

TRADE BLOG

The England's Coast & TUI Wolter's FAM trip – June 2019



Land, Sea and Tracks

What better way to discover the Jurassic coastline than sweeping along in an open-top bus, riding the waves or puffing through the Dorset countryside on a classic steam train? And that's exactly what we offered our TUI guests on our latest fam trip.

With the sun beaming down on us, I joined Viktoria, Anne, Miriam, Asja and Laura on their first morning for a peaceful stroll on the promenade at Bournemouth beach, one of the South Coast's finest, with seven sandy miles, four Blue Flags and two Piers. We ambled down Bournemouth Pier, a quintessential British seaside experience and one of the first pleasure piers, built in 1861.

Our pillar-box red City Sightseeing bus was due to stop at 23 sights, so we scored top-deck seats at the very front, ready to be wind-swept by the sea breeze. Up first was bustling Bournemouth Square, packed with lively shops, restaurants and BH2, the town's entertainment complex, then on to the quieter quarter of Westbourne, lined with independent fashion boutiques, cool cafés, cocktail bars and pubs.

Bournemouth is famous for its chines, deep ravine cuts leading to the sea; we were regaled with stories of pirates who smuggled their treasure through the winding paths using the tree canopies for cover. Then on to the leafy suburbs of Poole and the luxury peninsula of Sandbanks - millionaire's row - boasting some of the UK's most expensive property. Here you can hop off the bus for the chain ferry to Studland.



We left our bus at historic Poole Quay, overlooking the largest natural harbour in Europe, featuring cosy English pubs and seafood restaurants. No time for stopping however - it was time to test out our sea legs!

Along with many other routes, **City Cruises Poole** operates a one-hour boat ride from Poole Quay to the Victorian resort of Swanage, the trip guarantees several breath-taking sights.



As the boat departed Poole Harbour, we crept closer to **Brownsea Island**, famous for red squirrels, wildlife and the Scouting movement, and an ideal day-trip with a picnic.

However, the highlight of the boat trip was yet to come. We wound around the curves of the **Isle of Purbeck** where the stunning chalky white cliffs were suddenly upon us. The most famous of all, standing singular and tall, is Old Harry Rocks. This stump is the source of many myths and legends, but we learnt that thousands of years ago, Old Harry and The Needles on the Isle of Wight were linked by a line of chalk hills that eroded away during the last Ice Age.

The boat journey ended at **Swanage**, transformed during the Victorian era into a delightful seaside resort with a long beach, quaint high street of independent shops, invigorating fresh sea-air and delicious fish 'n' chips - who could resist this coastal classic - with mushy peas, of course!

Then it was time to board the **Swanage Railway** steam train! Treated to first class seating, we chugged through glorious historic Dorset countryside, appreciating its abundant wildlife, fascinating geology as well as the influence the region has on famous authors such as Enid Blyton and Thomas Hardy.

As we approached the last stop, we got a glimpse of magical **Corfe Castle** - once a royal palace and fortress, now a romantic ruin with views over the Purbeck Hills. Feeling very regal and overlooking the castle, what better way to end the perfect day than with an English cup of tea!

And if you'd like to follow in our footsteps, you can buy the whole day's activities - bus tour, cruise and the steam train all on the **Dorset Pass**

By Katy Dunnill

