

Studland Beach - Dorset

Sunday, 16 May 2010

General

Studland beach is located on the north-eastern tip of the part of Dorset known as the 'Isle of Purbeck', separated from Bournemouth by the entrance to Poole harbour. Easily the best-known naturist beach in the UK, it has also been voted the sixth-best beach in Britain.

The estate which owns the beach and surrounding heathland nature reserve was privately owned but has now passed into the hands of the National Trust . Studland is, for most of its length, a traditional textile beach. However, naturists have traditionally used the northernmost part, together with the nearby dunes. In recent years there has been some friction between some naturists and the NT because the latter has placed restrictions on the area used by naturists. On the positive side, nude use of the part of the beach is now "officially" sanctioned by the Trust.

Getting There

Microsoft Virtual Earth

MultiMap

There are two main ways of getting to Studland by car:

From the Purbeck (west) direction take the A351 from Wareham, turning left on to the B351 for Studland before reaching Corfe Castle. In Studland drive through the village and follow signs to the Studland Beach car park - (NT-owned Knoll CP costs £4 in June and £6.50 in July. The fee allows you to use any NT CP in Studland area.) Now walk north along the beach or tracks in the dunes until you reach the nude section which is marked by signposts on the beach and in the dunes.

From the Bournemouth (east) direction, a ferry runs from Sandbanks across the entrance to Poole harbour to the northern tip of Studland Heath. The distance is short, but at peak times there can be a long queue for the ferry (fare £2.20) . Shortly beyond the ferry there is an NT paying car park From here you walk east and then south along the beach past Shell Bay. Many visitors appear to park along the verge of Ferry Road - if you do, please take care not to obstruct the road. Alternatively, walk along the road to "Fire Point 6" and then through the nature reserve to the beach.

[Icarus comments:]

"The first time I went to Studland I had heard that it could be difficult to park, and that it's quite a distance from the car park to the naturist beach, so I took a bike in the back of the car, parked in the village and cycled down through the car park and along the wet sand at the water's edge to the naturist section. It would probably be just as easy to cycle along

the road towards the ferry to fire point 6 and down the path that comes out in the middle of the naturist section. Other times I've parked on the verge near fire point 6 and walked, but I hear that's being discouraged because of the number of cars being broken into there."

By Public Transport:

For those without a car, take the train to Poole or Bournemouth, then get the bus service to Swanage - Wilts and Dorset service number 150 from Bournemouth to Swanage (also passes Branksome station) and get off AFTER the ferry. Stay on the bus past the stop at the Swanage/Studland side of the ferry, then get off at the next one. You ask for "Fire Point Six " or "FRP6". The walk along the path through the scrub brings you out onto the beach right in the middle of the naturist section. It's the shortest of all possible walks (Shell Bay is next, then Studland "Knoll" carpark last) unless you have a boat! However, it does mean crossing the dunes, whereas the other routes (except at very high tide) do allow the whole walk to be on firm sand to minimise the amount of sand which collects inside your footwear. The bus goes all the way to Swanage, so on reverse journeys the opposite applies:- stay on the bus past Studland village AND past the main beach carpark access for well over a mile of the toll road to FRP6. The driver should know where you mean - if not, just tell her/him to look out for a large collection of cars parked at the side of the road about half a mile from Shell Bay.

Description

This is a very popular beach and, on a busy day, this would not be the best choice for those seeking solitude. The beach, which faces south-east, consists of sand, with dunes and heath to the rear. National Trust-employed wardens patrol regularly and will move naked people who stray outside the nude area (marked by posts). The beach is regularly cleaned. Behind the nude section the dunes are increasingly used by gays the further you get from the sea towards the wooded area fronting the nature reserve.

Because of the ferry and the propensity of bored adults in families to go for a long walk, the nudist section gets a lot of passers by. However they stick to the area immediately in front of the waves and don't interfere. Although there is more seclusion in the dunes, these are perhaps best avoided - for the reasons set out below.

[Kevan comments:]

"If you want a particularly pleasant piece of beach at Studland, go where I go. Knoll end of the naturist section - about 50 yards along from the posts. There you'll find nothing but folk enjoying the atmosphere, relaxing, sunbathing, and having a swim."

"Just to lay people's fears to rest regarding the voyeurs:

Over the years, I've introduced quite a few people to naturism at Studland and if you know the score it's as pleasant an experience as any other beach, maybe more so as the beach is (in my opinion) the finest in Britain.

Studland has a lot of voyeurs but for the most part they stay in the dunes where there are people happy to provide something for them to watch.

If you want to avoid them, choose a spot on the beach itself or in the first ridge of the dunes. The regulars generally chase off any undesirables that stray into this area. Walking down the path from the road, the area to the left is mainly frequented by gays and is therefore much more peaceful. The pests don't wander over there and the guys aren't interested in looking at anyone.

