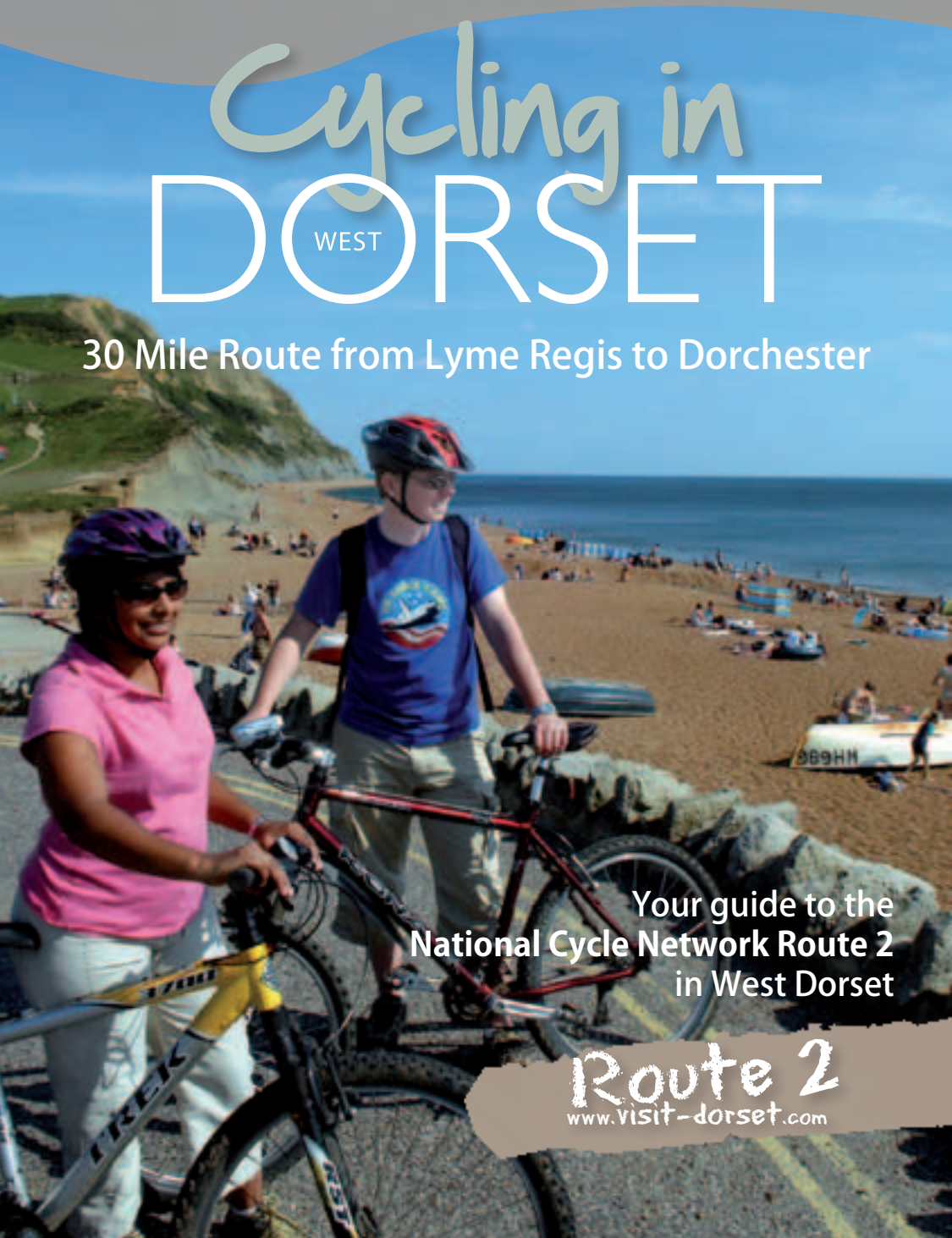
Your guide to

Cycling in WEST DORSET

30 Mile Route from Lyme Regis to Dorchester



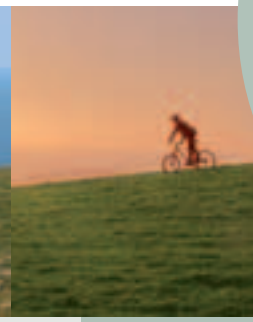
Your guide to the
National Cycle Network Route 2
in West Dorset

Route 2

www.visit-dorset.com

be free

to explore West Dorset at your own pace



With 400 square miles of countryside almost entirely designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, West Dorset is a great place to explore on two wheels. Here you'll find sleepy villages, bustling market towns, serene river valleys and green rolling hills. Our world famous Jurassic Coast is not far away and offers dramatic cliff-top views.

