

WALK 11

Sturminster
Newton

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



Distance

0.9 miles / 1.5km.



Suggested time

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



Difficulty

Mostly flat and short gentle slopes on tarmacked paths. Dog friendly.



Facilities

There are toilets at Station Road Car Park and places for refreshments in the town centre.



Transport

Suggested parking at Station Road Car Park, charges apply. Bus stop in Sturminster Newton centre, a few minutes walk from the start.



Route map



Suggested start point

Station Road Car Park, Barnes Close,
Sturminster Newton DT10 1BN



Points of interest



Seating



Parking



Start at the top of Station Road Car Park.

Sturminster Newton developed over 1,000 years ago at a crossing of the river Stour, where a 500 year-old bridge still exists.

You are on the site of Sturminster Newton's station on the former Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway. You can still see a railway signal at the start of the North Dorset Trailway, the path that follows the route of the old railway (see photo).

As you look towards the signal, the building on your left with the overhanging roof is the only surviving part of the station.



Cross the road and follow the pedestrianised Station Road. At the end, turn left to the Square. Stop at the Swan Inn.



Sturminster Newton thrived as a market town for the southern part of the Blackmore Vale, so there are fine historic buildings. The Swan Inn is an excellent example of an 18th century coaching inn.

Compare today's view with this photo taken 100 years ago. The Wilts & Dorset Bank on the right was taken over by Lloyds Bank. Today it is a business called The Emporium, but you can still make out the name of Lloyds Bank Limited above the door.



The small 'x' in the photo was added by the sender in this postcard. We wonder whether it was sent when they were still young or after he found himself on a postcard many years later.



Take the road on the left of the Market Place and go down the slope to Penny Street. Continue along Penny Street spotting the interesting buildings on the way.



On your right, you will see the archway which led into the Old School, and a little further along on your left you will see a 400 year-old pair of buildings, one called Vine House.

