

Royal Blue Tours inspiring the Royal Blue Run 2016

In planning a day of Royal Blue Tours we were charmed by the information in Elliott Bros weekly flyers from 1924. Lulworth Cove was Tour 8:

This journey is by LYTCHETT MINSTER, interesting for its inn sign, Peter's Finger, the historic town of WAREHAM, STOBOROUGH and the lovely avenue HOLME LANE. The view from the Holme Heath across to the Purbeck Hills is very beautiful, through the main camp of the famous Tank Corps over the heaths of the Isle of Purbeck, underneath the Purbeck Range through EAST LULWORTH, a pretty Dorset village set in a little from the sea gap of Arish Mell, under the shelter of Lulworth Castle, for generations the home of the Weld family. WEST LULWORTH is a long straggling village of great charm under steep downs and a short distance from the Cove. Passing quite near Lulworth Castle within the private grounds is situated the first Roman Catholic Church to be built in England since the Reformation. Reaching LULWORTH COVE, lunch or tea will be in readiness, time being allowed to visit the picturesque Coves and obtain charming views of Weymouth Bay, Portland, etc. The rock scenery of Lulworth Cove, Stair Hole, St Oswald's Bay, Man o' War Cove, Durdle Door, and westwards towards the Nothe Point is without doubt the most striking and beautiful along the English coast. Few places are more interesting geologically for so great a variety of rocks and rock structure. The return journey is up hill and down into WOOL and affords magnificent views over the greater part of Dorset, passing "Welbridge" Manor House, the scene of "Tess's Wedding Night" in Thomas Hardy's story "Tess of the D'Urbervilles." Also associated with Hardy's "Tess" is Bindon Abbey, a little way off.

Tour No. 5 was an all day excursion giving a leisurely exploration of the New Forest:

*This delightful tour proceeds via CHRISTCHURCH, thence making a nine mile run through the beautiful AVON VALLEY to RINGWOOD passing en route the pretty villages of SOPLEY, AVON and BISTERNE. Leaving Ringwood we shortly cross the border into the NEW FOREST, and obtaining on our Left extensive views of the county of Dorset. Continuing on through BRATLEY WOOD and some of the most magnificent scenery of the New Forest, including BOLDERWOOD, the King and Queen Oak, and the Coronation Oak planted in 1907 by the late King Edward VII in remembrance of his passing through Bolderwood. Reaching RUFUS STONE, time is allowed for a visit to the spot where King William Rufus was slain. Leaving here we pass CASTLE MALWOOD, the beautiful forest home of the late Sir William Harcourt, and run through the very pretty forest village of MINSTEAD, noting its little church and also the interesting sign over the village inn. We reach LYNDHURST, where lunch will be in readiness, time being allowed to visit the King's House and Lyndhurst Church, with its beautiful reredos, painted by the late Lord Leighton, during his frequent visits to the New Forest. Leaving Lyndhurst, a delightful drive through the Forest, via BROCKENHURST, brings us to BEAULIEU ABBEY, the seat of Lord Montagu, founded by King John in 1204. The Abbey was not completed till 1249, and was one of the most important of the Cistercian Order in England. In 1537 the Abbey was dissolved and by order of Henry VIII the stones went to build the fort of Hurst Castle in the Solent. Time is allowed to visit the interesting ruins. The return journey is made via the old seaport town of LYMINGTON and MILFORD ON SEA, with its lovely views of the Isle of Wight and Solent, and extending as far as Swanage Bay and Durlston Head with the famous Needles Lighthouse immediately in front. Tea will be in readiness at New Milton. Thence after a 12 mile spin we reach Bournemouth, after a most beautiful tour, embracing as it does the prettiest and most interesting parts of the New Forest. **As there are at least five different routes through the New Forest we do not bind ourselves to always follow the route set forth above, but vary them according to circumstances. Our chief aim is to give our clients the maximum amount of pleasure.***

This is marketing as persuasive as any pop-up that might appear on your iPad today. However, it makes no mention of 6'6" width restrictions approaching the beauty spots, omnipresent cyclists, interminable shopping arcades open on Sundays through the South Coast towns or the impact of individual car ownership. Given the realities of the New Forest in the 21st Century, we have taken licence from the caveat in bold and include a shortened tour to close the 2016 Royal Blue Run.