



TOWN TRAIL - WALK No 1

Takes you through the historic heart of Swanage.
Approximately 45 minutes.
Less than 1 mile.

-  One Way traffic
-  Route - level walk with some fairly steep slopes

Drawing of Purbeck House - Crickmay Architects.
Photograph of Steam Train at Corfe Castle - Swanage Railway.
All other photographs - Purbeck District Council.

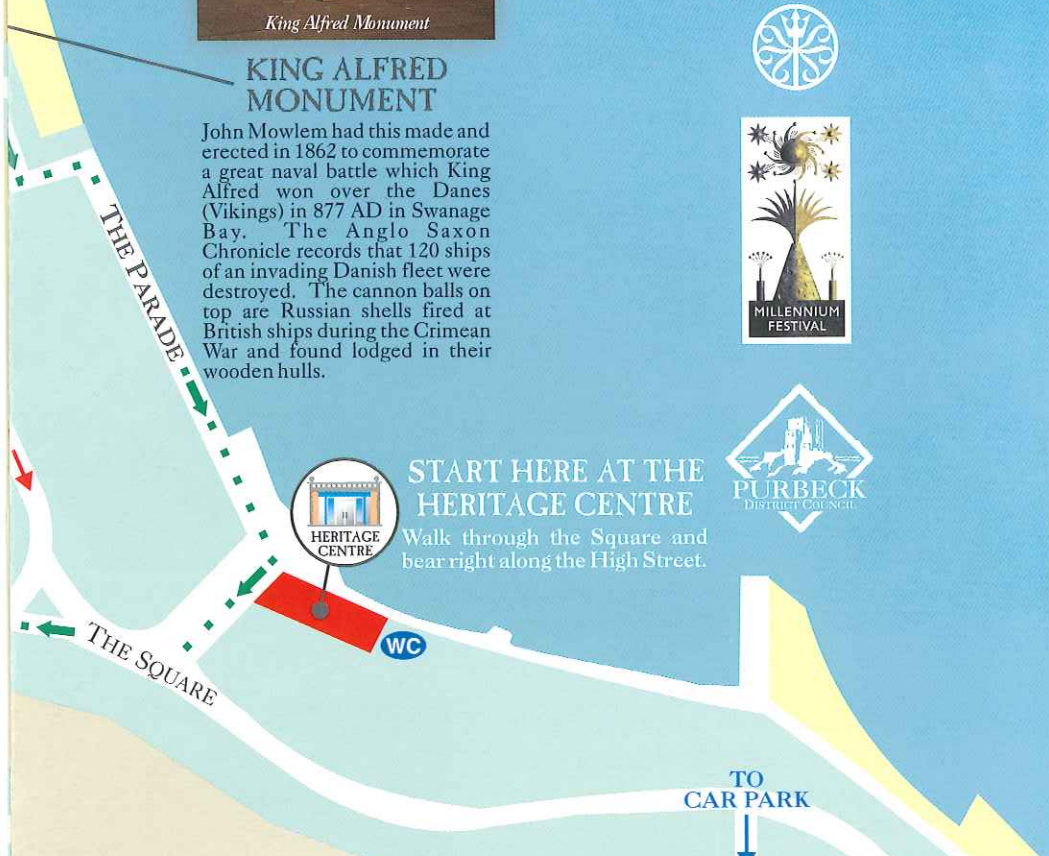
Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund



King Alfred Monument

KING ALFRED MONUMENT

John Mowlem had this made and erected in 1862 to commemorate a great naval battle which King Alfred won over the Danes (Vikings) in 877 AD in Swanage Bay. The Anglo Saxon Chronicle records that 120 ships of an invading Danish fleet were destroyed. The cannon balls on top are Russian shells fired at British ships during the Crimean War and found lodged in their wooden hulls.



START HERE AT THE HERITAGE CENTRE

Walk through the Square and bear right along the High Street.



... & HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT
... urt behind Purbeck House there is
... pavilion. The stone columns
... d roof come from the toll houses
... of Waterloo Bridge, London.
... or is paved with Minton floor tiles
... of the House of Commons. Famous
... entury would have walked across
... at issues of the day.



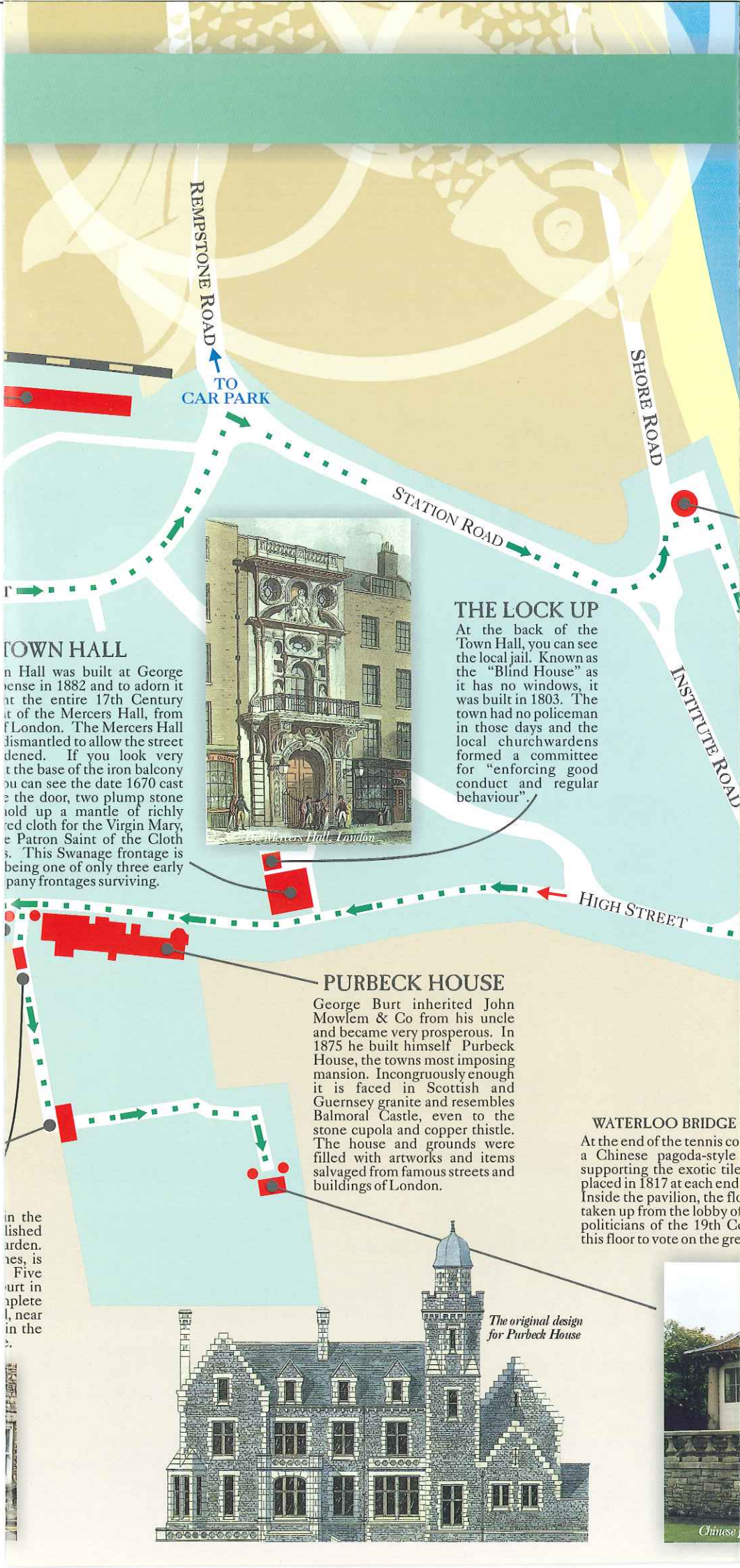
Jagoda-style pavilion

THE ROYAL EXCHANGE

At the end of the tennis court, either side of the summer house, are three damaged 17th Century statues. These came from London's Royal Exchange, built shortly after the Great Fire of London. Recent research suggests the headless figures are James I and Henry V; James I was made by Grinling Gibbons, the famous wood carver in 1685. A fire in 1838 damaged these statues and John Mowlem brought them to Swanage.

