

WORDS **CLAIRE WILLIAMS**

The enchanted coastline along our shores is home to a range of picturesque spots to visit.

You could chose to go eastwards towards Christchurch, Mudeford Spit and the Solent, with numerous harbours, sandy creeks and inlets to explore, or go westwards to Poole Harbour, Sandbanks, Swanage, Weymouth and beyond, following the spectacular craggy Jurassic coast.

The Dorset coast has many areas that are important for wildlife and birds and various beaches are owned by the

National Trust. Along the coast there is a choice of stunning beaches to

Set sail along

visit by foot, or take in the views out on the open water. Weymouth and Portland is famed for its excellent Olympic sailing facilities. Indeed, Dorset is a hot spot for boating enthusiasts, so where can you venture to? Here are some of the best places on the map.

Sights to see:

Studland: Studland's sandy beaches (Shell Bay, Knoll Beach, Middle Beach and South Beach) are owned and managed by the

National Trust.

Shell Bay is the start of the 630 mile south west coast path national trail. Old Harry Rocks near South Beach mark the end of the Jurassic coast.

There is a naturist area on Knoll Beach and swimming-only zones are found in the summer at Knoll and South beaches. Watersport hire is available and there is a designated area for kite surfing (permit required).

At Middle Beach a slipway is available for use (charge payable). There is a Kayak

Lulworth Cove

the Dorset coast

Trail at Middle Beach. The shortest route to get to the beaches from Poole and Bournemouth is via the Sandbanks Ferry. Alternatively, reach Studland with a scenic bike ride.

Swanage: Home to a glorious sandy beach with all the facilities of a seaside town – owned and managed by Swanage town council.

Various watersports, boat trips and boat hire are available. The Steam Railway runs between Norden Park and Ride, Corfe

Castle, Harman's Cross, Herston and Swanage with lots of room for bikes, pushchairs, buckets and spades – visit swanagerailway.co.uk.

Weymouth: The area is known for having one of the largest professional charter angling fleets operating out of a British harbour. There are plenty of launching areas should you choose to bring your own boat. Chesil Beach is a popular spot for shore anglers of all abilities.

Lulworth Cove: Lulworth Cove is part of

the Lulworth Estate. A shingle beach is located in West Lulworth. The Cove offers a variety of places to eat and there is a large car park (charge payable).

Boat trips and guided kayak tours are available at certain times of the year.

Hengistbury Head/Muddeford Spit: The historic scenic headland divides Poole Bay from Christchurch Bay.

Walk to the top of the headland for sweeping views of the coastline. You can even take the Noddy train if the picnic gear is too heavy. ►



Studland Bay

◀ National Trust's Brownsea Island:

Only a short boat ride from Poole Quay or Sandbanks, the island has woods, heath, fields, cliffs, beaches and views across the harbour to Purbeck. Private boats cannot moor here.

World Oceans Day Cruise: Enjoy a boat trip through Poole Harbour to Swanage and beyond. Experts will guide you point out wildlife and talk through Studland's seahorses, Dulston's dolphins, Brownsea's seabirds along the way. Departs from Poole Quay.

For ticket information visit dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk. ●



Make the most of your day out on the water

Chris White, Operations Manager at Parkstone Bay Marina, offers some itinerary ideas to get you on your way:

Poole: Enjoy a chilled glass of champagne as you gently cruise the Wareham River heading for lunch on the quant town quay – The Old Granary pub on the quay is highly recommended. After lunch enjoy a relaxed cruise enjoying all of Poole harbour's natural beauty, look forward to stopping and anchoring behind the harbour's iconic Brownsea Island, before heading back to the marina.

Isle of Wight: Cruise across Bournemouth Bay heading for a waterside lunch in one the island's wonderful restaurants. After lunch take an afternoon cruise back across the bay and anchor behind Brownsea Island, before heading back to Parkstone Bay Marina.

Parkstone Bay Marina: You can moor up here as a visitor and go to the Marina's cafe



Studland: The walk along the cliffs to Old Harry Rocks is hugely popular. The best views are from the top of Ballard Down, but probably best to eat the picnic at the bottom of the hill.

The Bankes Arms: You can't land here

but you can moor up nearby and see the sites. Enjoy views of the sea and the Isle of Wight. The Pig on the Beach is a new hotel opening at Studland Bay soon.

● To find out more visit parkstonebay.com or parkstonebaycharters.co.uk