

Walk 2 A GLIMPSE OF THE DEVIL'S JUMPS

Distance: 3.91km/2.43 miles

[TVT Walk 2 Map](#)

The story goes that the Abbot of Forde Abbey had an argument with the Devil and kicked him into the air. Clumps of trees grow on the three hills where he bounced as he flew through the air across Marshwood Vale, before falling into the sea at West Bay. The clumps of trees are known locally as the Devil's Jumps. Thorncombe's is on Longdown (pictured below). However the Devil has the last laugh as the Green Man, the symbol of paganism still lurks in the Chapel at Forde Abbey.

Part of the walk follows the Wessex Ridgeway Trail. For more information go to:
<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/wessexridgeway>



1. With the church behind you, turn left and walk up Chard Street. Turn left then sharp right down the track next to the Thorncombe Chapel. Ahead is a stile. Climb over and keeping the bungalow to your right, walk across the field in a straight line until you get to a gate. Ignore the stile to your right. Go through the gate and veer right and follow the path, until you come to the hedge bank which borders the copse. In spring it is carpeted with bluebells. Follow the path through the copse which opens out into a wood, planted by the TVT in 1987. Follow the somewhat precipitous path until you reach a stile with a dog gate.

2. Climb over the stile and keeping the hedge to your left, head for the stile which takes you into The Dungeon. Its steep banks and verdant ferns are reminiscent of the Gardens of Heligan before they were restored and would have given a frisson of pleasure to Thorncombe's 18th century Romantic aesthetes. Follow the well-worn footpath over two footbridges until you reach another stile. In the gorge to your left is Stonelake Brook, a tributary of the River Axe. Fossils of sea anemones have been found here.
3. Having climbed over the second stile, turn left and walk along the track leading to Yew Tree Farm along the edge of Starve Acre where sheep and cattle due for slaughter are thought to have been kept overnight before being driven through the Dungeon to Thorncombe's weekly 18th century market. There was also an annual cattle fair in Thorncombe which closed towards the end of the 19th century.
4. Pass through two gateways following the track as it bears right. Approximately 200 yards beyond the second gateway there is a grassy path to your right. It leads up to a stile where there is a footpath marker on the skyline. Climb the stile and turn right keeping the hedge to your right. To your left is Blackdown Hill. Beneath it runs the Causeway. Scots Pines marking its route are ancient waymarkers for drovers and other travellers. Ahead to your left is Pilsdon Penn one of the highest points in Dorset. Below Pilsdon Penn in the valley is Racedown. Romantic poet William Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy lived here briefly in 1795.
5. Pass through the next gate and continue, keeping the hedge on your right. Still keeping the hedge to your right, veer right and pass through a gateway. The Devil's Jumps, two distinct groves of beech trees, sitting proud of other trees, are on Longdown, the ridge directly ahead. On a clear day you can also see another well-known landmark, Colmers Hill at Symondsburry near Bridport. This is the third Devil's Jump.
6. Continue along the footpath towards the road, keeping the wood to your right. Climb over the stile and turn right, following the road. Until you reach Sadborow Pound, a grass covered island between two roads on your left. Opposite is a gate.
7. Go through the gate and follow the track back to the stile on the left. It leads back to the centre of Thorncombe through The Dungeon, Retrace your steps to the High Street and back to the church.

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