

**WALK 3**

Eastern  
Dorchester  
and  
Fordington

# Walk Dorset's History

🕒 90 minutes to walk, sit and enjoy  
reading the information



Stepping  
into  
nature

Welcome! As part of the Stepping into Nature project led by the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Team, we have produced a series of self-guided walks.

These easy access routes highlight the local history, as well as other fun snippets of information that you will find along the route.

Further Information: [www.stepin2nature.org](http://www.stepin2nature.org)



### Distance

1.2 miles/2km



### Suggested time

90 minutes to walk, sit and enjoy reading the information



### Difficulty

Generally level route with one downhill section on the outskirts of Dorchester's town centre and local streets. Steps to access church



### Facilities

You will find many places for refreshments along the route. Public toilets are sign posted from the Library.



### Transport

Car park, bus and train stop within a 5 minute walk



# Route map



## Suggested starting point

Dorchester Library and Learning Centre,  
South Walks, House Charles Street DT1 1EE



Points of interest



Seating



Parking



## Start at the entrance to Dorchester Library and Learning Centre

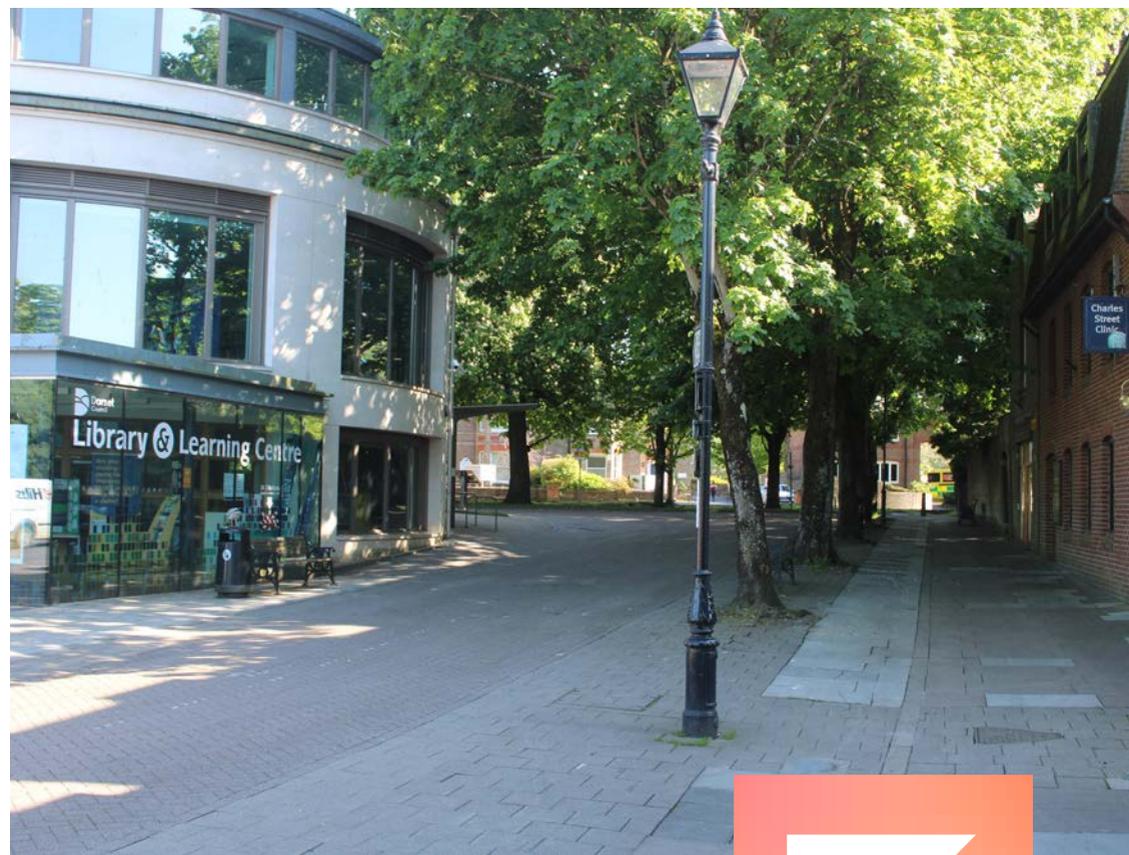
Transport yourself back nearly two thousand years and you are standing in 'Durnovaria' - Dorchester's Roman town.

