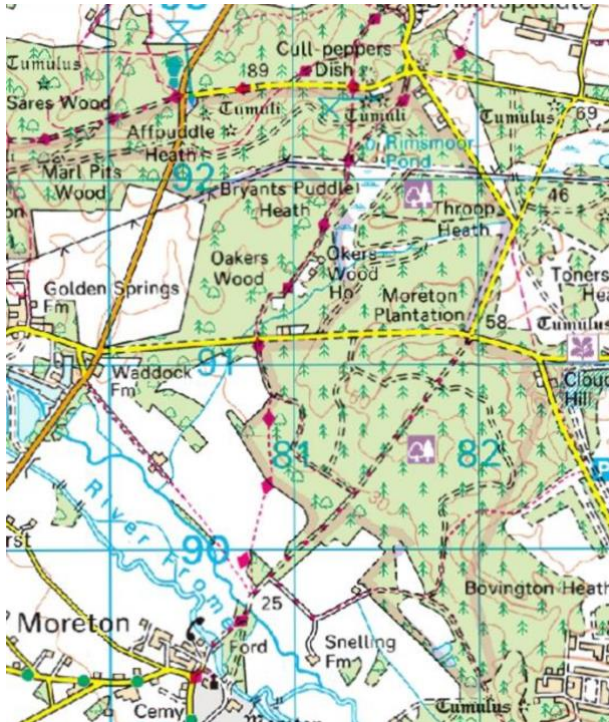




Walk, camp, breathe...

Wild Camp with Pack Ponies £175 pp/pn

The Arabian Dorset Trail, (so named as it follows in Lawrence of Arabia's footsteps)



Arrival Day We meet at 2.00

and spend some time introducing you to the ponies and how to be safe around them. It is also time to get the paperwork done and bags packed onto the ponies before we start off at about 2.30

We head through the village, with you leading the ponies as much or as little as you're comfortable with, towards St Nicolas Churchyard where Lawrence of Arabia was buried under his preferred name of T.E. Shaw. The funeral was well attended by statesmen and celebrities alike, the most notable of which was Winston Churchill, and bizarrely enough was filmed – clips of the funeral procession can actually be seen online.

After some time here, if you wish, we set off on the walk proper, crossing Moreton Ford- the ponies will walk through the ford, but feel free to take the bridge! We then head up onto heath and through the plantation towards Cloud's Hill after which Lawrence named his cottage.





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The hill itself is steep and sandy, very eroded in places so we let the ponies rest at the path below and those who wish to climb it may do so and catch a glimpse of Lawrence's house. If you wish to visit the house, it is a National Trust property and easily reached either before or after your Ancient Trail.

From here we start making our way towards Oakers Woods through more heath and plantation. This stretch really opens up and gives you great views of the slightly undulating plane, quite in contrast to the hills slightly north of here, and much gentler walking! This is an excellent route for wildlife spotting – we walk through Sites of Special Scientific Interest and as well as regularly seeing buzzards, woodpeckers and kite you may also spot sand lizards, grass snakes, slow worms, kingfisher and even osprey as they fly south to fish at Arne.

We are then close to camp and will arrive approximately 2 to 3 hours and 7km after departure.

Arrival at our wild woodland camp

The first thing we do is settle the ponies – they'll have worked hard and be ready to be unloaded. You are then free to choose where to site your tent or hammock. There are lots of beautiful little groves and clearings for you to choose from as well as two hubs where you'll find fire pits and wood if you wish to have a campfire. No fires outside of this for safety reasons.



Upon arrival, the ponies are unloaded and have their 'end of work TLC', which you are welcome to assist with before turning them loose into their woodland paddock.



You will also find our 'HQ' area where the fire pit is always lit and there is always a kettle of hot water and endless teas and coffee. It's under cover, so there is a dry place to cook and congregate if you wish.



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Our wild 'bathroom' is an experience in itself! Complete with a compost loo, outdoor washing facilities and a forest shower!

You have free range of the woods – bring a yoga mat, a book, a beer or your knitting – however you want to while away the evening! The woodland is about 100 acres in size and our maximum group size is 8 people.



Stay Days Having a day to chill in the woods is pure bliss. There are plenty of nearby walks – you can easily get on the Hardy Trail, stroll over to Clouds Hill Cottage or visit the local village of Briantspuddle. If you're a keen walker, you can reach Tolpuddle where the Martyrs Museum is located, although the pub there has yet to reopen after Covid. We do not recommend staying for more than two nights due to the difficulty of bringing in enough food supplies. The ponies have an upper weight limit of 15kg per person.



Departure Day. We meet at 11 with a view to pack and depart by 11.30. Heading back towards Moreton, we take a different route to wind our way past fields, through plantations, over heath and along ancient woodland until we return to the Moreton Drive and through the ford to our initial meeting point.

If you did want to walk the ponies through the ford, this is the best time to do so as you won't have much further to go in any soggy clothes!

The return journey is approximately 4km and should take about 1 to 1.5 hours.