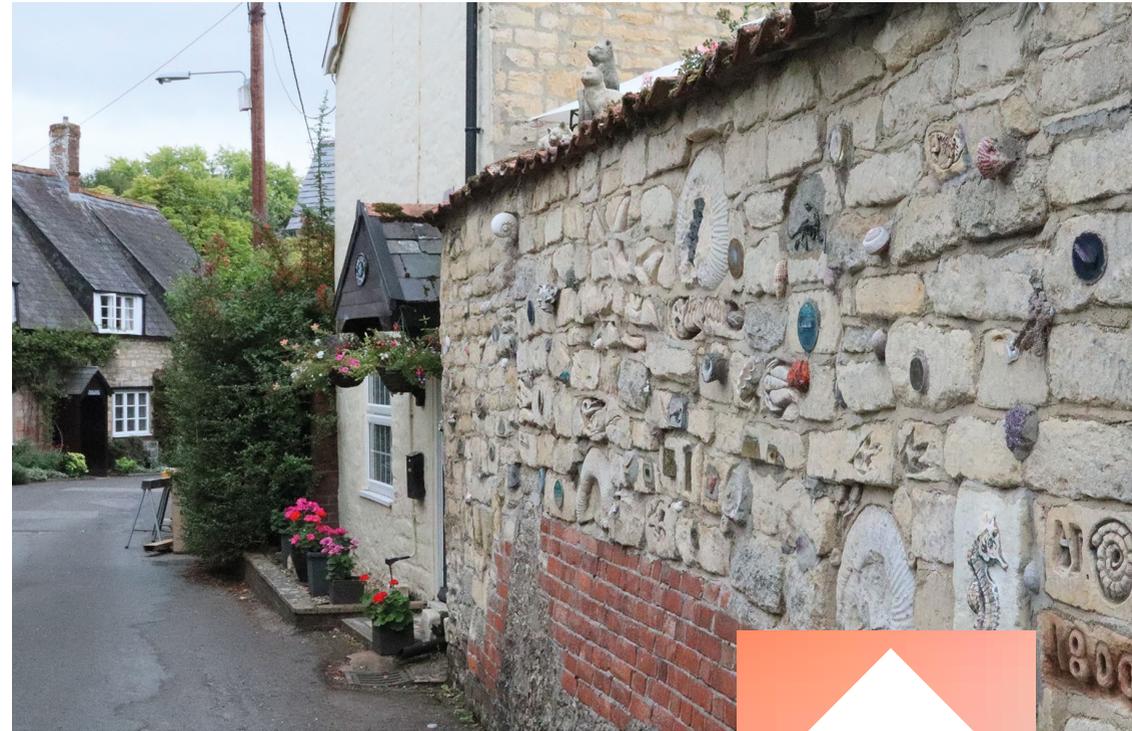


Can you spot this fun wall next? You can't help but pick your favourite item.

Keep following the road around the bend. Just here is a footpath to Fiddleford which can form a nice circular route with the North Dorset Trailway for another time.



Continue along Penny Lane through the narrow alley called Church Lane until the churchyard steps. Turn right and follow the path beside the churchyard, admiring the Giant Redwood. Stop when you reach the church entrance.



Take a look at the stone used to build the church. Most of this is Greensand, a type of sandstone that is quarried locally and has a distinct greenish hue.

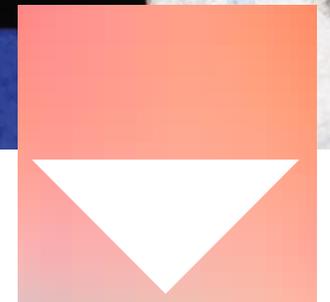
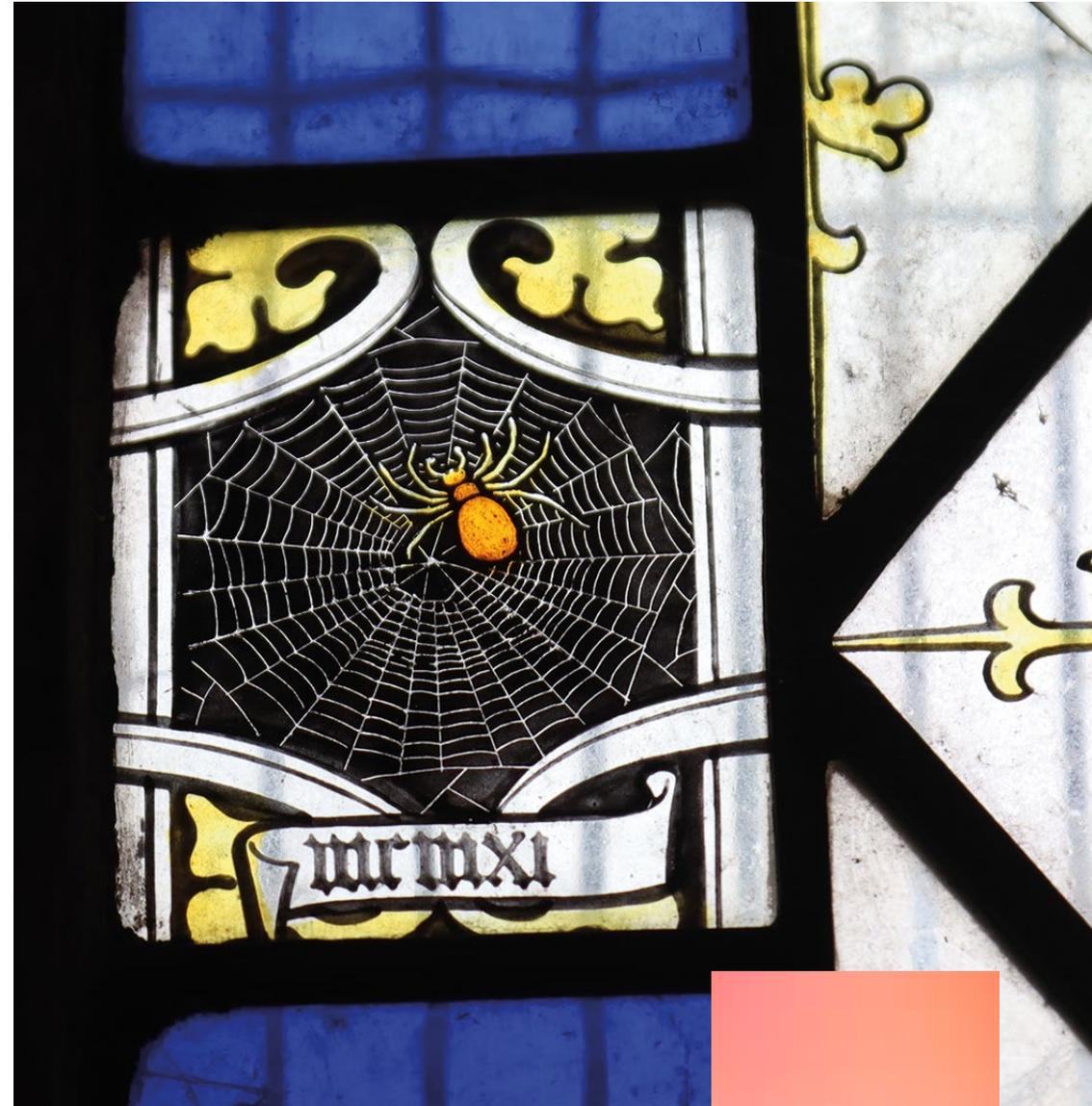
Go inside the church and explore. There is a painting of Sturminster Newton on the wall to the left. It was painted around 1850 and the painter made full use of their artistic licence!



