

Parish to Parish – bounding along the West Dorset Coast Path

On each parish boundary along the Dorset coast path from Ware, on the Dorset/Devon boundary, all the way to Abbotsbury can now be found a parish boundary marker letting the walker know when they have passed from one parish to the next.

As Tara Hansford, Countryside Access Improvement Officer, Dorset Council explains:

“The inspiration for this project stems from growing up in the heart of West Dorset. As a child I often accompanied my grandad, a local builder, in his little blue truck as he’d visit villages to price up work. He would often point out to me various features in the landscape – obviously hand crafted – where my Grandad could often ‘read’ their unique style and could therefore tell me who had made them. Each provided clues about the history of the people and landscape that have created this wonderful part of the world in which we are so lucky to live. It was fascinating. Collectively these artefacts provided details creating a rich cultural patina of local interest and character. However sadly and increasingly today, many are overlooked, obscured, no longer practiced and therefore often lost in understanding and memory. One such feature is the Parish Boundary marker. Also, today, due to economics - hand crafted – locally unique - features are often replaced by mass produced monotonous, un-remarkable ones. Combining experience in both the arts and countryside access this project provided the opportunity to reintroduce more of the ‘local’ and ‘distinctive’ interest back into our surroundings.

The West Dorset Coast Path Parish Boundary project has brought people together to create artefacts to celebrate special locations. It’s a collaboration between local people, landowners, local artists and craftspeople in response to their local landscape and its rich cultural history. These artefacts are not interpretation or information panels – they are practical, hand crafted “signposts” informing the walker when they pass from one parish to another as they travel along the coast path.”

Each artist was provided with a brief – information about the parishes to inspire the theme of the piece and, as a parish boundary marker, that each piece had to be made from materials robust and in keeping with its location, state the name of each parish, the number in its sequence along the coast path (from Dorset/Devon border) and the year of the project.

“So, each piece has an air of mystery about it – alluding to its local context – to wet the walkers appetite encouraging them to investigate more into what it might mean and unearth for themselves a bit of local history! For many people walking along the coast path the focus is often on the seascape – looking out onto that amazing mass of ocean and the beautiful narrow strip of coastal headland. This project hopes to also encourage the walker to look inland and gain a better awareness about the landscape they are walking through and curiosity to explore and learn more about the Dorset parishes along the coast path” Tara Hansford, Countryside Access Development Officer

The team behind this project are – Local landowners (Lyme Regis Golf Course, The Loosemore family, The Cook family, The Extons of Downhouse Farm, The Yeates family, Tamarisk Farm and National Trust), local artists and craftspeople (listed below), Dorset Council – Tara Hansford, Countryside Access Improvements Officer, Bran Acres, Coastal Ranger and Cleo Evans Arts & Environment Lead from the Arts Development Company. It couldn’t have been achieved without the input and support of the local landowners and grant funding from the Coastal Communities Fund.

This project is part of Dorset Coastal Connections, a connected portfolio of 18 projects along the Dorset coast which aims to support and boost the economies of Dorset coastal areas. The portfolio is funded by a grant from the governments Coastal Communities Fund and partner organisations, coordinated by the Dorset Coast Forum.

Please see <https://www.dorsetcoasthaveyoursay.co.uk/west-dorset-walkers-welcome> for a full description or contact Tara Hansford, Countryside Access Development Officer, Dorset Council tara.hansford@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Boundary marker descriptions

- 1 **Devon into Dorset, Ware:** To celebrate the iconic 19thC women of Lyme Regis pivotal in Lyme Regis reputation as the cradle of modern palaeontology – Mary Anning, Mary Buckland, & Sarah Woodruff.

Artists [Alex Brooks](#) and [Emma Molony](#)



1. Devon into Dorset

- 2 **Lyme Regis to Wootton Fitzpaine:** Highlighting the beautiful undulating local landscape with its distinctive hilltops providing birds eye viewpoints, for example, Lamberts Castle, Colney Castle, Stonebarrow, and Trinity, Thistle and Timber Hills.

Artists, craftsmen and brothers [Alex & Ed Brooks](#) (to be installed New Year 2021).

- 3 **Wootton Fitzpaine to Charmouth:** Remembering Mary Anning and her work searching for fossils in the Charmouth mudstone cliffs and discovering the first correctly identified ichthyosaur. **Artist** [Greta Berlin](#) (to be installed New Year 2021).

- 4 **Charmouth to Stanton St Gabriel:** To commemorate the alleged 836 Danish Viking landings on Charmouth beach. As you approach the gate the Viking landskip warships align with the sea horizon to take you back in time and witness the Viking fleet advancing towards the shore.

Artists [Alex Brooks](#), [Emma Molony](#) & Tara Hansford.

“It has been a pleasure to be involved in such a project. The brief allowed freedom to explore ideas about the parishes concerned, with sensible guidelines. I am proud of the results and hope that the works inspire walkers and locals along the coast path”

Alex Brooks, Furniture maker, crafts and woodsman



4. Charmouth to Stanton St Gabriel

- 5 **Stanton St Gabriel to Chideock:** Enhances the links between the two parish communities providing a seat sculpted from local fallen trees echoing the weathered trees and hedgerows in this location. Inviting local people and coast path walkers to stop, sit and contemplate and connect with their surroundings. **Artist [Isla Chaney](#)** (to be installed New Year 2021).

- 6 **Chideock to Symondsburry:** From the distance the walker can see the form suggesting the shape of a barrel which when reached invites the walker to stop and consider the coasts rich smuggling history.

Artist [Delphine Jones](#)



6. Chideock to Symondsburry

- 7 **Symondsburry to Bridport –** Remembering the “Wildcats of Bridport” a group of women netmakers who downed tools, went on strike and marched in protest of a pay cut and secured the support of Bridport. **Artist [Alice Blogg](#).**



7. Symondsburry to Bridport

- 8 **Bridport to Burton Bradstock –** recollecting the “spotters” who stood up along the iconic west bay cliff top and when they saw a shoal of fish would shout out to the fishermen below “Mackerel Straying” This prompted the fishermen to launch their boats and fish!

Artist [Brendon Murless](#)



8. Bridport to Burton Bradstock

- 9 **Burton Bradstock to Swyre:** Echoing how this landscape changes from winter into summer with smooth, bleached to dark jagged elements. An Oak tree protected by them will grow and distort because of this exposed landscape but provide a permanent boundary marker for future generations.

Artist [Alice Blogg](#).



9. Burton Bradstock to Swyre

- 10 **Swyre to Puncknowle** – In 1667 a white house stood on Chesil beach providing refuge for shipwrecked sailors washed up along the beach. Long since lost but remembered by a boundary marker that will help walkers brace themselves in windy weather!

Artists [Sarah Hough](#) Will Pinder Metal worker/forged & Jake Reilly Carpenter.



10. Swyre to Puncknowle

- 11 **Puncknowle to Abbotsbury** - spiral tassleweed, common mouse ear, toothed medick ...this boundary marker celebrates the fascinating names of the remarkable plants supported by The fleet and Chesil.

Artist [Andrew Whittle](#).



11. Puncknowle to Abbotsbury