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Ale Trail 2011

Sturminster Newton, Dorset

MINIMUM TIME: 2 hrs - Full walk
1 hr - Option A (including The Bull detour)
1 hr - Option B (to the Fiddleford Inn)

DISTANCE: 4.7 mi (7.5km) – Full walk
2.2mi (3.5km) – Option A
2.5mi (4.0km) – Option B

LEVEL/GRADE: Easy, level with kissing gates

PATHS: Field and riverside paths, former railway track, quiet country lanes

LANDSCAPE: Fields and pasture, riverside, village, mills, open views

A pleasant level walk in Dorset countryside including the attractive village of Sturminster Newton, a stretch of the River Stour, open pasture, a former railway track and two mills

KEY TO SYMBOLS

- Your route
- Public road
- Footpath/Bridal Way
- River
- Railway track
- Points on the route
- Pub



SUGGESTED STARTING POINT

Sturminster Newton is just a few minutes off the A357. As you enter the town, pass the small square and take the next right into Station Road and after a short distance you'll find the car park on your right.

OS MAPS

Explorer 129 (Yeovil and Sherbourne)
Landranger 194 (Dorchester and Weymouth)

THE WALK

- OPTION A** - From the car park, walk back up Station Road and at the T-junction turn left towards the square (actually a triangle). Over the zebra crossing stay on the right hand pavement, passing the Swan Inn on your left and the White Hart (☎ 01258 472593) shortly after.
- Take the second turning on the right which is Ricketts Lane, leading to the War Memorial Recreation Ground.
- Follow the right hand edge of the recreation ground until you reach a steep slope down to the river. Don't turn down the slope but turn left and follow the bottom edge of the recreation ground to the kissing gate which you pass through into the field beyond.
- Follow the field path alongside the river until you pass through another kissing gate and reach Sturminster Mill (it is worth crossing the bridge and taking a few minutes to look around the mill before returning to the kissing gate).
- On passing back through the kissing gate, turn right and head towards the stone road bridge, passing through another kissing gate to meet the road.
- SHORT DETOUR** (15 minutes return) - If you are planning to call into the Bull Tavern (☎ 01258 472435), turn right here to cross the river over the stone bridge and then turn immediately left onto the A357. A few minutes walk and you will reach the Bull Tavern opposite the Riverside Meadows Nature Reserve which you may want to also visit. On leaving the Bull, retrace your steps back over the bridge to return to the kissing

gate and pick up the directions again below.

WITHOUT DETOUR - If you are not calling at the Bull Tavern, on passing through the kissing gate turn left along the road.

- Just past the traffic lights, turn right to take the footpath (signposted Coach Road to Church Lane 1/4 mile). Follow this narrow tarmac'd path along the edge of the field, through another kissing gate and onto a wide tarmac'd path.
- When you reach the lanes and houses, walk straight ahead between Honeysuckle Cottage and Dovers and follow the path as it zigzags to become a narrow alleyway.
- At the road, turn right and the White Hart is just ahead of you on the left and the Swan Inn a little further on the right.
- If you want to finish here without the final leg, take Station Road just ahead of you on the right to get back to the car park.
- OPTION B** - You can either choose Option B on its own to walk from Sturminster Newton to Fiddleford and the Fiddleford Inn (☎ 01258 475612), or link Option A and B together for a longer walk. Option B also starts from the same car park.
- To head to Fiddleford, walk through the car park to the gate at the end which marks the start of the Trailway which follows the route of the former railway track.
- Follow the gravel track for some distance, continuing over a footbridge and to a crossroads where you turn right at the sign for "The Fiddleford Inn 1/2 mile".

13 When you meet the lane, turn left and you will soon reach the Fiddleford Inn.

- With your back to the door of the Fiddleford Inn, turn right away from the main road and then take the first dirt track on the left which soon narrow to become a footpath. This follows a small stream and field on your left.
- On reaching the lane, turn left (ignoring the "Trailway" sign pointing straight ahead which is the way you came). Follow the lane and, at the junction with another lane, keep right and follow the footpath sign to Sturminster Newton and Fiddleford Mill House.
- Pass between the mill buildings and turn left to pick up the footpath along the river, crossing a sluice gate and then a footbridge over a weir.
- Pass through the kissing gate and go straight ahead (do not turn right towards railway line). Over another footbridge and cut diagonally right, across the open pasture.
- Through another kissing gate, continuing diagonally ahead as you see the houses of Sturminster Newton coming into view.
- On reaching the farm buildings, go through another kissing gate, following the sign to "Penny Street 1/4 mile". On reaching Penny Street, turn right and keep following this as it winds between attractive terraced houses. At the end, keep straight ahead to the square again. Turn left to the White Hart or right to the Swan Inn or to return to your car via Station Road.