

A JOURNEY OF THE IMAGINATION ON ENGLAND'S GREAT WEST WAY

As it's not possible to explore our beautiful country at this time, now is the perfect opportunity to immerse yourself in films, television series and literature that has the power to transport your mind to another place and another time.

[England's Great West Way](#) is a touring route between London and Bristol, rich in history, picturesque landscapes and romantic destinations which is why it has provided the inspiration for many literary classics, and has been the chosen location for filming of many long-running television series, as well as big film productions.

We have compiled a list of ways to engage your mind and travel England's Great West Way, from your armchair.



LONG-RUNNING TELEVISION SERIES

Midsomer Murders

Now on its 21st series, the popular crime drama, *Midsomer Murders*, has featured many locations on the Great West Way since it started in 1997. The pretty streets of the Georgian market town of Marlow in Buckinghamshire has been regularly featured and the town's library was used for Causton Library in *Black Book*, and Danesfield House Hotel can be seen in *Judgment Day*.

Other filming locations on the Great West Way include properties in Berkshire such as Wellington College, Dorney Court and Eton, and Henley-on-Thames in Oxfordshire. The Grade II listed Town Hall of Henley has been used as the Court House of Causton, and the Auction Room was featured in *Black Book*. The Royal Regatta which takes place in Henley every year became the Midsomer Regatta in *Dead in the Water*.

Located five miles north of Henley is Stonor Park, an impressive country house that has been used as a filming location in *Midsomer Murders* but also in James Bond in *The Living Daylights*.



Downton Abbey

The very popular television series and film, *Downton Abbey*, focuses on life both above and below stairs in the fictional *Downton Abbey*. Writer, Julian Fellowes, is said to have based the show on real-life Highclere Castle in Newbury, which is why it's known as the 'Real Downton Abbey' and was used for both exterior and interior filming.

The National Trust's village of Lacock also featured in *Downton Abbey*, as well as Bowood House & Gardens, both in Wiltshire. Bowood House sits within 100 acres of beautifully landscaped parkland and a cottage located on the Bowood Estate was used as a filming location in the *Downton Abbey* feature-length film.



National Trust property, Basildon Park, in Berkshire, features in the series five finale as well as one of the television show's Christmas specials. Another National Trust property, Greys Court, a Tudor country house and garden near Henley-on-Thames, appeared in the third series of *Downton Abbey* as the potential downsizing home for the Crawley family. During the show, the whole family enjoyed a picnic on the lawn.

Other locations along the Great West Way that have been used for filming *Downton Abbey* include Eton College which was transformed into the Thirsk Country Fair, Royal Holloway in Surrey, The Langdon Down Museum in Teddington, Syon Park in Brentford and Surrey County Hall in Kingston upon Thames.

Poldark

Poldark is a popular historical drama filmed over five series from 2015 to 2018. The series was based in Cornwall; however, a lot of filming took place on the Great West Way.

Corsham High Street in Wiltshire, provided a filming location for the series, with the town's high street doubling up as 18th century Truro, with the Town Hall exterior used as the Truro Assembly Rooms.

In Bristol, Redcliffe Caves, a complex network of 15th and 18th century tunnels were used in series three for some of the internal mine scenes, as well as Tall Ship Kaskelot, based on Bristol's Floating Harbour.

Dyrham Park, a National Trust Property in South Gloucestershire, was used as George Warleggan's Georgian town house in series three, where *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* was also filmed. Another National Trust property near Bath, Great Chalfield Manor, was used in series three as the home of Ray Penvenen and his niece Caroline. Berkeley Castle, also in Gloucestershire, was used as a filming location in series two and three, as a French port town and the location of the Bodmin Assembly Rooms.

BLOCKBUSTER FILMS

Emma

Emma, based on the classic Jane Austen novel, stars Anya Taylor-Joy and tells the story of the titular resident of the village of Highbury. Within easy reach of the Great West Way is Chavenage House known as Hartfield in the film, located in Tetbury, a small town in the Cotswolds.

Another Jane Austen adaption which aired on ITV in August 2019 was *Sanditon*, a period drama television series based on Austen's unfinished final novel. Sanditon House's exterior was filmed at National Trust property, Dyrham Park, with more filming taking place in the city centre.

