

POINTS OF INTEREST

The National Trust property, **Hardy's Cottage**, backs onto the woodland and is where the author was born in 1840. The cob and thatch cottage was built by his grandfather.



Rushy Pond is home to a wealth of wildlife including Grass snakes, amphibians, damselflies and dragonflies.



The wood gives way to a small area of heathland called **Black Heath**, home to our resident Dartmoor ponies; this is now a small fragment of Hardy's famous 'Egdon Heath'.



To the south of the reserve is a small area of **Hazel Coppice** still traditionally worked for its material. The coppice is home to a varied range of woodland birds as well as a small population of the rare Hazel Dormouse.



Running through the site is a well preserved **Roman Road**. This Scheduled Ancient Monument would have stretched from Dorchester to Badbury Rings.



The Visitor Centre is home to the Under the Greenwood Tree Café, visitor information and toilets. You can also hire off road mobility scooters from here. Outside, there are picnic tables, bike racks and a bird feeding station to enjoy.



Photo credits: © Kath Clay, Chris Collins, Lydia Key, Tez Matthews, Ian Metcalfe

THORNCOMBE WOOD WALKABOUTS

WALKABOUT 1 Hardy's Birthplace Visitor Centre / Roman Road / Black Heath / Rushy Pond / Hardy's Cottage

A selection of routes to explore around the landscape that Thomas Hardy grew up in and was inspired by.

Thorncombe Wood is a magical pocket of mixed woodland and heath and is listed on the Ancient Woodland Inventory.

The 26 hectare site is home to a great diversity of trees including mature Oaks, Sweet Chestnut and Beech. The woodland gives way to Black Heath, an area of birch, gorse and heather with its own herd of Dartmoor ponies. Rushy Pond is a small watering hole for many birds, mammals, damselflies and dragonflies.

When walking, please remember:

- leave gates, waymarkers and property as you find them
- leave no trace of your visit and put your litter and dog waste in bins provided
- keep dogs under effective control and on leads if signs instruct you to do so
- no horse riding or cycling is allowed on the reserve
- please do not stroke or feed our resident ponies

Appropriate footwear is recommended, since wet or muddy conditions can be encountered at any time.

Hardy's Birthplace Visitor Centre and Under the Greenwood Tree Café

Centre toilets and information: open every day from 10am.
Café: seasonal opening times - visit www.facebook.com/underthegreenwoodtreecafe for current opening hours.
Visitor Centre entry is free. Parking charges apply.
Please pay for parking when you leave (ANPR system).
01305 251228 www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/hardysbirthplace

Hardy's Cottage (National Trust)

See website for opening times and admissions
01305 262366 www.nationaltrust.org.uk/hardys-cottage

Walkabout leaflets can be downloaded from
www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/walkabouts



THORNCOMBE WOOD WALKABOUTS

Hardy's Birthplace Visitor Centre / Roman Road /
Black Heath / Rushy Pond / Hardy's Cottage



A selection of routes to explore around the landscape that Thomas Hardy grew up in and was inspired by.

Hardy's Birthplace
Visitor Centre

up to
0.9miles

All walks start from the Hardy's Birthplace Visitor Centre, Higher Bockhampton (DT2 8QH). Parking charges apply.









Set in the heart of Hardy Country, the Visitor Centre is a gateway for local people and visitors alike to discover more about the life and works of Thomas Hardy and the local landscape. It is located on the edge of Thorncombe Wood and is a short walk from Hardy's Cottage, where he was born and lived until he was 34 years old.

There are lots of paths to discover; we have selected a few for you to explore. So, take a step back in time and follow the course of the ancient Roman Road or the route a young Thomas Hardy would have taken to his favourite woodland playground.

You can visit the cottage Thomas Hardy was born and grew up in (pre-booking required). It offers the chance to learn more about his life and works and is a must whilst in the area.

Why not end your visit with a nice cuppa and slice of cake in the Under the Greenwood Tree Café inside the Visitor Centre?

KEY

- Orange route (~0.25 miles)
- Pink route (~0.3 miles)
- Blue route (0.9miles)
- - - Other paths
-  Hardy's Birthplace Visitor Centre
-  Café
-  Toilets
-  Parking (pay when you leave)
-  Picnic benches
-  Litter bins
-  Gates
-  Pony Corral

