



Brockenhurst to Lymington walk

A varied walk on the southern edge of the New Forest through parkland, woods, open heaths and pasture before a contrasting finish past coastal marshes.



Length

Main Walk, to Lymington Town: 20¼ km[†] (12.6 miles). Four hours 35 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 10 hours.

Longer Walk, via Keyhaven: 25 km[†] (15.5 miles). Five hours 40 minutes walking time.

Shorter Walk, from Lymington Pier: 16½ km^{†‡} (10.3 miles). Three hours 35 minutes walking time.

Alternative Walk, from Lymington via Keyhaven: 21¼ km^{†‡} (13.2 miles). Four hours 40 minutes walking time.

† Add 1½ km (1 mile; 25 minutes) if returning from the Pier station. See Walk Options below.

‡ Subtract 1 km (0.7 miles; 15-20 minutes) if starting from the Town station. See Walk Options.

OS Map

Explorer OL22 (or OL29). Brockenhurst, map reference SU301020, is in Hampshire, 15 km **SW** of Southampton.

Toughness

3 out of 10 (4 for the Longer Walk, 2 for the Shorter Walk).

Features

Although a good part of this walk is within the **New Forest National Park**, there are only occasional encounters with the remote heathland or dense woodland which you might expect. Some of the walk's first section is in fact through the landscaped parkland of a now-demolished country house, **Brockenhurst Park**, and it continues along pleasant broad tracks through **Roydon Woods**. Shortly after leaving this nature reserve you

come to a possible early refreshment stop on the main road between Setley and Battramsley.

The next section includes the walk's one stretch across wide open heathland at Shirley Holms, with fine views across the gorse and heather. The walk then becomes less distinctive for a while as it leaves the National Park, past farms and stables with occasional glimpses of the Isle of Wight. After crossing the A337 at Efford Bridge the Main Walk heads south-east to the suggested lunch pub in Chequers Green.

The final section to the attractive sailing resort of **Lymington** is quite different in character. You walk along embankments past the extensive saltmarsh and mudflats of **Lymington-Keyhaven Marshes**, with magnificent views of the **Isle of Wight** across the **Solent**. This nature reserve is now a haven for wildlife but in the 18thC it was the site of the **Lymington Saltworks**, the country's leading supplier of sea salt. This profitable industry only ceased (in 1865) when salt could be obtained more cheaply from mines in Cheshire.

There are no opportunities for swimming in the sea but the route goes past Lymington's open-air **Sea Water Baths**; these are open daily in summer to 6pm; admission (2024) is £4.50. At the end of the walk a lucky few might be allowed to sip pink gins at one of the town's exclusive yacht clubs, but there are plenty of other places willing to serve *hoi polloi* before the longish journey home.

Walk Options

Two options were added to this walk in 2024. From Efford Bridge the **Longer Walk** heads south through a large wood and across farm fields to **Keyhaven**, which allows for an extended stretch alongside the coastal marshes which are the most distinctive feature of this walk. Although not included in the directions, you could also make an out-and-back extension along the shingle spit to **Hurst Castle** (or use the summer ferry link in one or both directions).

The **Shorter Walk** is a (near) circular walk from **Lymington**. If you take the longer start from the **Pier** station it goes past the impressive **Walhampton Monument** in the style of an Egyptian obelisk, then crosses the wide **Lymington River** to join the short link route from the **Town** station. It continues through a long (and potentially awkward) stretch of wet woodland in **Lymington Reedbeds** and crosses the site of a small Iron Age hill fort called **Buckland Rings** before joining the Main Walk route.

These two options can be combined to make an **Alternative Walk**, which only has 6¼ km in common with the Main Walk.

The directions from Lymington Pier are described in reverse to provide a small optional extension at the end of the walk, and some minor short cuts are available in all the walk options.

Transport **Brockenhurst** has a half-hourly semi-fast service from **Waterloo** (hourly Sun) taking about 1 hour 30 minutes.

Lymington is on a short branch off the main line at Brockenhurst, with a station in the town and another across the river at the ferry terminal. The

half-hourly service generally connects well with the Waterloo trains, but the return journey is still at least 20 minutes longer. Buy a **return to Lymington Pier** (or Town; the fare is the same).

If you want to abandon the walk Bluestar 6 runs hourly (two-hourly Sun) along the A337 between Brockenhurst and Lymington; you could also use it to start the walk from Battramsley. Further on there are more bus routes along some of the other roads into Lymington, but none once you have gone beyond Efford Bridge.

Suggested Train Take the train nearest to **09:00** from **Waterloo** to **Brockenhurst** (or **10:00** if you are planning to stop at the early lunch place; see below).

Lunch The suggested lunch pubs on the **Main & Longer Walks** are a long way from Brockenhurst, but you could have a mid-morning refreshment stop—or a very early lunch—in **Battramsley** (after 4¼ km), where the Hobler Inn has been transformed into **Rosie Lea House** (01590-622908). This “rustic restaurant” has an attractive garden and serves breakfast to 11.30am, lunch from noon to 5pm.

The suggested pub on the **Main Walk** (after 13¼ km) and **Shorter Walk** (9½ km from Lymington Pier) is the **Chequers Inn** (01590-673415) in **Chequers Green**. This is a friendly pub with food served to 2.15pm on weekdays, all afternoon at weekends.

The suggested pub on the **Longer Walk** (after 15 km) and **Alternative Walk** (11¼ km from Lymington Pier) is **The Gun Inn** (01590-642391) in **Keyhaven**. On the coast path near the harbour, this equally good pub serves food to 4.30pm.

