

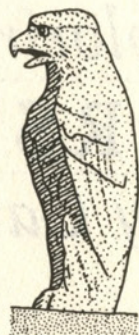
*Exploring*  
**DORSET**  
*by Car*

CHRIS JESTY



*Circular Routes for the Motorist  
with Interesting Walks*

Chris Jesty lives in Bridport and is well-known for his remarkable hand-drawn maps and guides, which make the landscape he describes come alive in a fresh and new way. His writing is always a delight, and is readable and full of information. The Dovecote Press has published two of his books, *A Guide to the Isle of Purbeck* and *A Guide to the West Dorset Countryside* and he is also the author of *Dorset Town Trails*.



Stone carving at  
Chetnole House

First published in 1990 by The Dovecote Press Ltd  
Stanbridge, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 4JD

ISBN 0946159 74 2

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Photoset in Palatino by Robert Antony Ltd  
Printed and bound by Biddles Ltd, Guildford and King's Lynn

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Jesty, Chris

Exploring Dorset by Car.

1. Dorset - Visitors' Guides

I. Title

914.23304858

ISBN 0-946159-74-2

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## CONTENTS

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List of illustrations 6

Introduction 7

Map of routes 8

	<i>Start and finish</i>	<i>Length (miles)</i>	<i>page</i>
ROUTE 1 · SOUTH	Abbotsbury	45	9
ROUTE 2 · CENTRAL	Dorchester	62	21
ROUTE 3 · NORTH	Sherborne	61	37
ROUTE 4 · NORTH-EAST	Blandford	60	49
ROUTE 5 · SOUTH-EAST	Sandbanks	78	60
ROUTE 6 · WEST	West Bay	47	75

---

## ILLUSTRATIONS

---

Stone carving at Chetnole House	4
The Gatehouse, Poxwell Manor	15
The Square, Puddletown	23
Abbey Street, Cerne Abbas	31
Wolfeton House	34
Athelhampton Hall	35
The Manor House, Holwell	39
Holnest church	41
Stourpaine	51
Stepleton House	51
Cruck Cottage, Briantspuddle	68
Corner of Butt Lane and West Street, Bere Regis	69
The Manor House, Wynford Eagle	78

---

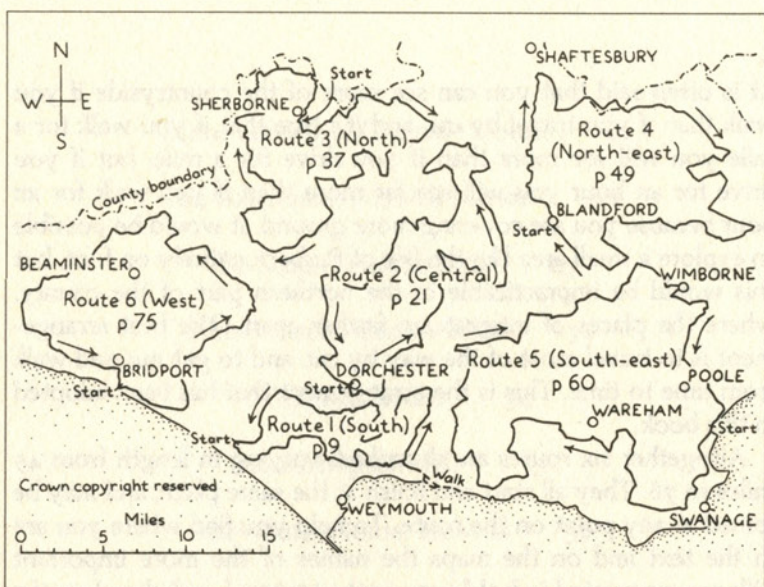
## INTRODUCTION

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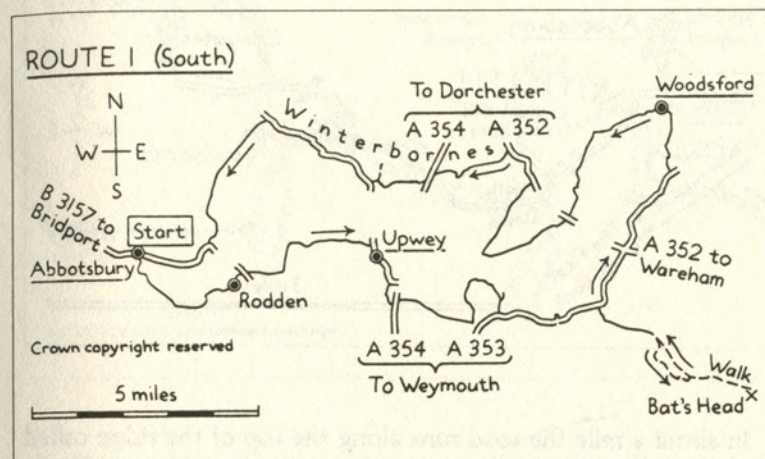
It is often said that you can see more of the countryside if you walk than if you travel by car, and it's true that if you walk for a mile you will see more than if you drive for a mile; but if you drive for an hour you will see far more than if you walk for an hour because you are covering more ground. It would be possible to explore a small area like the Isle of Purbeck entirely on foot, but this would be impracticable in the northern part of the county, where the places of interest are farther apart. The best arrangement is to travel most of the way by car, and to get out and walk from time to time. This is the arrangement that has been adopted in this book.

Altogether six routes are described, varying in length from 45 miles to 78. They all start and finish at the same place, and may be joined at any point on the route. To help you find where you are in the text and on the maps the names of the more important villages are printed in **bold** type in the text and underlined on the maps. Most of the walks are fairly short (about a mile or less), but Route 1 includes a walk of six miles. Here it might be a good idea to do the drive one day and go back and do the walk another day. On Route 2 there are seven walks, with a combined total of five miles, and it might prove to be too much to do them all on one day. Route 3 passes close to the entrances of five houses and castles that are open to the public. It is certainly not suggested that these should all be visited in one day, and in any case they have different opening days.

No attempt has been made to describe the towns of Dorset, as these are fully covered in my book *Dorset Town Trails* (Roy Gasson, 1985). The countryside of Dorset is described in greater detail in *A Guide to the Isle of Purbeck*, (Dovecote Press, 1984) and *A Guide to the West Dorset Countryside*, (Dovecote Press, 1986).



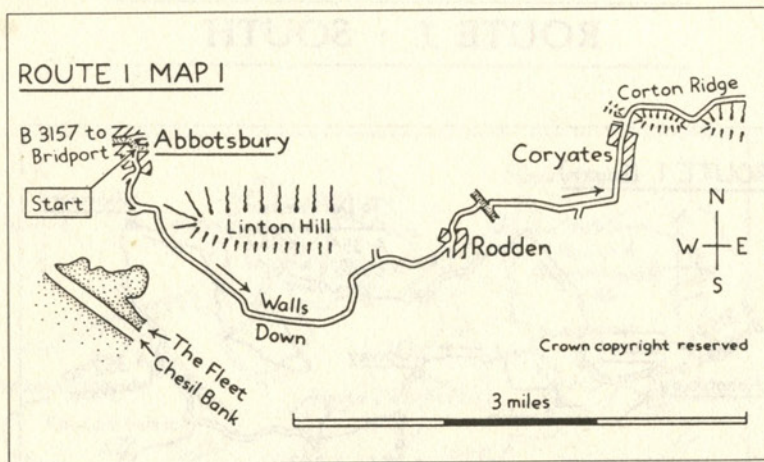
## ROUTE 1 · SOUTH



The route starts in the village of Abbotsbury on the B 3157 from Bridport to Weymouth. From the centre of the village take the turning signposted to the Swannery. On the right, opposite the church, is a delightful stone building called the Old Manor House. Just past it, in the wall on the right, are traces of an old archway that once stood at the entrance to the abbey precinct. Farther along on the right the outline of another archway can be made out on the wall of a house. The famous Abbey Barn is now visible ahead. This was originally built for the storage of tithes for the abbey.

Before long you can see St Catherine's Chapel on the summit of Chapel Hill on your right, and farther on the road passes the entrance to Abbotsbury Swannery, which is open to the public in the summer. Then the escarpment of Linton Hill appears directly in front of you. The escarpment is seen end-on, with the dip-slope on the left, and the steeper scarp-slope on the right.

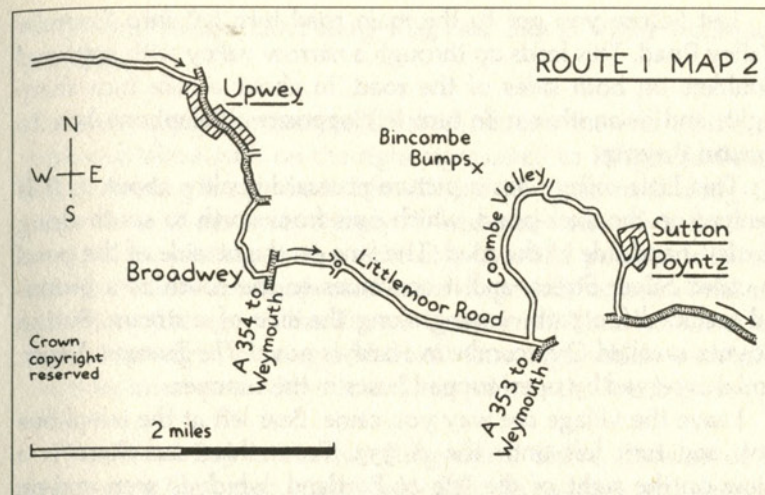
At Horsepool Farm the road takes a sharp turn to the right, and the Fleet comes into view with the Chesil Bank behind it. The Fleet is the largest tidal lagoon in Britain, and the Chesil Bank is a tombolo, or offshore bar that is joined to land at both ends. *Chesil* and *Fleet* are both derived from Saxon words.



In about a mile the road runs along the top of the ridge called Walls Down. At the entrance to the private road on the right there is room to pull up on the left. Walls Down is an escarpment of Cornbrash running from east to west, the scarp slope being to the south. On the left you can see the parallel ridge of Linton Hill, which is an escarpment of Corallian Limestone. Between the two ridges is a valley of Oxford Clay. Behind Linton Hill and rising above it is a third ridge, the South Dorset Downs, which is an escarpment of chalk. Between Linton Hill and the chalk is a valley of Kimmeridge Clay. This is the same sequence that is found on a larger scale between the Cotswolds and the Chilterns.

At New Barn the road bends left and crosses the Dorset Coast Path, which is indicated by a sign bearing an acorn. Ignore a turning on the left which leads to an attractive thatched barn, and continue to the hamlet of Rodden. Facing you at the junction is Rodden Manor, which was built of Portland Stone in about 1750. The roof is hipped, which means that it rises from all four sides without a gable.

Turn left here, right at the main road, and immediately left into Cheese Lane. In about a mile the road bends left and passes through the remains of an old railway bridge. Ahead of you rises the Corton Ridge, with the chalk ridge behind it. Of all the ridges in this area the Corton Ridge is perhaps the most impressive. It is composed of Portland Sand, and is not present further west because of a fault.



The road passes through a gap in the ridge called Coryates Spear and bends round to the right. In half a mile a lane on the right passes through a cutting and leads to Corton Farm, where there is a tiny thirteenth-century chapel. In another mile and a half turn right onto the B 3159 and enter the village of Upwey. Close to the church is the Upwey Wishing Well, the source of the River Wey, and the largest natural spring in Britain. It is open to the public from 10.30 a.m. until 6.0 p.m. The water-mill at Upwey is also open to the public.

Beyond the first turning on the left the River Wey runs along the right-hand side of the road. It is hard to believe that this substantial stream is only half a mile from its source. When the road forks, bear right. Just past the junction is a very peaceful spot where there is room to park on the left and there are ornamental waterfalls on the right. After a series of twists and turns the road passes under a railway arch and through an interesting group of buildings to the A 354.

Turn left along the main road and right into Littlemoor Road. On the left is Jesty's Avenue, the only geographical feature I have ever come across that bears my name. Ignore this turning, and go straight on at the roundabout. On the skyline on the left is a row of round barrows called the Bincombe Bumps. Round barrows (shown as 'tumuli' on Ordnance Survey maps) are ancient burial mounds erected mainly between 1750 and 1250 B.C.

Just before you get to the main road turn left into Coombe Valley Road. This leads up through a narrow valley with scattered boulders on both sides of the road. In about a mile turn sharp right, and in another mile turn left opposite a telephone box to **Sutton Poyntz**.

This little village has a picture-postcard quality about it. It is centred on the duck-pond, which runs from north to south along the left-hand side of the road. The lane on the far side of the pond is called Silver Street, and it continues to the south as a beautiful secluded footpath running along the side of a stream. Sutton Poyntz is called Overcombe in Hardy's novel *The Trumpet Major*, and it is served by open-topped buses in the summer.

Leave the village the way you came. Bear left at the telephone box and turn left onto the A 353. From this road there is a view on the right of the Isle of Portland, which is seen end-on from this direction. On the other side there is a view of the Osmington White Horse, which was cut into the hillside in 1848. This is the only white horse with a rider, the rider being King George III, who frequently travelled along this road on his way to Weymouth.

When you come to **Osmington**, take an unsignposted road on the left just past a slight left-hand bend. There is room to park outside the church. Adjoining the churchyard are the interesting ruins of the old manor house. In this village John Constable spent his honeymoon and created the painting which he called *Osmington Village*. Beyond the church is a complex junction with beautiful thatched cottages all the way round. Turn right here, and follow the road round to the right. Then turn left into the main road. Ignore the turning signposted to Osmington Mills, but take the turning signposted to Ringstead. This road descends into the valley of Upton Brook and climbs up onto a ridge where there are views on the left of the North Dorset Downs over the top of the South Dorset Downs.

Continue along the road until it becomes unmetalled and there is a National Trust car park. This is the start of a walk to one of the wildest and remotest parts of Dorset. The walk is six miles long with 1300 feet of ascent and descent. Even if you don't leave your car it is worth coming here to enjoy the open aspect and the view of the hills sweeping down to the sea.

### *A 2-3 hour circular walk along Ringstead Bay to White Nothe and Bat's Head*

Continue along the unmetalled road beyond the end of the car park and take a path on the right signposted to Ringstead Beach. After crossing a stile bear left. At first the path runs along the slope; then it descends steeply. When you come to a track go straight on, passing to the right of a beautiful pond in a natural setting. Follow the signposted route diagonally across a field and past Rose Cottage to the Dorset Coast Path. Turn left for a few yards, then right, passing a National Trust sign which is invisible from the coast path. Once found, the path to the beach is easy to follow.

Ringstead Bay is Hardy's Ringsworth Shore. Because of its remoteness the beach is uncrowded in the summer and deserted on weekdays in the winter. Turn left along the beach and continue along it when the shingle gives way to rocks. As you round a low headland a path comes into view high up on the hillside ahead. This is your objective. In the next inlet turn left up a flight of steps and follow the undercliff to the right, keeping your objective in view. When I came here in 1986 there were bee orchids flowering beside the path.

Eventually the path leaves the undercliff and rises in a series of zigzags to the headland of White Nothe. In J. Meade Falkner's novel *Moonfleet* John Trenchard was carried up this path by Elzevir Block. This is the nearest thing to mountaineering that Dorset has to offer. When the headland is gained go straight on over a causeway, and turn right along the Dorset Coast Path. (The walk may be shortened by turning left at this point, but the scenery between here and Bat's Head is too good to miss.)

In half a mile the view opens up, with hills behind hills stretching away to the horizon. The two obelisks are navigation markers for ships entering Portland Harbour. Ignore the path inland and take either of two parallel paths that curve round the top of West Bottom. West Bottom is no more than the highest part of a valley that has been removed by the sea. After passing one of the obelisks take the right fork, which faces Bat's Head. To the right of Bat's Head are two rocks, the Cow and the Calf, which are covered by the sea at high tide. These are the westernmost remnants of a ridge of Portland Stone that runs parallel with the coast.

The path drops down into the vast amphitheatre of Middle

Bottom. On the far side of the valley you can see the sinuous crest of a knife-edged ridge; and as you descend you get a feeling of being cut off from the rest of the world.

The path reaches almost to sea level, then it rises up the knife-edged ridge to a headland where there is a disturbed area of little valleys and ridges. Finally it descends again, and on your right the narrow promontory of Bat's Head thrusts out to sea. This is the place to stop and eat your sandwiches, if you've brought any. Cormorants perch on the tiniest of ledges, flocks of jackdaws rise on summer thermals, and high above the ubiquitous gulls whirl and cry.

Just east of Bat's Head is a chalk stack called the Butter Rock where the chalk dips so steeply the bands of flint are vertical. The chalk is derived from diatoms and the flint from sponges.

Retrace your steps to White Nothe. Close to the path is a row of cottages where the novelist Llewelyn Powys lived from 1925 until 1931. Here he wrote *The Verdict of Bridlegoose*, *The Pathetic Fallacy* and other books. At the end of the cottages you can see the field track that is the only way they can be reached by vehicle.

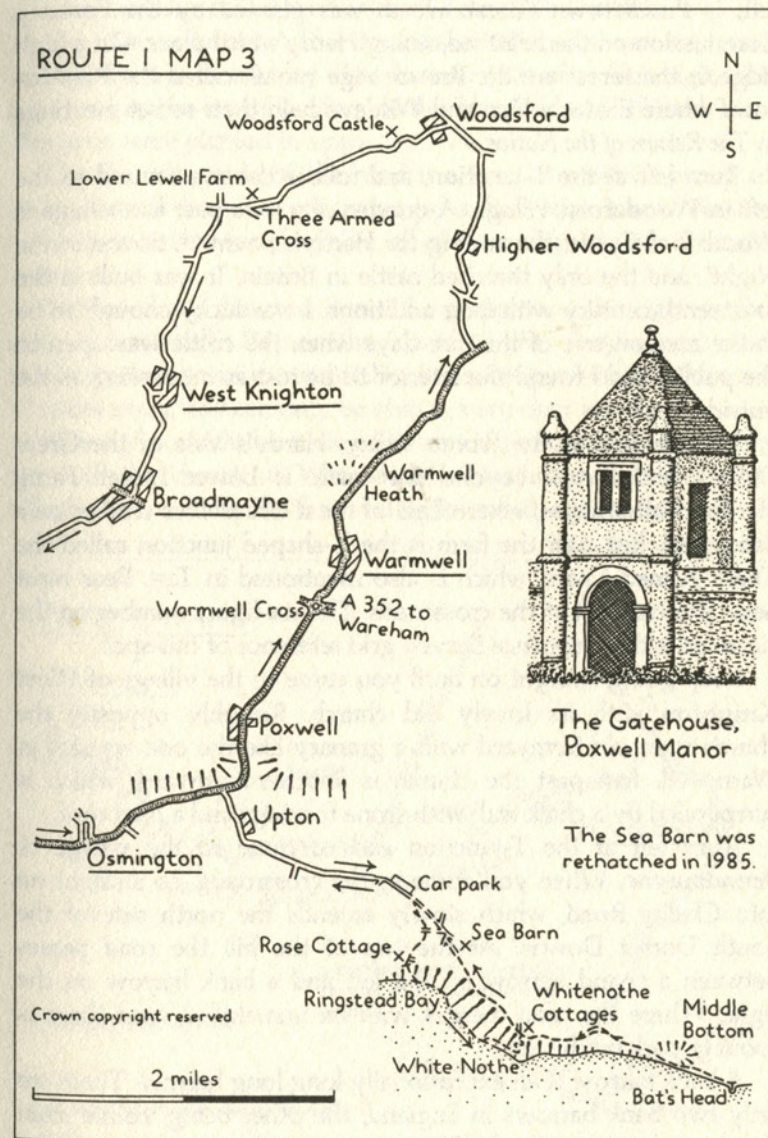
Beyond the cottages the path keeps to the landward side of a little valley. Then it follows the cliff-top, and there is a magnificent view on the left of the jumbled landscape of the undercliff, with blocks of chalk standing out above the vegetation like ruined buildings.

In half a mile you come to a house in a rectangular enclosure surrounded by open grassland, and beyond it you can see the track that leads back to the car park. Close to the house is a beautiful thatched barn which was acquired by the National Trust in 1984.

Return to the main road and turn right. As the road bends left it passes through the Poxwell Gap, the lowest crossing point of the South Dorset Downs. A gap like this with no river flowing through it is known as a wind gap.

Before long you come to the hamlet of Poxwell, which derives its name from Puck's Well, and which Hardy called Oxwell. As you enter the hamlet you pass Poxwell Manor, an imposing seventeenth-century stone building with an unusual brick gatehouse. The Manor was the home of Old Derriman in *The Trumpet Major*.

In another mile you come to Warmwell Cross, where a roundabout has been built round an attractive clump of trees. Go straight on at the roundabout to the village of **Warmwell**, which is called Springham in *The Trumpet Major*. An unusual feature of the church is that the chancel is higher than the nave. The low





arches that support the Dorchester Saddlery on the left indicate that the building was originally a granary.

In a couple of miles take a turning on the left signposted to West Stafford, and in half a mile take a turning on the right signposted to Higher Woodsford. Turn left into Paul's Way, and take the first turning on the left. Ahead of you, and slightly to the left, is Puddletown Forest, which was planted by the Forestry Commission on the heath adjoining Hardy's birthplace. On a high ridge in the forest are the Bronze Age tumuli called the Rainbarrows where Eustacia Vye and Wildeve held their secret meetings in *The Return of the Native*.

Turn left at the T-junction, and follow the road round to the left in **Woodsford** village. A quarter of a mile past the village is Woodsford Castle, the setting for Hardy's poem 'A Sound in the Night', and the only thatched castle in Britain. It was built in the fourteenth century with later additions. I was lucky enough to be in the area on one of the rare days when the castle was open to the public, and I found the interior to be just as interesting as the outside.

We are now in the Frome Valley, Hardy's Vale of the Great Dairies, and a mile beyond the castle is Lower Lewell Farm, Hardy's Talbothayes, where Tess of the d'Urbervilles worked as a dairymaid. Just past the farm is the Y-shaped junction called the Three Armed Cross, which is also mentioned in *Tess*. Bear right here, and turn left at the crossroads. The six-figure number on the signpost is the Ordnance Survey grid reference of this spot.

Keep going straight on until you come to the village of **West Knighton** with its lovely old church. Roughly opposite the church is an old farmyard with a granary like the one we saw at Warmwell. Just past the church is another farmyard, which is surrounded by a chalk wall with stone footings and a tiled roof.

Turn left at the T-junction and continue to the village of **Broadmayne**. When you come to the crossroads, go straight on into Chalky Road, which slowly ascends the north side of the South Dorset Downs. At the top of the hill the road passes between a round barrow on the left and a bank barrow on the right. Where the road merges with an unmetalled road there is room to park on the left.

A bank barrow is an exceptionally long long barrow. There are only two bank barrows in England, the other being visible from the A 35 near Long Bredy. There is a round barrow on top of the

bank barrow at its west end.

