

Introduction



Lymington Harbour

The Solent Way is a 60-mile long-distance coastal walking route that will take you from the seaside town of Milford-on-Sea past the hustle and bustle of seafronts, quiet yachting harbours, deserted marshland and saltings to finish at Emsworth Harbour. No other path is so awash with naval history.

The Way has been divided into eight sections, each providing a really good day out. Choose between deserted coastal marshes or promenades and candy-floss, seaside picnics or cosy riverside pubs, and shingle beaches with exhilarating views.

There are many places such as Lymington, Beaulieu, Hamble and Emsworth where you can stop along the way for refreshments, to visit antiques shops, to sample local crafts and foods, or even to stay for a night or two. We have listed a selection of refreshments in rural locations at the end of each section.



This breath-taking route passes by some of the prettiest harbours and creeks in Hampshire with ferry-rides to take and shingle spits to climb. There are castles and forts to explore, and ships, submarines and museums to visit – and always with the smell and sound of the sea beside you. Walk past some of the finest marshes and lagoons in the south with rare species to look for such as foxtail stonewort, lagoon shrimp and starlet sea anemone.

History

In addition to the local fare, the Solent Way is rich in seafaring and maritime history. There are numerous historically important and exciting buildings and places to visit along the route.

Near the start of the Way, sitting at the end of a 1¹/₂-mile-long shingle spit is Hurst Castle. It was built in this location by Henry VIII, as its position was ideal for defending the western passage into the Solent and the vital naval cities of Southampton and Portsmouth. Today, the views of the big ships passing through this narrow point are spectacular.

On the way to Lymington are the marshes and lagoons originally created by the making of a vast number of salterns. These were plots of land laid out as pools and walks, in which sea-water was allowed to evaporate naturally so the salt could be harvested. The lattice-like patterns of the old salt-pans can still clearly be seen.

Further east is Beaulieu Abbey, founded in 1204. Legend tells of how King John oppressed the Cistercian Order only to experience a nightmare in which he was beaten by a group of monks. On waking and still feeling the blows on his back, he decided to make reparation by gifting the Cistercians a tract of land on which to build an abbey.

In the city of Southampton, a fragment of the medieval town wall is still standing. It is also the harbour from which the Pilgrim Fathers, religious dissenters from Nottinghamshire, set sail for the New World in the 16th C.



Royal Victoria Hospital, Netley

Further along, the path passes Royal Victoria Country Park where the first and largest purpose-built hospital was built to care for soldiers serving in the British Empire. It took seven years to build, opened in 1863, was a quarter of a mile long and had 1000 beds. All but the Chapel was demolished in 1966 and the site is now a country park run by Hampshire County Council.

The Solent Way passes through Gosport and Portsmouth where at nearly every bend of the path you can find a historical rampart, fort, ship, dockyard or building to investigate. Henry VII and Henry VIII made Portsmouth their main naval port.

The Mary Rose was built at about the time that Henry VIII came to the throne (1509) and was one of the first ships able to fire a broadside. She was a firm favourite of his and took part in most of his wars. She was raised in 1982, and is the only 16th C warship on display anywhere in the world.



Sinking of the Mary Rose

At the end of the path is Emsworth, a picturesque fishing village set at the top of Chichester Harbour. Once famous for its oysters, it is also remembered as home of PG Wodehouse whose fictional characters took on many local place names, which can still be visited today.



Lymington Keyhaven Nature Reserve

How to follow the Solent Way

Solent Way
Emsworth 10 Miles

The route stretches between Milford-on-Sea and Emsworth Harbour in Hampshire.

The route is well waymarked with a Tern on a green arrow.

Maps

This leaflet does not provide navigation details. The route is shown on the following Ordnance Survey maps:-

Explorer OL22, 119 and 120 at 1:25 000 scale

The route is indicated on these maps with a green diamond and the name of the route (Solent Way).



