- Promote environmentally sustainable forms of transport

Visit www.purbeck.gov.uk for more information.

Useful contacts:

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Purbeck Heritage Officer | 01929 557337 |
| Rights of Way/Countryside Access Officer | 01305 221000 |
| Durlston Country Park | 01929 424443 |
| Tourist Information Centre (Wareham) | 01929 552740 |
| Tourist Information Centre (Swanage) | 0870 4420680 |

Open Access

Parts of the Purbeck countryside are mapped as open access land. Look out for the new access symbol shown right. Visit www.naturalengland.org.uk for information.



Footpaths and bridleways

Footpaths are for the use of pedestrians only and will be signed by:



Bridleways are for the use of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders and will be signed by:



Other walking leaflets available: Wareham Two Rivers Walks, Wareham Forest Way, Purbeck Way West and Lawrence of Arabia Trail.

Photo credits: Peter Booton, John Farmar, Nicholas James, Purbeck District Council, Colin Nunn, Ben Spurling.

Large print leaflets are available on request.

Please call 01929 557237 for further information.

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The Purbeck Way



A waymarked walk through beautiful landscapes with a wealth of wildlife to enjoy

Section 1 - Wareham to Corfe Castle (approx 6 miles/9.6km)

From Wareham Quay, follow the river to Redcliffe Farm and on through Ridge. Follow roads to Stoborough Green before turning left across Stoborough Heath. Cross the railway and continue across Creech Heath and into Furzebrook. The road becomes a path leading to the bottom of the chalk ridge to Corfe Castle. If you are joining the walk at Norden Park and Ride, walk to the Castle View Visitor Centre and cross the road to join a path around the base of the castle.

Section 2 - Corfe Castle to Ballard Down (approx 6 1/2 miles/10km)

The path skirts the south of the Castle along Ollie Vyes Lane and then into the Square. Follow West Street until the road bends, turn left at the footpath. At Morton's House Hotel turn right along East Street. Pass the school on your left and turn left to follow the footpath over the bridge to Challow Farm. At the road, turn left and then right up on to the chalk ridge, with fine views back to the Castle and on to Swanage. As the path descends to the Ulwell Gap, bear left, cross the Swanage to Studland road and continue around the bottom of the chalk ridge to the end of Ballard Down.

Section 3 - Ballard Down to Chapman's Pool along the South West Coast Path (approx 11 1/2 miles/18.5km)

Follow the 'acorn' waymarkers. Section 4 - Chapman's Pool to Corfe Castle (approx 3 1/4 miles/5.2km)
At Chapman's Pool the path continues north up the steep sided valley and past Swanworth Quarries, from where the village of Kingston will be seen on the left and Corfe Castle, across Corfe Common ahead in the distance.

Key

- The Purbeck Way
- South West Coast Path Link
- Bridleway
- Lulworth Range Walks
- Forest
- Major/Minor Road
- Railway and Station
- Swanage Steam Railway
- Disused Railway Track
- Car Park
- Tourist Information Centre
- Visitor Centre
- Bus Stop
- Public Telephone
- Public Toilets
- Refreshments
- Campsite



Route through Corfe Castle

THE CASTLE

Ollie Vyes Lane

Tea Room

National Trust Shop

West St.

Church

A351

Play Ground

East St.

Playing Field

P

River Frome
One of the most westerly chalk rivers in England, the Frome is an important breeding ground for salmon. The abundance of freshwater life attracts many birds including the jewel-like kingfisher. One of Britain's rarest birds, the cetti's warbler, breeds in the dense riverside vegetation, its presence usually betrayed by its loud, abrupt song.

Heathland
Purbeck's lowland heaths are internationally important for wildlife. Amongst the purple heather, grows the local Dorset heath, along with other acid-loving specialities such as sundew, bog asphodel and the vivid blue marsh gentian. All six species of native reptile including the rare smooth snake and sand lizard live here. Countless insects also thrive in the warm, sandy conditions including silver-studded blue butterflies, emperor moths and tiger beetles. These in turn provide food for Dartford warblers, tree pipits and nightjars.

