

DISCOVER POOLE

AND THE MAIN PLACES OF INTEREST
IN THE ISLE OF PURBECK, WAREHAM
AND WIMBORNE MINSTER

Rodney Cooper

Whilst Bournemouth is a relatively modern town with a history dating back only 200 years, the history of Poole dates from much earlier times, as do all of the villages mentioned in this book.

Poole itself has many interesting ancient buildings on and around the quay and villas built at the height of the town's wealth. From the quay, boats leave to Brownsea Island, Wareham and along the Purbeck coast to the World Heritage Site of the Jurassic Coast. Poole's beaches are amongst the best in the country, whilst the shallow harbour is ideal for water sports.

The chain ferry from the Haven Hotel offers an interesting introduction to the Isle of Purbeck where there are excellent country, cliff and beach walks suitable for both beginners and experienced walkers. The old villages of Langton Matravers, Worth Matravers and Kingston retain much of the charm of past eras, as does the ghost village of Tyneham. Not to be missed is a visit to the village of Corfe Castle - its castle was one of the finest in England until blown up by the Parliamentarians during the Civil War and now offers an imposing ruin.

Wareham with the remains of its earth walls and its Saxon church is fascinating and well worth a visit. Lawrence of Arabia's connection to the town is much in evidence and a trip to the area would not be complete without a visit to Clouds Hill Cottage, the beautiful church at Moreton and the world famous Tank Museum at Bovington.

To the north of the Purbeck Peninsula is the town of Wimborne Minster with its historical church. Nearby is Kingston Lacy House with its outstanding collection of paintings and beautiful grounds.

The entire area is fascinating with beautiful countryside, charming villages and old churches. In this new volume in Halsgrove's colourful Discover series, Rod Cooper explores the highways and byways of the town and its environs to produce a fascinating picture and indispensable guide to one of the most popular locations in the British Isles.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

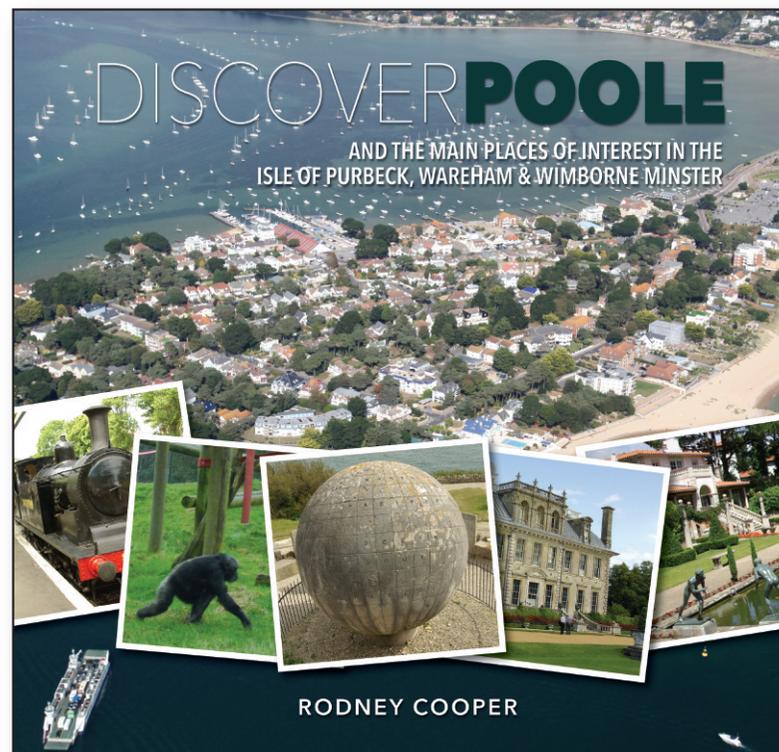
Rodney Cooper was born in 1940 and after graduating went teaching in Kenya at the time of the country's independence. On returning to England he continued his studies and gained a doctorate following research in cryogenics. After a spell in industry he returned to teaching, including in Hong Kong where Rod taught first at a Polytechnic and then started a teacher training college. Following early retirement he set up a company introducing overseas students to U.K. colleges and universities. Rod and his wife retired to Bournemouth in 2005 and both are Bournemouth Councillors. He has published numerous scientific papers and written three previous books – the predecessor to this volume, *Discover Bournemouth*, having been published last year – and one film on Technical Education.

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POOLE PARK

In 1875 Lord Wimborne of Cardinal Magna gave 110 acres of land to the Poole Corporation for establishing "People's Park". The park was opened five years later by the Prince of Wales. A violent storm on the opening day destroyed the specially built pavilion and the Prince had to decline the first offer from the banking office at Poole Station, before re-boarding his train back to London. The lake was formed when an embankment was constructed to build the mainline railway between London and Weymouth which cut off part of the bay of Poole Harbour. Since then, and over a number of years, the park has been turned into a recreation area suitable for both residents and tourists. The most recent change is that the lake now has five islands similar in shape to the main islands in Poole Harbour. The lake is salt water and a sluice is opened regularly to ensure the water remains clean. The road to the south entrance of the park goes under the railway lines and the bridge was built just wide enough to take a horse and carriage. The entrance has elaborate gates with stone eagles surmounting tops of pillars. There is a lovely cottage at the north entrance.

The lake has a wealth of aquatic birds including many ducks, swans and Canada geese - the latter can number in excess of 500 at peak times. The geese were introduced to the park in the 1930s and their main food is the grass. However they produce droppings every

30 minutes and this creates serious problems for the park keepers in trying to keep the grass and pathways clear. There are demands for them to be culled. Visitors are requested not to feed them.

A miniature railway, close to the cricket pitch, has been running since 1959. Initially it was feared that it would not only spoil the tranquility of the park but also disturb the wildfowl. The 7 mile, 10½" track circles the freshwater lake. The first locomotive was a two-ton steam engine but the regular coal fired steam train stopped in 1963 in favour of diesel although it is hoped soon to purchase a new steam engine. The carriages had to be widened for Ronnie Barker when they were used for one of Ronnie Barker's TV sketches. (Tel: 07947 846262).

Poole Sailing Yacht Club operates from Poole Park within a 300x200 metre enclosure. The depth of the lake in this region is one metre. Activities take place most days starting at 10:00 with racing on Sundays. Tel: 01202 623669. Other facilities in the park include a bowling green, tennis courts, mini pitch and putt, play area with swings, slides, tennis courts, and cycle track, all of which can be enjoyed by the casual visitor. A recent addition is a purpose-built boat house for the hire of rowing boats, kayaks or punts, or water cushions of short courses in sailing and windsurfing. There is a one-third mile cycle track encircling the cricket pitch.

"Central Park", on the edge of the fresh water lake, houses the Crown Continental Café bar, an indoor ice rink, and Gies Gurdle's Jungle Playground. The playground includes a spiral slide, ball pool, dog slide, ball cannon and hot air blower. Both the ice rink and playground are open seven days a week from 10:00 - 18:00. In February 2009 a 12-metre high, illuminated concrete fountain was installed in the lake in front of the Mezza Luna Italian restaurant.

Poole Park, Poole, Dorset BH1 5 2JF Tel: 01202 717197. No vehicular access from 04.00 - 10.00 Monday - Saturday.

For directions see page 13.

Example of a double-page spread.



Badbury Rings