

# A taste of cider country

Lee Davey and family explore Dorset and Somerset, stopping for refreshments along the way



## THIS MONTH'S SITES



**1. CROSSWAYS**  
See p100 of the *Sites Directory & Handbook*.



**2. HUNTER'S MOON**  
See p104 of the *Directory*. **Facilities include a playground.**



**3. ILMINSTER**  
See p106 of the *Directory*.



**4. WOOD FARM AS**  
See p118 of the *Directory*. **Facilities include a playground, play area and indoor pool.**



You can book your pitch online at [caravanclub.co.uk/searchandbook](http://caravanclub.co.uk/searchandbook) or by calling our Advance Booking Service on **01342 327490**. Please call Affiliated Sites directly.

\*Appy days: Perry's Cider farm

## FOOD + DRINK



### King Edwards fish and chips

The kids' meals came served in a bucket with a spade so getting them to eat before building sandcastles proved difficult! Opposite the Jubilee Clock on the Esplanade in Weymouth.

**Contact:** 01305 786924  
**Nearest featured site:** Crossways

### The Martyrs Inn

This pub in Tolpuddle enjoys lovely surroundings and offers food and service to match. Even Charlie, the harshest food critic of all, finished his plate of pasta. Result.



**Contact:** 01305 848249, themartyrsinn.co.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Hunter's Moon

### Perry's Cider

No Somerset food and drink section would be complete without a visit to a cider farm. Once chosen, your favourite 'apple juice' is poured directly from the barrel at this Ilminster attraction.

**Contact:** 01460 55195, perryscider.co.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Ilminster

### The Cobb Arms

The Cobb Arms in Lyme Regis is great for lunch while admiring the view across the harbour. Fish is well represented on the menu but we opted for the giant-sized ploughman's lunch.

**Contact:** 01297 443242, thecobbarms.co.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Wood Farm



Nicknamed 'The Pearl of Dorset', Lyme Regis sits on the Jurassic Coast

Planning for our trip to the South-West revealed a mind-boggling array of activity options, with an equal split between inland and coastal destinations and some that simply burrow underneath your feet. Underground, overground (wombling free!), we were spoilt for choice as a family.

During our visit, Weymouth seemed to cast a certain gravitational pull, and The Club's 112-pitch Crossways site offered easy access to this south-coast seaside town. An additional attraction for us was the Weymouth at War weekend, during which we were lucky enough to speak to a Second World War veteran who first visited 70 years ago during preparations for the Normandy landings.

There were so many sights and sounds to take in, the weekend becoming a blur of scenes from yesteryear intermingled with trips to Portland and the surrounding areas. And the weather was great.

### GOING FOR GOLD

As they are near neighbours on The Club site network, hopping from Crossways to Hunter's Moon (on the edge of Wareham Forest) is a quick and easy process. What's more, they share many easily-accessible attractions, Shaftesbury being one. The boy-on-a-bike advertising campaign for Hovis was filmed way back in 1973 but such was its success that the ever-famous Gold Hill still gathers the snap-happy, some of whom undoubtedly pitied the poor lad who had to climb Dorset's own Everest.

This north Dorset town makes for a great diversion when the coast is chock-a-block and possesses a laid-back feel as well as plenty of parking for those wishing to avoid climbing steep, cobbled hills.

With our wartime tank memories still relatively fresh from our previous weekend at Weymouth, Tankfest at Bovington seemed like the perfect excuse for Charlie to climb into his combats and see armoured vehicles

### POPPY AND CHARLIE'S TOP 5

1. Lyme Regis. "Crabbing is such good fun and there was a lot to do, with crazy golf in the gardens, sandy and stony beaches and an aquarium on the Cobb."
2. Weymouth. "Tanks, Jeeps, beach, fish and chips and ice-cream. It's little wonder that Weymouth was Charlie's favourite!"
3. "We both loved Clouds Hill with its treasure trail and picture hunt as well as climbing the steep slopes next to the house."
4. Rogershill Raceway, near Bere Regis. "Dad, Charlie and I love motorbikes and I've even ridden here myself when Dad wrote for dirt-bike magazines."
5. The Tank Museum. "Choosing between the tanks and the Fleet Air Arm Museum is tough but I think the Tank Museum wins..."

aplenty, both static in the museum and flat-out around the showground.

