

New Forest Walks

The New Forest is genuine walkers' paradise with many circular and linear routes. There are picnic and toilet facilities, all carefully sited to allow visitors safe and easy access to a variety of forest landscapes.

Access. You may walk on any footpath or track unless it says otherwise – by keeping to the paths you greatly reduce the risk of disturbance to wildlife and their habitats.

Parking. Parking on the roadside causes road congestion and damage to the verges. Please use one of the 150 car parks.

Roads. Driving at 40mph or below on all unfenced forest roads greatly reduces the number of accidents involving ponies, cattle and deer especially at night.

Fire. Fire is a great threat to habitats and wildlife. **No** picnic or campfires are allowed but barbecue sites are provided by the Forestry Commission, to book tel. 023 8028 3141

Litter. Litter should always be placed in litter bins or taken home. Glass and plastic can be harmful to wildlife.

Car Park Thieves. Remember to lock your car and take valuable with you – thieves operate from forest car parks.

Do not feed the animals. As you travel through the forest, you are bound to encounter the famous New Forest Ponies and other animals. They should not be approached as they can be dangerous, especially mares with foals. Ponies and donkeys are wild and do not need feeding by visitors, which can also encourage them to stray onto dangerous forest roads. They can also be very aggressive and young children are particularly at risk. There are many signs asking you not to feed the animals. Remember, not feeding them is better for them and for you.

Rhinefield Drive and walks

The Forestry Commission has designed several walks through Rhinefield near Brockenhurst, with clearly marked paths of various distances to show you the way.

Directions: Take the A337 to Brockenhurst. Once over the level crossing take the first left to Brockenhurst village, leaving the Morant Arms on your left. Follow the road through the village to the "ford". Turn right and follow this road for approximately 3 miles. This will take you across Whitefield Moor and into Rhinefield Drive. Black Water car park is situated about half way along the drive on the right. Many of the walks start and finish at this point. There are also public toilet facilities.

For those interested in seeing Deer, the Deer Sanctuary is a short drive along this road. At the junction with the A35 go straight across and follow the road through the Boldrewood Ornamental Drive. **The Knightwood Oak, reputed to be the largest tree in the New Forest is situated on the right approximately 500 meters ahead.** At the end of the Ornamental Drive there is a car park on the right. The viewing platform for the Deer Sanctuary is a short stroll away, together with the Jubilee Walk, created for the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977.

Lymington Riverside Circular Walk

Time needed approx. 1 hour & 30 minutes.

Starting from the old Victorian Lymington Town Station turn left into Mill Lane, walking along side the boatyard and then turn left after the boatyard office to the riverside. Ahead of you is a view of the Railway Bridge leading to the Isle of Wight ferry terminal. Continue along this footpath which ends on the Quayside by the Ship Inn.

From the Quay turn past the slipway into Quay Street and the straight across into Bath Road. Look right into Nelson Place with its attractive old cottages climbing the hill. As you continue along Bath road notice the group of old cottages on the right with intriguing names, especially 'Pressgang Cottage'. Berthon Boatyard with many large yachts is on the left as you continue on until you reach Bath road Recreation Park. Here is a large green, a children's play ground and Bandstand. Head across the green and walk along the riverside, you are opposite the Isle of Wight Ferry Terminal.

Walk along the riverside path to the Royal Lymington Yacht Club where there is a viewpoint with telescope looking towards the Isle of Wight. Continue along the slipway to the footpath by the river, here you will pass the Harbour Master's Office and the Open air

Sea-water Swimming Baths where in the summer, tea, coffee and ice creams are sold. This stretch of the footpath is part of the Solent Way and is signposted. Continue straight onto the Lymington Yacht haven, carefully follow the footpath signs through the stored boats. From here the Solent Way footpath turns left to go to Keyhaven. Our walk leaves the Solent Way at this point and you should follow the curved wall by Michael Morgan Power Boat School to the gravelled path (with distinctive reedbeds on the left) leading to King Saltern Road.

