

Fordington

Outside Dorchester's Roman walls lies the parish of Fordington. This is the centre of the village, with the tower of St George's Church and the green in front.

Archaeological surveys in Fordington have revealed many prehistoric sites - barrows, ditches and henges, and there are large Roman cemeteries.

Fordington was a Royal manor and had its own manor court-house, farms and mills. The parish land was wrapped round the southern and western sides of Dorchester and most of it was owned by the Duchy of Cornwall. It was divided into open strip-fields which were let to tenants. This stopped Dorchester from developing outside its Roman walls until the late 19th century, as it was not until 1874 that the land was enclosed and divided up into five farms and parcels of land for building. The Duchy still owns the surviving farmland and is building on West Fordington, or Poundbury as it is now known.

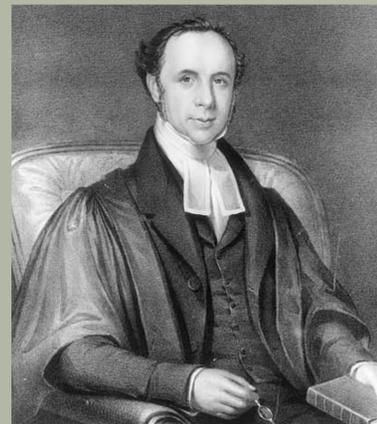
Go to the church and find the carving above the doorway inside the porch. It is very old. You may not be able to see it if the outer door is locked.

In the middle, riding the horse, is St George. How many soldiers wearing helmets are there each side of him?

The Dorchester Dormouse trail



Mount Pleasant, just outside Fordington
The archaeological excavation of a 12 acre circular enclosure surrounded by a ditch and bank. The remains of a massive wooden building were found inside. Excavations of many sites in Fordington have shown what a hugely important area this was in the Bronze Age.



Henry Moule was the Vicar of Fordington from 1829 to 1880. In the early 19th century Fordington became overcrowded, poverty-stricken and squalid, especially in the Mill Street area. Cholera broke out in 1849 and 1854, and there were also outbreaks of smallpox, typhus and scarlet fever. Henry Moule and his wife Mary personally cared for the sick parishioners and fought hard to improve their living conditions. Moule designed a dry earth closet to help improve sanitary conditions. It sold all round the world.



St George's is a fine medieval church, built over the foundations of a smaller, earlier, possibly Saxon church. Above the door is a Norman carving of St George taking part in the First Crusade at the battle of Antioch in 1098.



Find out more...

Visit St George's Church.

Read Discover Dorset: The Prehistoric Age by Bill Putnam.

Discover the Moule Earth Closet at the Dorset County Museum.

A Roman tombstone from the 1st or 2nd century was found in Fordington. It reads: "CARINUS, Roman Citizen, aged 50, Rufinus and Carina and Avita, his children, and Romana, his wife...". They are the earliest inhabitants of Dorchester we know by name.

