

# DORSET AND THE SEA

Gordon Le Pard

Dorset is a maritime county with a long and varied coastline, and a long and complex history. Some aspects of this past are well known, others less so but all are equally fascinating, from the three thousand year old carving of a ship, which was found in Wales, but which depicts a vessel from Dorset, to the vicious pirates which infested the Isle of Purbeck. From the unlikely heroes who swept these pirates from the sea, to the merchants who sailed to Africa and brought gold and ivory to the tiny port of Lyme Regis.

Even aspects of the coast that may seem dull, such as sea defences and land reclamation, can have an amazing history. From the first attempts to keep back the sea in the 770s, to the grandiose scheme nine hundred years later to drain the Fleet Lagoon, to the military men who turned their skills at fighting the French to fighting the sea, and who rebuilt the Cobb at Lyme Regis so that it has stood firm for two hundred years, the story is intriguing and exciting.

Finally this book can suggest where you can see, perhaps surprising, traces of the coast's remarkable past. Evidence of the Black Death, which entered Britain at Weymouth in 1348, carvings of the ships which took the stone to pave London's streets, or the many different lifeboat stations at Lyme Regis (and the curious fate of the earliest). *Dorset and the Sea* tells the remarkable story of possibly Dorset's greatest natural resource and the relationship that Man has had with it over the millennia.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

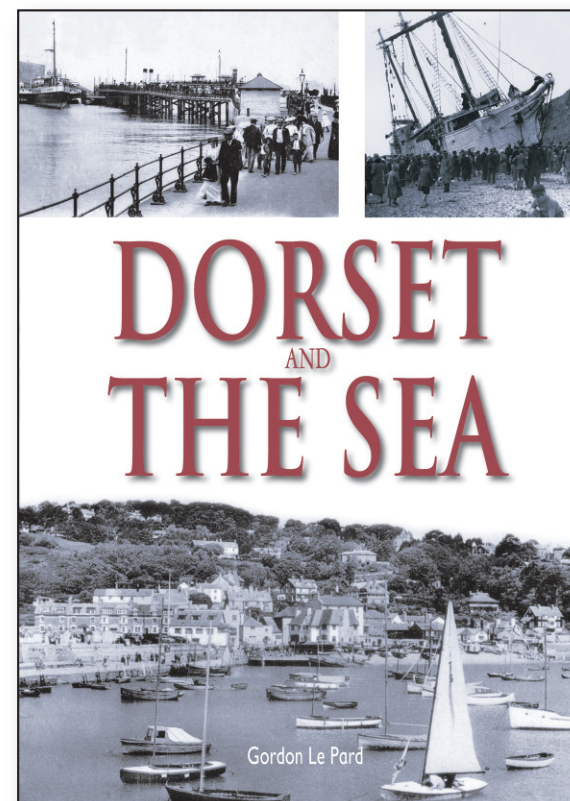
Gordon Le Pard is a maritime archaeologist who has been exploring the Dorset Coast all his life, and knows it well in all its moods. He has been researching and writing about the coast for many years on subjects as varied as storms and sea marks, shipwrecks and fossil beavers.

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A Second World War coastal pillbox.

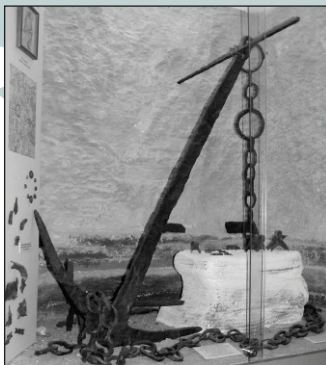


The Victorian Weymouth Bridge with a swinging central section.

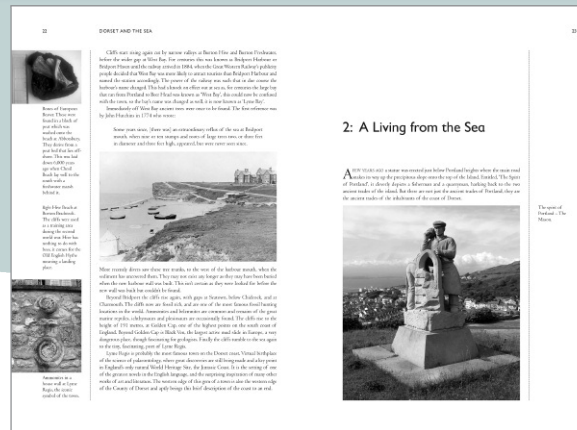
Right: Paddle steamer excursions from Weymouth to beauty spots such as Lulworth Cove were extremely popular from the late nineteenth century until the 1950s.



Below: The Bulbury Anchor, the oldest anchor ever found in Britain.



Right: Example of a double-page spread.



A Victorian view of the Battle of Portland.



Fishing for Mackerel along Chesil Beach. This scene didn't change for centuries. It was described by Daniel Defoe at the beginning of the eighteenth century and photographed at the beginning of the twentieth.