

WALK 12

Wareham

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

1.2 miles / 1.9km.



Suggested time

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



Difficulty

Generally flat on tarmacked paths. Dog friendly.



Facilities

Public toilets on Wareham Quay.
Refreshments available in town centre.

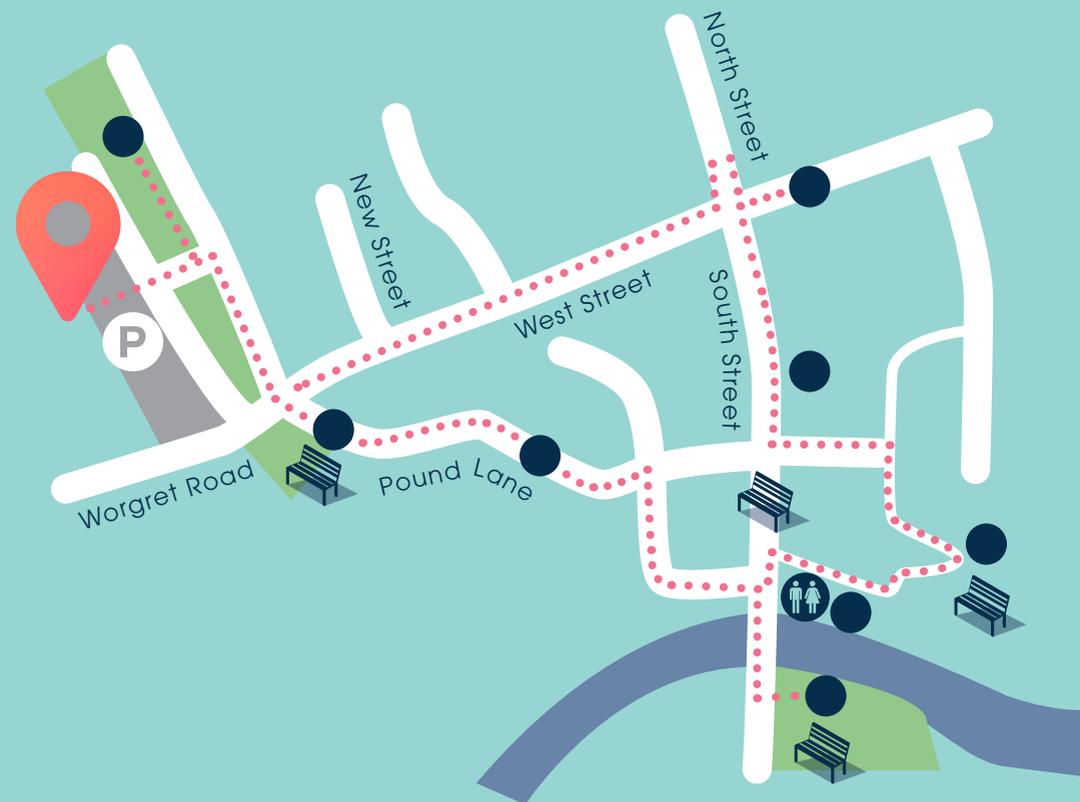


Transport

Suggested parking at Streche Road Car Park, charges apply. Bus stop in Wareham centre, 5 minutes walk from starting point.



Route map



Suggested starting point

Streche Road Car Park, Wareham,
BH20 4QF



Points of interest



Seating



Parking



Start in Streche Road Car Park.

Wareham sits between the rivers Piddle and Frome, which join a little east of the town, and flow into Poole Harbour.

In 875, Viking raiders used Wareham as a winter base. A few years later, after defeating the Vikings, King Alfred set up a series of forts called burhs, where people could shelter from future raiders. One of these was at Wareham. You are standing next to the well-preserved earth ramparts of this burh.

Halfway along the car park, a road cuts through the ramparts. To appreciate the scale of the defences, follow the path that goes from this cutting up to the top of the left rampart.



Turn to face the way you came, and on a clear day you can see the Purbeck Hills.

