

ChalkEscape Walking Festival 2025

Friday 30 May - Sunday 8 June

cranbornechase.org.uk



**Cranborne
Chase**
National
Landscape



**CHASE &
CHALKE**
LANDSCAPE
PARTNERSHIP



Made possible with

**Heritage
Fund**



Chase & Chalke and the Cranborne Chase National Landscape are delighted to offer a wide selection of events and activities to mark the 6th annual ChalkEscape Walking Festival.

As the Chase & Chalke Landscape Partnership Scheme comes to a conclusion, this year we celebrate some of the projects that have run over the last five years.



Bookings for ALL events are through the Cranborne Chase Eventbrite page: → [CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#) ←

With the exception of the final two events in the programme (Tarrant Gunville Walks and ChalkEscape Pizza and Picnic on the Park), all events have limited capacity, so we would politely ask that you only book on one or two events, so that as many people as possible can take part. If we have spare spaces on events these will be advertised in advance.

We would still ask you to register on Eventbrite for the Tarrant Gunville Walks and the final event in Broad Chalke, so that we have an indication of numbers for catering.

Detailed location and other helpful information will be provided as part of the booking process. For all events, please bring water and snacks and, if it is warm, a hat and sunscreen. For all events sturdy, flat shoes are recommended (no sandals/Crocs) and for the longer walks please wear comfortable walking shoes or boots.

Due to the nature of some activities, the route of walks, or wildlife/livestock concerns, dogs are not permitted on some of the walks, please look out for the dog symbols.





Your guide to enjoying parks and waterways, coast and countryside

RESPECT EVERYONE

Be considerate to those living in, working in and enjoying the countryside

Leave gates and property as you find them

Do not block access to gateways or driveways when parking

Be nice, say hello, share the space

Follow local signs and keep to marked paths unless wider access
is available

PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT

Take your litter home - leave no trace of your visit

Do not light fires and only have BBQs where signs say you can

Always keep dogs under control and in sight

Dog poo - bag it and bin it in any public waste bin or take it home

Care for nature - do not cause damage or disturbance

ENJOY THE OUTDOORS

Check your route and local conditions

Plan your adventure - know what to expect and what you can do

Enjoy your visit, have fun, make a memory

www.countryside-code.org.uk

Additional Event: Saturday 24 May, 8-10am

Bird and Wildflower Walk

 *Martin Down National Nature Reserve*

2 miles all flat, no stiles

Celebrating our Nurturing Nature project

Enjoy an early morning nature-inspired stroll at beautiful Martin Down NNR. Even the car park will provide us with an avian choir to welcome us!

We will walk at a gentle pace to allow us to spot and identify a wide range of birds and chalk downland plants. The area is known for hosting species that are rare outside of the reserve.

The grass will be wet so bring suitable footwear, mornings can be chilly, so dress warmly and please bring your binoculars.



Sorry NO dogs.



→ [CLICK HERE TO BOOK](#) ←

Friday 30 May, 11am or 2pm

Wonderful Woodlands – Family Art Session



 **Vernditch Chase**

1-2 miles, level, easy walking on grass and tracks

In partnership with Dorset Visual Arts

Join a professional artist and our Ranger for a two-hour family session in beautiful woodland on Cranborne Chase. You will explore the woodland, stopping to see and learn about some of the woodland's ecology and heritage, looking out for rare species and seasonal highlights.

The artist will then help you discover and respond to the unique biodiversity and character of the woodland, using your smartphone(s) to capture and create images, then work these up in to a 'hand-made' artwork in the woods.

This is small group activity, children in a family group must be aged 8+, maximum of 5 families in each session.



Sorry NO dogs.



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**Friday 30 May,
4-5pm (approx.)**

Mrs Ridout Returns

 **Coombe Bissett**

**Approx 1-1.5 miles, gentle meander,
some slopes and inclines**

*Celebrating our Characters
of the Chase project*

Mrs Ridout, proprietor of Coombe Bissett's
'Donkey Express' returns to the village to tell
the story of her life as a local carrier.

Join her for a walking performance on
Coombe Bissett Nature Reserve (Village Hall
if wet) and learn more about this wonderful
local character.

A family-friendly event suitable for children
age 6+.



