

We hope you enjoyed your walk!

For more information about Langport visit the following websites:

www.langport-area.info

www.celebratingsomerset.com

www.langport.org

www.aboutbritain.com

www.southwesttowns.net

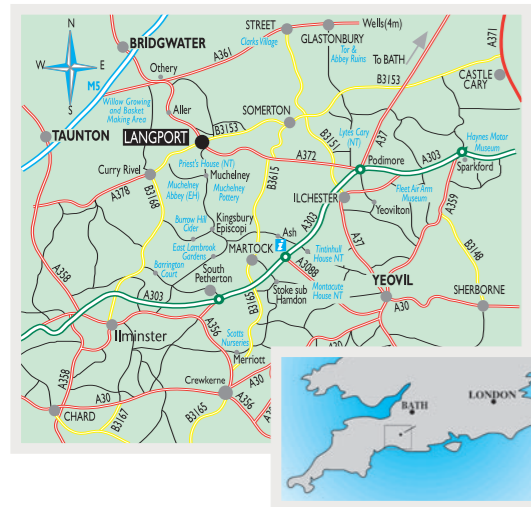
www.british-civil-wars.co.uk

www.riverparrett-trail.org.uk

Or call:

Langport Local Information Centre

01458 253527



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Moving on from Beard's Yard you will see on your right Stacey's Court, named after Mr Stacey who was a harness maker. There was also a butcher and a slaughter house located at the entrance to the Court. The Court comprised small terraced dwellings of inferior construction running at right angles to Bow Street.

The majority were demolished and the area was enlarged to make a small car park alongside Ridgway Hall. The Court also provides access to Cockle Moor over the Back River.



8

A little further up on your left is Webb's Yard. Originally used by the 'Spreadeagle' public house, which occupied the right hand side of the yard, the premises were later taken over by P W Webb who established his bakery business on the left hand side in 1894. There was a shop, living accommodation, the bakery itself, engine room, chaff cutter, wash house and stables for the delivery van horses. The stables later became garages. Flour was stored in a loft over the bakehouse.

9

Continue for quite a way up Bow Street and on your left is the Local Information Centre which hosts all kinds of information about the local area and further a field.

10



Just past the Information Centre on your left is the Town Hall. Walk through the passageway, under the clock into the Town Garden and out onto the moor. The Town Hall used to house the horse drawn fire engine, and was one of the town's lock-ups, with two cells, in the 18th Century. The cells are still there. Langport is the smallest town in the UK with a Town Council.

In front of you on the moor you will see the viaduct that carries the Paddington to West Country railway line. Its foundations reach a depth of 75 ft. Turn right on the moor and follow the path that runs along the North Moor Ditch to the back of Tesco.

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Walk up past Tesco and over the zebra crossing to join the main road. This area was once partly cobbled on the south side for use as a horse fair and market. The Primary School ahead of you was built in 1876 on the site of a cottage outside which, legend has it, an old lady would sit in all weathers, knitting, and smoking her clay pipe.

Cross the road via the zebra crossing, turn left and take the path on the right immediately after the school. Here you are climbing the outer ramparts of the ancient Saxon Burgh. Ahead of you and to the right is the Recreation Field. Turn left inside the gate of the playing field and walk straight ahead towards the wooden hut. Above and to the right are the ramparts of the original walled town.

With the wooden Scout Hut on your left, pass through the iron gate and out into Bonds Pool lane.



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Turn right and climb the hill to Langport's 14th Century gateway, known as the Hanging Chapel. It has been a town hall, grammar school, museum, armoury and Sunday School before its present use as a Masonic Lodge.

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Take the pavement to the right around the Hanging Chapel and carry on until entering All Saints' Churchyard on your left. All Saints' Church has been a place of worship since the Norman times at least. The Church contains some fine stained glass windows, including two rare depictions of Joseph of Arimathea, thus linking Langport with the Glastonbury legend. It is possible to go inside the Church with a guide from the Local Information Centre in Bow Street (9). The graveyard contains the remains of Walter Bagehot and his wife (far left hand corner as you enter the churchyard). Walter Bagehot (1826-1877), was Langport's famous economist who, with Vincent Stuckey a merchant and banker, was largely responsible for the town's prosperity in the 19th Century. Annie Tite is also buried in the churchyard. The husband of Annie Tite left money in trust to be used, among other things, as dowries for the virgin brides of Langport (funds are still available!).



Stand or sit a while and enjoy the fantastic views out over the Somerset Levels. In winter when the levels are flooded it is a truly spectacular sight.

Leave the churchyard through the gate by the tower and turn left. The large stone house opposite the Church was built by Vincent Stuckey.

Follow the road right down over The Hill (there are steps on the right hand pavement if easier) and enjoy the impressive view. The Old Grammar School is to your left just a little way after the last step. Walk around to your left at the bottom of the hill and along the main street of Langport.



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On your left is The Langport Arms Hotel, which was built in the 17th Century on a former brewery site. The next building – Bank Chambers – was the birthplace of Walter Bagehot and was the original Stuckey's Bank. The National Westminster Bank next door has a ledger from Stuckey's bank on permanent display.

