

# THE PERFECT WEEKEND IN... POOLE



*The route:* Sandbanks, Studland, Goathorn Point, Chapman's Pool, Brownsea Island

Poole is the perfect destination for a perfect weekend. It's easily reached from the Solent or the West Country, has enough boltholes to find protection from every wind direction, and has everything you could wish for, from miles of glorious sandy beaches to secluded anchorages, waterside pubs and fully serviced marinas. Whatever your budget, whatever your boat, there are a dozen different ways to fill two days afloat.

### SATURDAY MORNING

If it were me and the sun were shining down, I'd rise early and motor out in the stillness of the morning to Sandbanks beach. At this time of day the crowds haven't arrived, the water is as smooth as glass and, provided the tide isn't ebbing, you can anchor close enough to the beach to see the ripples on the sandy sea bed beneath you. With nothing to disturb you but the occasional skier taking advantage of the flat water, you can enjoy a lazy breakfast, watching the world come to life around you. As the sun climbs higher in the sky, swim or row ashore for a stroll along the beach or build sandcastles with your kids until the onshore breeze and constant stream of passing boats suggest that it's time to move on.

### SATURDAY AFTERNOON

At midday clamber back on board and head south-west to Studland Bay. It's no more than a 20-minute hop across from Sandbanks but take care to follow the channels rather than attempting to skip across Hook Sands, or worse still the submerged Training Bank rocks that separate the Swash Channel from Shell Bay. The coloured sandstone cliffs leading to the chalky white stacks of Old Harry Rocks provide perfect protection from the prevailing south-westerly breeze that builds up in the afternoon. Tucked in under the land, you can sit at anchor (taking care to avoid the voluntary no-anchor zone where seahorses breed) and enjoy a blissful lunch without fear of spilt drinks or prying eyes. Time it right and you can even hail the visiting ice-cream boat for pudding or row ashore, clamber up the cliff path and enjoy a pint of locally brewed ale and a bulging prawn baguette in the garden of the Bankes Arms pub (Tel: +44 (0)1929 450225). They even have a few visitors' moorings if you're concerned about leaving your boat at anchor. A couple of hours' sunbathing after lunch should allow time for the sea to warm up enough for a refreshing dip (bathing costumes optional if you motor a little further north along the bay to the nudist beach).



**PROFILE**

**THE AUTHOR**  
**Hugo Andreae**  
 Hugo has been boating in and around Poole for the past 30 years and intends to carry on enjoying its numerous creeks, bays and beaches until he's carried away in a boat-shaped GRP box.

**CURRENT BOAT**  
**Karnic 2250**  
 with 200hp Suzuki outboard.



Anchor off Sandbanks beach early while the water is still glassy calm



1 SATURDAY MORNING

Take a stroll along the golden sands of Sandbanks beach



Brush up on your geology at Old Harry Rocks



2 SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Enjoy a peaceful lunch and swim in Studland Bay



*Time it right and you can hail the ice-cream boat for pudding or row ashore and clamber up the path for some local ale*



Row ashore for a cool beer at the Banks Arms in Studland



3 SATURDAY EVENING

Watch the sun setting over the Purbeck Hills from Goathorn Point



5 SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Admire the beautiful flora and fauna on Brownsea Island



4 SUNDAY MORNING

Cruise along the Jurassic coast and anchor in Chapman's Pool

### FAVOURITE MARINAS

Salterns (+44 (0)1202 709971) would be my first choice because it's nearest to the harbour entrance and has a fuel berth and restaurant. There's also a Tesco Metro and a superb fish'n'chip shop (TJ's +44 (0)1202 707691) within walking distance. Nearer to the action, Poole Quay Boat Haven (+44 (0)1202 649488) has secure visitors' berths in the heart of Poole. The other big marina is MDL's Cobbs Quay (+44 (0)1202 674299), the downside being that bigger boats will have to time their comings and goings to fit in with the lifting times of Poole Bridge.

