



New Forest: Beaulieu Station, Lyndhurst

Distance: 18 km=11 miles

easy walking with navigational challenges

Region: Hampshire

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Author: Botafuego

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Refreshments: Lyndhurst

Map: Outdoor Leisure 22 (New Forest)

*the sketch maps in this guide should be sufficient in normal circumstances
but a map (e.g. OS) is useful in case of path closures due to forestry work*

Problems, changes? We depend on your feedback: feedback@fancyfreewalks.org

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Moorland, long woodland trails, country town, wild ponies

In Brief

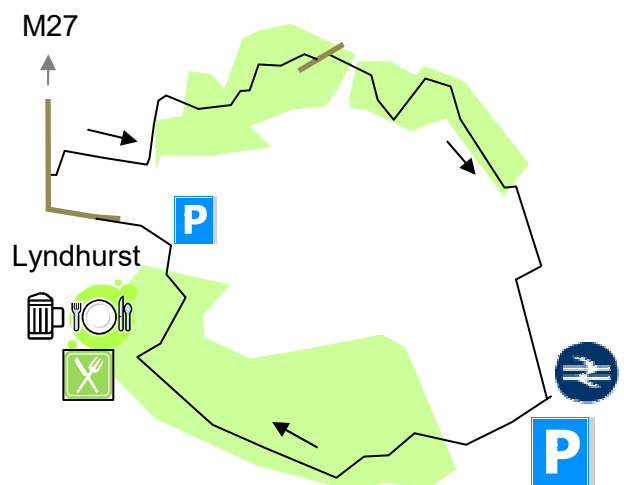
This is the third New Forest walk to appear on this site, this time centred on Lyndhurst with easy access by road (the M27) and by railway. The walk is a wonderful mixture of open heath with wild ponies and woodland for which the New Forest is renowned. The animals of the Forest roam freely and you will see New Forest breeds of cattle everywhere, totally used to people. The only fenced areas are the historic "Inclosures" of spectacular woodland.

Every kind of food and drink is available in the big country village of Lyndhurst which is on your route.

There are no nettles and very little undergrowth on this walk, so shorts can be worn. Because of one stretch of marshy ground, you will need boots that reach the ankles. A good strong walking pole will also be useful. Your dog will be very welcome, on a lead of course.

The walk begins **either** at **Beaulieu Road** railway station (frequent daily service from Waterloo, Woking, Basingstoke, Southampton).

Or at the **Shatterford** car park off Beaulieu Road, near **Lyndhurst**, Hants, postcode **SO42 7YQ** [closed in 2020: use the nearby **Beaulieu Road** car park]. If coming from Lyndhurst, it is on the **right** just **before** the railway bridge. You could also begin the walk just outside Lyndhurst. For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