I hope the adverse reports don't put off any new visitors, as Studland is a beautiful beach. The bay has a man-made spit across it so the water is like a lagoon, consequently it is often very warm. When the tide is right, I've known mediterranean like temperatures there."

"The naturist section has the cleanest sand and water but the sea was a little too cold for comfort.. . No problems with.... passing textile strollers who seemed disinterested in the bronzed bodies taking in yet more sun."

Facilities

There are toilets and an NT-run cafe at Studland village and toilets at the car park near to the ferry.

Water Quality

OK. A few too many boats off shore at times, some seaweed, a non-shelving beach and no surf.. The seawater meets the lower EEC Bathing Waters Directive standard. No routine sewage discharge.

Water meets Environment Agency "guideline quality" standard.

Camping Facilities and Other Activities

Many who visit Studland choose to camp locally. Available sites include:

- Studland Summer Camps - just up the road from Knitson. A temporary campsite for naturists open Whit weekend and from the end of July to early September. Follow very small "SSC" signs from Ulwell village, north of Swanage, through the lanes to the field. Cost: £6 per night, £35 weekly. Facilities: WC and shower. Restrictions: no caravans (trailer tents/ motorcaravans are OK), no singles, no 'bodypiercers'. For details tel: 01903 750190

- Burnbake - located off the road that runs from Corfe Castle to Studland. Go along this road and turn off (left coming from Corfe) down a narrow road marked Rempstone. Follow this past Rempstone Farm and keep going for about half a mile before turning right on to unsurfaced track. Studland is about 3 miles away on foot, more or less level walking on bridleways and the [private] road to the oil jetty. A gate at the back of the campsite is a useful shortcut - turn left on the forestry track and then right when you meet the tarmac road, follow signposts for 'Ferry Road' and then left toward FRP6 .

Burnbake is a textile site and rather basic, but they do have naturist weekends and are very friendly. Nice showers (£1 for four), small on-site shop, fresh bread, croissants and Danish pastries delivered before breakfast every morning (still warm sometimes) and daily papers. Pitch where you like, woods or field, lots of nooks and crannies. £8 per day for car plus two adults, £6.50 for single backpacker. ' Burnbake have a website.

- Priestway Holiday Park "We found a really nice campsite at Priestway Holiday Park at the height of the season. No problems with finding a pitch. One large tent was £13 The site is in Priests Way Swanage about a 15 minute drive from Studland. This is a textile campsite but pretty laid back otherwise. On arrival we asked how long we could stay and were told "please yourself". We asked where to pitch and were told "where you like". Could we have barbecues? "if you like". We run out of questions pretty quickly and it was suggested we go and find a pitch and wander back when we were settled to pay. About two hours later we did so and were told we could use the facilities (club, bar, restaurant and for a fee the swimming pool) on the caravan van park next door. Great."

- Seacombe Horse Riding Holidays offer riding holidays with Studland Stables, including riding on Studland Beach

Selected Visitor Comments

2002

"..as close to a completely nude beach as one would hope."

"All in all, if you aren't put off by the gays (stick to the north or south ends of the naturist section and don't venture into the sand dunes) Studland is a marvellous, spacious beach where couples, families, singles - everyone - can feel completely relaxed. Even if you've never been to a naturist beach before you wouldn't feel shy turning cartwheels in the sand here. Excellent."

"This is a wonderful beach on which to take an early morning nude walk or bathe in the sun. There is something liberating about nakedness. I would say that for a straight man it is unnerving to be approached by gays so I would recommend that any heterosexual taking a walk should take the beach instead of the dunes at the western end..."

2003

my partner Janet and I were walking down Studland beach and came across the naturist area. Without any hesitation we picked our spot and, for the first time ever, we both stripped off. Both Janet and I enjoyed the experience so much we actually changed our holiday plans and came back the next day and even managed to squeeze in a few hours on the beach before driving home on Bank Holiday Monday! The feeling of being naked amongst so many other like minded people was such a wonderful sensation - absolutely incredible, we have not stopped talking about it since. We are now hooked..."

"...almost everyone was nude, the main exception being a couple of hundred yards either side of the refreshment wagon, where the majority were clothed (despite this being right in the centre of the beach). Worth bearing in mind if, like us almost newbies, you summon up the courage to walk nude to buy the ice creams, only to find when you get there that you're the only naked people amongst textiles...Overall, though, a fantastic time, and memories to treasure."

2004

"I...was pleasantly surprised by the mixture of people, both families and couples as well as individuals enjoying the sun and surf. The atmosphere was very relaxed and welcoming, so much so I ended up plucking up the courage to remove my top and bottom and enjoy the radiant sun on my body...to sum up Studland, I would best describe it as a safe and comfortable environment for everyone."

