

TOL • THINKING OUT LOUD RUNNERS

ROUTE B • WEST BAY

THINKING OUT LOUD RUNNERS

WEST BAY & THE OLD LINE

*The railway, the harbour, the cliffs, the brewery.
One loop. No headphones.*

3.8 MI
DISTANCE

~65 FT
ELEVATION

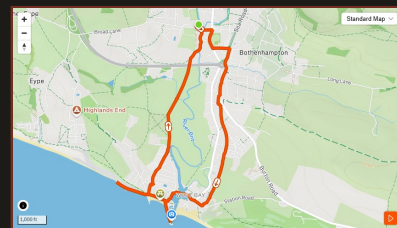
EASY-MOD
TERRAIN

MIXED
SURFACE

BRIDPORT → WEST BAY → BRIDPORT

ONE LOOP. ALL THE GOOD STUFF.

This is the route we've been running for years without ever stopping to write it down. Old railway to the sea. Harbour round the cliffs. Fields and the brewery on the way home. It packs a ridiculous amount into 3.8 miles. Headphones off. You'll want to be able to talk — there's a lot to look at.



1

START • WAYPOINTS 1-5

BRIDPORT FC TO THE OLD RAILWAY

W01 • START

BRIDPORT FC CAR PARK

Vearse Farm Road, DT6 3FN. Parking here is usually free but can require a small charge depending on time and fixtures. Check signs. It's a sensible, flat start with easy access back at the end. *What3Words: ///slips.risky.shelf*

W02 • 0.1 MI

PALMERS BREWERY — FIRST GLIMPSE

Head south down Vearse Farm Road. Within a minute, Palmers Brewery comes into view across the River Brit — the old stone mill, the waterwheel still visible from the road. You'll be back here properly at the end. *Save it for the return.*

W03 • 0.2 MI

ALONG WEST BAY ROAD

Turn left onto West Bay Road (B3157). Roughly 0.3 miles of road running heading south. The pavement is fine; traffic is manageable. This section traces the old route the railway used when it carried both passengers and freight out of Bridport.

W04 • 0.5 MI

CYCLEWAY ENTRANCE

Look for the wooden bollard and heritage boards on the left. This is where the old railway bed becomes a shared cycleway. The brick gateposts are original infrastructure — a neat threshold. Through here, the feel of the run changes completely.



THE OLD BRIDPORT RAILWAY • EST. 1884

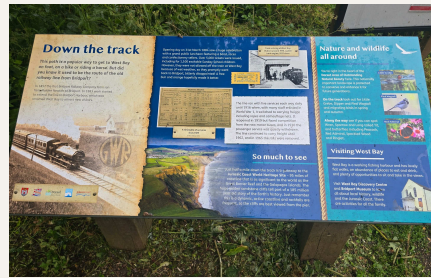
DOWN THE TRACK

Opening day was 31st March 1884. Over 5,000 tickets were sold. When the train arrived at West Bay, passengers weren't allowed off — the weather was too bad — and they went straight back to Bridport. A free bun and orange apparently made it better. The line ran until 1930 for passengers, 1962 for freight. The rails came out in 1965. What's left is *this* — a mile of perfect flat running, hedged on both sides, with the sea at the end of it.

2

WAYPOINTS 5-9 • THE CYCLEWAY

THE OLD RAILWAY TO WEST BAY STATION



LEFT TO RIGHT: THE CYCLEWAY ON A FOGGY MORNING • HERITAGE BOARDS AT THE TRAILHEAD

W05 • 0.5-1.1 MI THE CYCLEWAY

Straight, flat, hedged. Gravel surface. The path follows the exact route of the GWR branch line. Two heritage boards at the entrance give you the full history if you want to stop. Otherwise, just run. Cycle Route 2 markers keep you company. *Watch for cyclists, especially on the way back.*

W06 • RAILWAY HISTORY THE BRIDPORT BRANCH

"Did you know this track used to be the route of the old railway line from Bridport?" In 1857 the first train ran from Maiden Newton. In 1883 work started to extend to Bridport Harbour — renamed West Bay to attract visitors. The cliffs you're heading for are 185 million years old. *Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site.*

W07 • WILDLIFE WHAT TO LOOK FOR

Little Grebe, Dipper and Pied Wagtail along the path. Wren, Sparrow, Long-tailed Tit in the hedgerows. Butterflies in season: Peacock, Red Admiral, Speckled Wood, Ringlet. *This is AONB. It earns the designation at every season.*

W08 • 1.1 MI WEST BAY STATION APPROACH

The cycleway opens up and the old station platform appears ahead. The building to the right is the original West Bay station, now a café and heritage centre. The carriages on the tracks are the restaurant. You've arrived.



