

## FOLLY - LYSCOMBE CHAPEL WALK - Approximately 4 Miles

For many, the highlight will be Lyscombe Bottom, where the stream, the stone farm buildings and the valley open up into the wide bowl. Lyscombe's very name suggests remoteness, 'a lost coombe'. You will be rewarded by the restored chapel. The oldest parts date from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, when it was an out-chapel of Milton Abbey, and after the Dissolution it was used as a farm-worker's cottage and a bake-house. The restoration involved repairing the walls and putting on a new thatched roof. It is an absolute treasure and can only be reached by foot. The priest's house, immediately alongside was beyond repair but its ruins have been stabilised. The restoration won awards from the Civic Trust and Royal Institute of British architects.

**Terrain** The field paths and tracks provide easy walking underfoot but there are two or three hills to climb but you are rewarded by wonderful views.

**Start** at Folly. OS Explorer map 117. (Cerne Abbas & Bere Regis) Grid reference. 727 033

**How to get there:** Turn east off the B3143 Piddle Valley road in Piddletrenthide, signed to Plush. Park on wide grass verge.

### The Walk

**A.** You will start by walking eastward following the footpath that crosses the lane. *Finger sign opposite points to Dorset gap 1 mile.* Turn left from the lane up a wide track by 'Folly Farm' sign. (The track can be muddy in winter.)

**B.** When you reach the bridleway finger sign ignore the left track and take the right fork and climb the stile into the field. Walk diagonally left up the hill and to enjoy the views, walk on the higher ridge, keeping the deep farm track down immediately on your left. When you reach a gate at the top of the hill, turn around and enjoy the wonderful views over the Blackmore Vale, Plush Church, and on a clear day you can see Alfred's Tower in the distance.

**C.** Go through the metal and wood gate and turn right following *finger sign to Thorncombe Farm, 1-1/4 miles.* Follow the beautiful line of trees on your right, maintaining a gently downward slope. Keep to the hedge on your right and go through the gate in the bottom right hand corner of the field. Walk straight ahead and you will see a mast and piggery on your right.

**D.** Bear left into the field through a gap in the trees BEFORE the gate that leads into the piggery farm yard keeping to the left of a group of trees. At bottom of field, bear left, keeping the hedge immediately on your right.

**E.** Ignore the double field gate and take the single farm gate to the left following the blue footpath markers. You will see Lyscombe Chapel and ruins of the Priests' House down in the valley. Walk 50 yards keeping the hedge on your right, pass through a gate ahead and turn left down the hill towards the chapel alongside the metal fence on your left.

**F.** Go through a gate in the bottom left-hand corner of a field and go straight ahead to cross the little bridge over stream and take some time to explore the chapel and ruins of the priest's house. Exit the chapel through the same wooden gate, turn right alongside the wall and go through the wooden and metal gate to the left of the chapel as you look at it and bear left up a fairly steep hill to a gate visible on the skyline in the top left-hand corner. Go through the gate and continue diagonally uphill across the field beyond, to another gate.

**G.** Beware of badger sets near the hedge. Follow the right-hand edge of the next field which is often grazed by beautiful dainty black sheep. In the top right hand corner, go through a gate and head for the crest of the hill.

**H.** Look right to see the impressive contemporary mansion of Nettlecombe Farm.

**I.** Go through the gate in the left hand corner and continue straight ahead, *finger sign to Nettlecombe Tout.* Walk along the right-hand side of this field and the next one until you see the concrete remains of a water tower support the middle of the field.

**J.** Enjoy views over the Dorchester Gap to your right and Bulbarrow Hill. At the concrete structure, turn sharp left and cross to the far side of the field and turn right through the smaller wooden gate. Go through the wooden gate and down a path bordered by ancient trees which descends to meet a track. Beware of large pieces of flint stones on the track.

**K.** At the bottom, turn right onto the original track just 50 yards above the first fork, **B** and follow it back down to a lane and your parked car.

