

Dorchester Walking Festival 2025

Tickets must be booked in advance



DORCHESTER Walking Festival

For a detailed description of each walk and booking visit [eventbrite.com/cc/dorchester-walking-festival-2025-3974953](https://www.eventbrite.com/cc/dorchester-walking-festival-2025-3974953) or scan the QR code

Scan the QR code to book your walks



Terms & Conditions

All participants must buy their walk tickets in advance through Eventbrite.

Dogs are welcome on many of our walks, however, they must be kept in control on a lead. If they are a nuisance, your walk leader will have the right to ask you to leave the walk.

Please arrive at the meeting point a minimum of 10 minutes before the advertised start time. Walks will start on time whether all participants have arrived or not. Finishing times are approximate and may vary.

The walk leader is in complete charge of the walk. Routes/events may be changed and distances are approximate.

Walks will only be cancelled if conditions could put participants in danger. The organisers will contact participants directly should this be the case.

Under 16s must be accompanied by an adult.

It is the responsibility of all participants to ensure that they are physically fit enough to take part in the walks they have booked on to.

It is essential that all participants wear appropriate clothing and equipment.

Grade of walks

E Easy

Mainly flat walking, on paths with good surfaces. Few steps or stiles, if any.

M Moderate

Varying landscape with some more challenging terrain. Stiles and steps likely en route, suitable for anyone who is reasonably active.

S Strenuous

A challenging walk, suitable for keen walkers with some experience. Some steep gradients, stiles and steps and uneven surfaces to be expected.

Key

 Dog friendly

 Packed lunch required

 Pushchair/wheelchair accessible

DORCHESTER Walking Festival

DISCOVER DORCHESTER

The Heart of Dorset

Sponsored by



KINGSTON MAURWARD COLLEGE

Dorchester Walking Festival 2025

10th - 18th May

Experience the beauty of Dorchester and Dorset's Jurassic Coast

Lace up your boots and get ready to explore stunning landscapes and rich history.

An exciting programme of varied walks led by experienced and knowledgeable volunteer walk leaders.

Scan the QR code to book your walks



Further information to help plan your trip to Dorchester visit [discoverdorchester.co.uk](https://www.discoverdorchester.co.uk)



Festival Organiser

Mobile: 07983 897 051

Email: m.manley@dorchester-tc.gov.uk

Organised by Dorchester Town Council

28 Wildlife Wander around Hardy Monument

Date	17 May	Start Location	Hardy Monument
Time	11:00 – 12:30	Price	£3 per family
Distance	2 km		

Join us for a family walk around the Hardy Monument, we will be joined by ecology experts who will help us find and identify lots of bugs flowers and trees and we will end with some exciting pond dipping.

29 The Hanging Judge Baron Jeffreys

Date	17 May	Start Location	The Town Pump
Time	13:00 – 15:00	Price	£15 including cream tea
Distance	3 km		

This guided walk will be a tour around the places in Dorchester associated with Judge Jeffreys such as his courtroom used during the Bloody Assizes in Antelope Walk and his lodgings in the High Street. The walk will finish with afternoon tea at The Old Tea House (included in the price of the ticket).

30 Dorchester Through The Ages

Date	17 May	Start Location	Top of the Town Car Park
Time	14:00 – 15:30	Price	£7
Distance	2 km		

A walk suited to those not so familiar with the town, its important place in the wider region's history and its colourful characters. From the Romans to today's bustling county town, finishing in the town centre.

31 Dorchester Tree Walk

Date	17 May	Start Location	Dorchester Gallows Hill Cemetery
Time	18:00 – 19:30	Price	£5
Distance	3 km		

Let's have a look at some of the remarkable trees we have in Dorchester both big and small and learn some key identifying features along the way.

32 Coombes, Chalk Streams and 'V' Shaped Valleys

Date	18 May	Start Location	Cerne Giant Car Park
Time	09:00 – 16:00	Price	£5
Distance	20 km		

A longer guided walk exploring the Piddle Valley and its enclosed, 'V' shaped chalk valleys with associated chalk streams and surrounding steep branching valleys, rounded hollows and expansive open chalk uplands.

33 Maiden Castle – Archaeology and Nature

Date	18 May	Start Location	Maiden Castle car park
Time	11:00 – 13:50	Price	£10
Distance	2.5 km		

A guided walk around Maiden Castle, one of Europe's largest Iron Age Hillforts, exploring its archaeology history and wildlife. Miles King from People Need Nature and archaeologist, Steve Wallis will be leading this walk, explaining Maiden Castle's rich history and wildlife.

34 Dorchester Crime and Punishment

Date	18 May	Start Location	Shirehall Museum
Time	11:00 – 15:00	Price	£5
Distance	2.5 km		

For hundreds of years Dorchester was the home of the county assizes, where the most serious of crimes were tried. On this guided walk you will visit the places where criminals were imprisoned and executed and hear some of the stories of those who found themselves on the wrong side of the law.