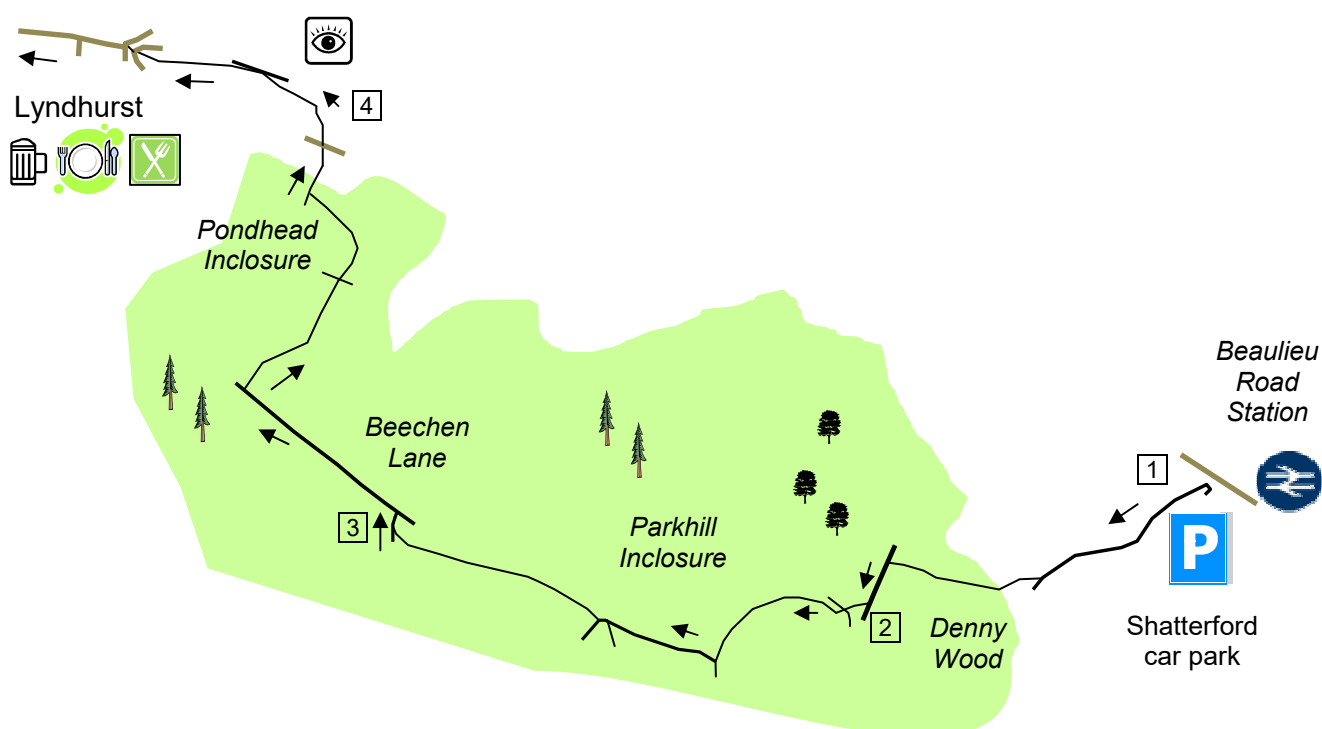


Bird's Eye View

The Walk

The New Forest was created by William the Conqueror as a hunting forest by razing many lowly villages. Everyone knows that his son King William II "Rufus" was killed by an arrow whilst hunting here, but it is not so generally known that his son Richard was killed several years before in a similar manner. Special Forest Laws were enacted to give local people grazing rights but with dire penalties for touching the King's deer. The Forest covers 566 km²=219 sq miles, of which about a third is broadleaf woodland, a third heath and grassland (including wetlands) and the rest settlements or "inclosures". These latter became common as a source of timber for the Navy. In 2005, the New Forest was made the twelfth national park in England and Wales (four years before the South Downs). Rare species of wildlife thrive in the Forest because these vast areas of lowland heath and marsh are hardly found elsewhere.

Leg 1: Beaulieu Road to Lyndhurst 8 km=5 miles



The little deserted Beaulieu Road railway station is a blessing for walkers but a historical curiosity. It was opened in 1847 as a concession to Lord Montagu in return for allowing the railway to run across his land. The village of Beaulieu is in fact 5½ km distant. The Beaulieu Hotel is on the other side of the road bridge, with precious little else.

- 1 Go out of the car park towards the entrance, just out of the trees. Immediately before the car park's big wooden sign, turn sharp **left** on a grassy path passing the car park on your left. After leaving the pine trees, your path becomes a clear stony path. It takes a raised course over a marshy area and goes over a bridge with railings. It now curves right, heading for the large wood ahead. When you are roughly 150m from the wood, your path forks into two distinct grassy paths. Choose the **right** fork. This path leads into the wood, known as Denny Wood. Immediately you have a choice of paths through the wood. Avoid the narrow path straight ahead

and instead take the one that veers off to the **right**, a very wide grassy path. In 300m, your path veers right past a very tall beech on your left (its close neighbour having died). In another 150m you come to a T-junction with a tarmac drive. Turn **left** on the drive.

