



## **HOME PAGE**

### **Welcome to Dorset and The New Forest – Southern England’s secret treasure**

Visit our region and discover 150km of breathtaking coastline - most of which comprises the Jurassic Coast, England's only UNESCO natural World Heritage Site - , the ancient hunting ground of the National Park of The New Forest, and some of the country's finest rural countryside, a large part of which is officially designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

If you're feeling active, ramble along miles of footpaths, follow our cycle trails, or make the most of the area's outstanding watersports facilities which the 2012 Olympic sailing athletes will use ... if your interest is in heritage, the area offers numerous historic houses, gardens, ancient castles and forts ... enjoy the region's lively seaside resorts and busy maritime harbours ... or simply recharge your batteries and be re-inspired by an area of stunning countryside views, idyllic villages and market towns.

Easily accessible from London and many UK airports and ports, Dorset and The New Forest's mild climate means it's a wonderful area to discover at any time of the year.

## HOW TO GET HERE

Dorset and The New Forest has excellent connections via international airports, ferry ports, national and local railway services and a comprehensive road system.

### By air

The main airports serving the area are Bournemouth Airport ([www.flybournemouth.com](http://www.flybournemouth.com)) (10km from Bournemouth) and Southampton Airport ([www.southamptonairport.com](http://www.southamptonairport.com)) (56 km from Bournemouth). Both have direct flights from many international cities.

Main airlines offering international scheduled flights to these airports are:

Air Berlin: [www.airberlin.com](http://www.airberlin.com)

Air France: [www.airfrance.com](http://www.airfrance.com)

British Airways: [www.britishairways.com](http://www.britishairways.com)

Easy Jet: [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com)

Flybe [www.flybe.com](http://www.flybe.com)

Ryanair [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com)

Scotairways [www.scotairways.co.uk](http://www.scotairways.co.uk)

Thomsonfly [www.thomsonfly.com](http://www.thomsonfly.com)

The area is also easily accessible from London Gatwick [www.gatwickairport.com](http://www.gatwickairport.com) (188km from Bournemouth), London Heathrow [www.heathrowairport.com](http://www.heathrowairport.com) (152km from Bournemouth) and Bristol airport [www.bristolairport.co.uk](http://www.bristolairport.co.uk) (126 km from Bournemouth)

### By sea

Regular ferries arrive into:

**Poole** from Cherbourg, St Malo and the Channel Islands

**Portsmouth** from St Malo, Caen, Cherbourg, Le Havre and Bilbao

**Weymouth** from the Channel Islands & St. Malo

**The southeast of England (Ramsgate)** from Dunkirk and Ostend, Belgium;

**The southeast of England (Dover, Folkestone and Newhaven)** from France;

**The east of England(Harwich)** from Hoek van Holland, the Netherlands and Hamburg, Germany

Main ferry companies offering services to these ports are:

Brittany Ferries: [www.brittany-ferries.co.uk](http://www.brittany-ferries.co.uk)

Condor Ferries: [www.condorferries.co.uk](http://www.condorferries.co.uk)

P&O Ferries: [www.poportsmouth.com](http://www.poportsmouth.com)

Hoverspeed: [www.hoverspeed.com](http://www.hoverspeed.com)

A useful general website is [www.aferry.to/ferry-ports.htm](http://www.aferry.to/ferry-ports.htm)

## By road

The following main motorway routes connect the east, ports and London with Dorset and the New Forest: M20 / M26 / M25 / M3 / M27. The M3/A303 from London to Devon also passes through the northernmost part of Dorset.

To plan your journey by car, route planners are available on [www.mapquest.co.uk](http://www.mapquest.co.uk) and [www.snappyroute.com](http://www.snappyroute.com)

Car rental is available at all the airports serving the region (see airport websites)

### Remember that:

Traffic drives on the left in Britain and traffic on the right has priority  
All drivers and passengers are legally required to wear seatbelts.  
In towns the speed limit is 30mph (50kph) and on motorways 70mph (110kph).  
The Government has introduced numerous speed cameras in recent years

## By train

The area is served by an excellent rail network from many principal towns in the UK to local stations throughout the region.

Direct trains from London depart from Waterloo station, the terminus for Eurostar passengers from Paris and Brussels. Direct trains stop at Brockenhurst in the New Forest, Bournemouth, Dorchester and Weymouth.

- National Rail information: [www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk), [www.thetrainline.com](http://www.thetrainline.com)
- National Rail Enquiries: tel. (+44) 0845 748 49 50

Passengers from London Heathrow airport can use the 'Railair Coach' link to Reading station and continue by train to stations in Dorset and the New Forest [www.railair.com](http://www.railair.com).

The regional rail companies that operate into Dorset and The New Forest are:

- South West Trains from London Waterloo: [www.southwesttrains.co.uk](http://www.southwesttrains.co.uk)
- Virgin Trains from Reading and the Midlands: [www.virgintrains.co.uk](http://www.virgintrains.co.uk)
- Wales and West Trains from Weymouth to Bath and Bristol: [www.wessextrains.co.uk](http://www.wessextrains.co.uk)

For those touring in the UK, a BritRail pass may be useful [www.britrail.com](http://www.britrail.com)

## By bus

National Express Coaches operate services throughout the country: tel. (+44) 08705 808080; [www.nationalexpress.com](http://www.nationalexpress.com). Coaches depart regularly from London into the area.

## General

Traveline: 0870 162 0806 [www.travelline.co.uk](http://www.travelline.co.uk)

Transport Direct: [www.transportdirect.com](http://www.transportdirect.com)

Distance in Km	Bath	Bristol	Bournemouth	Dover	Exeter	London	Ldn Heathrow	Portsmouth	Salisbury	Southampton	Winchester	Ldn Gatwick
Bournemouth	111	130	0	287	135	172	153	85	44	52	64	188
Bridport	92	98	74	349	61	235	214	146	90	113	126	249
Christchurch	108	127	9	285	143	169	150	82	40	39	61	185
Dorchester	93	100	48	324	89	208	188	121	64	87	100	224
Lyme Regis	101	121	90	365	47	251	232	163	106	130	142	267
Lyndhurst	127	137	41	238	161	132	113	55	32	10	32	166
Poole	100	114	8	295	127	179	159	92	50	58	71	195
Shaftesbury	56	76	54	293	113	177	157	158	32	69	89	193
Sherborne	61	68	67	314	85	198	179	137	58	105	109	214
Wareham	100	114	24	304	114	188	169	101	58	68	81	204
Weymouth	108	113	54	336	98	221	201	134	77	100	113	237
Wimborne	91	106	16	285	124	171	151	84	43	51	63	187

## Travelling within Dorset and The New Forest

As well as the above contacts, the local Tourist Information Centres are an excellent source of information about travelling in Dorset and The New Forest once you are here (see More Information section)

2 bus services aimed at visitors are of interest:

**The Jurassic Coast Bus Service COASTLINX53.** The perfect way to see the Jurassic Coast. The hop on-hop off service follows the Heritage Coast from Exeter to Poole and for a daily ticket travel is unlimited. [www.jurassiccoast.com](http://www.jurassiccoast.com)

**The Conservation Express.** Hop on-hop off service linking Wool railway station, Monkey World, Lulworth Castle and Park, Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door. [www.conservation-express.co.uk](http://www.conservation-express.co.uk)

## **ABOUT THE REGION**

Dorset & The New Forest offers a multitude of attractions for the visitor. The countryside encompasses some of the UK's loveliest scenery, both inland and coastal. Amateur and professional geologists alike will find the Jurassic Coast fascinating. Man's occupation of the area is evident as far back as the Iron Age and many of the towns and villages identified in the Domesday Book are still in existence. These attractions have inspired many artists of all disciplines, the most famous being Thomas Hardy.

Useful links:

[www.thedorsetpage.com](http://www.thedorsetpage.com)

[www.theheritagetrail.co.uk](http://www.theheritagetrail.co.uk)

[www.touruk.co.uk](http://www.touruk.co.uk)

[www.sightseeing.co.uk](http://www.sightseeing.co.uk)

## NATURAL SPLENDOURS

Dorset and The New Forest's unique landscapes and coastline cannot help but make a powerful impression on the visitor.

**The New Forest** heathlands and forest are in essence unchanged since they were given special protected status as a hunting ground by William the Conqueror over 900 years ago. That status has recently been enhanced by announcement that The New Forest is now a National Park. The ancient system of Verderers (judges), Agisters (police) and Commoners set in place to run The New Forest still exists today, and Commoners still have rights to graze their livestock - normally ponies, sheep and cattle - on Forest land; hence the famous New Forest ponies. In fact, only about half of The New Forest is actually woodland; the remainder is open heathland, which bursts with colour in the summer and autumn months. To the south, The New Forest runs down to the coast, offering views over the Solent and over to the Isle of Wight.

The neighbouring county of **Dorset** is an area of unspoilt and wonderfully varied rolling downland and heaths, hidden valleys, ancient field patterns, beaches and cliffs. Dorset is renowned for the diversity of its geology and wildlife, and just over half of the county is protected and designated within two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The varied rock strata running in broad bands across the county give rise to the distinct character of the countryside, which ranges from clay vales (the Blackmore and Marshwood Vales) to chalk downland (the Dorset Downs and Cranborne Chase) to the tertiary sands and gravels (Purbeck and East Dorset heathlands). Most of the towns and villages located in these areas reflect, through their local stone and other building materials, the character of the area.

In 2001, the **Dorset Jurassic Coast** from Lyme Regis to Poole Harbour, together with the East Devon Coast, was awarded prestigious World Heritage Status, a recognition of its outstanding geology: a complete record of almost 200 million years of the earth's history during the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods. From West Dorset beaches scattered with fossils, to Lulworth Cove's ancient fossil forest and folded rock formations, and even dinosaur footprints, Dorset is a geologist's and fossil-hunter's paradise, and has been the source of some of history's greatest geological discoveries.

One of Dorset's most unique features, **Chesil Beach**, a long shingle beach created by the tides and currents, runs the length of the coastline from Abbotsbury to Portland, separating the open sea from a lagoon known as The Fleet. While unsafe for swimming, there are good walks along the length of the Beach and superb views from the overlooking hills.

The 'Isle' of **Portland**, at the eastern end of Chesil Beach, is the home of Portland Limestone, one of Britain's most famous building stones, and its unique quarry sites contain a fascinating mixture of geology, industrial archaeology, sculpture and wildlife: **Tout Quarry** contains a sculpture park and is a great place to explore. Displays and information are available at The **Chesil Beach Centre, Portland Bill Visitor Centre** and **Portland Museum**, while the Portland Sculpture Trust runs workshops in Tout Quarry during the summer.

Dorset and The New Forest's climate and geology have led to the existence of a number of unique and internationally recognised wildlife habitats and ancient human settlements. With over 140 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and over 1300 sites recognised for wildlife value, outstanding wetlands designated Ramsar sites under international convention, including Chesil Beach, Fleet Lagoon, Poole Harbour and the Avon Valley, together with sizeable populations of rare species such as the sand lizard, water vole and almost all species of bat - there are few other counties that match Dorset's tremendous biodiversity.

