

## 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 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>-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).



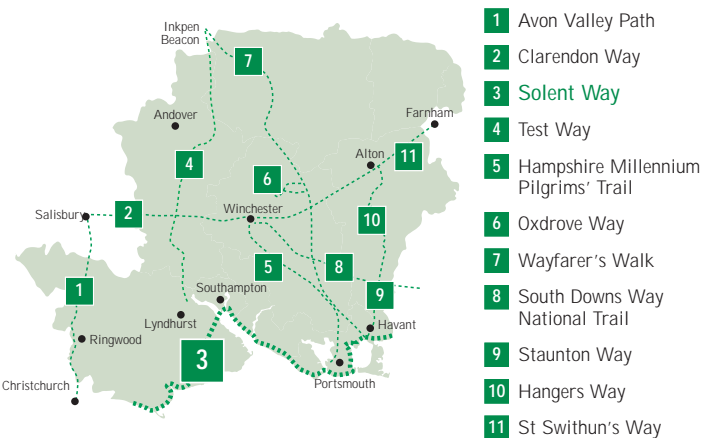
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Further information and a detailed route description is available on the web:-

[www.hants.gov.uk/walking/solentway](http://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](http://www.hants.gov.uk/walking)
- [www.hants.gov.uk/countryside](http://www.hants.gov.uk/countryside)
- [www.visit-hampshire.org.uk](http://www.visit-hampshire.org.uk)
- [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)
- [www.metoffice.co.uk](http://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](http://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

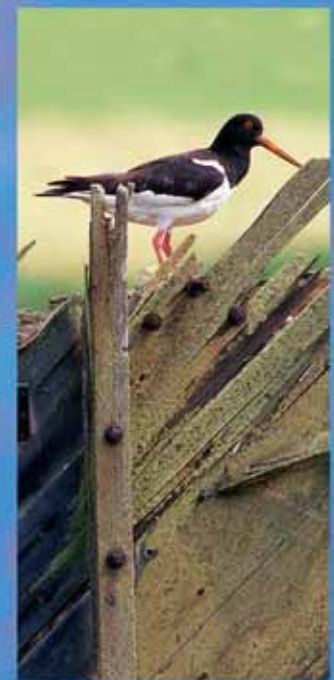


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walking in Hampshire

# Solent Way

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



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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)