WAYPOINT 9 • WEST BAY • EST. 2015

PLATFORM

The old station building still stands. The carriages on the original trackbed are a restaurant — proper food, properly done. If you're stopping, note the sign: "*You are entering a busy restaurant zone.*" On a mid-week morning run, the platform is yours. The roses on the left bloom most of the summer. There's something quietly brilliant about all of this existing at the end of a railway that closed in 1930.

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WAYPOINTS 10-14 • THE HARBOUR

ACROSS THE ROAD & INTO THE HARBOUR

W10 • 1.15 MI

WEST BAY ROAD CROSSING

Cross West Bay Road at the station. The harbour is directly ahead. Take the path along the inner harbour wall — the working boats are moored on your right. This is a proper working fishing harbour. It smells like one. *That's a good thing.*



W11 • 1.2 MI

INNER HARBOUR

Boats packed in. Hotel behind — the big art deco building that appears in the background of almost every West Bay postcard. Run the inner wall heading towards the harbour mouth. *Low tide shows the sandstone bed beneath the boats.*



W12 • 1.35 MI

THE HARBOUR MOUTH

Where the River Brit meets the Channel. Wooden piles on both sides. On foggy mornings the cliffs disappear entirely — you just hear the sea. On clear days the East Cliff is already visible from here, framing the left side of the gap. *Turn left along the East Pier.*

W13 • 1.5 MI

WINDY CORNER CAFÉ

On the corner where the pier road meets the seafront. Coffee, ice cream, hot drinks. Worth bookmarking for a post-run stop if you're with a group — it earns its name in any weather above a gentle breeze. Cross-pollination with our café network coming soon. *Carry on along the East Pier towards the tip.*



WAYPOINT 14 • EAST PIER TIP • THE SHOT

THE EAST CLIFF

Walk to the end of the East Pier. This is the picture. 185-million-year-old Jurassic sandstone, lit gold at either end of the day. Broadchurch filmed here. Harbour Lights filmed here. A million phone backgrounds have been made here. It looks different every single time. *The cliffs are best viewed from the pier — rockfalls are frequent, so don't stand directly beneath them.* The green navigation post in the water marks the harbour entrance. Everything beyond it is Lyme Bay.

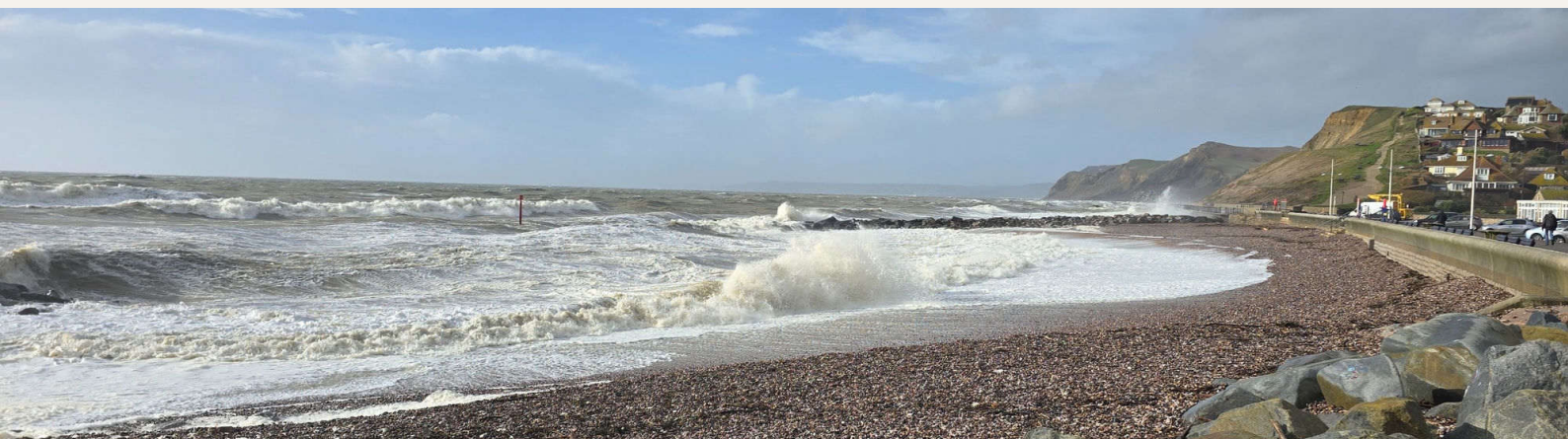
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WAYPOINTS 15-21 • THE PROMENADE

