



The Cerne Valley Trail can be started at any point but starting from Dorchester will enable you to walk the entire length of the trail. Parking is available at public car parks in Dorchester Town Centre. The trail is waymarked along its entire length. It is advisable to walk the trail using the relevant OS map, Explorer 117, and following the waymarkers. The eastern arm of the route parallels the river closely, exploring the rich and varied habitats along this chalk stream.

Cerne Valley Trail

As you follow the river you will pass through Forston and Godmanstone. You may wish to stop and visit the Smith's Arms in Godmanstone which claims to be one of the smallest pubs in England. Continue on from Godmanstone to Cerne Abbas. Here you will pass the Cerne Giant, Britain's largest hill figure. There are lots of legends surrounding the Giant and its exact origins are unknown. Folklore states that sheeping on the Giant will ensure a future marriage for unmarried women. The Trail then takes you up to Minterne Magna. The Minterne Valley is landscaped in manner of Capadocia. Brown and home to the Churchill family.



The River Cerne

The River Cerne is a chalk stream, rising and winding through the chalk, a natural filter that gives the water its characteristic purity. The water itself is home to a range of fish: including the Brown Trout and Grayling which makes the Cerne attractive to anglers. On the quiet reaches scan the dense rafts of Water Crowfoot where you may spot a Water Vole sitting on the riverbank, delicately nibbling one of the juicy stems. There's even the chance of glimpsing of an Otter - now making a comeback on Dorset's rivers. Plant life abounds and, in summer, the Water Crowfoot is bright with drifts of white flowers, so evocative of balmy days along the chalk streams they even inspired the Dorset dialect poet, William Barnes, to verse.

Now head west and you will meet up with the road below the Hillfield Hill Local Nature Reserve. This reserve contains a small remnant of rare chalk heath and is an ideal place to stop for lunch. You may be lucky enough to see the Duke of Burgundy butterfly while you are there. The trail then takes you back through the chalk hills that frame the valley, opening up the superb views and the wealth of downland flora and fauna. You will rejoin the path at Charminster and back to Dorchester.



Cerne Valley Trail

The Cerne Valley Trail is a circular route of 26 miles taking in the villages and hamlets of Minterne Magna, Cerne Abbas, Nether Cerne, Godmanstone, Forston and Charminster. The route follows the course of the river, from near its source in the basin formed by the hills of High Stoy and Dogbury to its confluence with the Frome, in the water meadows below Charminster.

All leaflets can be made available in audio tape, large print and Braille, or alternative languages on request.



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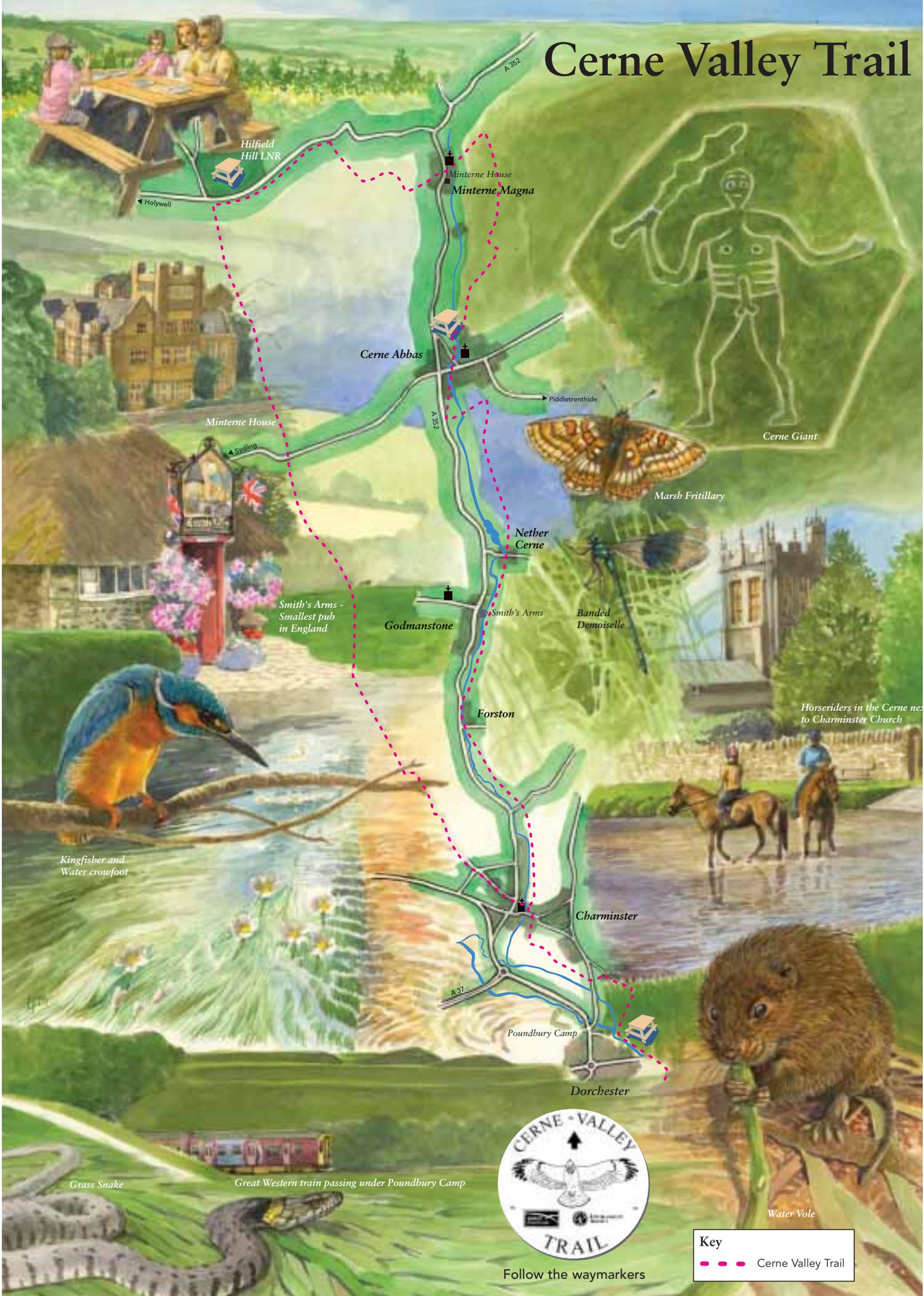
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Cerne Valley Trail



Hilfield Hill LNR

Holywell

Minterne House
Minterne Magna



Cerne Giant



Minterne House

Cerne Abbas



Marsh Fritillary



Banded Demoiselle

Nether Cerne

Smith's Arms -
Smallest pub
in England

Godmanstone

Smith's Arms

Forston

Horsiders in the Cerne
near Charminster Church



Kingfisher and
Water crowfoot

Charminster

Poundbury Camp

Dorchester



Water Vole



Grass Snake

Great Western train passing under Poundbury Camp



Follow the waymarkers

Key	
	Cerne Valley Trail