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

Designed by Purbeck District Council

The Purbeck Way

Wareham to Chapman’s Pool or Ballard Down

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.

Geology and Wildlife

The geology of the area is outstanding. The route from Wareham to Chapmans’ 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.

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).

Public Transport Information

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

Wareham

Chapman’s Pool

Ballard Down

Corfe Castle

Old Harry Rocks

Adonis blue butterfly

Bee orchid
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

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

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 ½ miles from Ballard Down to Chapman's Pool.

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.

The South West Coast Path
1. 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 waders, chiefly sandpipers and plovers, 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 admiral.

Chapman's Pool & Hill Bottom

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

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