

Visit to Cranborne Centre for Ancient Technology, Wednesday 12 April 2023

As our History topic was early British history, History and Travel Group member Sylvia Page suggested, why not a trip to look at the prehistoric and ancient buildings at Cranborne Centre for Ancient Technology? She soon had a party of thirty plus signed up and the trip was on. We made our way there one morning the following April, the forecasted gales and rain giving way to a bit of spring sun. We were welcomed by our hosts who guided us through a succession of amazing full-size reconstructions. A neolithic log-cabin, iron age round house, an Anglo-Saxon workshop, a Viking long-house, a Roman forge and water-lifting machine, and the spectacular Earth House. Exploring doors without hinges, earth floors, walls and roofs held up by massive posts, everything held together by wooden pegs, and kept warm and dry by wood, thatch, wattle and daub, we experienced first-hand how our historical forbears lived and worked. Everything is based on or suggested by the archaeology. This gem of a place, literally on our doorsteps (it's next-door to Cranborne Middle School) is mostly kept going by a small army of volunteers, including children on school trips or residentials who enjoy the delights of sleeping on a Viking bed, eating authentic food, spinning and weaving and digging trenches for chalk to use in building wattle and daub walls. One of our guides proudly pointed out the curved chunk of wood in the roof he'd personally hand-carved. And finally sitting around an authentic hearth-fire enjoying (inauthentic) tea, coffee and biscuits, we left at noon, resolved to check the Open Days on their website to explore further. The sheep behaved very well. Grateful thanks Sylvia for taking this initiative and giving us an interesting, informative and thoroughly enjoyable trip.

<https://ancienttechnologycentre.com/>

David Cheshire