### FAVOURITE EATERIES

In Poole itself Storm on the High Street (Tel: +44 (0)1202 674970) serves fabulous locally caught fish at reasonable prices. Shell Bay restaurant (Tel: +44 (0)1929 450363) on the west side of the chain ferry has exceptional views across the harbour (left) and

good cooking at a price, while for people-watching nothing beats the glitzy Cafe Shore in Sandbanks (+44 (0)1202 707271).



### HANDY FUEL BERTHS

Corrals Fuel between the Sunseeker yard and the lifting bridge is usually the cheapest place for diesel (+44 (0)1202 674551), although if you're an MDL berth-holder then Cobbs Quay will sell you fuel at cost. There's also a floating fuel barge off the east side of Brownsea Island near Aunt Betty Buoy (+44 (0)7768 715111) and a fuel berth at Salterns Marina.

### NAVIGATION NOTES

Poole Harbour has a lot of shallow water and a strange double tide so buy a proper chart of the harbour and a local tide table, preferably one that shows tide heights in graph form so you get a visual idea of what it's doing. The chain ferry can be daunting to first-time visitors but in a motor boat there's little to concern you: aim to pass well behind it so that the chains have had time to sink. The other two main hazards are Hook Sands to the east of the main channel outside the harbour mouth and Stony Island to the west of it inside, both of which regularly catch out unwary boaters on falling tides.



The chain ferry across the mouth of Poole Harbour



Drop your hook near Pottery Pier



Walk among the peacocks on Brownsea Island

*The holding is good and in anything but a stiff westerly you are guaranteed a roll-free night at anchor*



Let the kids play in the surf on Sandbanks beach

### SATURDAY EVENING

Many people choose to overnight in Studland but during neaps, in a small enough craft, I prefer to motor back to the harbour and follow the South Deep Channel westwards before dropping the hook on the south-east side of the narrow channel between Goathorn Point and Green Island. You'll need to pick your spot carefully to avoid the underwater cables and be certain there's enough water under your props at all states of the tide but it's so peaceful here and you can watch the sun sink behind the Purbecks, sipping on a chilled rosé to a background noise of chirping crickets and whirling oystercatchers.

The holding is good (sometimes a little too good) in the cloying mud of the harbour and in anything but a stiff westerly you are guaranteed a roll-free night. If you don't feel like cooking on board, head over in the tender to the Shell Bay restaurant on the Studland side of the harbour. Be sure to book in advance though, particularly at weekends.

### SUNDAY MORNING

Head out of the harbour but this time push on south west along Dorset's Jurassic coast – a dramatic coastline with copious caves, stacks and arches. Even if you only make it as far as the beautiful stretch of chalk cliffs leading from Old Harry into Swanage Bay it'll be worth the effort. But if you're lucky enough to pick a settled weekend with slack tides, you can press on past Peveril Point and St Alban's Head, where the tide race and overfalls can prove challenging, to Chapman's Pool, a perfect inlet with a beautiful pebble beach and gin-clear water surrounded by rolling hills.

### SUNDAY AFTERNOON

Time to blast back to Poole, inhaling lungfuls of sea air and burning the image of a pristine white wake into your retina to sustain you through another week in the office. But it's not quite over yet so head back into harbour and follow the inner channel eastwards around Brownsea Island to Pottery Pier at its north-west tip. The island belongs to the National Trust but, provided you pay your dues in the honesty box, you can row ashore (the pier is no longer safe) and wander around some of the most beautiful rhododendron, heather and pine woodlands anywhere along the South Coast. Red squirrels abound here along with peacocks, deer and all manner of sea birds. From here it's a short hop back to one of Poole's many marinas. **MBY**

### Do you have a perfect weekend?

If you'd like to show fellow **MBY** readers how to spend the perfect weekend in your home waters around the British Isles get in touch now. We'll pay for published articles so please email us a few sample words and digital photographs to [hugo\\_andreae@ipcmedia.com](mailto:hugo_andreae@ipcmedia.com).



Raft up under the coloured sandstone cliffs in Studland Bay