Saturday 26th March: OUTLINE of SHORT ROUTE 44km (27miles)

This route starts through Burley heading south-east through Sway to reach Lymington.

The return route skirts the southern edge of the Forest, crosses the A35 into open forest

and comes back to Avon Tyrrell via a cycle track on the former Brockenhurst to Ringwood

railway line.

* From Avon Tyrell to Burley then around the fringes of the village on the forest edge.
* Re-join the Brockenhurst Road to dip under the A35. The section of straight road, after the A35, was built on the former Brockenhurst to Ringwood railway line hence the station

tearooms on the right.

* Climb up to Wilverley Plain with long views to the right including Sway Tower in the distance (more about this later) and then to the left across the forest lawn of Horseshoe Bottom. After dipping into and climbing out of Long Slade Bottom you turn into Sway Village.
* Back in the open forest for a short way before leaving it across a cattlegrid to reach

Pennington Common and Pennington itself, which is now merged with the built up area of Lymington.

* The route crosses the A337 then skirts the south of Lymington to reach the Lymington River at the Town Quay. The Quay was once a busy commercial port exporting salt to

Newfoundland and timber for boat building to Norway. A brewery on the quay shipped beer to the Isle of Wight. While still home to about 12 commercial fishing boats, today it is a tourist destination with berths for visiting leisure boats. The Puffin ferry operates a foot passenger service to the Isle of Wight in summer months. There are public toilets on the Quay.

* From the Quay into the town centre High Street. Lymington is a Georgian market town. The weekly street market is held on Saturdays (morning and early afternoon). There is a local museum in New Street with interesting displays about all aspects of history and life of Lymington. There are numerous pubs, restaurants, cafes and fish and chips. You leave Lymington along New Street (beside Costa Coffee), to head north out of town.
* Continuing on small lanes at one point you eventually arrive in Flexford Lane. In this lane
* are various houses and lodges constructed with mass concrete and at the top of the lane on your left is Peterson’s Tower. Andrew Peterson made his fortune in India as a barrister. When he retired to the New Forest he became interested in experimenting with mass unreinforced concrete construction and built various concrete buildings, including a grand house, for himself, piggeries, lodges, a trial tower and Peterson’s Tower itself. Intended to be a mausoleum for himself, it is 218ft high with 13 storeys built with moving shuttering over a 5-year period – all by hand with one donkey to power the winch. As you continue along Barrows Lane you can see other buildings, the trial tower and the piggeries.
* The route continues through Tiptoe village. Quiet now, but in the 1880s this was where

Mary Girling’s Shaker religious sect set up camp to await the second coming of Christ.

Scandals of weird rituals and nudity escalated to end with questions in the House of

Commons and headlines in the Times newspaper.

* The route enters the open forest again north of New Milton and after a right / left zigzag to cross the A35, you cross a couple of fords and descend into a dip to turn left onto the

cyclepath along the old railway track. The incongruous house here is on the site of a former small crossing keeper’s cottage. The track leads to a car park on the road back to Avon Tyrrell.

Saturday 26th March: OUTLINE of MEDIUM ROUTE 80km (49miles)

This route starts northwards along the western edge of the New Forest, before heading east

to cross the central Forest plateau and down through the Bolderwood and Rhinefield

Ornamental Drives to Brockenhurst. From there you continue south to visit Lymington on

market day, before a short excursion along the coast and back to Burley.

