Stacey Sansom September 16, 2021	SMMBC 105 Bro. Babcock

W01 – 1.7 Dream Vacation

I started planning using something that would corelate to a real vacation. My husband travels the UK annually (when we aren't dealing with COVID) and we enjoyed our trip we took together, but I did travel home alone. Now that we have older children, it would not be unrealistic for me to travel and do my own thing while he is working, but still enjoy time together and not have to travel alone on the long flight.

Travel Dates: 8 March 2022 – 16 March 2021

The timing is largely due to certain things only being available during certain times of year, I would imagine weather or touristy times.

My passport also expired a couple of months ago, thus I factored in renewal time for my planning.

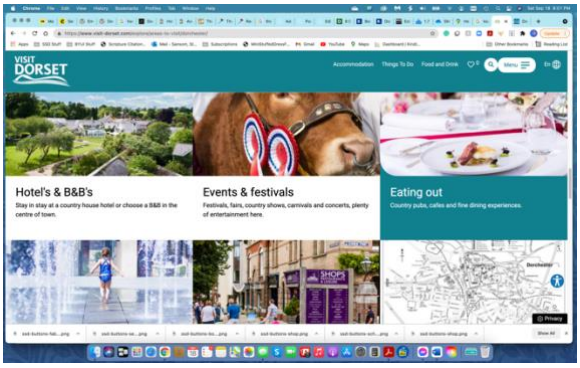
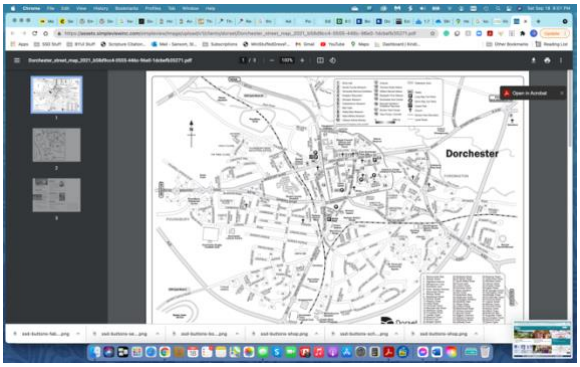
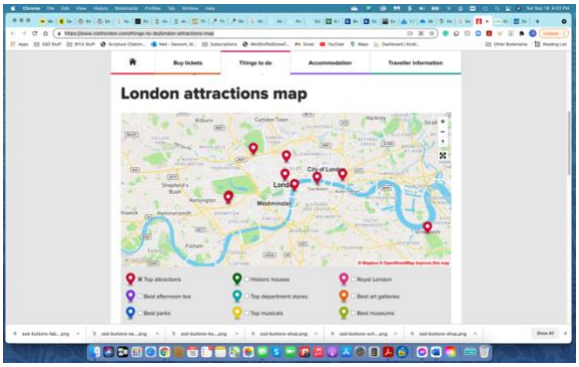
This is frequently when my husband would be traveling to the area. Also, my birthday is that week, so it would be a great time to travel.

It might seem like a long time, but I struggled to fill the 7 days and 7 nights requirements otherwise. With such a long in-air travel time, I had to extend the overall trip time. However, I suppose I could have counted the in-air over-night transits as "night" stays.

I also had to adjust for adequate transit time between the ultimate destination (Dorchester) and point of arrival (London). While there are airports that were considerably closer to Dorchester, the closest flights I could find were to London's Heathrow Airport.

Location: Dorchester England (and London England)

I am a huge fan of 19th Century British literature (outside of Dickens) and would love to be able to see these places that held their inspiration firsthand. I went down the quick list of my favorite authors and selected Thomas Hardy. I am focusing on sites that are primarily related to the novel Tess of the D'Ubervilles.

