



Puddletown to Hardy's Cottage

An undulating walk on woodland tracks through Hardy Country, culminating at the author's childhood home

Essential Facts

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| ▪ Route distance: | 16.4 km (10.3 miles) |
| ▪ Approximate time: | 4 hours 30 mins |
| ▪ Approx. total ascent: | 190 metres |
| ▪ Start point Grid Ref: | SY 758 943 |
| ▪ GPS Ref: | SY 75872 94389 |
| ▪ Recommended O.S. Map: | Explorer 117 - OL15 |
| ▪ Toughness Rating | Dorset 2 |

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

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CHALLENGE?

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A Team Effort

Full Info from the Great Walks web site

THE ROUTE

From Puddletown Church, **S**, turn left. At a crossroads go straight across. Pass houses and follow a footpath on the left to a road. Turn left to the traffic lights, then right. Fork right into the playing fields and follow the right-hand hedge to the end. Go through a gap to turn left and fork left to cross the A35 on a footbridge. At the far side go straight ahead, signed for Charminster, and follow a track for over a kilometre to a gate onto the Ridgeway at **A**.

Turn left and left again signed to Yellowham Wood. Follow a path downhill through trees and past a house to reach the old A35. Turn right and cross the main road on a road bridge. At the end turn left and just before you reach the main road turn right and right again. Go through a gate and follow a path through trees, soon arriving at the monument to Thomas Hardy erected by American admirers in 1931, **B**.

Turn right to pass Hardy's Cottage, and follow a track to the road. Turn left and in 50 metres turn right, signed for Stinsford. Follow a track to a gate. Keep a hedge on your right to another gate then go diagonally right across a field. Turn right along a narrow path and when you reach a road turn right. Pass the entrance to Kingston Maurward College and then turn left to Stinsford. Follow the road to the church at **C**.

After visiting the church, and Hardy's grave, take the path to the left of the churchyard. At a T-junction turn left to follow the stream-side path to Lower Bockhampton Bridge. Turn left and just past Bridge Cottage turn right. Go through a farmyard and then a gate to cross two fields and reach Bhompston Farm. Turn left along a track signed Thorncombe Wood. Cross a road and pass Pine Lodge Farm Tea Rooms, then follow a narrow fenced path uphill to a stile, **D**.

Go straight ahead signed Hardy's Cottage. At Rushy Pond turn left onto a narrow chalky path that descends steps and eventually reaches an information board. Go through a gate and turn left to reach Thorncombe Wood car park at **E**.

Turn right beside the information boards to follow the woodland path to Hardy's Cottage. Follow the path round to the left to return to the monument at **B**.

Now turn right, along a broad forest track. At a six way junction keep straight ahead (3rd exit). The path now narrows and, in about 600 metres, crosses a track and becomes narrower still. Eventually you reach a road at Beacon Corner. Turn right along the road and at the far side of a copse turn left along a track. At a junction turn left into trees. When they end follow a line of telegraph poles across two fields.

Cross a road to follow a track. At the end of a fence turn right to walk through school grounds to a road. Take the second road on the left to return to Puddletown. At a junction cross the road, walk past the Green and turn left to return to Puddletown church, **S**.



Puddletown Forest



Stinsford Church



Puddletown Church

Refreshment

Blue Vinny
Public House
12 The Moor,
Puddletown
Tel: 01305 848228
Meals and bar snacks

Pine Lodge Farm Tea
Rooms
Cafe
Pine Lodge Farm,
Higher Bockhampton
Tel: 01305 266052
Lunches, snacks, cream
teas