## Useful Links

[www.jurassiccoast.com](http://www.jurassiccoast.com)

[www.dorsetcoast.com](http://www.dorsetcoast.com)

[www.dorsetwildlife.co.uk](http://www.dorsetwildlife.co.uk)

[www.countryside.gov.uk](http://www.countryside.gov.uk)

[www.english-nature.org.uk/special/sssi](http://www.english-nature.org.uk/special/sssi) (for information on Sites of Special Scientific Interest)

## TOWNS & VILLAGES

### Towns trails

Across Dorset and The New Forest, ancient trade routes connect a range of fascinating market towns, mainly dating from Saxon or earlier times. The following trails include some of the most interesting towns, but there are many more a little further off the beaten track waiting to be explored.

A good starting point in each town is the Tourist Information Centre, which will have leaflets, books and maps relating to the town and surrounding area.

### Lyme Regis and Bridport

At the far western reaches of Dorset lie two towns that are at the heart of fossil country. **Lyme Regis**, a traditional seaside town full of atmosphere on the county border with Devon, is of historic importance as the landing port of the Duke of Monmouth in his bid to win the Crown from James II in the 17th century. The Cobb harbour has very famous literary associations with the John Fowles novel 'The French Lieutenant's Woman' and Jane Austen's 'Persuasion'. 10 km east **Bridport**, historically a centre for the rope and net industry in the 13th century - and still the provider of Wimbledon's tennis nets - is today a bustling market town close to the picturesque fishing harbour of **West Bay**. The coastline around Lyme Regis and the neighbouring seaside resort of **Charmouth** is the best part of the Dorset coast for uncovering newly unearthed fossils after rough weather, and the **Lyme Regis Museum** and **Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre** both hold examples of outstanding previous finds. The highest cliff on the south coast, the stunning **Golden Cap**, is just beyond Charmouth.

### Weymouth and Portland

**Weymouth** was originally 'founded' as a resort by King George III. The elegant Georgian seafront, pretty harbour and miles of golden beaches in a safe and scenic bay continue to keep Weymouth a favourite traditional resort with visitors. King George is still in evidence, carved into the chalk hillside riding out of town on his horse. The Timewalk exhibition at **Brewers Quay** imaginatively tells the story of Weymouth since medieval times, and there are plenty of shops, pubs and family attractions to entertain visitors, as well as some excellent fish restaurants. The 'Isle' of **Portland**, connected to Weymouth and the mainland by a thin causeway at the eastern end of the shingle Chesil Beach, has a character all of its own, and affords stupendous views of the Dorset coastline. A fascinating area for geological explorers, and the origin of the stone used in many of London's important buildings, **Portland Harbour**, formerly one of England's major marine bases, is also a renowned watersports and diving centre and is now home to the National Sailing Academy.

### Sherborne and Shaftesbury

Two northern Dorset towns with Saxon origins. **Shaftesbury**, a hilltop town that grew around the Abbey established by king Alfred in the 10th century AD, offers one of England's best-known and most picturesque sights, Gold Hill. The Abbey ruins, the remains of what was left after the Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, can still be visited today. 25 km west along the A30 lies the pretty town of **Sherborne**, known for its two Castles, superb 15th century Abbey and public schools, and good shopping.

## Wimborne Minster and Blandford Forum

The charming ancient market town of **Wimborne** nestles between the rivers Allen and Stour. Cuthberga, Saxon Princess of Wessex, founded the famous Minster church, around which the town grew, in 705 AD. The twin-towered building has several fascinating historical features, including a rare chained library and an astronomical clock. Close by are a handful of historical museums and acclaimed gardens as well as some excellent shopping. A half-hour drive down an idyllic beech-lined avenue past the National Trust mansion **Kingston Lacy** and the iron age fort **Badbury Rings**, lies the Georgian town of **Blandford Forum**. The town was rebuilt following a fire in the 1730s and its buildings today remain in essence little changed, the church and town hall being particularly known. Blandford is the home of Hall and Woodhouse Inns and Badger beer, which can be found throughout Dorset. A costume and military museum as well as a choice of shops await the visitor.

## Christchurch, Lymington and Lyndhurst

The relaxed Saxon town of **Christchurch** lies at the mouth of the Avon and Stour Valleys. The town lies in the shadow of its magnificent 11th century **Priory Church**, overlooking a picturesque harbour. Nearby **Hengistbury Head** offers excellent coastal strolls and good views over to the Isle of Wight. A short drive east along the coast brings you to **Lymington**, a picturesque fishing port and harbour town, home of the Royal Lymington Yacht Club. Lymington was for over 700 years a principle conveyor of quality salt; today you can still walk along the tidal salt marshes, a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Local cruises and a ferry link to the Isle of Wight are available. Continue north across the open forest to the busy 'capital' of The New Forest and home to the New Forest Visitor Centre, **Lyndhurst**. The town developed from a small hamlet in the 19th century. The Verderers' Hall has stood in the Queen's House, a former Royal Hunting Lodge, since the 14th century.

## Dorchester and Wareham

**Dorchester** (Roman name 'Durnovaria'), Dorset's county town, is at the heart of 'Thomas Hardy Country', with an excellent county museum containing the classic novelist's study as well as collections of fossils from the Jurassic Coast close by. Other eras in Dorchester's fascinating evolution are evidenced by the Roman town house and by Maiden Castle, the largest of the many iron age and Roman hillforts scattered across the Dorset landscape. Some 25 km further east across the Dorset heaths lies **Wareham**, a pretty Saxon town on the banks of the River Frome a short distance inland from the Purbeck coast. The town is still surrounded by original Saxon walls and contains the oldest church in Dorset, as well as the tomb of TE Lawrence 'Lawrence of Arabia'.

## Village trails

The countless villages and hamlets of Dorset and the New Forest are one of the area's major attractions. Nestled in valleys, hidden in woodland and perched high on the downlands you will come across settlements of local stone houses, often thatched, with the traditional country pub and church completing the picture. The trails that follow include most of the best-known and prettiest villages but there are hundreds more for you to discover - just take a good map and allow plenty of time!

## From The New Forest to the Cranborne Chase

Begin at the famous Georgian estate village of **Beaulieu**, known as being home to the world famous Palace House and National Motor Museum. In 1202 King John bestowed 'Bellus Locus' on the Cistercian monks, establishing what is now a picturesque village nesting on the banks of the Beaulieu River. Visit the number of fascinating craft shops in the village, or pay a visit to the reconstructed fishing village of **Bucklers Hard**, or take a stroll in the world famous **Exbury Gardens**. Continue across the woodlands and heathlands of the Forest to the little village of **Burley**, once a famous centre for smuggling and renowned for its association with

witches, both ancient and modern. The heaths around Burley offer excellent walks and cycle rides, and there are horseriding and wagon rides available nearby. A drive up the Avon Valley to the country town of **Fordingbridge** brings you to the edges of the Cranborne Chase and a recognised Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Continue through the pretty villages of **Cranborne** and, across the A354, Sixpenny Handley, to the former estate village of **Tollard Royal**, with its quaint thatched cottages. Close by is the Victorian **Larmer Tree Gardens**, part of the same estate, open in the summer months. A short drive further brings you to the highest village in the county, **Ashmore**, complete with village duckpond. **Win Green** nearby offers stupendous views over the neighbouring Wiltshire downs.

### **Along the Coast Road**

The West Dorset village of Abbotsbury, and the Purbeck villages of West Lulworth and Corfe Castle each offer a snapshot of the local stone as well as being exceptionally pretty villages in their own right. The most westerly village, **Abbotsbury**, grew around its medieval Benedictine Abbey, and its distinctive Tithe Barn and famous Abbotsbury Swannery, the world's only managed swannery, owe their origins to the Abbey. The hillside walk; at St Catherine's Chapel offers superb views over The Fleet lagoon to Portland and out to sea. Continue via Dorchester to **West Lulworth** (follow signs from Wool). This tiny village is clustered around **Lulworth Cove**, one of the best-loved spots on the Dorset heritage coast, a picturesque fishing harbour displaying nearby many of the unique geological features of the Dorset coast, including the Fossil Forest, Stair Hole and Durdle Door. Continuing east (via Wareham), follow signs to **Corfe Castle**. This well-loved village is best known for its castle ruin, ransacked during the civil war but still commanding a stunning location, nestled in a cleft in the Purbeck hills. Many of the buildings in the village at the foot of the castle contain stone from the original building, although today the National Trust protects the building from further encroachments! While at Corfe why not take a half-hour ride on the steam train down to the coast at **Swanage**, a traditional Victorian seaside resort with a safe beach nestled between two headlands.

### **Villages of the Chalk Downlands**

Straight out of a Thomas Hardy novel, the pretty village of **Evershot**, much used as a film location, is nestled quietly away in the West Dorset hills at the heart of some breathtaking walking trails. Across the downs to the east is the pretty stone village of **Cerne Abbas**, with several pubs and a crafts centre, but famous particularly for its 180' high **Giant**, an imposing Romano-British chalk figure cut into the hillside and well-known for its supposed fertility powers. The Giant is best viewed from the main A352 road. Further east still is the delightful village of **Milton Abbas**, with its main street of identical cob and thatch cottages, a unique example of a purpose-built 18th-century estate village. The location of the lake is the original setting of the village, which was uprooted to distance it from the Abbey House, now a public (private) school. The fine 14th and 15th century Abbey Church in breathtaking grounds, landscaped by the popular 18th century landscape designer Capability Brown, is well worth a visit.

## CASTLES & FORTS

Dorset and The New Forest has a wonderful selection of castles, ranging from ancient hillfort fortresses to more modern buildings still used as homes.

In the New Forest, **Hurst Castle** and **Calshot Castle**, each located on the seafront, can be easily visited in a day. Hurst Castle, built by Henry VIII, is located on the end of a shingle spit. Used during the war, 38-ton guns can be seen. [www.hurst-castle.co.uk](http://www.hurst-castle.co.uk)

Two castles in Purbeck attract large numbers of visitors due to their stunning locations and history. **Corfe Castle**, [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk) left a ruin in the English Civil War and today owned by the National Trust, lies in a picturesque cleft in the Purbeck hills, and the romantic castle ruins can be fully explored today. The village which grew up around the castle and took its name is well worth spending time to explore. Nearby **Lulworth Castle** [www.lulworth.com](http://www.lulworth.com), which offers stunning views over the heritage coast, is by contrast a restored 17th century castle set in an extensive estate. A number of lively events are held at each castle throughout the year including jousting tournaments!

Weymouth and Portland's castles, the **Nothe Fort** [www.fortressweymouth.co.uk](http://www.fortressweymouth.co.uk) and **Portland Castle**, offer a treat for military fort lovers. Both actively used in the World Wars, Portland Castle is the older, dating from Tudor times and used more recently as a Seaplane station in World War II. The Nothe Fort is a restored 19th-century fort, now a fascinating military museum.

The two castles at Sherborne are very famous and reflect two different eras in the town's history. Like Corfe, **Sherborne Old Castle**, owned today by English Heritage, was destroyed, in this case by Cromwell, but is today an evocative ruin to visit. The 'newer' **Sherborne Castle** has been home to the Digby Family since 1617 and splendid collections of art and furniture can be seen. The renowned designer Capability Brown landscaped the gardens and lake. [www.sherbornecastle.com](http://www.sherbornecastle.com)

## IRON AGE & ROMAN SITES

Dorset is immensely rich in ancient history and has been settled since pre-Iron Age times. Settlements from this and succeeding eras are in evidence across the county. The best known, and largest, of the hillforts, is **Maiden Castle**, which commands an impressive site just south of Dorchester. Other less well-known but equally impressive hillforts, all offering a steep climb but stupendous views, include **Pilsdon Pen** and **Eggardon Hill** in West Dorset, and **Hambledon** and **Hod Hills** in North Dorset. Further east, the more gentle **Badbury Rings** lies just off the ancient trade highways the **Dorset Cursus** and **Ackling Dyke**, parts of which can still be walked today. Close by, the ruins of a Christian church lie at the centre of the unique and mystical **Knowlton Rings**.

