





Brockenhurst to Lymington walk

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: 17¾ km (11.0 miles). Four hours 10 minutes walking time. For the whole excursion including trains, sights and meals, allow at least 10 hours.
OS Map	Explorer OL22 (or OL29). Brockenhurst, map reference SU301020, is in Hampshire, 15 km SW of Southampton.
Toughness	3 out of 10.
Features	<p>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. An early section is in fact through the landscaped parkland of a now-demolished country house, Brockenhurst Park, and the walk continues along pleasant broad tracks through Roydon Woods Nature Reserve. Shortly after leaving the woods you come to a possible early lunch stop on the main road between Setley and Battramsley.</p> <p>The next section includes the walk's one stretch across wide open heathland at Shirley Holms, with fine views across the gorse and heather. After crossing Sway Road you leave the National Park and the walk becomes less distinctive for a while, past farms and stables with occasional distant glimpses of the Isle of Wight. Eventually you come to the scattered hamlet of Lower Pennington and the alternative lunch pub.</p> <p><i>Some of the fenced paths in this middle section are quite narrow and although they were all passable when checked (in August), they could become overgrown.</i></p> <p>The final section to the attractive sailing resort of Lymington is quite different in character. You walk along raised embankments between mudflats and the coastal marshes of Lymington-Keyhaven Nature Reserve, with magnificent views of the Isle of Wight across the Solent. Now a haven for wildlife, this area was the site of the Lymington Saltworks, the country's leading supplier of sea salt in the 18thC. The industry only ceased (in 1865) when salt could be obtained more cheaply from mines in Cheshire.</p> <p>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 (2018) is £3. 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 us <i>hoi polloi</i> before the longish train journey home.</p>
Walk Options	<p>If your curiosity has been piqued by the large obelisk poking out above the trees on the other side of the Lymington River you could extend the walk by 1½ km, passing the Walhampton Monument and returning from Lymington Pier instead of the Town station.</p> <p>There are no other walk options but a glance at the map will show that there are several places where you could leave the walk route and make your way along roads into Lymington. You could also make use of the regular bus services in the area (see below).</p>
Transport	Brockenhurst has a half-hourly semi-fast service from London Waterloo (hourly on Sundays) taking about 1 hour 30 minutes, plus an hourly stopping service which is not usually worth considering.