As there is a long gap after Battramsley directions are given for a 1¼ km detour to the **New Wheel Inn** (01590-688953) in **Gordleton** (8¼ km from Brockenhurst), although this has not been tried since it was taken over and completely refurbished in 2020.

*Previous versions of this walk also included a detour to **The Musketeer** in **Pennington**, but this is reported to be permanently closed. However, the nearby common is a possible picnic spot.*

Tea If you have an early lunch stop the **Chequers Inn** or **The Gun Inn** (see above) would make convenient mid-afternoon tea stops.

At the end of the walk there are plenty of refreshment places in **Lymington**, including cafés and kiosks as you enter the town. The **Ship Inn** (01590-676903) has a prominent location on Town Quay and the **Kings Head** (01590-672709) is a little way back from the river, in Quay Hill. You won't have any difficulty sniffing out the local chippie if you want a traditional seaside meal before the journey home.

If you have to wait for a train the nearest pub to the **Town** station is the **Bosun's Chair** (01590-675140) in Station Street. On the extension the **Curlew Café** (0333-999 7333) in the Ferry Terminal next to the **Pier** station is normally open daily to 6pm.

Help Us! After the walk, please leave a comment, it really helps. Thanks!

You can also upload photos to the   SWC Group on Flickr (upload your photos) and videos to  Youtube. This walk's tags are:

By Car **Start** SO42 7TW **Finish** SO41 9AZ

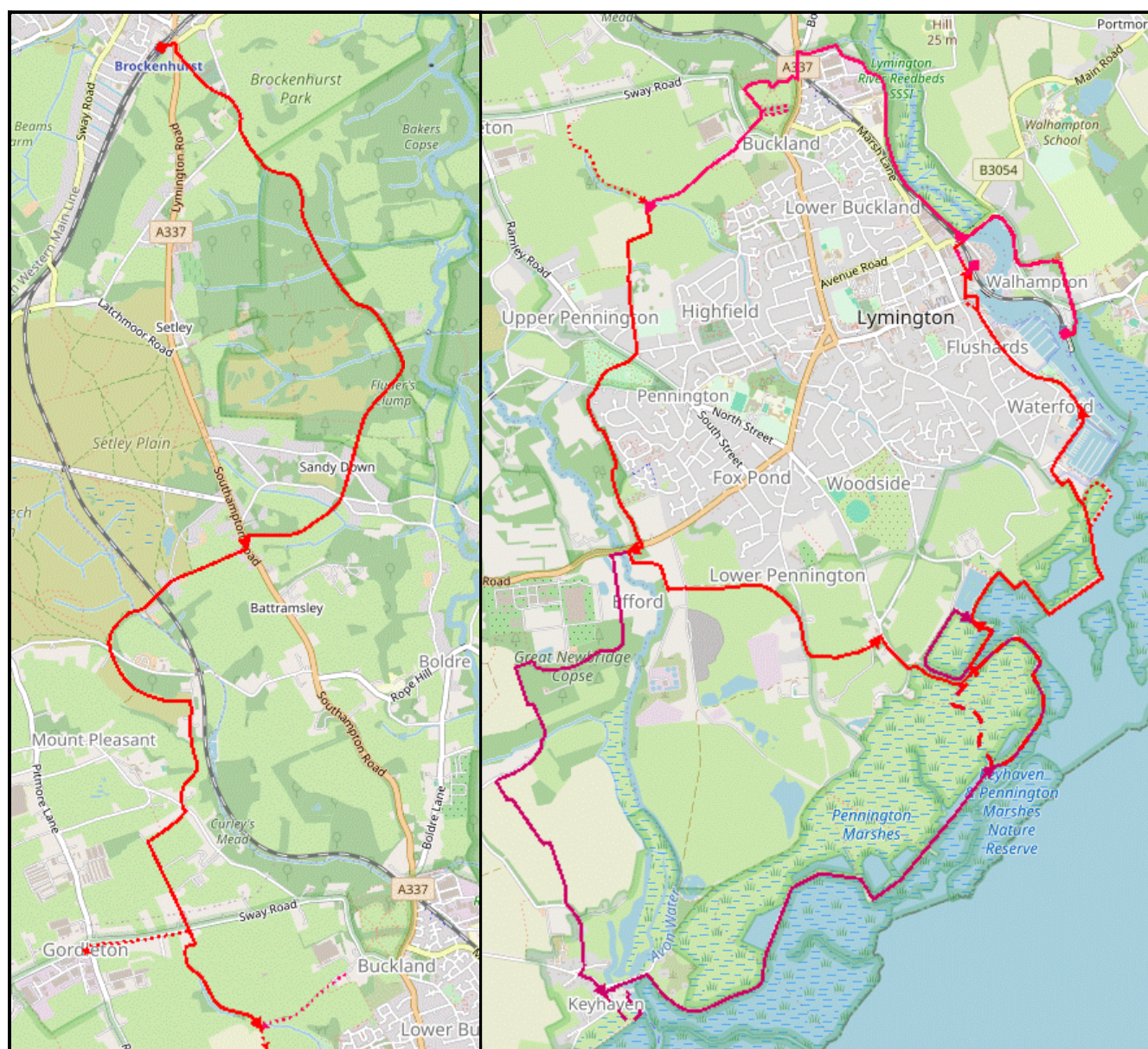
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Walk Directions

Walk Maps



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Walk Options

M. Main Walk (20¼ km)

- a. Longer Walk, via Keyhaven (25 km)
- b. Shorter Walk, from Lymington Pier • Town (16½ • 15½ km)
- c. Alternative Walk, from Lymington via Keyhaven (21¼ • 20¼ km)

Walk Directions

If you are doing the Shorter or Alternative Walk (from Lymington), start at 5C.