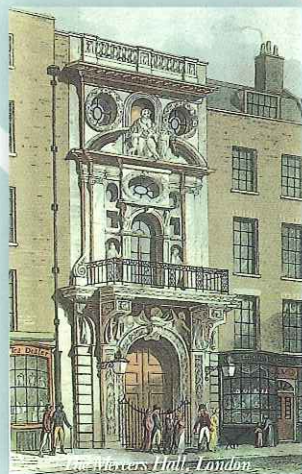


James I



TOWN HALL

n Hall was built at George
 nse in 1882 and to adorn it
 t the entire 17th Century
 t of the Mercers Hall, from
 f London. The Mercers Hall
 dismantled to allow the street
 dened. If you look very
 t the base of the iron balcony
 ou can see the date 1670 cast
 e the door, two plump stone
 old up a mantle of richly
 ed cloth for the Virgin Mary,
 e Patron Saint of the Cloth
 s. This Swanage frontage is
 being one of only three early
 pany frontages surviving.



THE LOCK UP

At the back of the
 Town Hall, you can see
 the local jail. Known as
 the "Blind House" as
 it has no windows, it
 was built in 1803. The
 town had no policeman
 in those days and the
 local churchwardens
 formed a committee
 for "enforcing good
 conduct and regular
 behaviour".

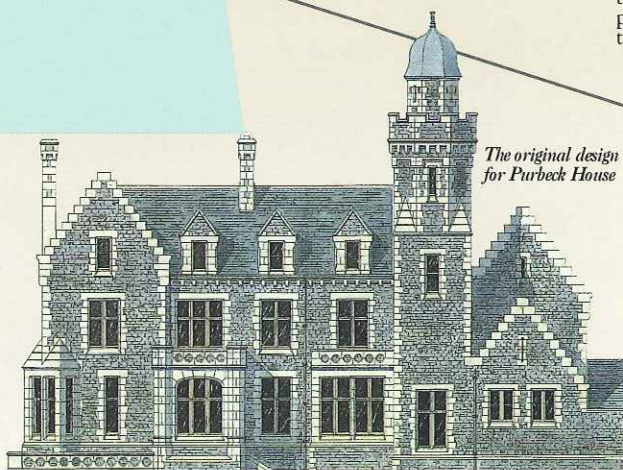
PURBECK HOUSE

George Burt inherited John
 Mowlem & Co from his uncle
 and became very prosperous. In
 1875 he built himself Purbeck
 House, the towns most imposing
 mansion. Incongruously enough
 it is faced in Scottish and
 Guernsey granite and resembles
 Balmoral Castle, even to the
 stone cupola and copper thistle.
 The house and grounds were
 filled with artworks and items
 salvaged from famous streets and
 buildings of London.

WATERLOO BRIDGE

At the end of the tennis co
 a Chinese pagoda-style
 supporting the exotic tile
 placed in 1817 at each end
 Inside the pavilion, the flo
 taken up from the lobby of
 politicians of the 19th Ce
 this floor to vote on the gre

in the
 lished
 arden.
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 Five
 ert in
 plete
 l, near
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*The original design
 for Purbeck House*