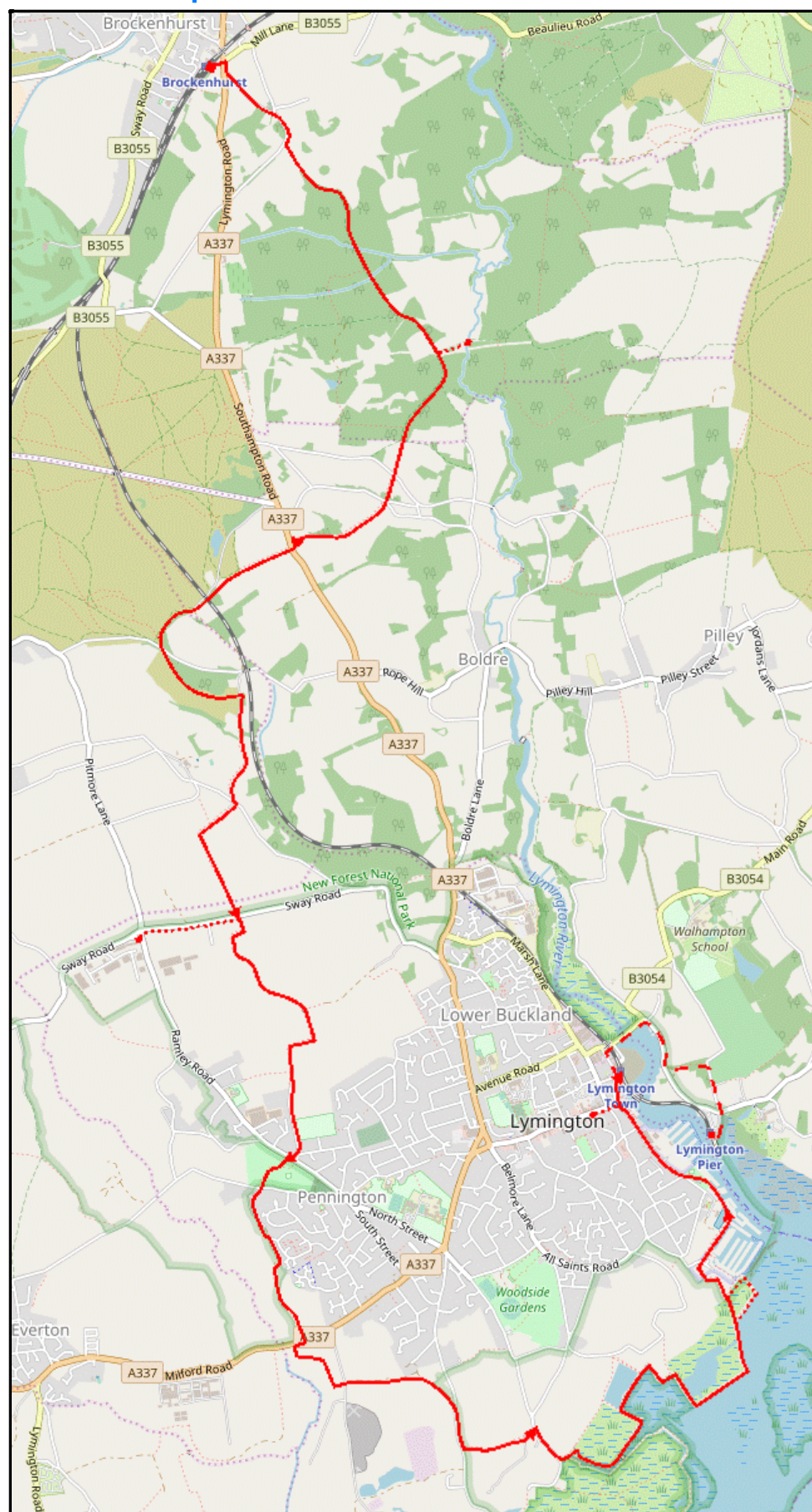
Lymington is on a short branch off the main line at Brockenhurst, with stations in the town and across the river at the ferry terminal. The half-hourly service generally connects well with fast trains back to Waterloo, but the return journey is still at least 20 minutes longer. Buy a **return to Lymington Pier** (or Town; the fare is the same).

If you want to abandon the walk Bluestar 6 runs hourly (two-hourly on Sundays) along the A337 between Brockenhurst and Lymington; you could also use this service to start the walk from the Hobler Inn. In the second half of the walk morebus X2 (Mon–Sat) goes from Bournemouth to Lymington via Sway and Pennington.

Suggested Train	If you are planning to stop at the early lunch pub (see below) take the train nearest to 10:00 from Waterloo to Brockenhurst . For the later lunch pub, leave at least an hour earlier.
Lunch	Unless you make a 1¼ km out-and-back detour along Sway Road to the Wheel Inn (01590-676122) in Bowling Green (which serves Thai food), you have to choose between an early or a late pub lunch. The early lunch stop is the Hobler Inn (01590-623944) on the A337 near Battramsley, after 4¼ km; this family-run pub has a large back garden and serves good freshly-prepared food all day from noon. The much later alternative is the Chequers (01590-673415) in Lower Pennington, after 13 km; a friendly locals pub with (unsurprisingly) a strong nautical feel, serving food until 2.15pm on weekday lunchtimes, all day at weekends and Bank Holidays. The best place for a picnic would be the heathland at Shirley Holms (after 5½ km), with Pennington Common (after 9½ km) as a later alternative.
Tea	If you have an early pub lunch the Chequers (see above) makes a convenient mid-afternoon stop. At the end of the walk there are plenty of refreshment places in Lymington, with cafés and kiosks selling hot drinks and ice cream 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. The nearest pub to the Town station is the Bosun's Chair (01590-675140) in Station Street. You won't have any difficulty sniffing out some fish'n'chips if you want a traditional seaside meal before the journey home. If you do the short extension to the Pier station you should be able to get some refreshment from the branch of Costa Coffee (01590-647639) at the ferry terminal.
Help Us!	After the walk, we would love to get your feedback
Photos	Upload your photos to the SWC Group on Flickr , and videos to Youtube . This walk's tags are: <div style="display: flex; gap: 10px;"> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px 5px; display: inline-block;"> swcwalks</div> <div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px 5px; display: inline-block;"> swcwalk226</div> </div>
By Car	Start: SO42 7TW Finish: SO41 9AZ
Help	National Rail: 03457 48 49 50 • Travelline SE (bus times): 0871 200 2233 (12p/min) • TFL (London) : 0343 222 1234
Version	Jun-18
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Walk Directions