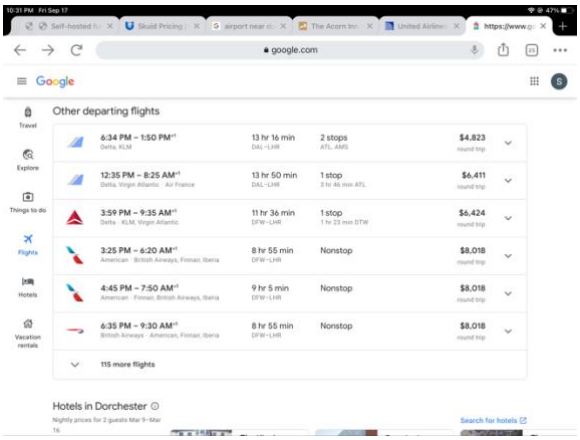
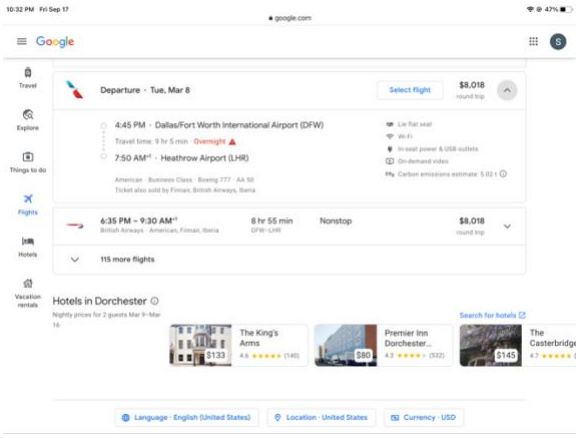
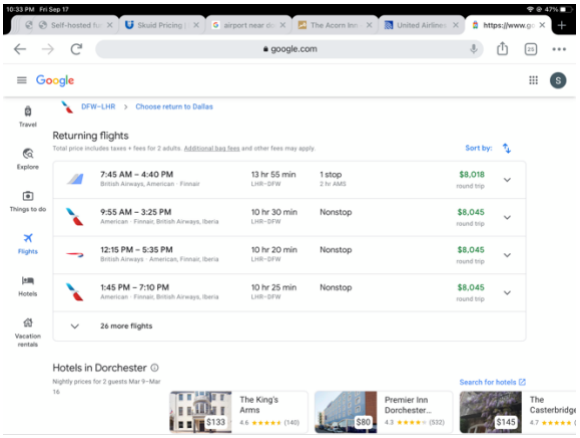
Dorchester – Tourist Website and Map	 
London – Tourist Website with Map	

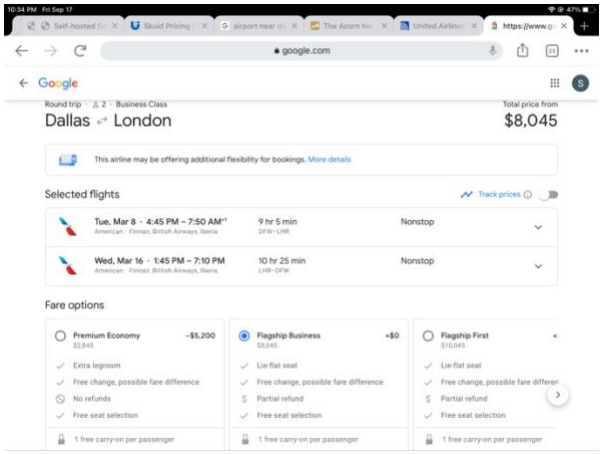
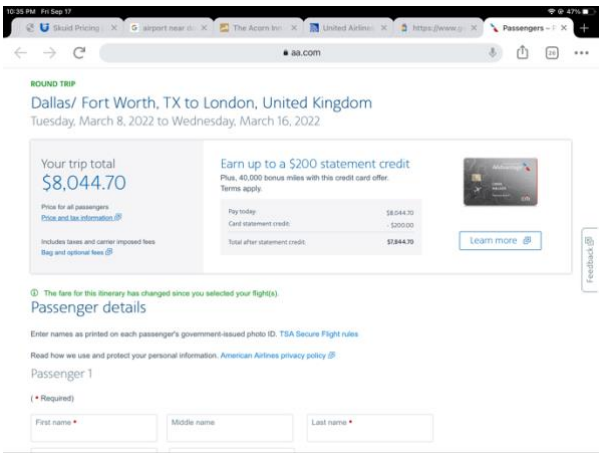
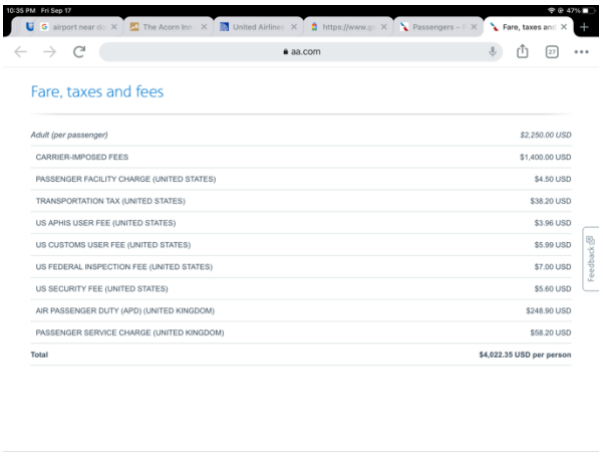
Airfare: American Airlines

I selected American Airlines primarily because DFW Airport is one of their major travel hubs. I live in DFW, so it was a natural selection. I did search all airlines in my attempt to find flights into Bournemouth, the closest airport, and other surrounding airports.

Upon searching the travel time from Heathrow to Dorchester, I even searched flying out of Houston Intercontinental Airport (IAH). My theory was if I was going to spend over 4 hours in transit from city to city using preferred mode of transport (train), I could do that same transit

stateside and drive myself to Houston. It wouldn't be the first time we've done something crazy like that. However, even IAH departing flights yielded me no better results. I opted for seeing the beautiful English countryside (or that's the hope).

