
 **Climb back out of the quarry. At the top of the cliff turn right along the coast path. Go through the next gate.** Now consider the route to Langton and the loads smugglers routinely carried home.


Smuggling was almost a respectable industry here. Langton's best-known smuggler was Thomas Hayward. He rented the quarry from Mrs Serrell, an ideal place for a quiet landing. Quarryman and smuggler, he was also sometime postmaster, parish clerk, sexton and church warden.

 **Ascend diagonally across the field. Before reaching the corner pass through a gap in the wall, then turn right and through a gap in the next hedge-covered wall. Turn left and climb the hill, keeping field boundaries on your left, through a scrubby patch at the top, and over a stile. Soon you reach a gateway and a stone stile on your left. Walk through, or climb the stile's**




Caption here?


steps. Continue to the north, keeping the wall on your right for a field's length, until you come to the Priest's Way.

 **Cross it, ignoring the waymark, and go straight ahead for two field lengths. When you are level with Langton House (away to the left)**

cross the third field diagonally to the corner of a paddock. Climb into the paddock and continue diagonally over two more stiles which give access to a path beside a private garden. The path leads to a rough road, The Hyde; turn right into it and emerge onto Langton High Street.

 **Turn left towards the King's Arms.** Licensed in 1742 as the Mason's Arms, it was rebuilt and rechristened early in the nineteenth century. Smuggled spirits were decanted into English bottles on the premises and telltale barrels burnt on fragrant bonfires. **Cross the road to the cemetery.**

Many names in the graveyard match those of sixteenth-century signatories to the Articles of Agreement of the Ancient Order of Purbeck Marblers and Stonecutters. Close to the road, on the left, Frederick Harris shares a grave with his father Alfred and a niece he never knew. Fred looked after the pony in his dad's quarry. He was killed at the top of the slide in 1888, aged 11. The capstan's spack (the pole that turned the winding gear) spun when a chain broke and struck him on the head.

 **Walk up towards the church.** Notice the stone everywhere, from paves to roof tiles, the product of Langton's exploitation of the Downsvein for which London developed such a voracious appetite after the Civil War and the Great Fire.


The Museum of the Stone Industry, run by the Langton Matravers Local History and Preservation Society*, is behind the church, off St George's Close. Reg Saville, its founder, recalls how an elderly and much respected quarryman finally crossed the threshold. Once inside he wept to see how his trade – his life – was valued.



Purbeck Quarryman

At the corner of the churchyard stands the Purbeck Quarryman carved by Mary Spencer Watson (1913-2006) who, as a girl, rode up from her home at Downshay and learnt the elements of the sculptor's craft in Lander's Quarry.

St George's Church's nave roof is higher than its fifteenth-century tower. By 1828 the roof and ceiling were in bad condition, partly because of the weight of smuggled goods frequently concealed in the church's loft. Rebuildings of 1828 and 1875-6 swept memorials away, but you can see the medieval roof-line on the inner west wall and the 1946 statue of St Leonard by the marbler Walter Haysom.

 **Time warps aside, your car should be where you left it.**

Walk guide written by Paul Hyland

Photography by Ben Osborne and Angie Green

Design by Artcore Studio Ltd.

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Further information:
Eric Benfield *Purbeck Shop*
Cambridge University Press 1940

R.J. Saville (ed.) *Ancient Order of Purbeck Marblers and Stonecutters: Articles of Agreement etc.* Langton Matravers Local History & Preservation Society 1996

Ilay Cooper *Purbeck Revealed*
James Pembroke Publishing 2004

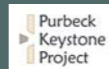
Paul Hyland *Purbeck: The Ingrained Island*
Gollancz 1978, Dovecote Press 1989

Langton Matravers Local History and Preservation Society (10.00-12.00 and 14.00-16.00hrs from April 1st to September 30th; closed on Sundays).

Jurassic Coast World Heritage site:
www.jurassiccoast.com

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Artsreach

A short walk to

Dancing Ledge



Caption here?

Purbeck  Footprints

A walk of about 3 miles
with steep ascents
at the coast

Artsreach

A short walk to Dancing Ledge

Start in Langton Matravers, 'long town' by name and by nature. Park on High Street, near the church (OS map reference: SY995787). Begin by turning up Durnford Drove, a short distance above the church on the opposite side of the road.

Durnford Drove is not exciting, but walk in a time warp and you may meet quarrymen in frock coats and top hats coming from Dancing Ledge, a crocodile of boys from one of Langton's schools marching to swim down there, boffins from the research establishment, smugglers with tubs on their way to church, and maybe the occasional escapee from the institution up the road.

Go straight ahead up the track towards Langton House. This was a secure institution – then Spyway House – for boys with behavioural problems; it was less popular in the village than the six private schools established between 1893 and 1929. It resembles a well-kept asylum, but now comprises twenty-five apartments.

Radar was researched here in World War Two. The Telecommunications Research Establishment (TRE), based at Worth Matravers, requisitioned houses in Langton. It was in the grounds of Spyway House that TRE developed H2S Town Finder radar for Lancaster bombers, the 'sixth sense' essential for the bombing of German cities.

Continue past Langton House and through Spyway Farm's gate. Soon you cross the Priest's Way, a romantic but in parts stark road by which the priest travelled from his church in important Worth Matravers to its dependent chapel at the humble fishing village of Sandwich, or Swanage.

The path takes a dogleg through Spyway Barn's farmyard. In a stone shed, next to the Great Barn, the National Trust have installed good information boards.



Caption here?

Mrs Serrell had the Great Barn built c.1800. Smugglers employed Spyway Barn's bull to guard contraband; what's more, the Serrells' cottages in Durnford Drove had communicating roof spaces where 'hot' goods could be hidden and moved around.

Walk straight across the field and between stone gate posts in a dry stone wall. Here you are on top of the limestone world, with the wind, ravens, butterflies and blown grass, between walls which mimic the rise and fall of strata beneath your feet.



Dancing Ledge looking West

Across the next field is a kissing gate between stone posts by a carved cow's head. Beyond that a waymark sends you down over steep turf, bald rock and steps. Aim for the end of a dry stone wall at the bottom of the valley. Cross the fence by a stile and descend rough steps into the quarry above Dancing Ledge itself.

Look at the cliff: the top shows the lowest of the Purbeck Beds. Then come the Portland Shrimp Bed and the rest of the Portland Freestone. The Under Freestone was taken from galleries now walled-up and left to bats. Beneath the quarry floor the Cherty Series begins. Chert is to limestone as flint is to chalk. Dancing Ledge itself is the Prickle Bed or Puffin Ledge. See the cart tracks punched into the floor and worn smooth by the wheels of man-drawn 'horn carts,' with outcurved shafts, used to shift stone to the boats.



The headmaster's swimming pool

In 1893, Thomas Pellat, first headmaster of Langton's first private school, Durnford House, had the swimming pool blasted out of the ledge and fenced in by iron grilles to keep the riffraff out. The power of the sea favoured the riffraff.