**We recommend leaving dogs at
home, but any dogs who come
must be kept on a short lead.**



**Saturday 31 May,
10.30am-12.30pm**

Poetry Walk

📍 *Start at Down Farm, nr Sixpenny
Handley (details supplied on booking)*

**Approx 2 miles, gentle walk,
some incline but not steep**

*Celebrating our Words in the
Landscape project*

Let the Cranborne Chase's stunning
landscapes and archaeology inspire you on
this gentle stroll with poet Estelle Phillips.

As you walk take notice of the things around you and note what catches your eye
or intrigues you – that's where a poem starts!

During the walk Estelle will perform her enthralling work 'The Headless
Horseman', a piece grounded in the local landscape and history, as well as 'Soil' her
latest poem. Your route will take you on to Gussage Down, with its Long Barrows,
an Iron Age settlement and, of course, the Dorset Cursus.

As you meander back towards the start there will be time to discuss what you
have noticed around you, what has touched you, and talk through issues. This
connection to the landscape is wonderful for wellbeing, self-confidence and
connections. For those that wish we can build on the social aspect and continue
discussions over a drink or lunch at The Cockerel pub in nearby Gussage All Saints
after the walk.



Sorry NO dogs.



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Saturday 31 May, 2-3.30pm

Curious Jack Tales – Family-friendly Story Walk Adventure!

 **Martin Down National Nature Reserve**

Flat leisurely walk of approx 1 mile, no stiles

Suitable for ages 6+

Celebrating the Communities Caring for Heritage Scheme

Join storyteller Lizzie Bryant for family-friendly interactive storytelling and story fun on a wild ramble on Martin Down to celebrate the launch of Curious Jack and the Time Travelling Shepherd's Hut, a series of audio adventures to be discovered around the Cranborne Chase.

Step into your imagination through stories and have fun exploring lives lived in the landscape from ancient times to WW2.

After the story walk stay on to enjoy more of Martin Down or play Nature Bingo on the short walk back to the car park.

This is a walk with stops for storytelling so please bring a blanket to sit on.

Children to be accompanied at all times by a parent/guardian.

If raining the storytelling will go ahead at Sixpenny Handley Village Hall.



Sorry NO dogs.



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Sunday 1 June, 10am-12.30pm (approx)

Ashmore Walk

 *Around Ashmore*

Approx 6½ miles, mix of woodland and field footpaths, some uneven ground, 1 or 2 stiles, no steep ascents.

This walk will take us past Ashmore Pond, site of the Filly Loo in June, an ancient and magical celebration held around the Summer Solstice in Ashmore. Theories include that it celebrated either the pond's constancy as a water supply, the summer solstice, or the end of the cultivated hazelnut harvest.

We will follow the Wessex Ridgeway (Benches Lane - track) to Tollard Royal with views across to Win Green in one direction and the Dorset coast in another; we will pass the magnificent 13th-century St. Peter ad Vincula church (a chance to pop inside) and walk around the outskirts of The Larmer Tree Gardens. General Pitt Rivers first created the Larmer Tree Pleasure Grounds in 1880, shortly after inheriting the Rushmore Estate. Designed as a sanctuary to enlighten, educate and inspire his estate workers and guests, he took great pride in creating a unique space to share with them. The Singing Theatre was used for plays and poetry recitals, while the field adjoining the gardens was transformed into a racecourse, lawn tennis courts and an 18-hole golf course. Evenings saw hanging glass lamps lit with candles – also known as Vauxhall lights – illuminating the gardens for open-air dancing. We will return via Tollard Green and Mudoak Wood.



Well behaved dogs welcome, must be on a lead at all times and able to complete the distance.

Note: This is a free event, but a £1 donation for the village hall car park would be appreciated, pay on the day.



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Monday 2 June, 10am-1pm

Ancient Ways Walk

 **Start; Martin Down Car Park, off A354**

5.8 miles, no steep hills, some gentle inclines, no stiles.

Celebrating our Ancient Ways and Roman Rally projects

Join us on this walk exploring two of Dorset's ancient roads, Ackling Dyke Roman road and the nearby Ox Drove. We will also take in the spectacular views across Cranborne Chase and look at some historic landmarks and local legends along the way.

Bring drinks and snacks for a stop enroute.



Sorry NO dogs.