A very different but very well known structure lies just to the north of Dorchester, at **Cerne Abbas**. The huge chalk 60m high **Giant** figure carved into the hillside has fascinated people for centuries and entertains a wealth of legend and stories. Widely recognised as a fertility symbol, the Giant is thought to date from Roman times.

For a taster of more domestic life in Roman times, visit the well-preserved villa remains at **Rockbourne** [www.hants.gov.uk/museum/rockbourne](http://www.hants.gov.uk/museum/rockbourne) or **Dorchester**.

## LITERATURE & FILM ASSOCIATIONS

### Literary associations

Dorset and The New Forest is rich in literary associations. Its most famous son is the 19th century novelist and poet **Thomas Hardy**, who was born at Higher Bockhampton and lived for much of his life in Dorset, which formed the heart of the 'Wessex' setting for his best known works. Many of the settings for his novels, as well as his idyllic thatched cottage birthplace (now owned by the National Trust) can be visited today. There are many books and leaflets containing trails around Hardy country, as well as a long-distance hiking trail; each take the visitor on a timeless trail into Hardy's rural Dorset, which is in so many ways little changed.  
[www.hardysociety.org](http://www.hardysociety.org)

Other famous literary associations include **Jane Austen**, who set part of her novel 'Persuasion' at Lyme Regis, a setting also more recently used by **John Fowles** in his famous 'French Lieutenant's Woman', which strongly featured the fossils of the Jurassic coast.

The many other literary associations include **Vera Britten**, author of 'Testament of Youth', who lived at Allum Green, Lyndhurst; **Lord Tennyson**, who spent much time in the New Forest; Alice Liddell, **Lewis Carroll's** inspiration for 'Alice in Wonderland', who is buried in Lyndhurst; **Sir Arthur Conan Doyle**, author of the Sherlock Holmes stories, lived and is buried in Minstead Churchyard; **Robert Louis Stevenson** who stayed in Bournemouth recovering from tuberculosis; the famous children's books writer, **Enid Blyton**, lived for many years in the Purbeck area and the poet **Shelley's** heart is buried with his wife **Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley**, author of Frankenstein, at St. Peter's Church Bournemouth. The **Powys** brothers all lived in and wrote about Dorset and the classic novel Moonfleet by **John Meade Faulkner** was based in Chesil Beach area.

The area's other most famous resident was probably **TE Lawrence**, 'Lawrence of Arabia', who lived the final years of his life at his tiny, picturesque home Cloud's Hill near Bovington Camp, where he was posted and near where he met with his tragic death on his motorcycle. His home, now owned by the National Trust, can be visited today, as well as his grave at nearby Moreton Churchyard, and other places associated with his life. A 'Lawrence of Arabia' trail is available at Tourist Information Centres.

## SMUGGLERS & SHIPWRECKS

Dorset and The New Forest's coastline has always given the area a maritime flavour, and the region is rich in legends and stories, tales of contraband and smuggling.

Many points along the coast hold associations with ships lost at sea. Brewers Quay in Weymouth tells some of the story, but why not check out some of the areas for yourself?

**Lulworth Cove** and **Kimmeridge Bay** were both much-used by smugglers, being mainly out-of-the-way, hidden inlets. Off the coast at **Osmington Mills**, just along from The Smugglers pub, a shipwreck can be seen at low tide. The isolated Isle of **Portland**, at the end of its long causeway, played a key role in the smuggling world, even though the waters around the promontory are treacherous for shipping outside of the Harbour.

In The New Forest, visit **Bucklers Hard** near Beaulieu for a taster of the time of smuggling and the golden age of maritime trade. For the most atmospheric venue of all, visit Moonfleet Chapel, nestled on the banks of The Fleet, inland from Chesil Beach. The chapel was immortalised in the classic novel **Moonfleet**, which was based on some of the legends and stories of the time.

## BEACHES & RESORTS

### Beaches & Resorts

This is where the English come for their seaside breaks! Whether you are after a quiet stroll along a secluded beach or a lively, busy resort, Dorset and The New Forest has an unrivalled range of outstanding beaches and buzzing resorts to choose from.

### Beaches

The Dorset coast is renowned for its clifftop walking, but is also well provided with beaches. Whether you are after the wilder shingle beaches of Charmouth, or the gentle sands of Studland, you will find something to suit you. All the beaches have parking close by.

The beaches at **Lyme Regis and Charmouth**, overshadowed by some of the tallest cliffs on the south coast, are renowned for their fossil treasures. Particularly in winter, the rough seas which have shaped the Jurassic coast sometimes uncover dramatic finds. (Care is needed as wet weather can make the cliffs unsafe - taking a guided fossil walk is the safest way.) Both towns have become well-known centres for fossil-hunters and the Charmouth Heritage Centre and Lyme Regis Museum both have full displays.

A little along the coast from Charmouth, **Seatown** is a quiet haven for walkers and those wanting some solitude, in the lee of Golden Cap, the highest cliff on the south coast. **West Bay** is a small fishing port, with a newly completed Jurassic Pier along which to view the spectacular coastline.

From Burton Bradstock eastwards until Portland, the long shingle beach of **Chesil Beach**, a natural phenomenon formed by sea currents, dominates the coastline. The strong tides make this entire stretch too unsafe for swimming or boating, but this is an excellent spot for fishing.

**Ringstead** is a protected shingle beach overlooking Weymouth Bay. Safe for swimming, this is a popular beach for those wanting a quieter beach.

The beaches around **Durdle Door and Man O' War Cove** are safe for swimmers and very good for snorkelling, as is **Lulworth Cove**.

**Studland** is the picture book sandy beach, accessed from the car park through sand dunes and waving grasses onto a wide and safe sandy paradise, with good swimming and no strong currents.

For information on taking dogs on the beach, please contact the relevant Tourist Information Centre.

### Resorts

**Bournemouth** offers the best of a traditional resort alongside a vibrant, bustling town centre. 10km of beautiful sandy beaches (recently voted the Best Beach in the UK by ENCAMS environmental agency), seafront dining, award-winning gardens, good shopping and top entertainment contribute to making Bournemouth well worth a visit. The Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum provides an eclectic mix of curios and art from around the world in a unique clifftop Italian style mansion.  
[www.bournemouth.co.uk](http://www.bournemouth.co.uk)

**Christchurch** is an ancient Saxon town overlooking a picturesque harbour, in the shadow of a magnificent 11th-century priory. Muford and Barton on Sea both offer a quiet sea-front location and the traditional English seaside sights of beachhuts and deckchairs.  
[www.christchurchtourism.info](http://www.christchurchtourism.info)

**Swanage** is a smaller resort on the stunning Purbeck Coast, not far from the famous coastal rock formations Old Harry and his wives, and Durlston Country Park. The town itself was formed in Victorian times and today can be reached not only by car but also by steam train from Corfe Castle.

[www.swanage.gov.uk](http://www.swanage.gov.uk)

**Weymouth** is a popular seaside town 'founded' as a resort by George III, who is remembered today as a giant chalk figure on his horse carved into the hillside on the way out of Weymouth. Set in a scenic bay, Weymouth has 3km of sand and shingle beaches, an elegant Georgian seafront and an attractive harbour lined with restaurants and pubs.

[www.weymouth.gov.uk](http://www.weymouth.gov.uk)

## **ACTIVITIES & ATTRACTIONS**

There's no excuse for being bored in this part of the world!

Dorset and The New Forest offers fantastic opportunities for outdoor leisure. Our stunning coastline and protected bays and harbours offer some nationally renowned locations for watersports such as windsurfing, scuba diving, sailing and fishing. Along the coastline and inland, the walking trails are second to none and offer a very real opportunity to get away from it all. Cyclists are well catered-for with a range of short and longer cycle trails, from 'easy' to 'challenging'. Horse riders are offered some truly wonderful routes, and an extensive range of bridlepaths well away from any built areas or busy roads. For the more adventurous, gliding, zorbing, ballooning and even llama trekking are available in the region!

For a more educational day out, the area has countless museums covering a wide range of topics from butterflies to fossils and vintage cars to army tanks. For the younger members of the family, there are any number of attractions which will keep the youngsters entertained for hours, even on a rainy day.

Please view the relevant websites for information about opening hours of attractions or enquire at the local Tourist Information Centre during your visit (see More Information section).

## HISTORIC HOUSES & GARDENS

Dorset and The New Forest's wide variety of historic houses and gardens has something for everyone.

Near Dorchester, **Athelhampton House**, a 15th century family home, contains fine furniture and extensive gardens with pavilions, fountains, a topiary, toll house and dovecote.  
[www.athelhampton.co.uk](http://www.athelhampton.co.uk)

**Kingston Maurward Gardens** nearby run to 35 acres of lakeside parkland and lawns which sweep around the Georgian House. Visit the croquet lawn, rose garden and herbaceous borders. There are many intimate gardens and designed vistas, as well as nature trails and animal park. [www.kmc.ac.uk/gardens/](http://www.kmc.ac.uk/gardens/)

**Mapperton Gardens** in West Dorset are a delightful Italianate terraced gardens beside a Tudor manor, church, stable and dovecote, with on the upper levels, a croquet lawn, orangery, fountains, topiary, grottoes, ponds and borders. Specimen shrubs and rare trees are found on the lower levels.  
[www.mapperton.com](http://www.mapperton.com)

**Forde Abbey**, founded in 1146, was one of the most significant Cistercian monasteries in England. Using the legacy of the eighteenth-century landscape and nineteenth-century trees, two generations of the Roper family have made a garden worthy of the house that it surrounds [www.fordeabbey.co.uk](http://www.fordeabbey.co.uk)

**Minterne Gardens** near Cerne Abbas offer 20 acres of woodland walks set in a valley created by the acclaimed landscape designer Capability Brown, which rhododendrons, azaleas and magnolias towering over lakes, streams and cascades.

