

HALL & WOODHOUSE

Lulworth Cove Inn to The Fossil Forest, The Smugglers Cave & Bindon Hill

Part of the Woodhouse Walks & Badger Trails Series.
Walks & Trails produced with thanks by 'Tess of the Vale'  tessofthevale.com



Key Facts

- Distance:** 5 miles/ 8km
- Duration:** 3 hours
- Ability:** Medium.
- Max Height:** 550ft
- Min Height:** 0ft
- Total climb:** 636ft
- Terrain:** Track, path, and beach.
- Map:** OL15 Explorer Purbeck and South Dorset

Start Point: Lulworth Cove Inn – car park nearby – payment required. (Car Park - Postcode: BH20 5RJ, Grid Reference: SY821800, What Three Words: modes.originate.triangles) (Inn - Postcode: BH20 5RQ, Grid Reference: as car park, What Three Words: vacancies.september.alarm).

How to Get There: From Wareham travel west on the A352. After about a mile, turn left onto the B3070. Follow the road through East Lulworth and at the next junction turn left staying on the B3070. Stay on the same road taking you through the village of West Lulworth and round to the left. The carpark is on the right hand side of the road.

Dogs: On leads where livestock is present and in accordance with any notices on the walk and The Countryside Code. Stay to all marked paths for danger of DEATH!

Refreshments: There are a number of cafes and ice cream parlours in the village of Lulworth. The Lulworth Cove Inn being the biggest pub.



Tess of the Vale 2021

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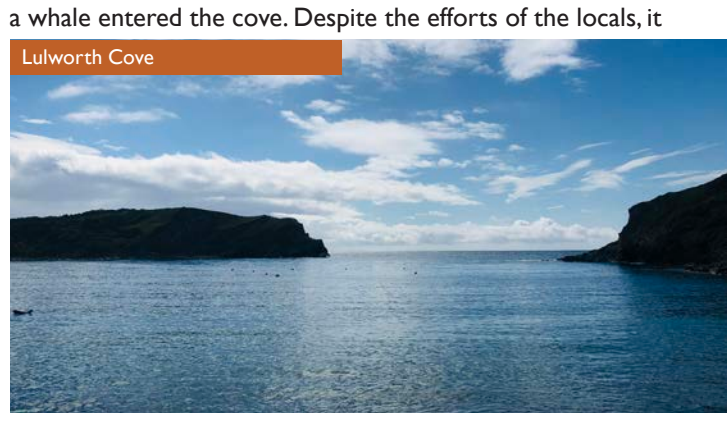


Key			
	Main Road		Tracks
	Country Lane		Buildings
	Woodland		The Route
	The Lulworth Inn		The Coast
	Water		Earthworks & cliff tops
	Start Point		Health & Fossils

The Walk

Lulworth Cove forms part of the UNESCO Jurassic Coast World Heritage site. During the summer months it is one of the most popular spots in the county, however, just walking a short distance away, it is possible to escape the crowds and discover some intentional secrets.

Most of the area is owned by the Lulworth Estate, an estate held by the Weld family, while land to the east is leased to the Ministry of Defence and used for tank training. The village is still working for a few fishermen, thatched cottages and small wooden boats lining the road. The biggest 'catch' in history was in 1785, when a whale entered the cove. Despite the efforts of the locals, it



Lulworth Cove

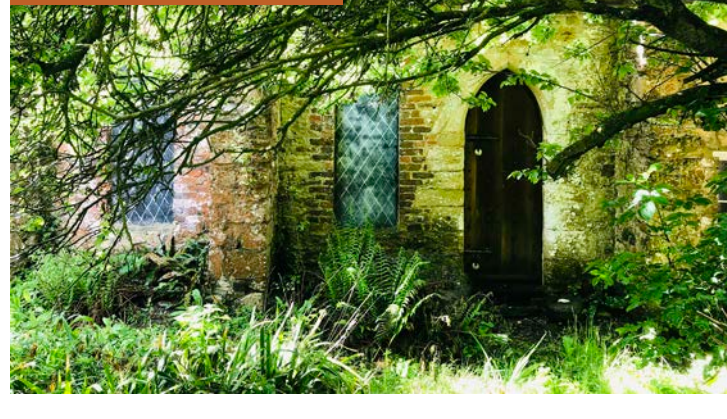
escaped the net and out to sea again. There was once a mill in the centre of the village but it was burnt down in the 19th century. Now all that remains is the millpond which was also used for the annual sheep wash.

The village has been used as the back drop for a number of media productions; one being 'Nuts in May' (1976). More recently Elizabeth (1998), Nanny McPhee (2005) and World War Z (2012).