Walk Map



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Walk Directions

1. Brockenhurst Station to the Hobler Inn (4¼ km)

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. In 50m **fork left** onto Church Lane, signposted to St Nicholas Parish Church.

The lane soon starts to climb gently and in 200m you pass a cemetery on the left. After a further 150m you come to **St Nicholas**¹ church; you can detour through the churchyard and leave through its main gate to return to the lane. 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**² on both sides.

In 200m go through a gate into **Roydon Woods Nature Reserve**³ 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. 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**⁴ 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.

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. 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.

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.

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 a pub garden on the left and come out onto the A337. Turn left to come to the **Hobler Inn**, the early lunch stop.

2. The Hobler Inn to Sway Road (3¼ km)

To continue the walk cross the A337 carefully and take the footpath opposite the pub'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. Continue in the same direction alongside a hedge. At the end **keep left** at a triangle of tracks to pass a large house "The Hob" on your right, then **fork right** down a gravel track.

Follow the track across a bridge over the **Lymington branch line**⁵, then past a number of cottages on your left (you can veer right onto the grass beside the track). 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 the main track round a gentle left-hand curve to reach a lane by a Forestry Commission sign for **Shirley Holms**⁶.

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. 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".

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. 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 this past a row of cottages to reach Mount Pleasant Lane.

Turn left briefly onto the lane. In 25m **turn right** into a driveway, with a yellow waymarker on a fence at the left-hand end of the drive confirming that this is a right of way. Follow this slightly awkward footpath for 250m through a belt of trees and past some new houses, ignoring another footpath off to the right along the way.

The path then turns left and you will be heading in this direction for 600m, initially on a broad grassy track between wire fences. In 200m the track turns left but you go through a small wicket gate ahead. 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.

If you want to detour to the pub in Bowling Green, follow the directions below.

- **Detour to the Wheel Inn (+1¼ km)**

Turn right and go along Sway Road for 600m, to the crossroads with Ramley Road. The pub is on the far side. Afterwards, return the same way.

3. Sway Road to Pennington Common (2 km)

Cross the road carefully and continue on the footpath opposite. You will be following a narrow (and potentially overgrown) fenced path for the next 900m: after a few turns to get around gardens it emerges into more open countryside, initially between hedges and then with a long belt of trees (Yaldhurst Copse) on the right. 100m after the end of the trees go over a stile by a three-way footpath signpost and **turn right**.

Go down to a wooden footbridge across a stream and continue up the left-hand edge of a large field. Turn right and left at the next two corners to stay on the field edge. In the next corner go through an old metal kissing gate and keep ahead along the edge of some grassland (ignoring a footpath off to the right). Just before the next corner go through a wooden gate on the left onto the tarmac lane which you have been walking alongside.

You now simply continue in the same direction along this lane for 400m (away from the entrance to Waldhurst Farm House). 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. Cross over carefully and take a sandy path opposite leading onto Pennington Common.

4. Pennington Common to the Chequers Inn (3½ km)

Take any of the grassy paths across the common, aiming for the right-hand end of the row of houses on the far side. On the far side cross a lane and take the driveway to the right of the houses, signposted as a footpath. Follow it round to the right, then a sharp turn to the left. 200m further on, **veer left** in front of the gate for Furzey House onto a woodland path.

Follow the path near the left-hand edge of this belt of trees for 200m, ignoring some exits into the housing estate on your left. 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.

In 200m the right of way is to **keep right** and go over a stile onto an enclosed path past some allotments, although you could in fact fork left and walk along a broad strip of grass between the allotments and the footpath as there is another exit at the end.