A. Brockenhurst Station to Battramsley (4¼ km)

1. From the platform go up steps to the overhead bridge and **turn right** to leave the station through the car park on its south side, coming to the A337 with Mill Lane opposite. Turn right onto the main road, heading **S** (away from the town) and crossing over carefully at some point.
2. In 50m **fork left** onto Church Lane, signposted to St Nicholas Parish Church and soon climbing gently. In 200m you pass the **New Zealand Cemetery**¹ on the left, with an information panel "Brockenhurst – A First World War Hospital Village".
3. After a further 150m you come to **St Nicholas**² church, and the suggested route is to go through its churchyard. On the way out through its main gate you pass another information panel, "New Zealand in the UK during World War I".
4. Continue along the lane for another 200m, round some right-hand bends, then **turn left** onto a signposted bridleway. Follow this broad path between hedges with the parkland of **Brockenhurst Park**³ on both sides.
5. In 200m go through a gate into **Roydon Woods**⁴ and continue along the main path, initially still with the parkland on your left and later veering into the wood, crossing a few streams along the way.
6. In 1 km you pass a patch of parkland on your left, then the path joins another bridleway coming in from the right. After passing an isolated cottage ignore the driveway to **Roydon Manor**⁵ on the left. In 200m another bridleway branches off to the left.
 - A 200m detour down this bridleway would give you a nice view of Roydon Manor and the Lymington River.
7. Stay on the main bridleway for a further 200m, round a bend to the right. As the path curves back to the left **turn right** onto a signposted bridleway, heading **SW** and soon climbing gently.
8. At the top of the slope follow the main path past a conifer plantation and out through a wooden side gate. Keep ahead across a patch of grassland to come out onto a lane, leaving the nature reserve.
9. Cross over and take the footpath opposite, between high garden hedges and then down through a wood to another lane. Again take the footpath opposite, gently downhill through trees. At the bottom cross a stream on a wooden footbridge and continue up the left-hand side of two fields.
10. In the top corner go over a stile onto an enclosed path along the edge of a wood and follow this for 300m (veering left along the way to avoid a private garden ahead). At the end you pass the garden of **Rosie Lea House** and come out onto the A337. Turn left onto the road to go past the front of the restaurant, an early refreshment stop.

B. Battramsley to Yaldhurst Stream (4¼ km)

11. To continue the walk cross the A337 carefully and take the footpath opposite the restaurant's car park, going over a stile to the right of a house. The path goes between hedges for 350m, then another stile takes you onto the corner of open heathland.
12. Continue in the same direction alongside a hedge. At the end pass to the right of a house and then **keep left** at a triangle of tracks. You pass another large house "The Hob" on your right, then **fork right** down a gravel track which takes you across a bridge over the **Lymington branch line**⁶.
13. Go past a row of cottages on your left, on the grass to the right of the track if you prefer. Where the track turns left by the last cottage, **keep ahead** across the grass to join a broad track climbing up through the heath. Follow this round a gentle left-hand curve to reach a lane by a Forestry Commission sign for **Shirley Holms**⁷.
14. Cross the lane and keep ahead on the heath to the right of the car park entrance. Continue on a grassy track alongside the wood on your left for 600m, gradually curving round to the left and with views across a valley on the right.
15. You eventually come to a cluster of houses at a corner of the heath where you **turn right** onto a gravel driveway heading **S**. In 150m the drive swings right in front of some more houses, but you **bear left** to find a stile in the corner, to the left of a thatched house "Widden".
16. Follow the footpath between fences, over a stream on a wooden footbridge and along the side of a field. In the far corner go over a stile and turn half-right as indicated to go up a wide strip of grass, alongside a fence on your left.
17. Ignore a track off to the left and go up to the top to find a stile in the fence, which takes you past a garden and its house to a lane. Follow the path past a row of cottages to reach Mount Pleasant Lane.
18. Turn left briefly onto the lane. In 25m **turn right** onto a signposted footpath, along a driveway. At the end keep left to continue through a belt of trees. Follow this slightly awkward footpath for 250m past some new houses, ignoring another footpath off to the right along the way.
19. The path then turns left and you will be heading in this direction for 600m, initially on a fenced gravel track between paddocks. Where the track turns left after 200m, **keep ahead** through a small wicket gate to continue on a grassy track.
20. As you approach another new house the path goes up a small bank and continues through a belt of trees. For the last part of this stretch keep left (where a gap on the right leads into a private garden) to go along a driveway to Sway Road. Unless you want to detour to the pub in Gordleton, cross the road carefully onto the continuation of the footpath.

21. Detour to the New Wheel Inn (+1¼ km)

Turn right and go along Sway Road for 600m. The pub is on the far side of the crossroads with Ramley Road. Return the same way and turn right onto the footpath.

22. After a few turns to get around gardens the footpath emerges into more open countryside. Follow this narrow (and potentially overgrown) fenced path for a further 600m, soon with a long belt of trees (Yaldhurst Copse) on the right. Shortly after the end of these trees **turn right** at a footpath signpost, towards a wooden footbridge.
Continue the directions at §E.

C. Lymington Pier • Town Station to Bridge Road (1¼ • ¼ km)

Directions are given from both of Lymington's stations. If you are starting later than intended you could use the shorter route from the Town station to catch up.