Chinese



St. Marys Church & Mill Pond



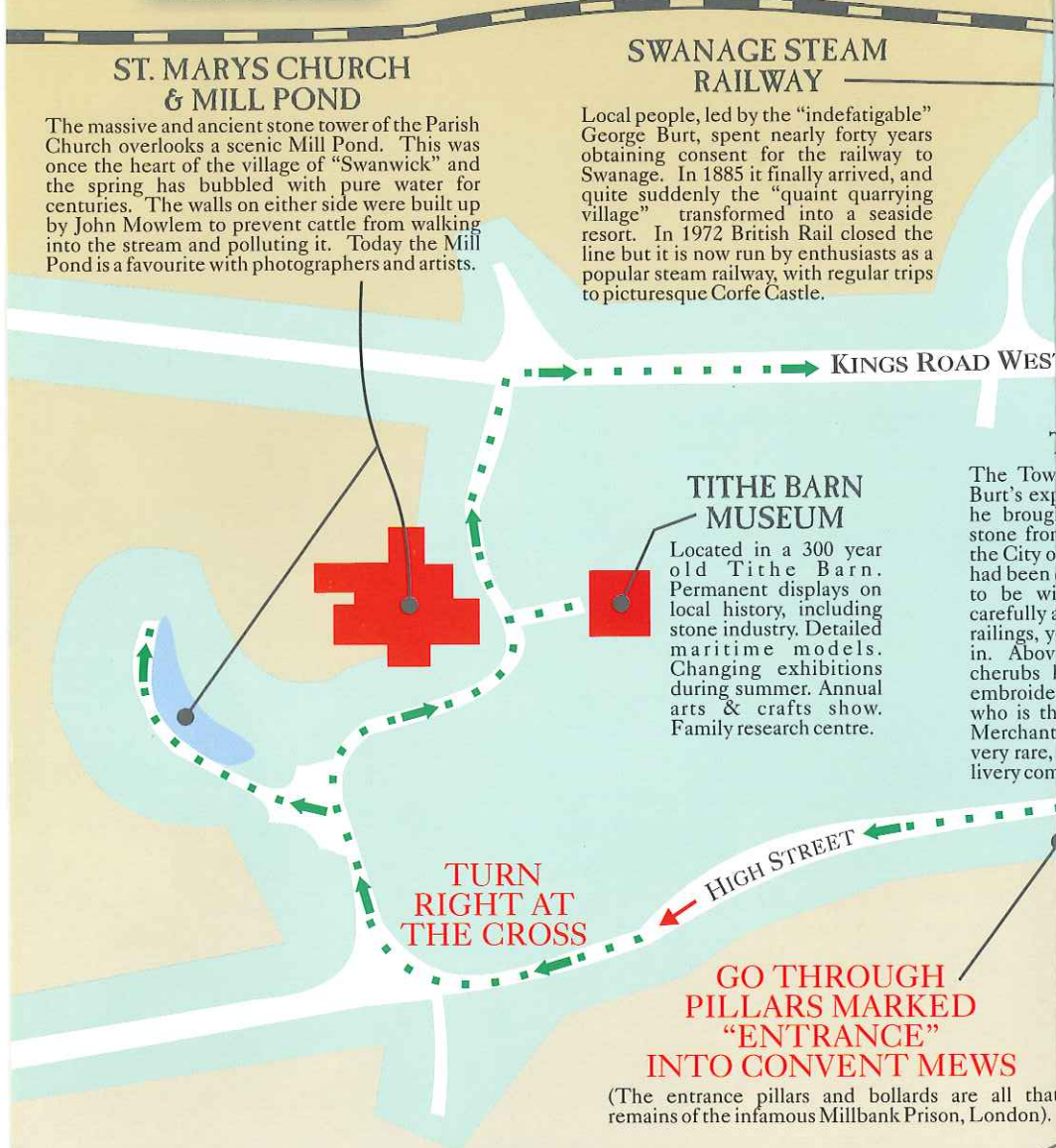
Steam train at Corfe Castle

ST. MARYS CHURCH & MILL POND

The massive and ancient stone tower of the Parish Church overlooks a scenic Mill Pond. This was once the heart of the village of "Swanwick" and the spring has bubbled with pure water for centuries. The walls on either side were built up by John Mowlem to prevent cattle from walking into the stream and polluting it. Today the Mill Pond is a favourite with photographers and artists.