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Tuesday 3 June, 11am

New Light on an Ancient Landscape: A walk across Martin Down enhanced by LiDAR technology

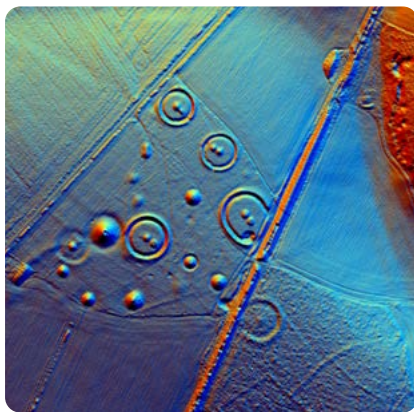
📍 Start; Martin Down Car Park, off A354

Approx 3 miles across Martin Down, fairly level, some undulation, no stiles.

Celebrating the Champions of the Past project

Join archaeologist and LiDAR specialist Rebecca Bennett for a walk over Martin Down to explore the ancient landscape in a new light. The walk will be enhanced by the results of the Champions of the Past LiDAR project with digital maps and printouts illustrating the historic features as captured in the digital models created from the LiDAR survey undertaken by the Chase & Chalke project.

A unique opportunity to experience the 'birds-eye-view' while walking in the footsteps of the past.



Children welcome and must be supervised at all times by a responsible adult.



Well-mannered dogs on leads welcome.

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Tuesday 3 June, 1.30pm

Cranborne & Boveridge Walk & Talk

 *Start; Cranborne Garden Centre*

4 miles, quiet lanes, bridleways and footpaths, undulating countryside.

Celebrating our Walking Festival and Ancient Ways projects

Enjoy a stroll and chat with members of the Chase & Chalke (Cranborne Chase) Team as we explore the lanes and paths around the historic village of Cranborne and the hamlet of Boveridge, looking out for wildlife and taking in points of interest.

We will finish at Cranborne Garden Centre for afternoon tea – for anyone who wishes to join us.



This is a dog-friendly walk, but dogs must be on leads, or under close control, at all times.

Wednesday 4 June, 10.30am-1pm

Nature and Art Journaling Walk

 **Coombe Bissett Village Hall & Nature Reserve**

Approx 1.5-2 miles, gentle meander, some inclines and slopes

Celebrating our Artists' Residencies

Join us in Combe Bissett to enjoy a nature and art journaling walk with Wiltshire artist Jo Beal. We'll make our own 8-page fold-out sketchbooks before setting off. Enroute we'll stop to take in the variety of Cranborne Chase's flora and fauna and sketch along the way. Jo will teach you some easy ways into drawing and capturing your personal experience of the walk. Suitable for all abilities.

Jo will bring a range of drawing materials but please also bring your own if you'd like to and a sketchbook (in addition to the one we'll make), and a folding stool or rug if you wish.



Sorry NO dogs.



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Thursday 5 June, 2-4.30pm

Down Farm Walk/Museum

 *Down Farm, nr Sixpenny Handley*

Approx 1-mile, gentle walk with regular stops, some uneven ground

Celebrating our Champions of the Past and Dorset Cursus projects

Join local landowner and archaeologist Martin Green and learn more about the fascinating history of the peoples of Cranborne Chase on a short walk taking in bell, round and pond barrows, the Dorset Cursus and a sink hole! You will also have the opportunity to explore Martin's wonderful museum with its collection of artefacts.



Sorry NO dogs.



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Friday 6 June, 7.45-10pm (approx)

Bat Walk

 *Rushmore Golf Club*

1-2 miles, this will be at dusk and as it gets dark, on grass and woodland paths which are uneven and with some undulation, so please wear sturdy shoes/boots to protect the ankles.

Celebrating our Nurturing Nature project

Bat Ecologist Jon Hayter talks about the species of bats that can be found on Cranborne Chase, before heading out on a bat hunt – which species will you discover using one of our bat detectors?

Please note; in the event of bad weather on 6 June, this event will be rescheduled for Saturday 7 June.



Sorry NO dogs.



Saturday 7 June, 10.15am

Women's Walk to the Pub

 *Sixpenny Handley to Broad Chalke*

7 miles on footpaths and quiet roads, one moderate uphill section and downhill at the end.

Celebrating our Walking Festival project

Walk to the pub! Women's hike from Sixpenny Handley to Broad Chalke walking ancient footpaths and trade routes. Take in the sweeping views of the Cranborne Chase and practise your map-reading skills. You will be guided so no previous map-reading experience is required.

This 7-mile walk is for women, particularly those who are keen to gain confidence walking, and join a supportive and fun event.

Take a packed lunch, water and snacks to enjoy along the route and finish in Broad Chalke at around 2.30/3pm for a drink in the garden of the Queen's Head. Transport back to the start will be provided.



