

Points of Interest on this route (see map overleaf for locations)

(A) Fonthill Abbey Woods. These woods were once the site for one of the most remarkable and extravagant buildings of the early 19th Century-Fonthill Abbey. This was an immense Gothic revival house with the grandeur of the finest cathedrals, built on Hinkley Hill by super rich author William Beckford Junior, but which later collapsed due to faulty workmanship destroying most of the building. A small fragment remains today but this is hidden from public view.

(B) Church of St Leonard's. A beautiful 12th Century Church. Closed in 1966, it is now in the care of the Churches Conservation Trust.

The village of Fonthill Gifford dates back to Norman times.

William Beckford, reputed at one time to be the richest commoner in England, is remembered for Fonthill Abbey and Lansdown Tower (known as 'Beckford's Tower') in Bath.

Fonthill Lake

Why not stop and rest a while at this beauty spot (point 10 on the walk) and admire views across Fonthill Lake and listen to the running water from the Hydro Dam.

(C) The Fonthill Arch. Next to the northern end of Fonthill Lake is the grand Palladian lodge and believed to be the work of original Palladian architect Inigo Jones.

(D) Fonthill House. This is one in a succession of grand country mansions built and destroyed at the site since the 15th Century. Two burned down and 'Fonthill Spensens', a grand palladian lodge built by William Beckford senior, was largely destroyed soon afterwards by his son in order to use its materials to create 'Fonthill Abbey'!

(E) Fonthill Lake. The lake is over 1 mile in length and was used as a film location for romance film Chocolat starring Johnny Depp in 2000. There has always been a long history of hydro-power at Fonthill dating back to when a flax mill used water from the lake to produce linen. In 2011, a hydro-dam was installed to generate electricity which is used on the estate with surplus sold back to the grid.

Follow the footsteps of the notorious Beckford family who once owned the Estate. Learn of a bygone era of building extravagant country mansions including the famous 19th century Gothic revival Fonthill Abbey (Beckford's Folly) now in ruins.


Start Point: Fonthill Lake, Fonthill Bishop.
Ordnance Survey Explorer Series Map 143. OS Grid Reference ST93317 W3W: commander.faster.rank

Parking: At the starting point of this walk, as above, at direction point 1 on the route map.

Terrain: Field and woodland paths which are often muddy, with some short sections of quiet lanes. Gently undulating countryside with gates and stiles, one steep climb with handrail and one steep descent through woodland.

Length: Approximately 7.4 miles / 11.8km.

Approximate time: 3.5 hours.

 **Dogs:** On leads or under close control (livestock).

Good to know: Whilst refreshments are available at the Beckford Arms, walkers are asked not to leave their vehicles at the pub.

Refreshments: The Beckford Arms: www.beckfordarms.com.
Riverbarn: www.riverbarnfonthillbishop.co.uk
Stone Daisy Brewery - shop selling own products: www.stonedaisy.co.uk

The information is only intended as a general guide. Please check local arrangements.



Respect everyone
Protect the environment
Enjoy the outdoors
Follow advice and local signs