The National Cycle Network Route 2 is part of a wider route that will take you to the Port of Poole via Purbeck (more information is available at www.dorsetforyou.com/traveldorset). You can use this leaflet to follow the route in West Dorset between Lyme Regis and Dorchester.

The entire route covers approximately 30 miles and is manageable in a day, but you can do as much or as little as you please. The route includes the fascinating towns of **Lyme Regis, Bridport and Dorchester** and many pretty villages along the way.

If you are looking for somewhere to stay our Tourist Information Centres offer a free accommodation booking service. Alternatively, contact them for a copy of the West Dorset Visitor Guide, or visit our website www.visit-dorset.com. Both feature an impressive range of high quality accommodation throughout West Dorset.

Remember to look out for the cycle friendly logo. This indicates accommodation with special facilities like a room to dry wet clothes and a secure place to store your bike.

Details of places to eat out, free town centre maps, events, attractions and other cycle routes in West Dorset are also available on our website or from our Tourist Information Centres, (see back cover).

Although most of the **NCN Route 2** is signed, you should use Ordnance Survey Landranger maps 193 &194 or Explorer 116 and OL15 alongside this leaflet.

To report missing signs or for queries/ comments on the route please contact Dorset County Council on: 01305 221000 or email: dorsetdirect@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Travelling by Train:

South West Trains
London (Waterloo) to Weymouth services call at Dorchester South Station. London (Waterloo) to Exeter services call at Axminster (for Lyme Regis).

First Great Western
Bristol to Weymouth services call at Dorchester West Station.

For all rail enquires call 08457 484950 or visit www.nationalrail.co.uk

Safe cycling advice:

Remember to be visible, wear a helmet and bright clothing and carry a waterproof. Take refreshments, OS maps and a cycle repair kit. Always follow the Highway Code and remember country lanes can be narrow and busy with farm and local traffic at times so please be extra vigilant.

Tour De Manche and Petit Tour De Manche

Explore further and discover the beautiful scenery of France and South West England on these two cross-channel cycle routes. More information at www.tourdemanche.com

Cycle Hire and Repair Centres: Dorchester

Dorchester Cycles (hire and repairs)
31 Great Western Rd, Dorchester DT1 1UF
T / 01305 268787
www.dorchestercycles.co.uk

Mud, Sweat and Gears (repairs only)
1st Floor, Great Western House,
Great Western Ind. Estate, Dorchester, DT1 1RD
T / 01305 260202
www.mudsweatngears.co.uk

Halfords
Unit 3, Weymouth Avenue, Dorchester, Dorset DT1 2RY
T / 01305 251732
www.halfords.com

Poundbury Cyclesport (repairs only)
4 Hessary Street, Poundbury, Dorchester, DT1 3SF
T / 01305 458155
www.poundburycyclesport.co.uk

Cycle Hire and Repair Centres: Bridport

Mud, Sweat and Gears
Grove Works, West Road, Bridport, Dorset, DT6 5JT,
T/ 01308 420586
www.mudsweatngears.co.uk

Cycle Hire and Repair Centres: Lyme Regis

Bikenutz (hire and repairs)
5 South Street, Axminster, Devon EX13 5AD
T / 01297 631202
www.bike-nutz.co.uk

Lyme Regis Cycles (hire and repairs)
Lyme Regis, DT7 3BW,
T/ 07522 799242
www. lymeregiscycles.wix.com/lymeregiscycles

Your Guide to the NCN Route 2 in West Dorset

This map shows the NCN Route 2 between Lyme Regis and Dorchester and its detours. You can choose to do the entire route in either direction, select a part of the route nearest to your holiday accommodation, or simply use this map as a guide to explore West Dorset for yourself. The map has been split into four sections and described in more detail below. The roads can be busy with traffic so please take care and always follow the Highway Code. For a guide to attractions in the area, pick up a copy of our Exploring West Dorset leaflet and don't forget to call into a West Dorset TIC for more information (see back cover).

