

Gordano Open Days

September 7-10th 2017

As part of English Heritage Open Days we have designated a collection of venues in the Gordano Valley that are architecturally and historically significant to our local community. They are referred to as Gordano Open Days.

We have laid out a trail of several miles that takes our visitors through villages that are little changed from when they were agricultural societies in medieval times and through other parts of the community that were involved with the industrial revolution and with the more recent mechanized agricultural processes. We have structures that were influenced by the great inventors such as Isambard Brunel and Henry Bessemer and by architects such as Edward Gabriel. Our journey ends at the entrance to the Portishead Marina in what is now one of the fastest growing towns in Europe.

It is a pleasant journey starting with historic Portbury, passing through the idyllic Gordano Valley and then along the coast road that follows the shoreline of the Severn Estuary. Having the second highest tide fall in the world the Estuary surges in and out twice daily and over the years has carved scenic bays and inlets from the rugged and rocky coastline.

Sites along the way are accessible by automobile or by footpath and visitors can set their own pace or select the portions that are of personal interest. Maps will be provided explaining points of interest. We will be accommodating walking groups and cyclist and refreshment will be available at each stage.

There is a mixture of serene and peaceful churches and buildings that have been remodelled with the latest modern conveniences and that are very much alive and active. Knowledgeable guides will be on hand to explain the details and answer question. As many of the historic buildings we will be visiting have been converted into luxurious pubs and restaurants, the journey will be a very pleasant one indeed.

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St Mary's Church
Church Lane, Portbury,
Somerset, BS20 7TR

Thur-Fri-Sat-Sun

11:00am-18:00pm

The ancient Manor of Portbury is one of the oldest settlements in Britain. It was in existence before Portishead and Bristol and was a Roman port for exporting silver & lead from the Mendips.

The Norman 12th century church of St Mary the Virgin is probably much older since it stands on ground that has been sacred for many centuries with the discovery and re-erection of the Neolithic Standing Stone and the Saxon and Romano British burial sites. St Mary's Church has some of the oldest tomb stones in the country. The oldest dates back to 1584 and was a former altar stone. Others from the early 1600's are kept within the church itself.



Portbury church has had links with Bristol Cathedral since 1150's when it was given the patronage of St Augustine's Abbey built in 1148 by Robert Fitzharding. (later to become Bristol Cathedral). Fitzharding was given the title Lord Berkeley by Henry II.

The Lords of Berkeley continued their patronage of the church for almost three hundred years. They were responsible for the building of the Berkeley Chapel.

The stone tower was built on the site of an older Saxon one probably in mid 1400's by the Berkeleys. It houses six bells of which the oldest dates to 1610. They are still fully functional and are rung regularly.

The church is Grade 1 listed and is maintained to a very high standard. The museum room in the Church will be available for Gordano Open Days. Guides will be available to show guest around each day.

Tea and Coffee, Cakes and Ploughman's Lunches will be available. There will be an Art Show displaying the works of local artist and a Craft Work Shop encouraging children to participate.

The Priory
Station Road, Portbury,
Somerset, BS20 7TN

Thur-Fri-Sat
Sunday

12:00am- 23:00pm
12:00am- 22:00pm

The Priory in Portbury is a country pub oozing rural charm and rustic character.

The Priory is a landmark for travellers from Bristol, the M5 and beyond. A footpath from Prior's Wood passes the pub to The Mount and Windmill Hill. The bluebells in Prior's Wood are quite spectacular in bloom.

Constructed in 1822 and called the Priory Hotel, this building has spent all its life serving food and drink - and some of it saving lives. Underground passages have been found which link the Priory Hotel to Portbury Monastery, suggesting that the monks would have used the premises to hide from persecution.



Black Horse Inn
Clevedon Lane, Clapton in Gordano, BS20 7RH

Thur-Fri-Sat
Sunday

11:00am - 23:00pm
12:00pm - 22:00pm

The Black Horse at Clapton in Gordano is one of the most unspoilt Inns in Norths Somerset. The building dates from the 14th century around the same time as the local church.