Either way, continue on the fenced path for a further 250m to come out onto the A337.

Turn right and go alongside the busy main road for 60m, crossing over carefully as soon as you can (there is a grass verge on both sides). **Turn left** into the driveway to "Eden", signposted as a footpath, and follow it past a pond and round to the left. Go past high wooden gates on the left and cross a stile onto a fenced path through a meadow. At the end go over another stile, turn right and go around two edges of a field to the opposite corner, where you come out onto a lane (Milford Road).

The walk continues along the farm drive just off to the right; if the fieldgate across it is locked you can go straight ahead on a narrow path and immediately turn right to join the driveway behind the gate. In 200m **fork left** off the drive onto a green lane (almost straight ahead), soon passing a vehicle barrier. In a further 200m bear right as indicated onto a broad strip of grass alongside a long tarmac drive. At the end turn right onto Lower Pennington Lane, passing Sadlers Farm.

The turning off this lane is easy to miss. In 225m (and 50m after a slight left turn) **turn left** through a narrow gap in the hedge (by a telegraph pole) onto a signposted footpath. Go along the right-hand edge of two fields for 250m, then follow the path as it zig-zags right and left to continue on the other side of a hedge. At the end go over a stile and keep ahead along the left-hand side of Chequers Green.

On the far side of the green you come to a T-junction with Ridgeway Lane. The walk continues to the right but the **Chequers Inn** is on the left if you want to break for refreshment.

5. The Chequers Inn to Lymington Sea Water Baths (3½ km)

Turn right out of the pub to head **S** along Ridgeway Lane (which becomes Lower Woodside). In 200m, with a footpath signpost on the right pointing across the road, **turn left** through a white-painted wooden gate onto a gravel driveway, entering **Lymington-Keyhaven Nature Reserve**⁷.

The route described here (along embankments between the sea and the marshes) is only one of several which you could take. To shorten the walk you could follow the Solent Way and then Normandy Lane directly towards the yacht masts in the marina. Conversely, you could extend the walk with a loop around Oxey Marsh and/or Pennington Marshes, or venture even further south-west towards Keyhaven.

For the suggested route, ignore a footpath branching off to the right to reach Creek Cottage and two old **salt boiling houses** around the end of **Moses Dock**⁸. Go past the end of the dock and through a wooden side gate. In 20m **turn right** onto a path which doubles back past the boiling houses and continues alongside the dock. On the left is **Salterns Marsh**⁹, another relic of the salt industry.

Follow the path round to the left and past a sluice gate across the dock, where there is an information panel "The Saltworkings of Lymington". After another turn to the left you come to an information panel "Lymington-Keyhaven Nature Reserve" where you **turn right**, now with Eight Acre Pond on the left. At the end of this large pond keep right at path junctions (joining the **Solent Way**¹⁰) to follow the embankment for a further 1¼ km, around Normandy Marsh.

After you have been heading directly towards the marina for 300m you could stay on the embankment where it turns right for a final loop around a small marshy area, but the suggested route is to **bear left** down steps onto a sandy path through the coastal scrubland. In 150m this goes up a short rise to a path T-junction where you turn left.

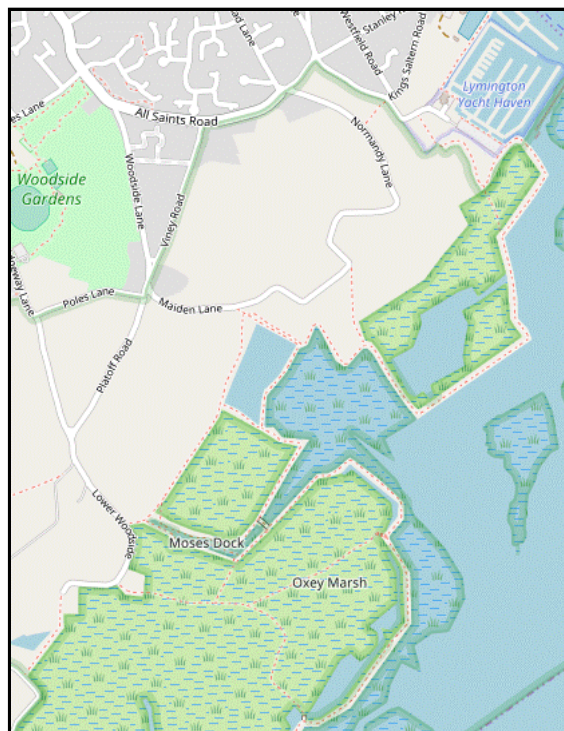
In 200m the path comes out into a large boatyard, where you should follow the signposted Solent Way straight ahead along a marked path between white bollards. Turn right on the far side and make your way along the side of the boatyard onto a gravel path heading **NE**, passing the berths of Lymington Yacht Haven on your right. Towards the end the **sea water baths**¹¹ are on your left and you turn left to pass the entrance.