**The Blue Vinny Inn
Puddletown**

LOCAL INFO

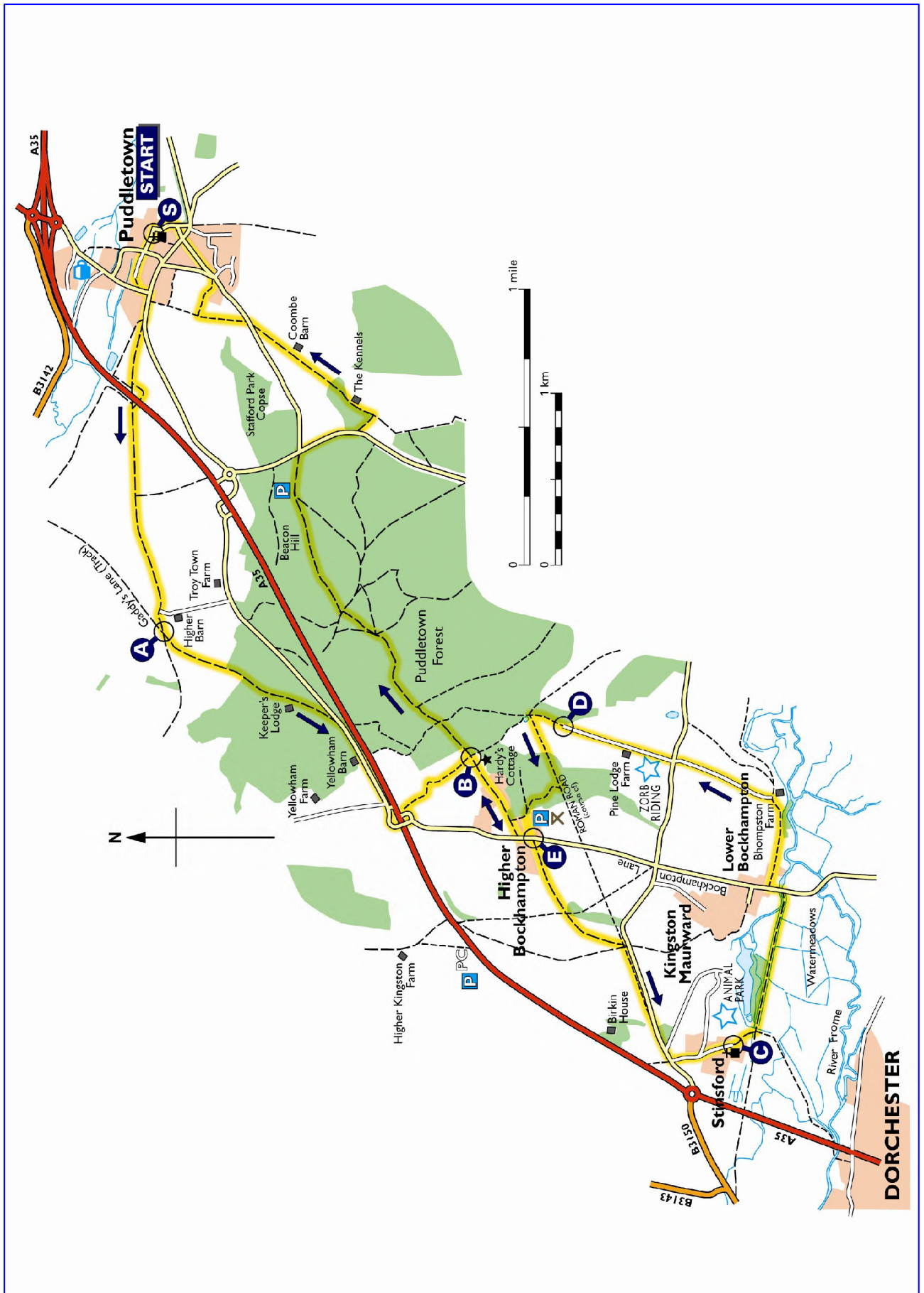
This walk is almost entirely through countryside **Thomas Hardy** knew well and that influenced his writing. He was born in the cottage at Higher Bockhampton, which his grandfather had built in 1800. Hardy lived there throughout his childhood and into his early architectural training.


























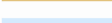


Hardy was christened at Stinsford and went to school in Lower Bockhampton. When he died his body was buried in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey but his heart lies in a grave in Stinsford churchyard, amongst other family members.

Puddletown is Hardy's Weatherby and it was here that Sergeant Troy, of *Far From The Madding Crowd*, spent the night in the church porch. Yellowham Wood is referred to as Yarlbury Wood. Mellstock in *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and other novels, is closely based on Stinsford and Lower Bockhampton.

PUDDLETOWN TO HARDY'S COTTAGE G.P.S. WAYPOINTS

WAYPOINT NAME	MAP REF	CO-ORDINATES	ELEVATION: metres
PUD S	S	SY 75872 94389	59
PUD A	A	SY 73561 94320	103
PUD B	B	SY 72826 92521	88
PUD C	C	SY 71143 91006	68
PUD D	D	SY 73015 92007	101
PUD E	E	SY 72540 92217	77



MAP LEGEND					
	Great Walks route		Church with tower		Spot height - metres
	Motorway		Church with spire		Information centre
	Main road		Other place of worship		Parking
	Secondary road		Cathedral / Abbey		Public convenience
	Minor road		Building		Public house
	Other road or track		Built up area		Picnic site
	Footpath		Woodland		Camp site
	Bridleway		Sand		Major tourist feature
	National trail		Water feature		Other tourist feature
	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 Cambridgeshire may be equivalent to an easier or moderate route in the Brecon Beacons.