



Walk on the WILD SIDE

JO VAUGHAN HEADS FOR THE CLUB'S NEW CENTENARY SITE FOR A GENTLE WALK IN THE NEW FOREST – WATCH OUT FOR THE WILDLIFE...



Ordnance Survey Landranger Map 195

IF YOU read last month's issue, you'll know that the New Forest Centenary site, near Bransgore, was officially opened. However, as the site had been open to members for a few months, many have already had the opportunity to enjoy this, the second Club site to be found within the New Forest. It is a great base from which to go walking or cycling, and there are a variety

of routes that start from and around the Holmsley Walk car park.

Of course, there's lots of wildlife to enjoy seeing as well, so bring your binoculars. In particular, the birdlife here is wildly varied, including sparrow hawks, common buzzards, hobbies, kestrels and the rare honey buzzard. But there are also five species of deer to spot, six native reptiles, and 55% of Britain's butterflies

and moths live within the New Forest.

After those all-too-rare long periods of dry, fine weather it should be possible to negotiate this route with an off-road pushchair if you have a little one with you – there are no stiles and the paths are mostly good. However, the ground can soon become boggy after rainfall, requiring walking boots for you, and your baby will be relegated to a backpack.



1 Leave the site via the main entrance and turn left up the road. Go through the wooden gate next to the cattle grid and continue along the road.

2 At the junction turn right, following the signs to Holmsley campsite. Very soon, turn left into Holmsley Walk car park. When standing facing the wooden information panel stating 'Welcome to the New Forest', turn left and walk straight ahead down the 'landing-strip' of grass.

3 Soon, just after a large oak tree on your right, veer right to walk along a clearly-defined track, past a lone tree on your right. Continue along the gravel track and over a small concrete bridge. The path soon heads to the right. Then, just before the path splits around an island of scrub, turn left to join a rougher track.

4 Where there are three routes to choose from, take the right turn. At a crossroads turn right again and continue along the slightly smaller path, heading just to the right of a small lake in the distance.

5 Pass a lone tree on your right. At a fork in the path, where you can clearly see the road on your left, take a right turn again, keeping to the right-hand side of

some gorse bushes. Keep to the main track. There are lovely open views of the heath to your right.

6 Bear right where another path joins from the left. Having followed a wire fence on your right for a short distance, bear right where the path forks. Continue to another more sand-coloured track, and turn left up it towards a building and some electricity poles.

INFORMATION GENERAL

NEAREST CLUB SITE: New Forest Caravan Club Centenary site, Forest Road, Bransgore, Christchurch BH23 8EB. Tel 01425 673638.
Open: 7 March to 31 October
DISTANCE: 5.5 miles/8.8km
TERRAIN: Mostly good tracks
NUMBER OF STILES: None
ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT: Ordnance Survey Explorer OL22, New Forest
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Easy
REFRESHMENTS: None
TOILETS: None

INFORMATION TOURISM

Lyndhurst VIC, Main Car Park, Lyndhurst SO43 7NY. Tel 02380 282269 or see thenewforest.co.uk

7 Walk past the wooden gate and immediately turn right along the footpath. Go through the gate in front of the red house and turn left. Turn right down the road, taking care as there is no footpath here.

8 Look for a large wooden gate on your right, then head through it. Continue along the grassy path. At a main track, bear right to join it, but almost immediately where it forks, bear right again and keep to the main track as it swings to the left.

9 When you get to a T-junction turn right, but almost immediately turn left at the next junction. Go through the wooden gate and turn right. Having passed beneath the power lines, continue ahead bearing slightly left, keeping to the main track.

10 Continue across the bridge, now rejoining our outward route. This means keeping to the main gravel track before turning left down the grassy clearing and back to the car park. Turn right down the road, left at the junction, and walk back along the site's entrance road.

INFORMATION ATTRACTIONS

■ **Macpennys Woodland Gardens and Nursery**, 154 Burley Road, Bransgore BH23 8DB. Tel 01425 672348 or see macpennys.co.uk. Open all year. No charge. Four-acre woodland garden containing many rare and unusual plants. You can buy the plants after you've admired them. Disabled access, but is a bit bumpy so you'll need a strong helper

■ **Highcliffe Castle**, Rothesay Drive, off Lymington Road,

Highcliffe BH23 4LE. Tel 01425 278807 or see highcliffecastle.co.uk. Open: 1 Feb-23 Dec. Cost: adults, £2.50; children under 16, free. Inside there are five partially restored staterooms housing a gift shop, visitor centre and galleries that offer a changing programme of exhibitions. Guided tours 2pm every Sunday and Tuesday. Full disabled access, although the driveway is gravelled

■ **Sammy Miller Transport**

Museum, Bashley Cross Road, New Milton BH25 5SZ. Tel 01425 619696 or see sammymiller.co.uk. Open all year from 10am-4.30pm. Cost: adults, £5.90; children and disabled visitors, £3. The museum houses a fine collection of over 400 fully-restored motorcycles, including factory racers and exotic prototypes, plus lots of memorabilia. Disabled access: ground floor only