**Bennetts Water Gardens** offer one of the most outstanding displays of water lilies in Britain, surrounded by huge pond and moisture loving plants, native trees, palms, wild plants and flowers. A 'Site of Nature Conservation Interest', the gardens, ponds and reed beds are home to abundant wildlife. [www.waterlily.co.uk](http://www.waterlily.co.uk)

On the west Dorset coast, **Abbotsbury Sub-Tropical Gardens** is a magnificent 20-acre Grade I listed garden, established in 1763 and blooming with exotic and rare plants from all over the world. It is particularly famous for its camellia groves, magnolias, rhododendrons and hydrangeas. [www.abbotsbury-tourism.co.uk](http://www.abbotsbury-tourism.co.uk)

Moving further east, **Kingston Lacy House**, owned by the National Trust, lies at the end of an idyllic beech-lined avenue, in acres of parkland. The house itself is known for its outstanding paintings, exhibition of Egyptian artefacts, and its dramatic Spanish Room hung with gilded leather. Many outdoor nature events are held in the parkland in the springtime, most notably the snowdrop walks.  
[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

A little further north, **Chettle House**, a beautiful Queen Anne family home and gardens in its own village, and the **Larmer Tree Gardens**, the Victorian Pleasure Gardens of General Pitt-Rivers containing a wealth of colonial and oriental buildings, offer a superb day out on the edges of the stunning landscape of the Cranborne Chase. [www.larmertreegardens.co.uk](http://www.larmertreegardens.co.uk)

Towards Wimborne, the **Knoll Gardens**, with its tumbling waterfalls and water gardens, formal 'Dragon' garden and Mediterranean Gravel Garden and national collections, and **Stapehill Abbey Crafts and Gardens**, set in a 19th century Abbey with nuns' cloister and chapel, with an award-winning garden, museum and working craftspeople, offer a rewarding day out. [www.knollgardens.co.uk](http://www.knollgardens.co.uk)

Further south, **Compton Acres Gardens**, set in 10 acres with spectacular views over Poole Harbour and the Purbeck Hills, takes the visitor on a garden journey around the world. Ten distinctive gardens make this one of the world's most renowned gardens to visit. [www.comptonacres.co.uk](http://www.comptonacres.co.uk)

**Exbury Gardens** also offers world-famous displays, of rhododendrons and azaleas, in 200-acre grounds. Fantastic spring and autumn colours help to make Exbury the well-loved garden that it is today. [www.exbury.co.uk](http://www.exbury.co.uk)

**Furzey Gardens**, across The New Forest, is a smaller informal garden, known also for its azaleas and rhododendrons, lake, sensory garden, arts and crafts galleries and thatched cottage. [www.furzey-gardens.org](http://www.furzey-gardens.org)

**Breamore House** is a fascinating Elizabethan family manor house with wonderful collections of pictures, furniture and needlework, with a countryside museum and 'life-sized' recreated shops. [www.breamorehouse.com](http://www.breamorehouse.com)

In the heart of The New Forest is **Beaulieu**. Formerly the 14th century Great Gatehouse of Beaulieu Abbey, Palace House is set in glorious grounds and gardens with immaculate spreading lawns and walkways overlooking the Beaulieu River. [www.beaulieu.co.uk](http://www.beaulieu.co.uk)

## SPORTING ACTIVITIES

### Walking & Cycling

Dorset and The New Forest offers a great variety of long and shorter walks through breathtaking scenery, whether along the stunning heritage coastline, or inland through the ancient woodlands, heathland and countryside. There are over 3000 miles of well-signed and waymarked footpaths, bridleways and byways to explore! Many cross or skirt spectacular sites that offer open access, often of historic or archaeological interest. Footpaths are marked with a yellow arrow, although walkers may also use byways (orange arrows) and bridlepaths (blue arrows).

In addition, there is a selection of waymarked on-road cycling routes, marked with a specific sign for each particular route, through quiet country lanes whose most frequent traffic is likely to comprise a tractor or herd of cattle. There are no generic signs for cycleways although off-road cyclists may also use byways (orange arrows) and bridleways (blue arrows).

All can be consulted in more detail on Ordnance Survey Explorer Maps 116, 117, 118, 129 and Outdoor Leisure 15 and 22. Information and guidebooks on each long walk are generally available in Tourist Information Centres or local bookshops.

### WALKING ROUTES

**The New Forest** – the Forest is a walker's paradise with hundreds of marked walking and cycling paths to take you through the woodlands and heathlands. Call in to the Tourist Information Centre for maps.

**Dorset Coast Path** – starts at Lyme Regis and extends for 100km to Poole harbour, offering a variety of terrain and spectacular views, and passing the famous landmarks of Golden Cap, Chesil Beach, the Isle of Portland, Lulworth Cove and Old Harry Rocks. A small section of the route at Kimmeridge is closed most months on week days for army firing; please check with local information points. The path is part of the South West Coast Path, based on the working footpath used by coastguards to patrol the coast each day to stop smuggling. Various guidebooks are available, including the Ordnance Survey National Trail Guide for Exmouth to Poole. [www.southwestcoastpath.com](http://www.southwestcoastpath.com)

**The Wessex Ridgeway** - is a 190km distance path from Marlborough in Wiltshire to Lyme Regis, and forms part of the Great Ridgeway, an ancient highway which was once an important tradelink. The Dorset section begins at Ashmore, the highest village in Dorset, and from here the walk to the coast offers splendid views as it crosses the County's main ancient hillforts, including the highest hill in Dorset, Pilsdon Pen, as well as the famous chalk figure the Cerne Abbas Giant. The official guidebook describes also eleven circular routes which can be walked from the main path. [www.ramblers.org.uk/info/paths/wessexridgeway.html](http://www.ramblers.org.uk/info/paths/wessexridgeway.html)

**The Solent Way** - Beginning at Milford on Sea, this walk traces the coastal edge of the New Forest for 22km, passing through the pretty villages of Lymington, Bucklers Hard, Beaulieu and Hythe en route to Havant. The route takes in a range of scenery, ranging from the shingle beach, sea wall, nature reserve, country lanes, woodland and fields, and there are good transport links at various points along the route. [www.solentway.co.uk](http://www.solentway.co.uk)

**The Liberty Trail** - follows in the footsteps of six men who walked across Somerset and Dorset to join the Duke of Monmouth at Lyme Regis when he landed there in 1685, forming a part of the Monmouth Rebellion for the English crown, which ended so brutally with deportation or death at the hands of the infamous Judge Jeffreys. Starting at Ham Hill, the route extends for 40km to Lyme Regis.

**The Dorset Jubilee Trail** - a recently-created walk, running from Forde Abbey on the western border of the County to Bokerley Dyke on the north-eastern border. The 125km walk curves its way through quiet villages, passing rural churches and offering extensive views over the rolling downs and secret valleys that make Dorset so special.

**The Hardy Way** - is a modern day pilgrimage celebrating the life and works of the classic Dorset 19th century novelist and poet Thomas Hardy. The walk starts from Hardy's birthplace at Higher Bockhampton near Dorchester and ends 300km later in the churchyard at Stinsford where it is said that his heart was buried. The guidebook guides you through some of Dorset's unspoilt landscapes, so many of them hardly changed since Hardy wrote about them, together with a literary narrative from Hardy's novels and poems.

**The Brit Valley Way** - is an 8-mile walk from West Bay near Bridport to Beaminster and has since been extended to link with South Somerset's River Parrett Trail. There are also seven circular, and shorter walks which you can take from the main path to discover the open gentle countryside that surrounds the River Brit.

**The Purbeck Way** - stretches for 25km from Wareham, leaving the River Frome and its water meadows, through heathland, woodland and downland, arriving at the dramatic coastal scenery of the Dorset section of the South West Coast Path before returning to Corfe Castle, and on to Winfrith Newburgh and Lulworth Cove. Wilts and Dorset Buses operate a number of services in the area to link with the trail and with Wareham Train Station and the Swanage Railway.

**The Wareham Forest Way** - is a waymarked footpath through some of the less well-known landscapes in the north Purbeck area. Just over 16km long, it heads north from Wareham through Wareham Forest, then passes through a patchwork of small fields and woodland to Sturminster Marshall, linking with the Stour Valley Way. There are excellent bus connections along the Wareham Forest Way, which in turn link with Poole and Wareham railway stations.

**The Avon Valley Path** - runs for 24km along the valley of the River Avon from Salisbury Cathedral to Christchurch Priory, through a wealth of wildlife and for much of the way through a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest for its nature. Other sections of the route are classed as environmentally sensitive, meaning that traditional agriculture is encouraged. The river is famous for its numerous aquatic plants, its fishing and its range of bird life. A guidebook is available from local stockists.

**The Castleman Trailway** - is based on a 22km recreational route that follows the old "Castleman Corkscrew" railway line from Ringwood to Upton, near Poole. The majority of the Trail is for walkers but cyclists may ride part of the route.

**The Ferndown, Stour & Forest Trail** - is an easy 14km circular walk that can be split into two single walks, ideal for all the family. Starting in Ferndown, it weaves through the forest, across the heath and then along the banks of the River Stour before returning across farmland back to the start.

**The Macmillan Way** - is a special long distance path created recently to raise funds for the Macmillan Cancer Relief Fund. The complete route spans 360km from the coast at Boston in Lincolnshire to the coast at Abbotsbury, entering Dorset just north of Sherborne.

**The Monarch's Way** - follows the escape route of Charles II from Worcester to Charmouth after the Battle of Worcester in 1651. The Dorset section features the short final section of this 850km long route. Three guidebooks describe the route with an historical flavour and can be purchased from main book shops.

### **Short Circular Walks**

For those who prefer shorter walks, the New Forest has plenty to offer, many clearly waymarked as nature trails and starting from simply a couple of miles in length. Dorset can offer the Beaminster Hills Circular Walks, Abbotsbury Round Walks, Three Short Walks around Osmington, Wareham Two Rivers Walks, short walks around Sturminster Newton, and short walks around Shaftesbury. Some of the shorter walks traverse or extend along parts of the longer trails. Many towns and villages also publish local walking trails. Information on short routes are available from tourist information centres and other stockists.

### **Guided Walks**

There are many short guided walks, lasting from an hour or so to a full day, around the area which are led by Dorset or New Forest Countryside Rangers and other approved guides. Many of the walks have themes such as wildlife, local history and geology. You can find out about these walks and dates by purchasing the **Dorset Countryside Book**, available from all Tourist Information Centres. Those who are less mobile can consult the **Out & About** book, free from the same outlets. Alternatively, ask for the list of **Blue Badge Guides** in any tourist information centre, for a tailor-made tour with a qualified and knowledgeable local guide, or join a Blue Badge tour already organised in the locality - if available they will be publicised in tourist information centres.

### **CYCLING**

The **North Dorset Cycleway** offers a choice of three challenging routes, of 36, 60 or 100 km duration, through the hills and vales of the Cranborne Chase, the Blackmore Vale and the Dorset Downs. Much of the scenery is truly breathtaking, including the second-highest point in Dorset at Bulbarrow, the scenic 18th-century estate village of Milton Abbas, and the distinctive local market towns of Blandford Forum and Sturminster Newton.

The **Purbeck Cycleway** follows a 65km route starting from the ancient Saxon town of Wareham, passing through the Purbeck downland and heathland via the imposing Castle ruin and idyllic village of Corfe Castle.

The **Castleman Trailway** covers 22km of the old Southampton to Dorchester railway line, which was closed in the 1960s. The route can be followed on foot, by bike or on horseback.

The **Lepe Trail** and the **Fordingbridge Trail** in the New Forest both cover sections of off-road cycling. The Lepe trail is an easy-going 9-mile route on the lanes and rights of way on the edge of the New Forest. The Fordingbridge Trail is more challenging, a 21-mile route for the more experienced cyclist which circles the Rockbourne Roman Villa.

The New Forest also offers a range of short waymarked cycling trails through the forest and heathland in the heart of the New Forest.