* From Avon Tyrell to Burley then head west through Crow towards the Avon Valley.
* Skirt the edge of Ringwood to cross the A31 and run north along the edge of the western Forest escarpment and beside the Avon Valley. Most fords in this stretch should be dry unless there was heavy rain the previous day (the streams running off the Forest to the Avon are very flashy and rise and fall quickly).
* Glimpses of water through trees to your left are all large lakes formed by gravel extraction in the Avon Valley floodplain.
* Pass the Alice Lisle pub on your left. Dame Alice sheltered John Hickes at her home here after the battle of Sedgemoor. He and his men were arrested the following morning. Lady Alice was tried by Judge Jeffries at the Bloody Assizes in Winchester and was sentenced to be burnt for treason. This was commuted to beheading by James II as being more fit for her station.
* Fairy shrimps, although rare, are locally common in the springtime pools beside the roadside along here. They thrive from the trampling of the ground by ponies drinking in the pools.
* Swing right to climb Buddle Hill up the escarpment and out of the Avon Valley.
* From here the route turns east to climb the escarpment, passing the Red Shoot Inn on left and eventually leaving the trees to cross heathland on the Stony Cross Plain, which is the highest part of the Forest.
* A dip down under the A31 flyover and up again leads to the Canadian war memorial cross on the left and then Bolderwood car park. There are picnic benches and toilets at this car park (and quite often ice creams for sale too). It is a very short walk to the viewing platform overlooking a deer sanctuary - follow the signs from road beside cattlegrid.
* Enjoy the downhill run along the Bolderwood Ornamental Drive through Ancient and
* Ornamental woodland – mostly beech, oak and holly. As you start down, the cottage and paddock on the left is a typical New Forest commoner’s smallholding with modest farm buildings, run-back enclosed pasture and direct access to the open forest.
* It is a short walk to see the Knightwood Oak (see car park sign on roadside) – 7.4m girth and one of the oldest in the Forest. A spectacular example of pollarding.
* After crossing the A35, the road continues as Rhinefield Ornamental Drive, lined with
* redwoods. These were planted in the 1850s when they were first introduced to Britain, but despite their height are still mere youngsters. The two tallest trees (giant sequoia) in the Forest are also here about 100m from the road either side of a ride on your right.
* Rhinefield house on the right is a former hunting lodge built in 1887. Now a hotel and much extended.
* From here the route crosses the large Whitemoor Forest Lawn to reach Brockenhurst.
* Through the Watersplash and into the High Street. There is a choice of pubs and cafes and there are public toilets in the car park. The Buttery café on the right is
* recommended.
* A short run out of Brockenhurst and across the A337 to reach and cross the Lymington River and then over the causeway of the old toll bridge to cross the river again; and the Lymington branch line level crossing to arrive beside the river and dismount for a short walk along a footpath beside the river to reach Lymington Town Quay. The Quay was once a busy commercial port exporting salt to Newfoundland and timber for boat building to Norway. A brewery on the quay shipped beer to the Isle of Wight. While still home to about 12 commercial fishing boats, today it is a tourist destination with berths for visiting leisure boats. The Puffin ferry operates a foot passenger service to the Isle of Wight in summer months. There are public toilets on the Quay.
* From the Quay into the town centre High Street. Lymington is a Georgian market town. The weekly street market is held on Saturdays (morning and early afternoon). There is a local museum in New Street with interesting displays about all aspects of history and life of Lymington. There are numerous pubs, restaurants, cafes and fish and chips. As you leave Lymington opposite St Thomas’ church on the right is a fine example of crinkle-crankle walling of which there are many examples in the town.
* The area of lanes south of Lymington is called Normandy, leading to the coast with views over salt marsh to the Isle of Wight and onto a short stretch of gravelled road (The Ancient Highway). There are otters on the salt marshes and in the Lymington River, but you will be very lucky to see one.
* The Ancient Highway leads into Keyhaven opposite the Gun Inn, from where the route continues through a sea defence gate beside the marsh to Hurst Spit. At the end of the spit you can see the Tudor Hurst Castle, much extended at various times since it was built. This is one of two Tudor castles defending the Solent as “bookends” to the National Park coast between Hurst Spit and Calshot Spit, (which the long route will visit on Sunday).
* Beyond the spit the route continues via Milford on Sea to run beside the open sea of

Christchurch Bay with views of the Isle of Wight and the Needles.

* North through Hordle and Tiptoe to the Rising Sun pub, where the route re-enters the open forest and returns to Avon Tyrrell via Burley. The section of straight road, which goes under the A35, was built on the former Brockenhurst to Ringwood railway line hence the Station Tearooms on the left.

Saturday 7th April: OUTLINE of LONG ROUTE 109km (68miles)

This route goes northwards along the western edge of the New Forest, briefly leaving the

National Park at the north, before heading south across the central Forest plateau and

down through the Bolderwood and Rhinefield Ornamental Drives to Brockenhurst. From

there you continue south to visit Lymington, before a short excursion along the coast and

back to Burley.

* From Avon Tyrell to Burley then head west through Crow towards the Avon Valley.
* Skirt the edge of Ringwood to cross the A31 and run north along the edge of the western Forest escarpment and beside the Avon Valley. Most fords in this stretch should be dry unless there was heavy rain the previous day (the streams running off the Forest to the Avon are very flashy and rise and fall quickly).
* Glimpses of water through trees to your left are all large lakes formed by gravel extraction in the Avon Valley floodplain.
* Pass the Alice Lisle pub on your left. Dame Alice sheltered John Hickes at her home here after the battle of Sedgemoor. He and his men were arrested the following morning. Lady Alice was tried by Judge Jeffries at the Bloody Assizes in Winchester and was sentenced to be burnt for treason. This was commuted to beheading by James II as being more fit for her station.
* Continue thro’ the ford at Moyles Court. There will probably be water here. There is a

footbridge if required.