35 Beating the Bounds

Date	18 May	Start Location	Roman Town House
Time	14:00 – 15:30	Price	Booking not required
Distance	2 km		

Join in with this free annual tradition to "Beat the Bounds" of the old Roman Walls! We will be joined by musicians and actors to make it a fun and noisy walk. Bring pots and pans and instruments to join in with the walking and noise making! The Beating of the Bounds is an ancient tradition, derived from a Roman festival dedicated to Terminus, God of Landmarks.

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1 Walk by Train – Moreton to Maumbury Rings

Date	10 May	Start Location	Moreton Train Station
Time	09:45 – 15:00		
Distance	15 km	Price	£5 + train ticket

In conjunction with South West Railways, join us for a longer walk from Moreton Railway Station back to Maumbury Rings.

2 Discover Lyscombe Bottom

Date	10 May	Start Location	Lyscombe Nature Reserve car park
Time	10:00 – 15:00		
Distance	10 km	Price	£5

Nestled within the breathtaking Dorset National Landscape this expansive landscape is a treasure trove of chalk downland, lush scrub, vibrant wildflower meadows, and ancient woodlands. Includes a talk by from Dorset Wildlife Trust.

3 Beyond the Pale

Date	10 May	Start Location	Athelhampton House car park
Time	12:30 – 15:30		
Distance	8 km	Price	£10

Roman and Tudor history hidden in the woods. Discover the remnants of Athelhampton's Tudor Park Pale and the Roman road in beautiful woodland.

4 A Folk Song Walk

Date	10 May	Start Location	John's Pond, Hangman's Cottage
Time	14:00 – 16:00		
Distance	4 km	Price	£10 per adult. Children go free

Join Dorchester-based folk singer Alastair Braidwood for a short walk in the countryside close to the town, accompanied by traditional folk songs connected to the rural ways and countryside matters we meet along the way.

5 Land of Bone and Stone

Date	11 May	Start Location	Hardy Monument
Time	10:00 – 15:00		
Distance	12 km	Price	£5

Discover and explore one of the UK's best kept secrets – the South Dorset Ridgeway - an ancient trackway and ridge of high land that has attracted people for thousands of years – a special place to celebrate life and bury their dead.

6 The Hanging Judge Baron Jeffreys

Date	11 May	Start Location	The Town Pump
Time	13:00 – 15:00		
Distance	3 km	Price	£15 including cream tea

Guided walk will be a tour around the places in Dorchester associated with Judge Jeffreys such as his courtroom used during the Bloody Assizes in Antelope Walk and his lodgings in the High Street. Finish with afternoon tea at The Old Tea House.

7 Broadmayne Walk with the Dorchester Strollers

Date	11 May	Start Location	Osmington Drove/High Trees
Time	14:00 – 15:30		
Distance	6.5 km	Price	Free

A 90 minute walk through the fields, using tracks, bridleways and footpaths and touching the Jubilee Trail.

8 A walk through 17th Century Dorchester

Date	11 May	Start Location	Behind the Corn Exchange
Time	14:30 – 16:30		
Distance	2.5 km	Price	£5

On this guided walk we will explore how Dorchester folk lived their everyday lives and how they were affected by the cataclysmic national events that led to the English Civil War.

9 Military Dorchester from 800BC to 1919

Date	12 May	Start Location	Maiden Castle car park
Time	09:30 – 16:30		
Distance	15 km	Price	£5

This guided walk will look at and discuss the military history of Dorchester starting in 800BC, but concentrating on its role during the Great War. Find out why WW1 didn't finish in Dorchester until 1919! Pub lunch en route.

10 Ringstead Coastal Circular

Date	12 May	Start Location	Ringstead Bay NT car park
Time	10:00 – 15:00		
Distance	12 km	Price	£5

Discover the beach, coast path and unspoilt countryside around Ringstead Bay. If the weather is kind we will factor in time for a dip in the sea and will stop at The Reef Cafe for a bite to eat for lunch.

11 Roman Road Walk

Date	12 May	Start Location	Hardys Birthplace Visitor Centre
Time	13:30 – 16:00		
Distance	5 km	Price	£6

Join Claire, the Thorncombe Ranger, and Steve, the Archaeologist, for a guided walk along the Roman Road through Thorncombe Wood Local Nature Reserve, just outside Dorchester. This informative walk will bring to life the heritage the Reserve conserves and provides an insight into the wildlife whom make it their home.

12 Dawn Chorus

Date	13 May	Start Location	Dorchester Borough Gardens
Time	05:00 – 07:00		
Distance	1.5 km	Price	£3

Early wake-up call in Dorchester Borough Gardens followed by a guided walk to the Mill Stream, Riverside Reserve, Salisbury Fields and South Walks, finishing with breakfast at Coffee#1. How many birds can we identify in the town centre?

13 Swallet Holes and Sand Lizards of Puddletown Forest

Date	13 May	Start Location	Rhododendron Mile
Time	10:00 – 12:30		
Distance	6.5 km	Price	£5

This guided walk will enable you to rediscover the beauty of the conifer tree without having to abandon any love of the broadleaf, as here they exist harmoniously side by side.

14 The Poundbury Nature Project

Date	13 May	Start Location	PiP Cafe Poundbury
Time	14:00 – 16:30		
Distance	3.7 km	Price	£7

Exploring the surprisingly rich wildlife already thriving in and around Poundbury, Dorchester's famous urban extension. Miles King from People Need Nature will lead this walk of various places being managed to benefit wildlife and people.