Note: mileages are included only as a guide.

Let's get those wheels rolling!

Section 1
The Marshwood Vale
(Approx 13 miles)

The Marshwood Vale is encircled by hills to the north and high cliffs along the south coast. Most of the hills were shaped by our Iron Age ancestors into fortified settlements called hill forts. Although the dwellings have long since gone, the impressive ramparts remain to this day.

The NCN Route 2 takes you deep into rural West Dorset, with narrow winding lanes bounded by hedges. Numerous springs feed into the River Char which flows down to the sea at Charmouth and the Simene at West Bay. The Vale is relatively sheltered and mostly on the level, although the ascent near the Devon border is challenging! Don't be put off by a few hills, as this is the best way to enjoy the beauty and spectacular views of the West Dorset countryside.

1. **Unsigned route into Lyme Regis** (Approx: 4.8 miles)
Starting at Monkton Wyld, take care when joining the busy B3165. Extreme care should also be taken when crossing the main A35 (you may wish to dismount). The route then follows a country lane via Harcombe Bottom and there is a fairly steep descent into Lyme Regis. On reaching Uplyme, turn left at the crossroads and rejoin the B3165, turn left again for a short stretch before turning left onto a back road that descends to meet the River Lim. As you near the centre of Lyme Regis, you will join a narrow riverside path where it is necessary to dismount and walk. Lyme Regis is a popular seaside resort and care needs to be taken when cycling along the very narrow streets in the town, particularly during the spring and summer months

2. **Lambert's Castle and Coney's Castle Hill Fort Mini-route** (Approx: 4.5 miles)
This mini-route is definitely not for the faint hearted, but is well worth the effort. Whilst steep and undulating in places, you will be rewarded with breathtaking views over the countryside and towards the coast.

3. **Charmouth Mini-route** (Approx: 2.2 miles)
There are a few hills but the effort is worth it to get to the World Heritage Coast and enjoy some well deserved refreshments. Care should be taken in Charmouth as the roads can be busy in the summer.

Section 2
Around Bridport
(Approx 5.7 miles)

Many of the local villages in this area are constructed of distinctive local sandstone and the villages of Loders and Uploders are good examples. You will notice that the steep sides of the valley to the south of Uploders have been terraced. This was carried out in medieval times and is an ancient form of farming known as 'strip lynchets', which is a common feature in West Dorset.

Cycling in and around Bridport is straight forward as it is more or less level. The NCN Route 2 currently skirts the northern limits of the town of Bridport but a visit to the town should not be missed. From here, you can then take a short ride to West Bay with its colourful harbour. This is also the start of the Chesil Beach.

4. **Bridport Mini-route** (Approx: 1 mile)
This detour is mostly unsigned and includes some town centre roads, which can be busy in the summer and on market days. A suggested route to follow is shown on the map.

5. **West Bay Mini-route** (Approx: 2.6 miles)
This mostly off-road route to the resort village of West Bay is a very pleasant gently sloping ride to the sea. Look out for the sculptured entrance feature and seat by local artist Karen Hansen as you join the off road route along the old Maiden Newton to West Bay railway line, which closed in 1964.

Section 3
The Bride Valley
(Approx 9.5 miles)

The Bride Valley is bound to the north by a steep scarp slope that rises up to Askerswell Down. To the south are cliffs and the foreshore of Chesil Beach.

The Valley is ideal for cycling and the NCN Route 2 takes full advantage of the flat Valley floor. Cycling is easy and the lanes gently meander through dairy pastures with farmsteads and small villages. The route passes the village of Littlebredy, but don't miss the chance to explore this picturesque little village. The lower section of the village is characterised by a stream running alongside the road. It is fed from an artificial lake in the grounds of Bridehead Manor.