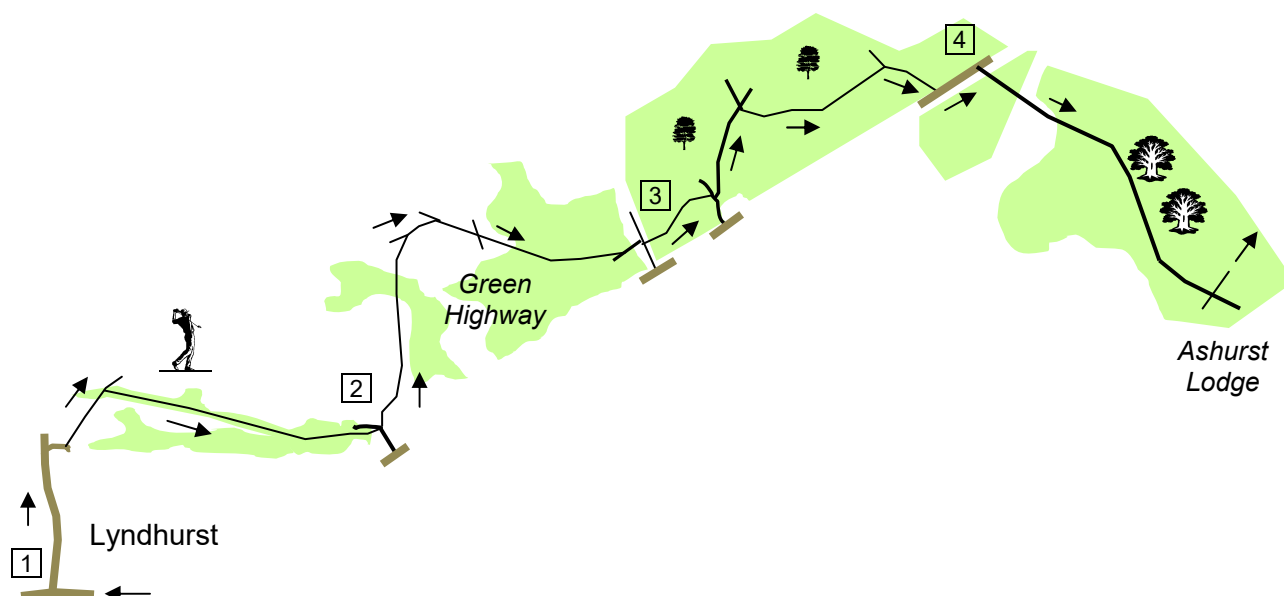
- 2 In 200m you reach a small car park and a sign warning motorists not to proceed any further. Fork **right** here past a wooden barrier on a wide shingle track. *(The warning notices about forestry work are always there, just in case a path should be closed at any time; there are always alternative routes.)* The track zigzags right-left and, after 600m or so in total, you reach the boundary fence of the Parkhill Inclosure. *(The New Forest always keeps this old spelling of "inclosure".)* Go through a small wooden gate beside the large one and continue ahead on a shingle track. In 150m or so, you reach a 4-way junction with a small grassy path on the left and a wider track on the right. Turn **right** here on the wider track. In 500m the track suddenly turns left. **Leave** the track here by continuing straight ahead on a wide grassy path. In 300m or so, your path crosses a forestry track. In 350m, avoid a minor left fork and stay on the main path, going beneath magnificent tall conifers and oaks. In 350m, your path curves right to meet a wide track at a T-junction. Turn **right** on the track, soon passing through a small wooden gate beside a large gate and, in 5m, turn **left** at a T-junction on a wide track.
- 3 This is Beechen Lane, an ancient highway running between inclosures, contained within the fences on each side. Your route is straight along this very wide woodland strip, under majestic oaks, soon going over a stream on a bridge with railings. After 800m on this path look to your right for double wooden gates, the smaller of which bears a little sign *Pondhead Inclosure*. (Note: if you pass a new large single wooden gate on your left, you've gone 20m too far.) Turn **right** here on a narrow woodland path. This lovely path runs under tall oaks and beeches. After 700m you come to a 4-way junction. Cross straight over on a wide sandy track. Your track wheels left and you find yourself for a short time on the Pondhead Conservation self-guided trail. Avoid all paths leading off until, 450m from that 4-way junction, you come to a T-junction with a wide shingle path. Turn **right** on it, going over a bridge with railings. You come through a small wooden gate beside a house onto a track leading to the Beaulieu Road.
- 4 Cross straight over the road, past a wooden barrier, onto a path rising over the moors ahead. At the highest point you have great views all round. Turn immediately **left** along the grass, heading for the big steepled church of Lyndhurst. Shift **right** to avoid some sand pits, walking close to the main stony path, still aiming for the church. You pass several car parks (alternative start) and usually a large group of ponies and cattle enjoying the attention of the many visitors. Head straight up a grassy slope, passing a cricket pitch and a large yew tree with a seat all around it, known as *Bolton's Bench* and associated with local folklore. Now head down to a road junction where the Beaulieu Road meets the main Southampton Road. Cross the Beaulieu Road and take a footway to your **right**, going through a small wooden gate and onwards into the town. Use the pedestrian crossing to switch to the right-hand side of the High Street, passing the Ferrari showroom and the *Mailman's Arms*, a reliable traditional pub/restaurant and the *Fox and Hounds*, a worthy Fullers pub. In their midst, you have a vast choice of eateries.



