

THE ISLE OF PURBECK IN PEN & INK

Roy Carr

The Isle of Purbeck is a fascinating part of Dorset which is a little paradise and a delight to both local people and visitors.

This easy-to-read book is full of all the information needed to offer the reader, or would-be explorer, a feel for an island full of beauty, history, archaeology, architecture, mystery and legend.

As armchair reading, it is designed to inspire the wish to discover new places or capture memories and in the field it is an essential companion for a walk. It is especially useful as a guide to new visitors.

The book embraces the magnificent Jurassic Coast from its sandy beaches to its cave-ridden limestone and chalk cliffs, broken only by sheltered caves. Inland, the ridges, valleys and rolling heartland offer picturesque views and are a haven for wildlife. Iconic, stone-built villages abound, most with accompanying church and manor house, adding their own characteristics to the surrounding countryside.

Many are depicted in over 300 meticulous illustrations and maps for which an explanation is given in hand-written text.

The drawings were created from the author's direct experience of countless walks and thorough investigation of Purbeck over a number of years.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Roy Carr is a native of Lancashire but has lived in Dorset for over forty years. He has always drawn and painted, studying at the Salford College of Art.

In 1959 he enlisted in the Royal Marines and served for twenty-five years during which he was posted in the Mediterranean, Middle East, Singapore and the West Indies.

On retirement he ran a Commercial Art Studio for ten years before becoming a lecturer and tutor in Art for Dorset County Council.

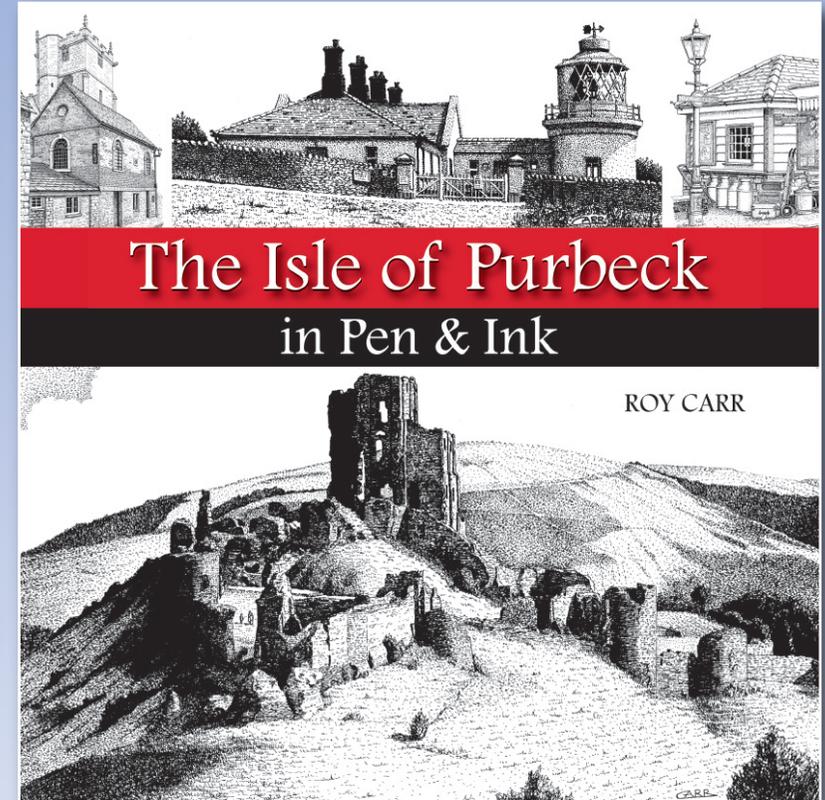
A keen walker, his favourite areas are Purbeck, Dartmoor and the Lake District.

He now serves as Chairman of the East Dorset Brave Art Society.

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Examples of double-page spreads.

Studland When entering the Isle of Purbeck via the Sandbanks Ferry you disembark at South Haven Point, the northernmost tip of Shell Bay and the Studland peninsula.

For those intrepid walkers with enough dedication and stamina, this is also the starting point of the South West Coastal Path. This 630 mile long and arduous route follows the shoreline through Dorset, Devon and Cornwall before ending at Minehead in Somerset.




The Shell Café

If your fancy is for a more leisurely lifestyle, just across the road is the famous Shell Café. Not surprisingly, this fine establishment specialises in seafood and offers excellent views across Poole Harbour.



A few yards up the road, you will reach a set of toll gates, not for admission to the way ahead, but to pay for your ferry crossing. To the right is an area called Bramble Bush Bay, black and bordered by mud flats. Here can be found traces of over seventy circles, mounds and standing stones, thought to date from the Bronze or Iron Age.

The road continues between Studland Heath and the lagoon known as Little Sea and it is two miles before you come to the first substantial building, the Knoll House Hotel. Surrounded by heathland, hills and cliffs, together with 3 miles of glorious beaches, Studland has given rise to a wealth of holiday accommodation. Though it does not cater for caravans or camping, there are cottages to rent and three very good hotels.