The ascent out of the Valley at Littlebredy is very steep and good brakes will be necessary for the descent. Similarly the climb out of the Valley towards Shipton Gorge is an exhilarating test of fitness!

While in this area, why not make your own way to Burton Bradstock, Puncknowle or Swyre for some refreshments or a walk around the villages.

Section 4
Hardy's Monument and Dorchester
(Approx 4 miles)

Hardy's Monument was erected in 1844 to commemorate Vice-Admiral Sir Thomas Masterman Hardy and is a popular visitor attraction. On a clear day there are stunning views across the heath towards the coast. The roads can be busy with cars and extra attention should be taken. From Hardy's Monument it is almost a 2 mile freewheel downhill to Martinstown. The route to/from Dorchester is level cycling. A little extra time should be added for westbound journeys. The continuous climb up to Hardy's Monument is slow but with an adequately geared bike it shouldn't be too demanding.

It should be noted that the bridleway section of the route from Martinstown to Dorchester is uneven and is really best suited to mountain bikes or tourers with wide tyres.

6. **Continue your journey with NCN Route 2**
You can continue along Route 2 through Purbeck to Poole. More information is available at www.dorsetforyou.com/traveldorset

Continue your journey with NCN Route 26
Pick up our Route 26 leaflet for optional extensions to your cycle ride. From Dorchester, you can join the route south to the seaside resort of Weymouth & Portland or head north to the picturesque town of Sherborne.

6 To get to the NCN route 2 from Dorchester
From the Weymouth Avenue junction at Maumbury Rings, (close to Dorchester's train stations) continue straight over the junction and turn right after 300m into Maiden Castle Road. NCN 2 is signed from Maiden Castle Road; follow the signs to Bridport. Follow the traffic calmed road for 1km crossing the A35 on the over bridge. The start of the bridleway is approx 600m on the right. **These roads are busy and extreme care should be taken at all times.**

Download your FREE Dorset Visitor App
your 'Guidebook on the Go'
Our free 'Dorset – official visitor guide' app is crammed with details on places to stay, where to eat, shopping, attractions, activities and events.

Google play
App Store

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So much to discover along the way...

En route through West Dorset's towns & villages...

Lyme Regis

Lyme Regis is an ancient town with a long and varied history dating back to the 8th Century. The town is made up of a narrow tangle of streets, which tumble down to its 13th Century Cobb Harbour. It boasts excellent independent shopping, including art galleries, fossil shops and gift stores.

Lyme Regis is a fantastic place to stop for lunch. All the restaurants and cafes have access to fresh locally caught fish and shellfish straight off the fishing boats, which operate from the harbour. The town also offers fun for all the family with its sheltered beaches, bustling harbour and many attractions. You can join a fossil hunting walk or, why not simply enjoy an ice-cream while admiring the view of Golden Cap. At 626ft it's the highest point on the south coast.

Marshwood Vale

This particular area of the cycle route can be quite steep at times, and here you will find many narrow roads so please take care. The views however are stunning across the lush green countryside, real Dorset! If you need refreshments there are pubs at Shave Cross and Whitchurch Canonicorum.

Lambert's Castle and Coney's Castle Hill Forts

These two Iron Age hill forts show evidence of ancient human occupation. They command strategic positions over the Marshwood Vale and offer breathtaking views over the countryside and towards the coast. Lambert's Castle is so vast that it was used as a racecourse during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Charmouth

(Pub, Shop, Tourist Information Point & Post Office)

Charmouth is world famous fossil hunting territory and also a great spot for rock pool rambles. Find out more at the Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre where you can hire a hammer to help you hunt for your own fossil or join a guided fossil hunting walk, the best and safest way to get started.

Bridport

Bridport is a friendly and vibrant market town which has its own thriving artistic and literary community. The town is just over one mile inland from the busy harbour at West Bay and is well placed as a Gateway Town for the Jurassic Coast. Bridport offers plenty to see and do as well as a fascinating history to discover. You can find out more about the town, once renowned as the centre of the country's rope and net-making industry, at the Bridport Museum.