Flight search via Google	
Selection of Departing Flight	
Options for Return Flight	

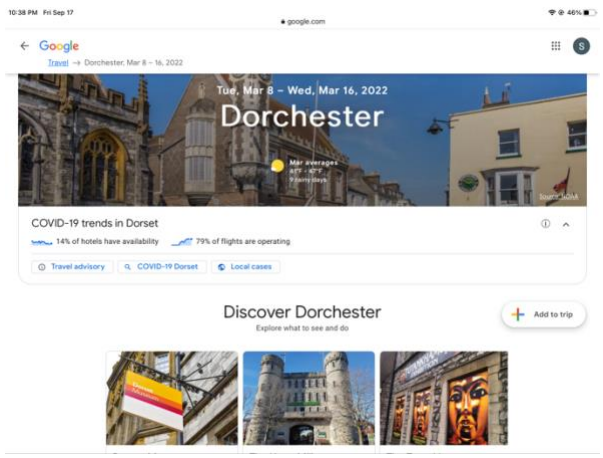
Selection of Return Flight I don't do long airplane trips as well as the average person, so I selected "non-stop" to limit the travel time to only what was necessary. American Airlines was more than happy to try and "up-sell" my reservation.	
Total Round Trip Flight Cost before entering passenger details. Non-stop. Business class seats for 2 adult passengers.	
Break down of total flight expenses per person.	

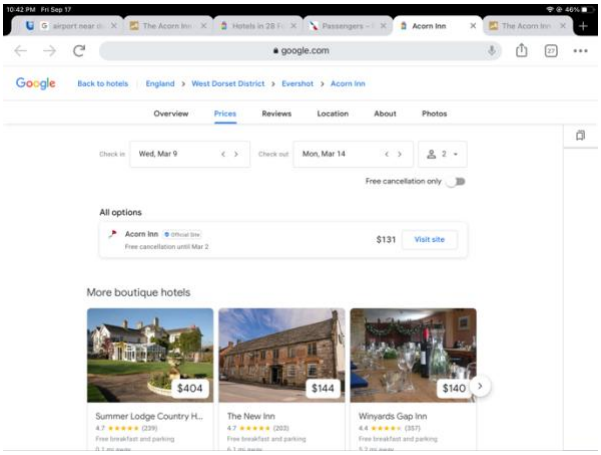
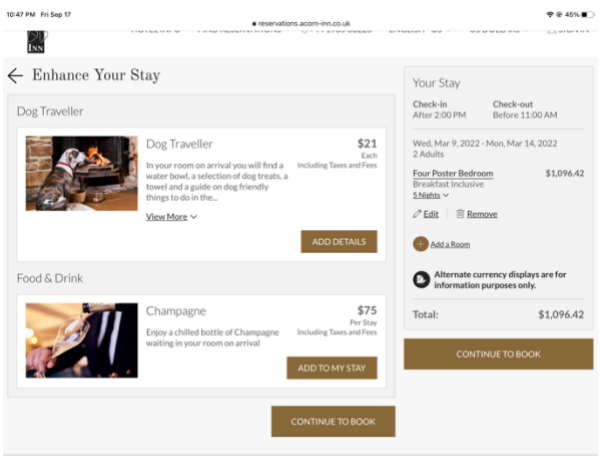
Hotel reservation: The Acorn Inn (Dorchester), Park International Hotel (London)

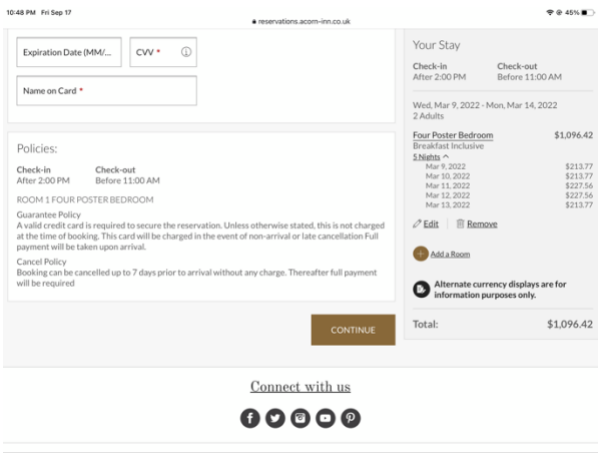
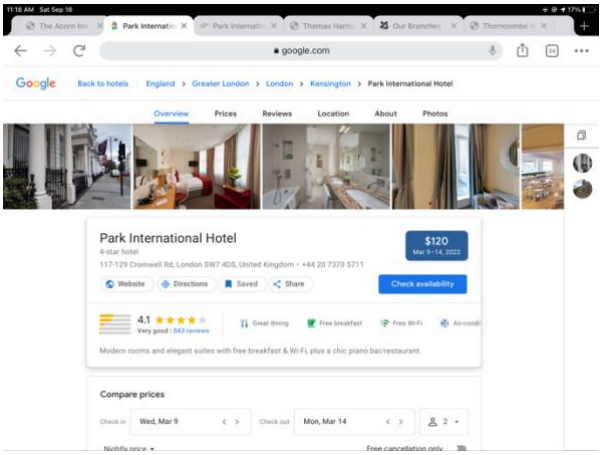
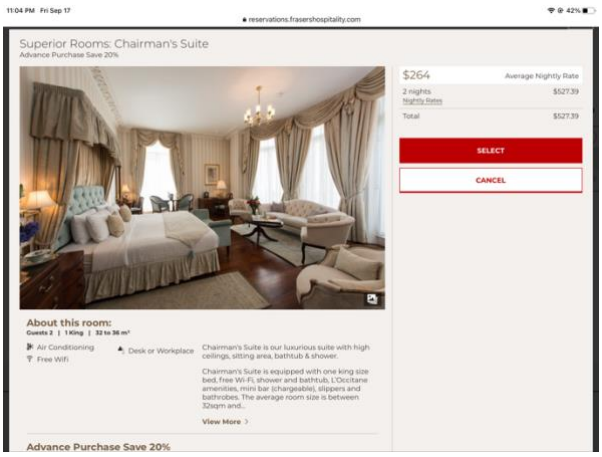
The Acorn Inn is a premier location and while it is not the 5-star hotel I would have selected; it is a 4-star hotel with the Thomas Hardy experience.