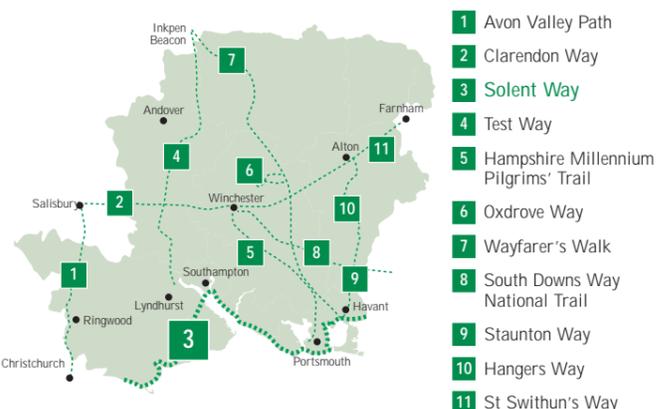
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Further information and a detailed route description is available on the web:-

www.hants.gov.uk/walking/solentway

Other long-distance walks



- 1 Avon Valley Path
- 2 Clarendon Way
- 3 Solent Way
- 4 Test Way
- 5 Hampshire Millennium Pilgrims' Trail
- 6 Oxdrove Way
- 7 Wayfarer's Walk
- 8 South Downs Way National Trail
- 9 Staunton Way
- 10 Hangers Way
- 11 St Swithun's Way

Further information

Publications

For information about the other ten long-distance walks or for leaflets about the following, tel: (01962) 870500, or visit your local Hampshire County Council Information Centre or Tourist Information Centre.

- Long-distance walks
- Walking in Hampshire
- Finding Your Way
- Guided Walks
- Discover Hampshire's Countryside
- Accessible Countryside in Hampshire
- Defence of the Realm
- Lee-on-the-Solent Historical Tour

Useful websites

- www.hants.gov.uk/walking
- www.hants.gov.uk/countryside
- www.visit-hampshire.org.uk
- www.traveline.org.uk
- www.metoffice.co.uk



Useful contacts

- Hampshire County Council
- Information Centre Winchester
- 01962 870500
- Met Office (weather information) 0870 9000100
- The Traveline 0870 608 2608

Local fare

Hampshire boasts a wide range of fine local products such as watercress, trout, beef and lamb, wine, cheeses, handmade chocolates and many more. For a guide to producers, call 01962 845999 or visit www.hampshirefare.co.uk on the web.

Recreation & Heritage Department
Hampshire County Council, Mottisfont Court, High Street,
Winchester Hampshire SO23 8ZF.

Available in alternative formats

01962 870500

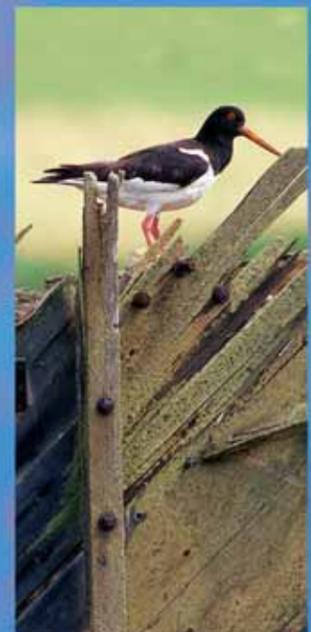


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walking in Hampshire

Solent Way

A 60 mile
long-distance walk
from Milford-on Sea
to Emsworth Harbour



DESIGN 03 3462 CORPORATE GRAPHICS TEAM 01962 870500 PRINT BY HAMPSHIRE PRINTING SERVICES ON REWIE UNCOATED RECYCLED PAPER



Hampshire
County Council

Milford-on-Sea to Lymington

Distance: 9 miles **Time: 3-4 hours**
The Solent Way begins in the seaside town of Milford-on-Sea. It follows the seashore to Hurst Castle Spit, which stretches out to Hurst Castle. From here you can retrace your steps back to the mainland, or catch a ferry (seasonal) to Keyhaven Harbour along the seawall past the unique Lymington-Keyhaven Nature Reserve, which provides a home for a huge number of wetland birds, plants and animals.