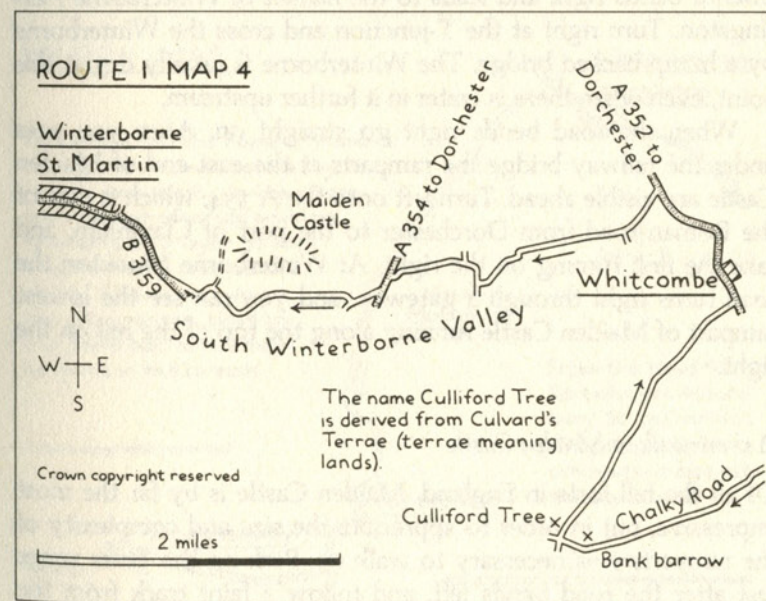
At this parking place our route joins the Dorset Ridgeway, which runs along the top of the hills to Hardy's Monument. On the left you can see across the lowlands of Weyland to the Isle of Portland, with the Bincombe Bumps to the right of it.

Turn right at the crossroads. In a field on the left is a tree-covered tumulus called the Culliford Tree. It is also known as the Music Barrow because of a tradition that music can be heard coming from it at midday. The barrow is twelve feet high, and was used as the meeting place of the Hundred of Culliford Tree. The trees were planted in 1740.

On the other side of the road is a very impressive group of grass-covered barrows consisting of a four-foot barrow in between two twelve-foot barrows, all of them aligned with the bank barrow.

Farther along the road there is a glimpse on the right of the cliffs of Scratchell's Bay on the Isle of Wight. They appear over the horizon as a white crescent like the setting moon, but they are 37 miles away, and can only be seen in very clear weather.

When you reach the main road turn left and park in the layby opposite the church at **Whitcombe**. Take a good look at this village. The church, the four cottages and the big house are all



built of stone, and all the cottages are thatched. The church stands apart from the village surrounded by a stone wall, and William Barnes used to conduct services here when he was the rector of Winterborne Came. In the churchyard is a lovely table tomb, and there are mediaeval wall paintings in the church.

In three-quarters of a mile turn left at a letter box just past a road junction sign. For the next six miles the route follows the valley of the South Winterborne, which gives its name to six or seven villages and hamlets. Some are spelt -borne and others -bourne. The first is Winterborne Came, whose church is well seen on the far side of the valley. Barnes was the rector from 1862 until 1886, and he was buried in the churchyard. Came House, which can also be seen from the road, is about twice the size of the church.

Half a mile past Winterborne Came is Winterbourne Farringdon, of which all that remains is one wall of the church. It can be seen on the left at the foot of the slope beyond the stream. Every year Barnes visited Farringdon, which was in his parish, and he wrote a poem about it called 'Farringdon Ruin'. Thomas Hardy came here in 1893, and a description of the ruin appears in *The Trumpet Major*.

Before long the road bends left and crosses over three bridges. Then it bends right and leads to the hamlet of Winterborne Herringston. Turn right at the T-junction and cross the Winterborne by a hump-backed bridge. The Winterborne is usually dry at this point, even when there is water in it further upstream.

When the road bends right go straight on. After you pass under the railway bridge the ramparts at the east end of Maiden Castle are visible ahead. Turn left onto the A 354, which is part of the Roman road from Dorchester to the port of Clavinium, and take the first turning on the right. At Winterborne Monkton the road turns right through a gateway, and you can see the lowest rampart of Maiden Castle running along the top of the hill on the right.

#### *A short walk to Maiden Castle*

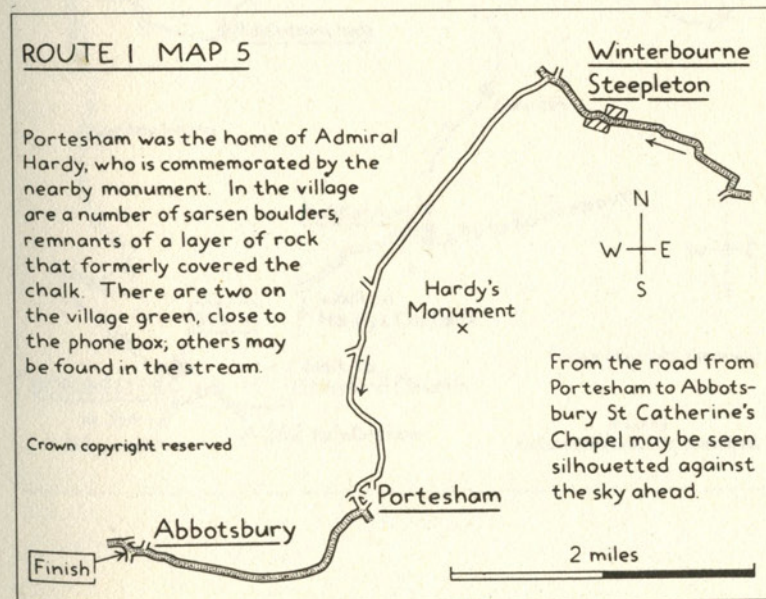
Of all the hill forts in England, Maiden Castle is by far the most impressive, but in order to appreciate the size and complexity of the ramparts it is necessary to walk up. Park on the grass verge just after the road bends left, and follow a faint track from the

bend up a little valley. At the top of the valley go through a kissing gate on the right. Maiden Castle was excavated by Sir Mortimer Wheeler in 1934-7 and is now owned by the Prince of Wales. Looking south from the ramparts you can see no fewer than twelve tumuli on the Dorset Ridgeway.

Turn right at the next junction and bear right onto the B 3159. The prominent tumulus on the hill on the right is Clandon Barrow, which is eighteen feet high. Follow the B 3159 to **Winterborne St Martin**, which is also known as Martinstown. This village holds the record for the greatest rainfall ever to be recorded on a single day in the British Isles - eleven inches on July 18th, 1955. The church is set back behind a charming village green, which is the site of a former horse-fair.

Continue along the road to **Winterbourne Steepleton**, the first of the Winterbourne villages to be spelt with a *u*. Usually there is water in the stream here because it has dug down to the less permeable Lower Chalk. The dominant plant in the stream is Hemlock Water Dropwort.

Half a mile past Steepleton turn left. (The name on the signpost is Steepleton Pond). On the left the road is followed by ancient cultivation terraces called strip lynchets. Farther along a dry valley



can be seen on the left, with Hardy's Monument behind it. The monument was erected in 1844 in memory of Admiral Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy.

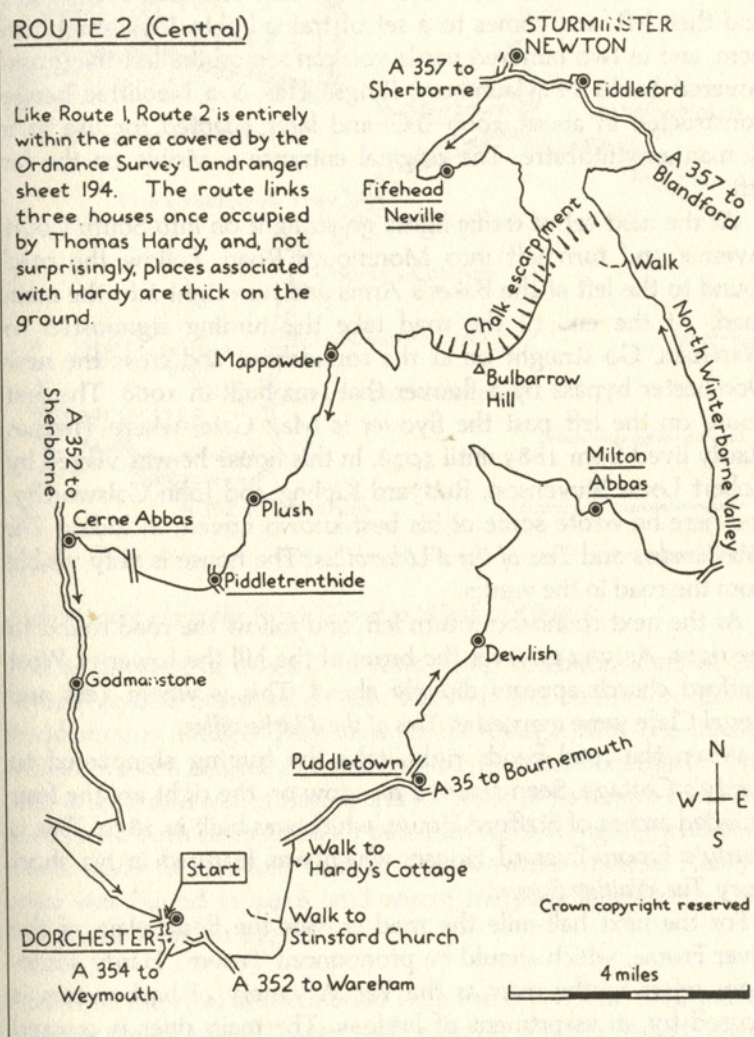
Go straight on at a staggered crossroads, and descend the hill into **Portesham**, which is called Posham in *The Trumpet Major*. Turn right at the post office into Back Street, passing an attractive duckpond on the right. Facing you at the crossroads is Portesham Manor, an interesting seventeenth-century building with niches either side of the doorway. Go straight on into New Road, passing a very old house on the right. Just before you get to the main road the road goes over a bump. If you drive slowly here and look back to the left you can see a stream emerging from under a cottage.

At the end of the road turn right, and immediately right again onto the B 3157. From here to Abbotsbury the road follows the valley of Kimmeridge Clay mentioned earlier. The chalk escarpment is on the right, and the ridge of Corallian Limestone is on the left.

## ROUTE 2 · CENTRAL

### ROUTE 2 (Central)

Like Route 1, Route 2 is entirely within the area covered by the Ordnance Survey Landranger sheet 194. The route links three houses once occupied by Thomas Hardy, and, not surprisingly, places associated with Hardy are thick on the ground.



The route starts at the Top o' Town roundabout in Dorchester. Dorchester is twinned with Bayeux in Normandy, which is famous for its tapestry. The roundabout is situated just west of the town centre at the junction of the main east-west road with the A37.

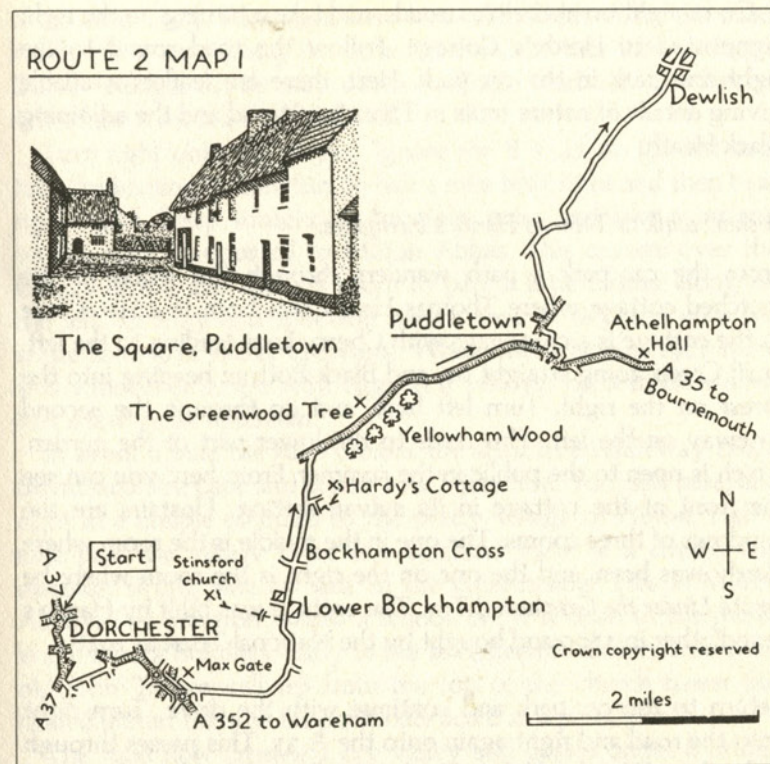
Leave the roundabout by the Weymouth road, passing a short stretch of the Roman town wall on the left. The road bends right and then left, and comes to a set of traffic lights. Go straight on here, and in two hundred yards you can see on the left the grass-covered banks of Maumbury Rings. This is a Neolithic henge constructed in about 2000 B.C. and later adapted for use as a Roman amphitheatre. The original entrance is visible on the far left.

At the next set of traffic lights go straight on into South Court Avenue and turn left into Monmouth Road. Follow the road round to the left at the Baker's Arms and turn right into the main road. At the end of the road take the turning signposted to Wareham. Go straight on at the roundabout and cross the new Dorchester bypass by a flyover that was built in 1988. The first house on the left past the flyover is Max Gate, where Thomas Hardy lived from 1885 until 1928. In this house he was visited by Robert Louis Stevenson, Rudyard Kipling and John Galsworthy, and here he wrote some of his best-known novels, including *The Woodlanders* and *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. The house is only visible from the road in the winter.

At the next roundabout turn left, and follow the road round to the right. As you go over the brow of the hill the tower of West Stafford church appears directly ahead. This is where Tess and Angel Clare were married in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*.

When the road bends right, take the turning signposted to Hardy's Cottage. Seen across a meadow on the right are the four rounded arches of Stafford House, which was built in 1850. This is Hardy's Froom-Everard House, which was featured in his short story *The Waiting Supper*.

For the next half-mile the road crosses the flood plain of the River Frome, which should be pronounced 'Froom'. Hardy sometimes refers to the river as the Var. A variety of back-waters is crossed by an assortment of bridges. The main river is crossed after the road bends left, and there is an attractive view on the right towards a low bridge. Just past the sign saying 'Lower Bockhampton' there is room to park on the left.



*A short walk along the River Frome to Stinsford Church.*

This is the start of a beautiful walk along the backwaters of the River Frome to Stinsford church. Turn left just before you get to Bockhampton Bridge. This view of the bridge with the houses behind it is the subject of a painting by Gordon Beningfield. The path is level and well surfaced, and for most of its length there are streams on both sides. In half a mile turn right along a gravel path which leads to Stinsford church. This is where Thomas Hardy's heart was buried in 1928, and where the poet laureate C. Day Lewis was buried in 1972.

Return to the road and continue with the drive. The road passes through the village of Lower Bockhampton, which is called Lower Melstock in *Under the Greenwood Tree*. Near the end of the village on the left is a pump. The lead spout and the stone trough are original, but the wooden part is a modern restoration.

Go straight on at the crossroads, and take a turning on the right signposted to Hardy's Cottage. Follow the road round to the right and park in the car park. Here there are leaflets available giving details of nature trails in Thornton Wood and the adjoining Black Heath.

*A short walk to Thomas Hardy's birthplace.*

From the car park a path wanders through the wood to the thatched cottage where Thomas Hardy was born in 1840. Close to the cottage is a crossways with Cherry Lane leading to the left, Snail Creep going straight on, and Black Bottom heading into the forest on the right. Turn left here, and go through the second gateway on the left. This leads to the lower part of the garden, which is open to the public in the summer. From here you can see the front of the cottage in its sylvan setting. Upstairs are the windows of three rooms. The one in the middle is the room where Hardy was born, and the one on the right is the room where he wrote *Under the Greenwood Tree*. The cottage was built by Hardy's grandfather in 1800 and bought by the National Trust in 1948.

Return to the car park and continue with the drive. Turn right onto the road and right again onto the A 35. This passes through Yellowham Wood, which is Hardy's Yarlbury Wood. In the wood on the left (but not visible from the road) is the keeper's cottage where Fancy Day lived in *Under the Greenwood Tree*. Near by is the Greenwood Tree itself (an ash tree) beneath which the wedding breakfast was set out.

The road leads to the village of **Puddletown** (Hardy's Weatherbury), where the well-known writer and broadcaster Ralph Whiteman lived until his death in 1971. Go straight on at the traffic lights. Ignore the turning on the left signposted to the church, and take the next turning on the left, which is called The Green. After bending left, right and left again the road passes the church where Bathsheba Everdene and Gabriel Oak were married in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. In the church is the musicians' gallery where the village band sat, and their instruments are on display.

This stretch of road is known as the Square. Facing you at the end of the road is an old house with stone and flint bands, mulioned windows and a Tudor doorway. Over one of the windows

is the date 1573. Turn right here into Mill Street. After the road bends left it runs along the little River Piddle that links a dozen Dorset villages on its way down to Poole Harbour. On the far side of the river is a thatched wall.

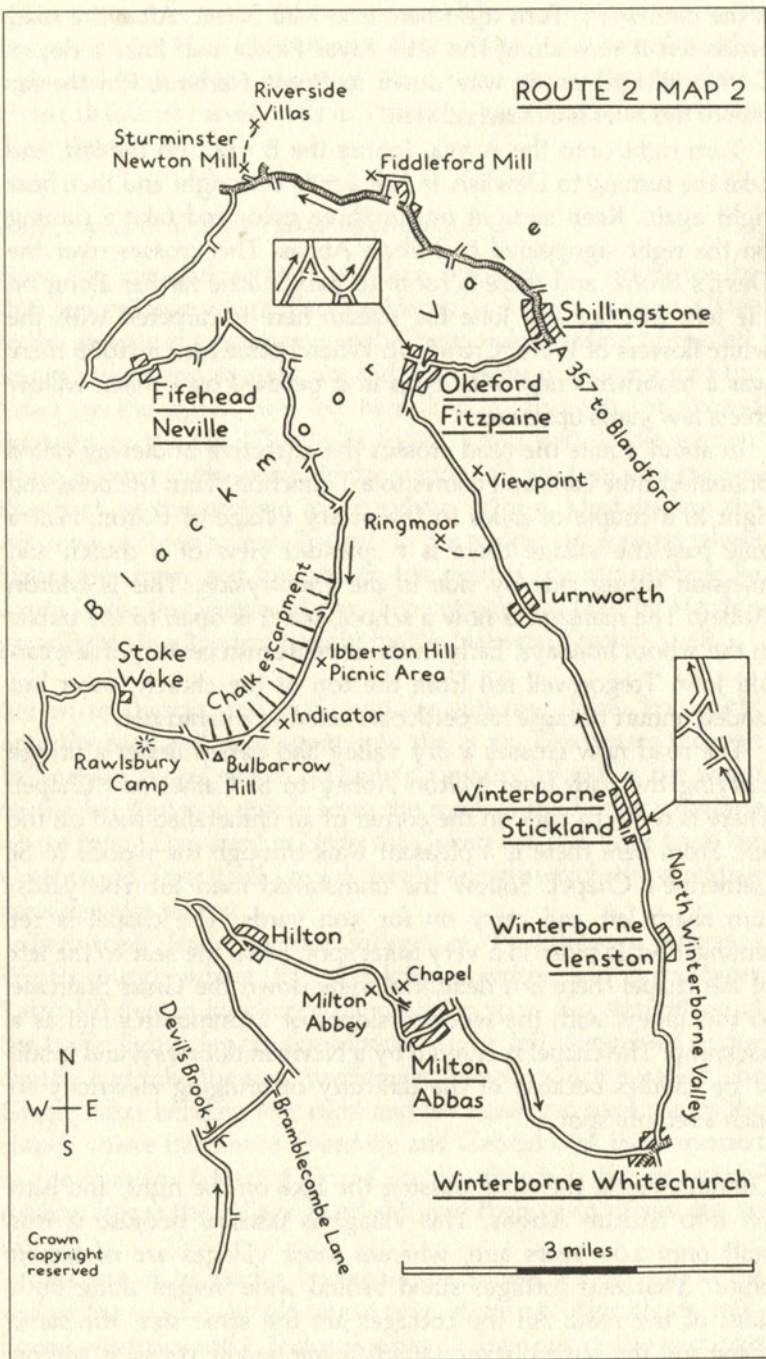
Turn right onto the A 354. Ignore the B 3142 on the left, and take the turning to Dewlish. In half a mile bear right and then bear right again. Keep straight on for three miles and take a turning on the right signposted to Milton Abbas. This crosses over the Devil's Brook, and there is room to park a little farther along on the left. In May and June the stream here is carpeted with the white flowers of Water Crowfoot. When I came here in 1988 there was a moorhen's nest with eggs in it perched on a fallen willow tree a few yards upstream.

In about a mile the road crosses the attractive bridleway called Bramblecombe Lane and comes to a T-junction. Turn left here, and right in a couple of miles to the pretty village of Hilton. Half a mile past the village there is a splendid view of a church and mansion sitting side by side in the countryside. This is Milton Abbey. The mansion is now a school, but it is open to the public in the school holidays. Early in the seventeenth century five-year-old John Tregonwell fell from the top of the church tower but landed unhurt because his petticoats acted as a parachute.

The road now crosses a dry valley and passes under a bridge carrying the path from Milton Abbey to St Catherine's Chapel. There is room to park on the corner of an unmetalled road on the left. From here there is a pleasant walk through the woods to St Catherine's Chapel. Follow the unmetalled road for 100 yards, turn sharp left and carry on for 300 yards. The chapel is set amongst Scots pines in a very quiet spot. From the seat to the left of the chapel there is a delightful view down the Grass Staircase to the abbey, with the wooded slopes of Monmouth's Hill as a backdrop. The chapel is entered by a Norman doorway, and is still lit by candles because of the difficulty of bringing electricity to such a remote spot.

Continue along the road, passing the lake on the right, and turn left into **Milton Abbas**. This village is unusual because it was built only 200 years ago, whereas most villages are of Saxon origin. Thatched cottages stand behind wide verges along both sides of the road. All the cottages are the same size, the same shape and the same distance apart. Some people consider Milton

ROUTE 2 MAP 2



Abbas to be the most beautiful village in Dorset, but I prefer the older, more informal villages.

At the top of the hill turn right to **Winterborne Whitechurch**. At the main road turn left and left again and enter the upper part of the North Winterborne Valley. The church at **Winterborne Clenston** is well seen from the road, the lightness of its stonework making it stand out clearly against the background. In the village there are two fine barns and an impressive Tudor manor house.

At **Winterborne Stickland** the Winterborne runs along the side of the road. The name Stickland means 'steep lane', 'stickle' being a dialect word for steep. When the road forks bear left, but don't turn sharp left. On the right are two beautiful thatched cottages, the second one having a steeply pitched roof. In the centre of the road is the base of the mediaeval cross with the Cross Tree behind it. Turn right here, and then left, so as to rejoin the main valley road.

At the end of the village bear left and continue on up the valley to **Turnworth**, where all the houses are built of flint and brick, and there is a spreading chestnut tree in the centre of the village. Half a mile farther up the valley you come to a National Trust sign saying 'Ringmoor'. From here a pleasant woodland path leads up to the site of an Iron Age farm. The farm survives as earthworks, and beyond the earthworks you can see the parallel banks of an Iron Age road.

At the top of the hill there is a picnic area on the left with two tables, but there is no view from here, and if you have brought sandwiches it is better to eat them in the layby a little farther along on the right.

Low down on the right you can see the Iron Age fort on Hambleton Hill. At the left end of the hill the ramparts appear as steps up the hillside, and at the right end of the hill they appear as bumps. Behind and above Hambleton Hill is the high ground of Cranborne Chase.

