

## WEST DOWN GARDENING CLUB

HOLIDAY – 2ND JUNE TO 6TH JUNE 2025

### Monday, 2<sup>nd</sup> June

Depart West Down 8.00 a.m. with pick ups at Braunton and Barnstaple stopping for a comfort break at Cullumpton before we drive on to **The Old Rectory** in Little Cheney for a walk round the garden and included refreshments. The steep paths lead to beguiling 4 acres of natural woodland with many springs, streams, 2 pools one a natural swimming pool planted with native plants. Formal front garden, designed by Arne Maynard, with pleached crabtree border, topiary and soft planting including tulips, peonies, roses and verbascums. Walled garden with informal planting, kitchen garden, orchard and 350 rose bushes for a cut flower business.

We then travel to **Dorchester** the county town of Dorset. It is a historic market town and is on the banks of the River Frome for a look round and an opportunity for lunch. Visitors find a town with one foot in the past and another firmly in the future, with some of this country's best preserved Roman ruins moments away from a thriving high street before travelling to the **Hotel Collingwood**, Bournemouth for four nights bed, breakfast and evening meals with en suite facilities. There is a choice of 'cosy' and 'signature' rooms for more space and a higher standard at an additional £25 per room per night. The Hotel has a leisure centre with indoor heated swimming pool, jacuzzi and games room. There is an extensive menu and meals are cooked fresh using local produce. There are other areas we can sit in during the evening. There is an eight minute slight incline walk up from the seafront to the hotel.



## Tuesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025

We have a free morning in **Bournemouth** with seven glorious miles of idyllic coastline, there is time for a leisurely stroll down to the promenade and a walk on the pier for a small charge. Alternatively you can walk to the shops, International Centre or gardens within about ten minutes.



After lunch we split in to two groups – one having free time in **Poole** to explore the harbour, quay and town and the other group visiting the **RNLI College** for a discovery tour to find out how the crews and lifeguards are trained with a behind the scenes 90 minutes tour.

## Wednesday, 4<sup>th</sup> June

This morning our two groups from yesterday afternoon swap over and have free time in Poole or the discovery tour.

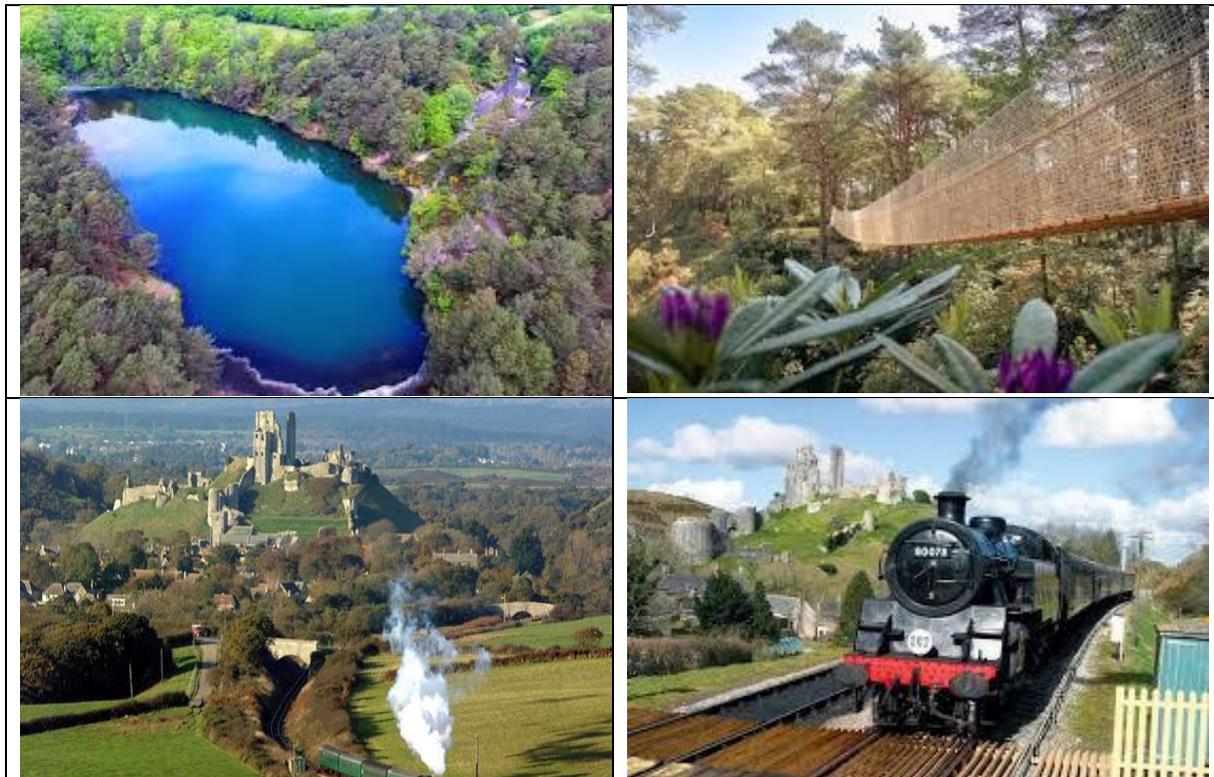
We then travel to **Bennetts Water Garden** in time for lunch and a look round the garden which is set over 8 acres and holds the National Plant Collection of Water Lilies with a Claude Monet style Japanese Bridge, Tropical House, Woodland Walks and Museum.



## Thursday, 5<sup>th</sup> June

We are off to visit the **Blue Pool Nature Reserve** this morning nestled within the Furzebrook Estate in the picturesque Isle of Purbeck. Designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the Blue Pool Nature Reserve is a sanctuary for a rich variety of flora and fauna. Once a clay pit, this site has been beautifully transformed by nature. Enjoy leisurely walks among lush trees and diverse wildlife. Are you brave enough to traverse the UK's longest rope bridge? We can have a light lunch in their Tearooms which beckon with timeless charm. Dating back to the 1930s the buildings still boast their original floors, light fittings, and Crittall windows. Step into their Art Deco adorned rooms and unwind, or dine out on the terrace overlooking The Blue Pool.

We then drive to **Swanage Steam Railway Station** where we may be able to visit their railway museum – it's only open on certain days - which tells the story of the branch line from 1885 to its closure in 1972. Dependent on next year's timetable we will catch a steam train to the ruins of Corfe Castle, a thousand-year-old royal castle shaped by warfare, a seventeen minute ride on a full-size steam passenger train. We should have time to walk around, or go in to the castle, which is a National Trust property – at your own cost, before our coach takes us back to the hotel.



## Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> June

We leave the hotel for our homeward journey stopping off at Abbotsbury Tropical Gardens a 30 acre garden filled with nearly 6,000 rare and exotic plants from all over the world. The garden was established in 1765 as a kitchen garden for the nearby castle. We have time for a walk round and lunch.



Our final part of the return journey sees us arriving at West Down at approx. 5.15 p.m. after a quick comfort stop and drop offs.

Please note that apart from the leaving times in the mornings all other times are approximate and are dependent upon traffic.