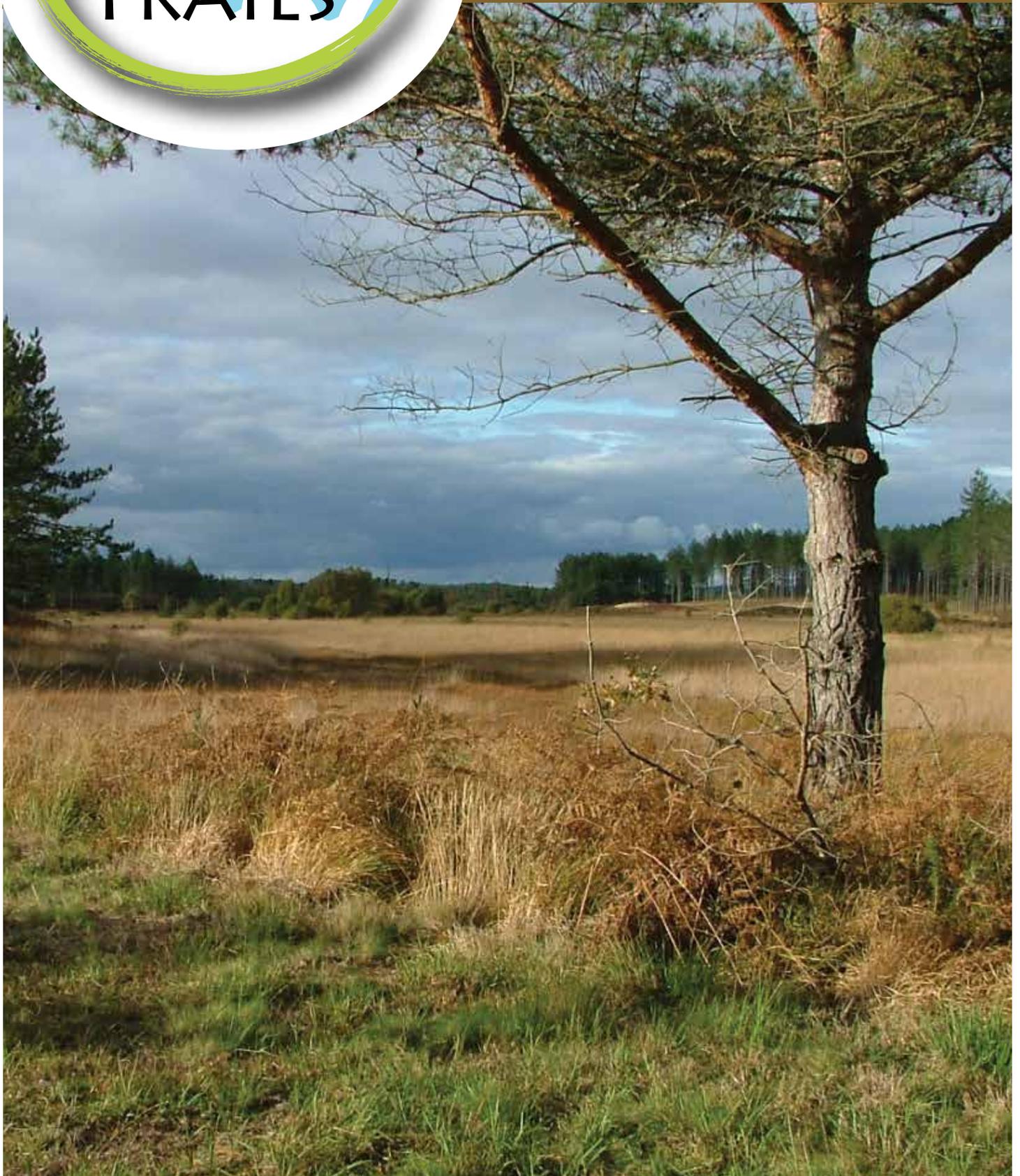




## WALK 4

WAREHAM QUAY  
TO SANDFORD



## LOCAL HISTORY

### TOWNS AND VILLAGES

Wareham means “Homestead by weir” in Old English which describes its location very well. It is situated between the River Frome and the River Piddle which both flow into Poole Harbour. The town is surrounded by water meadows that are rich in wildlife.

Wareham has many reminders of its past with its Saxon Walls, a well-preserved set of defence earthworks, attributed to Alfred the Great that still encircle the older part of the town. The town's old Saxon layout can also still be seen although many of the buildings were burnt down in a great fire in 1762. Thatched roofs were banned in the rebuilding.

On the Saxon Walls, overlooking the River Piddle, you can visit the Saxon Church, St Martin on the Walls. It was used as a refuge during the Great Fire. The church commemorates the exploits of Lawrence of Arabia, who settled in Dorset on returning to England.

The Priory, said to have been founded by St Aldhelm in the 8th century, operated as a nunnery, although it was sacked and rebuilt several times until the 11th century. It was then taken over by monks until the dissolution. It was rebuilt in the 16th century, much altered over the years, and is now a luxury hotel with lovely gardens.

