



02 DORSET CORFE CASTLE

▶ Distance: 7 miles/11.3km ▶ Time: 3 hours ▶ Grade: Moderate



The impressive ruins of Corfe Castle.



PHOTO: DENNIS KELSALL

PLAN YOUR WALK



ROUTE

Start/parking Use one of the car parks signed around Corfe Castle, grid ref SY960821

Is it for me? Clear down and woodland paths. Suitable for active walkers
Stiles 1

PLANNING

Nearest town Wareham
Refreshments Greyhound Inn Bankes Arms & NT Tea Rooms, all close to castle
Public toilets By car parks
Public transport Bus and rail to Corfe Castle
Maps OS Explorer OL15; Landranger 195



CHOSEN BY...
DENNIS KELSALL
Begun shortly after William's conquest,

Corfe Castle is one of the earliest in England built of stone. It occupies an earlier Saxon defence and for a while was a royal favourite – a hunting base for the king. It was later bought by the Bankes family of Kingston Lacey, who sided with Royalists during the Civil War. Although stoutly defended, the castle was defeated by guile and Cromwell ordered its destruction to prevent reuse. Commanding a break in the long Purbeck ridge, it is a dramatic sight and, despite its ruinous state, remains impressive, overlooking the

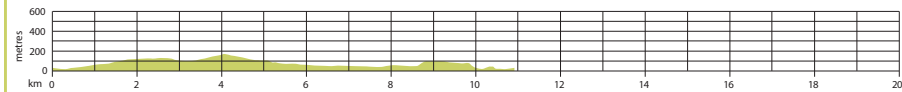
village that prospered in its shadow. The walk along the ridge to East Creech opens superb views, while the return leads through heath and wetland wood, whose flowers and wildlife are very different from the chalk downs above.

1 Start
From the cross in the square, head towards castle, but then turn L in front of the National Trust tea rooms. Narrowing to a path, the way leads down to a lane. Cross to a bridge opposite and keep L.

2 ¼ mile/500m
The way rises through a couple of gates to continue around West Hill towards Cocknowle Farm. After 800m,

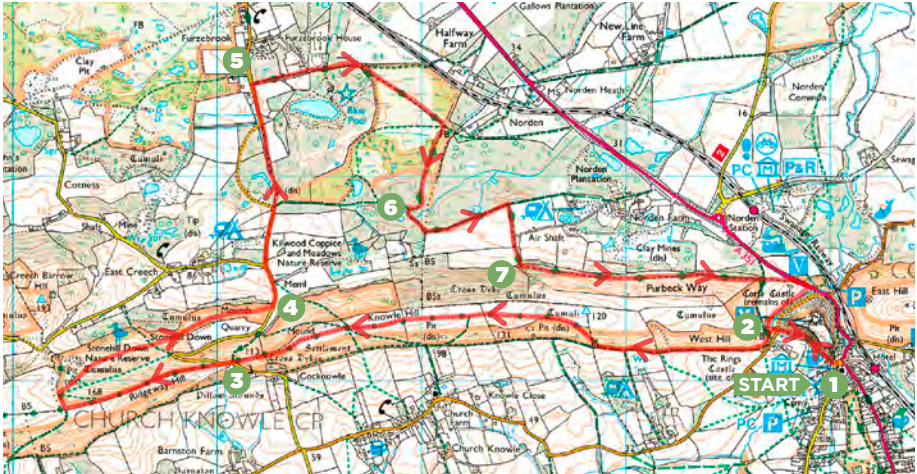
branch R at a fork and slant up the slope onto the long ridge of Knowle Hill. Carry on through a couple of gates, eventually reaching a small memorial, which serves to waymark six radiating paths. Keep ahead along the ridge, ultimately falling to meet lane. →

GRADIENT PROFILE



02 DORSET
CORFE CASTLE▶ OS Explorer map OL15 ▶ Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop

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**3** 2¼ miles/3.5km

Follow it briefly ahead, branching off with track onto Ridgeway Hill. Reaching a gate barring onward way, swing R across the head of the adjacent combe. Leave track at base of dip, making for a tumulus on top of Stonehill Down. Bear R and continue along gently falling snout, a path later developing that leads ever-more steeply to a stile and gate back onto the lane.

4 3½ miles/5.5km

Go L, passing a war memorial to the Crech Seven, then keep R at a junction towards the Blue Pool and Wareham. Leave at the next bend, taking a bridlettrack on the R, but immediately abandon it for a narrower path off L. The way delves through wetland wood, soon

rejoining the lane, which a little farther on passes the entrance to the Blue Pool.

5 4½ miles/6.75km

Turn in along the drive and keep ahead past the car park and garden entrance to continue through a gate on a wooded path by the perimeter fence. At a fork, bear R through a gate onto Norden Heath, branching L a few metres farther on to remain with the Purbeck Way. Strike across the open heath to find a kissing gate in the distant corner. A few metres beyond, go R into more wetland wood, duckboards bridging occasional patches of marsh.

6 5¼ miles/8.25km

Eventually meeting a crossing path before a pool, go L, later curving beside the

edge of the wood. Watch for a path shortly leaving on the R and head away across grazing fields towards the wooded skirt of Knowle Hill.

7 5¼ miles/9.25km

There, walk L, eventually passing through a gate. Keep L to a second gate and continue across open pasture, passing a barn to meet the road. Instead, however, go R on a gravel path above Corfe River, in time forking L to a bridge. Cross and reverse your outward route back to the village. **CW**

VIEW THE WALK ON OS MAPS ONLINE:

lfto.com/cwroutes

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



OS MAPS



Ordnance Survey

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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING