

Katherine Bebo

111 Places
in Bournemouth
That You
Shouldn't Miss

Photographs by Oliver Smith



emons:

Foreword

For Ben, Josh and Toby: my brilliant, Bournemouth boys



© Emons Verlag GmbH

All rights reserved

© Photographs by Oliver Smith, except:

Jan Tupper – Arniss Equestrian (ch. 8); Conker (ch. 29); Jamie James – GIANT Gallery (ch. 50); La Fosse (ch. 58); Mark Eaton – Silent Yoga UK (ch. 89)

© Cover icon: shutterstock.com/Martin Parratt

Layout: Editorial Design & Artdirection, Conny Laue, based on a design by Lübbecke | Naumann | Thoben

Maps: altancicek.design, www.altancicek.de

Basic cartographical information from Openstreetmap,

© OpenStreetMap-Mitwirkende, OdbL

Editing: Ros Horton

Printing and binding: Grafisches Centrum Cuno, Calbe

Printed in Germany 2022

ISBN 978-3-7408-1166-2

First edition

Did you enjoy this guidebook? Would you like to see more?

Join us in uncovering new places around the world at www.111places.com

Growing up in Bournemouth, I had a wonderful time: playing on the beach, splashing through the River Bourne in my wellies, riding the ‘Noddy’ train at Hengistbury Head... But, crikey, it’s only now that I’ve written this book do I realise how much I was missing out on! I had no idea, for example, that I could have been visiting an Egyptian mummy, gazing into the real Alice in Wonderland’s mirror or making magic in the woods, in memory of a local witch.

During the course of researching and writing this book, I’ve had breakfast with The Beatles, lunch with 11 feline friends, and drinks with Charlie Chaplin. I tried to share a bottle of wine with Napoléon but, unfortunately, his stash was cleared out. I’ve slept under the stars on Boscombe Beach, bought a loaf of bread from where the fugitives of the Great Train Robbery were hiding out, and labelled my own bottle of gin – exploring areas such as Christchurch, Mudeford, Kinson, Southbourne and Highcliffe. I haven’t journeyed in the direction of Poole because those areas are covered in my other book, *111 Places in Poole That You Shouldn’t Miss*. Many of the spots in this guidebook aren’t in Bournemouth proper. I’ve jaunted as far as the New Forest, always keeping within about a 30-minute drive of central Bournemouth. Who doesn’t love a day trip?

I have done my absolute best to ensure that my facts are correct, but if you notice any inaccuracies, please accept my apologies (and don’t tell anyone else!). As you read this book, my hope is that, like me, you find many new, exciting, surprising places to delve into. Or unearth fun, fascinating facts about places you already know and love. If you venture to Hengistbury Head, you should certainly take a ride on the ‘Noddy’ train. It really never gets old.

5 The Alice Lisle

She lost her head

If you Google ‘people who have been beheaded’, you’ll be met with an alarmingly long Wikipedia list – with most victims having hailed from England. Two of Henry VIII’s wives – Anne Boleyn and Catherine Howard – are on the list and, if you keep scrolling, you’ll see Lady Alice Lisle’s name. On 2 September, 1685, Alice was the last woman in England to be beheaded, and this New Forest pub is named after her.

The 67-year-old widow’s crime? She harboured two fugitives – John Hickes and Richard Nelthorpe – after the Battle of Sedgemoor, at her home, Moyles Court (now Moyles Court School), less than half a mile from here. John was found by officials in the malthouse, while Richard was discovered in the chimney. Despite the jury finding Alice not guilty three times, the ruthless Judge Jeffreys intimidated them so much that they changed the verdict to guilty. The poor woman’s fate was sealed as soon as the infamous ‘Hanging Judge’ took the case (if you thought Judge Judy was harsh...). Originally sentenced to being burned at the stake, this was later changed to beheading.

Alice’s mother was Edith Bond, a relative of spy John Bond, who is said to have inspired Ian Fleming’s 007 character. Inside The Alice Lisle pub, you can learn more about the condemned woman, and see pictures relating to the case, including one of her being arrested. If you’d rather not learn about the gruesome tale before tucking into your fish and triple-cooked chips, sit in the 450-capacity beer garden and take in the view of Rockford Lake.

Back inside, there are photos of schoolchildren, complete with cheeky smiles and grazed knees. They were pupils of Rockford Primary School, which is what the building was until 1941. You’ll also see framed books, such as *The Ladybird Book of Handwriting*, and a statement wall of fountain-pen wallpaper. As was the case for Alice, the writing is on the wall.

