



02 DORSET HAMBLEDON & HOD HILLS

▶ Distance: 6 miles/9.6km ▶ Time: 3 hours ▶ Grade: Moderate

SEE
FEATURE
ON PAGE 36

Hambledon Hill basks
in winter sunlight.



PHOTO: TOM BAILEY



CHOSEN BY...

PHILIP THOMAS

6000 years of human history were played out on two hills in Dorset at the southwestern edge of Cranborne Chase. This walk weaves between epochs as it climbs through a Neolithic camp and between the imposing Iron Age ramparts of Hambledon Hill. This chalk outcrop grants commanding views over the fertile expanse of Blackmore Vale, but for reasons unknown, it was abandoned by its prehistoric inhabitants in favour of nearby Hod Hill. It was later briefly reoccupied during the English Civil War, when a several thousand 'Clubmen' (disgruntled farmers, loyal to

neither crown or parliament) took up improvised arms to defend their land from looting troops. Cromwell's New Model Army swiftly sent them packing. Retreating from Hambledon Hill, we dip into the curiously twice-named village of Shroton (or Iwerne Courtney, as it's also known), before scaling the flanks of Hod Hill, where the Celtic Durotriges tribe were ousted by Roman invaders. Today, only sheep occupy the high ground of Hambledon and Hod Hills, shaping the flower-rich grasslands that attract 28 species of butterfly, including chalk-hill blue and dark green fritillary, earning Hambledon Hill its status as a National Nature Reserve.

PLAN YOUR WALK



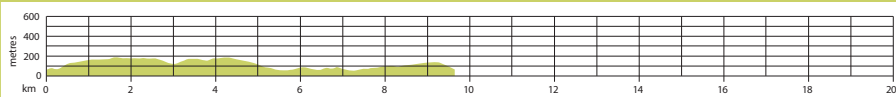
ROUTE

Start/parking Small National Trust car park (free), 5 minutes' drive from Child Okeford or A350, grid ref ST853112, nearby postcode DT11 8PS
Is it for me? Mostly follows muddy bridle tracks and grassy footpaths, with two gentle climbs to open access hilltops
Stiles 2 (same stile twice)

PLANNING

Nearest town Blandford Forum
Refreshments The Cricketers pub in Shroton/Iwerne Courtney (01258 860421) or The Baker Arms in Child Okeford (01258 860260)
Public toilets None
Public transport X3 bus from Shaftesbury/Blandford stops in Shroton, Point 3, southwestcoaches.co.uk
Maps OS Explorer 118, Landranger 194

GRADIENT PROFILE



02 DORSET
HAMBLEDON & HOD HILLS▶ OS Explorer map 118 ▶ Buy maps at: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/shop**1 Start**

From car park, head R/ east up road and turn L up bridleway after 'Keeper's Lodge', waymarked 'Stour Valley Way' (SVW). Go L around barn at top of field, and follow track along R edge of fields. At wyvern's tail fingerpost, continue through gate and follow muddy track to trig point on Hambleton Hill.

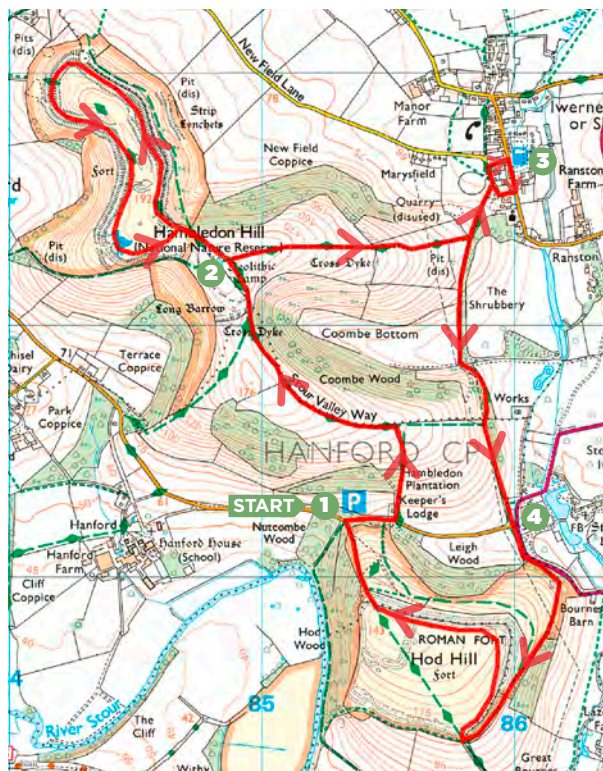
2 1 mile/1.6km

Go straight on at junction to gate and into National Trust open access land. Take an anti-clockwise loop around the hillfort earthworks (or just explore at your leisure, but keep dogs on lead). Return to gate you entered hillfort by and retrace steps to trig point/junction, turning L down bridleway waymarked 'Wessex Ridgeway'. After gate, turn L down track at signpost for 'Iwerne Courtney' (a village also known as Shroton). Cross stile R of cricket pavilion to lane, turn L, then shortly R on signed footpath between houses to pub and bus stop.

3 3½ miles 5.6km

Turn R down street and before church, turn R along Fairfield Road (signposted 'Child Okef'd') around to stile by cricket pavilion. Turn L over stile and retrace earlier steps back up to signpost. Stay ahead this time (signposted for 'Steepleton'), following bridleway to junction. Take

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middle of three tracks forking L (signed bridleway). Follow track to gate and L edge of next field to road by house.

4 4½ miles/7.2km

Cross road to gate opposite house and follow signed bridleway around L edge of field to gate. Pick up a track ahead, which curves away from road, climbing east flank of Hod Hill. At first gate/worn SVW waymark, turn R up into hillfort. Follow

earthworks anti-clockwise (or again, roam at will) to gate in far corner of Roman fort. Turn R, following bridleway steeply downhill, keeping L into trees to car park. **CW**

VIEW THE WALK ON OS MAPS ONLINE:
lfto.com/cwroutes

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



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DATE WALKED

TIME TAKEN

YOUR RATING