Wareham was completely destroyed by King Stephen during the Civil War in the 12th century because it supported his rival Matilda.

Towards the north of Wareham Forest are some Iron Age earthworks: Woolsbarrow Fort.

### INDUSTRY

A large excavation has been undertaken at Bestwall Farm, Swineham Point, and many Roman pottery kilns and much evidence of prehistoric activity have been found. Ancient salt workings have been discovered all around the harbour. Roman Black-Burnished Ware pottery, found at Roman sites all over Britain and often crucial in dating sites, was made at Bestwall and other sites on the shores of the harbour.

### WAR

During the Civil War, the town was taken and retaken twice. The first Parliamentary attack was via the river from Poole.

More recently, Wareham was a garrison town in World War I, with a camp at Worgret. In World War II, decoy areas were set up to try to divert enemy bombers. Locations in Wareham Forest and on Arne provided diversions from the cordite factory at Holton Heath, burning waste cordite to signify a ‘hit’.

### DEER

Originally Japanese, Sika deer made a home for themselves around the harbour and particularly in Wareham Forest after some of them escaped from Brownsea Island by swimming to Arne in the late 19th century. Another group escaped from Hyde House Park thirty years later.



Sika stag

## WALK 4: WAREHAM QUAY TO SANDFORD

Ordnance survey map: OL15

**Grid reference:** Start - SY 923 871  
Finish - SY 932 899

**Transport:** (check current timetables)

**Bus:** Purbeck Breezer 40 Poole/ Swanage

**South West Trains:** Poole, Bournemouth, Wareham and Holton Heath stations.

**Car Parking:** Wareham - Streche Road and Conniger Lane (off Church Lane) car parks (pay), also Bonnetts Lane car park maximum time 4 hours (pay); side roads in Sandford.

**Approximate distance:** 12 km (7.5 miles) allow 4 hrs.

**Facilities en route:** refreshments in Wareham, toilets at Wareham Quay and Howards Lane.

**Nature of route:** riverside path and heathland; some roads, no stiles.

**Special interest:** River Frome and Wareham's Saxon Walls.

**Connecting trails:** Purbeck Way, Purbeck Way West, Wareham Two Rivers Walks, Wareham Forest Way, and the Northport Greenway all link to this walk. (Leaflets available from Tourist Information Centres in Swanage and Wareham).

**Note:** a compass would be useful.

The route given uses Open Access land, roads, footpaths and bridleways that are public rights of way. Please note that while walkers can use any of these, cyclists and horse-riders are permitted to use only the roads and bridleways.

## COUNTRYSIDE CODE

► **Be safe, plan ahead and follow any signs.**

Check weather conditions and take adequate maps and equipment.

► **Leave gates and property as you find them.**

A gate may be open to give animals access to water, so leave gates as you find them and use access points provided.

► **Protect plants and animals and take your litter home.**

Don't touch animals and be careful not to leave a lighted match or a smouldering cigarette behind.

► **Keep dogs under close control.**

Your dog must not scare or disturb wild or farm animals. Pick up after your dog and dispose of the results responsibly.

► **Consider other people.**

Share transport or use public transport where possible and don't block access.

## OPEN ACCESS LAND

Open Access is a right of access on foot. Riding bikes or horses (except on bridleways designated public rights of way), driving vehicles (except mobility vehicles), camping or feeding animals are not allowed. Dogs must be on a short fixed lead up to 2 metres long near livestock and from 1 March until 31 July to protect nesting birds. Open Access is shown on our maps by pale yellow. Sometimes restrictions on access may be in place, please check details online or observe notices en route.



# WALK 4 ROUTE ~ WAREHAM QUAY TO SANDFORD



South Bridge, Wareham



Bird watching on the river path

- 1 Take the **40 Purbeck Breezer Poole/Swanage bus** to Wareham Quay. Starting at the quay in **Wareham**, head for the far left hand corner of the **Quay** (as viewed from the road) and go through a short alley to **Church Green** and the church.

Pass the church on your right and follow the churchyard wall around to the right. At the end turn right into a lane which turns left then right around a pumping station.



Lady St. Marys, Wareham

- 2 Just past this take the right hand path to join the river bank path after a wooden boardwalk, signed 'River path' and follow this path for about 3 km.
- 3 Ignore a sharp left hand turn of the path and carry on until the path reaches nearly the edge of the harbour and turns left. Soon after you will pass through a gate and enter open ground. Keep left and continue for about 2 km with the woods on your left (W).

- 4 When you reach a gate on your left leading onto a lane, follow the lane until you reach a point where the lane turns sharp left alongside the base of the **Wareham Walls**.

- 5 Follow a path up onto the **Wareham Walls** and continue along the top to the right.



View from Wareham Walls

**Wareham Walls** ~ Wareham is surrounded by a well preserved set of defence earthworks known locally as The Walls. These are Anglo Saxon, as is the street layout of the town.