23. Starting from Lymington Pier Station (1½ km)

- a. Leave the station from the front of the platform and **turn sharp left** to go back past the side of the Ferry Terminal building (with its **Curlew Café**). Make your way onto the walkway along the right-hand side of the car park and go out onto Undershore Road.
- b. Cross the road to go up Monument Lane opposite, joining the **Solent Way**⁸ (SW) from a footpath on the right halfway up the hill. At the top turn left through a gap in the fence onto a small clearing containing the **Walhampton Monument**⁹.
- c. On the far side of the monument take the footpath going back down the wooded hillside. At the bottom bear right to continue along Undershore Road, with a view of the town across the wide **Lymington River**.
- d. In 300m turn left onto the B3054 (Bridge Road) to cross the river. Just before reaching the level crossing **turn right** onto a signposted footpath, leaving the SW.

24. Starting from Lymington Town Station (¼ km)

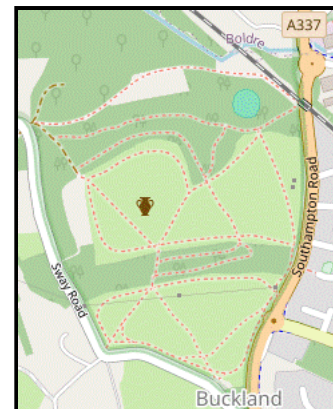
Go out through the station forecourt to a crossroads and **turn right**, into Waterloo Road. At the end turn right onto the B3054 (Bridge Road) to go over the level crossing, then **immediately turn left** onto a signposted footpath.

D. Bridge Road to Yaldhurst Stream (3½ km)

There is a prominent "Land Floods" warning at the start of this new right of way, which follows the course of the Lymington River for over 1 km. If it proves to be impassable a possible detour (see the Walk Map) would be to head north on Marsh Lane to the A337, where there is a gate into Buckland Rings just off to the right.

25. For the main route, go over some metal steps onto the long straight footpath, hemmed in between an ugly iron structure protecting the railway and a belt of trees affording only occasional glimpses of **Lymington Reedbeds**¹⁰. In 500m there are some more steps to negotiate and the path starts to curve away from the railway.
The right of way used to come in across the tracks here from Marsh Lane, but Network Rail closed the level crossing and substituted the 500m stretch from Bridge Road.
26. In the next 750m the path goes through a potentially waterlogged stretch of wet woodland, past the back of **Lymington New Forest Hospital** and then gradually curving to the left around Ampress industrial estate. It eventually comes out onto a water company site's access road at a bend.
You might be tempted to cut through the industrial estate to the left, but the final 500m of this right of way is less problematic and in any case you would have to hurdle a padlocked fieldgate to escape.
27. Turn right onto the road and go up to the metal gates in front of the site. Take the fenced path to their left and follow it around the northern part of the industrial estate, crossing a stream on a footbridge along the way. The path eventually emerges onto Boldre Lane where you turn left to come to its T-junction with the A337.
From this T-junction you can see a railway bridge off to the left, beyond a roundabout. The continuation of the walk is a footpath on the right-hand side of the main road just after this bridge, but there is no good way of reaching it.
28. If you stay on this side of the A337 (crossing Wellworthy Road at the roundabout) there is a pavement the whole way, but crossing the busy main road by the railway bridge is very awkward, with a restricted view of traffic coming from the roundabout. It is not much better, but the suggested route is to cross the A337 at the roundabout and **make your way carefully** along the right-hand side of the main road.

29. Immediately after going under the bridge **go past a safety barrier** onto the signposted public footpath, climbing steps cut into the steep bank. Where the path levels out **turn left** up a short flight of wooden steps, entering **Buckland Rings**¹¹. *The meandering route through this Iron Age hill fort takes in both the open interior and its double-ditched defensive ramparts.*



30. For the suggested route bear right from the top of the steps to go along a wooded ridge between two large pits, with the one on the right now used by BMX riders. Ignore a gate into the meadow on the left and follow a path along the edge of the woodland, soon curving away from the meadow.
31. Keep left at path junctions to go back towards the meadow, but in front of the remaining part of the site's eastern rampart **turn right** onto a path running along its upper ditch. Follow the path round to the left to continue alongside the northern rampart. At the end **turn left** up a short flight of wooden steps.
32. Go through a gate into the north-western corner of the site's interior and take the grassy path going diagonally across the meadow, heading **SE**. On the far side go through another gate and down the slope of the wooded southern rampart.
- There are paths off to the left along the upper and lower ditches, which connect at the far end. For a short extension (+250m) you could go out along the upper path and return on the lower path.
33. At the bottom go out through a gate into another meadow. **Turn half-right** and take the grassy path heading **SW** to a gate in the corner, 125m away. You emerge onto a fairly busy road (Sway Road) on the inside of a bend, so **cross the road carefully** and take the right-hand of two driveways opposite, signposted as a footpath.
34. In 100m bear left and then right to stay on the right of way, as indicated by some inconspicuous footpath waymarkers in this new development. After the houses keep ahead past the right-hand side of a large corrugated-iron shed onto a fenced path between fields, ignoring another footpath branching off to the left. In 450m **turn left** at a footpath signpost, towards a wooden footbridge.

