



Durdle Door from East Chaldon

An exhilarating walk, with some steep ascent, along one of the most dramatic and most photographed stretches of the Dorset coastline

Essential Facts

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| ▪ Route distance: | 15.0 km (9.4 miles) |
| ▪ Approximate time: | 5 hours |
| ▪ Optional shorter route: | 11.0 km (6.9 miles) |
| ▪ Approx. total ascent: | 450 metres |
| ▪ Start point Grid Ref: | SY 790 834 |
| ▪ GPS Ref: | SY 79076 83411 |
| ▪ Recommended O.S. Map: | Explorer OL 15 |
| ▪ Toughness Rating | Dorset 4 |

Please see the notes on Toughness Ratings at the end of this report

Up For A
CHALLENGE ?

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your favourite charity with

A Donation
An Individual Walk
A Team Effort

Full Info from the Great Walks web site

THE ROUTE

This walk starts in East Chaldon, off the A352 betwixt Wareham and Dorchester.

From East Chaldon village green, **S**, take the road towards Winfrith Newburgh. Just before the delimit signs turn right to walk through New Close Car Park, along a bridleway to Daggars Gate. After 750 metres go through a gate on the left and continue along the track to the road at Daggars Gate, **A**

For a less strenuous walk it is possible to turn right just before you reach this road, along a track signed to Ringstead. This ridge path goes through fields, past some modern sculptures and onto the gate at **B**.

For the main walk turn right along the road, take the first track on the right and turn right again at a finger-post. Go through a gate on the left signed to 'Scratchy Bottom' (Probably not contagious) and descend steeply to meet the Coast Path. Now it is possible to take a diversion of about 2 km to view the famous natural stone arch of 'Durdle Door'.

Otherwise turn right along the Coast Path. It is a steep ascent to the top of Swyre Head, a steep descent and ascent to Bats Head and then down again and a long gradual climb until you have an obelisk on your right. Now ascend to a handgate on the right, go through and continue upwards to a gate at **B**

Go through the gate and follow a bridleway signed to Ringstead. When you reach a kissing-gate, turn right to follow a path that heads downhill, then veers to the left and follows the valley bottom to the road at West Chaldon, **C**

For the shorter walk turn right here and follow this quiet road back to East Chaldon.

For the full walk turn left. At West Chaldon Farm cross a bridge and turn right signed to Holworth. Cross a stile and climb straight ahead to a stile on the left. At the far end of the field cross a stile and go diagonally left across the lumps and bumps of Holworth Deserted Village to a stile to the right of a barn. Cross a small field, walk along a track to another field, cross this and the track beyond to a gate. Turn left and exit the field through a gate in the top left hand corner. At a T-junction turn right and follow the road to a crossing track at **D**.

Here turn right and follow the field edge path along the ridge. Cross a road and continue along the path to a second road. Follow this for a few metres, then fork left and walk past the collection of tumuli known as the Five Marys. At the next gate turn right and walk steeply downhill to pick up a path going to the right and continue a steep descent to the road. Turn left to walk back to East Chaldon, **S**.



**A Sculpture
On Chaldon Down**



The Track To West Chaldon

Refreshment

The Sailors Return
Public House
East Chaldon
Meals and bar snacks
Real Ales, Garden