* Fairy shrimps, although rare, are locally common in the springtime pools beside the roadside along here. They thrive from the trampling of the ground by ponies drinking in the pools.
* Swing right to climb Buddle Hill up the escarpment and out of the Avon Valley.
* At the top a right turn for a very short distance off route will take you to a café (The Stables Tearoom) in the nursery on left.
* Continuing, the route descends Blissford Hill, which is not very long but at 25% is claimed to be the steepest road in the Forest.
* A couple more ups and downs brings you to the B3076 from Fordingbridge, which you take for a short spell before turning left along the edge of the Forest plateau again. From Castle Hill there are fine views out to the left over the Avon towards Breamore House and Dorset beyond.
* A drop down to Woodgreen (Horse and Groom pub) is followed by a short climb back into the Forest passing the village cricket pitch on a Forest Lawn on the right. The road continues beside Hale Purlieu, an area enclosed and “stolen” from the forest and a good habitat for the rare Dartford Warbler.
* Whiteshoot hill takes you out of the National Park and through Lover. Photo opportunity beside village name sign.
* Hamptworth Golf and Country Club on left has a café and restaurant open to the public. The Cuckoo Inn is a bit further on. Interesting old pub, but usually a bit short of food.
* Heading south again the route returns to the Forest beside the Lamb Inn at Nomansland from where a short sharp climb takes you back across the B3078 again.
* From here the route crosses Stony Cross Plain, which is the highest part of the Forest. The road follows the main runway of a WW2 airfield. This heathland is great in fine weather, but a bleak place with no shelter on a rainy day with a south-west gale!!
* A dip down under the A31 flyover and up again leads to the Canadian war memorial cross on the left and then Bolderwood car park. There are picnic benches and toilets at this car park (and quite often ice creams for sale too). It is a very short walk to the viewing platform overlooking a deer sanctuary - follow the signs from road beside cattlegrid.
* Enjoy the downhill run along the Bolderwood Ornamental Drive through Ancient and
* Ornamental woodland – mostly beech, oak and holly. As you start down the cottage and paddock on the left is a typical New Forest commoner’s smallholding with modest farm buildings, run-back enclosed pasture and direct access to the open forest.
* It is a short walk to see the Knightwood Oak (see car park sign on roadside) – 7.4m girth and one of the oldest in the Forest. A spectacular example of pollarding.
* After crossing the A35, the road continues as Rhinefield Ornamental Drive, lined with

redwoods. These were planted in the 1850s when they were first introduced to Britain, but despite their height are still mere youngsters. The two tallest trees (giant sequoia) in the Forest are also here about 100m from the road either side of a grass ride on your right.

* Rhinefield House on the right is a former hunting lodge built in 1887. Now a hotel and much extended.
* From here the route crosses the large Whitemoor forest lawn to reach Brockenhurst.
* Through the watersplash and into the High Street. There is a choice of pubs and cafes and there are public toilets in the car park. The Buttery café on the right is

recommended.

* A short run out of Brockenhurst and across the A337 to reach and cross the Lymington River and then over the causeway of the old toll bridge to cross the river again. Cross the Lymington branch line level crossing and turn left to arrive beside the river and dismount for a short walk along a footpath beside the river to reach Lymington Town Quay. The Quay was once a busy commercial port exporting salt to Newfoundland and timber for boat building to Norway. A brewery on the quay shipped beer to the Isle of Wight. While still home to about 12 commercial fishing boats, today it is a tourist destination with berths for visiting leisure boats. The Puffin ferry operates a foot passenger service to the Isle of Wight in summer months. There are public toilets on the Quay.
* From the Quay into the town centre High Street. Lymington is a Georgian market town. The weekly street market is held on Saturdays (morning and early afternoon). There is a local museum in New Street with interesting displays about all aspects of history and life of Lymington. There are numerous pubs, restaurants, cafes and fish and chips. Leave Lymington by Church Lane, opposite St Thomas’ church. On the right here is a fine example of crinkle-crankle walling of which there are many examples in the town.
* The area of lanes south of Lymington is called Normandy, leading to the coast with views over salt marsh to the Isle of Wight and onto a short stretch of gravelled road (The Ancient Highway). There are otters on the salt marshes and in the Lymington River, but you will be very lucky to see one.
* The Ancient Highway leads into Keyhaven opposite the Gun Inn, from where the route continues through a sea defence gate beside the marsh to Hurst Spit. At the end of the spit you can see a Tudor castle, much extended at various times since it was built. This is one of two Tudor castles defending the Solent as “bookends” to the National Park coast between Hurst Spit and Calshot Spit, (which you can visit on Sunday).
* Beyond the spit the route continues via Milford on Sea to run beside the open sea of

Christchurch Bay with views of the Isle of Wight and the Needles.

* North through Hordle and Tiptoe to the Rising Sun pub, where the route re-enters the open forest and returns via Burley to Avon Tyrrell. The section of straight road, which goes under the A35, was built on the former Brockenhurst to Ringwood railway line hence the Station Tearooms on the left.