E. Yaldhurst Stream to Efford Bridge (2¾ km)

35. Cross Yaldhurst Stream and follow a wide fenced path around the edges of some large fields, turning right and then left along the way. After going through a metal kissing gate keep ahead along one more field edge, ignoring another footpath off to the right. Near the end go through a kissing gate on the left to continue on the tarmac lane you have been walking alongside, away from the entrance to Waldhurst Farm House.
36. You now simply follow this lane for 400m. There are fields and later a recreation ground behind trees on your left, and houses on the right. At the end you come to a small green and **bear right** to reach Ramley Road.
37. Cross the road carefully and take any convenient route across **Pennington Common**, aiming for the right-hand end of the row of houses opposite. On the far side cross a lane and take the driveway to the right of these houses, signposted as a footpath.
38. Follow the path as it curves round to the right, then makes a sharp turn to the left. 200m further on, **veer left** in front of the gate for Furzey House onto a woodland path. Continue near the left-hand edge of this belt of trees for 200m, ignoring exits into the housing estate on your left.
39. Shortly before one of these exits, with only a narrow path continuing ahead through the trees, **turn right** onto a path with some low wooden supports on its right-hand side. On the other side of the copse follow the path round to the left, with a fence on your right.

40. In 200m the right of way is to **keep right** and go over a stile onto an enclosed path past some allotments, although as an alternative there is a broad strip of grass between the allotments and the footpath with an exit at the far end. Either way, continue on the fenced path for a further 250m to come out onto the A337 (Milford Road).
41. Turn right and go alongside the busy main road, crossing over carefully as soon as you can to the footway on the far side. In 60m, shortly before the road crosses **Avon Water** on Efford Bridge, the driveway to "Eden" on the left is signposted as a footpath.
If you are doing the Longer or Alternative Walk (via Keyhaven), go to §H.

F. Efford Bridge to Chequers Green (2¼ km)

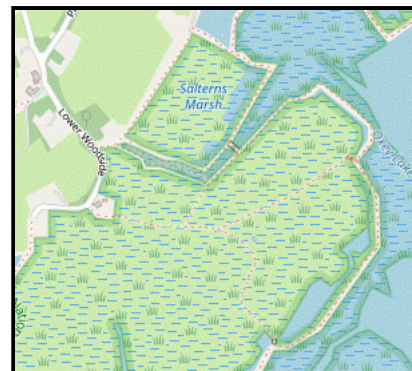
42. For the **Main & Shorter Walks** **turn left** onto the driveway, going through a side gate to the right of a metal fieldgate. After it curves round to the left go past the property's entrance gate and straight ahead into a meadow.
43. Follow a faint grassy path across the meadow and through a gap in the tree boundary on the far side. Go over a stile into the corner of a field, turn right and go around two edges. In the far corner go over another stile and across a ditch onto a lane.
44. The onward route is along the farm drive just off to the right, but the right of way (avoiding the fieldgate which is usually locked) is the short path opposite. This immediately turns right and crosses a footbridge to join the driveway behind the gate.
45. After going along the drive for 200m **fork left** onto a shingle track, soon passing a wooden vehicle barrier. Later this becomes a green lane which leads onto a tarmac drive. Bear right as indicated and follow the driveway out to a minor road (Lower Pennington Lane), with Sadlers Farm opposite.
46. Turn right onto the lane. In 200m you pass the entrance to Lower Pennington Farm House on the right. In a further 40m, just before the next driveway, **turn left** through a narrow gap in the hedge onto a signposted footpath.
47. Go along the right-hand edge of a field for 100m. The path swings round to the right in the corner and you have to make your way across a potentially muddy patch in the tree boundary. Go over a stile to continue along a narrow and slightly awkward fenced path for 200m, with a right and left zig-zag along the way.
48. At the far end go over another stile and across a driveway onto the triangular Chequers Green. Follow the lane on its left-hand side to come to the **Chequers Inn** on Ridgeway Lane.

G. Chequers Green to Eight Acre Pond (3¼ • 1¼ km)

49. Turn right out of the pub to head **S** on Ridgeway Lane (which becomes Lower Woodside). In 250m **turn left** into the second of two driveways (the one after Greek Cottage), as indicated by a footpath signpost across the road, and entering the area known as **Lymington-Keyhaven Marshes**¹².
 - It is unclear whether the signpost is pointing to the driveway or a parallel path in the adjoining belt of trees, but waymarkers further along the drive imply that it is a right of way.
50. In 50m **turn right** off the driveway through a narrow gap with footpath waymarkers, joining the **Solent Way**⁸ (SW). The path goes alongside **Moses Dock**¹³, with two derelict **salt boiling houses**¹⁴ on the far side.
51. Where the inlet turns sharply left go through a wooden gate and **turn left** to stay alongside it, with **Oxey Marsh** off to the right. Follow the path up to a large **sluice gate** across the inlet, which is the onward route to Lymington.
You could cut out the following loop along the sea wall and back across the marsh, as it returns to this point.

52. Loop around Oxy Marsh (+2 km)

- a. Go past the sluice gate to continue along the embankment path, initially with the inlet on your left and then making several turns to the right. In 600m ignore steps off the embankment at a left-hand bend.
- b. Carry on along the sea wall for a further 700m, soon passing Oxy Lagoon on the right. Where the sea wall swings left there is a track off the embankment to the right.
- c. **Leave the coastal path** by going down the slope. Follow the track through Oxy Marsh, curving right and then left along the way. In 400m it merges with a broad grassy path from the right.
- d. In a further 100m **turn right** at a path junction in front of some sheep pens. Follow the track along the edge of the marsh for 125m, where it zig-zags left and right to cross a ditch.
- e. Make your way back to the sluice gate which you can see ahead (to avoid repeating the short stretch along the embankment you could stay on the grassy track and climb up to the gate at the end).