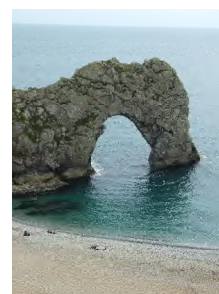


The Sailors Return

LOCAL INFO

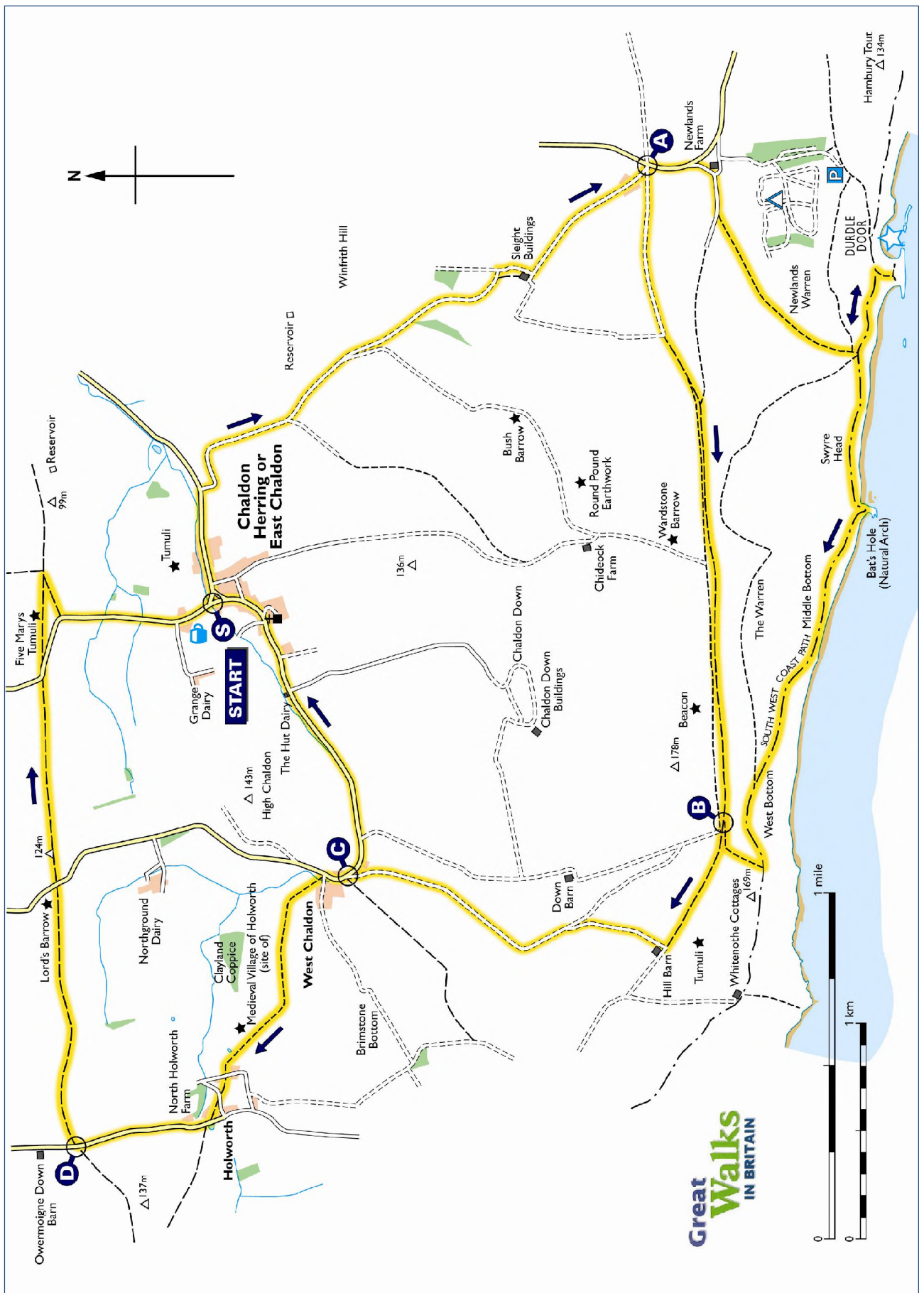
East Chaldon nestles among the chalk downlands typical of this area of Dorset. From 1904 to 1940 it was the home of the novelist Theodore F Powys. His two brothers also spent time here, John Cowper lived in the village in 1934/35 and Llewellyn lived in a cottage on the downs. There is a memorial to him on Chaldon Down. The Sailors Return public house was originally a pair of thatched cottages and began trade as an inn in the 19th century. As you enter a pre-reformation altar lies on the floor with a cross in one corner. There is a rare saxon font in the village church, which was discovered in the churchyard in 1897.

Durdle Door is one of the most iconic images associated with the Dorset coast. The constant battering of the sea on the cliffs has formed a fascinating rock arch. A similar arch is in the process of being created at Bats Head. We have no estimate of a date for its completion!



DURDLE DOOR FROM EAST CHALDON G.P.S. WAYPOINTS

WAYPOINT NAME	MAP REF	CO-ORDINATES	ELEVATION: Metres
CHA S	S	SY 79076 83411	68
CHA A	A	SY 81086 81391	147
CHA B	B	SY 78002 81027	192
CHA C	C	SY 77803 82791	95
CHA D	D	SY 76561 84054	142



MAP LEGEND					
	Great Walks route		Church with tower		Spot height - metres
	M6 Motorway		Church with spire		Information centre
	A23 Main road		Other place of worship		Parking
	B2116 Secondary road		Cathedral / Abbey		Public convenience
	Minor road		Building		Public house
	Other road		Built up area		Picnic site
	Track		Woodland		Camp site
	Footpath		Sand, shingle or mud		Major tourist feature
	Bridleway		Water feature		Other tourist feature
	National trail				
	Railway				

Safety First

Safety should always be your first priority in planning and undertaking a walk, whether on your own or leading a group. Please read these Safety First and Walking Our Routes notes.