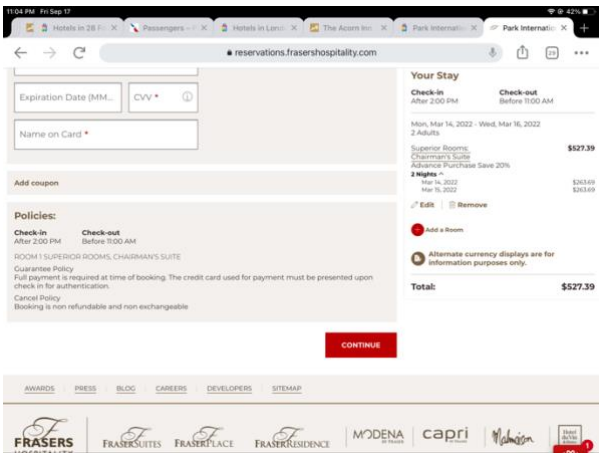
The inn also features an on-site restaurant which I figured would be a huge help in making sure I was fed safely this trip. I have multiple food allergies and on a previous trip to London, we discovered that eating is a challenge. I still shake my head the day we saw the McDonalds. It was the most expensive and absolute worst McDonald's food I have ever eaten, but that meal I did not have to worry about what things were lurking in my food. As a result of previous experience, I based some decisions on safe-food availability.

I opted for a 5 night stay in Dorchester due to schedules to get back to London. It was easiest to cut Dorchester short and stay a couple of days in London to meet the assignment guidelines.

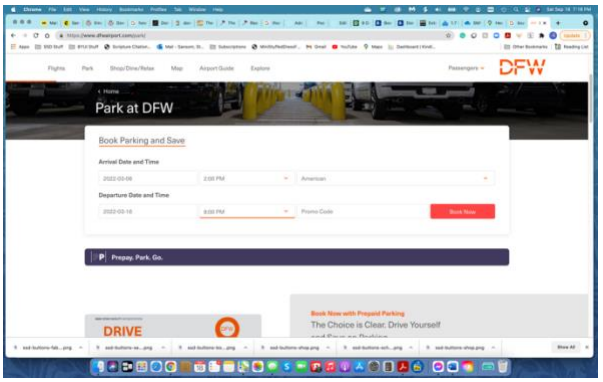
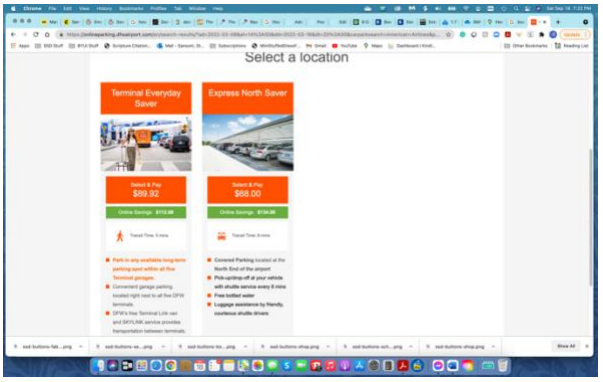
A quick Google search helped me find the perfect hotel – the one mentioned in the book Tess of the D'Ubervilles.	
I saw that Google had its own trip planning platform. I switched to help keep things straight and in one place. I like quick and easy access to information. This also offered me suggestions on things to see and places to visit.	