Beyond the layby the road descends a spur of the North Dorset Downs into the Blackmoor Vale, and as the gradient steepens so depth is added to the view, with the village of Shillingstone appearing below that of Child Okeford.

At the foot of the hill bear right and enter the village of **Okeford Fitzpaine**. Opposite the turning to Shillingstone there is

a fossilised ammonite built into the wall of a house on the left. Ignore this turning, but take the next turning on the right, by the telephone box. This leads through the prettiest part of the village, with thatched cottages on the right and a raised pavement leading beyond them towards the mediaeval church tower.

Follow the road round to the left by the church and keep straight on to **Shillingstone**. Turn left onto the A 357, and in a mile and three quarters turn right at the Fiddleford Inn. The road bends left, then left again, and there is a car park on the right.

#### *A short walk to Fiddleford Mill*

From here there is a short walk down to one of the local beauty spots, the footbridge over the River Stour at Fiddleford Mill. Return along the road to the first bend, and turn left. Then go straight on through the farmyard. On the wall of the mill house on the right is an inscription bearing the date 1566. The path bends left along the far side of the mill stream, and runs along the top of the sluices to an island. Then it continues along a narrow footbridge to the far bank, and a triple weir can be seen on the left.

Adjoining the car park is Fiddleford Manor, which dates from the fourteenth century and is open to the public from April to September.

Turn right out of the car park, and right again into the main road, which passes between Piddles Wood and Girdler's Coppice. On the right, beyond the river, is the little town of Sturminster Newton, which is locally known as 'Stur'. Go straight on at the traffic lights, and turn right into an unmetalled road signposted to 'Sturminster Newton Mill'. Then bear left to the car park.

#### *A walk to Sturminster Newton Mill and along the River Stour.*

At the end of the car park a flight of steps leads down to the stone-roofed watermill, which is still working and which is open to the public on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays from May to September. Inside the building the low ceilings, the abundant woodwork, the smell of the flour and the sound of the rumbling machinery combine to give the place an atmosphere that remains in the memory after all the details have been forgotten.

After passing the mill the path crosses the River Stour by a succession of footbridges where the sound of conversation is drowned by the roar of water running over a weir. Between the second and third bridges turn left over a stile, and follow the river upstream for a quarter of a mile. Tufts of dead grass on fences and bushes indicate the height that is reached by the water when the river is in flood. There is always a chance of seeing a kingfisher here, as I saw one not long ago from Hayward Bridge, a few miles downstream.

At the end of the field go through a gate and continue parallel with the river. After passing a metalled road on the right and going through a kissing gate you come to Riverside Villa, where Thomas Hardy was living when he wrote *The Return of the Native*. The house is of interest not for its architecture, but for its magnificent setting. It stands on high ground looking down on the River Stour and the countryside beyond. The view from the house is described in Hardy's poem 'Overlooking the River Stour', and the footbridge you can see (Colber Bridge) is featured in his poem 'On Sturminster Footbridge'. Return to the car park.

Turn right into the main road. Just before the phone box on the left is Barton House, a very attractive building once owned by Catherine Parr. Just past this turn left, and bear right in half a mile. After a further mile and a half take a road on the left signposted to **Fifehead Neville**. The Fifehead villages are named after their assessment of five hides in the Domesday Book.

At the far end of the village the little River Divilish is crossed by an Irish bridge where the Fifehead Neville Packhorse Bridge can be clearly seen. This is one of the locations used by Jack Hargreaves to introduce his television series 'Old Country'. He leads his horse at a gentle pace over the bridge to the accompaniment of a piece of haunting music that gives a marvellous feeling of tranquility to the scene. According to Hargreaves the bridge was built in the reign of King John.

At the next junction go straight on. Bear right where the road forks and take the first turning on the right. In half a mile turn right again into Garlands Lane. The wide verges either side of the road are characteristic of the Blackmoor Vale. Before the roads were surfaced the verges enabled people to avoid the mud and ruts of other road users.

After you pass through Belchalwell village the escarpment of

the North Dorset Downs rears up in front of you. At the end of the road go left and immediately right; as the road climbs up onto the downs there are glorious views over the Blackmore Vale on the right. At the top of the hill the road passes the car park and restaurant of Baker's Folly. Now we're in the heart of the Hargreaves country. In one of his programmes he parked his pony and trap at this spot and pointed out his house in the vale below. In Hardy's novels the Blackmoor Vale is called 'The Vale of the Little Dairies'.

Beyond the restaurant the road runs between hedges for a short distance, and then the view opens up again. The best place to stop and admire it is the Ibberton Hill Picnic Area on the left. A mile farther on, in a car park on the left, is an indicator on a pedestal. The view from here is not so good as that from the picnic area because it lacks depth, and the indicator is remarkably inaccurate.

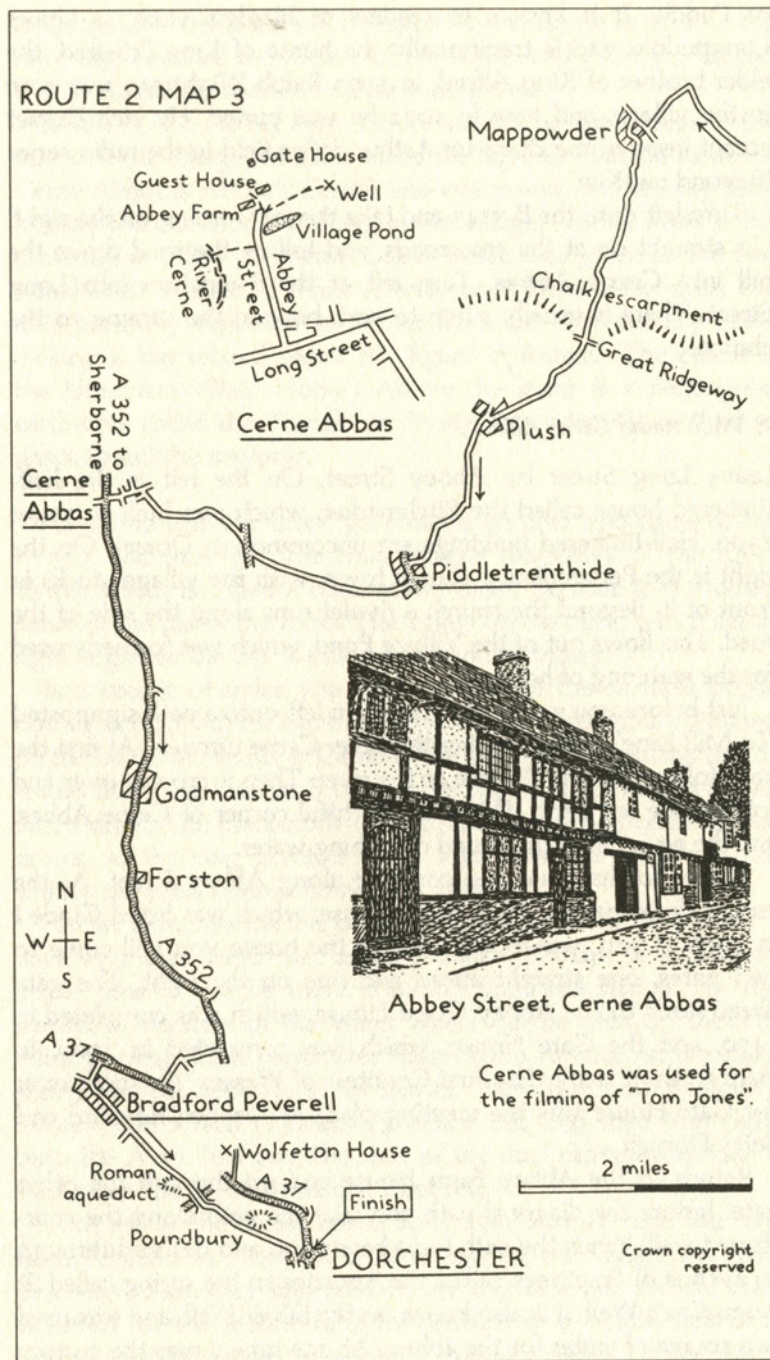
Ignore a turning sharp left and immediately bear right. We are now close to the summit of Bulbarrow Hill. At 901 feet or 274 metres, this is the highest point on the North Dorset Downs and the highest point in Dorset apart from Pilsdon Pen and Lewesdon Hill.

Immediately before the next junction a low, flat-topped tumulus is visible to the left of the road. This is the Bul Barrow that gave its name to the hill. Go straight on here, and ignore a turning on the right. The road now follows the crest of a ridge with views on both sides, and a marvellous prospect of the ramparts of Rawlsbury Camp ahead of you.

After passing the hill fort the road descends once more into the Blackmoor Vale. At one point the Quantocks are visible ahead; then the road bends right and Alfred's Tower comes into view. In half a mile take a turning on the left signposted to Mappowder. Turn left at the T-junction, and turn right in half a mile. When you get to **Mappowder** follow the right round to the right and turn left. Close to the church is the cottage called Newleaze Lodge where the novelist Theodore Powys spent his last thirteen years. It is now occupied by a signmaker.

In a couple of miles the road passes through a windgap in the North Dorset Downs. Here it crosses the Great Ridgeway, the prehistoric trackway that follows the high ground from Dorset to East Anglia. Then the road follows one of the dip-slope valleys through the hamlet of Plush to **Piddletrenthide**.

This is the highest of the villages bearing the name Piddle





or Puddle. It is known to readers of Hardy's work as Upper Longpuddle, and is traditionally the home of King Ethelred, the elder brother of King Alfred. In 1901 Ralph Wightman was born in the village, and here in 1971 he was buried. His rich Dorset accent inspired the character Arthur Fallowfield in the radio series 'Beyond our Ken'.

Turn left onto the B 3143 and take the first turning on the right. Go straight on at the crossroads, and follow the road down the hill into **Cerne Abbas**. Turn left at the T-junction into Long Street. There is usually room to park beyond the turning to the church.

### *A Walk round Cerne Abbas*

Leave Long Street by Abbey Street. On the left is the half-timbered house called the Pitchmarket, which was built in about 1500. Half-timbered buildings are uncommon in Dorset. On the right is the Perpendicular church tower with the village stocks in front of it. Beyond the church a rivulet runs along the side of the road. This flows out of the Village Pond, which was formerly used for the watering of horses.

Just before you get to the pond turn left onto a path signposted 'To Mill Lane'. After crossing the River Cerne turn left. At first the path follows the right bank of the river. Then it crosses over and follows the left bank. This is a delightful corner of Cerne Abbas, and the air is full of the sound of rushing water.

Return to the pond and continue along Abbey Street. At the end of the street is Abbey Farm House, which was listed Grade I in 1979. If you pass to the right of the house you will come to two gates, one straight ahead and one on the right. The gate ahead leads to the Abbey Guest House, which was completed in 1470, and the Gate House, which was completed in 1509. In Hardy's short story 'The First Countess of Wessex' the room over the Gate House was the meeting place of Stephen Reynard and Betty Dornell.

Return to the Abbey Farm House and go through the other gate. Ignore the diagonal path and take the path along the churchyard wall. When the path forks bear right, and descend through an avenue of lime trees called the Apostles to the spring called St Augustine's Well. It is also known as the Silver Well, and was used as a source of water for the abbey. At one time it was the custom

to bring new-born babies to be dipped in the spring as soon as the sun's rays touched the surface of the water; and there is a legend that St Augustine used to baptise people here.

Return to the Abbey Farm House and retrace your steps to the centre of the village (which is called the Square). Hardy's name for Cerne Abbas is Abbot's Cernel, and every year on the May bank holiday there is Morris dancing in the village. Not far away is the chalk figure called the Cerne Giant, which was given to the National Trust in 1920. It is first referred to in literature in 1764, but it is generally regarded as dating from the first century A.D., making it the second oldest hill figure in Britain. (The oldest is the Uffington White Horse.) Above the giant is a rectangular earthwork called the Trendle or Frying Pan, where they used to dance round the maypole.

To continue with the drive, go straight on until you come to the A 352, and turn left. The road follows the valley of the River Cerne, which is called a consequent valley because it is a direct result of the dip of the rocks. The valley on the right, which lies at right angles to the dip, is called a subsequent valley.

In a couple of miles you come to one of the smallest public houses in England, the Smith's Arms, which is beautifully situated on the banks of the River Cerne in the village of Godmanstone. It is said that King Charles II once asked the local blacksmith to sell him a drink. The blacksmith replied that he had no licence to sell drinks, so the king granted him a licence on the spot, and the smithy has been a public house ever since.

Farther along on the left in the same village is the only house I have ever seen which has artificial thatch. Perhaps in a hundred years' time it will be more common than real thatch. In the hamlet of Forston an old water wheel can be seen on the left. After passing the 'Charminster' sign take a turning on the right (easily missed) opposite a bus shelter. Turn right onto a slightly mainer road which immediately bends left, and then turn right onto the A 37. Just past the start of the dual carriageway take a turning on the left to **Bradford Peverell**.

Turn left at the crossroads onto the old Roman road that ran from Ilchester to Dorchester. After leaving the village the road descends to a valley and rises to the top of a hill. As the road descends for the second time the remains of a Roman aqueduct can be seen following the contours round a valley on the right.

In the next valley it can be seen running parallel with the new bypass. This is the longest Roman aqueduct in Britain. It is twelve miles long, and was built in AD 90 to supply water to the Roman town of Dorchester.

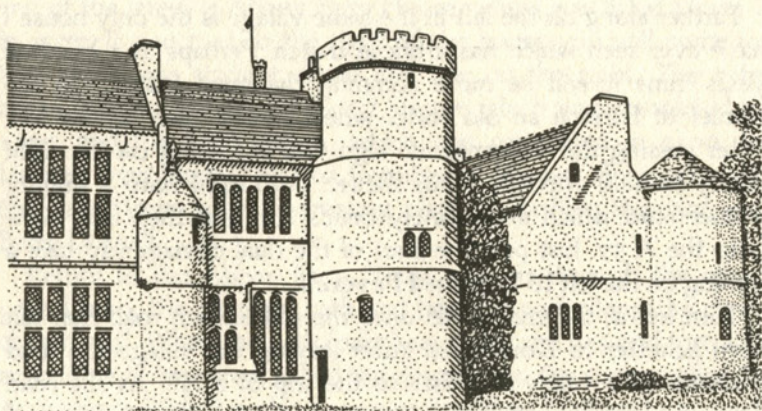
Farther along on the left is the Iron Age hill fort of Poundbury, which was called 'Pumery' in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. This hill fort is unusual in that there is a small rampart surrounding the big one. It may be entered by the stile opposite Normandy Way.

Keep straight on to the main road, and turn left to the roundabout. On the far side of the roundabout is a statue of Thomas Hardy by Eric Kennington.

**Wolfeton House** is situated a mile north of Dorchester on the A 37, and is open to the public on Tuesday and Friday afternoons from May to September. The house is approached through a Tudor gatehouse, which is flanked by two round towers, one larger than the other.

Enter the house by the north porch, and after passing the stairs turn right into the East Drawing Room, where there is extremely intricate carving over the door and fireplace. Go straight on into the West Drawing Room and turn right into a passage that leads back to the entrance hall. From here the Great Stairs lead to the Green Room and the Long Gallery, where the fireplace bears the date 1588.

Return to the entrance hall and enter the dining room. In the far



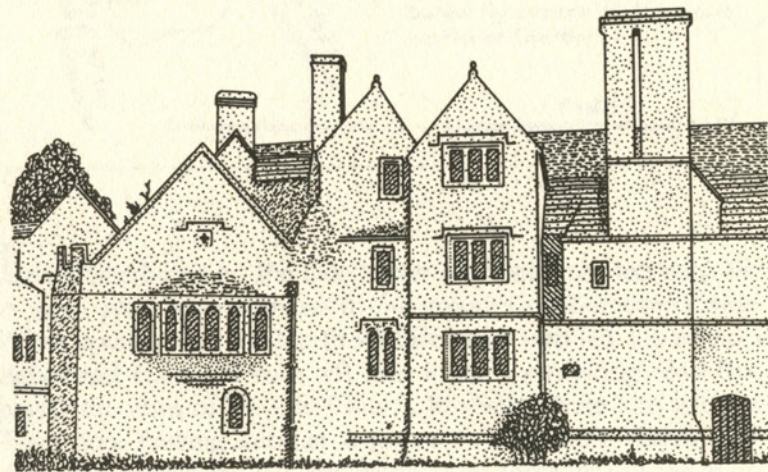
Wolfeton House

right-hand corner of this room is the South Tower, which leads to the garden. From the garden there is a beautiful view of the south front of the house. To the left of the tower is an endearing little turret with a stone roof, and to the right of the turret there is a mullioned window with superb carved stonework.

A description of Wolfeton appears in Hardy's short story 'The Lady Penelope'.

**Athelhampton Hall** is situated six miles east of Dorchester on the A 35. It was built by Sir William Martyn in 1485 on the site of the legendary palace of King Athelstan. From the fourteenth century until the seventeenth century the house was owned by the Martyn family of whom the present owner, Lady Cooke, is a descendant. The family crest of the Martyns is a chained ape holding a mirror, and the family motto is 'He who looks at Martyn's ape, Martyn's ape shall look at him'.

The house is open to the public on Wednesday, Thursday and Sunday afternoons from Easter to September. Pull off the road and park under the trees. To get to the house you have to pass through a range of lovely old outbuildings. The house is entered by a wide fifteenth-century door, which leads to the Screens Passage. To the right of the passage is my favourite room, the Green Parlour, with its low ceiling and homely atmosphere. On the other side of the passage is the most famous room in the house, the



Athelhampton Hall from the north-west

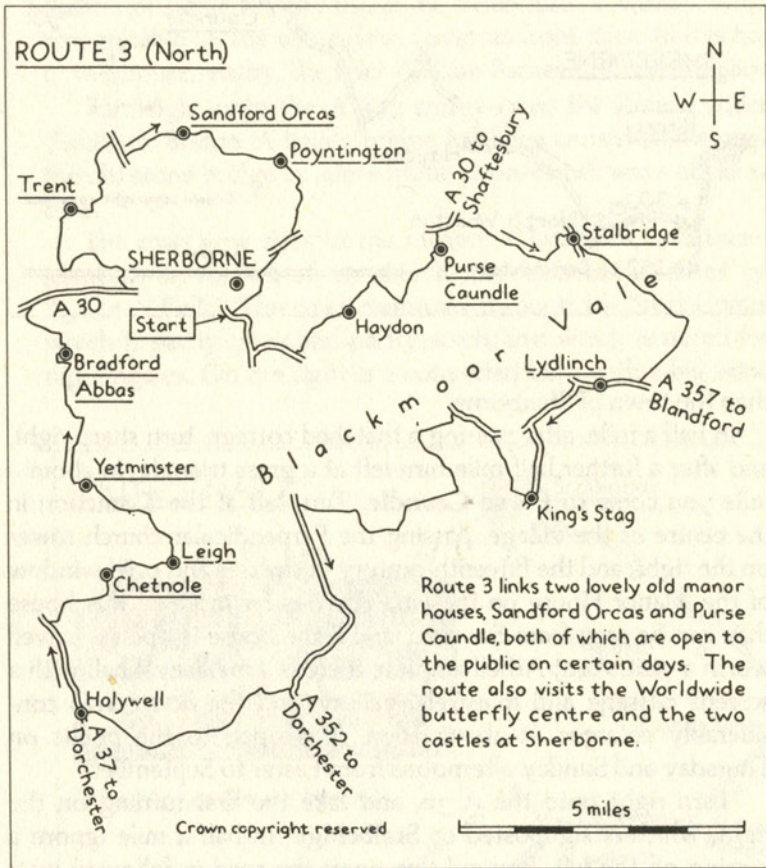
Great Hall. At the far end of the hall, to the right of the fireplace, is a secret door that is quite invisible when it is closed.

Leave the hall by the doorway in the oriel window and enter the King's Ante-room. From here a sixteenth-century newel staircase leads up to the King's Chamber, which has a beautiful timber ceiling and linenfold panelling. To see the upstairs rooms at the other end of the house you have to descend to the Great Hall, turn left along the Screens Passage and ascend the Great Stairs. Directly over the Green Parlour is the State Bedroom, which has a fifteenth-century fireplace and a lavishly carved four-poster bed.

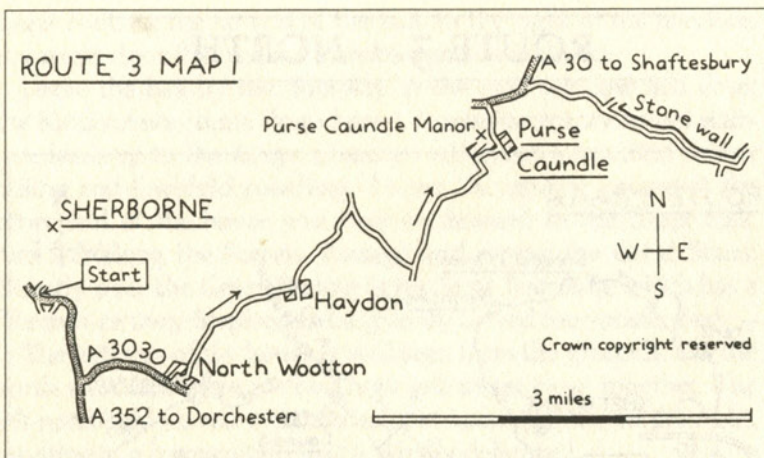
The exterior of the house is well seen from the grounds. On the north-west face there are two high gables set close together. The left-hand gable is not symmetrical, but leans quaintly to the right, resulting in a composition that is wholly delightful.

In my opinion Athelhampton is the finest house in Dorset, but it's not the finest house in England - *that* is Berkeley Castle.

## ROUTE 3 · NORTH



Leave Sherborne by the Dorchester road, and turn left onto the A 3030, passing an entrance to the grounds of Sherborne Castle. When you come to the North Wootton sign turn left. Go round a right-hand bend and turn left into a narrow twisting road that passes the ruins of the Old Church. In about a mile turn left at a T-junction, passing another entrance to Sherborne Castle. The distance between the two entrances gives some idea of the enormous area covered by Sherborne Park, which is actually bigger



than the town of Sherborne.

In half a mile, after passing a thatched cottage, turn sharp right, and after a further half-mile turn left at a grass triangle. In about a mile you come to **Purse Caundle**. Turn left at the T-junction in the centre of the village, passing the Perpendicular church tower on the right, and the fifteenth-century buttresses and oriel window of the Manor House on the left. There is far more to this house than can be seen from the road, and if the house is open it is well worth a visit. As at Athelhampton, there is a mediaeval hall with a screens passage and minstrels' gallery, and the house was considerably enlarged in about 1600. It is open to the public on Thursday and Sunday afternoons from Easter to September.