SWANAGE STEAM RAILWAY

Local people, led by the "indefatigable" George Burt, spent nearly forty years obtaining consent for the railway to Swanage. In 1885 it finally arrived, and quite suddenly the "quaint quarrying village" transformed into a seaside resort. In 1972 British Rail closed the line but it is now run by enthusiasts as a popular steam railway, with regular trips to picturesque Corfe Castle.



TITHE BARN MUSEUM

Located in a 300 year old Tithe Barn. Permanent displays on local history, including stone industry. Detailed maritime models. Changing exhibitions during summer. Annual arts & crafts show. Family research centre.

The Town of Swanage was built by George Burt's experience. He brought stone from the City of London had been to be with carefully arranged railings, yellow in. Above the cherubs in the embroidery who is the Merchant very rare, livery com

TURN RIGHT AT THE CROSS

GO THROUGH PILLARS MARKED "ENTRANCE" INTO CONVENT MEWS

(The entrance pillars and bollards are all that remains of the infamous Millbank Prison, London).

HYDE PARK CORNER ARCHWAY

A short distance inside the garden of Purbeck House is an imposing stone archway with a bronze plate explaining its origin. It came from Hyde Park Corner, next to Buckingham Palace. George Burt brought it back to Swanage because, as his plaque says, he had worked on it himself as a young stonemason.



Hyde Park Corner Archway

BILLINGSGATE MARKET

Billingsgate was once the greatest fish market in the world. George Burt collected parts of the demolished building and put them in his new house and garden. One cast iron column, formerly facing the Thames, was incorporated into the porch in the side entrance. Other Billingsgate columns enclose the tennis court in the garden. Rescued cast iron balustrading, complete with stone piers, can be seen on the boundary wall at the High Street entrance, and more can be seen in the garden alongside the splendid Victorian glass house.



Balustrading from Billingsgate Market

BRIEF HISTORY OF SWANAGE

ORIGINS

Swanage began as a fishing village called Suanwic or Sandwich. The centre of this tiny community was the Mill Pond, with its bubbling spring of pure water. The nearby church tower is believed to have been used as a refuge from pirates and the Mill Pond still retains the charm of this “quaint old-world village”.

“CHIPPING AND SHIPPING”

When Corfe Castle was destroyed in the English Civil War, Swanage became the focus of the local Purbeck Stone industry, and the town grew up as an industrial port.



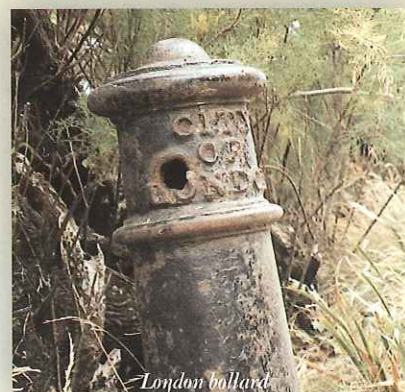
SWANAGE BAY C. 1861

Painting courtesy of Harry Clark

This activity reached its peak in the nineteenth century. Each year, thousands of tons of stone from local mines would be shipped out on a fleet of 70 sailing ships. Almost everyone who was not a quarrier would be working on the boats.

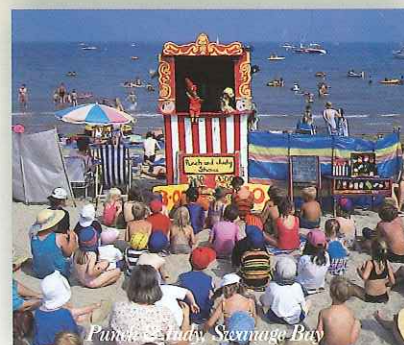
OLD LONDON BY THE SEA

Two sons of Swanage, John Mowlem and George Burt, made their fortunes in Victorian London. They adorned the town with an exceptional collection of relics salvaged from Old London. The three walking trails take you to see parts of famous London bridges, statues from the Stock Exchange, rare London bollards and the entire front of a London Livery Company, built in the time of Charles II.