Lyndhurst is the “capital of the New Forest”, named after the linden trees which used to adorn the village. The Manor which includes the village has been a royal hunting park since the Norman Conquest and was granted to a succession of royal queens (no joke intended) in the Middle Ages. The population now is around 3000. The tall church of St. Michael and All Angels, finished in 1869, contains a wonderful fresco by Lord Leighton behind the altar and its stained-glass windows were designed by William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones and Charles Kempe. Alice Liddell who inspired Lewis Carroll's Alice is buried there.

Several legends have survived around the town. The Burley Dragon which terrorised the people of that village (see the “Highland Water and Burley” walk in this series) was finally slain by Sir Maurice de Berkeley in Lyndhurst. The first Duc de Stacpoole, famous for restoring much of Rome and wallowing in luxury, still holds an annual ball for the dead in Glasshayes in Lyndhurst, despite being dead himself since 1848.

Leg 2: Lyndhurst to Ashurst Lodge 5 km=3 miles



- 1 Continue up the High Street, passing the Forest Glade icecream shop with its model train station and village. Immediately, at the junction before the Antiques Centre, turn **right** on the main two-way road and follow it out of the town. (Some walkers prefer to turn **right** shortly on Empress Road to avoid the main road, going past the catholic church, turning **left** at the far end on *The Custards*, passing *Rhubarb Cottage*, no joke.) 200m after passing a filling station, you reach the start of an open space. Turn **right** on a side road here (called Racecourse View) and, in about 50m, go **left** through a small wooden gate onto the wide open space. Head across the grass to go over a bridge with railings. As you enter an area of gnarled trees, keep to the **right** on a rooty path that runs along a high narrow bank peppered with silver birch. Follow this ancient double dyke, walking along the left-hand bank or the grassy strip on its right. 500m after the start of the bank, you pass the golf club car park on your left, after which your path runs along the right-hand bank. Finally, after another 300m, you reach a driveway not far from the Southampton Road on your right.
- 2 Turn **left** on the drive and immediately **leave** it by going to the **right** on a faint path which runs along the edge of the golf course close to the trees on