Useful general links:

Walking routes [www.dorsetforyou.com](http://www.dorsetforyou.com)

[www.walkingpages.co.uk](http://www.walkingpages.co.uk)

[www.bestwalks.com](http://www.bestwalks.com)

[www.walkingontheweb.co.uk](http://www.walkingontheweb.co.uk)

[www.ramblers.org.uk](http://www.ramblers.org.uk)

Walking guides [www.foottrails.co.uk](http://www.foottrails.co.uk)

[www.footscape.co.uk](http://www.footscape.co.uk)

Cycling routes [www.sustrans.org.uk](http://www.sustrans.org.uk)

Bike Hire [www.cyclex.co.uk](http://www.cyclex.co.uk)

[www.forestleisurecycling.co.uk](http://www.forestleisurecycling.co.uk)

[www.aabikehirenewforest.co.uk](http://www.aabikehirenewforest.co.uk)

[www.countrylanes.co.uk](http://www.countrylanes.co.uk)

## **Watersports**

### **Boat Trips**

Boat trips offer fishing, sightseeing and even alternative ways of simply getting about. There are numerous operators at all the main harbours along the coast. Occasional paddle steamer excursions take place along the Purbeck coast in the summer months as well as trips around Christchurch harbour [www.waverleyexcursions.co.uk](http://www.waverleyexcursions.co.uk). A boat trip is also an excellent way to appreciate the Jurassic Coast : a leaflet is published on [www.jurassiccoast.com](http://www.jurassiccoast.com)

### **Sailing**

With picturesque scenery, sheltered coves and safe anchorages the Purbeck and eastern Dorset coast is a sailor's paradise. In the west Lyme Bay is guarded by the notorious tidal race of Portland Bill and, with a shortage of sheltered anchorage, is for the accomplished yachtsman only!

Weymouth has several sailing clubs in the harbour. Portland harbour is growing in popularity for international sailing competitions hosted by the newly established National Sailing Academy, one of the venues for the 2012 Olympics. Lyme Regis has a small fleet of yachts and an active dinghy club. Christchurch, ideally situated at the confluence of the River Stour and Avon enjoys a unique position on the shores of its harbour.

### **Windsurfing & Waterskiing**

The orientation of the Dorset coast and the wide range of bays, inlets and harbours means that no matter where the wind blows there are conditions to suit most requirements. Portland Harbour is an internationally renowned venue for competitions because of the unique protection offered by Chesil Beach. Poole harbour also provides relatively smooth water in strong winds. Elsewhere along the coast, Lyme Regis, Kimmeridge Bay and Hook sands (near Studland) offer challenging windsurfing in strong wind conditions. Other popular spots include Bowleaze Cove, Weymouth and Swanage Bays. Sailboards can be hired by the hour, half-day or day from several shops in Poole harbour, Weymouth and Swanage.

### **Canoeing**

The sheltered bays and headlands off the Dorset coast offer exciting sea kayaking. There are numerous launching and recovery points along the coast but adequate equipment, preparation and training are essential.

### **Surfing**

Although not renowned as a surfing destination, Dorset's coast does provide some surfing locations. In good conditions, the reefs at Kimmeridge provide excellent waves, although the presence of rocks and rip currents make the area unsuitable for beginners. Part of the bay, Broad Bench, is within the Lulworth Ranges and so access is restricted to this area at certain times of year. If new to the area, seek local advice before surfing at this location.

The piers at Bournemouth and Boscombe, along with the beach at Southbourne, provide popular surfing locations and are suitable for beginners. However, during the summer months the waters can be busy.

### **Diving**

Dorset's marine environment, particularly the numerous wrecks and reefs, offer something for everyone. The rocky ledges of Lyme Bay are of particular interest as they contain a wealth of marine wildlife including the fragile pink sea fan and solitary corals, some of which are rare in

UK waters. A number of areas have been designated as Voluntary Marine Nature Reserves including sites off Swanage, Kimmeridge and Charmouth. Dorset SEASEARCH is a project for divers to make useful observations of underwater habitats and marine life [www.seasearch.org.uk](http://www.seasearch.org.uk). The centres for both diving and training are at Poole, Swanage, Weymouth, Portland, West Bay and Lyme Regis. The best, but also the busiest months, are during the summer.

The deeper wrecks (20m+) should be considered as challenging dives, especially to the novice or newcomer to UK diving. The nearest recompression chambers are at Poole or Plymouth.

## **Safety**

**Portland Coastguard co-ordinate search and rescue along the Dorset Coast. In case of emergency dial 999. Non emergency calls Tel: 01305 760439.**

Maritime Coastguard Agency publish a set of leaflets 'Safety Afloat, a voluntary code of Best and Safe practice for Leisure Craft Users' and this, together with further advice is available at their One Shop Stop/24 hour helpline on 0870 6006505.

When undertaking maritime sports it is advisable to inform Portland Coastguard of your plans or at least let someone know where you are going and what time you plan to return. Take into account the prevailing conditions and the weather forecast.

The Lulworth Gunnery Range between Lulworth Cove and Kimmeridge Bay extends out to sea for nearly 12 miles, and this area is closed to boats during firing sessions, but is usually open during weekends and school holidays.

## Contacts

### Boat Trips

Dorset Belles, Bournemouth [www.dorsetbelles.co.uk](http://www.dorsetbelles.co.uk)

Weymouth Whitewater [www.weymouth-whitewater.co.uk](http://www.weymouth-whitewater.co.uk)

Ferry Steps Cruises, Weymouth Tel: 01305 789761

Fleet Observer, Weymouth Tel: 01305 759692

White Motor Boats Weymouth Tel: 01305 785000

### Sailing

Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy Tel: 01305 866000  
[www.wpnsa.org.uk](http://www.wpnsa.org.uk)

Hurst Point Yacht Charters, Brockenhurst Tel: 01590 623765

New Forest Water Park Fordingbridge Tel: 01425 656868

Weymouth Yacht Charters Tel: 01305 770283

GB Yachts, Weymouth, [www.gbyachts.com](http://www.gbyachts.com)

Windsurfing/Canoeing:

Liquid Logistics (Canoeing and kayaking activities on Beaulieu River), Brockenhurst  
Tel: 01590 624730

Avon Beach Company, Christchurch Tel: 01425 272162

Hengistbury Head Centre, Christchurch Tel: 01202 425173

New Forest Water Park, Fordingbridge Tel: 01425 656868

Waterski & Wakeboard Club, Ringwood [www.ellinghamwaterski.co.uk](http://www.ellinghamwaterski.co.uk)

Shell Bay Watersports Tel: 01929 450399

Second Wind Tel: 01305 835301

Weymouth Watersports Club Tel: 07810 698741

Weymouth Outdoor Education Centre Tel: 01305 784927

[www.ukwindsurfing.com](http://www.ukwindsurfing.com)

Surfing:

Bournemouth Surfing Centre Tel: 01202 433544 [www.bournemouth-surfing.co.uk](http://www.bournemouth-surfing.co.uk)

Diving

[www.divedorset.com](http://www.divedorset.com)

[www.weymouth.gov.uk](http://www.weymouth.gov.uk) for list of local Dive Boat Charters, Shops and Facilities

New Dawn Dive Centre, New Milton Tel: 01425 616062

Portland Oceaneering Tel: 01305 860402

Scuba Centre, Portland Tel: 01305 82666

Divers Down Diving School, Swanage Tel: 01929 423565

Old Harbour Dive Centre, Weymouth Tel: 01305 760888

## **Fishing**

### **Outdoor Activities - Fishing**

The region offers excellent coarse, river and sea fishing.

Sea and shore angling are extremely popular along the Dorset Coast: Weymouth and Portland offers probably the most exciting angling along the South Coast for anglers of all abilities. Chartered boat angling is increasingly favoured around the harbours of Poole, Weymouth, Lyme Regis and Christchurch. Dorset also hosts many major and junior angling competitions.

The freshwater angler can also enjoy some really good coarse fishing and there is a good range of trout lakes available throughout our beautiful countryside: the River Frome and the River Stour, plus many privately owned and municipally managed lakes make Dorset an angler's paradise.

An NRA Rod licence is required by all persons of 12 years and over, available from Post Offices, but permission should still be obtained from the land owner.

### Contacts

Amaretto Sport Fishing, Lyme Regis  
Tel: 01297 445949

Deep Sea Fishing  
Tel: 01425 629776

Dorchester Wessex Fly Fishing Trout Lake, Tolpuddle  
Tel: 01305 848460

Lyme Regis Amherst Lodge Fishery  
Tel: 01297 442773

Poole Sea Angling Charter  
Tel: 01202 385496

Ray Pitt Sea Fishing  
Tel: 01425 612896

Sea Fishing  
Tel: 01202 679666

Wimborne White Sheet Trout Fishery  
Tel: 01202 883687

### Coarse Fishing

Christchurch Royalty Fishery  
Tel: 01202 485262

Cranborne Gold Oak Farm  
Tel: 01725 517275

Dorchester Flowers Farm Trout Lake  
Tel: 01300 341351

Ferndown East Moors Fishing Lake  
Tel: 01202 872302

Fordingbridge New Forest Water Park  
Tel: 01425 656868

Pallington Lakes  
Tel: 01305 84814

Verwood Martins Farm Fishery  
Tel: 01202 822335

#### Tackle Shops

Avon Angling Centre, Ringwood  
Tel: 01425 461038

Blandford Conyers Gun & Tackle Shop  
Tel: 01258 452307

Bournemouth Fishing Lodge  
Tel: 01202 514345

Castaways  
Tel: 01202 739202

Christchurch Angling Centre  
Tel: 01202 480520

Davis Fishing Tackle, Christchurch  
Tel: 01202 485169

Fishingbig.com, Poole  
Tel: 0870 7605699

Forest Sports, Lymington  
Tel: 01590 643366

Leominstead Trout Fishery, Lyndhurst  
Tel: 023 8028 2610

Poole A C Angling  
Tel: 01202 734451

Poole Sea Angling Centre  
Tel: 01202 676597

Potters Tackle Shop, Bridport  
Tel: 01308 428226

Pro Angling, Christchurch  
Tel: 01202 484518

Purbeck Angling, Wareham  
Tel: 01929 5500770

Ringwood Tackle  
Tel: 01425 475155

Specialist Angling Supplies, Dorchester  
Tel: 01305 266500

Swanage Angling Centre  
Tel: 01929 424989

Reels & Deals  
Tel: 01305 787848

Revel Fishery & Tackle, Dorchester  
Tel: 01300 345301

Tackle Box, Lyme Regis  
Tel: 01297 443373

Todber Manor Fishing Tackle Shop, Sturminster Newton  
Tel: 01258 820384

Ultimate Angling, Bournemouth  
Tel: 01202 525355

Wessex Angling Centre, Poole  
Tel: 01202 668244

West Bay Water Sports Ltd

Tel: 01308 421800

Weymouth Angling Centre

Tel: 01305 777771

Weymouth Denning Tackle

Tel: 01305 783145

Yesterday Tackle & Books, Christchurch

Tel: 01202 476586

## Riding

### Outdoor Activities - Riding

Come and enjoy Dorset and the New Forest's stunning countryside on horseback. The vast network of public bridleways is the best way to explore the area rural hinterland and really get away from it all.

The British Horse Society has guides for riding in the area [www.bhs.org.uk](http://www.bhs.org.uk).

Dorset and The New Forest also offers a wide range of Riding Schools and whether you are looking for beginner rides, solo rides or group rides, prices start from around £15 per hour.

