

## 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 Hemsforth. 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) 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 Hemsforth, 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:** The Witchampton Club and Shop have kindly given permission for walkers to use their car park on weekdays only, up until 5pm. This area will be busy at school drop-off and pick-up times. If parking at the roadside please do not block driveways and field entrances, or park where your vehicle will obstruct other traffic. Avoid damaging soft verges.

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

**Length:** Approximately 6.4 miles / 10.3 km.

**Approximate time:** 3 hours.

 **Dogs:** Please clean up after your dogs and please keep them on a lead wherever livestock are present.

**Good to know:** Witchampton shop is run by volunteers from the community. Open 9am - 12 noon Monday to Saturday, 9am - 11am on Sundays and Bank Holidays. In term time also open from 3pm - 4pm.

**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)



Cranborne Chase  
National Landscape

[cranbornechase.org.uk](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 left 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 is 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 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 turn right along the road to pass Bradford House. When the road leads uphill to a bend to the left, where there is a small copse to the right and a public bridleway from the right meets the road, look for a gap in the hedge on the left onto a public footpath.
- 8 The path leads to the right, alongside the hedge on the left. Where the hedge turns through 90 degrees to the right, go through a gap in the hedge into the large field on the left. Go straight over the crest of the hill and down to cross a footbridge over a stream.
- 9 Go straight across the field to a stile and gate into a hedged lane, which leads uphill to a gate before a house on the left. Continue straight ahead past the house to meet the road. Turn right and follow the road into Witchampton to reach a T-junction.
- 10 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.