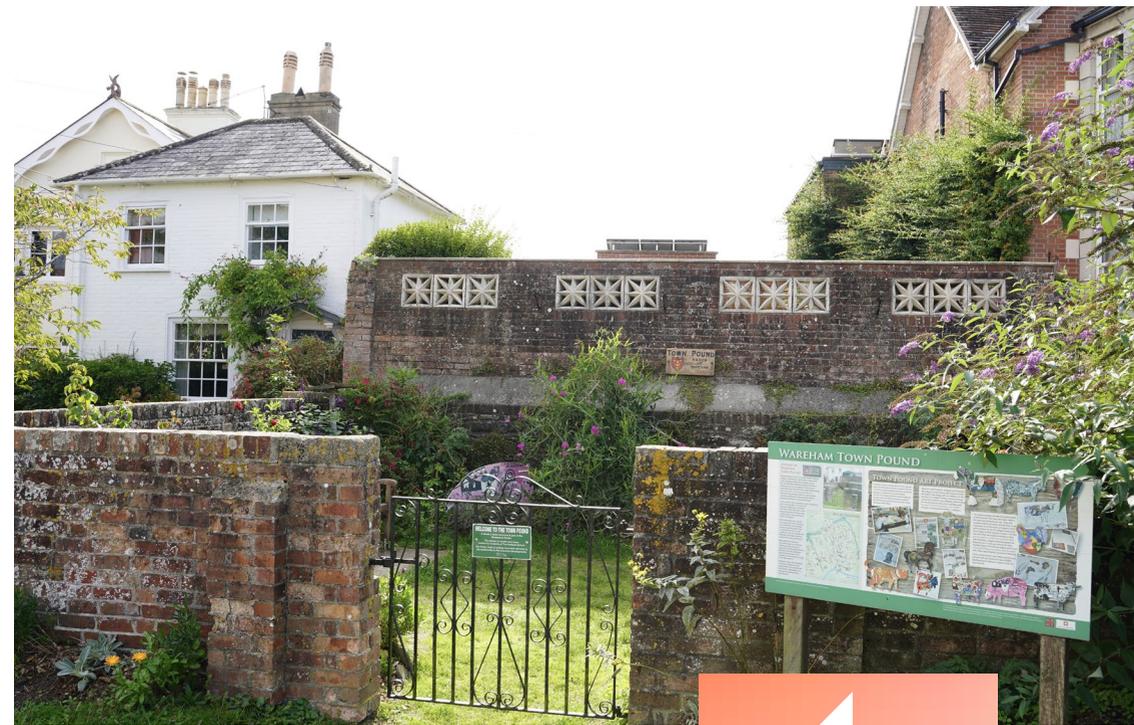


From the base of the rampart, take the path to the left of the opposite rampart along the street called West Walls. At the end, cross over West Street and have a look at the pound, pictured on the next page.

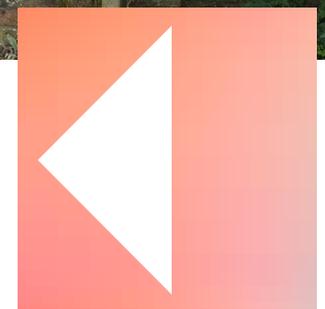
Pounds like this were used to lock up stray animals for their owners to claim as well as the occasional human miscreant. Imagine how it felt being locked up on such public display.

Once Alfred's ramparts were built, the town developed in a grid pattern which explains Wareham's characteristic straight roads.

However, around 200 years later when the Normans had just conquered England, they decided to build a castle in Wareham's burh. This was surrounded by curved defensive ditches, and today Pound Lane follows the line of the inner defensive ditch, hence the uncharacteristic curved road. Trinity Street nearby follows the Castle's outer ditch. The site of the castle itself is 50 yards down Pound Lane on your right, now with a house aptly named Castle Close.



Go down Pound Lane, spotting the buildings mentioned on the next page en route until you reach Tanners Lane.



When the long brick wall on your right ends, you'll see The Old Brewery. In the 1800s, James Panton ran the brewery, and another in Swanage, which supplied 90 pubs, some as far away as the Isle of Wight, until 1922. Just past the warehouse is an archway which would have led into the brewery yard and then two attached houses for the brewers.



Imagine the smell of the brewery in its heyday!

A little further on, see if you can spot an old doorway rebuilt in the stone wall on your left. The style of this door is typically Norman and was probably recycled from the castle or St Mary's Church.



Turn right at Tanners Lane and follow the road to South Street. Cross the road and go over the bridge and turn left into the small park.



