

# **The Wessex Ridgeway**

## **Itinerary**

### **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> Sept.**

Depart Worcester at 10.00am in hired minibus. Anyone wishing to leave their car at my home is welcome to do so. Arrive at camp mid – late afternoon.

### **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> Sept. – Tollard Royal to Ibberton (12.5 miles – 20km)**

A climb across Woodley Down is followed by a descent to Ashmore, crossing the border into Dorset. Ashmore Wood is passed through after which rolling hills leads to a final descent down to the village of Iwerne Courtney. The trail leaves Iwerne Courtney and immediately climbs up towards the summit of Hambledon Hill, from where superb views can be had. The height gained is quickly lost as the trail descends to cross the River Stour and enter the village of Shillingstone. A steep climb leads up onto Shillingstone Hill, after which the height is kept as a road is followed southwestwards across Bell, Ibberton and Woolland Hills. Superb views can be had from the road to the northwest.

### **Monday 5<sup>th</sup> Sept. – Ibberton to Sydling St Nicholas (16.5 miles - 26.5km)**

The trail passes Bulbarrow Hill and leaves the road by the ancient hillfort of Rawlsbury Camp. A descent down to a road is followed by another stiff climb to a junction of paths at Dorsetshire Camp, where a metal box contains a logbook that can be filled in by walkers. A series of ascents and descents leads westwards from Dorsetshire Gap, crossing Nettlecombe Tout and Church Hill before reaching a camping and caravan site at Giant's Head. The trail avoids the village of Cerne Abbas and instead descends down to Minterne Parva, before climbing once more onto Gore Hill. A few glimpses of the Cerne Abbas Giant may be visible before the path joins a track that runs southwards along a ridge, passing a transmission mast and eventually descending down into the village of Sydling St Nicholas. It is planned that before we return to camp we can take a look at the Cerne Abbas Giant.

### **Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> Sept. – Sydling St Nicholas to Beaminster (13.5 miles – 21.7km)**

A short climb from Sydling St Nicholas leads to the A37 on Break Heart Hill, after which a descent leads to the village of Maiden Newton, which has a railway station. The valley of the River Frome is followed for a short distance to Chilfrome, after which a road climbs up westwards to reach the A356. A steep descent leads down to the hamlet of Lower Kingcombe, before a gentle climb passes the BBC World Service masts on Rampisham Down. A descent leads down into Hooke, after which paths and roads lead to Toller Whelme. Roads and paths head northwestwards for a few miles along the edge of a ridge, with good views to the south. At Mintern's Hill a glimpse of the sea may even be seen. Here the trail leaves a road and descends steeply downhill, joining a road in Meerhay to reach the town of Beaminster.

### **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> – Rest day with excursions to Dorchester and Weymouth**

### **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> Sept. – Beaminster to Champenrhayes (14 miles – 22.5km)**

The trail passes through the centre of beautiful Beaminster before climbing steeply up onto Gerrard's Hill. Some severe climbs and falls leads to the path skirting the wooded side of Lewesdon Hill, before descending down and climbing up to pass the northwestern tip of Pilsdon Pen. Yet another descent is followed by an ascent up Blackdown Hill. A final descent leads to a road by a chapel, which is followed through to the hamlet of Synderford. The path follows a narrow road from Synderford, crossing the small river before reaching Saddle Street. A steep climb leads up to a road and Grighay Farm. A steady descent leads down to the tiny Blackwater River, after which the path ascends, skirting the Devon border. A steep climb leads up to the summit of Lambert's Castle, from where more great views can be had., before descending to Champernhayes.

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. – Champernhayes to Lyme Regis (6 miles – 10km)**

A steep descent leads down to a road, which can be followed over and through the hillfort on Coney's Hill. A long descent leads to Wootton Fitzpaine, after which the trail skirts the valley side before climbing up to cross the A35 at Penn. The path descends through some woodland before eventually reaching the outskirts of Lyme Regis by a sewage farm. A pleasant stroll alongside the River Lym is followed by a road walk to the museum by the seafront in Lyme Regis. This walk should be completed by lunch time, giving us time to relax in Lyme Regis or to visit the Jurassic Coast at Charmouth

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> Sept.**

After packing up camp we will return to Worcester, hoping to arrive by mid afternoon.