6. Lymington Sea Water Baths to Lymington Town (or Pier) Station (1¼ or 2¾ km)

Make your way along the riverfront, passing an ornate **cast iron column**¹² in front of the Royal Lymington Yacht Club on your right. You can continue for a while on the riverside path alongside a recreation ground, but another large marina up ahead will eventually force you away from the river. Halfway along, therefore, bear left onto a path going diagonally across to the far corner and out onto Bath Road.

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 possible refreshment places here, the most prominent being the **Ship Inn** on the far side of the quay.

Go past the end of the quay onto a short pedestrianised street of tourist shops. At the end the street turns left and you could continue up Quay Hill and then the High Street for more pubs and the town's fish and chip shop, but to complete the walk **bear right** into a walkway towards a modern development (Trafalgar Place). Follow the path round to the right and turn left onto Mill Lane. The Town station is up ahead on the right, 150m away.

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

- **Extension to Lymington Pier Station (+1½ km)**

Instead of turning right to the Town station, continue straight on (now on Waterloo Road). At the end turn right onto the B3054 (rejoining the Solent Way). Go over the level crossing and across the long bridge over the Lymington River. On the far side **turn right** into Undershore Road, which curves round to the right with views of the town across the river.

In 300m two minor roads branch off to the left. Bear left briefly into the second of these roads, then in 25m **turn left** through a gap in the fence onto a signposted footpath, still on the Solent Way. After climbing for 200m the path comes to the **Walhampton Monument**¹³ in a small clearing.

To complete the walk go out onto Monument Lane and turn right. Follow this narrow road down to the bottom of the hill and go straight across Undershore Road into the car park for the Ferry Terminal. Go through this and past the terminal building (which has a Costa coffee shop) before turning sharp right onto the station platform.

Walk Notes

1. **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. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission cares for the graves of 100 WWI soldiers (mostly New Zealanders) who were brought back from France for treatment at Brockenhurst Hospital.
2. **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 chateau), but this was demolished after the family sold the estate in the 1950s. The current house (250m to the left of the bridleway, hidden behind trees) dates from 1960.
3. **Roydon Woods Nature Reserve** is a 950-acre site owned by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, a mixture of woodland, heaths and pasture bisected by the Lymington River.
4. **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.
5. 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.
6. **Shirley Holms** is one of the ancient holly clumps on the New Forest; *holm* is an old word for holly.
7. **Lymington-Keyhaven Nature Reserve** is a patchwork of lagoons, ditches, salt marshes and mudflats supporting a wide variety of wetland plants and animals.
8. **Moses Dock** is one of the docks where barges transported salt away from the buildings where sea water had been boiled away in large copper pans.
9. **Salterns Marsh** was divided into shallow lagoons where sea water was allowed to evaporate before being moved by wind pumps into the boiling houses.
10. The **Solent Way** runs for 96 km (60 miles) along the Hampshire coast from Milford-on-Sea through Lymington, Southampton and Portsmouth to Emsworth.
11. **Lymington Sea Water Baths** have been "Rejuvenating the people of Lymington since 1833" and claim to be the oldest open-air sea water baths in the UK.
12. The **cast-iron column** outside the Royal Lymington Yacht Club commemorates the introduction of gas lighting to the town in 1832.
13. 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.

» *Last updated: June 8, 2018*

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