Standing here you are protected from invaders as you are within the south side of the town's defences.

Now let's follow the edge of these defences for the first part of our trip.



Head around the library and  
up the shallow ramp next to the  
building.





## Stop at the objects pictured here

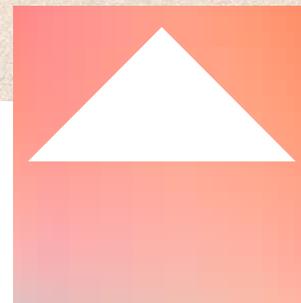
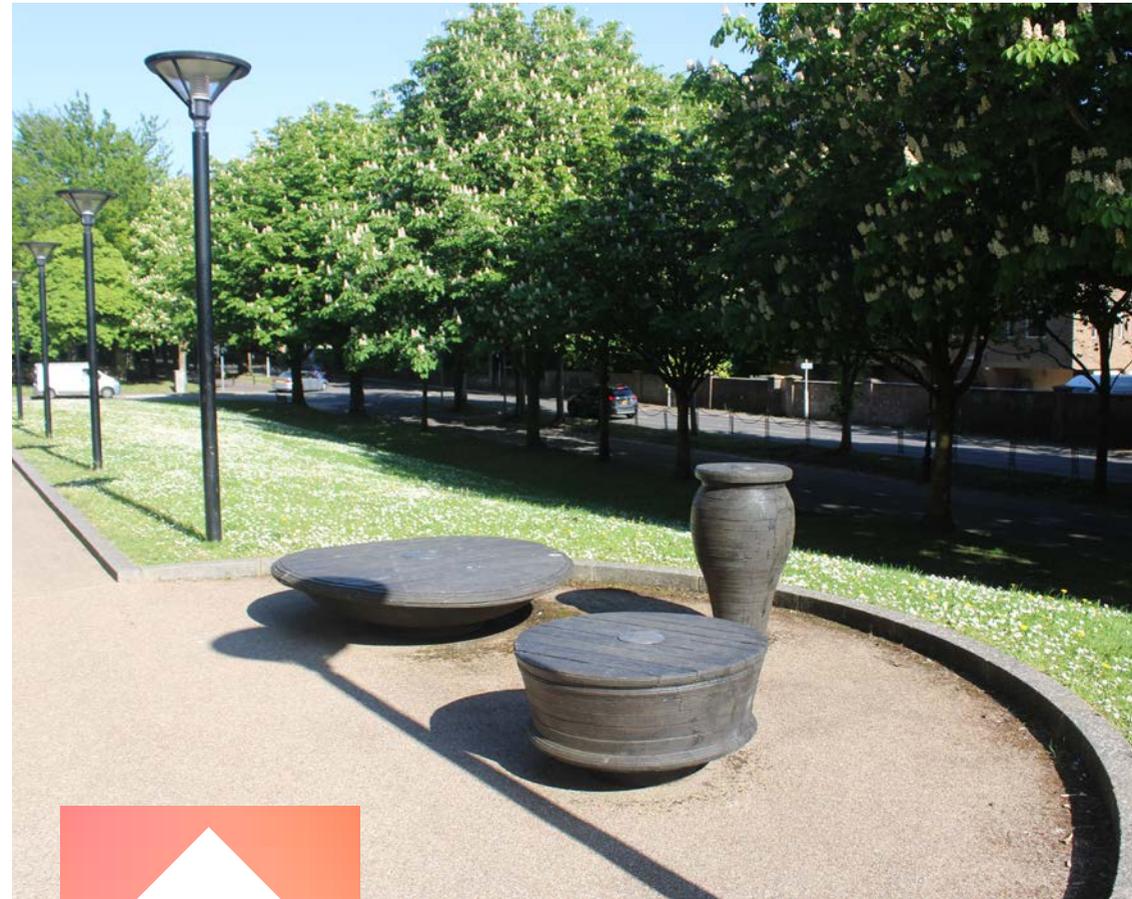
Look closer at the objects to discover what archaeologists found here.

Below you is South Walks Road which runs along the line of the Roman town's defences. Built in the 2nd century these defences consisted of three pairs of banks and ditches.

The defences worked well until the 1700s when improving artillery made them useless. Instead the defences were levelled and replaced with boulevards in the latest continental fashion, now known as 'The Walks'.