It wasn't just for boys though – in fact, Poppy picked the Tank Museum from our shortlist. A family pass lasts for a year, which means repeat trips won't cost a bean (unless there is a special event being held).

Nearby attractions include Monkey World Ape Rescue Centre and the National Trust's Clouds Hill, the former home of T E Lawrence – popularly known as

Lawrence of Arabia. "See if you can differentiate between Lawrence's states of mind as you walk around the house," said the National Trust guide and, with austere foil-lined walls upstairs and a king-sized 'bed'-equipped library downstairs, it seems that wellbeing improved gradually from top to bottom. Despite being one of the smallest Trust properties, Lawrence's Arabian-styled home is fascinating and boasts lovely grounds that exhausted the kids. >>

## FOR THE FAMILY

### Fleet Air Arm Museum

Boasting four halls, 90 aircraft and 30,000 artefacts, the Royal Navy's museum of all-things airborne is a whopper; the kids favourite was the aircraft carrier deck. We combined our visit with the Yeovilton Air Show which made for a cracking day.



**Contact:** 01935 840565, fleetairarm.com  
**Nearest featured site:** Ilminster

### Lyme Regis Marine Aquarium

The Marine Aquarium focuses on local fish and marine life that live on and around the Jurassic Coast – you can even hand feed a mullet or stroke a lobster! Handily-placed on the Cobb, too.



**Contact:** 01297 444230, lymeregismarineaquarium.co.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Wood Farm

### Shaftesbury Arts Centre

This fascinating arts centre hosts a varied programme of events from art and craft exhibitions to film screenings and jazz and folk gigs.



**Contact:** 01747 854321, shaftesburyartscentre.org.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Hunter's Moon

### The Tank Museum

Home to tanks dating from the First World War to the Cold War era and beyond, a day at this Bovington attraction is hardly enough to marvel at all the vehicles.

**Contact:** 01929 405096, tankmuseum.org  
**Nearest featured site:** Crossways





Musbury Hill Fort

“Musbury Hill Fort offers a cross between sightseeing and orienteering”

Next on the itinerary was Ilminster Club site (formerly Five Acres) – a peaceful and open location offering 69 pitches, near Chard. From here you have easy access to Somerset-style Vitamin C at Perry’s Cider. It’s tucked away along a network of lanes – so don’t be tempted to pick up supplies with the caravan still attached.

Provided you’re not driving, of course, a few tasters in the shop will help you narrow down your favourite before your

‘apple juice’ of choice is poured directly from the barrel. If you want something less potent, there is a tea room, while a small museum adds further interest.

**FLYING VISIT**

Also a short drive from the site is the Fleet Air Arm Museum which provides a fascinating insight into the navy’s airborne role through history. Offering a cinema-style screen and hall decked-out in the style of an aircraft carrier, it provides an up-close-and-personal experience of military life at sea which got the adrenalin flowing. A visit to the new First World War exhibition spotlights the brave souls who took to the skies in aeroplanes that were little more than flimsy frames with breathless engines.

Coastward-bound, Lyme Regis is a short hop from the Wood Farm Affiliated



Tanks for the memories: Weymouth at War

CULTURE



Clouds Hill

Home of the fabled Lawrence of Arabia, Clouds Hill (near Wareham) gives a remarkable insight into the life of T E Lawrence both abroad and in deepest Dorset. The surrounding two acres or so gives kids plenty of room to run off any excess energy.

**Contact:** 01929 405616, nationaltrust.org.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Hunter’s Moon

Muchelney Abbey

This abbey in the village of Muchelney on the Somerset Levels boasts “the only complete thatched monks’ lavatory in England”. The Tudor house, cloisters and interactive story made for a good trip – but the kids are still talking about the loo...



**Contact:** 01458 250664, english-heritage.org.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Ilminster



Gold Hill

Remember the Hovis ‘boy on a bike’ advert from the 1970s? Gold Hill in Shaftesbury is well worth a visit even if it’s to marvel at just how steep it is. Tucked away at the top is Gold Hill Museum & Garden.