53. Cross the inlet on the sluice gate and **turn right** by a "Saltworkings of Lymington" information panel. Follow the embankment path around a corner of **Salterns Marsh** to come to the southern corner of **Eight Acre Pond**. **Turn right** by an information panel about the nature reserve.

Continue the directions at §K.

H. Efford Bridge to Keyhaven (4 km)

54. For the **Longer & Alternative Walks** ignore the first footpath and cross **Avon Water**. The onward route is the long straight farm drive off to the left, but the right of way (avoiding the fieldgate which is usually locked) is a metal kissing gate concealed in the hedge just past the driveway.
55. At the far end of the drive keep to the right of a farmyard on a grassy track and go through a metal kissing gate into **Great Newbridge Copse**. The right of way through this large wood is well signposted and easy to follow.
56. After going straight ahead through a glade the path becomes a broad grassy track and swings round to the right, heading roughly **W**. In 500m the track ends at a T-junction where you go straight ahead onto a narrow woodland path, passing a large industrial area off to the right behind a high fence.
57. In 200m the path curves to the right at the corner of this area, so that you are briefly heading away from the coast, but in 75m you **turn left** at a three-way footpath signpost. The path crosses a small stream on a wooden footbridge and climbs gently through a potentially muddy area, then turns sharply left at the edge of the wood to head **S**.
58. Follow the path along the western edge of the wood, gently downhill. In 250m it zig-zags left and right to continue along the woodland edge, later with a wood on both sides. The path then swings right and drops down to cross a stream in another muddy area, and climbs past a house. Follow the right of way round to the right along its driveway and continue on Agarton Lane.
59. **The next turning is easy to miss**. In 250m you pass two large houses on the right, the second with a thatched roof (Agarton Cottage). Opposite this house **turn left** through a small gap in the hedge onto an inconspicuous footpath. As you go up a small slope you finally get a clear view of the **Isle of Wight**, 5 km away.

60. You now simply follow the right of way along the edges of some large farm fields for 500m, heading **SE** with a small left and right zig-zag along the way. Another left and right manoeuvre then takes you onto a surfaced farm drive for a further 400m. At the far end go over a stile to the right of two fieldgates and turn left onto a minor road (Lymore Lane).
61. The lane curves round to the right and goes past a row of cottages. After it turns right again by the junction with Harewood Green, **turn sharp left** in front of a small village green (with a War Memorial) to go along Keyhaven Road. In 200m the **The Gun Inn** is on its right-hand side opposite a car park, just past a No Through Road on the left (Lower Pennington Lane, the onward route to Lymington).
- If you are not having a pub lunch there are plenty of benches overlooking the harbour at the start of the next section, both on the harbour loop and on the lane out of the village.*

I. Keyhaven to Oxey Marsh (4 • 3½ km)

You could cut out the short loop below and go straight onto Lower Pennington Lane.

62. Loop around Keyhaven Harbour (+½ km)

- For the full walk turn right out of the pub to continue along Keyhaven Road for 100m. Where it turns right by Hurst Castle Sailing Club keep ahead past a vehicle barrier onto a shingle track.
- Follow the track up to the sea wall. There is a bench to admire the view across the **Solent** to **Hurst Point Lighthouse**¹⁵ and **Hurst Castle**¹⁶ at the end of a long spit, with the blockhouse of **Fort Albert**¹⁷ beyond them on the **Isle of Wight**.
- Unless you decide to walk out across the shingle spit to Hurst Castle (3 km away) **turn left** onto the sea wall. After turning left again at the corner you pass the boarding point for the **Hurst Castle Ferry** and later some more benches overlooking **Keyhaven Harbour**.
- Cross a lane in front of Keyhaven Yacht Club and **turn right** onto the enclosed path skirting around the harbour buildings and the back of the car park. Unless you want to revisit The Gun Inn, **turn sharp right** at the far end onto Lower Pennington Lane.

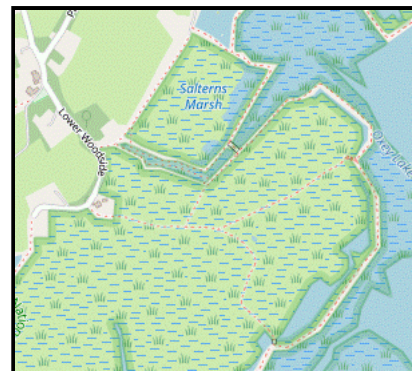
63. Follow the lane out of the village, joining the **Solent Way**⁸ (SW) and passing a small hut housing **Keyhaven Bird Observatory**, overlooking **The Pans & Avon Water Wetlands**¹⁸. The lane crosses the river at a sluice gate and goes past a row of benches overlooking the harbour.
64. On the far side of the causeway **turn right** through a wooden gate onto the sea wall, staying on the SW and passing a "Running & Walking Trails" information panel. You are now in the area known as **Lymington-Keyhaven Marshes**¹²; after passing the grounds of a couple of private properties **Keyhaven Marsh** is on your left.
65. In 1 km you go through a gate and pass an information panel about the nature reserve, now with Keyhaven Lagoon on your left. Later the coastal path goes alongside Fishtail Lagoon and makes several right turns, followed by a sharp left turn.
66. After going between Butts Lagoon and the sea for 500m you pass an old concrete jetty and continue along the sea wall, now alongside Pennington Lagoon in **Pennington Marsh**. In 650m there is a track off to the left through **Oxey Marsh** where the coastal path swings right.