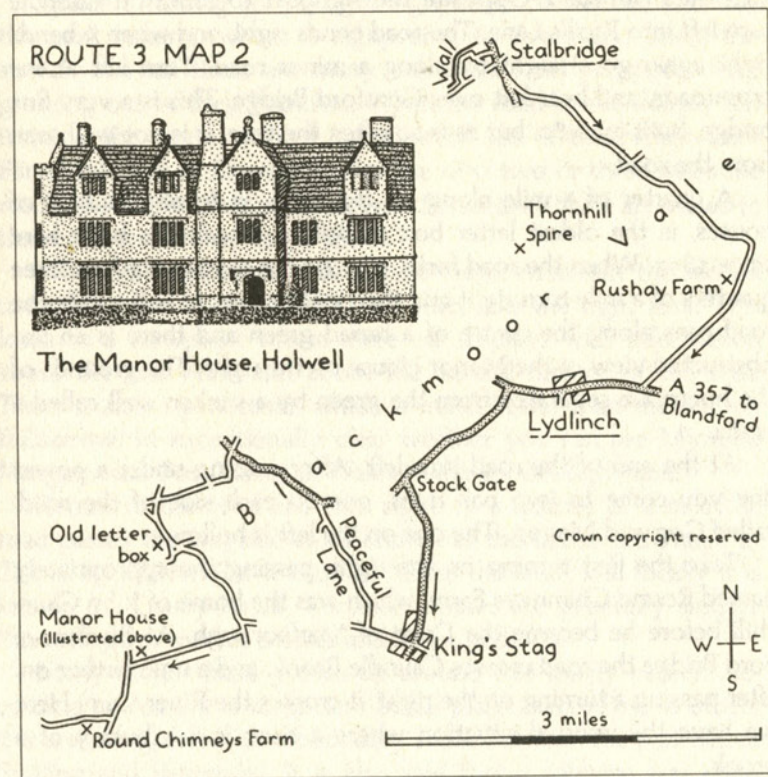
Turn right onto the A 30, and take the first turning on the right, which is signposted to **Stalbridge**. In half a mile ignore a turning on the left. Beyond this point the road is followed by a stone wall of tremendous length. The mind boggles at the amount of work that must have gone into its construction. The wall surrounds Stalbridge Park, where the famous scientist Robert Boyle lived, and where he conducted his chemical experiments.

Ignore a turning on the right, and when the wall bends left take a turning on the left, which continues to follow the wall. In a quarter of a mile the road leaves the wall. It bends right and then left, and comes to a T-junction in the village of Stalbridge. Turn right here, passing on the left the finest market cross in Dorset. It is thirty feet high, and it was built in the late fifteenth century.

Go straight on at the village centre, and bear left along a road signposted to Marnhull. When you come to a crossroads go straight on, and cross the River Lydden at Bagber Bridge. A quarter of a mile past the bridge is a right-hand bend, and a quarter of a mile beyond this is the farmhouse of Rushay, which is recognisable by the white doves over its front door. In this house, or in a house nearby, the poet William Barnes was born in 1801.

Turn right onto the A 357 and re-cross the River Lydden at Twofords Bridge. A bailey bridge has been constructed alongside the old stone bridge to allow traffic to pass both ways at the same time.

The road now rises to the village of **Lydlinch**, and there are glimpses on the left of the church that features in Barnes' poem 'Lydlinch Bells'. The road continues through Lydlinch Common, which is partly grass and partly scrub, and which is noted for its nightingales. On the right is a converted barn with a big window



in the transept.

Turn left onto the A 3030. After emerging from the woodland this runs along the side of Stock Gaylard Park, where fallow deer graze in large numbers among the scattered oak trees. Turn left at Stock Gate onto the B 3143, which crosses the former Blackcrow Common. The extent of the common may be determined from the position of the hedges.

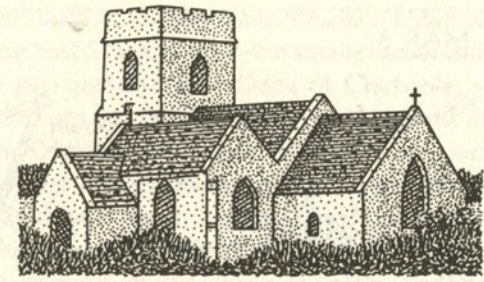
The road leads to the hamlet of King's Stag, which is said to be named after a white stag that was given royal protection by Henry III because of its beauty. Turn right onto a road signposted to Holwell, and right again into the delightfully named Peaceful Lane. This is another of those roads with wide verges that are found throughout the Blackmoor Vale, particularly on the Oxford Clay. Sometimes squatters' cottages were built on the grass verges with long thin gardens parallel with the road. Peaceful Lane Cottage on the right is a typical example.

Ignore a turning on the left signposted to Holwell, and turn left into the main road. Opposite the signpost to Stourton Caundle turn left into Ryalls Lane. The road bends right, and when it bends right again go straight on along a minor road. Turn left at the crossroads, and bear left over Cornford Bridge. This is a very fine bridge, built in 1480, but as is so often the case, it is not well seen from the road.

A quarter of a mile along on the right, in front of a row of houses, is the oldest letter box in Britain, which has been here since 1853. When the road forks, stay on the main road. In three quarters of a mile turn right and then right again. In half a mile the road runs along the centre of a broad green and there is an unobstructed view of the Manor House on the right. The grounds of the house are separated from the green by a sunken wall called a ha-ha.

At the end of the road turn left. After passing under a power line you come to two oak trees, one on each side of the road, called Gog and Magog. The one on the left is hollow.

Take the first turning on the right, passing the appropriately named Round Chimneys Farm, which was the home of John Churchill before he became the Duke of Marlborough. At Blackmore Ford Bridge the road crosses Caundle Brook, and a mile farther on, after passing a turning on the right, it crosses the River Cam. Here we have the unusual situation where a river is a tributary of a brook.



Holnest: the perfect country church

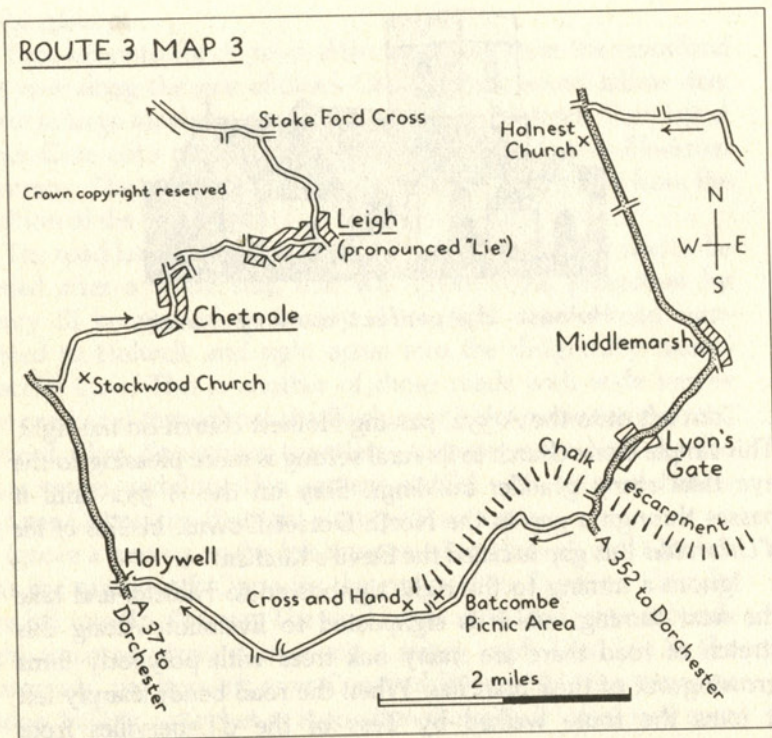
Turn left onto the A 352, passing Holnest church on the right. This simple stone church in its rural setting is more pleasing to the eye than many grander buildings. Stay on the A 352 until it passes through a gap in the North Dorset Downs. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* this gap is called the Devil's Kitchen.

Ignore a turning to the right signposted to Hilfield, and take the next turning, which is signposted to Evershot. Along this stretch of road there are many oak trees with polypody ferns growing out of their branches. When the road bends sharply left it joins the route walked by Tess of the d'Urbervilles from Flintcomb-Ash to Emminster. For the next two or three miles the road follows the crest of the downs. Sometimes there are views to the north, sometimes to the south.

When you come to the Batcombe Picnic Area take the second unmetalled road on the right, and then take the right fork. This leads to a viewpoint where there are displays with information about the Hill Walk and about the natural history of the area. There is also a panorama, which is much better than the one on Bulbarrow. In exceptionally clear weather you can see Mynydd Margam near Port Talbot in Wales to the left of High Ham.

Return to the road and turn right. In a quarter of a mile the road passes the wayside cross known as the Cross and Hand. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* it is called 'Cross-in-Hand', and locally it is known as 'Crossy-Hand'. Wayside crosses are generally simpler than village or market crosses and lack a pedestal.

Many stories have grown up around this lonely object. According to some it is an ancient burial-place. According to others it is a wishing stone, or a boundary stone between the parishes of Sydling and Batcombe. It is also said that a robbery was com-



mitted on this spot, that four kings met here, and that travellers used to leave money in the hollow on the capital for the poor.

In two and a half miles turn right onto the A 37. Before long there is a distant view ahead extending to Wavering Down, Dundon Hill and the Poldens. As the road emerges from the trees the mansion of Melbury Sampford can be seen in its extensive park on the left.

In about a mile take a turning on the right signposted to Stockwood. The road passes through an attractive avenue of oak trees, and the atmosphere is quieter and more peaceful that it was on the main road.

When you come to a T-junction turn left. A quarter of a mile away on the right you can see the farmhouse of Church Farm, and immediately to the left of it is Stockwood Church with its seventeenth-century bell-turret. Inside the building is a booklet which compares the dimensions of the church with those of other

small churches such as Culbone and Wasdale Head, and comes to the conclusion that Stockwood is the smallest church in England.

In a mile you come to the village of **Chetnole**, which Hardy calls Catknoll. Turn left at the T-junction, and right at the church. After passing Chetnole House on the right the road crosses the Wriggle River by a hump-backed bridge. The river takes its name from little star-shaped fossils that are found on the river bed.

Follow the road round to the left and then to the right, and keep straight on through the village of **Leigh**. The best part of the village is after the T-junction sign. First there is a fine Georgian stone house on the left. This is followed by Cromwell Cottage, which bears the date 1628, and then you come to the weather-beaten village cross with its octagonal pedestal and square shaft. The custom of erecting village crosses dates from the earliest days of Christianity, when there were no churches, and the villagers would assemble at the cross.

Turn left here, and keep straight on to **Yetminster**. In the garden of Yew Tree Cottage on the right are some bushes shaped like young toadstools. The art of trimming bushes to shapes like these is known as topiary. After crossing the railway ignore two turnings on the right and bear right at the centre of the village. This junction is still called the Cross although the village cross has long since gone. There is room to park on the left by the telephone box.

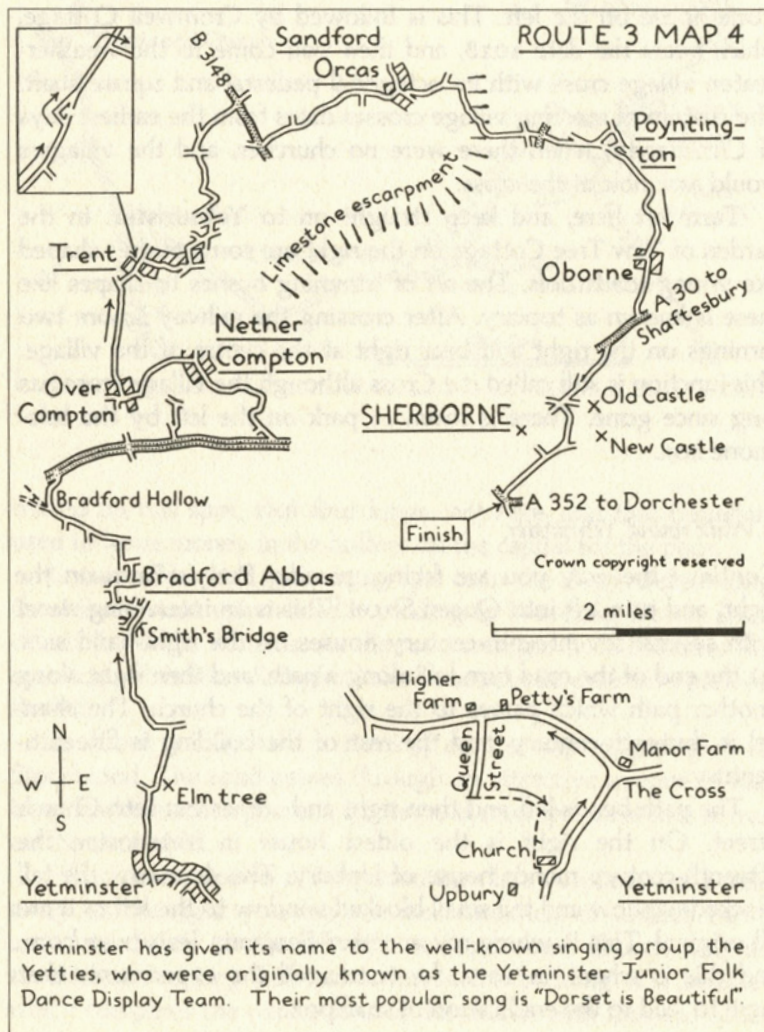
#### *A Walk round Yetminster.*

Continue the way you are facing, passing Petty's Farm on the right, and turn left into Queen Street. This is an interesting street with several seventeenth-century houses on the right-hand side. At the end of the road turn left along a path, and then right along another path which passes to the right of the church. The chancel is thirteenth-century, and the rest of the building is fifteenth-century.

The path bends left and then right and comes out into Church Street. On the right is the oldest house in Yetminster, the fifteenth-century manor house of Upbury. The doorway, the tall blocked window and the small blocked window to the left of it are all original. This is where my ancestor Benjamin Jesty was born, and this is where, in 1774, he conducted the experiments that were to lead to the eradication of smallpox.

Turn left into the road, and left again at the Cross. On the right is a succession of seventeenth-century houses with stone-mullioned windows, and on the left is the telephone box where the walk began.

Go straight on at the junction with Queen Street, passing Higher Farm on the right. Bear right when the road forks, and turn right onto a mainer road. In half a mile the road bends right and then left. On the second of these bends, on the right-hand side of the



road, there is an elm tree. As hedgerow bushes elms are still quite common, but this is the only full-grown elm that I have seen in Dorset in recent years. Long may it survive!

After crossing the railway turn left at a T-junction. In about a mile, ignore a turning on the left, and cross the River Yeo by an old hump-backed bridge. This is known as Smith's Bridge, and it was built in the sixteenth century. In a hundred yards turn left into **Bradford Abbas**.

Keep going straight on until you pass the church, and then turn right into Westbury. In the churchyard is a fifteenth-century cross which is visible from the road. Pass under the railway bridge and ignore a turning on the left. When the road bends left go straight on into Higher Westbury, and turn left at the Cross into North Street. This is a very charming street, and it is not often visited, because it lies off the beaten track.

Turn left at the end of the road, and then right, and left in a quarter of a mile. Ignore two turnings on the left, and park just before a track on the left. Immediately past the track are private roads to left and right, and then the narrow track called Leaze Lane bears off to the left. In the angle between Leaze Lane and the road is the entrance to the sunken path called Bradford Hollow. This is a fascinating example of a hollow way, an old road that has been worn down by the passage of feet over hundreds of years and later abandoned. It formed part of the road from Bradford Abbas to Yeovil.

Two hundred yards along Bradford Hollow a gully on the left leads up to Leaze Lane, and makes a worth-while triangular walk about a quarter of a mile long. From the path running alongside Leaze Lane there are dramatic views into the ravine of Bradford Hollow.

Continue along the road until you come to the A 30 and turn right. On the right is a good exposure of the rock formation known as the Yeovil Sands, which is recognisable by its horizontal calcareous bands. This formation extends from here to the cliffs between West Bay and Burton Bradstock (where it is known as the Bridport Sands) and gives rise to the many sunken lanes in the area around Broadwindsor and Powerstock.

Go straight on at the crossroads. On the left is the Moto Chef, where teas, snacks and meals are obtainable throughout the day. Just past this is the entrance to Compton House, which has been

the home of Worldwide Butterflies since 1978.

*A visit to Worldwide Butterflies.*

The house is open to the public from April to October. In the room to the right of the entrance hall there are glass cases containing all the most beautiful butterflies in the world, including owl butterflies that look like owls and leaf butterflies that look like beech leaves. There is also a palm house, where the scent of the plants hits you as you enter; and the upper floor is occupied by the Lullingstone Silk Farm. At the back of the house there is a cobbled courtyard surrounded by sixteenth-century outbuildings.

Return to the A 30 and turn left. Ignore a minor road on the left and take the next turning on the left, which leads to the beautiful village of **Nether Compton**. In the centre of the village turn left for Over Compton. There is a view on the left of the tall chimneys of Compton House.

When you get to Over Compton take a turning on the right signposted to Trent. From this road the Pen Hill radio mast is visible straight ahead with Glastonbury Tor to the left of it. After crossing Trent Brook, turn right and enter the village of **Trent**.

Though not well known, Trent contains many old houses of architectural merit. First of all there is a glimpse down an unmetalled road on the left of Church Farm. The window on the right is fifteenth-century. Then, on the right-hand side of the road, is the sixteenth-century Dairy Farm, which has a traceried window upstairs. Opposite this is the fifteenth-century Chantry, which has cusped windows on both floors, and a fine chimney breast.

Immediately past this turn left for a few yards to the entrance to the church. In the porch is a sign saying 'All persons are requested to take off pattens and clogs before entering the church'. Ahead of you is the entrance to the Manor House, where King Charles II hid for a fortnight after the Battle of Worcester. Follow the road round to the right, and go straight on. There is a seventeenth-century cottage on the left, and opposite this is the Rectory. The side facing the road is Georgian, but the smaller doorway in the side wall is fifteenth-century.

Farther along on the right are Turner's Almshouses, which were built in 1846 and are now called Turner's Close. There are two ranges separated by a small courtyard and linked by a stone

wall with a central doorway. In the centre of the courtyard is a stone pump. There is much carved stonework, and the quality of the architecture is just as good as that of the older buildings in the village.

Immediately past the almshouses turn right at the site of the village cross. When the road bends left and immediately right it passes Manor Farm, which bears the date 1660 over the door. There are two more seventeenth-century cottages on the left. When you come to the telephone box turn left into Rigg Lane. On the left is a lovely old house called Flamberts, which was built in 1658. It has two projecting wings, and an old studded door with strap hinges. The mullions of the windows are ovolo-moulded, which means convex.

On leaving the village ignore turnings on the left and right, and turn left at a thatched cottage. Go straight on at a crossroads, right at a T-junction, and, after half a mile, straight on at a triangle of roads. In a quarter of a mile, just before you get to a row of white posts, there is a view on the left over the Somerset Levels to Glastonbury Tor, which is recognisable by the tower on its summit. In front of you are three hills. The one on the left, with trees growing from its left-hand slope, is Cadbury Castle. Glastonbury Tor stands on the Isle of Avalon, and Cadbury Castle is believed to be the site of Camelot. These are the two places that are most strongly associated with the stories of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table.

Turn right at the White Post Inn onto the B 3148. Take the first turning on the left, and keep straight on to **Sandford Orcas**. If you are visiting the manor house turn left. Otherwise, turn right and immediately left.

*A visit to Sandford Orcas Manor.*

Sandford Orcas Manor is a beautiful sixteenth-century house open to the public on Sunday afternoons and Mondays from May to September. It is reputed to be haunted by no fewer than fourteen ghosts, and since the destruction of Borley Rectory in 1939 it has had the reputation of being the most haunted house in England. To continue with the route, leave the manor house the way you came and take the first turning on the left.

In a quarter of a mile take a turning on the right, signposted to



Holway. The escarpment ahead of you is that of the Oolitic Limestone. This is the same layer of rock that produced the Cotswolds, but the two escarpments are not continuous because of the intrusion of the Mendips in between. As the road goes over Holway Hill the limestone can be seen dipping to the east.

Go straight on at two crossroads and enter the village of **Poynington**. Poynington Hill is now visible ahead. The footpath running along the top of the ridge is called the Ladies' Mile and follows the county boundary between Dorset and Somerset.

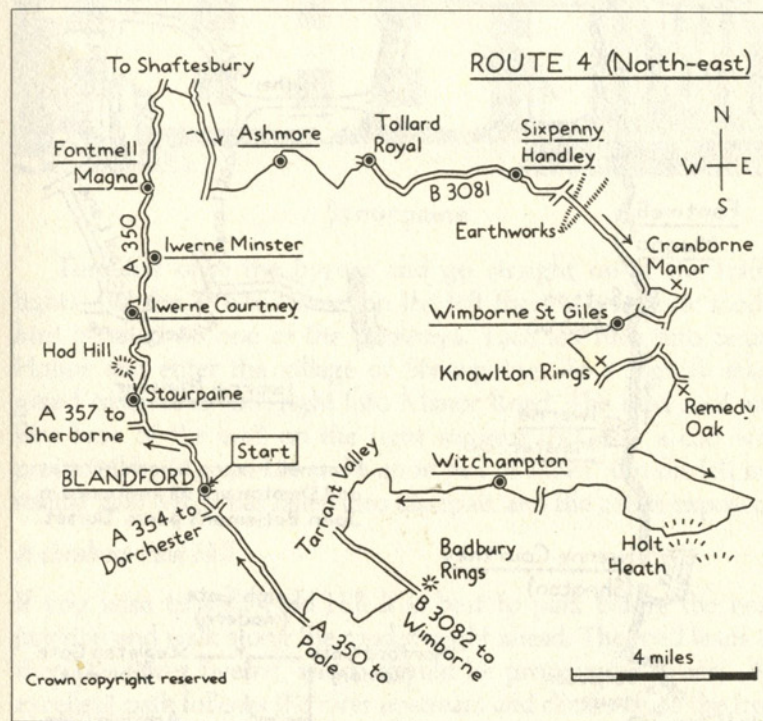
Ignore a turning sharp left and bear left at a fork. Follow the road round to the right, and then to the right again. On the left is an old archway with a cusped window above it. This is the entrance to the Manor House, which was built round a courtyard in about 1500. The fourteenth-century church is visible ahead.

In the centre of the village turn left. For nearly a mile the road follows a sequestered green valley down to the village of **Oborne**, accompanied on the left by the infant River Yeo. Go straight on through Oborne and turn right onto the A 30, passing St Cuthbert's Chapel on the left. This is the chancel of the former church, which was built in 1533.

Take the first turning on the left, which is signposted to the town centre. From this stretch of road you can see the ruins of Sherborne Old Castle, which was completed in 1135. To visit the old castle turn sharp left. To continue with the route take the turning on the left signposted to Dorchester. Just before you cross the railway you get a glimpse of the new castle, which was built in 1594 and was the home of Sir Walter Raleigh. The entrance is a little farther along on the left. The old castle is open throughout the year, and the new castle is open on Thursdays and at weekends from Easter to September. In between the two is a lake created by Capability Brown.