Read the information boards here and the Dorset dialect etched on the seats. Take a few minutes to relax and enjoy the views.



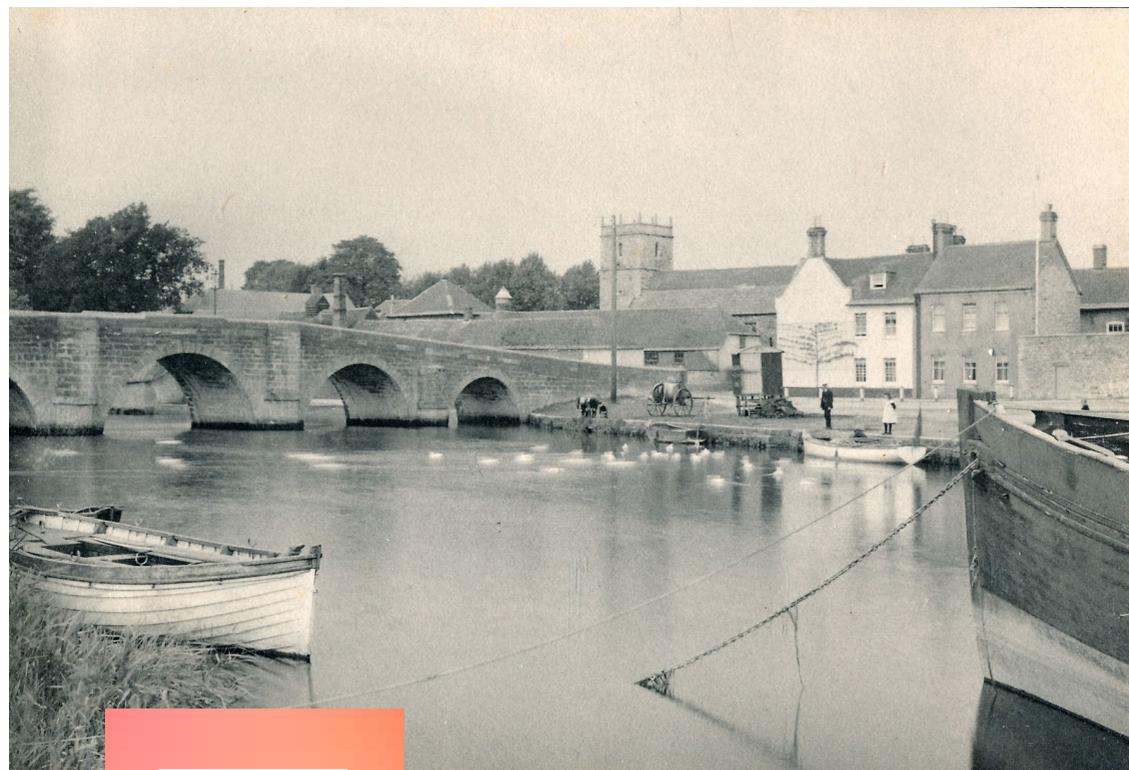
Compare today's view to this 100 year-old photo, which shows a different bridge.

Whilst prettier, the bridge in the photo was narrow and arched, making it difficult for modern traffic. As this was the main route to the Isle of Purbeck it was rebuilt in 1927.

Wareham was historically important as a port. Even before Alfred's burh was constructed, Wareham was likely a place from which people travelled to the Continent. Over time, however, the river silted up and by the Middle Ages, Poole had become the main port.



Return over the bridge and turn right at the Quay. Go to the far left corner of the Quay and take the narrow lane to St Mary's Church.



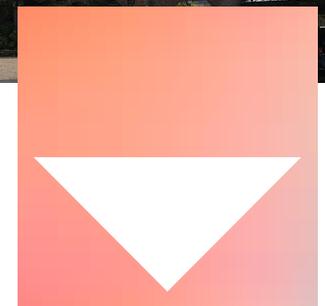
St Mary's Church dates from the 700s, earlier than Alfred's burh. Sadly, the building was restored 200 years ago in a way that destroyed much of the early building. Perhaps the door we saw on Pound Lane was taken out then too.

The building to the right of the church was originally a nunnery and is now the Priory Hotel.

Inside the church, there is still much to see, including a rare Norman lead font and some ancient inscriptions on display to the left of the altar.