Chalk Ridge
This classic whale-back ridge forming the Purbeck hills, provides a marked contrast to the heathland, highlighting Purbeck's wonderfully varied geology. Like the heaths, these chalk downs were once woodland cleared from all but the steepest slopes by early farmers for their crops and grazing animals. The name Nine Barrow Down comes from the group of neolithic burial mounds - striking evidence of nearly 4,000 years of human occupation. From here, extensive views over Poole Harbour can be enjoyed. The rich chalk grassland is home to specialities such as the Adonis blue butterfly, grey bush cricket and is rich in orchids and flowering plants.

Ballard Down
Separated from the main ridge by the geological fault line of Ulwell Gap, Ballard is one of the best sites in Britain for downland butterflies, particularly the Blues. The superb Adonis blue appears in spring with a second brood in late summer, while chalkhill blues emerge in July.

Ball-clay workings
For 3,000 years, Purbeck's fine-grained clay has been used to make high quality pottery and today the extraction industry is still an important part of the local economy. Many of the old clay pits have long been abandoned, filling with water to become well-known beauty spots like the Blue Pool (admission charge). These pools are also a haven for wildlife, supporting over 20 species of dragonfly and a wide variety of other pondlife.

The South West Coast Path
The South West Coast Path is the longest of all Britain's national trails measuring 630 miles in total. The link with the Purbeck Way is a little more modest, running some 11 1/2 miles from Ballard Down to Chapman's Pool. The route takes you through Swanage, the largest town in Purbeck, formerly a port for the stone trade, but now a charming seaside resort and 'Gateway to the Jurassic Coast'. The Jurassic Coast, England's first natural World Heritage Site, runs from Orcombe Rocks, in Exmouth, Devon to Studland Bay in Dorset. This 95 mile stretch of coast, covers 185 million years of earth history - a real walk through time! Limited public access to the Lulworth Range Walks and Coastal Path around Kimmeridge and Tyneham is available during the main school holidays and most weekends. Call 01929 404819 for access information.

Corfe Castle (see inset map)
The historic village of Corfe is dominated by the magnificent ruin, Corfe Castle. In 1646 a combination of undermining and gunpowder was used to destroy this Royalist stronghold on the orders of Oliver Cromwell, after Lady Bankes had held out against the Roundheads for three years. More information is available at the Castle View Visitor Centre tel: 01929 481294.

Corfe Common
The yellow flowers of marsh marigold flourish in the wetter areas which are also a favourite haunt of wintering snipe. In late summer the drier grassland turns blue with the flowers of devils bit scabious. The scrub is home to nesting linnets, yellowhammers and sometimes, nightingales.

Purbeck Stone
Purbeck stone has been worked since the earliest recorded times, with evidence of surface working dating from the Stone Age. Over the centuries the main uses have changed, from churches and cathedrals during medieval times, to current uses for house building, bridges, sculpture and road aggregates. Extensive quarrying still takes place across the limestone plateau, and the Purbeck Way passes close to Swanworth Quarry.

Chapman's Pool and Hill Bottom
This steep-sided valley, created 10,000 years ago by the flood waters of the last ice age, is an important site for migrant birds. Each spring and autumn thousands of warblers, chats and flycatchers pass through the area, resting and feeding before continuing their journey. The purple spikes of buddleia attract many butterflies, particularly migrant painted ladies and red admirals.

Durlston to St. Aldhelm's Head
The spectacular cliff-top walk between Durlston and St. Aldhelm's Head is full of interest with a long legacy of quarrying and smuggling. The Portland limestone cliffs are home to many seabirds, most famously the puffins at Dancing Ledge. Peregrines are also a common sight while, out at sea, with a bit of luck you may spot bottle-nosed dolphins between September and June. The coastal grassland is home to two real Purbeck specialities - the early spider orchid and Lulworth skipper butterfly. St. Aldhelm's Head is important for rare arable plants.

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