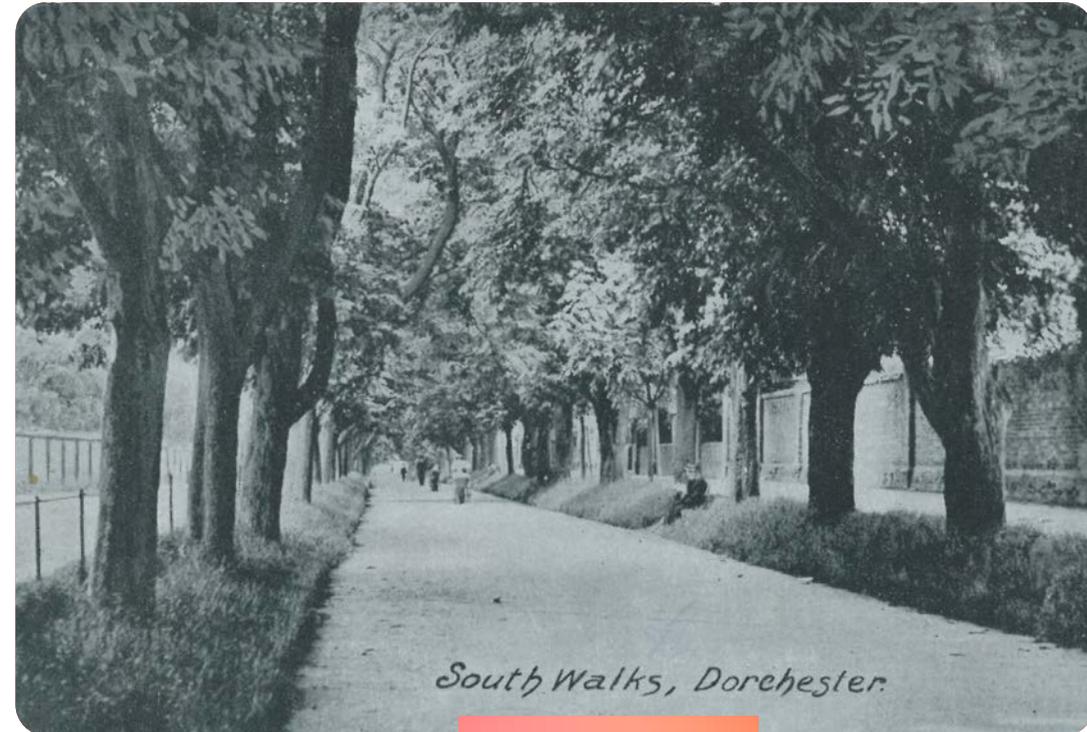
Follow the path to the traffic lights, cross the road and continue straight under the trees.



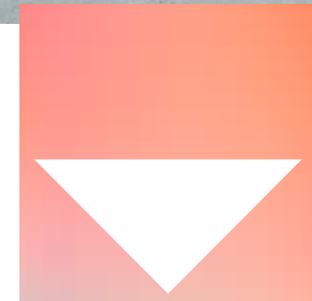
As you walk along keep looking back and see if you can find where this photo was taken.



**What looks different from this photo taken 100 years ago to now?**



Keep heading straight until you reach 3 large sculptures.



You are at the southeast corner of the Roman town. Until the 1830s the town of Dorchester sat within the Roman defences, beyond was the separate village and parish of Fordington.

This spot symbolised the end of the town which, in those days, seemed an appropriate place for executions!

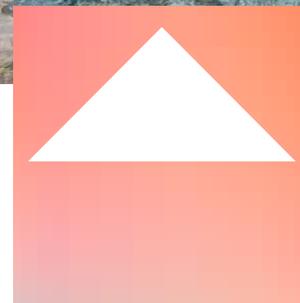
Find out more by reading the information panel nearby.



**Wonder what the atmosphere of this place would have been like in Roman times.**



Cross Icen Way, go straight ahead for short distance then follow path bending to the left.



## Salisbury Field

In front of you is Salisbury Field.

The Roman defences continue along the left hand side.

In the distance is an unusual 200 year old red brick building.



**Take a moment to stop and just listen – what can you hear?**



Take the path to right then right again down a wide alley - spot a tombstone reset in the walls! At the end of the alley turn left and head over the green towards Fordington's historic parish church.



# St George's Church

This church was built in the Middle Ages and extensively renovated and altered.

Enjoy the green around the church and go inside for more historic features including a Roman tombstone.