From the Lulworth Inn, make your way down the road away from the visitor centre. The line of white 19th century coastguard cottages appears on your right and then the mill pond, bordered by a stone wall. Slowly the sea creeps into view ahead as the road continues to the cove.

The coastal feature of Lulworth is one of the finest examples of a natural cove in the world. The cove, along with neighbouring Durdle Door and Stair Hole, were created in the same way.

Bands of rock, of alternating geological resistance, lie parallel to the shore. The Portland Limestone (that forms the Door) is the toughest of these. Once the sea broke through it ate away at the softer rocks behind; made from Purbeck Beds, Wealden Clay and Greensand, until, eventually, it met the steep, tough slopes of the chalk. The shape is caused by the wave refraction as the sea is squeezed through the small entrance, spreading its energy weakly to the sides and strongly ahead. Stair Hole is at the earliest stage of this development in coastal erosion, followed by Lulworth Cove.



Little Bindon

Over thousands more years it will grow to become more like Man 'o War Cove and Durdle Door.

Arriving at the beach, the circular bay spreading wide open, turn left following the pebble surface around the cove. Prior to reaching the end some wooden steps appear on your left, slightly beaten and eroded, to take you up the cliff. Continue to the top and when the path splits, take the right hand fork. When it splits again turn left to Little Bindon. Little Bindon soon appears on your right hand side, behind a stone wall. The small chapel and cottage are in a ruinous state, hidden by overgrown trees; the area locked and fenced off from the public.

This wild spot is cocooned from the elements, hiding from the world, but still within hearing distance of the waves on the shore. William de Gastonia, along with 19 other Cistercian monks from Forde Abbey, established a community here in 1149. They lived at Little Bindon for only a short time as they moved, in 1172, to a site near Wool on the river Frome and naming it Bindon Abbey. Today the Abbey is also in ruins. Little Bindon was sold to the Weld family in 1640, the only sale and purchase in nearly one thousand years of its history.

Retrace your steps back to the footpath junction and turn left, over a little wooden bridge and up the hill. Keep right and follow the curve of the cove to Pepler's Point. At Pepler's Point there is a stone memorial to Sir George Lionel Pepler (1882-1959), who was the tenant at Little Bindon for fifty years. Here you get an amazing panoramic view, all along the Jurassic coastline to the **Isle of Portland** and a bird's eye view of the cove.

Turning around, follow the coastal path along the top of the cliffs and make your way through the army gate. The army gate covers an area of more than 7,000 acres, stretching from Lulworth to Kimmeridge and includes the ruined village of **Tyneham**. The ranges are used for live-firing practice by tanks and other armoured vehicles and therefore, for safety reasons, access to the public is only permissible when the ranges are not in operation.

As soon as you are through the gate, turn right to reach the 97 steps to the Fossil Forest. This unique Fossil Forest is a very primitive-looking landscape of thrombolites – rock doughnuts or algal burrs. 150 million years ago, when the Portland Limestone was being formed, there was a worldwide drop in sea levels. In an area that had once been underwater, a forest of cypress-like trees grew, which later flooded when the climate became wetter again. The trees died and their stumps, trunks and roots were preserved by layers of calcareous sediment from the deposits of freshwater algae, basically poo. What can be seen today are the bowl shapes remaining once the trees had rotted away as well as the ripple marks of the ancient sea floor. The site was closed in



The path to Bepler Point

2015 when a large rock fall damaged the steps. Now, all mended and improved, a small seating area has been installed along with an information board.

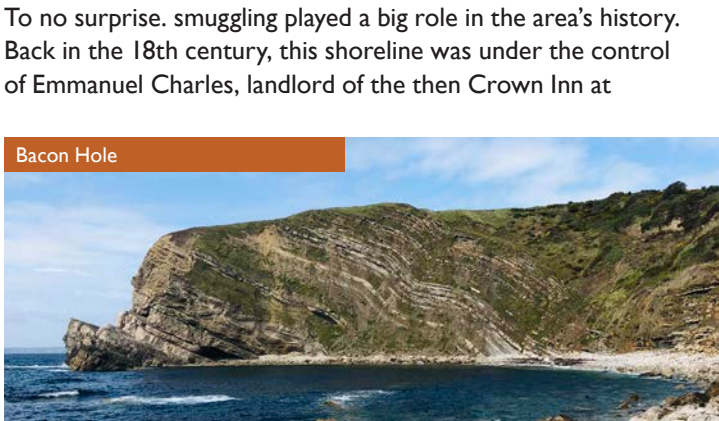
Once back at the top of the steps, turn right to follow the coastline. As you walk more remains of the Fossil Forest can be seen below while above the views stretch out to the east. The sharp ridge of **Gad Cliff** points up to the sky on the opposite side of Worbarrow Bay. Behind the jagged cliff sits Kimmeridge Bay, and for the keen eyes, the little dot of Kimmeridge Tower can be seen. Beyond is the high peak of **Swyre Head** rising above the surrounding landscape to then drop down to the large pinnacle of **St Aldhelms Head**, sticking out to sea.

