

WALK 10
Shaftesbury

Walk Dorset's History

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



Stepping
into
nature

Route map

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



Distance

1 mile / 1.6km.



Suggested time

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



Difficulty

Mostly flat and on tarmacked paths.



Dog friendly.



Facilities

Along the route there are toilets and places for refreshments.



Transport

Suggested parking at Bell Street Car Park, charges apply. Bus stops in town centre.



Suggested start point

Bell Street Car Park, Shaftesbury, SP7 8AP



Points of interest



Seating



Parking



Start at Bell Street Car Park.

From here, the town seems flat, but this photo taken around 1900, shows the hilltop on which the earliest part of the town sits. The town's origins came in the time of King Alfred, who built a place of refuge from Viking raiders, known as a burh, and an abbey here in the 870s and 880s.

Near the right edge of the photo is St Peter's Church, and a little further to the left is the tower of Holy Trinity Church, both of which we will see on this walk. The houses of Gold Hill run down on the right, with the suburb of St James near the bottom of the hill.



Leave the car park past the Tourist Information Centre, then turn right onto Bell Street. Follow the road as it bends left onto the High Street. Stop when you see a view of St Peter's Church ahead, pictured next.



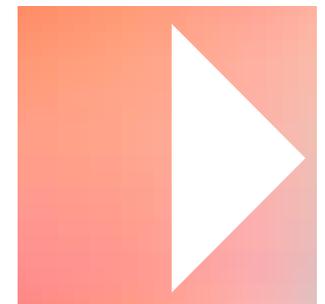
What's different today compared to this photo taken in the 1930s?

On each side of this Medieval church, there is a 200 year-old building. On the left is the Mitre Inn – its stone frontage was added later to make it look even older.

Shaftesbury's Town Hall is on the right of the church. We guess that the parked cars and covered building in front of it in the picture belonged to an entrepreneur running a taxi business - what do you think?



Go down the lane to the right of the Town Hall and stop at the top of Gold Hill.



You may feel like you've been transported to the North of England if you remember Gold Hill being used for the Hovis bread advert in the 1970s!

In this advert, a delivery boy in early 20th century clothing pushes his bike up the hill, with a voiceover in the very northern accent of Joe Gladwin, the actor who played Wally Batty in 'Last of the Summer Wine'.

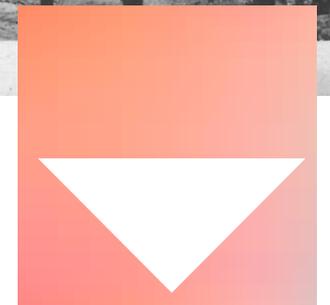
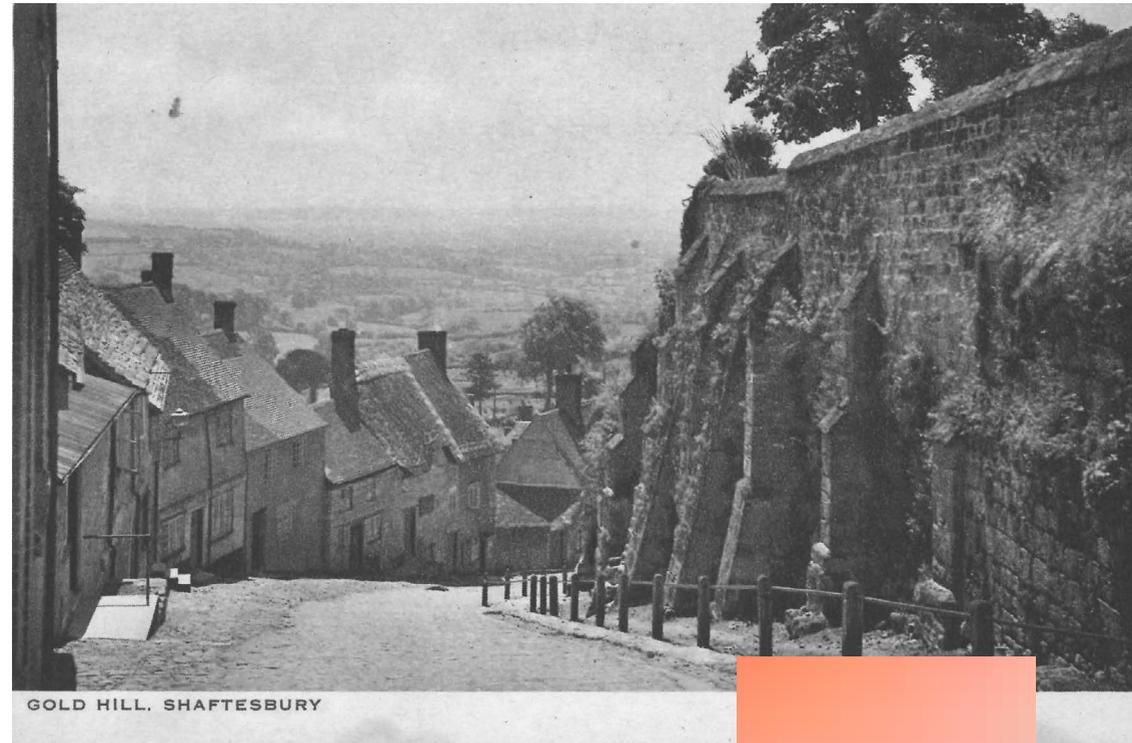
On your right, is the largest surviving feature of Shaftesbury Abbey, a massive section of wall that once surrounded the abbey's grounds. In the distance, and on a clear day, you can see Hambledon Hill, the site of one of Dorset's finest Iron Age hillforts.



