

WEST BAY DISCOVERY WALKS

Walk Name : Exploring the West Cliff and Eype

Distance : 2.5miles/4 kms

OS Explorer Map Number : 105

Terrain : A couple of steep gradients up and down but generally good.



The Jurassic Coast stretches for 95 miles and along its length reveals 185 million years of the earth's history. This walk, along a small section of that Coast, starts where the West Bay Esplanade road reaches the pedestrianised section. Shortly we will take the path up the cliff (shown above) but first it's worth having a quick look at what there is to see from the esplanade.

Walk along the esplanade, look up to your right, the cliff face here has been artificially shaped as part of the coastal defence works carried out in the early 2000s. Above the wall plants suited to the conditions have colonised the shale. Look out for rock samphire, often served in restaurants with fish dishes.

Near the rocks and groynes keep an eye out for a small sparrow-sized bird with grey plumage. This is a rock pipit. Often overlooked, these birds live among the rocks and feed on small insects. Their flight often involves an upward flutter followed by a twirling descent - like a tiny parachute!

In the sea at the end of the groynes is a red warning post, is there a medium-sized bird with dark-coloured plumage on the top of this? It's one of the favourite haunts of cormorants, a fish-eating seabird that is fairly common locally.

Fascinating Fact - Forest Marble was used for building. As it is made up of crushed shells, it was waterproof !

At the far end of the promenade a barrier has been erected to prevent onward access. This is because the cliff beyond this is prone to rock falls. Look upwards and notice the bands of different rock material. The lower section of cliff is mostly a grey colour – this is Frome Clay, above this the yellow-coloured rock is Forest Marble. Both of these rock layers are over 160 million years old!

Now retrace your steps along the esplanade and take the steps up the cliff path. Immediately on your right is an unusual-looking sculpture. This was erected to mark the parish boundary and some of the carving on it commemorates the "Wildcat Strike" of women networkers in Bridport in 1912.

As you climb the path, on your right you'll see a large number of shiny green leaves. These are wild beet, a form of spinach that is edible. At the top of the path pause for a moment to enjoy the views back towards West Bay and then pass through the gate into the field beyond.

In spring and summer this field has a variety of wildflowers and grasses as well as butterflies. Watch and listen for skylarks as you walk along the path – these increasingly rare birds sometimes nest here. You may also see a kestrel hovering while hunting. Enjoy the lovely views inland, including the River Brit and its floodplain. As you reach the far end of the field there is a small

bowl-shaped area of lower land on your left. This is the site of a former quarry for Forest Marble. You can also see the remains of an old Lime Kiln. Lime Kilns burnt calcium carbonate at temperatures above 900°C. The resulting Quicklime was a key ingredient in mortar.

The path beyond this point is currently diverted slightly, due to a landslip, but follow it down towards Eype. Enjoy the fine views towards Lyme Regis and Beer in the West. On a good day it is possible to follow the view of the coast as far as Start Point, some 50 miles away as “the crow flies”.

Birds to watch out for :	
Kestrel	Goldfinch
Herring Gull	Sparrow
Crows	Swallow
Raven	Cormorant
Skylark	Rock Pipit

Eype’s Mouth is a small break in the cliffs of the Jurassic Coast and the furthest point of the walk. Just before the final descent take the footpath signed to the right along a grass path. After a few hundred yards the path emerges onto the road uphill towards the village of Eype.

Follow the road round keeping right, until you come to the village street, where an attractive raised “crazy paving” footway fronts the cottages. Refreshments can be found at the New Inn. Carry on to the top of the hill and there take the path via the St Peter’s Church. When the path reaches the road, cross directly onto a wide path, walking past a communications mast. At the end of this path bear half-right onto a narrow path. This is called Donkey Lane, inferring a past use, possibly by smugglers, or more likely by people from West Bay making their journey to Church!

On emerging from Donkey Lane, take a 90° right turn with a boarded fence on your left. This goes up through a field edge to re-join the original footpath. Enjoy the view as you walk back down the cliff path into West Bay, where you can find refreshment at one of the many inviting cafes, pubs or kiosks. Should you see anything particularly interesting or unusual on your walk, do please let us know !



Rock Pipit



Rock Samphire



Ox-eye Daisy



Valerian



Kestrel



Raven



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Production supported by the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty 60th Anniversary Fund.