

# Swyre / Cogden Beach - Dorset

Wednesday, 31 May 2006

## General

This location is part of Cogden Beach south of the village of Swyre in Dorset (half way between Burton Bradstock and West Bexington). The beach is comprises a high bank of fine shingle, a westward continuation of the nearby Chesil Beach.

## Getting There

O.S. Map Ref: SY 520 872

There are three ways to reach this beach - all of which are off the B3157 road from Burton Bradstock to Abbotsbury.

- On foot from the village of Swyre, two paths about 3/4 mile long lead southwards to the coast. No information about car parking in the village is available. From the beach the path is signposted "Newlane and Swyre"

- Approximately 1 mile east of Burton Bradstock is the car park for the National Trust site at Cogden Beach. Once you reach the beach, turn left (eastwards) on the Dorset Coast Path which runs between the back of the shingle bank and Burton Mere. No more than 1 mile should bring you to a point suitable for naturism. Pick a suitable spot to cross the shingle bank to the water side - walk where you will not damage the vegetation which clings precariously to life on the pebbles.

- From the village of West Bexington a minor road leads south to a car park sited more or less on the beach itself - £3 per day. From this point, take the Coast Path westwards to reach the part of the beach described above.

## Description

The beach is composed mostly of fine round gravel - about pea-sized - clean and very comfortable to lie on, but rather tiring to walk any distance on. The shingle is heaped up by the elements to form a ridge (like nearby Chesil Beach) which effectively hides the seaward side of the beach from the Coast Path behind it. The top of the ridge is colonised by Sea Kale and other plants which can cling to life in such a barren and salt-sprayed environment. Behind the beach are reed beds, pools and meadows. The overriding impression is one of wide open space - the section between Burton and Bexington alone is two miles long - although with no shelter available on the beach, a sun shade and / or wind-break might be advisable. Clean water for swimming, but steeply shelving and possibly hazardous when the sea is rough - in 2003 a child and a would-be rescuer were drowned at nearby Burton Bradstock.

"When I visited on a fine Sunday in early June, I was the only person within a quarter of a mile, plus an occasional walker. Ideal for worry-free naturism. The only other people in sight were a few sea-anglers near the Cogden car park."

In fact, much of this part of the coast must be suitable for naturist use if you just get far enough from the access points - easy enough on foot along the well-signed and completely level Coast Path. To the east, between West Bexington and Abbotsbury, is a similar stretch of beach which must offer possibilities. Parking, toilets and cafe are available at the Chesil Beach car park, near Abbotsbury. From there a surfaced track runs westward behind the beach, making the walking particularly easy!

## Facilities

At the West Bexington car park there are toilets and a small cafe.

## Water Quality

Good

### Trip Report - August 2005 (Bank Holiday Monday)

"It was fine, warm and sunny and my wife and I had travelled down from Bristol for the day. The roads were busy with holiday traffic. We noticed lots of fields and camp sites along the Dorset coast packed full of tents and caravans. We arrived at West Bexington car park, next to the shore, at 10.45am and were lucky enough to secure the last space. Pay & display £3 all day (£2 for up to 4 hours). There are toilets at the car park and a cafe nearby. The South West Coast Path runs along the back of the beach and is mainly firm shingle. A fifteen minute level stroll and probably slightly less than a mile west from the car park the beach was deserted.

The beach is hidden from the path by the banked-up shingle. People could be seen in the distance in either direction, though nobody came within 400 yards of us during four hours spent sunning in the buff. Swimming was enjoyable, but the shingle beach shelved steeply at the waters edge - as others have mentioned, great care is needed in any conditions other than calm weather. As we were leaving my wife spotted one other young naturist.

All in all it was a delightful day - we felt completely relaxed and I was surprised how peaceful it was for a Bank Holiday

### Trip Report - June 2004

"Arrived here on Tuesday 15th June on a completely perfect Dorset day. Temperature about 24C and cloudless sky. Beach parking is available in the (free) National Trust Car Park at the top of the hill. There were Police notices about car security but felt comfortable leaving my car as there were a number of people sitting next to their cars taking in the view, and also an adjacent ice-cream seller.

A short walk to the pebbly beach and then an eastwards turn for about 400 yards to where there was a solitary, but friendly fellow naturist with his dog. Beach is shingle the size of peas and comfortable to lie on. After about twenty minutes another nude fellow joined us sitting about 50 yds away and along with two "trunked" fishermen about 400 yds away, that completed that day's beach tally.

"Absolute bliss, but the beach shelves and extreme care must be taken at high tide-time. A wonderful beach - but do respect the sea conditions."