The pub was built on the edge of a salt marsh to serve the needs of the local mining community and The Black Horse name is believed to be derived from the pit ponies and the horses that drew the coal to Portishead for shipping. The pit was at the end of the pub garden and it is recorded that in 1797 it produced 240 bushels of coal a day. Around this time the lounge bar doubled as the village lock up and the only window in the room is still barred today.

The Black Horse prides itself on maintaining its unique character and retains many original features with its stone flagged floors, beamed ceilings and large open fireplace which proves a real attraction in the cold winter months. The Black Horse is a time capsule of the perfect West Country pub from a different era preserved so that we can enjoy it today as our ancestors might have enjoyed it. The locals have a special name for it, they call it the Kicker.

Situated in the beautiful Gordano Valley the pub benefits from many nearby walks, including the Gordano Round and a footpath that leads to Cadbury Camp, a 200 year old hillfort with magnificent views of the surrounding countryside.

St Michael's Church
Clevedon Lane, Clapton in Gordano, BS20 7RJ

Thur-Fri-Sat-Sun

11:00am- 18:00pm

14th Century Church for descendants of the Berkley family it was developed over the years into a rural Victorian church. Some of the pews are from medieval times and the building has been recently restored to its former glory. The church is perched atop a hill and the surrounding lawns provide a good vantage point to view the Gordano Valley.



St Paul's Church
Walton Street, Walton in Gordano, BS21 7AW

Thur-Fri-Sat-Sun

11:00am - 18:00pm

18th Century Village Church. A quaint village church that is the central focus of the Walton community and a place for hikers passing by on the adjacent footpath to stop and rest and meditate. It is quiet and peaceful and has an eloquence of rural simplicity. The church will be open for self guided tours or a guide will be available to explain the history of the building and the site.



St Peter and St Paul's Church
Clevedon Road, Weston-in-Gordano,
Somerset, BS20 8PZ

Thur-Fri-Sat-Sun 11:00am- 18:00pm

The Church is designated as a Grade I listed building. It was erected in the 12th Century by Sir Ascelin de Perceval, Earl of Yvery, son of Robert, who accompanied William the Conqueror on his expedition to England.



Richard, the Grandson of Ascelin, was a Commander in King Richard's army on the Third Crusade to the Holy Land. Legend has it that when he lost the use of his right arm in battle he took the reins of his horse in his teeth and continued fighting with his sword in his left hand. Returning from the Crusade with only one arm and one leg he was famously depicted in a Monty Python sketch as the knight who carried on in spite of injuries.

He and his tomb are just opposite the porch door. Although now quite plain, it was originally very ornate with railing and brass covers.

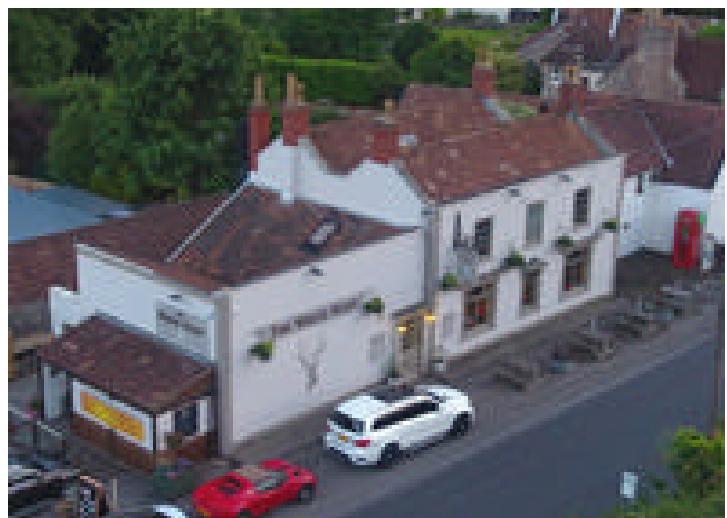
The church is beautifully preserved and maintained. The ancient font at the back of the nave was almost certainly produced in Normandy and shipped across the Channel. The 13th Century stone pulpit, on the south wall, is one of the earliest specimens of the fixed kind and a quaint and interesting feature in the church. The other pulpit, on the north side, is Jacobean. The seating in the chancel is of heavy oak stalls and Miserere's, which are roughly carved. It is thought that these could have come from Portbury Priory and, if so, could date back to the 12th Century. Elements of the east window are the oldest and contain glass that is medieval and depicts a variety of musical instruments.

