



Memories by the Sea: Friends' Holiday in Dorset

What better way is there to start a holiday on the Dorset coast than heading straight to the beach to walk barefoot in the sand?

This is exactly what a group of holidaymakers did on their trip to Weymouth in late September. The friends, supported by Harpenden Mencap, travelled to Weymouth for a six-day break to relax, refresh and create lasting memories.

“Before the trip, we spent a long time planning what we each wanted to do,” Heather, Senior Support Worker says. “We did a lot of research and put together a detailed itinerary, and we managed to do something for everyone.”



The group of eight – six friends and two Support Workers – stayed in two lodges at Parkdean Resorts at Warmwell, just a fifteen-minute drive from the seafront at Weymouth.

They hired a minibus to get around and enjoyed a vast array of activities. These included a boat trip, visiting Portland Bill Lighthouse where some of them climbed all the way to the top, and travelling around the coast.

“It was really exciting setting off on the minibus. It was just nice to be with my friends.” Alison says.



Portland Bill Lighthouse

The energetic adventurers also tried dry slope skiing and visited Weymouth tank museum – this was one of the group’s favourite parts of the holiday, hearing about military history.

“We learned a lot about local and military history,” Heather recalls. “And about Weymouth’s man-made sea defence.”

One day, they boarded a steam train from Corfe Castle to Swanage. They also spent time in Weymouth, gazing out across the seafront, exploring the tropical gardens, and soaking up the wildlife and atmosphere at the town’s famous swannery.



Steam train

“The Swanage-Corfe Castle rail journey and visiting the swannery were my favourite parts of the holiday,” Penny says. “It was also lovely just seeing the sea.”

The friends’ days were long and fun-filled. “We were out from 9am to around 6pm each day, and were out again in the evenings for dinner,” Heather explains.

They even caught a beautiful sunset over Chesil Beach, enjoyed evening entertainment at the resort and on the last night, went for a tasty Chinese meal in Dorchester.



Chesil Beach

“Penny and Susan performed ‘Roar’ by Katy Perry during karaoke at the holiday park’s club house!” Heather reminisces.

For Susan, her highlight was the range of pubs the group visited during their stay. There were lots of new experiences.



Alison adds, “I really enjoyed having a giant strawberry knickerbocker glory one afternoon!”

“It was my first trip to Weymouth and I had a lovely time.”

“We all got on really well from beginning to end,” says Heather. “It was so much fun!”

“We had such a good time in Dorset that we’re planning another holiday to the same place in September 2026!”



Story written by Sarah Welsh

From experiences shared by the six friends and two Harpenden Mencap Support Workers