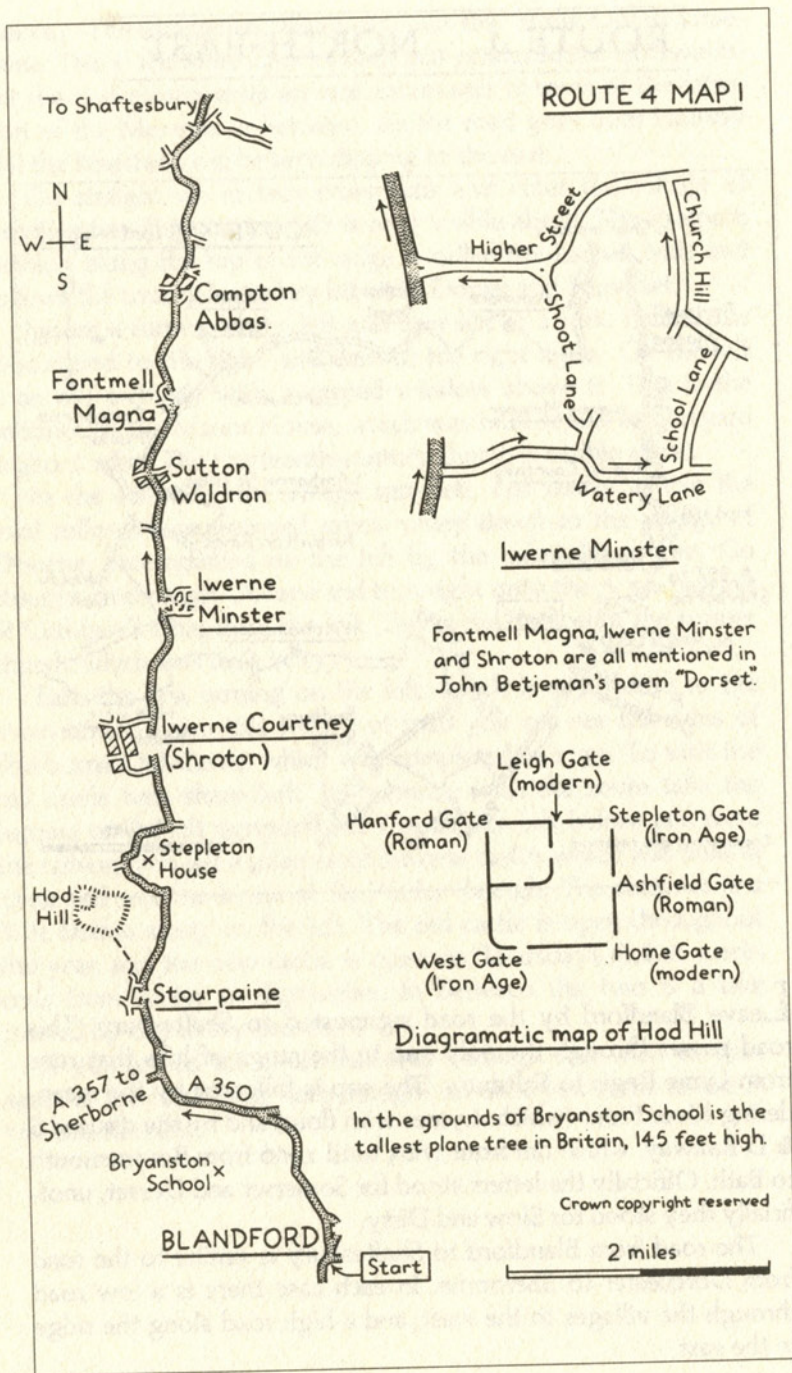
If you joined the route half-way through and wish to start again at the beginning, keep straight on until you come to the A 352 and turn left.

## ROUTE 4 · NORTH-EAST



Leave Blandford by the road signposted to Shaftesbury. This road passes through the only gap in the range of hills that runs from Lyme Regis to Salisbury. The gap is followed by the meandering River Stour (which rhymes with flour) and by the disused S & D Railway, which ran from 1863 until 1966 from Bournemouth to Bath. Officially the letters stood for Somerset and Dorset, unofficially they stood for Slow and Dirty.

The road from Blandford to Shaftesbury is similar to the road from Dorchester to Sherborne. In each case there is a low road through the villages to the west, and a high road along the ridge to the east.



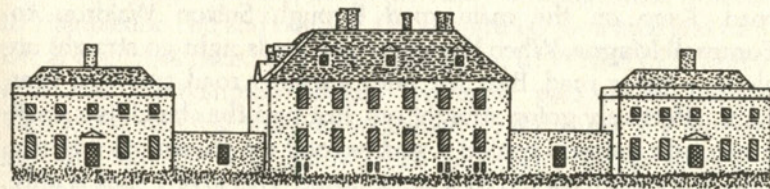
Stourpaine

Turn left onto the bypass and go straight on at the traffic lights. On the 'White Horse' on the left there is a realistic model bird perched on one of the chimneys. Turn left here into South Holme and enter the village of **Stourpaine**. At a slightly staggered crossroads turn right into Manor Road. The tiled roof and flint base of the wall on the right suggest that it is a cob wall protected by 'a good hat and a good pair of shoes'. On the left is a similar wall which has fallen into disrepair, and the cob is exposed.

#### *A climb up Hod Hill*

If you wish to visit Hod Hill it is best to park before the next junction and walk along the road straight ahead. The road leads to the little River Iwerne, which should be pronounced 'Yuen'. An excellent path follows the river upstream and climbs up to the Iron Age hill fort on Hod Hill. The area enclosed by the ramparts is roughly square, and the north-east quarter is occupied by a Roman fort. Hod Hill was acquired by the National Trust in 1984.

Follow the road round to the right, and turn left onto the A 350. In about a mile and a half there is a view on the right of Stepleton House, which is made up of three separate buildings linked by



Stepleton House

passages. The central building was built early in the seventeenth century, and the two smaller buildings were added in 1758.

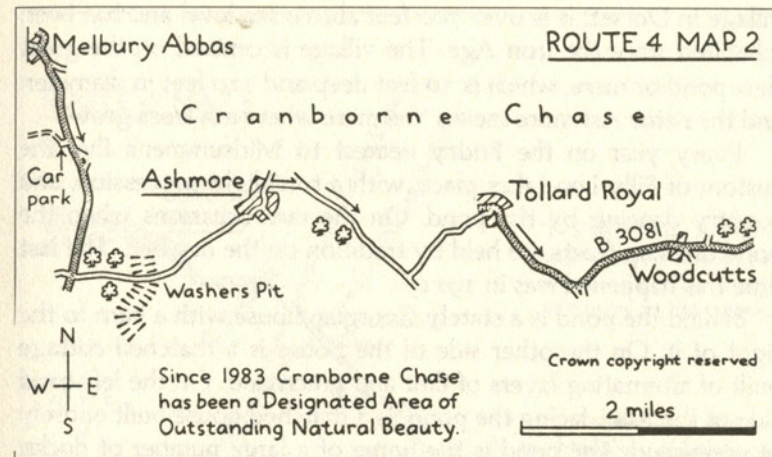
In another half-mile take a turning on the left signposted to **Iwerne Courtney** or Shroton. After the road bends right there is a lovely high stone wall on the left. In front of this is a pump bearing the date 1883. Just past the church is an enormous thatched barn with two projecting wings on the north side. It is quite the largest barn I have ever seen.

Go straight on here. Turn right at the crossroads and left into the main road. This leads to **Iwerne Minster**, which is the most interesting of all the villages on the road from Blandford to Shaftesbury. After passing the filling station take the first turning on the right. At the next junction there is a copper beech tree on a circular raised bed and a pump house with a plaque saying that Iwerne Minster was the best-kept village in Dorset in 1987. Bear right here, into Watery Lane. On the right is an old cottage which is used as a butcher's shop. A plate glass window has been added without spoiling the appearance of the cottage at all.

Here the road is followed on the left by a clear stream which is crossed by tiny bridges. At the next junction turn left into School Lane. Some way along on the left is an exceptionally beautiful house, partly tile-hung and partly half-timbered, with overhanging upper stories at different levels.

At the end of the road there is another copper beech tree on a circular raised bed. It is so like the first you could easily believe that you have gone round in a circle. Close to the junction is a very old building with tiny ogee-headed windows. Turn left here, then right, and then left at the T-junction. The road bends left and right and comes to yet another interesting road junction. In the centre is a pump dated 1880 complete with its handle and lead spout. Above the spout is a little wooden door with strap hinges. On the left is a shelter adorned with a statue of Mercury, who may be recognised by the wings on his heels.

Ignore the turning on the left, and turn right into the main road. Keep on the main road through Sutton Waldron to **Fontmell Magna**. When the main road bends right go straight on along a minor road. Bear left onto a mainer road and then bear right (effectively going straight on). Just past the church is a small green with a stream behind it, and beyond the stream is a brightly coloured garden backed by a stone house. This lovely spot is only a hundred yards from the A 350, yet most of those who use the



main road are unaware of its existence.

Opposite the green is Watermill Cottage, and just south of the cottage, hidden by a wall, is a mill pond. Tall people can see the pond over the top of the wall. Small people have to be lifted up.

Turn left onto the main road. The range of hills visible on the right is Cranborne Chase. Go straight on through Compton Abbas, and about a mile beyond the village take a turning on the right signposted to Melbury Abbas. Take the first turning on the right (which is unsignposted), and go straight on onto a mainer road. This is part of the high level route from Shaftesbury to Blandford.

Stay on the main road as it climbs up onto Cranborne Chase. At the top of the hill there is a car park on the right. From the far right-hand corner of the car park a track leads down to East Compton. Some way down the hill on the right is a bank of wild flowers, including twayblade orchids, on a south-facing slope.

Two hundred yards beyond the car park there is a magnificent view on the right looking down the valley of Longcombe Bottom to Hambledon Hill and beyond. Go straight on for a mile and turn left at the crossroads. The road leads down to Washers Pit where it crosses Stubhampton Bottom, the upper part of the Tarrant Valley. It is said that this area is haunted by the ghost of a woman in white, and that wild spirits called gappergennies can be heard wailing here.

In about a mile you come to **Ashmore**, the oldest and highest

village in Dorset. It is over 700 feet above sea level and has been inhabited since the Iron Age. The village is centred on the great dew pond or mere, which is 16 feet deep and 120 feet in diameter; and the name Ashmore means 'the mere where ash trees grow'.

Every year on the Friday nearest to Midsummer's Eve the custom of Filly Loo takes place, with a torchlight procession, and country dancing by the pond. On the rare occasions when the pond dries up feasts are held by tradition on the dry bed. The last time this happened was in 1911.

Behind the pond is a stately Georgian house with a barn to the right of it. On the other side of the house is a thatched cottage built of alternating layers of flint and greensand. On the left-hand side of the road, facing the pond, is a thatched house built entirely of greensand. The pond is the home of a large number of ducks, and, in the spring, of fluffy yellow ducklings.

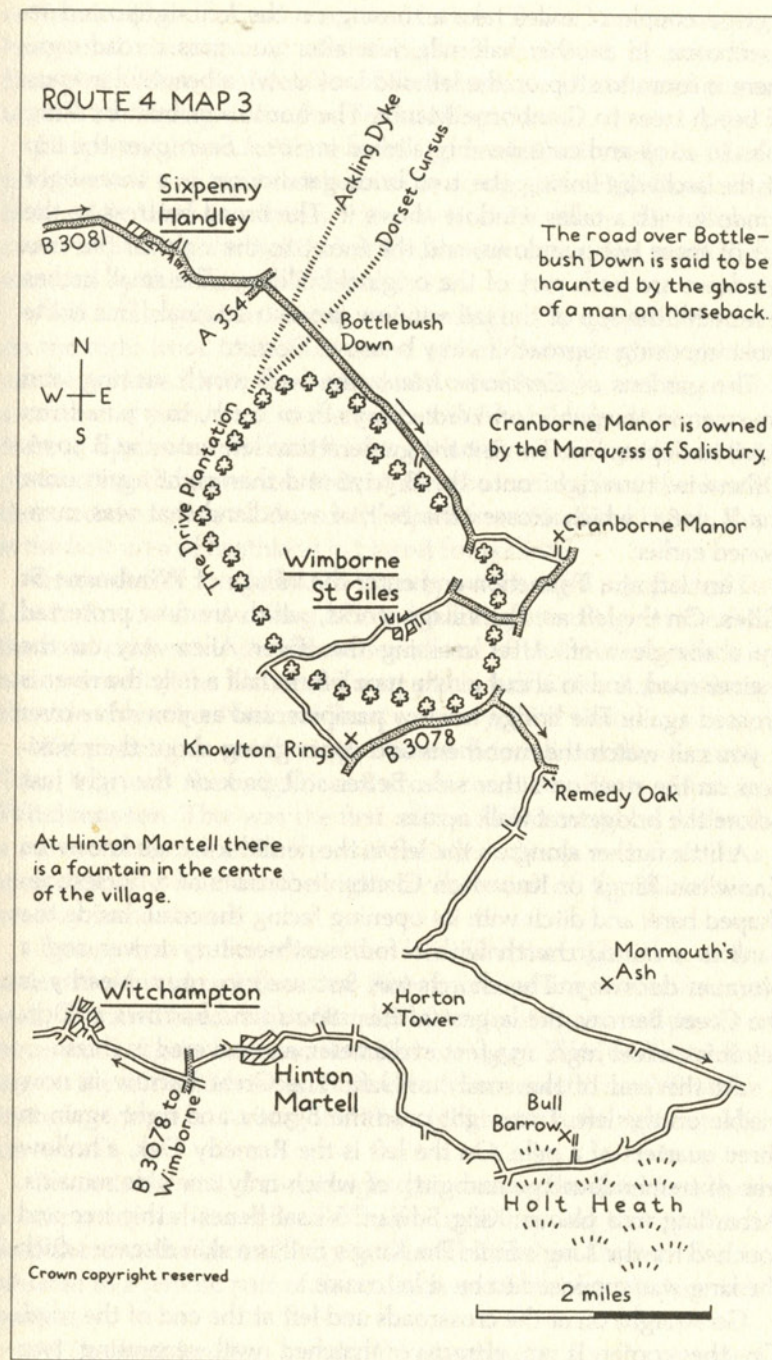
Ignore the turning right by the pond. When you come to the end of the village take a turning on the right signposted to Tollard Royal, and then turn right again. On a clear day you can see the Isle of Wight from this road.

On the left is a common dotted with oak trees. At the end of the common take an unsignposted road on the left that is easily missed. In half a mile the road bends left and there is a view across the valley to the beautiful sylvan landscape of the Rushmore estate.

When you get to Tollard Royal turn right onto the B 3081, and continue through **Sixpenny Handley** to a roundabout. Here the road crosses the Great Western Turnpike, which was built in about 1750.

Go straight on at the roundabout. In a quarter of a mile, in the area called Bottlebush Down, the road crosses the Roman road Ackling Dyke, which runs from Old Sarum to Badbury Rings. Usually a Roman road survives only in the alignment of modern roads and hedges, but here the actual agger, or embankment, of the Roman road can be seen. In another quarter of a mile the road crosses an even earlier embankment, the neolithic Dorset Cursus. This is not so pronounced as Ackling Dyke, but it is still clearly visible.

The woodland you can see on the right is part of the Drive Plantation, a narrow strip of woodland nine miles long and a hundred yards wide that surrounds the estate of the Earl of Shaftesbury.



In a couple of miles take a turning on the left signposted to Cranborne. In another half-mile, just after you pass a road sign, there is room to stop on the left and look down a beautiful avenue of beech trees to Cranborne Manor. The house was built by King John in 1208 and considerably altered in 1611. Seen over the top of the archway linking the two brick gatehouses is a three-light window with a taller window above it. The broad buttress to the left of these two windows, and the turret to the right of the two windows are both part of the original building. The small arches level with the top of the tall window are also original. This is the most imposing approach to any house in Dorset.

The gardens of *Cranborne Manor* are well worth visiting, and are open to the public on Wednesdays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. from April to September. To visit the gardens turn left onto the B 3078. Otherwise turn right onto the B 3078 and then right again onto the B 3081, which crosses the belt of woodland that was mentioned earlier.

Turn left at a T-junction and enter the village of **Wimborne St Giles**. On the left are the village stocks, which are now protected by a shingle roof. After crossing the River Allen stay on the main road, and in about a mile turn left. In half a mile the river is crossed again. The bridge has low parapets, and as you drive over it you can watch the moorhens and coots going about their business on the river on either side. Better still, park on the right just before the bridge and walk across.

A little farther along on the left is the neolithic henge known as Knowlton Rings or Knowlton Circles. It consists of a horseshoe-shaped bank and ditch with its opening facing the road. Inside the bank is a ruined church with a fourteenth-century tower and a Norman doorway. The church was last used in 1647. Nearby is the Great Barrow, the largest of the 1800 round barrows in Dorset. It is 21 feet high, 135 feet in diameter, and covered in trees.

At the end of the road turn left. The Great Barrow is now visible on the left. Turn right onto the B 3081 and right again in three quarters of a mile. On the left is the Remedy Oak, a hollow tree of tremendous age and girth of which only one side remains. According to a plaque, King Edward VI sat beneath this tree and touched for the King's Evil. The King's Evil is a skin disease which the king was supposed to be able to cure.

Go straight on at the crossroads and left at the end of the road. On the corner is an attractive thatched wall separating two

cottages. Ahead of you is the Horton Tower, an interesting hexagonal structure six stories high. It was built in 1762 by Humphrey Sturt, the Member of Parliament for Dorset, and it was used in the filming of *Far from the Madding Crowd*.

Keep straight on for three miles, ignoring the turning to Mannington, and turn right just before the 40 sign into Holt Road. In a little while there is a lovely view of Holt Heath on the left and room to park on the right. Holt Heath was among the properties acquired by the National Trust in 1982.

Half a mile past the turning to Mannington an unmetalled road on the right leads to the viewpoint of Bull Barrow, which should not be confused with the better-known Bul Barrow, and there are a number of paths back to the road. A third of a mile farther along there is a gateway on the left where there is room to park without obstructing the entrance. From here you can explore the heath that stretches away to the south. Apart from Studland Heath, this is the best area of heathland in Dorset for walking.

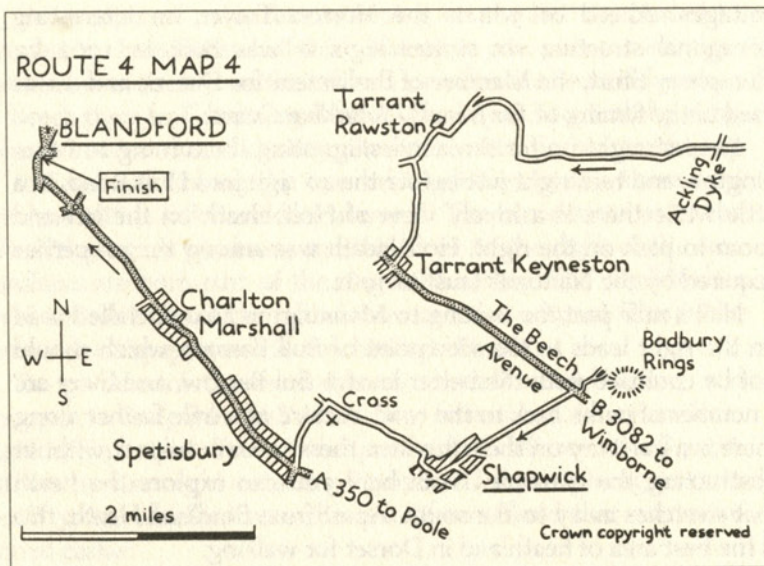
In about half a mile take a turning on the right signposted to Lower Row. After bending left and passing a turning on the left the road crosses the deciduous woodland of Holt Forest, which is now owned by the National Trust; and in half a mile it runs along the side of another National Trust property, Holt Wood.

Keep straight on through Hinton Martell to the B 3078. Turn left, and then right, and cross over the River Allen to **Witchampton**. This was the first village in Dorset to be declared a conservation area. At the start of the built-up area there is a view across a field on the right to the ruins of the thirteenth-century manor house.

Ignore Lower Street on the left. On the right the early-sixteenth-century windows of Abbey House are visible over a wall. The road bends right, then left, then right again, and passes a traceried lychgate between thatched cottages. Take the first turning on the left, which is signposted to Manswood. Turn left at the triangle, ignore a turning on the right, and turn right at the crossroads.

Towards the end of the straight you can see Bradford Farm half a mile away on the left, and half a mile beyond that is Bradford Barrow, the second largest round barrow in Dorset. This is situated in a remote part of the county, and is not known to many people.

At the next junction go straight on, crossing the Roman road



Ackling Dyke. Here it is a metalled road, but for most of its length from Bottlebush Down to Badbury Rings it is a track or bridgeway.

In another two miles the road descends into the valley of the Tarrant, the stream that gives its name to no fewer than eight villages and hamlets. In descending order these are Tarrant Gunville, Tarrant Hinton, Tarrant Launceston, Tarrant Monkton, Tarrant Rawston, Tarrant Rushton, Tarrant Keyneston and Tarrant Crawford.

When you meet the valley road go straight on. The road bends right and crosses the Tarrant. From the bridge you can see a miniature water mill that was once used to grind corn on a small scale. The name Tarrant is said to be derived from the word torrent, which hardly describes the placid little stream that flows under this bridge.

Bear left at the telephone box, and follow the valley down to **Tarrant Keyneston**. Turn left at the crossroads. When the road reaches the top of the hill it enters an avenue of pollarded beech trees that was planted in 1835. The avenue is two miles long, and there are about 365 trees on each side.

In a mile take an unmetalled road on the left signposted to Badbury Rings. This well-known hill fort was another of the

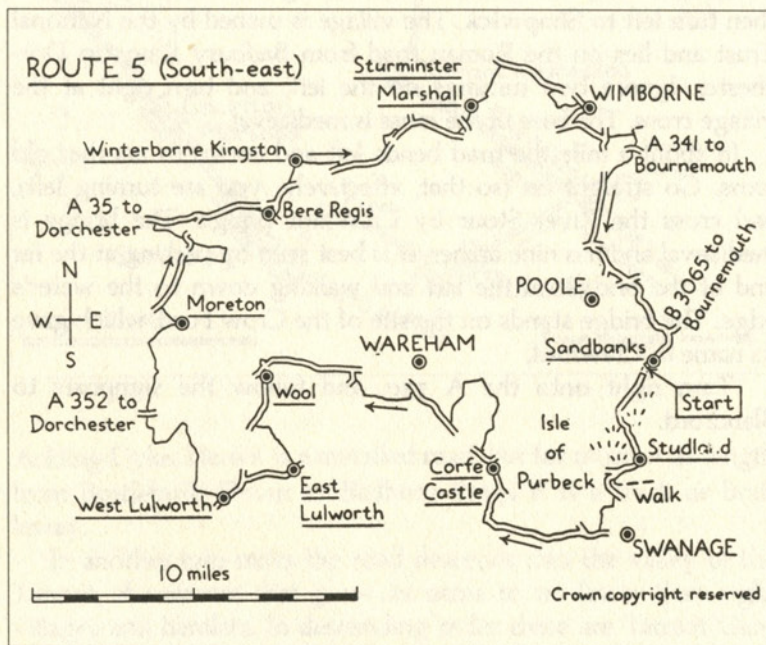
properties acquired by the National Trust in 1982. Unlike Maiden Castle, it continued to be occupied in Roman times, when it was known as Vindocladia, and a number of Roman roads converge on the site. The trees in the centre of the earthwork (Badbury Clump) were planted in the eighteenth century.

On returning to the main road turn right for a few yards, and then turn left to **Shapwick**. The village is owned by the National Trust and lies on the Roman road from Badbury Rings to Dorchester. Ignore two turnings on the left, and turn right at the village cross. The base of the cross is mediaeval.

In about a mile the road bends left and comes to another old cross. Go straight on (so that, effectively, you are turning left), and cross the River Stour by Crawford Bridge. The bridge is mediaeval and has nine arches. It is best seen by parking at the far end of the bridge on the left and walking down to the water's edge. The bridge stands on the site of the Crow Ford, which gave its name to Crawford.

