

Points of Interest on this route (see map overleaf for locations)

A **Witchampton** stands on the River Allen and was first recorded in the Domesday Book as Wichemtone. Other spellings through the 13th century include Wichampton, Wychampton and Michelhampton. The origins of the village are uncertain, although evidence of a Roman vineyard has been discovered adjacent to the church along with a Roman villa at nearby East Hemsworth. A breakdown of the name Witchampton has Saxon as well as Roman associations.



Ruins of former Manor House



B Witchampton **Abbey House**, which dates from 1500, stands in the centre of the village, uphill from the ruins of the former manor house which can be seen from Witchampton Lane.

C Until the middle of the 20th century the village was predominantly part of the **Crichel Estate**, variously held by the Matraver family, the Earls of Arundel, the Cole family and the Napier family before it came into the Sturt family.

D Part of this circular walk follows that of part of **The Hardy Way**, a long-distance path (217 miles / 350km) which explores the Wessex of Thomas Hardy passes through the village. The path starts at the author's birthplace near Dorchester and leads through Dorset and Wiltshire to where his heart lies buried in the churchyard at Stinsford.



A gentle circular walk through the pretty countryside around the historic village of Witchampton, to Manswood, Chetterwood and Hemsworth, on lanes and paths used by our ancestors as far back as the Romans.

Start Point: Witchampton Shop and Club W3W: deep.gilding.ratio


OS Grid Reference: OS Explorer 118| ST988065.

Parking: Witchampton Shop and Club free car park.

Terrain: Quiet lanes and tracks bridleways and footpaths through fields and woods in undulating countryside. 1 stile and 1 gate..

Length: Approximately 5 miles / 8 km.

Approximate time: 2.5 hours.

 **Dogs:** Please keep dogs on a lead wherever livestock are present.

Good to know: Witchampton shop is run by volunteers from the community. Opening hours are between 9.00am and 12.00noon from Monday to Saturday and until 11.00am on Sundays and Bank Holidays. In term time it is also open from 3.00 to 4.00pm.

Refreshments: Witchampton and Crichel Club and Shop.

The information is only intended as a general guide. Please check local arrangements.



Respect everyone
Protect the environment
Enjoy the outdoors
Follow advice and local signs

Share your pictures with us at [#cranbornechase](https://www.cranbornechase.org.uk)



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Exploring Witchampton and Chetterwood

Romans, Saxons, Saints and Earls

WALK #
W61



Cranborne Chase National Landscape





Directions

- 1 From the village shop, walk uphill along Pound Lane, then at the top of the hill before turning right onto Sheepdrove.
- 2 Continue along the road to pass Sheephouse Farm then turn right onto a signposted bridleway, Rowbarrow Lane. Pass Hilda Cottages and continue straight ahead to reach a wide, grassy footpath on the left. Follow the footpath to the road, turning right onto the signposted bridleway which runs parallel to the road but separated from it by a hedge.
- 3 As the road and bridleway curve away to the right, go through the gap in the hedge and cross the road at Manswood Farm onto a bridleway which leads through a gate into the woods.
- 4 Stay on the bridleway until you come to a five-way junction one of tracks. Do not turn sharp left onto the first track but take the left-hand one of the two tracks leading ahead through the wood, then stay on this footpath with the woodland to your left and open views across the fields to your right, as it descends the hill to a T-junction with a bridleway.
- 5 Turn left to follow the bridleway past farm buildings at Dean Hill and then around to the right to pass Dean Farm and continue until you meet the road.

- 6 Cross the road onto the signposted bridleway which leads uphill to Hemsworth. On reaching the farm, turn left along the track and follow the waymarked route across the farmyard, before turning left through a gate onto a waymarked footpath along a stone track fenced on either side between fields

- 7 At the bottom of the hill, cross the stile and go straight ahead along the road to pass Zannies Cottages. Stay on the road to return to Witchampton. At the crossroads, take the road ahead of you to pass a row of cottages, then turn right as you reach a former chapel, onto a footpath which takes you downhill to the village hall. Bear left across the village hall car park to meet the road. Before heading uphill to return to the centre of the village, it is worth making a short detour to the right, downhill along Witchampton Lane, to view across the field to the right the ruins of Witchampton Abbey, then returning back up Witchampton Lane to complete this walk by passing the church and on to the village shop and club and the car park.