Turn left into car park. This site used to be a pig and sheep market.

We hope you enjoyed your walk!



Langport has been a natural crossing point of the River Parrett since prehistoric times. The Celts and Romans were here and in Saxon times it had its own mint. The layout of the town has changed little since medieval times.

In the 17th Century the Royalists and Parliamentarians fought just outside Langport, and the Royalists set the town ablaze as they retreated, defeated. In the 18th and 19th Centuries it was a thriving inland port, much given to smuggling.

Today, Langport is a peaceful country town and a focal point of the River Parrett Trail.

But go back in time and imagine yourself in Bow Street on a Saturday night at the turn of the century. The town's twenty ale houses are full to bursting with farmers and merchants in town for the market. There are horse dealers from the horse market in North Street. Bargees, up river on the tide, rub shoulders with hard drinking navvies, lodged close to town for the building of the new railway. For the red light district in the Courts between the Dolphin Inn and the river, and for Langport's five overworked police constables, it is business as usual.

Have a good walk

Before starting your walk, please note that the Yards are commemorated with name plates ONLY. They are now all privately owned, and it is not possible to walk around them (other than to access the Warehouse in Great Bow Yard).



The Town Trail leaves the main car park onto the raised bank, Langport's river front. Take the gravel path that runs up to the River Parrett and turn right.

1 As you walk along the bank of the river, imagine yourself 160 years ago, when small barges would have been passing you transporting goods such as coal, culm etc. up to Thorney on the River Parrett, and Ilchester on the River Yeo. In the 18th Century Langport was one of the major trading posts for sugar, flour, corn, salt, coal and willow.



River Parrett barge
Edward Page Tomkinson

River trade declined with the introduction of the railway in 1853. As you near the bend in the river, on the opposite bank is the one of the old railway warehouse buildings. The railway station was one of two in Langport, and the line ran between Yeovil and Taunton.

The line was dismantled in 1964 – 1965. It is now a foot and cycle path. To the right of the old railway building is the Langport Visitor Centre, where you can find out more information about the local area and hire cycles.

Follow the bend around the river and walk over the bridge. You will see Langport's Great Bow Bridge, built in 1840 after the original nine arched bridge was demolished.



The Old Great Bow Bridge
Source: Archaeological and Natural History Society

Walk out to the main road, turn left for the visitor centre, or to continue the walk turn right onto the pavement and walk up 50 yards before crossing. TAKE EXTREME CAUTION as this can be a busy road, and Bow Bridge can obscure traffic from vision.

2 As you cross the road, you will notice Great Bow Yard. This would have been a noisy and busy place in the 1800s. Flat bottomed barges came up on the tide from Bridgwater and carried all manner of goods. Pre - 1840 the goods were unloaded and carried under the small arches of the bridge to smaller barges.



Unloading the barges
Edward Page Tomkinson

3 Walk up Bow Street away from the river. On the opposite side of the road is Baulk Yard. Baulks of timber were once floated up the river and stored for drying here before being sawn at other sites in town.

You may notice that the houses are leaning drunkenly backwards along the length of Bow Street. In 1616 Bow Street was described as being supported by 31 arches known as bows to form an ancient causeway. The fronts of the houses rest on that causeway whilst the backs of the houses were built onto the moors without solid foundations, causing the lean.



Bow Street in the past
Somerset County Museums Service
Copyright: Brian Lee, Museum, Glastonbury

4 Carry on along Bow Street and on your left you will see some wrought iron gates with a filled in archway and a plaque saying Pocock's Yard. Albert Pocock came to Langport in 1898 and was a coal merchant who started off with horse drawn barges bringing coal and bricks from Bridgwater. Before demolishing four of the cottages in Pocock's Yard, he stored the coal at Beard's Yard. The archway was the original entrance to Pocock's Yard, in and out of which passed the coal wagons.

Some goods were also stored here for transportation by road or rail. It is in this area of Bow Street that most of the taverns were located, and they would have been bursting at the seams with bargees, railway workers, traders and locals.

5 Walking on up Bow Street on your right is the former Dolphin Hotel – which would have housed many bargees and railway workers away from home. Knights Court entrance was to the right of the Dolphin and once had traditional housing of small terraced dwellings built on ancient burgage plots running at right angles to the street. The majority were demolished and the area was developed for modern housing.

6 Continuing up Bow Street, on your left look for Beard's Yard (it is just before Stacey's Court which is on your right). It is named after James Beard who built a hall there in 1806 and was an iron founder. When the hall was renovated some years later it was found to have iron battens supporting the roof tiles. The hall was used by Langport Volunteers and then by the Salvation Army for around 20 years. In 1883 the Temperance Hall was being used by the Total Abstiners Association.



Public Water Pump
Environment Agency

Just past Beard's Yard on your left is Moor Lane which leads to the Common Moor where Langport's 'commoners' still have grazing rights. It also leads to the River Parrett trail which runs through the town. Each commoner is traditionally allowed to graze two beasts, which can remain on the moor until three weeks and two days before the date of old Christmas Day.