Turn right onto the A 350, and follow the signposts to Blandford.

## ROUTE 5 · SOUTH-EAST



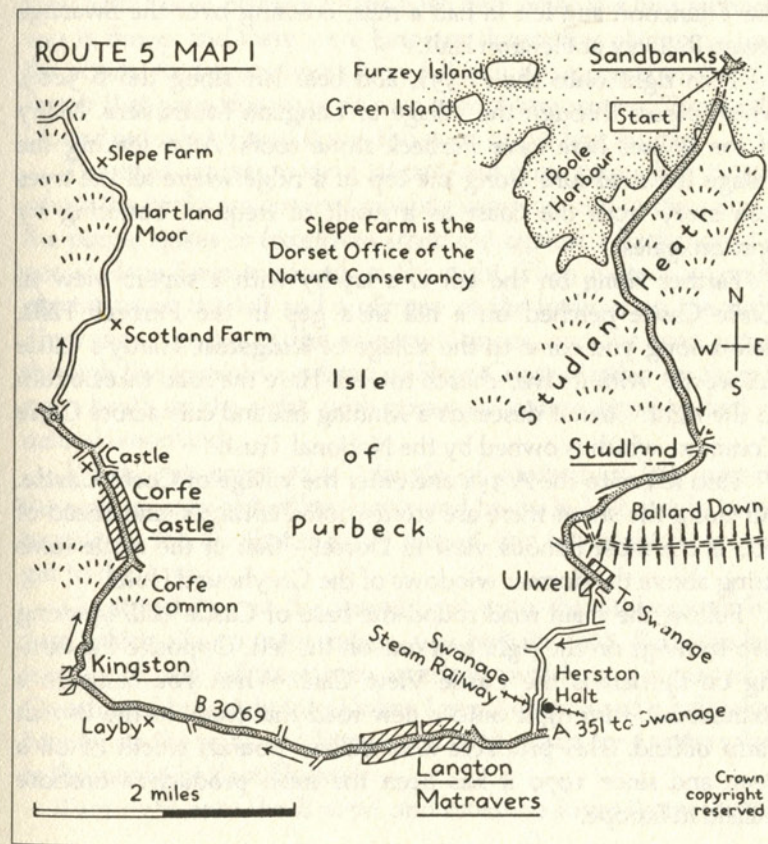
The route starts at Sandbanks, at the north side of the entrance to Poole Harbour. Sandbanks is situated on a remarkable peninsula linked to the mainland by a neck of land only a hundred yards across.

Leave Sandbanks by the ferry to South Haven Point. From the ferry there is a good view of the islands in Poole Harbour. On the far left is the Goathorn Peninsula with the Purbeck Hills behind it. To the right of this is Green Island, which was uninhabited until 1978, and now has a single dwelling, Greensleeves Cottage. Farther right is Furzey Island, which is owned by B.P. and used for the extraction of oil. To the right of this and twice as far away is Round Island, which gradually disappears behind Furzey Island as

you cross. On the far right is the largest island in the harbour, Brownsea Island, much of which is now a nature reserve, with over-wintering waders and red squirrels.

As you leave the ferry there is a view on the left of a beautiful sandy beach, then for two miles the road runs through the uncultivated wastes of Studland Heath. After the road bends left, the Agglestone is visible below and to the left of the obelisk on Ballard Down. The Agglestone is a remnant of a layer of ironstone that rolled over in 1970 and is now tilted to the south. It is also known as the Haggerstone, the Witchstone, the Devil's Nightcap and the Devil's Anvil.

From the bus stop opposite Knoll House Hotel you can see across Studland Bay to the island of No Man's Land. The arch connecting this with the mainland collapsed in 1920. To the left of



the island is the chalk stack called Old Harry's Wife, which was as high as the mainland before the top half tumbled into the sea in 1896.

Carry straight on through the village of **Studland**, where there is a well-preserved Norman church, and take a turning on the left signposted to Swanage. In a quarter of a mile, by a slight right-hand bend, is a small parking place on the left. 200 yards farther on is a track on the left which leads up onto Ballard Down and to one of the finest ridge walks in Dorset. I came to Ballard Down with Jim White on one of his guided walks, and he pointed out twelve different kinds of butterfly.

The road passes through the only gap in the Purbeck Hills between Corfe Castle and the sea. After passing a layby on the left turn right into an unsignposted road through the hamlet of Ulwell. After the road bends left take the right fork. Turn right at the T-junction and left in half a mile, crossing over the Swanage Steam Railway at Herston Halt.

Turn right onto the A 351, and bear left along the B 3069, which passes through the village of **Langton Matravers**. Many of the houses here have Purbeck stone roofs. After leaving the village the road runs along the top of a ridge where all the trees lean away from the coast as a result of frequent battering by onshore gales.

Farther along on the left is a lay-by with a superb view of Corfe Castle perched on a hill in a gap in the Purbeck Hills. Before long you come to the village of **Kingston**, Hardy's 'Little Enkworth', with its two church towers. Here the road takes a turn to the right. Then it descends a winding hill and cuts across Corfe Common, which is owned by the National Trust.

Turn left onto the A 351 and enter the village of **Corfe Castle**. All along the street there are stone-roofed cottages, and ahead of you is the most famous view in Dorset - that of the castle ruins rising above the dormer windows of the Greyhound Hotel.

Follow the main road round the base of Castle Hill, ignoring two turnings on the right and one on the left. Opposite the turning on the left is the Castle View Café. When you come to a roundabout, turn right onto a new road that leads to the Wytch Farm oilfield. This produces £22 million pounds worth of oil a year, and since 1979 it has been the most productive onshore oilfield in Europe.

Before you get to the gate take a turning on the left which immediately bends right. In about a mile the road bends left at Scotland Farm, which is the subject of a painting by Gordon Beningfield, and which was featured in his television programme 'A Brush with Hardy's Dorset'.

In another three-quarters of a mile the signpost to Middlebere Farm is passed. Then the road bends right, and at the next left-hand bend there is room to park on the right. The stretch of road beyond this point provides the best short walk in Dorset. The road is unfenced and level with the heath on either side, and sometimes you can hear the wildfowl on Poole Harbour.

I have returned here many times since the early-morning walk described in my Purbeck guide, and each time there has been something different to see. I have been here when the orchids were so prolific along the grass verges it was hard to believe that they hadn't been planted. I have been here when the bog asphodel was in flower and there were Emperor dragonflies skimming over the ponds. And every time I have felt that there was something in the air that gave this place its own special atmosphere. Eventually I found out what it was: it was the scent of the bog myrtle.

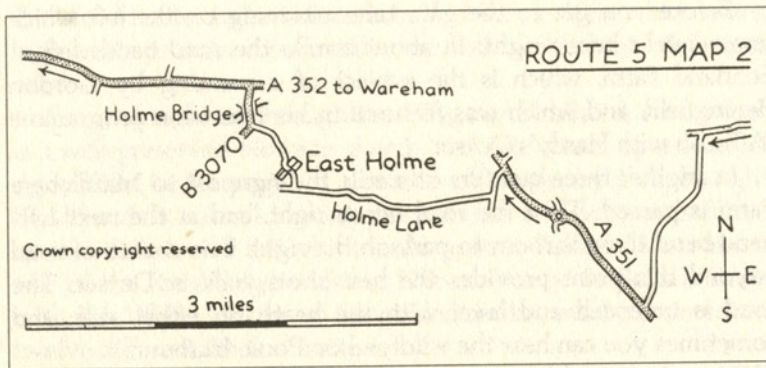
The road crosses over a stream and rises through a cutting where the banks are covered in white campion; and in the summer the purple spikes of foxgloves stand out against a background of gorse. Slepe Farm is passed on the right. Then there is a conifer plantation on the left and a glimpse of the harbour on the right. Then the character of the scenery changes, and the road passes through the ancient woodland of Slepe Copse. Farther on there is open heath on the right, with gorse and cotton grass backed by natural woodland.

When you come to a triangle of roads turn left, passing through an area of heather, gorse and birch. In half a mile take a turning on the left that is easily missed, and turn right when you get to the A 351.

Go straight on at the roundabout onto the Stoborough bypass, which, like so many others, was built in 1988. Take the first turning on the left (see map overleaf), which is signposted to Creech, and turn right into Holme Lane. In a mile and a half take a turning on the right which crosses a little stream by a watersplash in the hamlet of **East Holme**.

Turn right onto the B 3070, and cross the River Frome by the



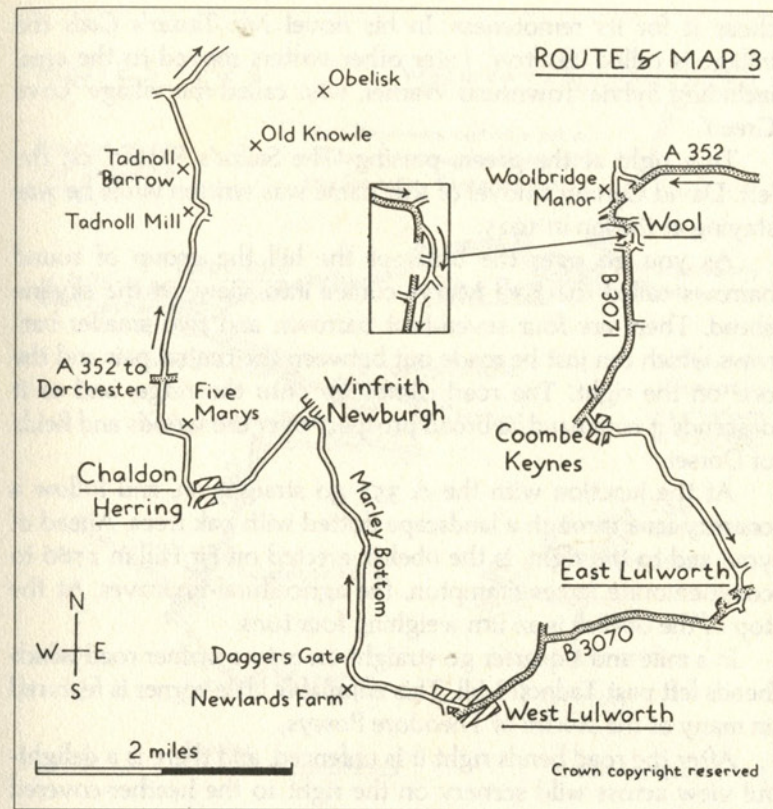


New Holme Bridge. There is a good view of the old bridge on the left. At the far end of the bridge there is a beautiful thatched cottage.

Turn left onto the A 352, passing the nineteenth-century tower of East Stoke church. In a mile and a half turn right, and then, in a quarter of a mile, turn sharp left. On the right is Woolbridge Manor with its three big chimneys and its mullioned and transomed windows. This is Hardy's Wellbridge Manor, where Tess of the d'Urbervilles spent her honeymoon. The name 'd'Urberville' was taken from the historical Turberville family who once owned the house. Beside the road is a sixteenth-century barn with earlier windows inserted into it.

After passing the manor house the road crosses the River Frome by the sixteenth-century Wool Bridge, which has refuges over its cutwaters. Turn right onto the A 352 and enter the village of **Wool**. Just past the level crossing turn left and follow the road round to the right. Immediately before the Black Bear turn left into Spring Street, a very beautiful road with wide verges and cottages on both sides. Those on the left are approached by footbridges over a clear stream.

Keep straight on to the main road and bear left. Ignore the turning to Woodstreet, and take the next turning on the left to the attractive hamlet of **Coombe Keynes**, which should be pronounced Kaynes. Here there is an oak tree on the village green and a cottage with the delightful name of 'April Thatch'. Farther on the road follows the long carstone wall surrounding the grounds of Lulworth Castle. At the top of the hill on the right is a gatehouse bearing the date 1808.



When you get to **East Lulworth** go straight on at the cross-roads, and follow the road round to the right when an unmetalled road goes straight on. There are many beautiful thatched cottages in this area. When you come to the B 3070 go straight on, and turn left at the T-junction to **West Lulworth**.

Bear right at the war memorial and bear right again at the end of the road. Just past the turning to Durdle Door on the left is Newlands Farm, which was once a temporary residence of Bertrand Russell. Here the road curves round to the right and follows the valley of Marley Bottom down to Winfrith Newburgh.

After passing the church, turn left, and follow another valley to **Chaldon Herring**. From 1904 until 1940 this charming village was the home of the author Theodore Powys, who deliberately

chose it for its remoteness. In his novel *Mr Tasker's Gods* the village is called 'Skelton'. Later other writers moved to the area, including Sylvia Townsend Warner, who called the village 'Love Green'.

Turn right at the green, passing 'The Sailor's Return' on the left. David Garnett's novel of that name was written while he was staying at the inn in 1925.

As you go over the brow of the hill the group of round barrows called the Five Marys comes into view on the skyline ahead. There are four seven-foot barrows, and two smaller barrows which can just be made out between the central pair and the one on the right. The road climbs up onto the ridge, and as it descends it commands a broad prospect over the woods and fields of Dorset.

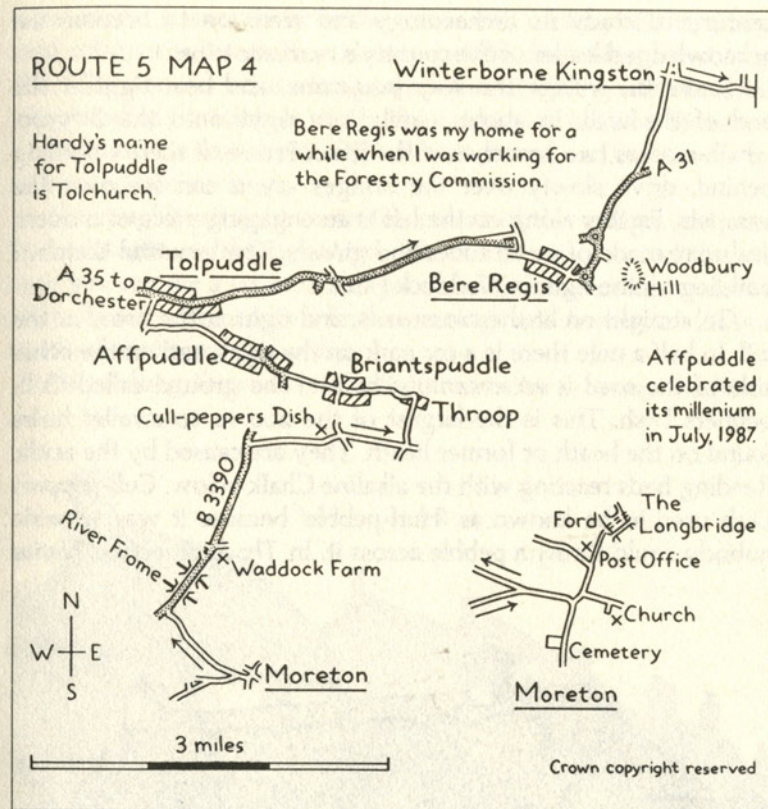
At the junction with the A 352 go straight on, and follow a country lane through a landscape dotted with oak trees. Ahead of you, and to the right, is the obelisk erected on Fir Hill in 1786 to commemorate James Frampton, the agricultural improver. At the top of the obelisk is an urn weighing four tons.

In a mile and a quarter go straight on onto a main road which bends left past Tadnoll Mill. This enjoyable little corner is featured in many of the stories of Theodore Powys.

After the road bends right it is unfenced, and there is a delightful view across wild scenery on the right to the heather-covered tumulus on Old Knowle. Open the car window to appreciate the subtle fragrance of the bog myrtle that grows in this area. The pine-covered bank on the left where the road bends slightly left is Tadknoll Barrow. There is room to park just past here on the left. The obelisk is now visible at 90° on the right.

At the end of the road turn right, crossing the London-to-Dorchester railway by the Red Bridge. It is unusual for a railway bridge to have a name. After crossing the bridge the road descends through a beautiful wood of pines and rhododendrons and crosses a stretch of country where there are oak trees at intervals along the roadside and along all the adjoining hedges.

Ignore a turning on the left. Bear right onto a main road and keep straight on to **Moreton**. In Hardy's *Wessex Poems* Moreton is referred to as Moreford. In the centre of the village the road bends right and there is a minor road on the left. Just a few yards along the minor road a turning on the right leads to the church, where there is room to park. Moreton church is noted for its



windows, which were engraved by Laurence Whistler between 1955 and 1984.

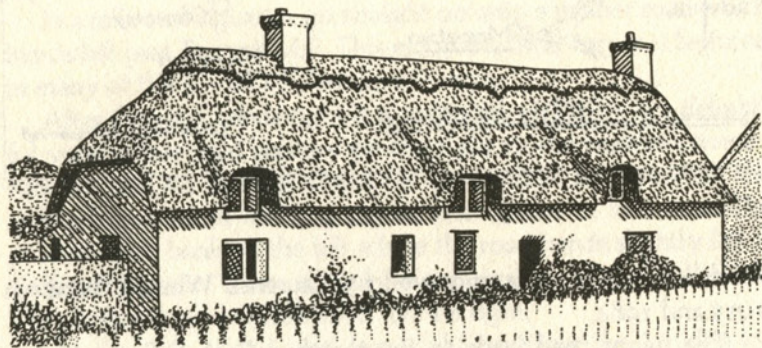
The minor road leads to the thatched Post Office, where a street of old-world charm leads off to the left, and continues to a ford over the River Frome. This is a true ford, that is a place where a river is shallow enough to be crossed, and not a watersplash, as at East Holme. Alongside the ford is the Long-bridge, the longest footbridge in Dorset, and one of the locations used by Jack Hargreaves to introduce his television series 'Old Country'. From the far end of the bridge you can see Moreton House on the right.

A hundred yards south of the village is a cemetery, and at the far end of the cemetery on the right is the grave of T.E. Lawrence, or 'Lawrence of Arabia'. He went to Arabia early in the present

century to study its archaeology and went on to become the acknowledged leader of the country's nomadic tribes.

Leave the village the way you came, and bear right at the end of the wall. In about a mile turn right onto the B 3390, which crosses two branches of the River Frome. If there's nothing behind, drive slowly over the bridges - you can see over the parapets. Farther along on the left is an engaging piece of modern sculpture made of metal tubes and girders. The beautiful thatched building on the right is Waddock Farm.

Go straight on at the crossroads, and right at the brow of the hill. In half a mile there is a car park on the right, and on the other side of the road is an enormous hole in the ground called Cull-peppers Dish. This is the largest of the 200 or so swallet holes found on the heath or former heath. They are caused by the acidic Reading Beds reacting with the alkaline Chalk below. Cull-peppers Dish used to be known as 'Hurl-pebble' because it was so wide nobody could throw a pebble across it. In *The Return of the Native*



Cruck Cottage, opposite the Ring at Briantspuddle

Mrs Wildeve gathered holly here. Near by are smaller holes called Cull-peppers Spoon and the Devil's Pit or Hell Pit.

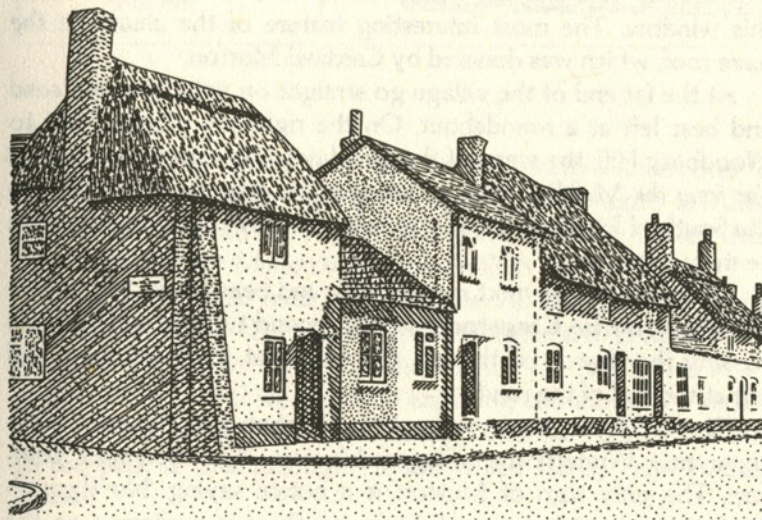
Go straight on at the crossroads and in half a mile take a turning on the left signposted to Throop. From here the road descends between ivy-covered oaks to the hamlet of Throop, where it bends sharply to the left.

Our route now follows the Piddle valley to **Briantspuddle**. The village takes its name from Sir Brian Turberville, who was the

Lord of the Manor early in the fourteenth century. Of its forty-odd cottages no fewer than twenty are thatched. Near the start of the village on the left is a long symmetrical building with thatched turrets called the Ring. It was built as a dairy in 1919 by Sir Ernest Debenham, the founder of Debenham's stores, and has now been converted into cottages.

Go roughly straight on in the centre of the village, and continue straight on through Affpuddle. Some way beyond the village you can see a series of low parallel ridges in a meadow on the right. This phenomenon is known as ridge and furrow, and it is a result of mediaeval ploughing.

Before long the road bends right, and after crossing the River



Corner of Butt Lane and West Street, Bere Regis

Piddle, enters the village of **Tolpuddle**. Ahead of you is the Martyr's Tree, a hollow sycamore whose branches were removed in April 1989. Under this tree six farm workers met in 1833 to form the Friendly Society of Agricultural Workers. This is traditionally regarded as the beginning of the Trades Union movement, although there were other trade unions existing at the time. The six men were called the Tolpuddle Martyrs, and they became so well-known it is probably true to say that more people have

heard of Tolpuddle than have heard of any other village in Dorset. Go straight on onto the A 35. As you leave the village the little hill called 'Tolpuddle Ball' comes into view amongst the pine trees ahead. Stay on the road for about three miles, and bear left just past the start of the dual carriageway. Turn right at the T-junction, and follow the road into **Bere Regis**.

Bere Regis is featured in several of Hardy's novels, where it is called Kingsbere-sub-Greenhill. Queen Elfrida, the mother of Ethelred the Unready, lived in the village in the tenth century, and King John had a palace here. For over five hundred years, from 1259 until 1780, members of the Turberville family were Lords of the Manor, and all their coats of arms are displayed in the Turberville Window in the south wall of the church. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* Tess and her family set up their double bed outside this window. The most interesting feature of the church is the nave roof, which was donated by Cardinal Morton.

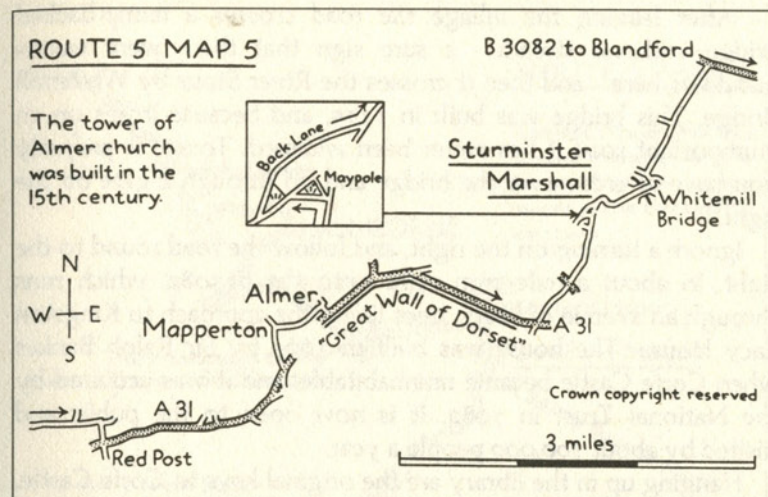
At the far end of the village go straight on onto a main road and bear left at a roundabout. On the right the ground rises to Woodbury Hill, the scene of the five-day fair that was described in *Far from the Madding Crowd*. This was the most important fair in the South of England, and it was held annually from the thirteenth century until 1951.