J. Oxey Marsh to Eight Acre Pond (2¼ • 1¼ km)

There is a choice of routes for this section. The main route loops around Oxey Marsh and then takes a longer route around three sides of Salterns Marsh to pass the last two salt boiling houses, now derelict. The short cut in [68] takes a track through Oxey Marsh and a shorter route around Salterns Marsh. You could switch between the two routes at their crossover point, the sluice gate across Moses Dock.

67. Main route (2¼ km)

- Keep right** to stay on the sea wall, now with Oxy Lagoon on the left. The path then gradually curves round to the left.
- Ignore steps down to another path across the marsh after 700m. Carry on along the sea wall for a further 600m, around more left-hand bends and eventually heading **SW** alongside an inlet.
- Follow the path up to a large **sluice gate** across the inlet, where you could switch to the other route at [68·d] below.
- Cross the inlet on the sluice gate and **turn left** by a “Saltworkings of Lymington” information panel. Follow the embankment path around a corner of **Salterns Marsh** and alongside **Moses Dock**¹³.
- As you approach the end of the inlet the path veers right to skirt around two derelict **salt boiling houses**¹⁴, hidden behind a tall hedge.
- The path comes to a T-junction where the walk continues to the right (but a short detour to the left would let you view these historic buildings, opposite some new properties at the head of the dock).
- To resume the walk follow the tree-lined path for 300m, heading **NE** and later skirting around some more new properties. Alongside a high brick wall **turn right** through a gate onto a path alongside **Eight Acre Pond**.
- At its southern corner the lakeside path goes up a short rise. **Turn left** by an information panel about the nature reserve to stay alongside the lake.



68. Short cut (1¼ km)

- Leave the coastal path** by going down the slope. Follow the track through Oxy Marsh, curving right and then left along the way. In 400m it merges with a broad grassy path from the right.
- In a further 100m **turn right** at a path junction in front of some sheep pens. Follow the track along the edge of the marsh for 125m, where it zig-zags left and right to cross a ditch.
- Climb onto the low embankment and follow the raised path alongside **Moses Dock**¹³ to a large **sluice gate** across the inlet, where you could switch to the other route at [67·d] above.
- Cross the inlet on the sluice gate and **turn right** by a “Saltworkings of Lymington” information panel. Follow the embankment path around a corner of **Salterns Marsh** to come to the southern corner of **Eight Acre Pond**. **Turn right** by an information panel about the nature reserve.

K. Eight Acre Pond to the Sea Water Baths (2½ km)

- Follow the raised path between Eight Acre Pond and the sea, initially heading **N**. At the far end of the lake keep the sea on your right at path junctions, soon rejoining the Solent Way (SW). Carry on along the embankment as it zig-zags around the lagoons of **Normandy Marsh** for 1¼ km.
- After you have been heading directly towards the marina for 300m the suggested route is to **bear left** down steps onto a sandy path, briefly leaving the SW. After going through the coastal scrubland for 150m the path goes up a short rise, where you turn left to rejoin the SW.
 - Alternatively you could stay on the SW as it goes around three sides of this final marshy area (an extra 400m).

71. In 200m the path comes out into a large boatyard. As directed, keep ahead between white bollards on the waymarked SW and turn right on the far side. Make your way along the side of the boatyard onto a gravel path heading **NE**.
72. For the next 250m the berths of **Lymington Yacht Haven** are on your right. Towards the end of this stretch the **sea water baths**¹⁹ are on the other side and you follow the path round to the left to pass their entrance.

L. The Sea Water Baths to Lymington Town • Pier Station (1¼ • 2¾ km)

73. Make your way along the riverfront, passing an ornate **cast iron column**²⁰ in front of the **Royal Lymington Yacht Club** on your right.

At the midpoint of the recreation ground on your left, take the path going diagonally across it to the far corner and go out onto Bath Road.

It is tempting to continue along the riverfront but another large marina would eventually force you away from it.

74. Go along Bath Road for 400m, passing the entrance to **Berthon Lymington Marina**. Where this road turns sharply left **keep ahead** on Quay Road to reach the **Town Quay**. There are several refreshment places here, with the most prominent being the **Ship Inn** on the far side of the quay.

- For other places, go past the end of the quay onto a short pedestrianised street of tourist shops (Quay Hill). Where it turns sharply left (and the way to the station is along the short alleyway ahead), follow the street uphill to find the **Kings Head** on the left, with the town's chippie and other pubs on the High Street ahead.

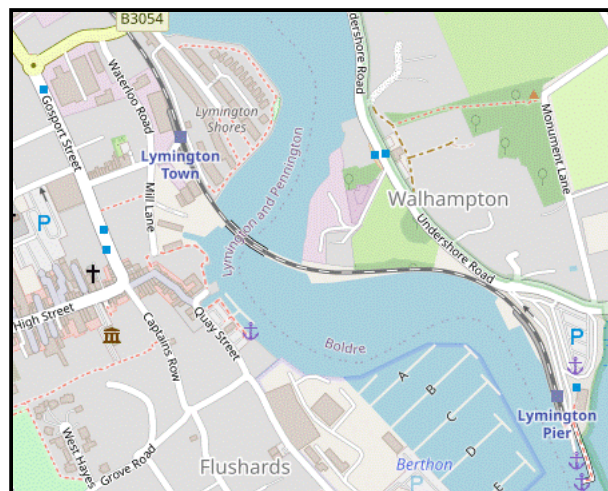
75. To complete the walk either take the riverside path in front of the Ship Inn or the alley off Quay Hill, which soon turns right in front of Trafalgar Place. Where these two paths meet at the end of Mill Lane, go along this street for 150m to a crossroads where the Town station is on the right.