Stay on the same path, passing some military defences, to circle the edge of Bacon Hole. The string of Mupe Rocks defines its far edge. As you make your way around the top the view becomes clearer to the cove and you get the first glimpse of the Smugglers cave down on the rocky shore.

Continue around the bay until you reach the opposite cliff. A small path to the right then takes you down the steps to Mupe Bay. The moon shaped beach of Mupe Bay is dominated by towering white chalk cliffs on your left. As they continue around Worbarrow Bay the highest peak is marked with **Flowers Barrow**, an ancient Hillfort slowly crumbling into the sea. At high tide the beach is mainly rocks and shingle but as the tide drops away it exposes a softer, sandy floor. Low water also uncovers Mupe Ledge, a flat rocky area that is full of rockpools. To reach the cave it is best to go an hour or so after high tide, leaving plenty of time to return.

At the bottom of the steps turn right and climb carefully over the varied boulders, ledges, pebbles and stones. Pass the impressive Mupe Rocks on your left and continue along the rocky shore. As you curve around the point the cave appears opposite, dark but enticing.

To no surprise, smuggling played a big role in the area's history. Back in the 18th century, this shoreline was under the control of Emmanuel Charles, landlord of the then Crown Inn at



Bacon Hole

Osmington Mills. Another was Harry Payne, whose name lives on in Old Harry's Rocks. Hidden and hard to reach, the cave was the perfect location for goods such as brandy, wine, spice and tea to be unloaded, stored and prepped for delivery, all under cover of darkness, lit only by candlelight.

At the rear of the cave is a false wall with a small square door, still supported by a fragile timber frame. It was behind this wall where the contraband would have been kept, protected from the elements. The view back across Mupe rocks, through the mouth of the cave, is an awesome sight, and nothing within it has changed between present day and the days when smuggling was at its peak.

From the cave you have nothing but climbing for a while. Make your way back across the rocks, back up the steps and turn right. Here you begin the steep climb of Bindon Hill but the effort is rewarded. At the top not only is it possible to appreciate the coastal view, and a view of little Bacon Hole down below, but also an inland view.

Lulworth Castle, with its four towers of grey limestone, sits nestled in the trees. In the distance the shimmering blue waters of Poole lie flat with the heathland that encircles it. Along the coastline Worbarrow Bay continues to Arish Mell (this beach being permanently closed to the public due to the risk of unexploded artillery) and on to Worbarrow Tout.

At the top of Bindon Hill, turn away from the castle and the harbour to follow the track along the ridge. The sea sits on your left as the views once again stretch out ahead, widening as you climb

Bindon Hill is home to a collection of extensive Iron Age earthworks. A large rampart (bank and ditch) runs 2 km along the ridge parallel to the coast. At the Lulworth end, a further series of ramparts curve back to the cove while the eastern end rampart curves to Mupe Bay. The total enclosed area is about 272 acres, which makes it much larger than the 'biggest hillfort of the country' Maiden Castle; tiny in comparison at only 47 acres. However, the interior of the Bindon Hill has yet to produce evidence of settlement, suggesting it was used for pasture and not as a strategic hillfort. A crossing dike at the western end suggests an attempt to construct an enclosure, possibly to become a hillfort, but was never completed. A Roman grave dating from the first century AD was discovered on a nearby bay, and the ranges are said to be haunted by a ghostly Roman army, some believing their appearance signifies a threat to Britain.