The Way continues to the yachting mecca of Lymington with its pretty cobbled streets hosting many cafés, restaurants and pubs, as well as shops to browse in.

Accommodation:
Ringwood TIC - 01425 470896
Lyndhurst TIC - 023 8028 2269
Lymington TIC (summer only) - 01590 672422

Refreshments:
Gun Inn, Keyhaven - 01590 642391

Places of Interest:
St Barbe Museum, Lymington - 01590 676969
Hurst Castle, Milford-on-Sea - 01590 642344

Public Transport: Milford on Sea/Lymington
Wilts & Dorset Bus Service - 01202 673555
Services from Bournemouth, Southampton and Hythe

Lymington to Beaulieu

Distance: 10 miles **Time: 4-5 hours**
Cross Lymington River and head inland, with occasional glimpses of the Solent through the trees. Continue into the New Forest to Sowley Pond. Then along the lanes and curl inland to Buckler's Hard village on the Beaulieu River. There is a fragment of an 18th C village remaining here, and a Maritime Museum that tells the story of shipbuilding at Buckler's Hard. Follow the route inland up the east bank of the river to arrive at the Montagu Arms pub in Beaulieu.

Accommodation:
Lyndhurst TIC - 023 8028 2269
Lymington TIC (summer only) - 01590 672422

Refreshments:
Master Builder's House Hotel, Buckler's Hard - 01590 616253
Montagu Arms PH, Beaulieu - 01590 612324

Places of Interest:
Buckler's Hard Maritime Museum, - 01590 616203

Public Transport: Beaulieu
Wilts & Dorset, 112 - 01202 673555



Lymington

Beaulieu to Hythe

Distance: 6 miles **Time: 2-3 hours**
In the village of Beaulieu you can visit the 13th C Beaulieu Abbey, Palace House and the church. Stop to browse in the shops or, just off the route, tour the National Motor Museum.

Heading out of the village, the path climbs up onto Beaulieu Heath, an area of moorland and the chance of spotting a nightjar, snipe or redshank.

Follow on down an old twisting lane, to Hythe and the huge drowned estuary of Southampton Water.

Accommodation:
Lyndhurst TIC - 023 8028 2269

Refreshments:
Forest Home, Hardley - 023 8084 2270
Travellers Rest, Hythe - 023 8084 2356

Places of Interest:
Beaulieu Abbey and National Motor Museum 01590 612345

Public Transport: Hythe/Southampton
Wilts & Dorset, 112 - 01202 673555
Solent Blue Line, X9, 38 - 023 8061 8233



Buckler's Hard

Hythe to Hamble

Distance: 7 miles **Time: 2-3 hours**
At Hythe Pier catch the ferry to Southampton's Town Quay where there are many places to visit. Leave Southampton and cross the Itchen Bridge to Woolston, once a great aircraft and shipbuilding area. The route returns to the shoreline passing Westwood Woodland Park, Netley Castle, the ruins of Netley Abbey and the popular Royal Victoria Country Park. Stop for a ride on the miniature railway or play on the beach before continuing along the shore and up the River Hamble to the delightful waterfront village of Hamble-le-Rice.

Accommodation:
Lyndhurst TIC - 023 8028 2269
Southampton TIC - 023 8083 3333
Hamble Valley Tourism - 0906 6822 001

Refreshments:
Prince Consort, Netley - 023 8045 2676
Royal Victoria Country Park Tea Rooms - 023 8045 7745

Places of Interest:
Royal Victoria Country Park - 023 8045 5157
Netley Abbey - 023 9258 1059
Bursledon Windmill - 023 8040 4999

Public Transport: Hamble
First, from Soton, 16, 16A - 023 8022 4854
Solent Blue Line, Winchester 9A - 023 8061 8233
Hamble River Bus (June - Sept) - 023 8245 3542