your right. Keep round to the **left**, staying on the edge of the golf course. In 300m, at the next corner, where the edge turns sharp left, **leave** the golf course by continuing straight ahead into trees. Your path takes you over a bridge with railings and over a grassy clearing. **This is the start of the Green Highway, a series of clearings which form a kind of grassy trunk route. If in doubt, simply follow the series of long wide clear ways with forest each side.** Your path goes through gleaming silver birch with a felled area (2017) on your right. In 100m, at the remains of an old gatepost, you meet a grassy path coming from the left. Here your path veers **right** on a very wide grass path. In 100m or so, you meet another path from the left and again your path veers **right**. The green highway is now very wide as, after 150m, it goes over a diagonal crossing path. Your path seems to narrow because of the dense bracken. The vegetation changes to tall pines and your path veers a fraction left. As you pass through a clearing, you are joined by a grassy path from your right. In another 80m, you reach a T-junction with a wide shingle-or-grass drive.

- 3 [Jul 2019-2020: this alternative was offered to solve the problem below (in colour). Turn **left** on the gravel drive, uphill, keeping a fence on your right. At the top of the hill, follow the gravel path to the **right**, keeping the fence on your right. Keep straight on, through the smaller of two wooden gates, to reach a T-junction with another gravel path. Turn **right** and walk down towards conifers. This brings you to the junction with the wood stacks referred to below at point “*”.] Cross straight over the drive, shifting if necessary about 15m right-left first, going through a large wooden gate. Follow this beautiful woodland path for 250m or so, till you come out to a clearing with sheds and a compound used for forestry. Walk straight through the compound and out the other side to meet a track. [Jul 2019 and again in Jul 2020: walkers reported this compound fenced off, leaving the options of edging around it through undergrowth or turning **right** prematurely to the main road.] Turn **right** and, in only 20m, **left** onto a wide gravel track marked as a “cycle path 362”, passing a metal barrier. In 250m, you come to a junction by some old wood stacks [*] with a track straight ahead and a track forking left. **Ignore both** wide tracks and instead turn **right** on a narrower path. After 10m of shingle, the path is pleasant grass. On your left is a plantation. After nearly 500m on this path, you reach a crossing with a wide gravel drive. Turn **right** on the gravel drive, arriving in 200m, through a large wooden gate by a cattle grid to the main Southampton Road. Turn **left** on the road using the tarmac footway.

- 4 In 150m, cross the road carefully and turn **right** on a surfaced drive signed to *Ashurst Lodge*. (The *Private* notice only applies to motorists.) You immediately go through a large wooden gate beside a cattle grid. Follow this wide tarmac drive through oak forests (some trees having a grotesque shape). After a bendy and very easy 1 km, you see the house and fence of Ashurst Lodge ahead. About 50m before the house, you come to a crossing path with a wooden barrier on both sides.

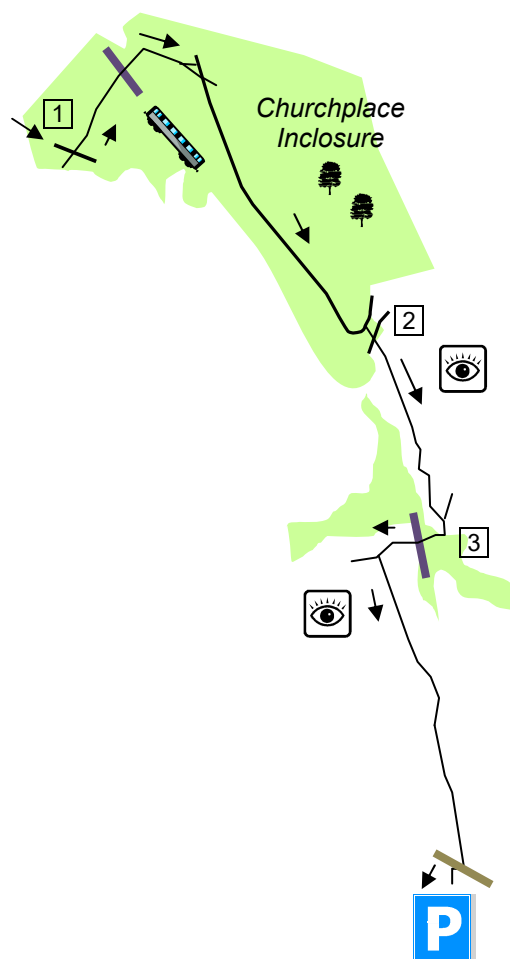
Leg 3: Ashurst Lodge to Beaulieu Road 5 km=3 miles