To your right, ignoring the military buildings, the village of West Lulworth comes into view. The 19th century church and its little graveyard sit in the central triangle of land bordered by roads. Lulworth once had a smaller, older church that was demolished in 1869. Today all that remains is the small graveyard. Plans for the

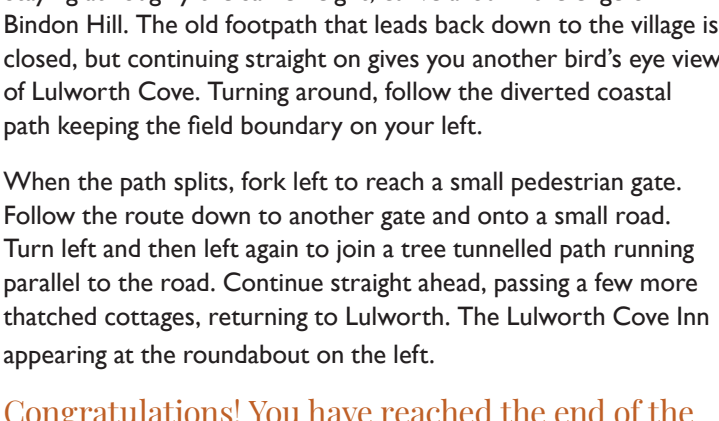
'new' church were drawn up by a young architect named Thomas Hardy, who later turned his hand to writing!

Continue to follow the ridge and when you pass through the army gates, fork right, joining the ramparts. Cut through the cross dike as it fiercely arrives from your left and drops to your right. Once on the other side, more earthworks appear, supporting the theory that this section was more likely to have been settled. On the opposite hill across the valley ahead is Hambury Tout, topped with its own ancient Bronze Age barrow.

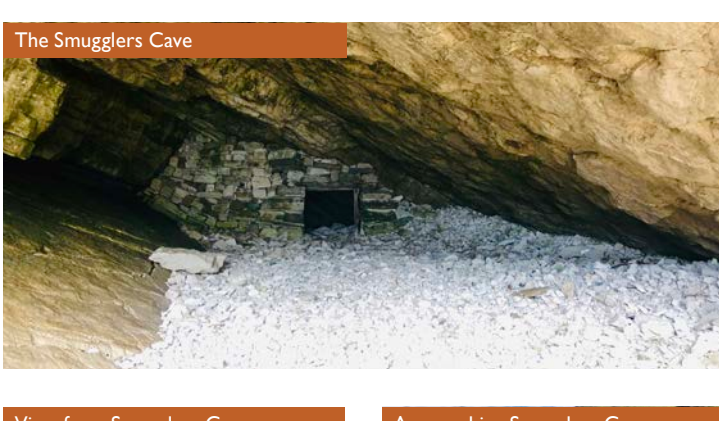
Staying at roughly the same height, curve around the edge of Bindon Hill. The old footpath that leads back down to the village is closed, but continuing straight on gives you another bird's eye view of Lulworth Cove. Turning around, follow the inverted coastal path keeping the field boundary on your left.

When the path splits, fork left to reach a small pedestrian gate. Follow the route down to another gate and onto a small road. Turn left and then left again to join a tree tunnelled path running parallel to the road. Continue straight ahead, passing a few more thatched cottages, returning to Lulworth. The Lulworth Cove Inn appearing at the roundabout on the left.

Congratulations! You have reached the end of the walk. Pop in for a well earned drink & refuel with our amazing signature dishes.

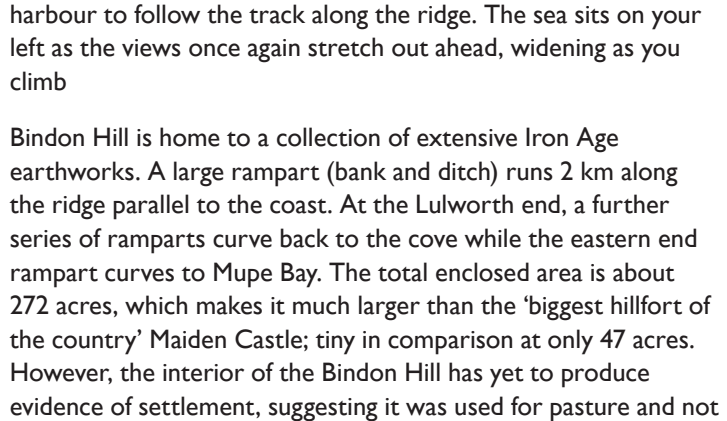


The Smugglers Cave



View from Smugglers Cave

Approaching Smugglers Cave



Bindon Hill



Bindon Hill Track



The Lulworth Cove Inn



The Smugglers Cave Door

The path back to Lulworth



Bacon Hole & Smugglers Cave view

By providing walking routes, we are not guaranteeing usability or safety for any particular walker and you must be responsible for your own safety. Whilst care has been taken to include routes that are on rights of way, or paths or access areas where permission exists, inclusion of a route is no evidence of a current right of way or permissive access. There are inherent risks in any outdoor activity, and walkers should take into consideration conditions on the day as well as their own fitness and experience levels to ensure they enjoy these routes safely.

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