Turn right at the next roundabout, and bear left in half a mile. At **Winterborne Kingston** take the second turning on the right, passing the church on the left. Turn right at the T-junction, and left at the end of the road.

The road you are now on links Winterborne Kingston with three tiny Winterborne villages, Muston, Anderson and Tomson. The only sign of Muston is a notice saying 'No through road'. Between Muston and Anderson there is a glimpse on the left of the chimneys and gables of Anderson Manor. When the road bends right a lane on the left leads to Winterborne Tomson, where there is a tiny Norman church well worth visiting.

Turn left at the Red Post onto the A 31. Now the view ahead is dominated by the tallest prospect tower in Dorset, Charborough Tower, which is over a hundred feet high. In Hardy's *Two on a Tower*, Swithin St Cleeve gazed at the stars through his telescope from the top of this tower.

On the left is the Happy Eater, which is open from 7 a.m. until 11 p.m. Ignore the turnings to Winterborne Zelston but take the turning on the left signposted to Mapperton. Looking sharp left



as you turn the corner you can see the North Winterborne or its dried-up bed. Turn right at Mapperton, right again at Almer church and left onto the A 31. A few yards along on the left there is a view of Almer Manor, which was built in about 1600.

Stay on the main road for two miles. All along the right-hand side of the road is the wall of Charborough Park. It was built in 1841, and is known locally as the Great Wall of Dorset. In the course of the wall there are three imposing entrances. The second of these has a stag over the archway, and the third has a lion. In the park is Charborough House, which Hardy calls Welland House.

After passing the Lion Gate turn left at a crossroads to **Sturminster Marshall**. Go straight on at the junction with the A 350, and in half a mile turn left into Kings Street. On the right is a triangular green where fairs have been held since 1101. On the green is an oak tree planted in 1887 and a modern maypole thirty-five feet high. At the top of the maypole is a weather vane in the form of a water vole, which is the emblem of the village.

Farther on is another triangular green, and here there is a modern replica of the village stocks. At the end of the second green (by a telephone box) turn sharp right, and go straight on into Church Street, passing between the church on the left and a row of thatched cottages on the right.

After leaving the village the road crosses a hump-backed bridge with no stream - a sure sign that there were water-meadows here - and then it crosses the River Stour by Whitemill Bridge. This bridge was built in 1175, and because it lies on an unimportant road it has never been widened. To see it properly you have to cross over the bridge and go through a gate on the right.

Ignore a turning on the right, and follow the road round to the right. In about a mile turn right onto the B 3082, which runs through an avenue of beech trees lining the approach to Kingston Lacy House. The house was built in 1665 by Sir Ralph Bankes when Corfe Castle became uninhabitable, and it was acquired by the National Trust in 1982. It is now open to the public and visited by about 100,000 people a year.

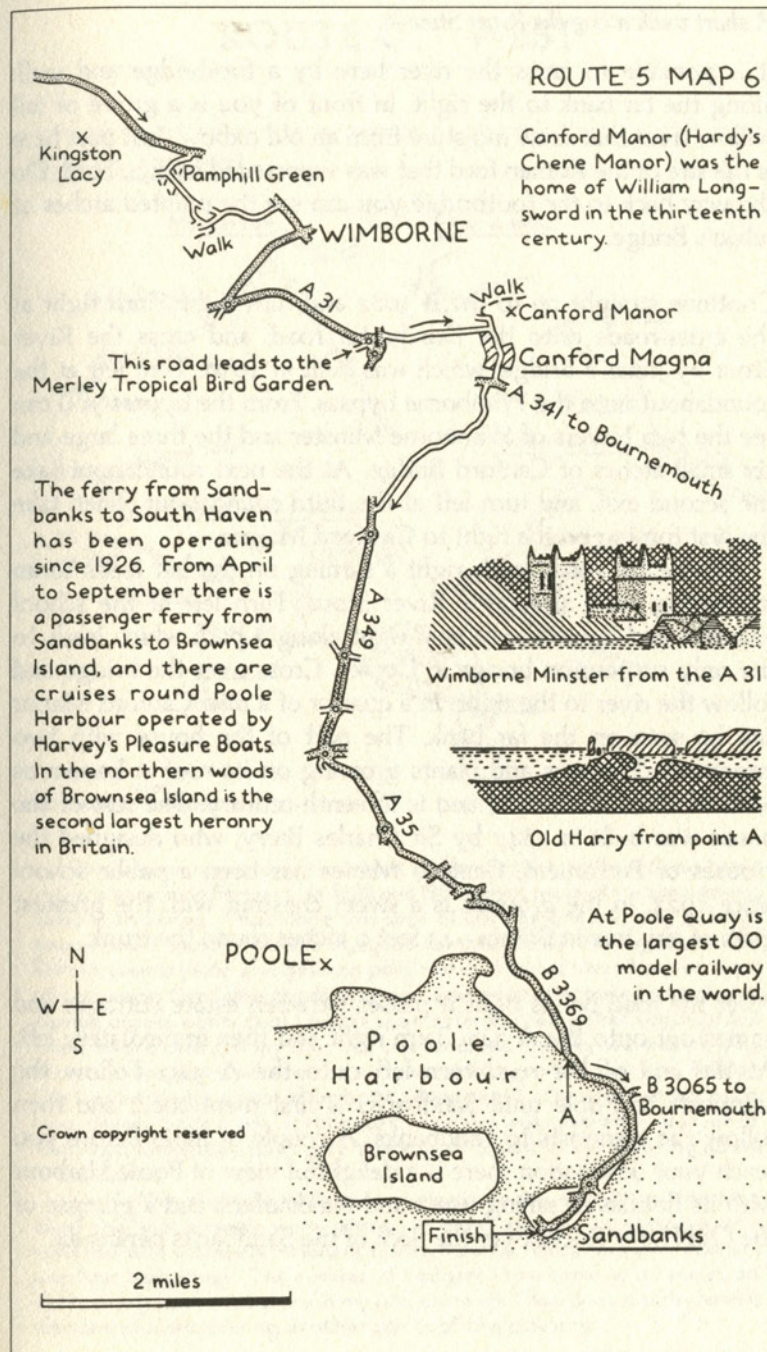
Hanging up in the library are the original keys to Corfe Castle. It is strange to think that these keys still exist, when all the locks have gone. It makes one wonder what happened to the locks, and to all the other fittings of the castle.

In the grounds is the Philae Needle, an Egyptian obelisk erected in 150 B.C., brought to Britain in 1819 and re-erected here in 1827. In 1822 Jean-François Champollion used this obelisk in conjunction with the Rosetta stone to decipher hieroglyphics.

In 1984 a National Trust consultant, going through the estate papers, came across a page from a bible written in A.D. 712 on the orders of the Venerable Bede.

After passing the entrance to the house take a turning on the right signposted to Cowgrove, and turn left opposite the drive to St Stephen's Church. The road now runs through an avenue of oak trees planted in 1846. The avenue passes down the centre of Pamphill Green, which was acquired by the National Trust at the same time as Corfe Castle and Kingston Lacy. Behind a wall on the right is the seventeenth-century stone-roofed Manor House, and farther along on the right is a thatched cricket pavilion built in 1907.

After passing the Almshouses, which are now used as a school, turn right along the side of Little Pamphill Green. Ignore a road on the right and bear left onto a main road. On the right, down a short unmetalled road, is Eye Ford, which is so called because it leads to an 'eye' or island surrounded by branches of the River Stour. This is a popular place for children and dogs to go paddling.



### A short walk along the River Stour

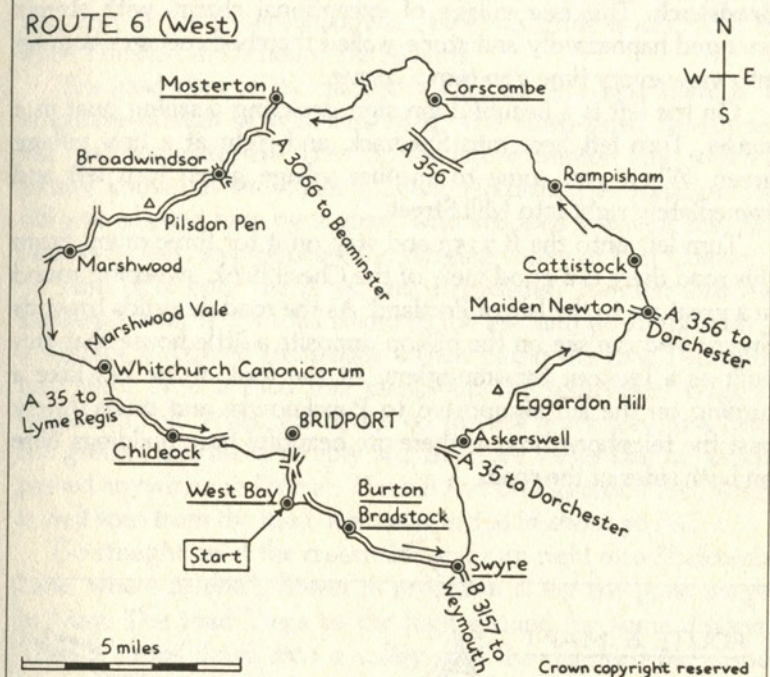
It is possible to cross the river here by a footbridge and walk along the far bank to the right. In front of you is a grove of tall willow trees that draw moisture from an old oxbow. Just past here is the site of the Roman ford that was superseded by Eye Ford. On the way back to the footbridge you can see the pointed arches of Julian's Bridge.

Continue straight on to the B 3082 and turn right. Turn right at the cross-roads onto the Dorchester road, and cross the River Stour by Julian's Bridge, which was built in 1636. Turn left at the roundabout onto the Wimborne bypass. From the bypass you can see the two towers of Wimborne Minster and the three large and six small arches of Canford Bridge. At the next roundabout take the second exit, and turn left at the third roundabout. Then take the first turning on the right to **Canford Magna**.

Where the road bends right a turning on the left leads to an interesting walk along the River Stour. Turn left at the school entrance and immediately bear right along a path which leads to the only suspension bridge in Dorset. Cross over the bridge and follow the river to the right. In a quarter of a mile Canford Manor can be seen on the far bank. The part of the house with two enormous chimneys and plants growing on its roof is known as John of Gaunt's Kitchen, and is fifteenth-century. The rest of the house was built in 1847 by Sir Charles Barry, who designed the Houses of Parliament. Canford Manor has been a public school since 1923. In the grounds is a sweet chestnut with the greatest girth of any tree in Britain - 43 feet 9 inches round the trunk.

After the road bends right it passes between estate cottages and comes out onto the A 341. Turn right and then immediately left. At the end of the road turn left onto the A 349. Follow the signposts to Poole until Sandbanks is first mentioned, and then follow the signposts to Sandbanks. A couple of miles before you reach your destination there is a delightful view of Poole Harbour with its flotillas of sailing boats and windsurfers, and a glimpse of the Old Harry Rocks over the neck of the Sandbanks peninsula.

## ROUTE 6 · WEST



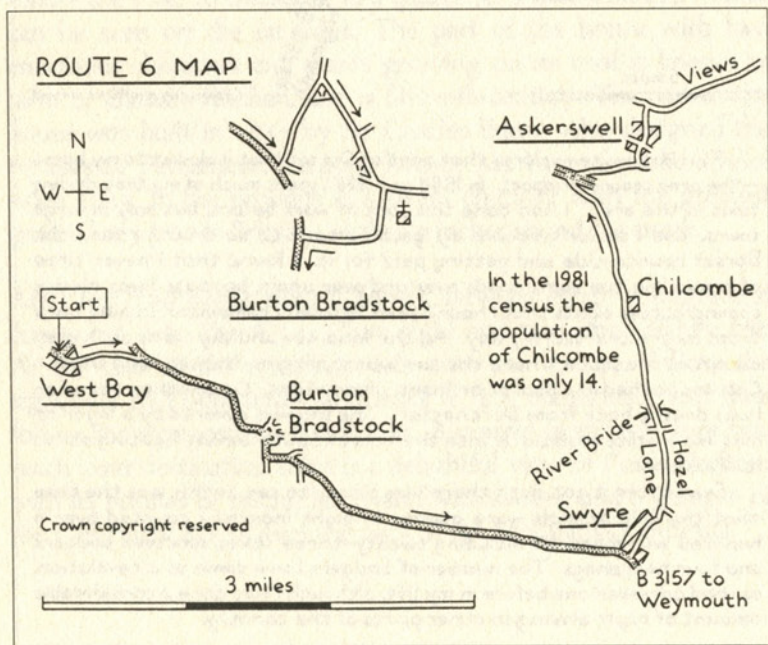
This last route explores that part of Dorset that is closest to my home — the area around Bridport. In 1988 and 1989 I spent much of my time driving taxis in this area. I had done this sort of work before, but only in large towns; and I couldn't believe my good fortune to be driving round the Dorset countryside and getting paid for it. I found that I never tired of travelling the same roads over and over again, because I was always coming across sights that I hadn't seen before. I remember coming back from Swyre one stormy day. All the land, sea and sky were dark grey except in one place where the sun was shining on the sea, and Golden Cap was bathed in a pool of brilliant silvery light. On another occasion I was driving back from Dorchester. The sea was covered by a layer of mist like a white tablecloth with the hills of South Devon floating above it like islands.

Even after it got dark there was plenty to see, as this was the time that the wild animals were about. In eight months I counted over a hundred wild mammals including twenty-three foxes, nineteen badgers and four hedgehogs. The number of badgers I saw came as a revelation, as I had only seen one before in my life, although I had done a considerable amount of night driving in other parts of the country.

Leave West Bay by the Burton Bradstock road. As the road bends left you can see the former railway station with its platform and canopy. Turn right onto the B 3157 and enter **Burton Bradstock**. This is a village of exceptional charm, with streets arranged haphazardly and stone-walled thatched cottages coming into view every time you turn a corner.

On the left is a beautiful inn sign depicting a sailing boat in a sunset. Turn left here into Shadrack, and right at a tiny village green. When you come to another village green turn left and immediately right into Mill Street.

Turn left onto the B 3157 and stay on it for three miles. From this road there is a good view of the Chesil Bank, sweeping round in a great arc to the Isle of Portland. As the road descends towards **Swyre** you can see on the hilltop opposite a little house that was built as a lookout for smugglers. At the foot of the hill take a turning on the left signposted to Puncknowle, and drive slowly past the telephone box, as there are beautiful farm buildings here on both sides of the road.



When the road bends right bear left into Hazel Lane, and go straight on at the crossroads. The road crosses the River Bride, which is well seen from the bridge, and then it goes over another of those streamless hump-backed bridges that were left over from the days of the water-meadows. The River Bride is described by Eden Phillpott in his novel *The Spinners*.

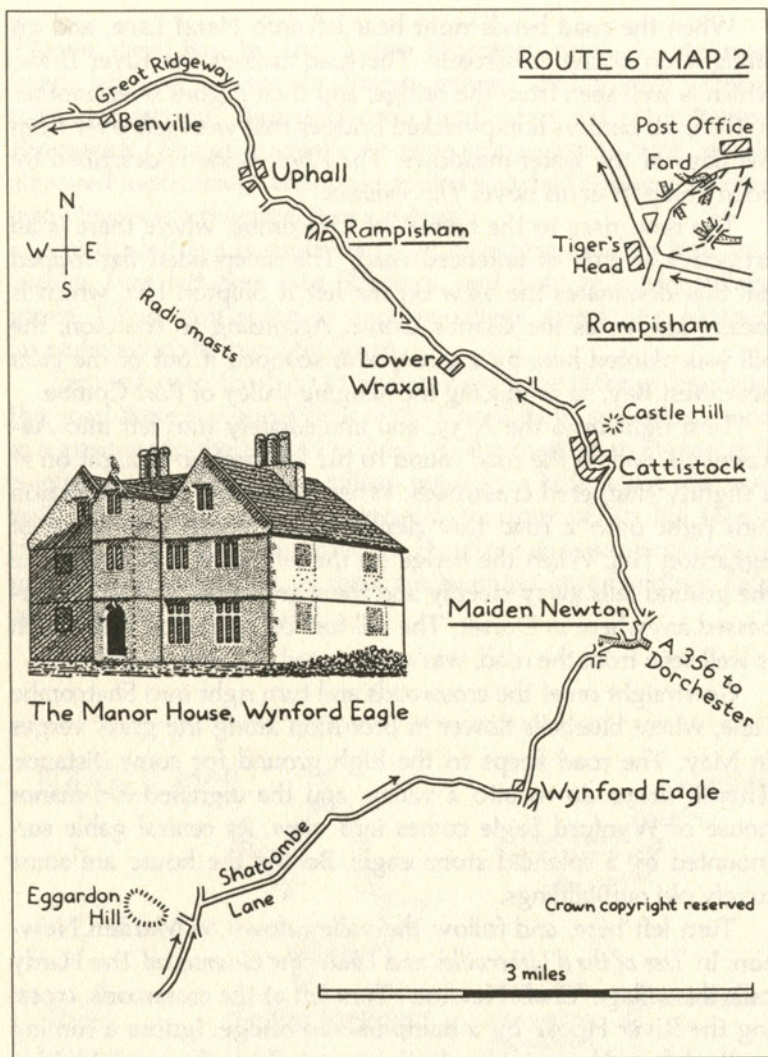
The road rises to the hamlet of Chilcombe, where there is an attractive stretch of unfenced road. The steep-sided flat-topped hill that dominates the view on the left is Shipton Hill, which is locally known as the Giant's Grave. According to tradition, the hill was planted here by a giant, who scooped it out of the cliffs near West Bay, so producing the hanging valley of Port Combe.

Turn right onto the A 35, and immediately turn left into **Askerswell**. Follow the road round to the left, and go straight on at a slightly staggered crossroads. When you come to a T-junction turn right onto a road that climbs up the south-west ridge of Eggardon Hill. When the hedge on the left gives way to a fence the ground falls away steeply and there are views that are unsurpassed anywhere in Dorset. The hill fort on Eggardon Hill, which is well seen from the road, was constructed in about 50 B.C.

Go straight on at the crossroads and turn right into Shatcombe Lane, where bluebells flower in profusion along the grass verges in May. The road keeps to the high ground for some distance. Then it drops down into a valley, and the dignified old manor house of Wynford Eagle comes into view, its central gable surmounted by a splendid stone eagle. Behind the house are some lovely old outbuildings.

Turn left here, and follow the valley down to **Maiden Newton**. In *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Under the Greenwood Tree* Hardy calls this village 'Chalk Newton'. Turn left at the crossroads, crossing the River Hooke by a hump-backed bridge. Ignore a turning on the left and bear right onto the A 356. From the second bridge you can see the River Frome emerging from low arches under a mill on the left.

In the centre of the village is the stump of a fifteenth-century cross. There are figures carved on the shaft, but they are so weathered they are unrecognisable. Turn left here. In a hundred yards the road bends right, and a turning straight ahead leads to the church. There are many churches in Dorset with Norman doorways, but this is the only church where an actual Norman door has survived. It consists simply of a number of vertical



wooden planks and is protected from the weather by a modern glass door.

In another hundred yards the road divides into three. Take the left branch, which leads to **Cattistock**. There is a good view along a footpath on the left of the church tower, which was built by George Gilbert Scott in the nineteenth century. The Iron Age

earthwork on Castle Hill can now be seen ahead. Where the road bends left there is an interesting barn which has been converted into dwellings.

Follow the road round to the right in the village, and ignore a turning on the right. Ahead of you are the masts of the Rampisham Transmitting Station, which were erected in 1984 for the B.B.C. World Service. This is the most powerful radio transmitter in Western Europe.

After crossing the railway go straight on. In half a mile the road bends left, and there is an attractive view on the right along a long thin meadow between parallel streams. Then the road passes through the charming hamlet of Lower Wraxall, where there is a ford on the left.

When you come to a Y-junction take the right fork, which leads to **Rampisham**. There is room to park on the left just past the Tiger's Head. From here a short circular walk is recommended. Go back the way you came, and just past the road junction take a path on the left which leads to an old stone footbridge over Benville Brook. Continue along the path to the thatched Post Office and turn left. There is a pump here bearing the date 1793.

From the parking place go straight on. Ignore two turnings on the left, and in half a mile turn left onto a main road. Here our route joins the Great Ridgeway and the route of Tess of the d'Urbervilles' fictional walk from Flintcombe Ash to Emminster.

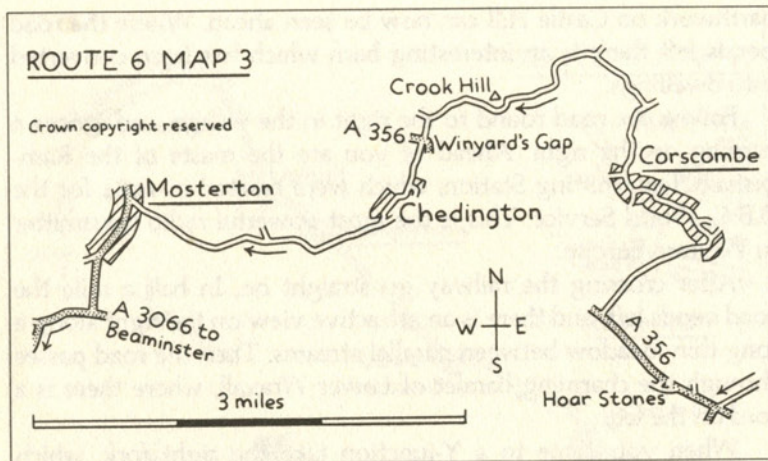
The road meets the A 356 at Toller Down Gate, the site of a former toll gate. An important mediaeval sheep fair was held near here. Turn right onto the main road and take the first turning on the left. Close to the junction are two sarsen boulders called the Hoar Stones, one on each side of the road. The first time I looked for them I failed to find them because they are below ground level.

After passing the stones turn right, leaving the course of the Great Ridgeway, and then turn left onto the main road. In half a mile take a turning on the right, which has extensive views to the north.

When you get to **Corscombe** follow the road round to the left, then turn left and keep straight on. The most interesting part of the village is at the far end. Between Manor Farm and the West Dorset Bird Farm on the left a little stream tumbles down through the gap and passes under the road.