Carry along to the crossroads and cross Stanley road to Brook Road and keep left into Waterford Lane. This is an attractive residential area with some lovely gardens. Walk along Waterford lane to the junction with Church lane where you should turn right and then right again into Grove Road, then left into Grove Pastures. Walk straight up to Ashley Lane with Grove Gardens on your right and straight on into the High Street. Turn right down the hill and follow the road around the left-hand bend at the bottom. Follow the sign for the station, which is right into station road. The station is at the bottom of the road and is where your walk began.

Solent Way -Lymington to Keyhaven Circular Walk.

Time needed approx. 2-1/2 hrs. each way for the full walk.

The walk begins at the public car park beside the Royal Lymington Yacht Club. From the car park, take the footpath past the Harbour Masters office, skirt the edge of the open-air swimming pool to the Lymington Yacht Haven. Keep straight on until the high level footpath sign "Solent Way" on the right hand side, follow the direction through the roped bollards between the yachts.

Continue on the path in front of you, and follow along the seawall, or take the short cut to the right. It is easy to do a short circular walk at this point.

The footpath continues around the Hampshire County Council Normandy Farm Bird Reserve to the Salterns. The area from Lymington to Keyhaven was a major salt producing area from medieval times until the nineteenth century. Today, this is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is one of the best bird watching areas on the south coast. Here there is a path towards the houses in Normandy Lane for a shorter circular walk.

The sea wall continues to Moses Dock where there is a walkway across the dock gates. When the gates are open, it is essential to continue along the path by Moses Creak to Creek Cottage. Then follow the path back on the south side of the creek to continue along the sea wall to Keyhaven. Again at the creek, there is another footpath, which returns to Lymington. From Moses Creek, the footpath leads straight to Keyhaven with good views of Hurst Castle and the Isle of Wight.

Keyhaven is a hamlet with a car park, public toilets, post box, public telephone, slipway and Harbour Master. The Gun Inn is a popular pub serving food, there is a lovely walled garden and an area for children to play.

Hurst Castle can be seen from Keyhaven and is easily reached by the ferry that has a regular service during the summer and a reduced service for winter weekends (subject to weather & tied conditions). The Castle was built by Henry VIII as one of a chain of coastal defences and was completed in 1544. Charles I was imprisoned in the castle in 1648, before returning to London for his trial of execution in 1649.

From Keyhaven it is possible to walk to Miford-on-Sea, just over 1 mile in distance to catch a bus, no.123 or 124 to return to Lymington.

To return on foot by the most direct route, re-cross the Keyhaven River and continue straight along through the gates, onto the Ancient Highway – there is no vehicle access beyond this point. The track continues for 1 mile to Lower Pennington Lane. Follow the lane for nearly a quarter of a mile and then take the signed footpath to the right. This footpath becomes a lane, which leads to Creek Cottage.

At this point a diversion to the chequers Inn can be made, by following the lane to the left and the pub is on the left.

From Creek Cottage to return to Lymington Harbour area follow the signs for Solent Way, past the Salterns Sailing Club on the right. At the junction go right into Normandy Lane and follow the lane to the path on the right, which leads to the Yacht Haven- the yacht masts can be seen from here. Now follow the path back to the main car park where the walk began.

Note: Warden of the Normandy Farm Nature Reserve (01590 674656). Cyclists are allowed on the sea wall but must give way to people walking. On the land side of the wall, for most of the length, there are lagoons where both resident and migrant birds can be seen at all times of the year. The path can be walked on top of the wall, and at a lower level inside the wall to protect against the wind.

Birds that can be seen on the walk. Oyster Catchers, Canada Goose, Heron, Egret, Common Tern, Little Tern, Swallows, Swift, Stint, Curlew, Lark, Pheasant, Kestrel, Dunlin, Cormorant, Herring Gull, Black-headed Gull, Swans, Shelduck, Mallard, Moorhen, coot, Thrush, Blackbird, Greenfinch and Snipe.

NB. A copy of all these walks and many more can be obtained from the Reception.