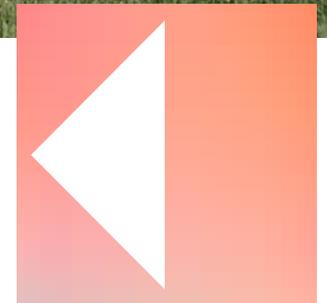


**The picture of the church here is from 100 years ago. What has changed since then?**

Don't forget to look up when in the porch to see a stone carving made 900 years ago! It's believed to show the Battle of Antioch in 1098 during the first crusade. The large figure is Saint George, who made a miraculous appearance to help during the battle - it was miraculous since he had been dead for 800 years!



Leave the churchyard, turn right and head along Fordington High Street until the bend at the bottom of the hill.



Historically Fordington was a socially deprived part of Dorchester. It appears in Thomas Hardy's novel 'The Mayor of Casterbridge' as 'Mixer Lane' - Mixer is a genuine old word for a rubbish dump!

In the 1850s there was a particularly bad cholera epidemic here, and aware that polluted drinking water was the cause, Reverend Henry Moule tried to do something about this by inventing his dry earth closet - what we now call a composting toilet.

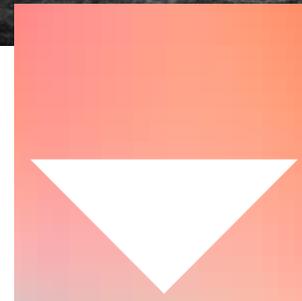
Moule intended that the 'produce' of this closet could be used as a fertiliser. You can imagine that local farmers got very tired of locals turning up with buckets of this stuff hoping to earn a few pennies!



**Look back up the hill to see what has changed since the photo was taken.**



Continue along Fordington High Street



Across the road there is the former foundry of Lott and Walne.

The building with a conical tower was a malthouse, already a century old when this photo was taken.

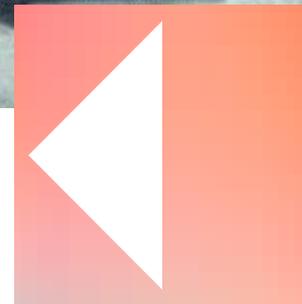
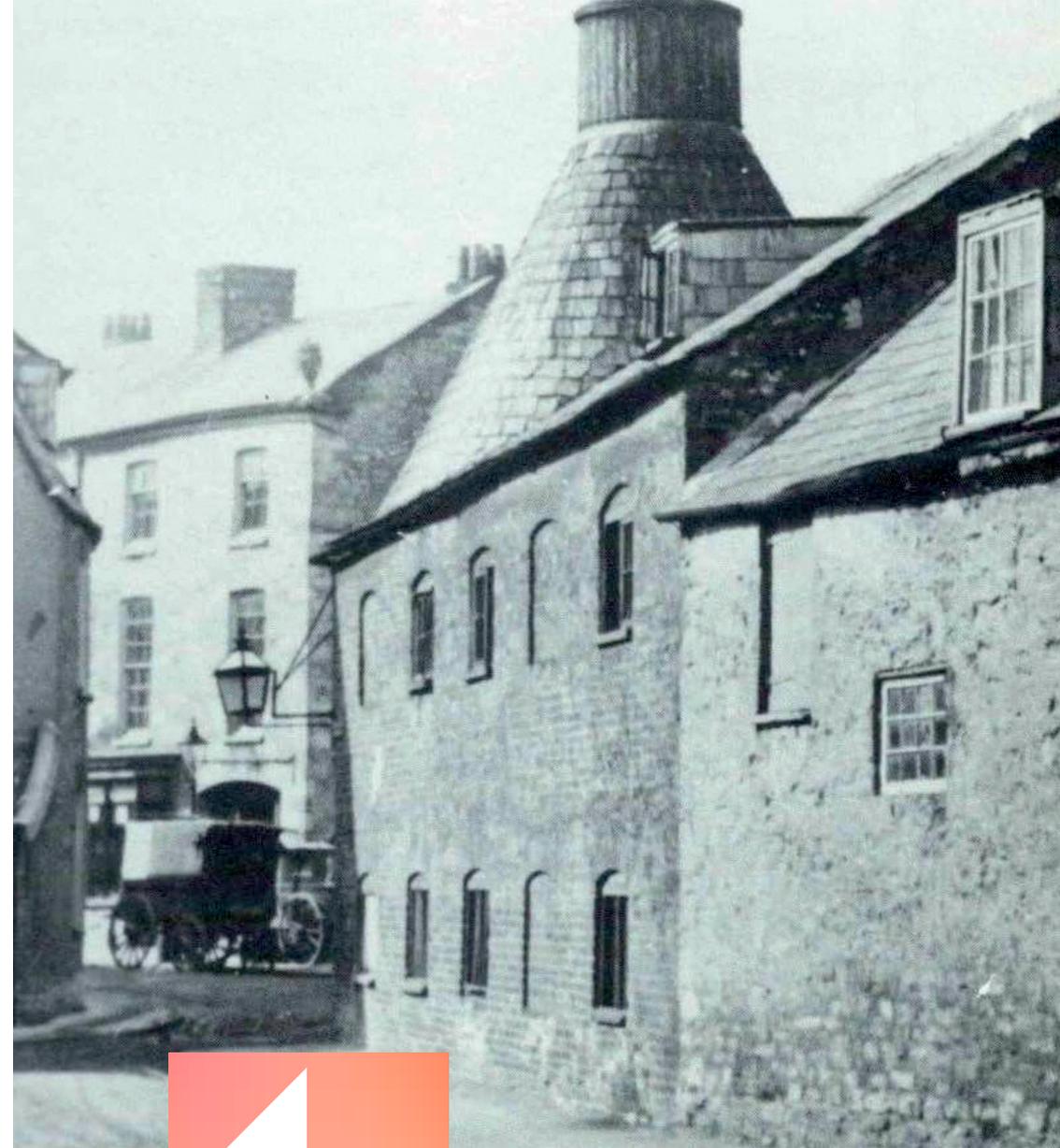