- If you have a long wait for the train, the **Bosun's Chair** pub is up the street opposite.

The following optional extension takes you past the Walhampton Monument to Lymington's other station.

76. Extension to Lymington Pier Station (+1½ km)

- a. Instead of turning right to the Town station, go straight on (now on Waterloo Road). At the end turn right onto the B3054 (Bridge Road), rejoining the Solent Way. Go over the level crossing and across the long bridge over the **Lymington River**.
- b. On the far side **turn right** and go along Undershore Road for 300m, where there is a Private Road off to the left. You could stay on the main road to the Ferry Terminal's car park, but to view the monument **bear left** across the side street onto a lane.
- c. Almost immediately **turn left** off the lane onto a signposted footpath, with a New Forest National Park marker. After climbing for 200m the path comes to the **Walhampton Monument**⁹ in a small clearing (with an information panel about it on the far side, near the exit onto Monument Lane).
- d. To complete the walk turn right onto this narrow lane and go back downhill, leaving the SW halfway along. At the bottom cross Undershore Road and take the walkway along the left-hand side of the Ferry Terminal's car park. Go past the terminal building (with its **Curlew Café**) and **turn sharp right** onto the station's single platform.



Walk Notes

1. The **New Zealand Cemetery** contains the graves of 100 WWI soldiers (mostly New Zealanders) who were invalided back from France but died in the New Zealand General Hospital in Brockenhurst.
2. **St Nicholas, Brockenhurst** is the oldest church in the New Forest, with Christian worship on the site going back to the 8thC. The south door and font are Norman, and there is evidence of Saxon masonry.
3. **Brockenhurst Park** was owned by the Morant family (who made their wealth from sugar plantations in Jamaica) for nearly 200 years. They built a large Georgian mansion (subsequently remodelled as a French château), but this was demolished after the family sold the estate in the 1950s.
4. **Roydon Woods** is a Local Nature Reserve owned by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. The 950-acre site is a mixture of woodland, heaths and pasture bisected by the Lymington River.
5. **Roydon Manor** is an elegant 17thC red-brick house which was bought by the Morant family soon after they acquired Brockenhurst Park. The family moved here after selling the estate.
6. The single-track **Lymington branch line** was built to the Town Quay in 1858 and extended to a new deep-water berth for the Isle of Wight ferries in 1884. Between 2005–10 it was promoted as a 'heritage' route, using old rolling stock repainted in BR liveries.
7. **Shirley Holms** is one of the ancient holly clumps on the New Forest; *holm* is an old word for holly.
8. The **Solent Way** runs for 96 km (60 miles) along the Hampshire coast from Milford-on-Sea through Lymington, Southampton and Portsmouth to Emsworth.
9. The **Walhampton Monument** commemorates "a forgotten New Forest naval hero", Admiral Sir Harry Burrard Neale (1765-1840). Built in the style of an Egyptian obelisk, it is 23m high and made of gigantic blocks of granite. Before the trees grew up around it the monument was a prominent sea-mark.
10. **Lymington Reedbeds** is a small Local Nature Reserve of reedbeds and unimproved grassland in the river estuary. A one-way tide flap preserves the habitat by preventing salt water from entering the site at high tide.
11. **Buckland Rings** is a small multivallate hill fort (one with multiple ditches and ramparts), possibly dating from the early Iron Age (c.500 BC). The eastern rampart was ploughed over in the 18thC and two houses were built in its western section in the 20thC, but the ditches and ramparts on the other sides are well preserved (though now covered in trees).
12. **Lymington-Keyhaven Marshes** is the name given to a group of Local Nature Reserves with a combined area of over 1200 hectares. The coastal area between Lymington and Keyhaven is a patchwork of mudflats, salt marshes, shingle banks, coastal grazing marshes and saline lagoons, which support a wide variety of wetland plants and animals.
13. **Moses Dock** is one of the narrow docks where barges transported coal to burn in the boiling houses and took away the salt.
14. Partially evaporated sea water was transported to the **Salt Boiling Houses** by wind pumps and boiled away in large copper pans to leave salt. Several other boiling houses have been demolished and modern houses built in their place, such as the ones at the head of Moses Dock.
15. **Hurst Point Lighthouse** was built by Trinity House in 1867 to guide vessels through the western approaches of the Solent. There had been lighthouses on the site since 1786 but this higher (26m) tower was needed when a new wing was added to Hurst Castle.
16. **Hurst Castle** was one of the artillery forts on the south coast built by Henry VIII in the 1540s to defend against invasion from France. It was reinforced in the 19thC and formed part of the coastal defences in WWI and WWII before being decommissioned in 1956.
17. **Fort Albert** was built in 1856 to defend against attack by France but soon became obsolete. Later in the 19thC it became one of the sites where early types of torpedo were tested.

18. **The Pans & Avon Water Wetlands** were created when some farmland which was prone to flooding was allowed to revert to wetlands in the 1990s. The farm's pump house was converted into the **Keyhaven Bird Observatory** in 2017, with access controlled by a key fob system.
19. **Lymington Sea Water Baths** claim to be the oldest open-air sea water baths in the UK, "Rejuvenating Family Fun Since 1833".
20. The **cast-iron column** outside the Royal Lymington Yacht Club commemorates the introduction of gas lighting to the town in 1832.

» *Last updated: April 16, 2024*

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