Share your pictures with us at **#cranbornechase**



Cranborne Chase
National Landscape



cranbornechase.org.uk

The Splendour of the Fonthill Estate and Fonthill Abbey

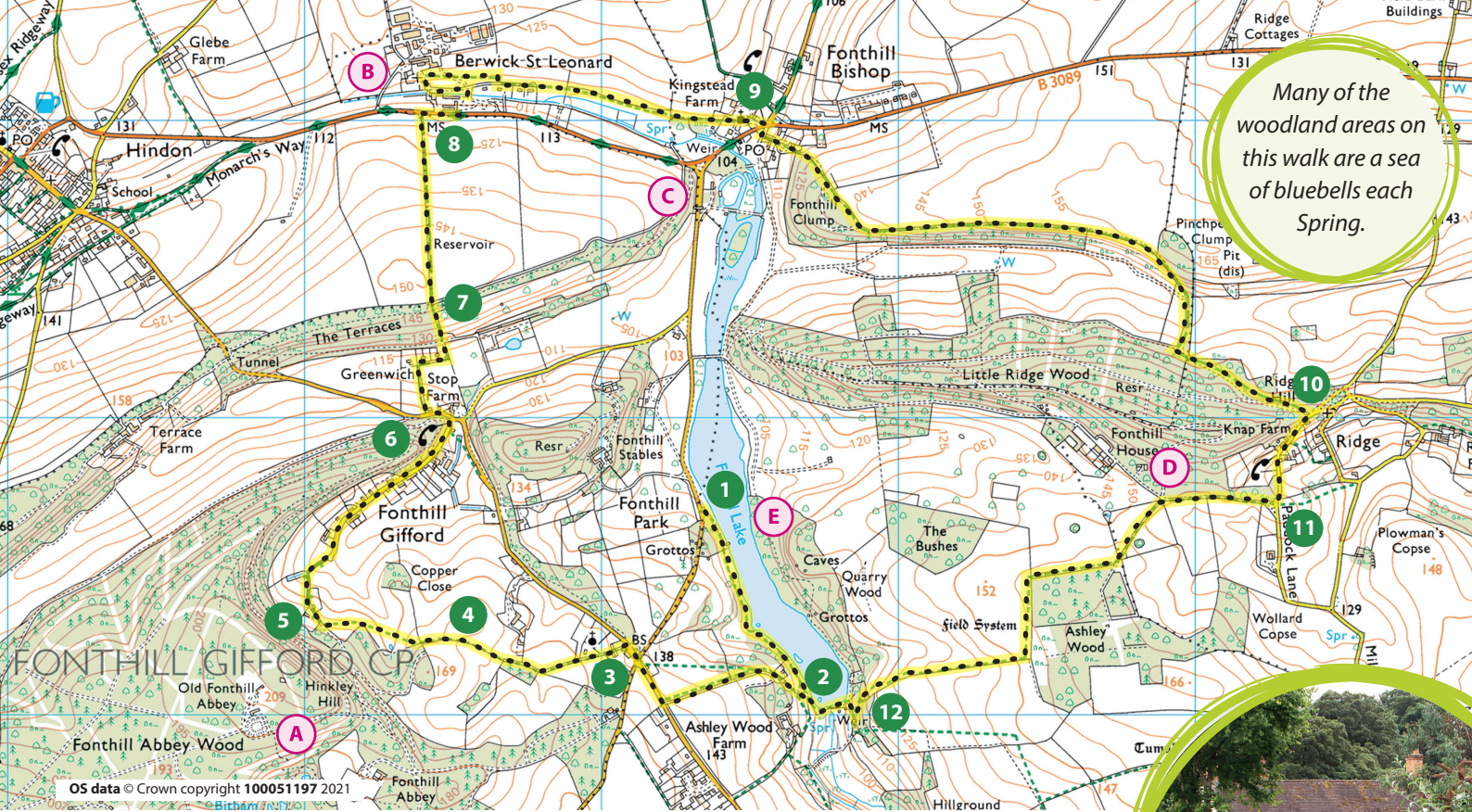
How are the mighty fallen!

WALK #
W8



Cranborne Chase
National Landscape





Directions

- 1** Pass between the wooden posts at the edge of the parking area and follow the public footpath to the right, alongside the lake.
- 2** As it reaches the southern end of the lake the path passes through a gate. Turn right here, uphill along the gravel track and through a gate ignoring the footpath through the metal gate into the field on the right, and continue to reach the road. Turn right along the road and at the crossroads keep straight ahead past the front of the Beckford Arms.
- 3** Just past the Beckford Arms, turn left at the public footpath sign into Wood Lane, just before the Holy Trinity Church which was built in 1866.
- 4** Continue along Wood Lane past Bratch Farmhouse and into a grassy track. Follow the track around a gentle curve to the right and on to a stile at the end, into a field. Follow the edge of the field alongside the hedge to the left, towards Fonthill Abbey Woods.
- 5** Continue along the path, keeping the woods to your left, until reaching a pedestrian gate onto a forest-edge track signposted as a Road Used as Public Path. Turn right to reach Stop Street and continue down the tarmac road through the village of Fonthill Gifford, which dates back to Norman times.
- 6** At the end of the lane, cross the road with care as it is a busy road, and walk uphill to the left past Stop Farm, built in the 17th century. Turn right into the lane to the hamlet of Greenwich and right again at the bottom of the hill to pass to the right of a row of estate cottages, built around 1800. At the last of the cottages, turn left alongside the far edge of the garden to follow the path uphill into the woods, known as The Terraces. The entry to the woods is steep and can be slippery when wet, so use the handrail which has been helpfully provided.
- 7** Enter the field at the top of the woods and continue straight ahead, following the path down to the bottom left hand corner of the field where there is a gate onto the road.
- 8** Cross the road and walk to the right along the grass verge, then turn left into the entrance to Berwick Courtyard, a small complex of commercial units.
- 9** At the road, cross to the Fonthill Estate Office yard and turn left through the yard to follow the public bridleway up the hill and along a stone/earthen track into and uphill through the woods. Continue along the track beside woods and fields, then on reaching the edge of the intriguingly named Pinchpenny Clump, follow the track downhill to the right and then uphill to the left to meet another forest track. Turn left to reach a gate onto the road at the hamlet of Ridge.
- 10** Turn right through the village, then uphill to the entrance gates to Fonthill House. The house and gardens are open to the public on selected dates. www.fonthill.co.uk/gardens/.
- 11** Go along the drive towards Fonthill House, then as the house starts to come into view, take the signposted footpath to the left, between fields, to Ashley Woods ahead. As you enter the woods, turn right onto the footpath between the trees and the field to the right. Continue through a gate and along the left-hand edge of the next field, dropping downhill to a gate into beech woods. The path here is steep and uneven as it leads down to Fonthill Lake, where it is well worth taking a break to admire the view before undertaking the final part of this walk.
- 12** Cross the dam, noting the hydro-electric apparatus, and follow the tarmac track around the end of the lake. As the track starts to climb the hill, bear to the right to go through the gate at point 2 on the route map, and follow the path alongside the lake and back to the starting point of this walk.