...what a revelation! I was able to relax completely in a friendly and safe environment. The beach and weather were fantastic and even the sea was not too cold. I was able to sunbathe, swim and find peace on Studland. The naturist area is quieter and populated by nice, polite and friendly people. If you have any doubts about naturism visit Studland."

"My recommendation is visit Studland - if you've never tried nude swimming and sunning you have missed out on a very liberating experience. [We] will certainly go back next year..."

2007

May 26 - the first time I have stripped off in public and found it to be an exhilarating and liberating experience. I should have done it years ago!

2008

March 28 - The guiding principle for enjoying Studland...is to keep out of the dunes altogether. This is not out of prurience [but] an observation about the wonders of nature of the dunes which are put at risk by public use of them, not least erosion of miram grasses. Other than that, the beach below the high water mark is absolutely marvelous in June and September. Few people, all polite and friendly.

May 31 - The experience was wonderful. We swam, had our picnic and slept the heat of the afternoon away, I like the description of meerkats as it's so appropriate to the occasional head pooping up and then disappearing. Nobody bothered us at all and the fellow beach users were lovely.

June 12 - My husband and I spent a very pleasant day on the beach and were not bothered by anyone, it was the first time either of us had been to a naturist beach and we were very surprised at the friendly attitude of all the people. The beach was very clean...

July 22 - ...a really pleasant experience... Superbly liberating and so much better than in the back garden around the pool...we enjoyed a couple of marvellous hours naked on the beach..

August 08 - .. for those who just want to keep themselves to themselves stay near the front of the dunes or on the beach...if you dont want to be watched tell the meerkats to clear off the word soon gets around... we have had great times at studland and look forward to many more.

August 30 - ..as i was leaving along the regular naturist track to the road i could clearly see two men.. obviously they were turned on by being in full view of everyone on the track. the beach was very busy, lots of naturists and regular bathers. also lots of children - have these people no sense of decency at all?

2009

March 07 - We found the beach to be in a wonderful location and spoke to some very nice people, but.. what spoilt it for us was these pests/perverts.. who patrolled up and down the the beach all day every day looking in every dune, behind every wind break, sometimes hiding in the dune grass sitting and waiting, watching hours on end... why don't they have some self esteem and stop embarassing them selves.

May 01 - [why] all the negative comments about the gays? We are a gay couple who have been here loads, and to be honest, these comments are just some of the "straight" community wanting to scape goat the gays... Studland is a beautiful place, we need to work together to ensure it remains safe and useable for naturists, not taking cheap shots.

May 18 - Dont know what all the fuss is about with the gays at Studland. I have had 3 yearly visits there with my girlfriend without problem. Ok, so you do get the odd times when you are watched by guys in the dunes but if you stay on the beach you dont get the attention...

August 16 - I went there yestereday with my family and we all had a wonderful time. Lovely white sand, great dunes for the kids to play in. I think some people are being a little homophobic on here, yes I am sure there are some gay men here and I saw some of them sporting erections, but heh - its a natural thing, men we all get them at times! So if you've not been before don't let other peoples comments put you off. We loved it!

August 25 - I was not aware of any unpleasant activity or of the meerkats mentioned above. There were some men walking along the top of the dunes and also along the beach but they did not bother me. They are allowed to. In fact I did the same just for the sheer pleasure of walking naked in the sun and air rather than just sitting in one spot.

August 26 - ... you have a choice; there is a huge expanse of beach in front of the dunes to enjoy without any fear of seeing any sexual behaviour or being subject to unwanted attention. If you go into the dunes, in our experience, you will only find other activity if you are looking for it.

August 26 - [I] have enjoyed Studland both alone and with my partner, when it has been windy we have gone into the dunes, but this seems to be an open invitation for guys to come and watch us..

September 15 - I have been to Studland naturist beach on several occasions and have always found it very liberating. I enjoyed being naked and being around lots of naked people in public. It may not be a sexual experience, but it is definitely a sensual experience.

September 18 - .. I've been to virtually every other section of the UK coastline in my travels. Studland Bay & the surrounding coastline & woodland is a stunningly beautiful & sheltered location, with great views towards Bournemouth, Poole & the magnificent Isle Of Wight clearly visible & a short ferry ride away. You couldn't really design a more user friendly section of coast line. Its well worth taking a camera! (but please dont film naturists, that is really annoying, really bad manners & I would also say its downright wrong, whether or not you are naked yourself)

October 10 -... we overheard a discussion between an NT warden and 2 police officers who'd clearly been called to investigate sexual activity in the dunes. Personally the sexual activity doesnt offend us, however so close to the beach is inappropriate... I'm becoming increasingly concerned that this behaviour, if it increases, could ultimately lead to the NT deciding to ban naturism at this beach altogether - which would be hugely frustrating to the majority of us who enjoy being naked & seeing others naked but keep our carnal thoughts and actions for later.