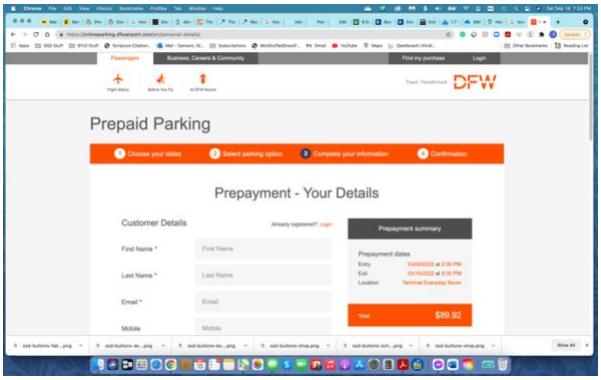
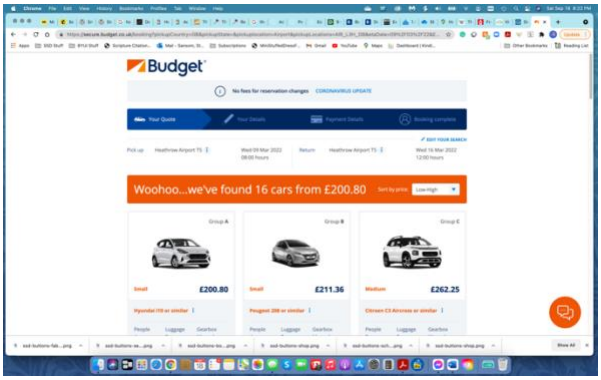
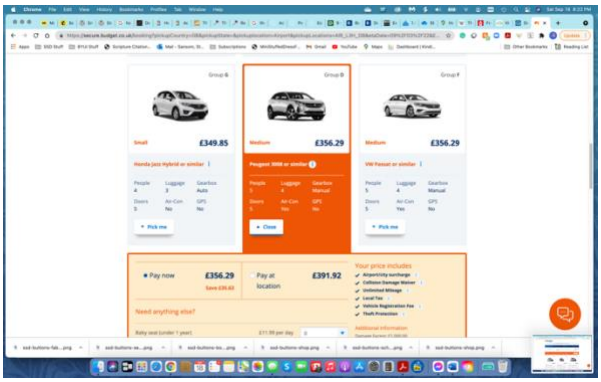
Selecting the Dorchester Hotel – The Acorn Inn This hotel, I had to search on the hotel website to get the information I needed. This hotel was further away from attractions than anticipated but is near a bus stop. However, I decided it was easiest to rent a car for personal reasons. This offers more flexibility for health concerns.	
The Acorn Inn Website I truly enjoyed this website. From a user standpoint it was easy to navigate and find what I needed. From a design standpoint it was aesthetically pleasing. I was quickly able to compare the rooms and figure out what each of the options meant.	
Selecting the room – The Four Poster Bedroom Breakfast Inclusive package. This package includes a full 3-course English breakfast each morning. This allows me to have a leisurely vacation without having to get up early to find a suitable eatery. The hotel was quick to try and “upsell” my room reservation. I declined.	

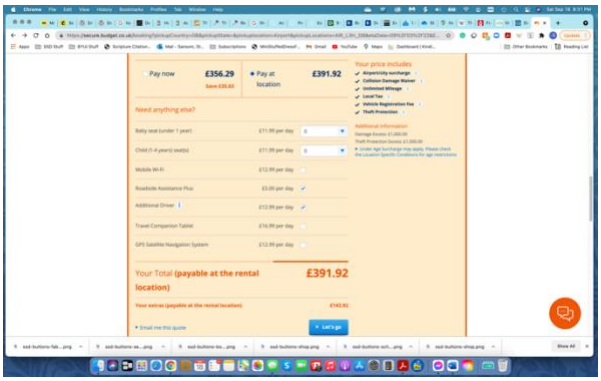
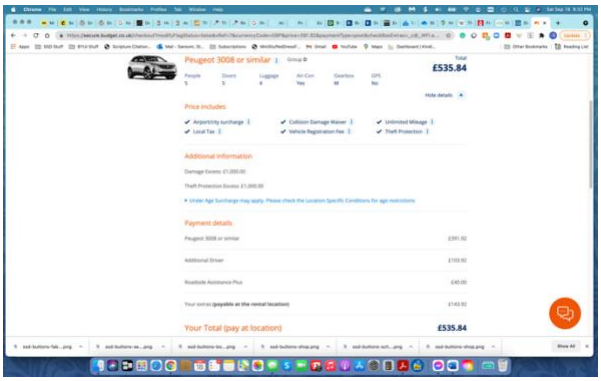
Booking information – I was able to expand the daily details on the reservation information. Also, under the information to guests and payment, their policies were clearly visible.	
Selecting the London Hotel – Park International Hotel I narrowed my search down to 4-star and 5-star hotels with certain features. I then selected from the list. Having stayed in London before, I viewed pictures for several hotels and went through their options. I was able to price compare on the Google Trip Planning website, but I opted to go directly to the hotel website booking to make my reservation and get additional details.	
Selecting the room – Superior Rooms: Chairman's Suite with the Advance Purchase discount (save 20%). I went with a more open and spacious feeling room based on previous experience and my claustrophobia.	

