Maiden Castle

Maiden Castle is the largest hillfort in England extending 45 acres,and lies about 2 miles to the south of Dorchester town centre. The hillfort was first occupied around 3000 BC, and contains a complex arrangement of ramparts and ditches.

Maiden comes from the Celtic 'Mai Dun', meaning 'great hill', and this great hill can be seen today with the huge earth walls rising up to 6 metres high. In the Neolithic period a barrow some 540m long was constructed east to west across the site.

Maiden Castle was a bustling town populated by the Durotriges Tribe. In AD43, the Romans attacked the inhabitants of the town and a hard battle was fought focussed towards the eastern entrance. As you walk around the hillfort today, you might imagine how the Romans under Vespasian, must have found it very difficult to overcome the steep array of ditches before defeating the inhabitants of the castle.

In around the 4th century a Roman temple was build, the foundations of which are still visible today in the north east sector of the fort. Maiden Castle is maintained by English Heritage, and is open all year round and free to enter for the public. The Dorset County Museum has a number of items found on or near Maiden Castle on display.

Details of the Maiden Castle page of the Visit Dorchester Visitor Guide 2008 is here : Maiden Castle

Next you can go to the Maiden Castle Image Gallery

{mospagebreak title=Image Gallery}Here are some recent images of Maiden Castle. When you come to Dorchester, be sure to visit.