After visiting the church, cross the green and turn right along St John's Hill. Bear left when this opens onto a square and you'll reach South Street. Go right until you reach a large Georgian house set back on the right.



Sansom, Speed & Co

COMPLETE HOUSE FURNISHERS,

General Builders' Ironmongers, and Undertakers.



Compare the photo of the view across the road to today. We think the carts in the foreground were used for deliveries.

A little further up South Street, you will see a green plaque on Lloyds Bank. This commemorates the starting point of the Great Fire of 1762 which destroyed many buildings in the town. Streche's Almshouses, just around the corner, was one of the buildings lucky to survive – let's go and take a look.



Cross the road ahead and turn immediately right into East Street. Go along for a few yards until you are just past the museum.



The ornate building with an inscription high up on the wall on the opposite side of the road is Streche's Almshouses. Originally built in 1418 by a man called John Streche, it housed six men and five women. It was rebuilt in 1741, surviving the fire 21 years later. Since then, the almshouses have moved to a new location just past the car park where we started the walk.

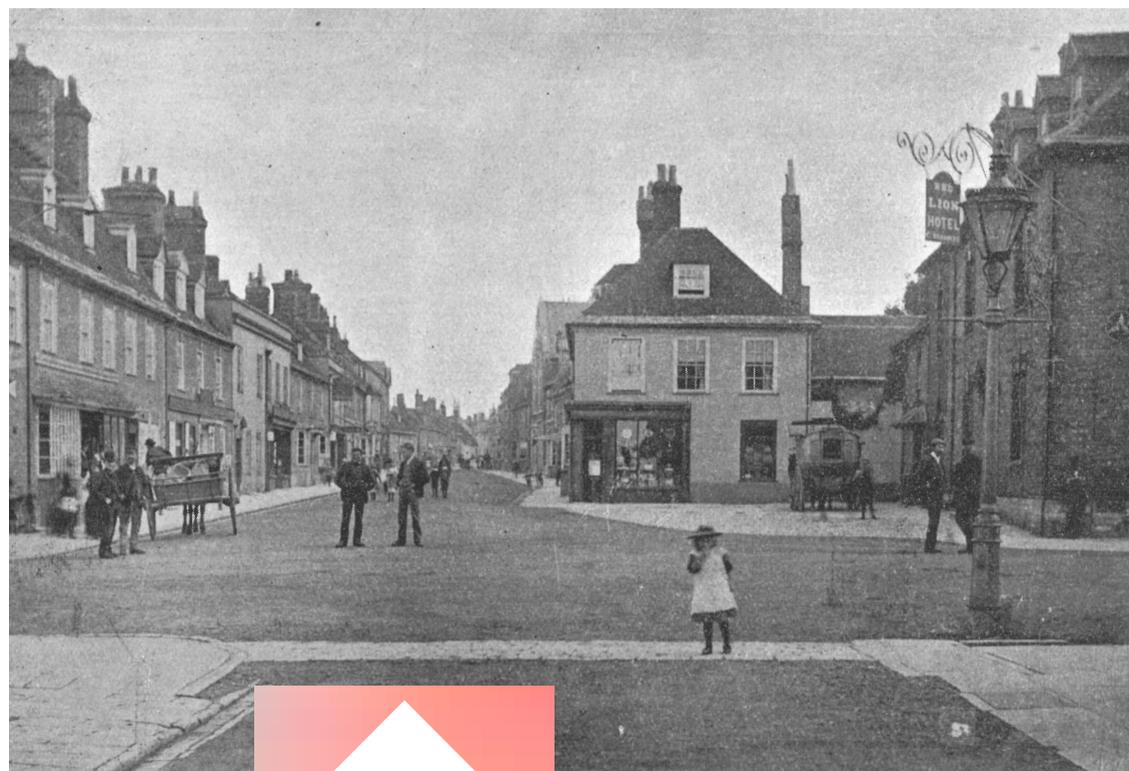
The large building behind you is Wareham's Town Hall. A blue plaque by the door of the museum explains the Town Hall's history.



Turn to face the way you came to compare the view looking down West Street across the crossroads with the photo taken around 1900.



Whilst here, have a look in the museum and enjoy the town. When ready to return, head straight along West Street and after 300 yards you will reach the 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
STURMINSTER NEWTON

Further Information

www.stepin2nature.org