Booking information – I was able to expand the daily details on this website as well. Again, the Hotel Policies were clearly stated under the reservation purchase form.	

Transportation: Own Vehicle with airport parking. Rental Car.

Travel to and from DFW Airport Own vehicle. Park in airport. We reside outside of taxi service range, and it is very costly to use Uber or Lyft to our house. It is cheaper to just park the car at the airport.	
Booking Parking at DFW Airport – You save up to 50% off terminal parking if you pre-pay. According to this we actually save more than 50% on our parking package. We also have Dallas Toll Tags that allow us to easily pay entrance and exit from the airport as well as pay for our parking automatically with our tag.	

Prepaid Parking at DFW Airport For the slightly more than the cost of a one-way Uber ride we have paid for parking for 8 days of Airport Terminal Parking.	
Rental Car – Budget Heathrow Airport I selected my basic specifications based on travel dates. I had to guess which location, but this works for estimating.	
Rental Car – Selection	

Rental Car Budget was quick to “upsell” me on a lot of features. I did add the additional driver and roadside assistance.	
Rental Car – Estimated Cost I had to manually calculate the amount in USD - $741.46. Fortunately, we have a credit card that handles all the currency exchange non-sense for us so knowing exactly was not a huge concern.	

Three activities: Thomas Hardy tourist stuff

Day 1 – March 8 – Travel from DFW to London.

Day 2 – March 9 – Happy Birthday, Travel from London to Dorchester. Rest.

Day 3 – March 10 – **Thomas Hardy Statue, Dorset Museum, Hangman’s Cottage, Thomas Hardy Explorer**

Day 4 – March 11 – **National Trust Max Gate**

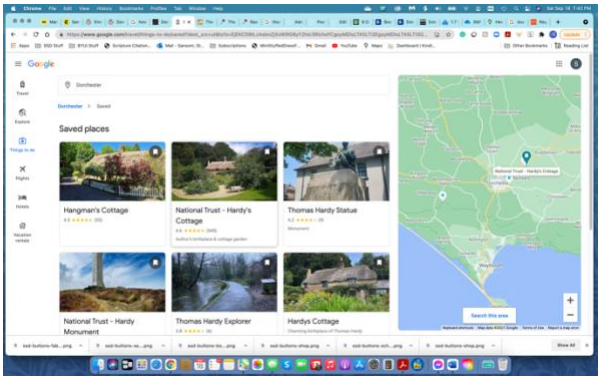
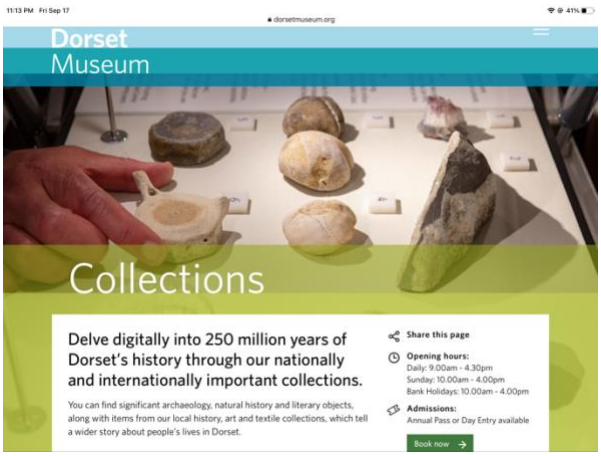
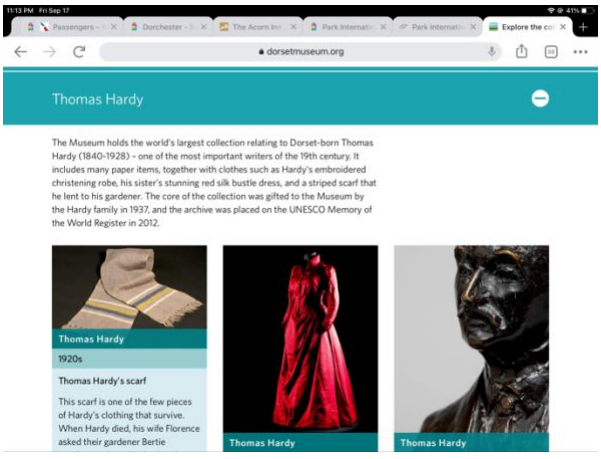
Day 5 – March 12 – **National Trust Hardy’s Cottage**