- 1 **See map overleaf.** Turn **left** here on a sandy track. In 300m, it rises between metal railings to go over the railway. In a further 100m, your path turns **right** through a small wooden gate beside a large gate. Follow this wide straight gravel path. This great wood is the Churchplace Inclosure, once the site of a medieval hunting lodge. In 200m, as a junction comes into view ahead, ignore a narrow path that goes diagonally left and stay on

the main path. In 80m, you reach an oblique T-junction with a wide gravel track. Ignore a muddy grassy path opposite and instead veer **right** onto the track. After 700m on this track, you reach a junction by a post bearing the number 374 where a narrow path joins from the right. Ignore a track that forks off left here and continue straight ahead on the same original track. The wood thins out with tall pines overhead. When you reach the end of the inclosure, the track curves left uphill. Before the curve is complete, go **right** through a double wooden gate, out of the inclosure.

- 2 [2018: some walkers found the next section too boggy. Instead, they turned **right** over the stream (the "Fulliford Bog"), over the railway bridge, forking **left** in 250m, over the bridge in King's Passage keeping **left** towards Fulford Passage and then following the railway.] The sudden open heath, usually browsed by numerous ponies and their foals, makes a striking change from the brooding forest. Cross straight over a wide gravel path used by cyclists and take a grassy path opposite, across the heath. For the first 100m, keep the trees close on your right. Where the line of trees bends away, keep straight ahead across the open heath. The path is not clear at first but, as you come over a high point, you can see your path winding across the heather. Nearly 500m since you left the inclosure, your path goes through a marshy section which you need to circumvent, by skirting it widely or by using a makeshift bridge made of branches. (Probe the ground with a pole before crossing!) Just after the marshy section, you need to cross **left** over a stream, through a band of trees and continue on the other side. The crossing point has a pool of water which is not too deep, but you can avoid getting your shoes wet by hopping over at another point, either 10m upstream (before the crossing point) or, better, 10m downstream. Now pick up your sandy path, continuing in the same direction as before.

- 3 Follow the visible sandy path for 200m, where you meet a path coming down from the left. On your right is a clearing at a break in the trees. Turn **right** here on a wide path which goes over a bridge across the stream and under an arch of the railway. You are now on the open heath again with a host of forest animals. Go straight ahead on the path over the heath. In 150m, ignore a minor path on your left but, in another 20m, fork **left** on a grassy path which runs along the right-hand side of a line of trees. In 250m, you go over an oblique crossing path. In 150m, a path joins from your right. In 80m, your path curves right uphill. In 450m, you pass another railway bridge on your left. In a further 300m, you reach the Beaulieu Road. Cross it to reach the Shatterford car park where the walk began.



Getting there

By car: the Shatterford car park can easily be reached from Lyndhurst which is signed from the M27 motorway (Exit 1). When you reach the centre of the town, turn left (one way), keep straight on till you come out into the open country and turn **right** over a cattle grid on the B3056, signed *Beaulieu*. *Keep a look out for ponies and cattle which roam freely!* The car park is on your right just before a road bridge over the railway.

By train: trains run to Beaulieu Road station every hour, including Sunday. Check the timetables. Cross the road bridge to start the walk.

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