



RINGWOOD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

West Cliff Walk

Date: 10th February 2026
 Weather: Sunny to start with turning to light rain
 Walk Leader : Christine Storey
 Attendees: 10

Our walk started from West Overcliff Drive found to the west of Bournemouth town centre near to the district of Westbourne. We used roadside parking opposite Argyll Bowling Club, also near to an entrance into Alum Chine, which got its name from the alum mining which took place locally in the 16th century. Alum is a fixative that was used in dyeing, tanning and painting. The mines eventually became uneconomical and closed in the mid-17th century. A chine is a steep-sided dry river valley. Alum Chine is the largest of the four chines in Bournemouth.

The chine was used by fisherman to store their boats and equipment until the late 19th century/early 20th century, when the present mixture of deciduous and evergreen woodland was planted. This woodland creates a great habitat for several species of birds including woodpeckers, summer warblers and thrushes. Insects such as dragonflies and butterflies are to be found, along with grey squirrels. It holds SSSI status.

We walked down the path through the chine towards Alum Chine Beach which holds a Blue Flag, we passed the Tropical Gardens, planted in the early 1920's and subsequently replanted in 1996 after deteriorating. They contain a wide variety of tropical and sub tropical plants such as Chusan Palms, Yuccas and Pampas grasses, along with Hottentot-fig, Gazanias and African Daises. These gardens have recently been closed off by BCP council, they deem the gardens are unsafe because of cliff slip fears due to erosion and a risk to public safety. They will remain closed whilst the council look at options for funding future stabilisation works. Arriving at West Undercliff Promenade we walked in a westerly direction towards Sandbanks until it started to rain, so we returned back retracing our steps. Afterwards we had a pleasant lunch at Cafe Argyll.

Birds	Flowering Plants	Strandline Finds
Black-headed Gull	Common Gorse	Cuttlefish a marine mollusc
Wood Pigeon	Daisy	Bladder Wrack an algae
Carrion Crow	Seaside Daisy	Common Whelk egg cases
Herring Gull	Sweet Violet	
Kestrel	Sweet Alison	Reptiles
Dunnock	Smooth Sow-thistle	Common Lizard
Robin	Red Dead-nettle	
Magpie	White Borage	
	Daffodil	
	Primrose	
	Groundsel	
	Hairy Bittercress	
	Common Mouse-ear	
	Common Scurvygrass	
	African Daisy (Osteospermum)	



Common Whelk egg cases by Gerry Traves



White Borage by Gerry Traves