

## CEC Walking Weekend 2024

The 10th annual Walking Weekend Event was held in Purbeck, Dorset this year.

The event started on Friday afternoon at Swanage Railway Station where Gavin Johns, Chair of The Swanage Railway Co. met the group for a train ride to Norden which was pulled by a steam locomotive.

Gavin told us about the history of the railway and some of the operational problems. The line extends to Wareham, but it does not operate a service between Swanage and Wareham since it is unable to compete with a subsidised bus service of £2.

The group was given a private guided tour around the Clay Mine at Norden, where some of the mining equipment and a reconstructed mine were on display. Clay is still mined in the area and used to make China pottery and exported to Spain for tiles manufacture.

Upon leaving the mine we walked to Corfe (0.8 mile), to relax and enjoy some refreshments. Some of the group climbed the mound to visit the ruins of Corfe Castle and enjoy some fantastic views.

The trip finished with a visit to the signal box at Corfe Castle Station and a train ride back to Swanage.

The day finished with an excellent meal at Tawny's Restaurant in the town.

The walk on Saturday started at Broad Road Car Park for a circular route which had many points of interest and fantastic views along the coast line, a coffee break at Durlston Castle with its own interesting information centre including Burt's Globe, and a buffet style lunch in The King's Arms at Langton Matravers. Distance approx. 8 miles.

In the evening there was a convivial dinner at La Trattoria Restaurant.

On Sunday there was a shorter circular walk starting from the National Trust carpark at Middle Beach, Studland. The route took us by Fort Henry, where Winston Churchill, was joined by King George VI, Supreme Allied commander Dwight D. Eisenhower, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery and Acting Admiral Louis Mountbatten to witness Operation Smash, the largest live ammunition practice of the entire war, the iconic 'Old Harry' formation, and along Purbeck Way with stunning 360deg views, before descending back to Studland with brief visit to the unique Romanesque Norman building of St Nicholas church. Lunch was at Bankes Arms Inn on the way back to the carpark. Distance approx. 4 miles

A total of 25 people took part in the walks.

Thanks to Peter and Fiona Ahm for making the arrangements for such a brilliant weekend, and thanks to everybody who joined us.

Tony Barber

June 2024



