

Walk 6

FORDE ABBEY ESTATE

Distance: 7.95km/4.94 miles (to Forde Abbey and back) or
4.45km/2.76 miles (excluding detour to Forde Abbey)

[TVT Walk 6 Map](#)



This walk takes you to Forde Abbey (distance: 4.48km/2.76 miles) or you can admire from afar and take the shorter circular walk and have a separate day out to admire the legendary gardens and take a tour of the house. For more information go to:

<http://www.fordeabbey-gardens-dorset.co.uk/>

1. Go up the alleyway between the Old Forge and Worcester. Cross Potter's Field as it is known locally, diagonally, where there is a footpath leading to the stile in the middle of the trees ahead of you. Wilfred Potter, a member of one of Thorncombe's oldest families and a much loved member of the community, lived at Worcester from childhood until his death in 2008 . (See also [Wilfred Potter \(1923-2008\)](#)) Having climbed over the stile turn right and follow the footpath to the top of Gribb View. Pass through the gate on your left and keeping the hedge to your right walk through two fields, passing through a field gate, another gate and over a stile until you reach the wood.
2. Climb over the stile in the wood and follow the path ahead. You are now on the Forde Abbey estate. At the junction of the muddy track turn left and follow the path around the old quarry until you reach another T-junction. Ignore the path to the left, and take the path ahead. Either clamber over or shimmy through the gap in the fence into the field. Walk straight across the field until you reach another stile set into a steep bank. Haul yourself over, scramble down the muddy bank . If you can't manage the stile turn left, go through the gateway by the copse, turn right and keeping the hedge on your right rejoin the path.

3. Keeping the hedge on your right follow the path until you reach another stile. The house you can see ahead is Forge Grange Farm. After the stile turn left and keeping the hedge on your left pass through two fields until you reach another rather high stile on Horseshoe Road. There is a gate on the left if you can't manage to climb the stile. Cross the road and follow the track ahead. Your first glimpse of Forde Abbey is to your right. The avenue of trees marks the approach to the grand entrance which would have first been used by 17th century visitors. Edmund Prideaux, Oliver Cromwell's Attorney General bought the ruined abbey from Sir Henry Rosewell in 1649. and restored and extended it, as befitted his elevated social position. Part of the the Abbey, a rare example of English Commonwealth it is designed in the style of Inigo Jones. Francis Gwyn, Queen Anne's Minister for War, lived here between 1702 and 1734.(See also [Thorncombe's Jacobites](#))
4. Pass through the gate and keeping the hedge on your left cross the field and go through the gate. Ahead of you is Partway, a medieval road, leading to Holditch. If you wish to visit Forde Abbey turn right, keeping straight until you reach the road. If you have a valid ticket you can use the entrance into the gardens by the lodge. Otherwise you will need to walk round to the main entrance which you reach by turning right and taking the first turning on the left which leads to the main entrance.
5. To return to Thorncombe, turn left and follow the track until you reach two gates at angles to each other. Pass through the right hand gate, and walk across the field to the stile in the hedge Turn right and walk up Horseshoe Road until you reach a wide entrance into the field opposite a copse. This is Searchlight Wood where there was an aircraft battery during World War II. It was also used as a triangulation point by Ordnance Survey during the 19th century.
6. Turn left through the entrance opposite Searchlight Wood and cross the field towards the wood where you see an opening in the hedge. Go through the opening, follow the path immediately ahead of you. It rejoins the path back to Thorncombe.
7. Turn right and retrace your steps.

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