

## THE DENG PENINSULA / DUNGENESS 'B' NUCLEAR POWER STATION

The Denge Peninsula, commonly known as Dungeness, is a remarkable natural shingle promontory on the shore of the English Channel. In times gone by it was an island, a marshland & a primary route for smugglers, the location of the first submarine oil pipeline to connect to the continent & the site for the 'Acoustic Mirrors' development in the 1920's – a trial that led directly to the development of radar.

Today it is a unique ecological site holding National Nature Reserve (NNR), Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) & Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status. It is also, of course, home to the UK's first Advanced Gas Cooled Nuclear Power station, 'Dungeness 'B'.

Our trip was planned to take in the best of the area on a short walking tour of the peninsula starting at the [Light House](#), which unfortunately was not open, & coffee in the RHDR café, with the RHDR light steam train due to arrive at 12:00. The [RHDR light railway](#) is 1/3 scale; it takes over 2 hours to traverse the full line & since tickets cost £17.50, participants decided to have a quick look rather than travel.

We then made our way back along the Dungeness Road (along the beach) to admire the cottages & characteristic gravel gardens; hoping to stop at the fish hut for a fish bap (a local delicacy) before walking to the lifeboat station to view Greatstone Beach. [The Fish Hut](#) is a much talked about outlet for the small local fishery, serving very fresh fish that the locals queue up for. Alas, the hut was also shut on this day, so we diverted to the 'World Famous' Pilot Inn, further up the beach in Battery Rd, where we enjoyed a splendid & leisurely lunch.



On the walk back we posed in front of [Prospect Cottage](#), former home of film-maker Derek Jarman before driving around to the entrance of the Dungeness B Power Station for the commencement of our tour.

### DUNGENESS B POWER STATION:

**Our tour of the power station** began at the Visitor Centre, where we met our guides, our security & ID checks were carried out, various formalities & health & safety requirements were explained, & we were given an introduction to the station & its operation. We were then divided into two groups & kitted out in our protective suits, helmets, gloves & ear protectors. Security requirements precluded the use of cameras, so sadly we were unable to take a photograph of the group thus attired in our fetching outfits!

We moved on through some outside areas & were checked through the security fence gates & into the first of the various buildings, where we learned more about the company & the production of electricity. Eventually we reached the Turbine Hall where we saw the giant Condensers & Generators & the pumps in the Cooling Water Pump House.

Later we were taken into the Radiologically Controlled Area with its two reactors. The area was particularly impressive – we ascended to the sixth floor of the building to look down on the vast charging room floor containing the tops of the pods through which spent nuclear fuel rods are replaced by the huge fuel handling array.

Somewhat later we were able to observe a complete replica of the station's control centre where staff were being trained in various procedures. Returning past the seawater intake area we had a glimpse of a seal which had managed to get past the extensive filters & into the tidal holding area. We learned that as this apparently happens on rare occasions, rescue facilities are installed, & the seal would be freed later when the tide was at a suitable level.

There were many questions & answers during the tour, which ended back in the Visitor Centre, where we handed in our kit & studied the fascinating displays on show until we left – some of us a great deal later than scheduled – after thanking our hosts for a fascinating day.