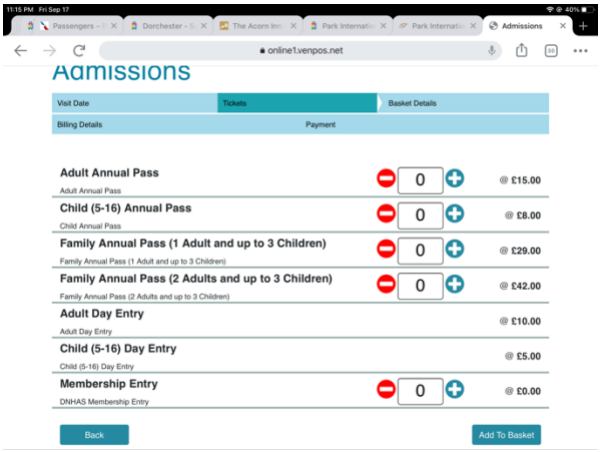
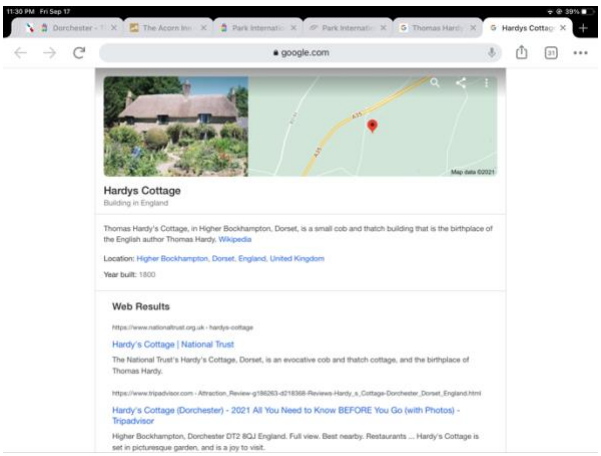
Day 6 – March 13 – **National Trust Hardy Monument**

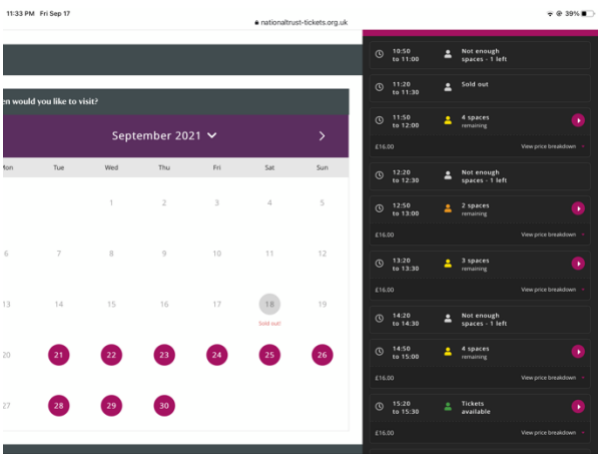
Day 7 – March 14 – Travel from Dorchester to London. Rest.

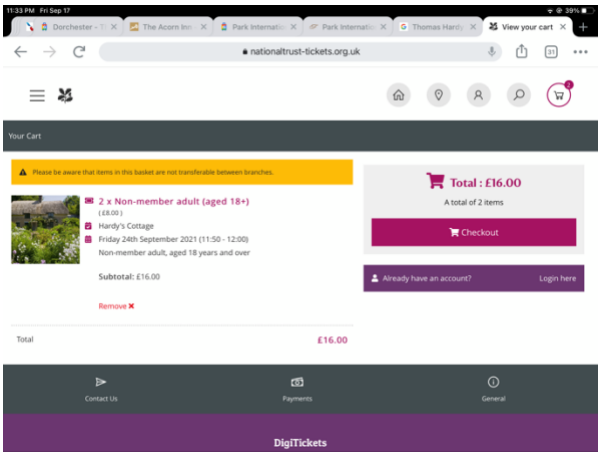
Day 8 – March 15 – Harrod’s

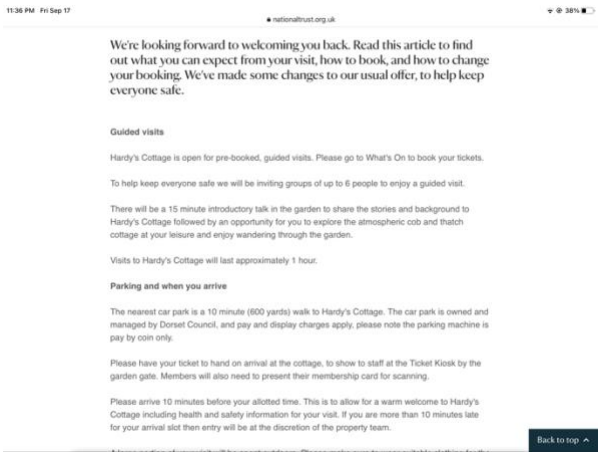
Day 9 – March 16 – Travel from London to DFW.