### Contacts

Bagnum Riding Stables, Ringwood  
Tel: 01425 476263

Beaminstor Cattistock Riding Stables  
Tel: 01308 863006

Blandford Coombs  
Tel: 01258 455846

Bovington R.A.C Saddle Club  
Tel: 01929 403580

Bridles Equestrian Centre, Christchurch  
Tel: 01202 488827

Brockenhurst Forest Park Riding Stables  
Tel: 01590 623429

Burley Manor Hotel Riding Stables  
Tel: 01425 403489

Burley Villa Riding Stables  
Tel: 01425 610278

Charmouth Higher Pound Riding Centre, Monkton Wyld  
Tel: 01297 678747

Church Road Riding Stables, Preston  
Tel: 01305 833272

Corfe Castle Rempstone Equestrian  
Tel: 01929 480490

Deer Park Riding Stables, Blandford Forum  
Tel: 01258 453283

Dorchester Kingston Maurward College  
Tel: 01305 264738

Dudmoor Farm Riding School, Christchurch  
Tel: 01202 473826

Ferndown Stocks Farm Equestrian Centre, West Parley  
Tel: 01202 570288

Fleet House Stud & Equestrian Centre, Weymouth  
Tel: 01305 788005

Gillingham Foot, Penselwood  
Tel: 01747 840283

Green Cottage Riding Centre, Three Legged Cross

Tel: 01202 822632  
Higher Pound Equestrian, Monkton Wyld  
Tel: 01297 678747  
Holtwood Riding Stables, Holt  
Tel: 01258 840293  
Lanehouse Equitation Centre  
Tel: 01305 770177  
L'Liwetto Riding School Sturminster Newton  
Tel: 01963 23462  
Lulworth Equestrian Centre, Coombe Keynes  
Tel: 01929 400396  
Moreton Stables, Dorchester  
Tel: 01929 463662  
New Milton Burley-Villa School of Riding  
Tel: 01425 610278  
Pippin Equestrian Ltd  
Presthays Farm, Eccliffe, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 5RE  
Tel: 01747 822997

Portland Windmill stables  
Tel: 01305 823719  
Pound Cottage Riding Centre, Milton Abbas  
Tel: 01258 880057  
Ranch House Riding Stables, Osmington Mills  
Tel: 01305 833578  
Rushall Park Riding Stables, Corfe Mullen  
Tel: 01202 691988  
Sherborne Bridleways  
Tel: 01935 871011  
Sims Cottage Stables  
Tel: 01425 612961  
St Leonards Forest Pines Riding Centre  
Tel: 01202 871828  
[www.forestpinesriding.com](http://www.forestpinesriding.com)  
Stocks Farm Equestrian Centre, Ferndown  
Tel: 01202 570288  
Studland Riding Stables  
Tel: 01929 450273  
Sunnyland Farm & Livery Stables, Wimborne  
Tel: 01258 840445  
Vastings Meadow Livery Stables, Lyme Regis  
Tel: 01297 21582  
Verwood Brambles Farm Riding School, Gotham  
Tel: 01202 822837  
Warborne Farm Stables, Pilley (btwn Lymington & Brockenhurst)  
Tel 01590 673999  
[www.warbornefarmstables.co.uk](http://www.warbornefarmstables.co.uk)  
Wareham Hyde Woods Riding Centre  
Tel: 01929 471087  
Weymouth Bramdon Trekking Centre, Portesham  
Tel: 01305 871011  
Weymouth Riding Centre, Chickerell  
Tel: 01305 771760

Wimborne Claires Riding School, Three Legged Cross  
Tel: 01202 822975

Windmill Stables, Portland  
Tel: 07976 661838

## **Golf**

The picturesque countryside and scenic coast provide the perfect backdrop for the golfing enthusiast, and with the variety of challenging courses available, Dorset and The New Forest is the perfect choice for a golfing break.

### Contacts

Useful link: [www.uk-golfguide.com](http://www.uk-golfguide.com)

Ashley Wood Golf Club  
Wimborne Road, Blandford, Dorset DT11 9HN  
Tel 01258 452253

Barton on Sea Golf Club  
Milford Road, New Milton, Dorset BH25 5PP  
Tel 01425 615308  
[www.barton-on-sea-golf.co.uk](http://www.barton-on-sea-golf.co.uk)

Bournemouth Golf Driving Range  
Parley Green Lane, Parley, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 6BB  
Tel: 01202 593131

Bramshaw Golf Club Ltd  
Brook, Lyndhurst, Hampshire SO43 7HE  
Tel: 023 8081 3433

Bridport & West Dorset Golf Club  
East Cliff, West Bay, Bridport, Dorset DT6 4EP  
Tel 01308 421095

Broadstone (Dorset) Golf Club  
Wentworth Drive, Broadstone, Dorset BH18 8DQ  
Tel 01202 692595

Brockenhurst Manor Golf Club  
Sway Road, Brockenhurst, Hants SO42 7SG  
Tel 01590 623332

Bulbury Club, Bulbury Lane  
Lytchett Matravers, Poole, Dorset BH16 6EP  
Tel 01929 459574

The Burley Golf Club  
Cott Lane, Burley, Ringwood, Hants BH24 4BB  
Tel 01425 402431

Bullpits Golf Club  
Bullpits, Bourton, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 5AX  
Tel: 01747 840229

Came Down Golf Club  
Came Down, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 8NR  
Tel 01305 813494  
[www.camedowngolfclub.co.uk](http://www.camedowngolfclub.co.uk)

Canford Magna Golf Club  
Knighton Lane, Wimborne, Dorset BH21 3AS  
Tel 01202 592552  
[www.canfordmagnagc.co.uk](http://www.canfordmagnagc.co.uk)

Chedington Court Golf Club  
South Perrott, Dorset DT8 3HU  
Tel 01935 891413

Chewton Glen Golf Association  
Chewton Glen Hotel, Health & Country Club, New Milton, Hants BH25 6QS  
Tel 01425 275341  
[www.chewtonglen.com](http://www.chewtonglen.com)

Crane Valley Golf Club  
The Clubhouse, Verwood, Dorset BH31 7LE  
Tel 01202 814088

The Dorset Golf & Country Club  
Bere Regis, Wareham, Dorset BH20 7NT  
Tel: 01929 472244

Dudsbury Golf Club  
64 Christchurch Road, Ferndown, Dorset BH22 8ST  
Tel 01202 593499

Dudmoor Golf Course  
Dudmoor Farm Rd, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 6AQ  
Tel: 01202 473826

East Dorset Golf Club  
Bere Regis, Nr Wareham, Dorset BH20 7NT  
Tel 01929 472244

Ferndown Forest Golf Club  
Forest Links Road, Ferndown, Dorset BH22 9QE  
Tel 01202 876096

Ferndown Golf Club  
119 Golf Links Road, Ferndown, Dorset BH22 8BU  
Tel 01202 874602

Folke Golf Centre  
Allweston, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 5HR  
Tel 01963 23330

Highcliffe Castle Golf Club  
107 Lymington Road, Highcliffe, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 4LA  
Tel 01425 272210

Iford Golf Centre  
Riverside Avenue, Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 7ES  
Tel: 01202 436436

Isle of Purbeck Golf Club  
Corfe Road, Studland, Swanage, Dorset BH19 3AB  
Tel 01929 450361  
[www.purbeckgolf.co.uk](http://www.purbeckgolf.co.uk)

Knighton Heath Golf Club  
Francis Avenue, Bournemouth, Dorset BH11 8NX  
Tel 01202 572633

Lyme Regis Golf Club  
Timber Hill, Lyme Regis, Dorset DT7 3HQ  
Tel 01297 442963

Lyons Gate Golf Club  
Lyons Gate, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 7AZ  
Tel 01300 345239

Meyrick Park Golf Club  
Meyrick Park, Bournemouth, Dorset BH2 6PD  
Tel 01202 292425

Moors Valley Golf Centre  
Horton Road, Ashley Heath, Ringwood, Hants BH24 2ET  
Tel 01425 479776

New Forest Golf Club  
Southampton Road, Lyndhurst, Hants SO43 7BU  
Tel 023 80282752

Parkstone Golf Club  
49a Links Road, Poole, Dorset BH14 9QS  
Tel 01202 707138  
[www.parkstonegolfclub.co.uk](http://www.parkstonegolfclub.co.uk)

Parley Court Golf Club  
Parley Green Lane, Hurn, Christchurch, Dorset BH23 6BB

Tel 01202 593131  
Port Regis Golf Club  
Motcombe park, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 9QA  
Tel 01747 852566

Queens Park Golf Club  
Queens Park, West Drive, Bournemouth, Dorset BH8 9BY  
Tel 01202 396198

Sherborne Golf Club  
Higher Clatcombe, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 4RN  
Tel 01935 814431

Solent Meads Golf Course & Driving Range  
Rolls Drive, Hengistbury Head, Bournemouth, Dorset BH6 4NA  
Tel: 01202 420795

Somerley Park Golf Course  
The Estate Office, Somerley, Ringwood, Hants BH24 3PL  
Tel 01425 461496

Sturminster Marshall Golf Club  
Moor Lane, Sturminster Marshall, Dorset BH21 4AH  
Tel 01258 858444

Twyford Golf Range  
Twyford, Shaftesbury, Dorset SP7 0JN  
Tel 01747 811356

Walhampton Golf Course Ltd  
Bampton Farm, Lisle Court Rd, Lymington, Hampshire SO41 5SH  
Tel: 01590 689631

Wareham Golf Club  
Sandford Road, Wareham, Dorset BH20 4DH  
Tel 01929 554147

Wessex Golf Centre  
Radipole Lane, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 9HX  
Tel 01305 784737

Weymouth Golf Club  
Links Road, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 0PF  
Tel 01305 773981

Wincanton Golf Club  
The Racecourse, Wincanton, Somerset BA9 9BJ  
Tel 01963 34606

Wolfedale Golf Course  
Charminster, Dorchester, Dorset DT2 7SG  
Tel 01305 260186

## MUSEUMS

Dorset & The New Forest offers museums catering for almost any interest.

Anyone interested in the evolution of Dorset's unique, and globally-renowned, coastline will enjoy the story of the Jurassic Coast and evidence of recent fossil treasures at the **Lyme Regis Museum** [www.lymeregismuseum.co.uk](http://www.lymeregismuseum.co.uk) and the **Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre** in West Dorset [www.charmouth.org](http://www.charmouth.org) . Further along the coast east at Abbotsbury, the famous **Swannery** is a living sanctuary to thousands of swans, a bird with very strong links to the former monastery at Abbotsbury [www.abbotsbury-tourism.co.uk](http://www.abbotsbury-tourism.co.uk) . Springtime for the hatching season is always popular.

History lovers will enjoy the wide variety of museums available. **The Red House Museum** in Christchurch and the **Priest's House Museum** in Wimborne each offer fascinating social history displays in a Georgian workhouse and a townhouse respectively. The **Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum** [www.russell-cotes.bournemouth.gov.uk](http://www.russell-cotes.bournemouth.gov.uk) houses a diverse art collection from around the world in an Italianate-style Victorian mansion on the Bournemouth seafront. In Dorchester, the **Old Crown Court and Cells** takes the visitor back to the time of the Civil War and the notorious Judge Jeffreys, while the nearby **Tolpuddle Martyr's Museum** [www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk](http://www.tolpuddlemartyrs.org.uk) documents the beginnings of the modern trade union movement. In Dorchester high street, the **Dorset County Museum** [www.dorsetcountymuseum.org](http://www.dorsetcountymuseum.org) is renowned for its fossil collection from the Jurassic Coast, as well as the complete study of Thomas Hardy, the much-loved 19th-century novelist and poet. In the northern reaches of the county, at **Shaftesbury Abbey Museum**, the original foundations of the Benedictine Monastery set up by King Alfred can be viewed, along with an interactive exhibition which tells the story of the abbey.

