

Walk description:

This walk starts and finishes at St Martin's Church in the village of Martinstown, Dorset. Martinstown, also known as Winterborne St Martin's, is five miles west of Dorchester. The walk takes you through some fields and a copse to Great Hill. The walk then follows the ridge to the

'Chess Piece' that is Hardy's Monument.

The second half of the walk retraces its steps along the inland coastal path, to return via Pen Barn Farm.

Please keep dogs on the lead.

Access information:

From the A35 roundabout west of Dorchester turn south, which is signposted to Martinstown. After approx 1.25 miles, turn right into the village and head for St Martin's Church (500 yards on the right). Park here; space may be limited on Sundays.

Additional info:

Hardy's Monument was built in 1848 using £3,609 raised by public subscription. It was built to celebrate the life of Dorset's most famous maritime hero, Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy (of 'kiss me Hardy' fame). It is 22 metres tall and is constructed of ashlar stone from a quarry owned by Hardy's nephew at Luckhams Pond.

Start grid ref: SY648889

OS map: Outdoor Leisure 15

Walk length: 6.21 miles

Duration: 180 minutes

Height gain: 250 metres

Contributor: Alan Kingsland

Weathercall: Get a local forecast for this walk.

Call 09068 020 504 from your phone or mobile. Or dial 09065 22 45 02 from your fax machine to receive a fax.
09068 calls 60p/min, 09065 calls £1.50p/min.

Features:

- Hills or Fells
- River
- Pub
- Church
- National Trust/NTS
- Wildlife
- Birds
- Flowers
- Great Views



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- 1**  Cross the road from the church, then the unnecessary footbridge that leads to a road. Follow this road clear of the houses and farm buildings. Once past the buildings the road bends first left then right. On the right bend we join a footpath to the left. (Grid ref: 648889)
- 2**  From the footpath sign and gate, the path leads across the field ahead. At the far side of this field is a second gate giving access to a young copse. Walk down the clear path to the bottom of the valley. Here keep to the right as you travel up the valley to a farm track. Turn left onto the track and follow this until it ends in a field at the bottom of Great Hill. (Grid ref: 648886)
- 3**  The chalky track ahead leads up the first slope of Great Hill and into a large field. The track here crosses the middle of the field and heads towards some obvious barrows and pylons. Go through the gate at the field's end, across the next field and past more barrows to a hedge and sign giving the choice of left or right. Down to your left are views of Weymouth and Portland. (Grid ref: 643875)
- 4**  Turn right (with your back to the views) and follow the path up along the field edge and under the power lines. Take the path ahead at the rusty tanks (water not artillery). The path here goes through a gate, then up the hill between the gorse bushes to a second gate. (Grid ref: 638868)
- 5**  At this gate you are again given a choice of left or right; choose the right and go through the gate. This ridge path leads away to the 'Chess Piece' along the hill, passing numerous barrows or tumuli as it goes. Eventually the path reaches the road. (Grid ref: 628867)
- 6**  At the road, turn left and follow it up a steep but short section to the car park and monument. This is Blagdon or Black Down Hill and the monument stands on the site of an old signalling beacon called Beacon Mount. (Grid ref: 616877)
- 7**  The monument is owned by the National Trust and is staffed from April to September. The climb to the parapet will cost you £1. From this historic site the walk retraces its steps onto the inland coastal path. Following the ridge back is a chance to enjoy the views in reverse. Keep to the path to the junction at 625870. (Grid ref: 613876)
- 8**  At the path junction the way ahead is shown by an obscured sign in the hedge, so keep your eyes open. Turn left as directed and follow the path to the farm buildings and road. (Grid ref: 625870)
- 9**  When you reach the road go through the gate and turn left, down the hill. Follow this road to Pen Hill Farm (you will pass under two sets of power lines on your way). (Grid ref: 630872)

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At Pen Hill Farm the path leads off to the right, in front of the dark barn on the right. It climbs up a slight rise and under more power lines to the hilltop and a gate. Go through the gate and follow the field-edge path down the slope to the next gate and track (you have been here before).

(Grid ref: 634879)

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Turn left onto the track, leaving to the right in a very short distance. Follow the footpath back down the valley to the young copse from earlier in the day. Walk back up through the trees to the gate and across the field, through the gate back onto the road and down to your car at St Martin's Church. In the village you can get refreshment at the Brewers Arms public house, or goods from the village store. Well done.

(Grid ref: 643881)