

The Evening Hill Discovery Trail

The Evening Hill Discovery Trail – A short walk around Evening Hill and Sandbanks

The trail is about 3 miles long and can be joined at any point.

Our walk starts at the Evening Hill Viewpoint. An information panel illustrates some features of interest and another board shows the places you can see. On a clear day you can see right across the Harbour to the Purbeck Hills. If you're lucky you may also see a Kestrel hovering overhead.

Behind you are small areas of Heather and Gorse, remnants of the heathland that once stretched from Christchurch to Dorchester. Can you imagine the view a thousand years ago when heathland dominated the landscape?

Now follow the fence towards Sandbanks (going to your left as you look at the harbour)

Just past the East Dorset Sailing Club you reach the harbour wall and some cast iron lamp posts dated 1895. The scallop shells decorating the posts are a symbol of pilgrimage. Poole was once on a pilgrimage route to the shrine of St. James at Santiago de Compostella in north west Spain.

Follow the sea wall until it curves round past a large area of Saltmarsh at the top of the mudflats. This is a good area for birdwatching, especially at mid-tide. Look out for the Oystercatchers with their bright orange bills. What gulls can you see?

Continue along the sea wall keeping an eye open for the birds and boats in the harbour.

Before you reach the small roundabout cross the road and walk through the car park towards Sandbanks Beach.

On your left, as you approach the beach, there are some remnants of the towering Sand Dunes that once dominated Sandbanks. The spiky Marram Grass growing on the dunes helps hold them together.

From the beach you can see Old Harry Rocks and sometimes the Needles on the Isle of Wight. Had you stood here 10,000 years ago you would have been looking across a wide valley with the River Solent flowing towards Bournemouth! Then the land would have been covered in a "wildwood".

Now follow the beach towards Bournemouth until you reach the Sandbanks Hotel. From here you can follow Shore Road back to Evening Hill. On the way you pass the entrance to Luscombe Valley Nature Reserve.