**Contact:** 01747 852157, goldhillmuseum.org.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Crossways

Musbury Hill Fort

Once you’ve walked from the church car park, you’re rewarded with stunning views. Making a note of the coordinates beforehand will make life easier if you have an OS map or map-enabled phone.

**Contact:** 01752 346585, nationaltrust.org.uk  
**Nearest featured site:** Wood Farm



# OUTDOOR FUN



## Weymouth beach

Long stretches of sand and seafront amusements are complemented by shops and restaurants just a short walk away.

**Contact:** 01305 252241, [visit-dorset.com](http://visit-dorset.com)

**Nearest featured site:** Crossways



## Wareham Golf Club

While it may be a little shorter than some top courses, Wareham offers a decent test as well as very reasonable green fees. Weekend tee times are available – check website for details. Just a three-minute drive from Hunter's Moon.

**Contact:** 01929 554147,

[warehamgolfclub.com](http://warehamgolfclub.com)

**Nearest featured site:** Hunter's Moon



## Cycling

National Cycle Network Route 2 skirts the south coast of Dorset and is a great way to see the Jurassic Coast. In Somerset, the Stop Line Way (National Route 33) links Weston-super-Mare with Axminster via Chard and Ilminster.

**Contact:** [sustrans.org.uk](http://sustrans.org.uk)



## Crabbing

We had to give it a go at Lyme Regis Cobb. Our £1.99 fish-in-a-bag crab-catcher lured one from the water but a couple of boys had a £3.99 cylindrical net which worked wonders. Both were available from The Slipway beach shop.

**Contact:** 01297 442552

**Nearest featured site:** Wood Farm

site and can easily entertain folks for the entire day. Head for the 'Cobb' (harbour) and park all day in the pay & display at the top of the hill for just £2. Gardens, beaches and the Cobb itself are just a short, but steep, walk away.

## RELEASE CLAWS

Having previously tried crabbing at Padstow (see the June issue of the magazine), Lyme Regis was to offer us another opportunity. Needless to say, no crustaceans were harmed for this feature as I'm sure they've learned to let go of my line the minute they feel fresh air.

All we saw were claws of varying sizes clamped to our chunks of mackerel before that particular crab slipped effortlessly beneath the surface. To add to our frustration, a small group of young lads was having great success with a cylindrical device that seemed like a magnet to shrimps and crabs alike.

New to the National Trust network is Musbury Hill Fort, which offers a cross between sightseeing and orienteering – the start point is the church car park in Musbury (easily found by using your sat-nav) while the finishing line is a grid reference away. Think *Challenge Annika* without the helicopter, boilersuit or blonde locks and you get the picture.

Accessibility may be limited for some, but an upwards trek accompanied by stunning scenery is something to cherish (with hindsight, letting Charlie wear his new Lyme Regis camouflage flip-flops for the journey was an error, however).

Scratching the surface, this is but a taster of wallet-friendly, family-fun in Dorset and Somerset. Providing you spend £3.99 instead of £1.99 on crab-catching gear and don't use flip-flops as hiking boots, you'll have a ball.

Cider anyone?

## MEMBERS' VIEWS



**The Sellars family** (above) are from Ossett in West Yorkshire. "We chose Hunter's Moon as Poole is easily accessible and we're planning a boat trip. Plus there are Fireworks on the Quay on certain Thursdays during the summer. We've also visited Swanage and tried a coastal walk or two."

**David Bonner and Monty** are from Hockley, Essex. "After staying at Hillhead in Devon, we chose Crossways for a break on our way back to Essex as it's close to Weymouth. Being a woodland site, Monty seems to like it, too."



**The Dalton Family** (below) from Bewdley, Worcestershire, were staying at Ilminster. "Being a relatively short drive from the sea and close to the Blackdown Hills, Ilminster is perfect for coastal visits or walking the dog. Plus, our 134 mile-trip was simple as it was all main roads to the site. It's nice and quiet, too."



## Tasha and Amy Hopkins (plus 'Baby' the dolly)

had travelled from Glastonbury. "The standard of the site is amazing, plus there is an on-site swimming pool which the kids love. We've been visiting Lyme Regis for 20 years and it's an easy thing to do from Wood Farm."



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