

STOUR VALLEY WAY

The Stour Valley Way, a sixty four mile waymarked footpath from Christchurch in Dorset to Stourhead in Wiltshire, passes through Bear Cross, just a few minutes walk from Butchers Coppice.

The route follows the River Stour from the sea at Christchurch and the Norman splendour of Christchurch Priory to the river's source at the National Trust-owned Stourhead.

The River Stour meanders through the Dorset countryside creating a variety of habitats for wildlife to enjoy - from fish and dragonflies to kingfishers and otters. With beautiful views of old mills and bridges to see on the way, and towns and villages steeped with history to explore, this easily-walked footpath will help you to discover the hidden charms of Dorset.

Passing close to Christchurch, Wimborne Minster, Blandford Forum and Sturminster Newton, the Stour Valley Way is clearly waymarked with a distinctive kingfisher logo. To help you find your way, we suggest you take the relevant Ordnance Survey maps (Outdoor Leisure 22 and Explorer 118 for the southern section, and Explorer 117, 129 and 142 for the northern section).

You are advised to wear stout footwear for walking the Stour Valley Way due to its proximity to the river. Please remember that during the winter months, sections of this route may well be flooded.

CASTLEMAN TRAILWAY

The Castleman Trailway can be reached via the Stour Valley Way. The Stour Valley Way joins the Castleman Trailway near Oakley just outside Wimborne Minster - about three miles from Butchers Coppice.

The Trailway runs from just outside Ringwood to Upton Country Park in Poole - a sixteen mile walk following the route of the old Southampton to Dorchester railway, known as 'Castleman's Corkscrew'.

The railway was closed as part of Dr Beechings programme in the 1960's. It was subsequently sold and some of the route was developed for housing and industrial use, however, it is still very clear where the Trailway uses the old railway line with many of the old railway artifacts still present. Since some of the railway has been developed, Dorset County Council has negotiated alternative routes to fill in these gaps.

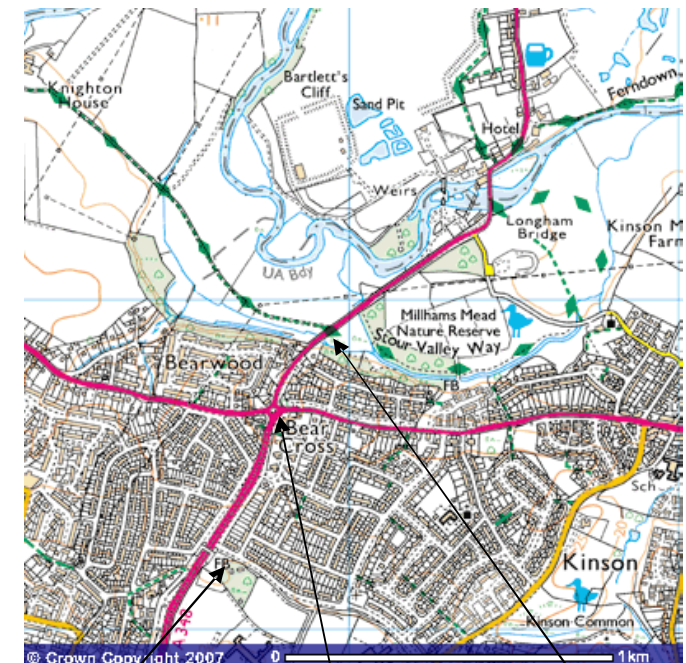
The Trailway meanders through some of East Dorset's most beautiful countryside. Starting next to a subsidiary of the River Avon, you will experience a variety of different habitats from Dorset Heathland through mature pine forest and the fertile farmland close to the River Stour, eventually finishing at Upton Country Park in Poole.

Public access along this route, except where it follows existing rights of way, is designated by kind permission of the landowners. This also applies to horseriders and cyclists on footpaths where normally they would not be allowed access.

Dorset County Council jointly manages the Castleman Trailway with Poole Borough Council.

GETTING STARTED...