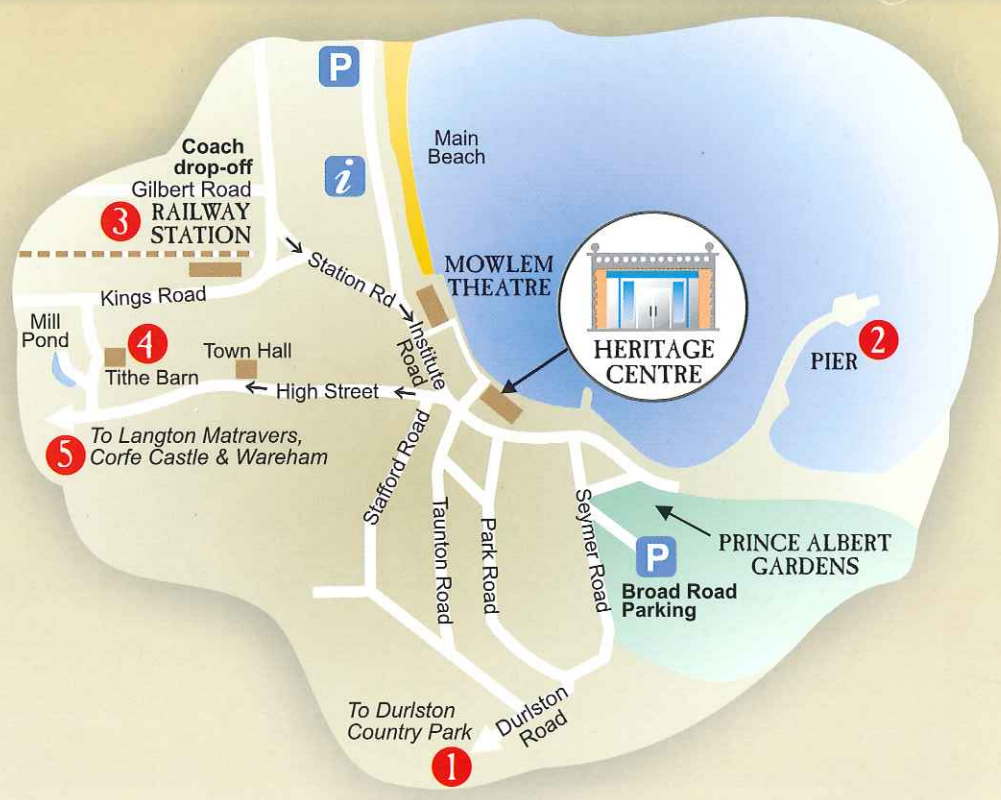
WATERING PLACE

Many visitors had praised the beautiful scenery and beaches, but in the days of unpaved roads it was difficult to get there. So the coming of the railway in 1885 transformed Swanage, quite suddenly, into a successful seaside resort. It is still able to treble its population with tourists and visitors during the summer season.





TOWN MAP



OTHER NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

- 1 Durlston Country Park** - 1 mile south of Swanage. 270 acres of clifftop countryside including internationally important wildlife and the Great Globe. Tel: 01929 424443.
- 2 Swanage Pier** - Fully restored Victorian pier. Tel: 01929 427058.
- 3 Swanage Railway** - Steam trains run to Corfe Castle (or you can park at Norden and ride to Swanage and Corfe). Tel: 01929 425800.
- 4 Tithe Barn Museum** - near the Mill Pond, Swanage. Displays relating to the stone industry, arts & crafts and other local features. Tel: 01929 423174.
- 5 Coach House Museum** - Langton Matravers. Material relating to the local stone industry and audio-visual displays. Tel: 01929 423168 / 422218.