

# Coastal Highlights



Durdle Door is one of the most photographed landmarks along the Jurassic Coast. Each year more than 200,000 walkers use the walking trail between Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door, making it the busiest stretch in the south west. The views are worth the effort.

Durdle Door, like most of the Jurassic Coast, is around 140 million years old. The name Durdle is derived from the Old English word thirl meaning bore or drill. This rock arch in the sea was formed as a result of the softer rocks being eroded away behind the hard limestone, allowing the sea to punch a hole all the way through. Eventually the arch will collapse to leave a sea stack such as those that can be seen at Ladram Bay in East Devon.

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For now, the arch remains, creating a magical scene which author Ron Dawson uses in the third story in the Amazing Adventures of Scary Bones the Skeleton series. In Scary Bones meets the Dinosaurs of the Jurassic Coast, the story's heroes meet an undiscovered dinosaur called Durdle Doorus. At the end of the story Durdle Doorus is transformed into Durdle Door. With a little imagination it is not hard to believe.

Durdle Door and Man 'O' War beaches are part of the Weld Estate, privately owned, but thankfully open to the public. Both Man 'O' War beach and Lulworth Cove are pebble beaches. They may lack the appeal of white sand squeaking underfoot, but the crunch of millions of tiny stones has its own charm.



The 2.5 mile walk between Durdle Door and Lulworth Cove is a highlight, traversing the cliff side on a well-graded path. There are brief steep sections, but overall the walk is not difficult and offers spectacular coastal views.

Lulworth Cove itself is formed by bands of rock of alternating resistance running parallel to the shore. On the seaward side the clays and sands have been eroded away. A narrow band of Portland limestone rocks forms the shoreline. Behind this is another narrow band of slightly less resistant Purbeck limestone. Behind this are 300–350 metres of much less resistant clays and greensands. Forming the back of the cove is a 250 metre wide band of chalk, considerably more resistant than the clays and sands, but less resistant



### Durdle Door on the Silver Screen

Scenes from the 1967 film of Thomas Hardy's novel *Far From the Madding Crowd* were filmed at Durdle Door and in 1997 parts of the film *Wilde* starring Stephen Fry were also shot here. More famously, Cliff Richards' 1990 hit *Saviour's Day* which saw Cliff singing both on the beach and on the cliff top in the promotional video were once again at Durdle Door, and in the 80's *Tears for Fears* shot parts of their video to promote *Shout* at this iconic arch.

than the limestone. The entrance to the cove is a narrow gap in the limestone bands formed by a combination of erosion from wave action, glacial melt waters and the process of weathering. The narrow entrance to the cove ensures that as waves enter they bend into an arced shape creating a unique shape.

The cove is spectacular, whether it is viewed from the cliffs above or from sea level and parts are safe for swimming. Multiple walking trails lead up and around the rim of the cove to the points flanking the opening. There is also a petrified forest in the area, and the trails continue along the coast for as far as you choose to walk but when planning a walk be aware that the footpath that leads to the Fossil Forest and Mupe Bay is within the

### To Get There

From Bournemouth - take the A35 towards Dorchester, turning left onto the A351 towards Wareham. Turn onto the A352 signposted to Wool then follow the brown signs for Durdle Door.

From Dorchester - take the A352 signposted for Wool and Wareham. Towards Wool follow the brown signs for Durdle Door.

Access and car parking is via Durdle Door Holiday Park which leads to a pay and display car park at the top of the cliffs, or park at Lulworth Cove for a longer walk along the cliffs.

MoD Restricted Area, closed for firing on specific days.

Once you have completed your walking for the day, reward yourself with a soft serve ice-cream at the beach side store as you watch the seagulls dip and dive into the cove. No matter what season Durdle Door and Lulworth Cove are highlights of any visit to the south coast.

Top left: Hobart city marina  
Top: Wineglass Bay  
Inset: Cradle Mountain