Leave Butchers Coppice from the main entrance on to Holloway Avenue then head left to the dual carriageway. Follow the path alongside the dual carriageway right down towards the Bear Cross Roundabout. Cross Wimborne Road by the Kwik Fit Garage and head down Ringwood Road (A348) signposted Longham/Ringwood (by the Murco Petrol Station). After just a short walk along Ringwood Road look out for Stour Valley Way footpath signposts on both sides of the road. Cross the road and head left for Canford Magna (which joins the Castleman Trailway near Wimborne Minster) or head right for West Parley, Throop Mill and, eventually, Christchurch.



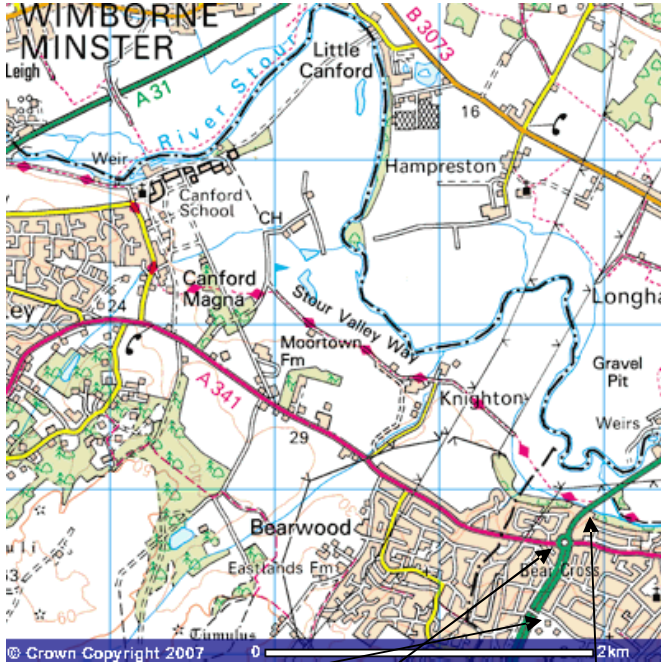
BUTCHERS
COPPICE

BEAR
CROSS

DECISION
TIME!

LEFT... towards Canford Magna

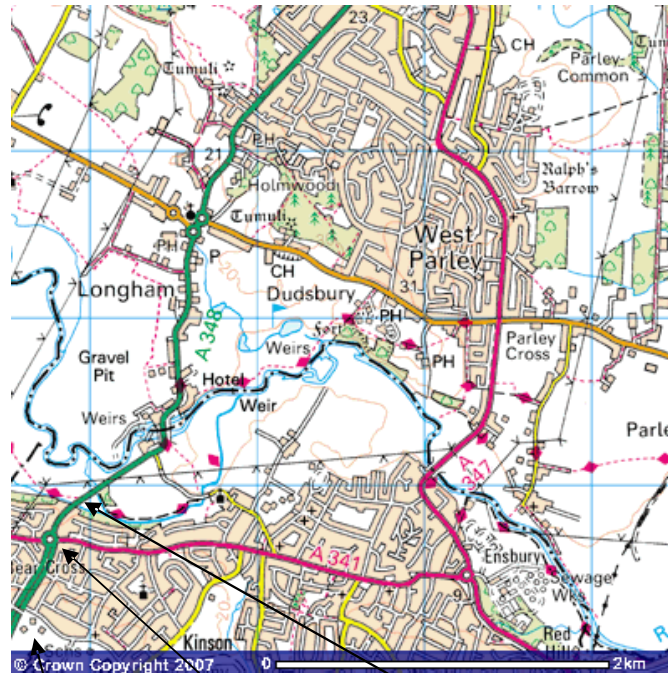
Head left for Canford Magna, leading to Wimborne Minster, the Castleman Trailway (to Upton House, Poole), Kingston Lacy, Sturminster Marshall and Blandford Forum.



BUTCHERS COPPICE BEAR CROSS DECISION TIME!

RIGHT... towards West Parley

Head right for West Parley, Throop Mill and Christchurch.



BUTCHERS COPPICE BEAR CROSS DECISION TIME!

WALKS

STOUR VALLEY WAY
CASTLEMAN TRAILWAY



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