

RIDE 5

Hillforts & the Vale

“Here I find
the ancient signs”

Start off with seaside and fossils at Charmouth, explore the heights of the ancient hillforts of Coney's and Lambert's Castles with 360° panoramic views over the Marshwood Vale to Lyme Bay (down to Start Point in Devon and up to Portland on a clear day) and to the north, Pilsdon Pen and Somerset. An optional route will take you to Pilsdon Pen for even more far reaching views northwards to the Blackdown Hills, Quantocks and Mendips.

Descend to the mysterious Marshwood Vale full of mystery and hidden beauty in miniature. A landscape of narrow lanes, high hedge banks bright with wild flowers in spring and summer, brooks and streams where damsel and dragonflies dart about, tangled copses, old cider orchards and small fields, which has been farmed since the Iron Age.

Let it enchant and take you away from modern life's hurly burly.

Explore Dorset's fortified past - visit the hillforts & castles dotted across the county and find out who lived there

Explore the Marshwood Vale on foot. Search online for "The Dorset Walk Bettiscombe and Pilsdon" to get you started

Poetry by Jean Florence

A SEASIDE START & FINISH

Fabulous fossils can be found at Charmouth Beach, for expert advice pop into the Heritage Centre & learn the secrets of what made them & how to find them. For a fabulous finale, back on the beach to build sandcastles & dip your toes in the sea. charmouth.org

WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS

Follow in the steps of villagers of 2500 years ago at Lambert's Castle, which with nearby Coney's Castle, was built as a border post between neighbouring tribes. The inhabitants controlled trackways & trade routes, defended the coastline & Marshwood Vale below where they farmed. nationaltrust.org.uk/lamberts-and-coneys-castle

PLACES OF TRUST

The National Trust's Golden Cap estate offers enjoyment for all. Ramble up the highest cliff (627ft) on the south coast for the views, take a woodland walk at Langdon Hill, find the medieval chapel at St Gabriels & explore the traditional hay meadows full of wild flowers in spring & summer or simply take a picnic to Stonebarrow. nationaltrust.org.uk/golden-cap

MYSTERIOUS ANCIENT HIGHWAYS

Labyrinthine paths criss-crossing Dorset, the name Holloway means sunken road and dates from 300 years ago or before. Originally they were drove trails taking cattle to market, routes to ports, pilgrimage routes or boundary ditches. Many trackways are 20 - 30 deep worn away by water and use. thedorsetrambler.com

FOR THE BIG KID IN YOU

Join Jake Diamond and Bessie on the Smugglers Trail at Stonebarrow. An app is available to guide you around the trail, or find the play trail at Langdon Hill. Download audio tracks from dorsetaonb.org.uk. For Apple users download Stonebarrow Hill Smugglers from the App Store.

SECRET WORLD

The Marshwood Vale is a secret world of its own. Weaving round the lanes, you'll see glimpses of the small fields enclosed by old hedges. High banks contain the lanes and create a micro climate ideal for a diverse variety of



-  Eat & drink
-  Great view
-  Farm shop
-  Steep bit
-  Your route
-  NCN route

MAIN: 12 MILES
DETOUR: 2 MILES
 (one way)

EAT THE VIEW

- 1 THE ALEXANDRA HOTEL & RESTAURANT**
 18C hotel overlooking the bay serving teas, lunches and dinners
hotalexandra.co.uk
- 2 MARSHWOOD VALE CIDER**
 Traditional, multi-award winning cider aged in oak barrels
marshwoodvalecider.com
- 3 WYLD MEADOW FARM**
 Lamb and beef produced in prime Dorset meadow land
wyldmeadowfarm.co.uk
- 4 MOORES BISCUITS**
 Traditional baked goods including the famous Dorset Knob!
moores-biscuits.co.uk
- 5 HIX OYSTER & FISH HOUSE**
 British seafood in picturesque setting from Dorset's Food & Drink Ambassador Mark Hix.
hixoysterandfishhouse.co.uk

Full list of Dorset Food & Drink members can be found at dorsetfoodanddrink.org



Hell Lane, a spectacular Holloway lies behind Chideock - rich in history and mystery. Well worth exploring



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