

• Distance 13km/8 miles • Time 4-5hrs • Type Downland and coast

**2** NAVIGATION LEVEL 2 **2** FITNESS LEVEL 2



**Plan your walk**



**WHERE:** Linear walk from Corfe Castle to Swanage along the Purbeck ridge, with a return on the award-winning heritage steam railway.  
**START:** Corfe Castle car park (SY958817).  
**END:** Swanage railway station (SZ029789).  
**TERRAIN:** Grassy ridge-top chalk downland (easy-going once on top and very suitable for children) and coastal path.  
**MAPS:** OS Explorer OL15; Landranger 195.  
**GETTING THERE:** The Swanage Railway (© 01929 425800, www.swanagerailway.co.uk) runs trains every weekend and Bank Holiday from mid-February to the end of the year, and every day of the week from April to October. Regular year-round daily buses (service 142/143) go between Swanage and Poole via Wareham and Corfe Castle.  
**EATING & DRINKING:** Lots of pubs, cafés and teashops in both Corfe Castle and Swanage. Swanage station ▶



**The Isle of Purbeck - which forms the eastern end of Dorset - isn't an island as such, though it is largely bounded by water: the English Channel to the south and east and the River Frome and Poole harbour to the north. It's a delightful area for walkers. Apart from the superb coastline (part of the Jurassic Coast), there are the inland Purbeck Hills, forming an east-west ridge that can be linked to the coast to provide a variety of linear or circular routes. This family-friendly walk follows a fine stretch of the Purbeck ridge from Corfe Castle to the coast and continues along the coast path to finish at the resort town of Swanage. A ride on the popular Swanage Railway, an award-winning heritage steam railway, is always a hit with the children and returns you to the start.**

**1. START** Corfe Castle is dominated by the ruins of its 11th-century castle perched above the pretty village on a hill in a gap in the

Purbeck chalk ridge. From the car park (SY958817) head back into the village centre, go L along the main road and very soon turn R along Sandy Lane which goes under the railway. Immediately turn L over a stile onto a permissive path signed for East Hill. It's a steep climb up lots of steps onto the ridge, but once on top the going is much easier. Below you may hear and see the Swanage Railway steam train as it chuffs its way up and down the valley. The path links up with the bridleway near Rollington Hill. Head along the ridge-top bridleway towards the mast and continue over Branscombe Hill, past several tumuli, to the trig point on Nine Barrow Down (SZ008812).

**2.** From the Down follow the track downhill, taking a R fork for Ulwell. After a few hundred metres bear L to the road.

**3.** At the road go R down to a second layby where there are information panels and a Welcome ▶

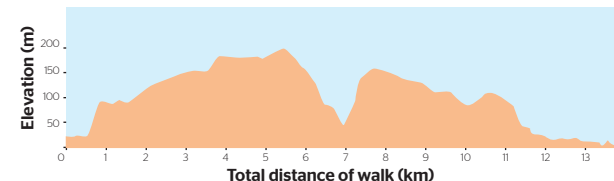


Map not to scale.  
Representation of OS Landranger MAP 195, 1:50,000  
www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk

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has a restaurant and there's a buffet service on board some trains.  
**SLEEPING:** Lots of choice in both Corfe Castle and Swanage (www.visitswanageandpurbeck.co.uk). Good centrally based self-catering accommodation at Holcombe Valley Cottages (© 01305 852817, www.holcombe-cottages.co.uk).  
**VISITOR INFORMATION:** Wareham TIC (© 01929 552740); Swanage TIC (© 01929 422885; www.visitswanageandpurbeck.co.uk).  
**GUIDEBOOKS:** *Dorset Walks* (Pathfinder Guide) by Brian Conduit (£11.99, Jarrold, ISBN: 9780711749825); *50 Walks in Dorset* by Ann F. Stonehouse (£9.99, AA Publishing, ISBN: 9780749560508).  
**LOCAL RAMBLERS AREA/ GROUP:** East Dorset Ramblers (© 01202 691709, www.dorset-ramblers.co.uk).

**Steepness of walk**



to Swanage sign. Take the footpath on the L and go ahead to climb steeply uphill to the obelisk. Turn R and follow the path westwards along the ridge over Ballard Point. If you want to see the Old Harry Rocks (SZ055825) carry on past Ballard Point until you have a view of the famous chalk stacks, then retrace your steps. (This will add c.3km/2 miles to the overall distance.) Otherwise turn R along the Coast Path before reaching the trig point.

**4.** Follow the Coast Path which leads you into Swanage, a popular family-friendly beach resort. Turn R after passing the TIC to head up to the railway station and bus stops. The Swanage Railway is a six-mile long heritage railway between

Swanage and Norden (with a stop at Corfe Castle). Special events are held throughout the year (eg half-term Family Fun weeks). From the Corfe Castle stop it's just a short walk back to the car park. An alternative to the train is the bus, which also links Swanage with Corfe and runs regularly every day. For those with children who'd prefer not to do the walk, a return trip on the train and a short stroll down to the beach and something to eat in between journeys, is also recommended. The National Trust-owned Corfe Castle is also suitable for families, with school holiday activities and a children's guide and quiz/trail (www.nationaltrust.org.uk).  
*Route devised by Fiona Barltrop*