Sorry NO dogs.



Saturday 7 June, 10.30am

Tarrant Gunville Walking Trails & Treasure Hunt

 **Tarrant Gunville Village Hall**

Celebrating the Communities Caring for Heritage Scheme

Fun for all ages with walks and a family treasure hunt around the pretty village of Tarrant Gunville. Arrive at the Village Hall for complimentary tea/coffee and biscuits at 10.30am, hear how the village came together to create the Coronation Pathways in a brief, and entertaining presentation, then set off and explore one of the routes.

Families can follow the gentle 3-mile Skylark Loop which is pushchair and tramper accessible, no steps or stiles. Take part in the free family treasure hunt along the route. Finish at Home Farm, with a free ice lolly for all completed treasure hunts!

From Home Farm return along the lane to Tarrant Gunville (approx. $\frac{3}{4}$ mile) or enjoy minibus transport back to the Village Hall.

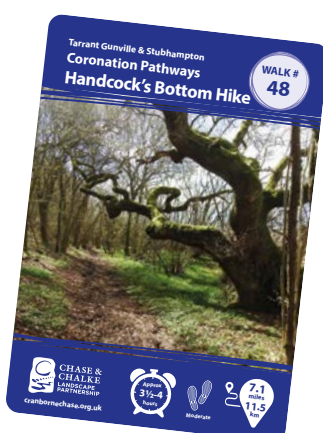
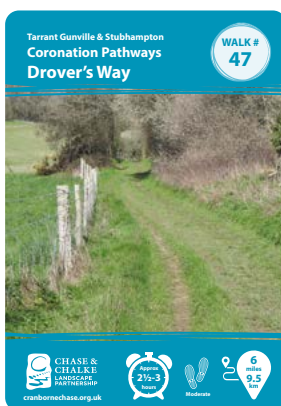
For those who like a longer walk, team up with friends and enjoy a lovely social stroll through the pretty countryside on Drover's Way (6 miles) or Handcock's Bottom (7.1 miles) routes. Pause or finish at Home Farm for a cuppa or something more substantial. Minibus back to Tarrant Gunville Village Hall from Home Farm if required (saving $\frac{3}{4}$ mile!). **Home Farm closes at 4pm.**



No dogs (except assistance dogs) in the Village Hall



Dogs on leads welcome on the walks



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Sunday 8 June, 10.30am – 4pm

ChalkEscape Pizza & Picnic on the Park

 **Chalke Valley Sports Centre,
Broad Chalke**

*Celebrating the Walking Festival and
Chase & Chalke Scheme*

Join us for a day of walking, nature and outdoor-themed activities, bring a picnic and enjoy some free, freshly cooked pizza.

- Walks - short family-friendly route and longer guided route (latter at 10am, see following page, booking required)
- In-character storytelling performances by General Pitt Rivers, the father of modern archaeology
- Kite making - construct a kite, you can make your own bespoke design and then test it out (wind permitting!)
- Make a wildflower seed bomb
- Art activities, games and more...



Appearances by General Pitt Rivers at 11.30am and 2pm, Guided Walk at 10am (see following page), all other events are drop-in. This is a free event, but to enable us to judge numbers for catering please register on Eventbrite.

So, join us for art activities and games, take a walk, make something nature focussed to take home, meet the wonderful General Pitt Rivers and enjoy some pizza* on the house, served 12noon til 3.30pm, or bring your own picnic to enjoy.

In the event of wet weather the performances and arts/crafts activities will take place in the hall of the sports centre.



Dogs are not permitted in the hall, or in the play area



Dogs welcome outside. All dogs must be kept on a lead and owners must clear up after their dogs and take waste home (there are no bins on site).

*gluten/dairy free options available.

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Sunday 8 June, 10am

Marleycombe Hill Circular

Start at Chalke Valley Sports Centre, Broad Chalke

6.7 miles on footpaths, quiet tracks and village roads, includes a few climbs.

A pretty walk offering some wonderful views. The route will take you from Broad Chalke up Church Bottom, through the lovely Middleton Down Nature Reserve, over the top of Marleycombe Hill into Bowerchalke and back.

Return back to the Chalke Valley Sports Centre and join in the party, with performances and free pizza!



Sorry NO dogs.



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Cranborne Chase National Landscape.
Rushmore Farm, Tinkley Bottom, Tollard Royal, Wiltshire SP5 5QA