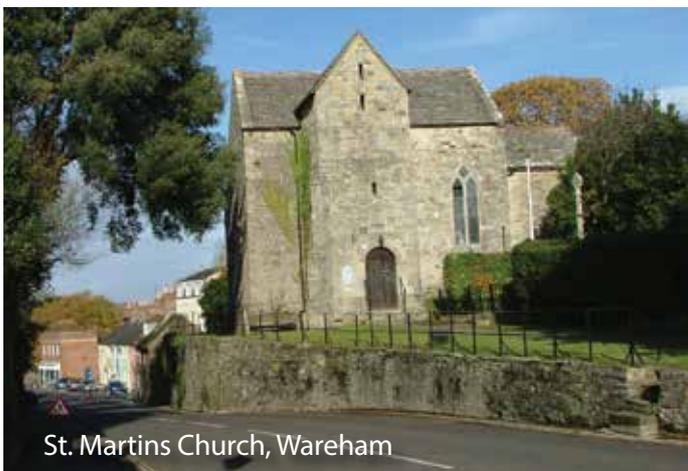
Some Wareham residents supported the Monmouth Rebellion of 1685 and were hanged from gallows on the walls near Streche Road car park.

- 6 The path turns left and at the end joins a road. Go down onto the road and turn right (NNW) to join the main road into **Wareham**.



View from the bridge

Turn right and cross the bridge over the **River Piddle**. Take the pedestrian underpass towards the station.



St. Martins Church, Wareham

**Lawrence of Arabia** ~ Wareham town was visited regularly by T E Lawrence during his final years when he was living at Clouds Hill, his cottage near Bovington. He met an untimely death in 1935 in a motorcycle accident near Clouds Hill aged only forty six. His grave is in Moreton but an impressive life-sized effigy lies in St. Martins Church, Wareham.

**7** Cross over the railway line to the bus shelter. Take the path which is on the opposite side of Bere Road to the bus stop. This is signed as a cycleway/footpath. Follow it and after it bears left it joins an estate road, go straight over and keep alongside the open space (N). Keep to the right of the open space and pass through a narrow entryway between the houses. At the road turn left.

**8** In a short distance turn right onto a cycleway leading towards the golf course (NW). Follow this track through the golf course until you reach a barrier leading into **Wareham Forest**.



Wareham Forest

- 9** Turn right (NE) keeping to the boundary fencing on your right. This wide track winds around for some distance. You will pass a seat and come to a junction of several tracks.
- 10** Turn right (E) to go over the bridge. Once over the bridge bear left (N).
- 11** Follow the wide track round a long left bend and up a small rise. The track winds around a hill turning to the right (ENE). Continue ahead, passing a cross track.
- 12** Cross the road from **Sandford**. Go straight on over the heath (ENE) to the woods.
- 13** Turn right (SSE) at the junction onto the nature reserve.
- 14** After several boardwalks you will come out into an estate road in **Sandford**. Turn left and follow the road around, passing a road on your right. You will turn to the right then left and finally you will come to a short footpath on a bend leading off to the left onto the **A351**. Catch a **40 Poole/Swanage bus** from here.

**Holton Heath** ~ During the First World War Holton Heath was developed into a site for the manufacture of cordite. At one point channels were going to be dredged to make it into a naval dockyard.

Visit website for route updates  
[www.pooleharbourtrails.org.uk](http://www.pooleharbourtrails.org.uk)

*Revised 2017*

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# POOLE HARBOUR

Purbeck and the Isle of Wight were once joined, Old Harry and the Needles having much in common. The rivers Frome and Piddle join at Wareham, and drain much of Dorset. Originally, these joined the Stour and the Avon at Christchurch with all these joining the Hamble to break out into the Channel through Spithead, east of the Isle of Wight. Since the end of the last Ice Age, about 12,000 years ago, the sea level has risen dramatically. The sea eventually broke through the chalk ridge, flooding the river valleys and dividing off the Isle of Wight.



Find out more about us on our website  
[www.pooleharbourtrails.org.uk](http://www.pooleharbourtrails.org.uk)

## POOLE HARBOUR TRAILS LEAFLET SERIES

**WALK 1** - Poole to Greenlands - 12 km (7.5 miles).

**WALK 2** - Greenlands to Norden Park-and-Ride - 11 km (7 miles).

**WALK 3** - Norden Park-and-Ride to Wareham - 12 km (7.5 miles).

**WALK 4** - Wareham Quay to Sandford - 12 km (7.5 miles).

**WALK 5b** - Sandford to Turlin Moor - 13.5 km (8.5 miles).

**WALK 6** - Turlin Moor to Poole Quay - 11 km (7 miles).

Other connecting routes can be found on our website.

Check your nearest Tourist Information Centre for information on other local walks.

With acknowledgements to Peter Strudwick and Bernard Corby  
for the original concept and research for this project.

Supported by



The Ramblers  
East Dorset Group

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