Industrial heritage fans will be intrigued by the number of mills in the area. **Sturminster Newton Mill** and **Eling Tide Mill** are two well-known examples which offer milling days on certain occasions over the summer, but there are several others that can be visited. Those interested in Dorset's former major industry, quarrying, will also be interested in a visit to Portland, the home of the stone used in a number of London's major historic buildings, including St Paul's Cathedral.

Military and motor fanatics can find entertainment in a number of museums. For the military, the **Bovington Tank Museum** [www.tankmuseum.co.uk](http://www.tankmuseum.co.uk), the **Royal Signals Museum** at Blandford [www.army.mod.uk/royalsignalsmuseum](http://www.army.mod.uk/royalsignalsmuseum) and the **Keep Military Museum** in Dorchester [www.keepmilitarymuseum.org](http://www.keepmilitarymuseum.org) each offer exciting and imaginative exhibitions. Motor enthusiasts will love the **Sammy Miller Museum** for restored motorcycles [www.sammymiller.co.uk](http://www.sammymiller.co.uk) and the world-famous **Beaulieu National Motor Museum** [www.beaulieu.co.uk](http://www.beaulieu.co.uk), with its 250 vehicles, Palace House and Abbey Ruins.

## **FAMILY DAYS OUT**

Dorset and The New Forest boasts a large number of attractions for the family, both outdoor and indoor.

Animal lovers can visit Monkey World in Bovington, recognised as a leading site for ape rescue and rehabilitation or Farmer Palmer's Farm Park which operates alongside a genuine working farm. To experience times gone by, take a trip on Swanage Steam Railway through some of Dorset's most lovely countryside. For an active day, clamber over the timber play structures at Moors Valley Park or just enjoy the forest walks. Or see the world's finest collection of Armoured Fighting Vehicles at the Tank Museum near Wareham.

### **ALICE IN WONDERLAND FAMILY PARK, Christchurch**

An adventure park for younger children inspired by Lewis Carroll's famous stories.

[www.aliceinwonderlandpark.co.uk](http://www.aliceinwonderlandpark.co.uk)

### **OCEANARIUM, Bournemouth**

Explore the marvels of the undersea world.

[www.oceanarium.co.uk](http://www.oceanarium.co.uk)

### **VISTARAMA BALLOON, Bournemouth**

Experience spectacular views with this tethered balloon flight.

[www.bournemouthballoon.com](http://www.bournemouthballoon.com)

### **DORSET HEAVY HORSE AND ANIMAL CENTRE, near Verwood**

The Centre's aim is not only to preserve and breed the different heavy horses, but also to give visitors the chance to share and delight in these magnificent animals.

[www.dorset-heavy-horse-centre.co.uk](http://www.dorset-heavy-horse-centre.co.uk)

### **NEW FOREST OTTER, OWL AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PARK, Longdown near Southampton**

Set in 25 acres of ancient woodland where you will see Europe's largest collection of multi-specied otters, owls and other indigenous wildlife.

[www.ottersandowls.co.uk/newforest.htm](http://www.ottersandowls.co.uk/newforest.htm)

### **THE NEW FOREST OWL SANCTUARY, near Ringwood**

One of the largest collection of owls in Europe with daily flying displays.

### **FARMER PALMER'S FARM PARK, Organford, Poole**

The Farm Park operates alongside a 170 acre family-owned working farm.

[www.farmerpalmer.co.uk](http://www.farmerpalmer.co.uk)

### **MONKEY WORLD, Bovington**

The park is home to a wide variety of rescued primates including Orang-utans, Gibbons, Woolly Monkeys, Lemurs, Macaques and Marmosets.

[www.monkeyworld.co.uk](http://www.monkeyworld.co.uk)

### **SWANAGE STEAM RAILWAY, Swanage and Corfe Castle**

A steam train ride through some of the Dorset's most lovely countryside.

[www.swanagerailway.co.uk](http://www.swanagerailway.co.uk)

### **PUTLAKE ADVENTURE FARM, near Swanage.**

Make contact with a variety of friendly animals in a relaxed atmosphere.

[www.putlakefarm.co.uk](http://www.putlakefarm.co.uk)

**THE TANK MUSEUM**, Bovington near Wareham

Over 300 vehicles on display, detailing the complete evolution of armoured vehicles. Tanks in Action Displays and Tank Rides available on certain dates.  
[www.tankmuseum.co.uk](http://www.tankmuseum.co.uk)

**TERRACOTTA WARRIORS**

The only museum outside China exclusively dedicated to the amazing Terracotta Warriors in China. [www.terracottawarriors.co.uk](http://www.terracottawarriors.co.uk)

**WORLD OF TOYS & VINTAGE END OF PIER MUSEUM**, Arne near Wareham.

Featuring Victorian Dolls and Musical Boxes, and thousands of toys of all kinds from 1850 to 1970.

**ABBOTSBURY SMUGGLER'S BARN BY THE SEA**

A superb soft play area inside the hulls of a Smuggler's Lugger and a Revenue Cutter.  
[www.abbotsbury-tourism.co.uk](http://www.abbotsbury-tourism.co.uk)

**DINOSAURLAND FOSSIL WORLD**, Lyme Regis

A museum featuring Jurassic fossils and dinosaurs - bring your fossils in for free expert analysis.

**DINOSAUR MUSEUM, Dorchester**

The incredible world of Dinosaurs comes alive in a new way that visitors of all ages will love and enjoy. Actual fossils, skeletons and life-size reconstruction's combine with audio-visual and hands-on displays to inform and entertain. [www.dinosaur-museum.com](http://www.dinosaur-museum.com)

**THE TEDDY BEAR MUSEUM**, Dorchester

Discover the origins of the teddy bear and see hundreds of bears from the past century in atmospheric and evocative settings.  
[www.teddybearhouse.co.uk](http://www.teddybearhouse.co.uk)

**THE TUTANKHAMUN EXHIBITION**, Dorchester

Tutankhamun's tomb, treasures, and mummified body are superbly recreated in this spectacular exhibition – spanning time itself. [www.tutankhamun-exhibition.co.uk](http://www.tutankhamun-exhibition.co.uk)

**WORLDWIDE BUTTERFLIES & WORL DLIFE**, near Sherborne

Living butterflies, giant moths and exotic insects bring a taste of the tropics.  
[www.worldlife.co.uk](http://www.worldlife.co.uk)

**DEEP SEA ADVENTURE AND SHARKY'S PLAYZONE**, Weymouth

Two separate attractions under one roof: Deep Sea Adventure takes you on a unique journey, encountering underwater exploration and featuring "The Titanic Experience" and Sharky's Playzone is an all weather kids adventure play zone. [www.deepsea-adventure.co.uk](http://www.deepsea-adventure.co.uk)

**DISCOVERY - BREWERS QUAY**, Weymouth

With over 60 exhibits, Discovery offers hands on fun for everyone. See the world's weather patterns with the Satellite Weather Station, leave your shadow behind or mix up a friend's face with your own – plenty to do, so spend as little or as long as you like.  
[www.discoverdiscovery.co.uk](http://www.discoverdiscovery.co.uk)

**MOORS VALLEY COUNTRY PARK** nr Ringwood

750 acres of woodland in the Valley of the Moors River; adventure play trail and tree top trail.  
[www.moors-valley.co.uk](http://www.moors-valley.co.uk)

**WEYMOUTH SEA LIFE PARK**

Exciting close encounters with marvels of marine life from shrimps to sharks, octopus to eels. A full programme of feeding demonstrations, talks and special presentations.  
[www.sealifeeurope.com/uk/weymouth/home.htm](http://www.sealifeeurope.com/uk/weymouth/home.htm)

## EATING & DRINKING

Dorset and The New Forest is a food lover's dream. Hearty local produce, ranging from fruit and vegetables to pork and apple sausages, from jams and marmalades to Dorset Apple Cake and Knob biscuits, awaits you!

With over 4,000 farms in the area, local produce is readily available at one of the many Farmers' Markets held throughout the year. These markets offer the perfect opportunity to meet some of the local characters that help to make Dorset and The New Forest such a special area. Many farm and cottage producers also have a farm shop.

Each market town in the area also has a set general market day, when the town buzzes with activity as local traders bring their wares to town. Wimborne Minster's weekend covered market is the largest in the south, and Dorchester's Wednesday market is also well-known and widely-attended. In the New Forest, Lymington's Saturday market is popular.

There are also various food festivals throughout the year – the one in Christchurch for example is in May every year and in Sturminster Newton there is an annual festival dedicated to cheese in September.

Dorset and The New Forest is home to some local Real Ale breweries, among them Hall and Woodhouse ('Badger' beers [www.hall-woodhouse.co.uk](http://www.hall-woodhouse.co.uk)). The Hall and Woodhouse Brewery in Blandford Forum, Ringwood Brewery [www.ringwoodbrewery.co.uk](http://www.ringwoodbrewery.co.uk), and Palmer's Brewery in Bridport [www.palmersbrewery.com](http://www.palmersbrewery.com), are open to visitors at certain times. Each brewery owns a chain of pubs throughout the area and elsewhere in the UK, which serve the local brew.

Thanks to its mild climate, the area even has some vineyards such as The Purbeck Vineyard [www.purbeckvineyard.co.uk](http://www.purbeckvineyard.co.uk) and Setley Ridge Vineyard in The New Forest.

The local produce can also be enjoyed in the many fine eating and drinking establishments in the area – including 2 Michelin-starred restaurants. Sit on the seafront and taste fish brought in that morning, sample traditional fare in one of the many countryside pubs or enjoy a sumptuous meal at a luxury hotel.

Useful links:

[www.directfromdorset.org.uk](http://www.directfromdorset.org.uk)

[www.dorsetfoodlinks.co.uk](http://www.dorsetfoodlinks.co.uk),

[www.farmshopping.com](http://www.farmshopping.com)

## FARM SHOPS AND FARMERS & GENERAL MARKETS

### **FARM SHOPS**

Cranborne Stores, Wimborne [www.cranbornestores.co.uk](http://www.cranbornestores.co.uk)

Holt Vale Farm Shop, Wimborne Tel: 01202 881525

Home Farm Shop, Tarrant Gunville *Blandford*, Tel: 07736 709953 [www.homefarmshop.co.uk](http://www.homefarmshop.co.uk)

Pampered Pigs Pantry, *Tolpuddle* Dorchester Tel: 01305 848107  
[www.pamperedpigs.co.uk](http://www.pamperedpigs.co.uk)

Pamphill Dairy Farm Shop, Pamphill *Wimborne* Tel: 01202 880618  
[www.pamphilldairy.com](http://www.pamphilldairy.com)

Washingpool Farm Shop & Restaurant, North Allington *Bridport* Tel: 01308 425424

[www.washingpool.co.uk](http://www.washingpool.co.uk)

Hazel Copse Farm Shop & Bakery, Beaulieu Tel: 01590 612107

### **FARMERS MARKETS**

Beaulieu  
8th January, 12th February, 12th March, 9th April, 14th May, 11th June, 9th July, 13th August, 10th September, 8th October, 12th November, 10th December 2006

Blandford  
Corn Exchange. 2nd Friday of the month 2006

Bournemouth  
The Square, 3rd Saturday of the month 10am onwards

Bridport  
Arts Centre, South Street. 2nd Saturday of the month 2006

Brockenhurst  
16th August (evening)

Christchurch  
Saxon Square. 1st Friday of the month 2006

Dorchester  
Poundbury, Burraton Square. 1st Saturday of the month 2006

Fordingbridge  
29th January, 30th April, 30th July, 29th October 2006

Lymington  
15th January, 19th February, 19th March, 16th April, 21st May, 18th June, 16th July, 20th August,  
17th September, 15th October, 19th November 2006

Lyndhurst  
22nd January, 26th February, 26th March, 23rd April, 28th May, 25th June, 24th September,  
22nd October, 26th November 2006

Shaftesbury  
Town Hall. 1st Saturday of the month 2006

Sherborne  
Cheap Street. 3rd Friday of the month 2006

Sturminster Newton  
Market Place. 4th Friday of the month 2006

Verwood  
The Square, 3rd Saturday of the month 2006

Wareham  
Town Hall. 4th Thursday of the month 2006

Weymouth  
Western Bridge, 2nd Sunday of the month 2006

Wimborne  
Cornmarket. 2nd Thursday of the month 2006

## WHERE TO EAT & DRINK

There are many fine eating and drinking establishments in the area, too many to include here. We've listed below a selection recommended in the 2005 editions of Which Good Food Guide and Good Pub Guide. But when you're here, ask the local people you meet or pop into a Tourist Information Centre for a tip!