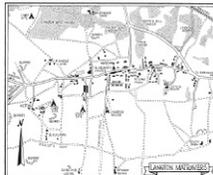
The Toll Gates



Pleasantly sited on the edge of the heath and close to the beach, the Knoll House Hotel has a high reputation for its friendly, family orientated atmosphere. With local strong associations with the authors H.G. Wells, Thomas Hardy and Enid Blyton, I particularly like the description by one guest who said they stay west like "...a return to Neverland".

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Langton Matravers



Situated just to the west of Swanage, Langton Matravers owed its medieval exposure to the stone trade and is the largest village on Purbeck associated with quarrying.

The name Langton meaning 'long-farm' describes it perfectly, for it consists of one street nearly a mile in length. Constructed almost entirely of local stone, few of its buildings are older than the 18th century.

The addition of Matravers to the name of the village came from the Matravers family who became Lords of the Manor in the 13th century. One of its members, Sir John Matravers, was implicated in the gruesome murder of King Edward II at Berkeley Castle in September 1327. Although strangely suspected, he was never formally accused.



Arms of the Matravers Family

High Street Cottages



Close to the centre of the village, the Kings Arms was named after George III who popularized the Dorset Coast. Though he never visited Langton, it was originally licensed in 1742 as the Masons Arms and refurbished during the 19th century when the porch was added.



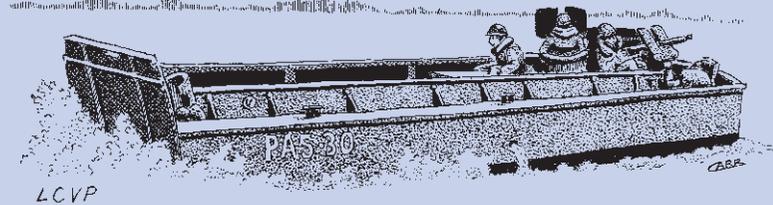
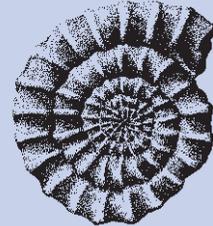
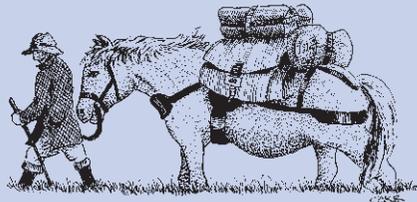
The Kings Arms

Nearby, at the bottom of the High Street is Putlake Farm. Built in the 18th century, this cottage and barn were originally outbuildings of the larger Langton Manor Farm, across the road. Now independent, it is a working farm which has diversified into an 'Adventure Centre' for children. It offers a pet centre, go-karts, tractor rides and a maze, whilst the cottage is now a tea-room and shop.



Putlake Farm

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Margaret Green Animal Rescue Centre

Established in 1965, this sanctuary is the oldest animal welfare organisation in Dorset. As a registered charity, it relies solely on donations from visitors, though entry and parking are free. The Reception Centre is welcoming and full of information, souvenirs, a gift shop and a tea room.



Reception and Shop

Set in picturesque scenery, the centre takes in every kind of animal. The sole aim of the staff and volunteers is to rescue, nurture and hopefully rehouse the creatures in their care. During one visit I was lucky enough to find a farrier busy at work, a rare opportunity to observe an age old craft in action.



The Stables



The Farrier



Corfe Castle Village

Below the ruins of its famous fortress, Corfe Castle is described as one of the most beautiful villages in Britain, and is known throughout the world. Its charm and varied past ensure a constant flow of tourists, writers and historians whilst artists and photographers find inspiration wherever they look.



The site of the village has been occupied for thousands of years, a fact borne out by a line of eight Bronze Age burial mounds which are sited on the common, together with traces of Celtic field systems. The findings of a Roman villa, were also discovered in the area.

From the 12th century, Corfe built a reputation as the centre of stoneworking on Purbeck, the raw materials being dragged on horse-drawn sleds from the local quarries. The village is built almost entirely of this warm, grey stone, its buildings lining East and West Streets which meet at the tiny inclined Market Square by the castle entrance.



Entrance to the Village

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Arne - 'a Saxon quiet place'



The northern shore of Purbeck, opening on to Poole Harbour, consists of a huge heath-covered peninsula. At its centre, on a low hill, is the tiny hamlet of Arne, surrounded by some of the few fields to be found in the parish. Originally belonging to the Abbey of Shaftesbury, the name comes from the Saxon words 'aerne' or 'aern' which means 'house' or 'secret place'.



Roe Deer

A common sight on the peninsula, especially in the early morning and evenings, is scores of Roe Deer. They are very used to human contact and, with care, are very approachable.

If lucky, you may spot the rarer Sika Deer which, having been introduced to Brownsea Island in 1896, have migrated to Arne.

Besides its wildlife and natural beauty, Arne is also famous as the home of the first on-shore oil drilling development based at Wytkin Farm.



RSPB Information Centre

Arne is a Nature Reserve and, on the approach to the village is a car park and Information Centre run by the RSPB. The reserve covers some 12,000 acres across which is a network of paths which take you over heathland, through woods and to the coastal areas.

There is a lookout point on a large mound which offers wonderful views over the bay and Purbeck countryside. Wildlife is abundant and you can observe breeds such as the Linnet, Yellow Hammer, Hawks and the rare Dartford Warbler.



Dartford Warbler

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