Lead a group of other walkers only if you have leadership and navigational experience adequate for the 'worst case' conditions which may be encountered on the particular walk, bearing in mind the terrain, possible weather and navigational demands.

Weigh up the capabilities of your party, in terms of fitness and walking speed. Adjust your time expectations accordingly.

Ensure all your party are adequately clothed for the weather and conditions. Footwear is particularly important. Clothing must protect against cold, wet or strong sun according to the time of year.

Emergencies are quite rare, but it is essential to think ahead about what to do if someone in your party sustains an injury. Will you have a First Aid kit? Is there a qualified First Aider in the party? How could help be summoned in a serious eventuality?

Refreshment, particularly water, can be vital. Dehydration in hot summer conditions can be rapid, and frequent intake of fluids is essential.

On tougher walks it is a good idea to tell someone where you are planning to go – and when you expect to be back. Remember - mobile phones often lose reception in mountainous or isolated areas.

All our walks use legitimate routes: Public Rights of Way, Public Footpaths, Bridleways, Permissive Paths, Access Land, Byways and Roads.

Road walking calls for particular care. When there is no defined footpath or verge wide enough for safe walking it is usually best to walk on the right – facing oncoming traffic. An exception may be a tight bend, where walkers would be more visible on the left.

Occasionally you may find a public footpath blocked or unuseable. It is perfectly in order to take the shortest available diversion without damaging crops, perhaps around a field margin.

It is courteous to close gates after passing through, sometimes even if the gate was open when you arrived – particularly if it is obvious livestock may escape.

Mutual respect for farm animals is to be encouraged! Don't frighten or annoy them, but equally don't put your party members in danger or discomfort. You certainly wouldn't be the first walkers to go round the outside of a field of frisky bullocks.

Dogs should always be kept on a lead anywhere near farm animals, and under close supervision elsewhere in the countryside.

Walking Our Routes

Our walks are designed to be negotiated using the route directions in conjunction with the map section provided. We suggest walkers also take the Ordnance Survey Explorer or Outdoor Leisure map recommended for each walk.

On mountain, moorland and open heathland walks it is **ESSENTIAL** to have navigational expertise and tools, including the recommended Ordnance Survey map(s).

Take care to observe any cautions in the route description; exposed paths, areas liable to flooding etc.

Consider conditions before setting off. Will heavy rain have made a water meadow impassable? Will frost or snow make a path slippery?

When navigating the route look for clues to confirm you are in the right place. Are map features where you would expect on the ground? Are features mentioned in the text where expected? If you suspect you may have taken a wrong turn, take action sooner rather than later. It is better to re-trace to a known point rather than carry on regardless with the possibility of becoming increasingly confused.

All our routes are carefully checked before publication, but features can change on the ground – sometimes surprisingly quickly. Footpaths may be re-routed, buildings can appear or change significantly and these days pub names seem to change frequently.

The approximate time given for each walk is based on an average walking speed of 2.5 miles per hour (4 km/hour), plus an allowance for ascent, descent and any difficult terrain.

Total ascent is the approximate total ascent over the whole walk.

GPS users can enter in the waypoints provided in each of our walk reports. It is important to read our guide **Introducing GPS for Walkers**, available as a PDF file from the Great Walks in Britain web site.

Remember that GPS is a great navigational tool, but only one of those available to the navigator. Never dispense with conventional map and compass – and the training and skills to use them, especially on mountain, moorland or open heathland walks.

TOUGHNESS RATINGS

All our **Dorset** routes can be undertaken by reasonably fit walkers able to utilise our map segments, together with the route guidance notes. Always consider recent and forecast weather.

Each walk has been allocated a **Toughness Rating**:

1. Easier walks with modest ascent and generally on well defined paths. There may be stiles or narrow gateways to negotiate.
2. Routes which are more demanding. They may include more ascent and possibly paths which are looser or more difficult underfoot.
3. More strenuous walks with some steep sections, higher paths or places which may be wet and boggy.
4. The most demanding walks in this edition. There may be prolonged steep ascents. Conditions may be challenging underfoot.

Toughness Ratings are allocated in the context of the terrain in the edition area. For example a walk rated as demanding in Dorset may be equivalent to a moderate route in Devon & Dartmoor..