See if you can find this unusual stained glass spider tucked into the left of a window. The window was made in 1911 by an artist called Geoffrey Webb, who used the spider as his signature!



Exit the church and go straight along Church Lane and keep straight at the junctions. Stop at the end of the lane.



Look right along Bridge Street to compare this 100 year-old photo with today. Many details are still recognisable but several buildings on the left have been replaced.



Do you think the people in the photo are heading to market?



Turn right and go up Bridge Street. Please take care as the pavement narrows.





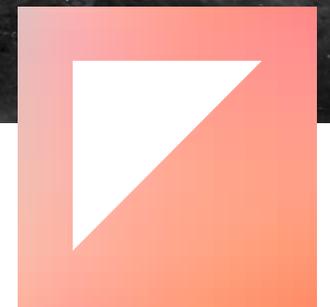
Imagine how different this place would have sounded and smelt back then.

Ahead of you is the Market Cross, or at least part of the shaft and the steps at the base. Crosses like this date from the Middle Ages, and were used for public announcements. On this one, the tops of the stones look like they have been worn away by centuries of people's bums!

As you approach the Market Cross, the town's museum is on your right if you wish to make a visit.



Go through the Market Place. At the junction with Station Road continue along the main road for 100 yards or so and turn right into Railway Gardens.

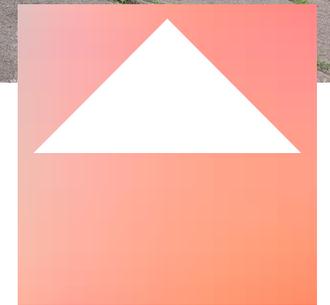


Railway Gardens are on the site of a railway cutting that was filled in during the 1990s – though the railway itself had gone out of use in the 1960s. There is a re-set section of railway and many garden sculptures to take a look at.

Please read the information boards for more details of the Somerset and Dorset Railway whose initials, S & D, were often interpreted by local people as 'Slow and Dirty'!



Leave at the further end of Railway Gardens and cross the road to get back to Station Road car park.



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

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
SHAFTESBURY
WAREHAM

Further Information

www.stepin2nature.org