Other period drama films and television series filmed on the Great West Way include *Pride & Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Far from the Madding Crowd*, and *The Crown*.



Harry Potter

The National Trust's Lacock Abbey was a filming location for three of the Harry Potter films. The Abbey lends itself as the setting for Professor Snape's potion's class, as well as the location of The Mirror of Erised, where Harry first sees his parents.

There are other filming locations on the route, Ashridge Wood in the North Wessex Downs is where the Quidditch World Cup was held in *The Goblet of Fire*, and Virginia Water Lake which lies on the southern edge of Windsor Great Park also features in *The Goblet of Fire*, as well as the *Prisoner of Azkaban*.



Secret Garden

The latest adaptation of Frances Hodgson Burnett's 1911 novel, *The Secret Garden*, starring Colin Firth and Julie Walters is due to come out at cinemas this year. The film's pinnacle garden scene was shot at Iford Gardens, located in Bradford on Avon in Wiltshire. The 1993 film adaptation was also filmed at a location on the Great West Way, at Eton College.

For more information on Great West Way's popular filming locations, visit: www.GreatWestWay.co.uk/plan-your-way/top-10s/top-10-famous-filming-locations



THE INSPIRATION BEHIND LITERARY CLASSICS

Kenneth Grahame

Kenneth Grahame resided in Berkshire at various times of his life, in Cookham Dean, a stone's throw from the River Thames, Pangbourne and Cranbourne. In later life, Cookham Dean provided the inspiration and material for his best-known work, *The Wind in the Willows*, the nearby Quarry Wood provided the inspiration for the book's Wild Wood.

Jane Austen

During her lifetime author Jane Austen lived in Bath and Reading, two destinations on the Great West Way. Austen also spent time in Bristol with her mother and is thought to have stayed in Clifton.

Bath provided the inspiration for two of Austen's six major novels, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*, which were both published posthumously in 1817, which is why Bath is home to the Jane Austen Centre and Jane Austen Festival, an immersive experience.



Thomas Hardy

Destinations on the Great West Way provided inspiration for many of Hardy's major novels which were set in the fictional area 'Wessex' which incorporated real-life locations on, and within easy reach of the Great West Way, including Somerset, Wiltshire and Berkshire. The city of Salisbury in Wiltshire, is known as Melchester, Reading is Aldbrickham and Newbury is Kennetbridge in *Jude the Obscure*.

Salisbury/Melchester also featured in *Two on a Tower* and *Far from the Madding Crowd* and *The Hand of Ethelberta*. Oxford is within easy reach of the Great West Way, similarly to where its located to Hardy's Wessex which is described in *Jude the Obscure* as "within hail of the Wessex border, and almost with the top of one small toe within it".

For more information on the locations mentioned, or to start planning a Great West Way trip for the future, visit: www.GreatWestWay.co.uk

Notes to editors:

If you're interested in joining the Great West Way Ambassador or finding out some more information, visit: www.GreatWestWay.co.uk/Ambassador-Network

Follow and engage with us on our social channels Facebook [@GreatWestWay](https://www.facebook.com/GreatWestWay), Instagram [@GreatWestWay](https://www.instagram.com/GreatWestWay) and Twitter [@theGreatWestWay](https://twitter.com/theGreatWestWay)

Images for **Great West Way** can be downloaded from our Flickr gallery via this link <https://www.flickr.com/gp/129320754@N03/3g1fd7> Photos may be used in print and/or online for the promotion of tourism to the Great West Way and photos used must be credited to www.GreatWestWay.co.uk, unless otherwise stated in the title of the photo. Full terms and conditions can be found [here](#).

About the Great West Way

The Great West Way is one of a number of successful projects to receive funding from the UK Government's £40 million Discover England Fund, administered by VisitEngland. For further information go to www.discoverenglandfund.org

The Story of the Great West Way booklet is available at: www.GreatWestWay.co.uk/storyoftheGreatWestWay

Great West Way and England's Great West Way are registered trademarks.

For further information contact:

Holly Windsor, PR and Communication Manager

Hollywindsor@GreatWestWay.co.uk

01722 324 888/07444 601 421