15 Walk with the Dorchester Strollers

Date	13 May	Start Location	Band Stand in Borough Gardens
Time	14:15 – 15:00		
Distance	Various	Price	Free

Three friendly health walks from 4 km, 2.5 km or 0.8 km offered by the Dorchester Strollers ranging from 60 minutes, 45 minutes or 30-45 minutes.

16 Cerne Valley Walk

Date	14 May	Start Location	Minterne Magna Car Park
Time	10:00 – 15:00		
Distance	14 km	Price	£5

Join us for a circular guided walk from Minterne Magna. Don't miss out on this opportunity to explore the beauty of the Cerne Valley and learn about the ancient naked figure sculpted into the chalk hillside above Cerne Abbas.

17 In the Footsteps of Hardy's Childhood

Date	14 May	Start Location	Hardy's Cottage Visitor Centre
Time	10:30 – 12:30		
Distance	3 km	Price	£5

A guided walk with frequent stops to talk about the poet and novelist's life, to read some of his poetry and prose and to make connections between the landscape and his writing. There is the option to visit Hardy's Cottage after the walk.

18 A Farming Folk Song Walk

Date	14 May	Start Location	Tamarisk Farm, West Bexington
Time	18:00 – 21:00		
Distance	4 km	Price	£10 per adult. Children go free

A chance to tour a working organic farm overlooking the beautiful Lyme Bay as the sun goes down, and hear about farming life and traditional folk songs relating to countryside ways.

19 Discover Dorset's two Thomas Hardys

Date	15 May	Start Location	Hardy Monument
Time	10:00 – 15:00		
Distance	14 km	Price	£5

This longer guided walk will start at the Hardy Monument (Vice Admiral Sir Thomas Hardy) on Black Down and explore the heathland, chalk ridgeway and historic village of Abbotsbury on the Jurassic Coast. This is the landscape of Thomas Hardy (novelist and poet) with far reaching views - on a clear day it is possible to see the coast from Start Point, Devon to St. Catherine's Point on the Isle of Wight.

20 Walk in the footsteps of T.E. Lawrence

Date	15 May	Start Location	Entrance to Moreton Cemetery
Time	10:00 – 12:30		
Distance	6.5 km	Price	£3

A guided walk visiting key areas linked to T.E. Lawrence. The walk includes the cemetery where T.E. Lawrence is buried and Clouds Hill, Lawrence's cottage retreat. There is the option to book a visit to Clouds Hill after the walk.

21 Seasonal Walk at Thorncombe Wood

Date	15 May	Start Location	Hardys Birthplace Visitor Centre
Time	10:15 – 11:15		
Distance	2.5 km	Price	£5

Join this Ranger led walk looking at the seasonal wonder in the reserve. Trampler Hire is available for this walk: 01305 251228.

22 Walk by Train – Maiden Newton to Dorchester

Date	16 May	Start Location	Dorchester West Station
Time	09:45 – 15:45		
Distance	18 km	Price	£5 + train ticket

Catch the GWR train from Dorchester West Station to Maiden Newton. This guided walk will take you through farmland and open countryside to Sydling St Nicholas. Tackle the chalk ridges with far reaching views.

23 Hardy's Dorchester Walk and Talk

Date	16 May	Start Location	Dorset Museum entrance
Time	14:00 – 16:30		
Distance	4.5 km	Price	£10

This guided walk will follow in the footsteps of Hardy's characters. There will be plenty of readings from his novels and poetry along the way.

24 Nature and Archaeology of Ancient Poundbury

Date	16 May	Start Location	PiP Cafe Poundbury
Time	14:00 – 17:00		
Distance	3.5 km	Price	£10

A circular guided walk exploring the chalk downland and archaeology of Poundbury Hillfort and the Roman Aqueduct, including stops at Poundbury Nature Project areas. Led by Miles King from People Need Nature and archaeologist Steve Wallis. There will be a short introduction about the walk at Pips Cafe.

25 Tibb's Hollow Circular

Date	17 May	Start Location	Tibb's Hollow, Frampton
Time	10:00 – 15:00		
Distance	12 km	Price	£5

A circular guided walk from the car park at Tibb's Hollow exploring the high hills and coombs that have remained a peaceful place since the Roman period.

26 Springtime at Tamarisk Farm

Date	17 May	Start Location	Tamarisk Farm, West Bexington
Time	10:00 – 12:30		
Distance	3 km	Price	£5

Discover Spring opening up on a mixed organic farm: lambs and calves, early wild flowers, developing crops and whatever else we find. The Farm Shop will be open after the walk. Tea and biscuits before we set off. Dogs if calm and on a short lead. Children welcome.

27 Hardy Monument Circular

Date	17 May	Start Location	Hardy Monument
Time	10:30 – 14:00		
Distance	11 km	Price	£3

Meeting at Hardy Monument this guided circular walk offers amazing views and takes you to some less know parts of rural Dorset. You will head towards Littlebredy and pass through the Valley of Stones before returning to the Monument.