Dorset New Forest Tourism Partnership can take no responsibility for the quality of offering at these venues.

## **RESTAURANTS**

### **AA GOOD RESTAURANT GUIDE 2006, AA publications**

BARTON-ON-SEA : PEBBLE BEACH  
BEAMINSTER : BRIDGE HOUSE HOTEL  
BEAULIEU: BEAULIEU HOTEL, MONTAGU ARMS HOTEL  
BLANDFORD FORUM: CASTLEMAN HOTEL  
BOURNEMOUTH: BISTRO ON THE BEACH, CHINE HOTEL, LANGTRY RESTAURANT,  
OSCARS AT DE VERE ROYAL BATH HOTEL, SAINT MICHEL, WEST BEACH (Best  
Seafood Restaurant of the Year in England)  
BROCKENHURST: BALMER LAWN HOTEL, CAREYS MANOR HOTEL, NEW PARK  
MANOR HOTEL, LE POUSSIN @ WHITLEY RIDGE, RHINEFIELD HOUSE HOTEL,  
SIMPLY POUSSIN  
BRIDPORT: RIVERSIDE RESTAURANT  
BROOK: THE BELL INN  
BUCKLERS HARD: MASTERBUILDERS HOUSE HOTEL  
BURLEY: MOORHILL HOTEL  
CADNAM: BARTLEY LODGE HOTEL  
CHIDEOCK: CHIDEOCK HOUSE HOTEL  
CHRISTCHURCH: THE AVONMOUTH HOTEL, SPLINTERS RESTAURANT, WATERFORD  
LODGE RESTAURANT  
CORFE CASTLE: MORTONS HOUSE HOTEL  
CRANBORNE: LE FOSSE AT CRANBORNE

DORCHESTER: SIENNA, YALBURY COTTAGE  
EVERSHOT: ACORN INN, SUMMER LODGE  
FARNHAM: THE MUSEUM INN  
FONTMELL MAGNA: THE CROWN INN  
FORDINGBRIDGE: ASHBURN HOTEL, HOUR GLASS  
GILLINGHAM: STOCK HILL HOTEL  
LYME REGIS: ALEXANDRA HOTEL, MARINERS HOTEL  
LYMINGTON: THE MILL AT GORDLETON, STANWELL HOUSE  
MAIDEN NEWTON: LE PETIT CANARD  
MILFORD ON SEA: ROUILLE RESTAURANT, SOUTH LAWN HOTEL, WESTOVER HALL,  
CHEWTON GLEN HOTEL  
PORTLAND: BLUE FISH CAFÉ  
SHAFTESBURY: LA FLEUR DE LYS, ROYAL CHASE HOTEL, WAYFARERS  
RESTAURANT  
SHERBORNE: EASTBURY HOTEL, THE GREEN  
STURMINSTER NEWTON: PLUMBER MANOR HOTEL  
WAREHAM: KEMPS COUNTRY HOUSE HOTEL  
WEYMOUTH: GLENBURN HOTEL, MOONFLEET MANOR HOTEL, PERRYS  
RESTAURANT  
WIMBORNE: LES BOUVIERS

## **PUBS**

### **THE GOOD PUB GUIDE 2006, Ebury Press**

BANK: OAK  
BOLDRE: RED LION  
CERNE ABBAS: ROYAL OAK  
CHIDEOCK: GEORGE  
CHURCH KNOWLE: NEW INN  
COEHILL: BARLEY MOW  
CORSCOMBE: FOX  
EAST CHALDON: SAILORS RETURN  
EAST MORDEN: COCK & BOTTLE  
FARNHAM: MUSEUM  
FRITHAM: ROYAL OAK  
LANGTON HERRING: ELM TREE  
LYMINGTON: KINGS HEAD  
MARSHWOOD: BOTTLE  
MIDDLEMARSH: HUNTERS MOON  
MUDEFORD: SHIP IN DISTRESS  
OSMINGTON MILLS: SMUGGLERS  
PAMPHILL: THE VINE  
PIDDLEHINTON: THE THIMBLE  
PLUSH: BRACE OF PHEASANTS  
SHAVE CROSS: SHAVE CROSS INN  
SHERBORNE: DIGBY TAP, SKIPPERS  
SHROTON: CRICKETERS  
STURMINSTER NEWTON: BULL & SWAN  
TARRANT MONKTON: LANGTON ARMS  
WEST BAY: WEST BAY  
WORTH MATRAVERS: SQUARE & COMPASS

## WHAT'S ON

Throughout the year are countless colourful local events, ranging from country shows, local fairs and summertime open air concerts to local guided walks, arts and food festivals, and children's events.

Some key annual events in the area are:

**International Kite Festival, Weymouth** (April/May)

The world meets up to fly kites of every shape and size on the beach at Weymouth  
[www.weymouth.gov.uk](http://www.weymouth.gov.uk) / [www.thekitesociety.org.uk](http://www.thekitesociety.org.uk)

**Christchurch Food & Wine Festival** (May)

A week long festival throughout the town celebrating local fare  
[www.christchurchfoodfest.co.uk](http://www.christchurchfoodfest.co.uk)

**Gold Hill Fair, Shaftesbury** (July)

A country fair held in one of Dorset's most notable market towns  
[www.shaftesburydorset.com](http://www.shaftesburydorset.com)

**Dorset Art Weeks (May/June)**

A celebration of artistic endeavours of all kinds  
[www.dorsetartweeks.com](http://www.dorsetartweeks.com)

**New Forest Show (July)**

One of the largest agricultural and country shows with displays every day  
[www.newforestshow.co.uk](http://www.newforestshow.co.uk)

**Great Dorset Steam Fair, Tarrant Hinton** (August/September)

The largest collection of steam-driven machines anywhere in the world  
[www.gdsf.co.uk](http://www.gdsf.co.uk)

**Dorset Food Week** (October)

A week long series of events by the county's food producers and retailers  
[www.dorsetfoodweek.co.uk](http://www.dorsetfoodweek.co.uk)

We recommend that before your visit, you look at the following websites for further information on these and other events in specific areas of Dorset and The New Forest:

Weblinks:

Dorset	<a href="http://www.dorsetforyou.com">www.dorsetforyou.com</a>
The New Forest	<a href="http://www.thenewforest.co.uk">www.thenewforest.co.uk</a>
North & East Dorset	<a href="http://www.ruraldorset.com">www.ruraldorset.com</a>
West Dorset	<a href="http://www.westdorset.com">www.westdorset.com</a>
Purbeck	<a href="http://www.purbeck.gov.uk">www.purbeck.gov.uk</a>
Bournemouth	<a href="http://www.bournemouth.co.uk">www.bournemouth.co.uk</a>
Christchurch	<a href="http://www.christchurchtourism.info">www.christchurchtourism.info</a>
Weymouth	<a href="http://www.weymouth.gov.uk">www.weymouth.gov.uk</a>

## **ACCOMMODATION**

Whether you are after a traditional rural Bed and Breakfast, your very own picture-book holiday cottage, or a top-quality hotel or holiday park, you will find a wide selection in Dorset and the New Forest.

Information about accommodation in each area within Dorset and The New Forest is available via their websites. Accommodation on these websites has been checked according to national or local government schemes, guaranteeing levels of facilities and quality of service.

Colour brochures in English containing details about accommodation and general information can also be ordered via the websites.

Tourist Information Centres can also book short-term accommodation in Dorset and the New Forest for you. Just look out for the **i** sign when you are in the area. A list of TICs is included in the More Information section

## **MORE INFORMATION**

For more information about specific areas in Dorset and The New Forest, either visit the websites below or contact their associated Tourist Information Centre (TIC).

Colour brochures in English containing details about accommodation and general information can be ordered on the websites.

[www.ruraldorest.com](http://www.ruraldorest.com)

### **Blandford TIC**

1 Greyhound Yard, Market Place,  
Blandford Forum, DT11 7EB.  
Tel: 01258 454770

### **Shaftesbury TIC**

8 Bell Street  
Shaftesbury  
SP7 8AE.  
Tel: 01747 853514

### **Wimborne TIC**

29 High Street, Wimborne, BH21 1HR.  
Tel: 01202 886116.

[www.westdorset.com](http://www.westdorset.com)

### **Bridport TIC**

47 South Street  
Bridport, DT6 3NY  
Tel: 01308 424901

### **Dorchester TIC**

Unit 11, Antelope Walk, Dorchester, DT1 1BE.  
Tel: 01305 267992

### **Lyme Regis TIC**

Church Street  
Lyme Regis  
DT7 3BS.  
Tel: 01297 442138

### **Sherborne TIC**

3 Tilton Court  
Digby Road  
Sherborne  
DT9 3NL.  
Tel: 01935 815341

[www.bournemouth.co.uk](http://www.bournemouth.co.uk)

### **Bournemouth TIC**

Westover Road  
Bournemouth BH1 2BU  
Tel: 01202 451700

[www.christchurchtourism.info](http://www.christchurchtourism.info)

**Christchurch TIC**

23 High Street, Christchurch, BH23 1AZ.  
Tel: 01202 471780

[www.pooletourism.com](http://www.pooletourism.com)

**Poole TIC**

Enefco House  
Poole Quay BH15 1HJ  
Tel: 01202 253253

[www.purbeck-dc.gov.uk](http://www.purbeck-dc.gov.uk)

**Swanage TIC**

The White House, Shore Road, Swanage, BH19 1LB.  
Tel: 01929 422885.

**Wareham TIC**

Trinity Church  
South Street  
Wareham  
BH20 4LU.  
Tel: 01929 552740

[www.weymouth.gov.uk](http://www.weymouth.gov.uk)

**Weymouth TIC**

The King's Statue, The Esplanade  
Weymouth DT4 7AN  
Tel: 01305 785747

[www.thenewforest.co.uk](http://www.thenewforest.co.uk)

**New Forest Visitor Centre** New Street, Lymington, Hampshire, SO41 9BH  
Tel: 01590 689000.

## LANGUAGE SCHOOLS

Bournemouth is the UK's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest centre for language schools after London. Useful websites are:

[www.excellenceineducation.co.uk](http://www.excellenceineducation.co.uk)

[www.englishuk.com](http://www.englishuk.com)

[www.language-course-directory.com](http://www.language-course-directory.com)