The town is dominated by a Georgian town hall and broad streets where the regular Wednesday and Saturday markets, as well as the thriving Farmers' markets, are held. Bridport is recognised as a Beacon Town for the quality and variety of its locally produced food and is the ideal place to browse, shop and stop for a bite to eat.

The town hosts a wide range of colourful events throughout the year. Find out more at the Tourist Information Centre.

When cycling into Bridport, you will notice that it is mostly unsigned and includes some town centre roads, which can be busy in the summer and on market days.

West Bay

(Pubs, Post Office & Shop)

West Bay is recognisable as being the setting for ITV's detective drama 'Broadchurch' and the 1990s TV series, 'Harbour Lights'.

Once known as Bridport Harbour, this resort village has a busy waterfront with bright kiosks, fishing and pleasure boats. The mostly off-road route from Bridport is a very pleasant, gently sloping ride to the sea. West Bay is the perfect spot for coast and countryside walks, fishing / angling trips, scuba diving, paragliding, golfing, river boating and so much more. It's also the perfect place to take a stroll and enjoy a pub lunch or a fresh seafood supper whilst overlooking the sea and admiring the fantastic views.

The Bride Valley – From Bridport to Hardy's Monument

There are many places of interest in this area known as The Bride Valley. It is ideal for cycling and the NCN Route 2 takes full advantage of the flat Valley floor.

Hardy's Monument

The Hardy Monument is a 72-foot high monument erected by public subscription in 1844 in memory of Vice Admiral Sir Thomas Hardy, a commander at the Battle of Trafalgar.The monument is situated on a high chalk hill overlooking the English Channel. On a clear day, enjoy the stunning views across the heath towards the coast.

Dorchester

Dorchester is a bustling market town with a vibrant cultural life, bursting with lots to see and do, and once home to the famous literary genius Thomas Hardy. The town has so much to offer in relaxation, entertainment and rural charm.

Find out more about what to see and do at the Tourist Information Centre, where you can pick up town leaflets, information about local attractions and details of guided walks in the town and countryside. If you want to explore the heart of Thomas Hardy Country, then visit Hardy's Cottage, the birthplace of the famous author. Or pay a visit to Max Gate, his later home of his own design (both are National Trust properties).

Dorchester makes a great place to stop for lunch with so much choice in the town. If you prefer, you could take a short stroll to one of the towns many green spaces with a picnic. The Borough Gardens and Salisbury Fields are only a short distance away from the shops. Both offer play parks and plenty of space for the children.

If you would like to further explore the towns of Bridport and Dorchester by bike, town area cycle maps for these towns can be browsed online at www.dorsetforyou.com/traveldorset or free hard copies can be ordered from travelchoice@dorsetcc.gov.uk

Route 2

Maiden Castle, a vast hill fort on the outskirts of Dorchester, the largest in Europe.

Sustrans is the charity that's enabling people to travel by foot, bike or public transport for more of the journeys we make everyday. Visit www.sustrans.org.uk to get great tips if you're thinking about getting back on your bike or would like to go cycling with your children. Take a look at the easy rides section to find simple, safe and enjoyable cycling routes in your area, or order a free cycling information pack highlighting all the National Cycle Network routes near you.

TravelDorset
Check before you travel

Dorset County Council

sustrans
JOIN THE MOVEMENT

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WEST DORSET TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES

DORCHESTER: Antelope Walk, Dorset. DT1 1BE **t: 01305 267992**
e: dorchester.tic@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk

BRIDPORT: South Street, Dorset. DT6 3LF **t: 01308 424901**
e: bridport.tic@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk

SHERBORNE: Digby Road, Dorset. DT9 3NL **t: 01935 815341**
e: sherborne.tic@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk

LYME REGIS: Church Street, Dorset. DT7 3BS **t: 01297 442138**
e: lymeregis.tic@westdorset-weymouth.gov.uk

FOR DETAILS OF TOURIST INFORMATION IN WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND go to www.visit-dorset.com

WHERE TO GO | HOW TO GET THERE | WHERE TO STAY | OPEN ALL YEAR

WEST DORSET DISTRICT COUNCIL

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council

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