



Only on foot
Sunrise over Colmer's Hill



Acclaimed landscape photographer **James Osmond** reveals his favourite views and the walks that take him to them, so you can follow in his footsteps.

THE LOCATION

Colmer's Hill is a flat-topped, conical hill sitting above the village of Symondsburry in Dorset. You wouldn't have thought that a hill standing a mere 125m tall could be so conspicuous, but Colmer's Hill is something of a local icon. Its unusual shape is further emphasised by the charming clump of pine trees on its summit (planted during the First World War), while its position on the southern edge of the low-lying Marshwood Vale means it can be seen for miles around. In my opinion though, it is best viewed from its larger neighbour, Quarry Hill, as you see here.

THE WALK

Setting off along the track from Symondsburry in the twilight of pre-dawn, I was soon enclosed between high banks of sandstone into which generations of walkers have carved their names. Even in midday sunshine this is a shady spot, but with 20 minutes until sunrise, it was almost pitch black. I often find myself walking in the dark when I'm trying to get to a remote location by sunrise. It adds to the suspense and when I finally arrive and see the view, it is all the more amazing for not having seen much of my surroundings on the way in.

THE PHOTOGRAPH

The north side of Quarry Hill is access land. I wanted to capture Colmer's Hill nestled in the surrounding landscape, with its distinctive profile silhouetted against the pale mist, so I had to be high enough for the clump of trees to appear below the horizon. Then I waited for the sun to appear and complete the picture.

WALK HERE!

Quarry Hill and Colmer's Hill can be visited via the lanes leading west from Symondsburry. A footpath behind Quarr Lane Farm flanks Quarry Hill to the access land on the north top (grid reference SY434936), where James took his picture. Colmer's Hill is on a private estate and has no public access, but with a courtesy call to the estate on 01304 424116, walkers may climb it from the gate on Shute Lane. The estate offers farmhouse accommodation; see symondsburryestateholidays.co.uk

Factfile

Location: Quarry Hill, Dorset
 OS Grid Reference: SY4393
 Date: 6.30am, May 16th, 2012
 James' book **Somerset and Bristol** (£17) is available now at franceslincoln.com