This view hasn't changed much in the past 100 years, can you spot any differences?



The Museum is to the left if you wish to visit, otherwise turn back up the hill and just before the lane goes past the Town Hall, turn left into Park Lane. Follow this onto Park Walk.



Park Walk was laid out in 1753 as a boulevard for people to enjoy walks and views south across the Blackmore Vale.

Opposite the view is the site of Shaftesbury Abbey, built in 888 by King Alfred as a nunnery. The remains of a later Saxon King, known as Edward the Martyr, were reburied here exactly 100 years after the abbey was founded. He had been murdered at Corfe Castle 10 years before and originally buried in Wareham – Shaftesbury would have been considered a more honourable place to be buried, and Edward’s own grandmother had once been the abbess here.



Turn to face the direction you have come from to compare with this picture taken around 100 years ago.



Continue along Park Walk to the Panoramic Dial on a stone plinth (on the left of path), which points to features you can see.



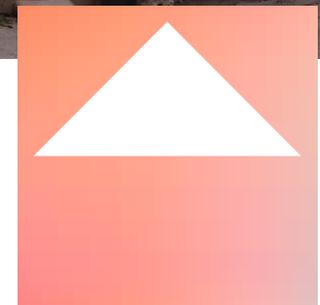
Retrace your steps to the War Memorial and turn left up Abbey Walk. Further along along Abbey Walk, you can see the tower of Holy Trinity Church on the right.

Holy Trinity Church was built in 1841-2. One of the two architects was George Gilbert Scott. He built many great buildings around the country, including St Pancras Station and the Albert Memorial, both in London.

As the first old photo in this booklet shows, it is one of the landmarks of Shaftesbury that can be seen for miles around.



At the end of Abbey Walk, turn left along Bimport, and then right down the alley opposite Magdalene Lane (pictured). You soon emerge into an open park – continue along the path, which bends left, until you reach another panoramic dial.



Here you appreciate how Alfred's burh worked - there was a large flat area on the hilltop where people and their livestock could take refuge from raiders, and have a good view across the countryside to see who was coming!

Below us is the suburb of Enmore Green. Compare what you see today with this photograph taken around 1900 - it is surprising to see that some of the houses in the old picture look newly-built.



Retrace your steps back to the road. Turn left along Bimport and continue straight - you will see Holy Trinity Church again on your right. Cross the road at the end and Bell Street car park is in front of you.



Looking for some more things to do?

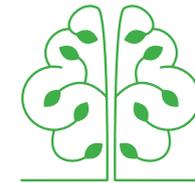
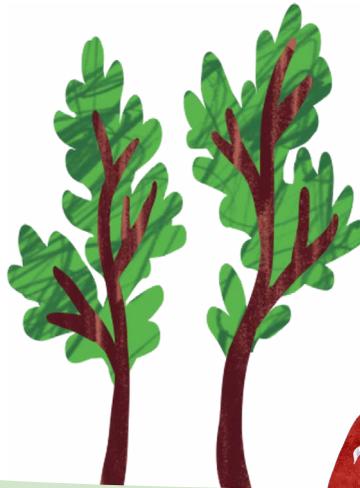
Picnic in the Parks



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



Stepping into nature



Explore the unique, varied, and outstanding natural beauty of this AONB which underpins its designation as a nationally important protected landscape.

dorsetaonb.org

Find new places to go, learn new skills and meet like-minded people through nature-themed activities held indoors and out.

stepin2nature.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
ABBOTSBURY
BEAMINSTER
BRIDPORT
STURMINSTER NEWTON
WAREHAM

Further Information

www.stepin2nature.org