**What features of the old foundry can you still see?**

Just beyond the malthouse was the east gate of the Roman town. Fordington High Street roughly follows the line of the Roman road that ran east from the town.



Turn left into Salisbury Street. Follow the road round to the right by the former Salvation Army chapel into Durgate Street going past a small car park. At the junction with Icen Way head straight across. Stop at the crossroads with Acland Road.



# Wollaston House

This house was built in the 18th century.

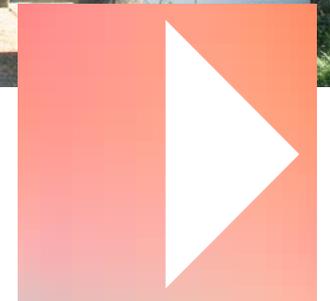
The land over to your left which is mainly car parks was once Wollaston Fields, the grounds of the house.



**Can you imagine how different this area would have looked, sounded and even smelled?**



Walk past Wollaston House with the house on your left. Continue until the little roundabout and you will see the archway pictured on the next page. Go through the archway.



In 1978 archaeologists excavated this land before the car park was built and found Dorchester's Roman baths.

Roman baths were public places to wash as well be entertained and socialise too.

Many people visited the excavation during an open day but unfortunately it was considered impractical to leave them on public display.



**Wonder what the Romans would have thought to us bathing in private.**



Return out of the archway and go diagonally across the roundabout via the crossings. Look across the car parks with South Walks House on your left.





What thoughts come to mind looking at the cars in this photo?

You are standing roughly where this picture was taken from around 1967.

The large building on the right in the photograph was a store for Lock's Seeds which has long been demolished.

Some buildings across the car park are still there and you can still see the church in South Street.



Head across the car park in front of you and you be back at the starting point. Alternatively head off to explore and/or seek refreshments!



# Looking for some more things to do?

## Picnic in the Parks

Discover new experiences and enjoy fun health and nature-related activities at Picnic in the Parks.

You can access all of the other History walks from this series as well as lots of other activities, films and resources to help you live well and love nature.

[picnicintheparks.org](http://picnicintheparks.org)



## Stepping into Nature

Stepping into Nature opens opportunities for people to connect with Dorset's fascinating landscape, wildlife, history and culture, helping people live happier and healthier lives for longer.

Using Dorset's natural and cultural landscape, the project creates activities and sensory rich places for older people, people living with long term health conditions, such as dementia, and their care partners.

The Stepping into Nature project is led by the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty team, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund.





A series of easy access routes  
highlighting local history and  
the stories around them.

Other routes include

**BLANDFORD FORUM**

**CERNE ABBAS**

**EASTERN DORCHESTER  
& FORDINGTON**

**SHERBORNE**

**SWANAGE**

**WEYMOUTH**

Further Information

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