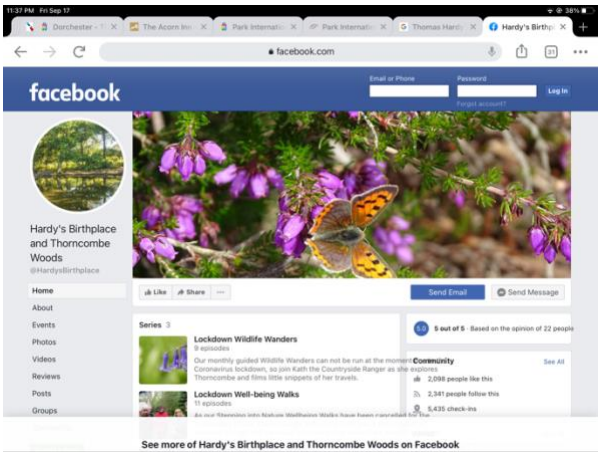
Selecting Activities – Saved Options with Map Google made this selection very fast and helped me visualize where things were.	
Dorset Museum – Checking which exhibits are available or will be available.	
Dorset Museum – Thomas Hardy Exhibit The website had a nice overview of the exhibit.	

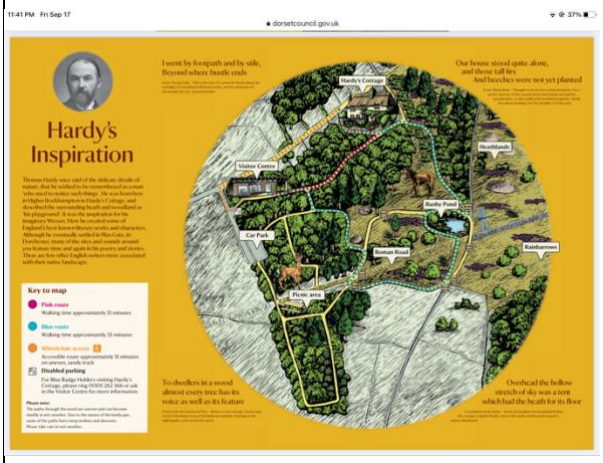
Dorset Museum – Booking Exhibit Tickets Looks like day passes are at entrance, need to allow extra time. By providing the information for all tickets, it could be tempting to simply purchase annual passes to have them already in hand upon arrival.	
The Google Trip Planner – Additional Information The trip planner made it easy to find the information needed to plan activities.	
National Trust Hardy's Cottage	


nationaltrust-tickets.org.uk
September 2021
10:50 to 11:00
Not enough spaces - 1 left
11:20 to 11:30
Sold out
11:50 to 12:00
4 spaces remaining
12:20 to 12:30
Not enough spaces - 1 left
12:50 to 13:00
2 spaces remaining
13:20 to 13:30
3 spaces remaining
14:20 to 14:30
Not enough spaces - 1 left
14:50 to 15:00
4 spaces remaining
15:20 to 15:30
Tickets available


nationaltrust-tickets.org.uk
Your Cart
Please be aware that items in this basket are not transferable between branches.
2 x Non-member adult (aged 18+)
Hardy's Cottage
Friday 24th September 2021 (11:50 - 12:00)
Non-member adult, aged 18 years and over
Subtotal: £16.00
Remove
Total
£16.00
Total : £16.00
A total of 2 items
Checkout
Already have an account?
Login here
Contact Us
Payments
General
DigiTickets


nationaltrust.org.uk
We're looking forward to welcoming you back. Read this article to find out what you can expect from your visit, how to book, and how to change your booking. We've made some changes to our usual offer, to help keep everyone safe.
Guided visits
Hardy's Cottage is open for pre-booked, guided visits. Please go to What's On to book your tickets.
To help keep everyone safe we will be inviting groups of up to 6 people to enjoy a guided visit.
There will be a 15 minute introductory talk in the garden to share the stories and background to Hardy's Cottage followed by an opportunity for you to explore the atmospheric cob and thatch cottage at your leisure and enjoy wandering through the garden.
Visits to Hardy's Cottage will last approximately 1 hour.
Parking and when you arrive
The nearest car park is a 10 minute (600 yards) walk to Hardy's Cottage. The car park is owned and managed by Dorset Council, and pay and display charges apply, please note the parking machine is pay by coin only.
Please have your ticket to hand on arrival at the cottage, to show to staff at the Ticket Kiosk by the garden gate. Members will also need to present their membership card for scanning.
Please arrive 10 minutes before your allotted time. This is to allow for a warm welcome to Hardy's Cottage including health and safety information for your visit. If you are more than 10 minutes late for your arrival slot then entry will be at the discretion of the property team.
Back to top


facebook
Hardy's Birthplace and Thorncombe Woods
@HardysBirthplace
Home
About
Events
Photos
Videos
Reviews
Posts
Groups
Send Email
Send Message
Lockdown Wildlife Wanders
Lockdown Well-being Walks
See more of Hardy's Birthplace and Thorncombe Woods on Facebook


Hardy's Inspiration
Key to map
Visitor Centre
Car Park
Picnic area
Roman Road
Rainbarrows
Hardy's Cottage
Heathlands
Rushy Pond