Tea and Coffee will be available.

The White Hart Inn
Clevedon Road, Weston-in-Gordano,
Somerset, BS20 8PU

Thur-Fri-Sat-Sun 12:00pm- 23:00pm

The Grade II listed 18th century coaching inn on the main Portishead to Clevedon road.



Always the centre of village life and now a recently renovated luxury restaurant with extensive dining facilities in the back garden.

Serves fresh cooked food daily with varying menus from lighter lunches through to weekend evening feasts.

The Old Mill
1 High Street, Portishead, BS20 6AF

Thur-Fri-Sat-Sun 12:00pm- 23:00pm

As old as the town of Portishead, it was once a tidal watermill with warehousing for grains and its own wharf. The archway at the front of the building was on the waterline so that milled grains could be floated out on small boats to the port and out onto the Severn. Many old photographs of early Portishead feature the mill as a prominent landmark.

The Old Mill has been remodelled as a modern high-quality restaurant, pub and wine bar. The original millstone has been preserved and is on permanent display on the high street at the front of the building.



A guide will be available to explain the history of the building and the site.

St George, Easton-in-Gordano
Church Road, North Somerset, BS20 0NB

Thur-Fri-Sat-Sun 11:00am- 18:00pm

It is known that a church stood on the current site since 1230 with records dating back to 1239 and was rebuilt in the 14th and 15th centuries. The registers date from 1559.

With the exception of the tower, the church was rebuilt again in 1872.

The church will be open for self guided tours or a guide will be available to explain the history of the building and the site.



The Windmill
58 Nore Road, Portishead, North Somerset BS20 6JZ

Thur-Fri-Sat 11:00am- 23:00pm
Sun 11:00am- 22:00pm

The Windmill started its life in the 1830s as a Wind powered mill that was used by local farmers for grinding grains. It later became the Hole in One clubhouse as part of a par 77 18-hole golf course designed by Harry Vardon – six-time winner of the British Open and winner of the US Open.

The old clubhouse is now a pub and restaurant. It is known for its beautiful views of the Severn and fine dining. The dining area looks out over the Severn Estuary and the Severn Crossing bridges.

The Estuary is known as the second highest tide fall in the world and is an area of natural beauty. A self guiding tour will be available to explain the history of the building and the site.



The Royal Inn
Pier Road
BS20 7HG
Portishead
North Somerset

Thur-Fri-Sat
Sun

11:00am- 23:00pm
12:00pm- 22:30pm

Built in 1830 it was to be the terminus of Brunel’s Great Western Railway. Passengers arriving from London or New York could disembark at The Royal and an adjacent steamer pier. With the death of Brunel his plans were not completed and The Royal became a destination holiday hotel. It has now been converted into a pub and high quality restaurant. The walls are covered with period charts and maps and nineteenth and early twentieth century photographs of the old Inn by local photographer Eric Wright.



It features a wide patio area facing onto the Severn and Portbury Docks where patrons can watch the ships come and go from the port. The patio looks out over the old steamer pier and is a short walk from the lock gates for Portishead Marina where portions of the historic lock gate mechanisms are on display. The Marina also features display boards provided by the Gordano Historical Society explaining the history of the Marina when it was a working port and part of the regional electric power generating plants.

A guide will be available to explain the history of the building and the site.

Black Nore Lighthouse
Black Nore Point
Portishead
BS20 8GB

<http://www.blacknore-lighthouse.com>
email@blacknore-lighthouse.com
Tel: 07802 615123

Thur-Fri-Sat-Sun 11:00am- 18:00pm

19th Century Cast Iron and Steel Lighthouse. Located on a picturesque point on the Severn Estuary and next to the Portishead to Clevedon coastal footpath. It is a fine example of leading edge technology as used in 1894. Although no longer operational the unique architecture of cast iron, wrought iron and mild steel makes an interesting study when viewed from the footpath.



A guide will be available to explain the history of the structure and the site.

Access to the Lighthouse is by way of the Coastal Footpath or by the footpath from Nore Road at the top of Glenwood Rise. The entrance on Nore Road is marked by a brown Heritage sign and a blue sign pointing out the footpath.