Hamble to Hillhead

Distance: 5 miles **Time: 2 hours**
Take the ferry to Warsash and walk south to the mouth of the River Hamble, and the Hook-with-Warsash Nature Reserve with its intertidal mudflats, shoreline and a variety of habitats to explore. The route continues to the low sand cliffs of Chilling and Bronwich with large stretches of undeveloped open farmland beyond, before reaching the Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve. This reserve of reedbeds, saltings and marshes is another great birdwatching site with hides, a tea room and a Visitor Centre. It's only a short distance from here to Hillhead Harbour.

Accommodation:
Hamble Valley Tourism - 0906 6822 001
Fareham TIC - 01329 221342/824896

Refreshments/places of interest:
Titchfield Haven National Nature Reserve & Haven House Tea Room, Titchfield - 01329 662145
Osborne View, Hillhead - 01329 664623

Public Transport: Hill Head
First, 33, 35 - 023 9286 2412



Royal Victoria Country Park

Hillhead to Gosport

Distance: 8 miles **Time: 3-4 hours**
From the tiny harbour of Hillhead, the Way follows a long shingle beach to Lee-on-the-Solent and its promenade. At Stokes Bay you are entering an area oozing with naval history - you can see a fort out to sea and a land fort at the western end of the bay.

Dip inland before returning to the water's edge at Gosport, where there are excellent views across to Portsmouth.

Visit the exciting Royal Navy Submarine Museum with several submarines to investigate, or 'Explosion!' - the award-winning museum of Naval firepower. Take the ferry across to Portsmouth.

Accommodation:
Fareham TIC - 01329 221342/824896
Gosport TIC - 023 9252 2944

Refreshments:
Old Ship, Lee-on-the-Solent - 023 9255 9811
Pebble Beach Café, Gosport - 023 9282 7456

Places of Interest:
Royal Navy Submarine Museum, - 023 9251 0345
Explosion!, - 023 9250 5600
SEARCH - 023 9250 1957
Gosport Discovery Centre - 023 9252 3431

Public Transport: Gosport
Served by a variety of First routes - 023 9286 2412



Titchfield Haven

Gosport to Langstone

Distance: 12 miles **Time: 5 hours**
To the west of the path are the historic docks and three fantastic maritime museums and many other attractions in the city of Portsmouth.

Back to the water's edge, the Way goes past the neck of the harbour then Clarence Pier, with its bright lights and arcades, and along to Southsea.

Leave the deckchairs and candy-floss behind and enter the calm of Langstone Harbour and the wild Farlington Marshes. This expanse of coastal grassland is a haven for migrating birds.

Accommodation:
Gosport TIC - 023 9252 2944
Portsmouth TIC - 023 9282 6722
Havant TIC - 023 9248 0024

Refreshments:
Old Oyster House, Milton 023 9282 7456

Places of Interest:
Portsmouth Historic Dockyard - 023 9286 1512

Public Transport: Langstone
Stagecoach, 30, 31 - 0845 121 0170



HMS Victory

Langstone to Emsworth

Distance: 3 miles **Time: 1-2 hours**
This section of the Way runs along the shoreline past the old waterside village of Langstone with its delightful heritage quayside, pubs and a picturesque millhouse.

Walk past Warblington Castle, with its gruesome tales, and the church with a grave-watcher's hut, across the fields and through the woods to finish at the fishing village of Emsworth, with its curious millponds. Emsworth, once famous for its oyster fishing fleet, offers a wide range of shops to wander around and a good selection of eating places - the perfect spot for a relaxing seafood meal.

Accommodation:
Havant TIC - 023 9248 0024

Public Transport: Emsworth
Stagecoach, 700 - 0845 121 0170



Langstone Mill



- Key
- Trail (walkers only)
 - P** Parking
 - Train Station
 - i** Tourist Information Centre (TIC)