Address Rockford Green, Rockford, Ringwood BH24 3NA, +44 (0)1425 474700, www.thealicelisle.co.uk | **Getting there** Bus X3 to Ellingham Crossroads, then a 20-minute walk | **Hours** Mon–Thu 11am–10pm, Fri & Sat 11am–10.30pm, Sun noon–9.30pm | **Tip** The Ibsley Room inside the pub is dedicated to Ibsley Airfield, about a mile away, where a memorial now stands (different from the one in ch. 4). Filming took place here for the 1942 movie *The First of the Few*, in which you can see many of the buildings at Ibsley, including the control tower and hangars.



36 The Ducking Stool

This is torture

Women, do you know your place? If you'd have been found guilty of brawling, verbal abuse or acting in an otherwise antisocial way in the 14th century, it would have been at the end of this ducking stool, suspended over a body of water. This punishment device would see the offender strapped to the wooden contraption, then dunked into the river as many times as their sentence dictated. Public humiliation was the order of the day, but many ducking-stool punishments led to death, the victim dying from shock or drowning. Contrary to popular belief, it's unlikely these rigs were used in Britain to identify witches – a different water-dunking technique was reserved for those suspected of witchcraft.

This ducking stool next to the River Avon in Christchurch is a replica, placed here in 1986, close to where its original position would have been. The silt in the river has accumulated over the years, so the water would have been much deeper when the original was in use. The gruesome nature of this apparatus is now at odds with the charming pink, blue and green pastel-coloured houses that line the surrounding Ducking Stool Walk. It's a very pleasant place for a stroll, torture implement aside.

Ducking stools have been depicted in a few films over the years, including the 1934 *Babes in Toyland*, where Laurel and Hardy (see ch. 27) are arrested for burglary and sentenced to be dunked in the ducking stool then banished to Bogeyland; and a type of ducking stool is seen in the 1975 *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*. More recently, a ducking stool appeared in Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman's *Good Omens* book but, unfortunately, was cut from the TV show (starring David Tennant, Michael Sheen and Jon Hamm) for health and safety reasons. Apparently, dunking children on screen is frowned upon, so the makeshift ducking stool was replaced with a much more palatable tyre swing.

Address Ducking Stool Lane, Christchurch BH23 1DS | **Getting there** Bus 1 or 1a to Priory Corner | **Tip** Other forms of public humiliation included time in a pillory, whipping through the market, being spun in a whirlygig, and exposure in the stocks. Not far from the ducking stool, in front of the ruins of Christchurch Castle, is Ye Olde Stocks, which you can put your arms through.



44 Fossilised Ammonite

Rock on

The bristlemouth is the most abundant creature in the ocean; around 64 million years ago, it was the ammonite. And here, by Highcliffe Beach, is a rather impressive fossilised one. Ammonites became extinct along with the dinosaurs and, since then, scientists have identified more than 10,000 species. They are related to other cephalopods like the octopus, cuttlefish, squid and nautilus.

Once you've marvelled at this huge chunk of prehistory, turn left (if you're looking at the sea) to hunt for fossils and shark's teeth along the beach. Get on your hands and knees and sift through the gatherings of shingle and, with a little patience, you're likely to find some of Jaws' friends' gnashers. It's incredible to think that you could be the first human in the history of the world to touch a particular tooth, which was inside a shark's mouth – chomping its prey – some 40 million years ago!

Another impressive ammonite nearby is located outside the information centre at the Steamer Point Nature Reserve. The two-foot relic was discovered on the beach between Christchurch and Highcliffe in 2007 when coast-protection engineers dumped the rock (originally intended to support the groyne on the beach) onto the sand and the large limestone boulder split in two, revealing the fossilised coiled-shelled creature.

You can walk through the 24-acre nature reserve to Highcliffe Castle (see ch. 53), stopping for a swing in a hammock along the way. The Bournemouth Natural Science Society museum (see ch. 38) also houses five large ammonites, all believed to have been discovered in Dorset.

When you've had your fill of collecting sharks' teeth, mosey on back past the ammonite and you'll come to a big rock with a plaque marking it as 'Bill's Bench'. It reads: *Bill Booth 16-3-44 to 12-4-98. Surfed it, loved it, respected it. Enjoy the sea as much as he did. Be like Bill.*

Address Highcliffe Beach, Highcliffe, Christchurch BH23 5DE | **Getting there** Bus 1a to Highcliffe Recreation Ground, then a 10-minute walk. The ammonite is on the beach path in front of Cliffhanger Restaurant. | **Tip** Near Highcliffe Beach is Chewton Bunny (the term 'bunny' means a narrow valley or wooded ravine and is sometimes used instead of 'chine'), which has Chewton Bridge within it. Built in 1900, it was the first bridge in the country to be made from concrete.