Just past here follow the road round to the right, and ignore a turning signposted to 'Weston only'. Before long the road is



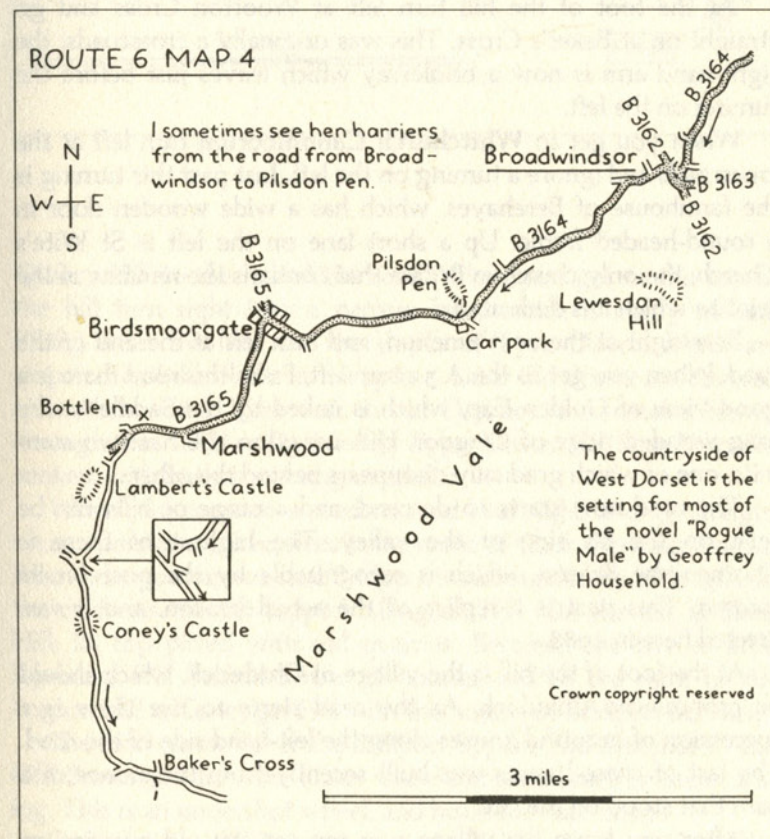


joined by a stream which flows through a little wooded dell on the left. After the road bends left it comes to a place where two streams meet on the left and flow under the road. An enjoyable feeling of wildness pervades this area. It is easy to forget that one is on a road and imagine oneself deep in the heart of a forest. The last time I came here a heron rose from the stream on the right and flapped slowly away through the trees.

At the end of the road turn sharp left, passing a tiny telephone exchange on the right. Crook Hill is now ahead of us. After the road curves round the base of the hill there is a wicket gate on the right with a National Trust sign. From here a short steep path leads up onto the hill, where there is a delightful walk along the ridge. On days of exceptional clarity it is possible to see the Brecon Beacons from here.

In a quarter of a mile ignore a turning on the right. Just past here on the left is a pond that was teeming with tadpoles when I came here in 1986. Go straight on over the A 356 and continue straight on through the village of Chedington. Lower Farm on the right is an interesting building with seventeenth-century stone-mullioned windows. Just past it on the right is an old circular village sign put up by the Automobile Association.

Bear left at the fork, and follow the road up through a wooded hillside and along a ridge. Keep straight on until you come to **Mosterton**, and then turn left onto the A 3066. In about a mile



turn right onto the B 3164, which is unusually narrow for a classified road. As the road descends into **Broadwindsor** it cuts down into the Bridport Sands.

Turn right at the Cross Keys and left at the telephone box. As you turn the corner you pass a little house with a plaque proclaiming that King Charles II spent the night here on September 23rd 1651.

The wooded hill that you can see on the left after you leave the village is Lewesdon Hill. The Pathfinder map now shows a spot height 279 metres (915 feet) on this hill, making it the highest hill in Dorset. Ahead of you is a flat-topped hill descending steeply to the left. This is Pilsdon Pen, which, at 277 metres or 908 feet, is the second highest hill in Dorset. Just past the turning to Pilsdon

there is a car park on the left, and the path to Pilsdon Pen leaves opposite it. The view from the car park is almost as good as that from the summit.

Turn left at the crossroads at Birdsmoorgate and keep straight on through Marshwood. After passing the Bottle Inn bear left, and ignore a turning on the right. In a quarter of a mile there is a gateway on the left with a magnificent view over the Marshwood Vale. The slopes to the right of the road rise to Lambert's Castle Hill.

In half a mile you come to a complex series of junctions. Ignore a turning on the left, and after you've gone over the brow of the hill turn left at a grass triangle. Then go straight on, passing under the power lines. From here the road winds round the hill in a pleasing manner and leads to the hill fort of Coney's Castle, where there is a car park.

At the foot of the hill turn left at Wootton Cross and go straight on at Baker's Cross. This was originally a crossroads: the right-hand arm is now a bridleway which leaves just before the turning on the left.

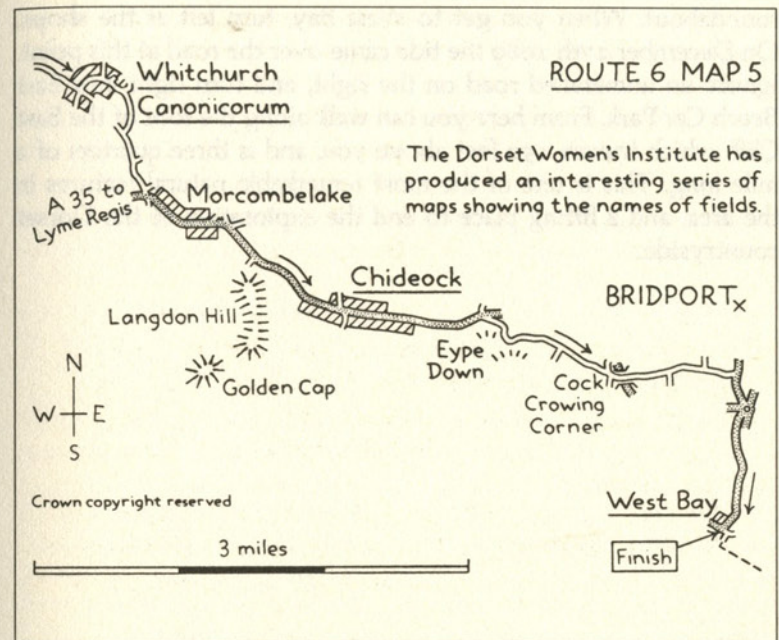
When you get to **Whitchurch Canonicorum** turn left at the crossroads and ignore a turning on the left. Just past this turning is the farmhouse of Berehayes, which has a wide wooden door in a round-headed frame. Up a short lane on the left is St Wite's Church, the only church in Britain that contains the remains of the saint to which it is dedicated.

Bear right at the next junction, and turn left at the end of the road. When you get to the A 35 turn left. From this road there is a good view of Golden Cap, which is linked by the Saddle to the long wooded ridge of Langdon Hill. Langdon Hill has two summits, one of which gradually disappears behind the other.

The road now starts to descend, and a range of hills can be seen on the far side of the valley. The highest of these is Thorncombe Beacon, which is recognisable by the post on its summit. This post is a replica of the actual beacon, and it was erected here in 1988.

At the foot of the hill is the village of **Chideock**, which should be pronounced Chiddock. As the road starts to rise there is a succession of beautiful houses along the left-hand side of the road. The last of these houses was built recently from the stones of a barn that stood on the site.

After you leave the village you can see the old quarries on



Quarry Hill to the left of the road. When you get to the top of the hill turn right into a narrow lane, which is easily missed. Rising from the lane are the slopes of Eype Down, which are carpeted with bluebells in the spring. Later the slopes are covered in bracken, which turns dark red in October, and remains brown through the winter. On leaving Eype Down the lane becomes sunken, with bushes meeting overhead.

When you come to a modern road bear right, and go straight on at a junction that rejoices in the name of Cock Crowing Corner. From here you can see that Bridport is surrounded by little hills. In the centre is the flat-topped Allington Hill. On the left is Sloes Hill, its top pitted with old quarries. Between the two is little Ryeberry Hill behind a row of houses, and to the right of Allington Hill is Coneygar Hill with the houses of Bridport below it.

The road crosses over the Bridport bypass, and descends to the Old Brewery, where the water wheel can sometimes be seen turning. This is an undershot wheel, and bears the date 1879.

Turn right at the T-junction, and take the third exit from the

roundabout. When you get to West Bay, turn left at the shops. On December 17th 1989 the tide came over the road at this point. Ignore an unmetalled road on the right, and turn right into East Beach Car Park. From here you can walk along the foot of the East Cliff, which towers 150 feet above you, and is three quarters of a mile long. This is one of the most remarkable natural features in the area, and a fitting place to end the exploration of the Dorset countryside.

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## INDEX

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Abbey Barn 9  
Abbey Farm House 32  
Abbey Guest House 32  
Abbey House 57  
Abbey Street 31, 32  
Abbotsbury 9, 20  
Abbotsbury Swannery 9  
Ackling Dyke 54, 57-8  
Affpuddle 67, 69  
Agger 54  
Agglestone, the 57  
Allen, River 56  
Almer 71  
Ammonite 28  
Amphitheatre 22  
Anderson 68  
Arthur, King 47  
Ashmore 53-4  
Askerswell 77  
Athelhampton 35-6  
Athelstan, King 35  
  
Badbury Rings 58-9  
Bagber Bridge 39  
Baker's Folly 30  
Ballard Down 62  
Bank Barrow 16  
Banks, Sir Ralph 72  
Barnes, William 18, 39  
Barry, Sir Charles 74  
Barton House 29  
Batcombe Picnic Area 41  
Bat's Head 14  
Beech Avenue 58  
Belchalwell 29  
Beningfield, Gordon 23, 63  
Benville Brook 79  
Bere Regis 67, 69, 70  
Betjeman, John 48  
Bincombe Bumps 11, 17

Birdsmoorgate 82  
Black Bottom 24  
Black Heath 24  
Blackmoor Vale 29, 30, 40  
Blackrow Common 40  
Blandford 49, 59  
Bockhampton Bridge 23  
Bottlebush Down 54, 55  
Bottle Inn 82  
Boyle, Robert 38  
Bradford Abbas 45  
Bradford Barrow 57  
Bradford Hollow 45  
Bradford Peverell 33  
Bramblecombe Lane 25  
Briantspuddle 68-9  
Bride, River 73  
Bridport 83  
Bridport Sands 81  
Broadmayne 16  
Broadwindsor 81  
Brown, Capability 48  
Brownsea Island 61, 73  
Bulbarrow Hill 30  
Bull Barrow 57  
Burton Bradstock 76  
Butter Rock 14  
  
Calf, the 13  
Canford Bridge 74  
Canford Magna 74  
Canford Manor 73, 74  
Castle Hill 62, 78-9  
Castles 48, 60  
Cattistock 78-9  
Cerne Abbas 31, 32-3  
Cerne Giant 33  
Chaldon Herring 65-6  
Chalky Road 16  
Champollion, Jean-François 72

Chantry, the 46  
Charborough Park 71  
Charborough Tower 70  
Charles II 33, 46, 81  
Charminster 33  
Chedington 80  
Cheese Lane 10  
Cherry Lane 24  
Chesil Bank 9  
Chetnole 43  
Chetnole House 43  
Chideock 82  
Chilcombe 76, 77  
Church Farm 46  
Clandon Barrow 19  
Cob wall 51  
Cock Crowing Corner 83  
Colber Bridge 29  
Compton Abbas 53  
Compton House 45-6  
Coney's Castle 82  
Constable, John 12  
Coombe Keynes 64  
Coombe Valley Road 12  
Corfe Castle 62  
Corfe Common 62  
Cornford Bridge 40  
Corscombe 79  
Corton Farm 11  
Corton Ridge 10  
Coryates Spear 11  
Cow, the 13  
Cranborne Chase 53-4  
Cranborne Manor 45, 46  
Crawford Bridge 59  
Cromwell Cottage 43  
Crook Hill 80  
Cross and Hand 41-2  
Cross Tree, the 27  
Cruck Cottage 68  
Culliford Tree 17  
Cull-peppers Dish 68  
Cull-peppers Spoon 68  
  
Dairy Farm 46  
Debenham, Sir Ernest 69  
  
Devil's Brook 25  
Devil's Pit 68  
Divelish, River 29  
Dewlish 25  
Dorchester 22, 34  
Dorset Coast Path 10, 13  
Dorset Cursus 54  
Dorset Ridgeway 17, 19  
Dorset Women's Institute 83  
Drive Plantation 54  
  
East Cliff 84  
East Compton 53  
East Holme 63  
East Lulworth 65  
East Stoke 64  
Edward VI, King 56  
Eggardon Hill 73  
Elfrida, Queen 70  
Elm tree 45  
Ethelred, King 32  
Eye Ford 72  
Eype Down 83  
Falkner, J. Meade 13  
*Far from the Madding Crowd* 24, 70  
Farringdon 18  
Fiddleford Manor 28  
Fiddleford Mill 28  
Fifehead Neville 29  
Filly Loo 54  
Fir Hill 66  
Five Marys 66  
Flamberts 47  
Fleet, the 9  
Fontmell Magna 52-3  
Forston 33  
Fossilised ammonite 28  
Frampton, James 66  
Frome, River 22, 23, 63, 64, 67, 68, 77  
Furzey Island 60  
  
Gappergennies 53  
Garlands Lane 29  
Garnett, David 66  
George III 12  
Godmanstone 33

Ghosts 47, 53, 55  
 Gog and Magog 38  
 Golden Cap 82  
 Granaries 16  
 Great Barrow, the 56  
 Great Ridgeway 30, 79  
 Great Western Turnpike 54  
 Green Island 60  
 Greenwood Tree, the 24

Ha-ha 40  
 Hambledon Hill 27  
 Hardy, Admiral 19, 20  
 Hardy, Thomas 18, 22, 23, 24, 29, 34  
 Hardy's Cottage 24  
 Hardy's Monument 20  
 Hargreaves, Jack 29, 30, 67  
 Hazel Lane 77  
 Hell Pit 68  
 Henges 22  
 Hen harriers 81  
 Heronry 73  
 Herston Halt 62  
 Highest point in Dorset 81  
 Hill forts 18-19, 27, 28, 34, 51, 58-9,  
 77, 82  
 Hilton 25  
 Hinton Martell 56, 57  
 Hoar Stones 79  
 Hod Hill 50, 51  
 Hollow way 45  
 Holme Lane 63  
 Holnest church 41  
 Holt Forest 57  
 Holt Heath 57  
 Holt Wood 57  
 Holway Hill 48  
 Horsepool Farm 9  
 Horton Tower 57  
 Household, Geoffrey 81

Ibberton Hill Picnic Area 30  
 Irish bridge 29  
 Iron Age farm 27  
 Iron Age hill forts 18-19, 27, 30, 34,  
 51, 58-9, 77, 82

Iron Age road 27  
 Iwerne Courtney 52  
 Iwerne Minster 50, 52

Jesty, Benjamin 43  
 John, King 56, 70  
 John of Gaunt's Kitchen 74  
 Julian's Bridge 74

King Arthur 47  
 King Athelstan 35  
 King Charles II 33, 46, 81  
 King Edward VI 56  
 King Ethelred 32  
 King George III 12  
 King John 56, 70  
 King's Stag 40  
 Kingston 62  
 Kingston Lacy House 72  
 Knoll House Hotel 61  
 Knowlton Rings 56

Ladies' Mile 48  
 Lamberts Castle Hill 82  
 Langdon Hill 82  
 Langton Matravers 62  
 Lawrence of Arabia 67-8  
 Leaze Lane 45  
 Leigh 43  
 Letter box, oldest in Britain 40  
 Lewesdon Hill 81  
 Lewis, C. Day 23  
 Linton Hill 9, 10  
 Littlemoor Road 11  
 Little Pamphill Green 72  
 Long-bridge, the 67  
 Longcombe Bottom 53  
 Longsword, William 73  
 Lower Bockhampton 23  
 Lower Lewell Farm 16  
 Lower Wraxall 79  
 Lulworth Castle 64  
 Lydlinch 39  
 Lydlinch Common 39

Maiden Castle 18-19

Maiden Newton 77  
 Mapperton 71  
 Mappowder 30  
 Market cross 38  
 Marley Bottom 65  
 Marshwood 82  
 Marshwood Vale 82  
 Martinstown 19  
 Martyr's Tree 69  
 Maumbury Rings 22  
 Max Gate 22  
 Maypole 71  
 Melbury Abbas 53  
 Melbury Sampford 42  
 Merley Tropical Bird Garden 73  
 Middle Bottom 13-14  
 Milton Abbas 25-6  
 Milton Abbey 25  
 Model Railway 73  
*Moonfleet* 13  
 Monmouth's Ash 55  
 Moreton 66-8  
 Mosterton 80  
 Music Barrow 17

Nature Conservancy 61  
 Nether Compton 46  
 Neolithic henges 22  
 Newlands Farm 65  
 No Man's Land 61  
 Norman door 77-8  
 Norman churches 62  
 North Wootton 37

Osborne 48  
 Oilfield 62  
*Old Country* 29, 67  
 Old Harry 73, 74  
 Old Harry's Wife 62  
 Old Knowle 66  
 Okeford Fitzpaine 27-8  
 Osmington 12  
 Osmington White Horse 12  
 Over Compton 46

Packhorse bridge 29

Pamphill Green 72  
 Parr, Catherine 29  
 Peaceful Lane 40  
 Philae Needle 72  
 Piddle, River 25  
 Piddletrenthide 30, 32  
 Pilsdon Pen 81-2  
 Pitchmarket, the 32  
 Plane tree, tallest in Britain 50  
 Plush 30  
 Poole 73  
 Poole Harbour 60-61, 74  
 Portesham 19, 20  
 Portesham Manor 20  
 Poundbury 34  
 Powys, Llewelyn 14  
 Powys, Theodore 30, 65-6  
 Poxwell 14  
 Poxwell Gap 14  
 Poxwell Manor 14, 15  
 Poynington 48  
 Puddletown 23, 24  
 Puddletown Forest 16  
 Purbeck, Isle of 60-63  
 Purse Caundle 38  
 Purse Caundle Manor 38

Quarry Hill 82-3  
 Queen Elfrida 68

Rainbarrows, the 16  
 Raleigh, Sir Walter 48  
 Rampisham 78, 79  
 Rampisham Transmitting Station 79  
 Rawlsbury Camp 30  
 Red Bridge 66  
 Red Post 70  
 Remedy Oak 56  
*Return of the Native, The* 16, 68  
 Ridgeways 17, 19, 30  
 Ridge and furrow 69  
 Ringmoor 27  
 Ringstead Bay 13  
 Ring, the 69  
 River Allen 56  
 River Bride 77

River Develish 29  
 River Frome 22, 23, 63, 64, 67, 68, 77  
 River Hooke 77  
 River Piddle 25  
 Riverside Villa 29  
 River Stour 28, 29, 72, 74  
 River Wey 11  
 Rodden 10  
 Rodden Manor 10  
*Rogue Male* 81  
 Roman amphitheatre 22  
 Roman aqueduct 33-4  
 Roman fort 51  
 Roman road 54  
 Roman town wall 22  
 Round barrows 13  
 Round Chimneys Farm 40  
 Round Island 60  
 Rushay Farm 39  
 Russell, Bertrand 65  
 Ryalls Lane 40  
  
 Saddle, the 82  
 St Augustine's Well 32  
 St Catherine's Chapel 9, 25  
 St Cuthbert's Chapel 48  
 St Wite's Church 82  
 Sandbanks 60, 73, 74  
 Sandford Orcas 47  
 Sandford Orcas Manor 47  
 Sarsen boulders 19  
 Scotland Farm 63  
 Scott, George Gilbert 78  
 Sea Barn 15  
 Shaftesbury, Earl of 54  
 Shapwick 59  
 Shatcombe Lane 77  
 Sherborne 37, 48  
 Sherborne Castle 48  
 Sherborne Old Castle 48  
 Shillingstone 28  
 Shipton Hill 77  
 Shroton 52  
 Sixpenny Handley 54  
 Slepe Copse 63  
 Slepe Farm 61, 63  
  
 Smith's Arms 33  
 Smith's Bridge 45  
 Snail Creep 24  
 South Haven Point 60  
 Spring, largest in Britain 11  
 Spring Street 64  
 Squatter's cottage 40  
 Stafford House 22  
 Stalbridge 38  
 Steam railway 62  
 Stepleton House 51-2  
 Stinsford church 23  
 Stock Gate 40  
 Stock Gaylard Park 40  
 Stocks 32, 56, 71  
 Stockwood Church 42-3  
 Stourpaine 51  
 Stour, River 28, 29, 49, 72, 74  
 Stubhampton Bottom 53  
 Studland 62  
 Studland Heath 61  
 Sturminster Marshall 71-2  
 Sturminster Newton Mill 28  
 Sutton Poyntz 12  
 Sutton Waldron 52  
 Swallet holes 68  
 Swanage Steam Railway 62  
 Swannery 9  
 Swyre 76  
  
 Tadnoll Barrow 66  
 Tadnoll Mill 66  
 Tarrant, the 58  
 Tarrant Keyneston 58  
 Tarrant Valley 58  
*Tess of the d'Urbervilles* 16, 22, 41, 64,  
 70, 79  
 Thorncombe Beacon 82  
 Thornhill Spire 39  
 Thornton Wood 24  
 Three Armed Cross 16  
 Throop 68  
 Tollard Royal 54  
 Toller Down Gate 79  
 Tolpuddle 67, 69-70  
 Tolpuddle Ball 70

Topiary 43  
 Town wall 22  
 Trenderle, the 33  
 Trent 46-7  
 Tropical Bird Garden 73  
*Trumpet Major, The* 12, 14, 15, 18, 20  
 Tumuli 11  
 Turbervilles 64, 70  
 Turner's Almshouses 46-7  
 Turnworth 27  
 Twofords Bridge 39  
*Two on a Tower* 70  
  
 Ulwell 62  
*Under the Greenwood Tree* 23, 24  
 Upbury 43  
 Upwey 11  
  
 Village crosses 43, 59, 77  
 Vindocladia 59  
  
 Waddock Farm 68  
 Walls Down 10  
 Warmwell 15-16  
 Warmwell Cross 15  
 Washers Pit 53  
 Water-mills 28, 58  
 Wayside cross 41-3  
 West Bay 76, 84  
 West Bottom 13  
 West Knighton 16  
 West Lulworth 65  
 West Stafford 22  
 Wey, River 11  
 Wheeler, Sir Mortimer 19  
 Whistler, Laurence 67  
 Whitchurch Canonicorum 82  
 Whitcombe 17-18  
 White, Jim 62  
 Whitemill Bridge 72  
  
 White Nothe 13-14  
 White Post Inn 47  
 Wightman, Ralph 24, 32  
 Wimborne Minster 73, 74  
 Wimborne St Giles 56  
 Winfrith Newburgh 65  
 Winterborne Anderson 70  
 Winterborne Came 18  
 Winterborne Clenston 27  
 Winterborne Herringston 18  
 Winterborne Kingston 70  
 Winterborne Monkton 18  
 Winterborne Muston 70  
 Winterborne St Martin 19  
 Winterborne Stickland 27  
 Winterborne Tomson 70  
 Winterborne Whitechurch 27  
 Winterbourne Farringdon 18  
 Winterbourne Steepleton 19  
 Wishing Well 11  
 Witchampton 77  
 Wolfeton House 34-5  
 Women's Institute 83  
 Woodbury Hill 70  
 Woodsford 16  
 Woodsford Castle 16  
 Wool 64  
 Wool Bridge 64  
 Woolbridge Manor 64  
 Wootton Cross 82  
 Worldwide Butterflies 46  
 Wynford Eagle 77, 78  
 Wytch Farm oilfield 62  
  
 Yellowham Wood 24  
 Yeovil Sands 45  
 Yetminster 43-4  
 Yetties, the 44  
 Yew Tree Cottage 43



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*The front cover photograph was taken near Bulbarrow Hill  
looking out over the Blackmoor Vale.  
Back cover: a Briantspuddle cottage.*

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ISBN 0-946159-74-2



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