ALONG LYME BAY & BACK ON OURSELVES



WAYPOINTS 18-20 • THE PROMENADE

LYME BAY

The full sweep of Lyme Bay opens up along the promenade. On clear days, Lyme Regis is visible in the distance — a smudge of white against the far cliffs. The shingle beach is to your left. The houses on the cliff above you to the right appeared in Broadchurch. *The wave break changes the acoustics. You'll need to talk louder.*

W15 • 1.7 MI

BROADCHURCH CLIFF

The distinctive house perched on the East Cliff appeared throughout Broadchurch filming. The cliff path runs above you — keep it in view as you run the promenade below.

W16 • 1.8 MI

ALONG THE PROMENADE

Flat and open. Usually a headwind. Lyme Regis sits roughly 12 miles along the coast in the far distance. The bay curves west. Run to the end of the prom then turn back north — retrace to the holiday park entrance.

W17 • 2.0 MI

BACK ON OURSELVES

Return along the seafront road heading north-west, past Windy Corner again if you need the café. Turn right into the holiday park — it's signed. Cut through the static caravan park to the footpath that leads into the fields.



W18 • 2.1 MI

THE HOLIDAY PARK

Static caravans, neat little paths. It's quieter mid-week than it looks. The footpath through is public right of way — follow it north through the park and out through the gate at the far end into the meadow fields. *Gate signed: Public Footpath.*

JURASSIC FIELDS, RIVER BRIT & PALMERS



LEFT TO RIGHT: INTO THE JURASSIC FIELDS • DORSET FOOTPATH MARKER / MONARCH'S WAY • THE RIVER BRIT

W22 • 2.3 MI

JURASSIC FIELDS

The open meadow fields north of West Bay. In late summer this becomes the site of Jurassic Fields festival. For most of the year it's just long grass, sky, and a straight gravel path that disappears into the mist. *Keep north on the path.*

W23 • 2.5 MI

MONARCH'S WAY JUNCTION

The wooden gatepost carries two markers: Dorset County Council Public Footpath and the Monarch's Way long-distance route. The path joins briefly here — you're following the same line that supposedly traces Charles II's escape route after Worcester, 1651. *Continue north towards the River Brit.*

W24 • 2.8 MI

THE RIVER BRIT

The path drops down to the Brit, which runs slow and green through the valley. Willows overhang both banks. The river drains the Marshwood Vale before reaching the sea at West Bay. Follow it east towards the brewery — you'll hear the weir before you see the wheel.

W25 • 3.1 MI

PALMERS BREWERY

The ornate iron bridge over the Brit arrives first — look for the red rivets and the Palmers banner. Cross and the brewery opens up: stone mill, Victorian chimney, the waterwheel still turning beside the millrace. Founded 1794. Still family-owned. *West Dorset's oldest brewery. Tours available.*



WAYPOINT 25 • BRIDPORT • EST. 1794

PALMERS

The only thatched brewery in England. The waterwheel drives the millstones — it's not decorative. On a still morning the sound carries over the water. *Best smells in Bridport.*

W26-W27 • FINISH

BACK TO THE CAR PARK — THEN THE CROWN

From Palmers, follow Vearse Farm Road north for 0.3 miles back to Bridport FC car park. Route complete. If you've timed it right, The Crown pub is 200 metres back up East Street — good beer (Palmers, obviously), friendly bar staff, no fuss. Earned it.

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