

RINGWOOD NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Bolton's Bench, Lyndhurst walk



Date: 1st February 2018
Weather: Sunny light cloud. Temperature: 7 degrees
Walk Leaders: Maz and Will Russell
Attendees: 15

Lyndhurst is a large village and civil parish situated in the New Forest National Park in Hampshire, serving as the administrative capital of the New Forest. The name derives from an Old English name, comprising the words *lind* (lime tree) and *hyrst* (wooded hill). Our walk started from Bolton's Bench Forestry Commission car park in Lyndhurst. The Bench actually commemorates the 18th century New Forest Master Keeper, the Duke of Bolton, and it attracts many visitors who come to sit under the giant yew tree at the top of the hill and take in the views. The hill of Bolton's Bench is surrounded by open grassy lawns on which New Forest ponies and donkeys graze. A village cricket green can be seen on the eastern side, beyond that starts the heather and gorse covered sandy heathlands of White Moor which we crossed. White Moor is an area with a fascinating military history. Here Victorian rifle range butts remain concealed amongst the trees, whilst engulfed in heather are the remains of trenches used during military manoeuvres prior to and during the First World War. The heathland here is home to a range of birds Dartford Warblers, Woodlarks, Stonechats and Nightjars along with the Silver-studded blue butterfly.

Reaching Park Pale, an earth bank with internal ditch that once enclosed what became known as Lyndhurst Old Park, a medieval deer park dating back to at least the 13th century, its presence was first recorded in 1291 but even then it was not new. We crossed the B3056 Lyndhurst to Beaulieu road, by Lime Wood Hotel and circling the Lime Wood to the path running between Pondhead and Park Ground Inclosures known as Beechen Lane. Previously known as Mine House Grounds Inclosure, Pondhead was first planted in 1810, and many of the original trees remain. The stock-proof and deer-proof fencing that for more than 20 years has helped reduce grazing and browsing pressure, allowing the development of a rich under-storey that includes abundant wild flowers, and in spring and summer, butterflies and other insects. Rotational hazel coppicing is also undertaken here, further encouraging the growth of wild flowers. We reached Clay Hill and the A337 Lyndhurst to Lymington road, passing Goose Green, then along Gosport Road and a shortcut through The New Forest District Council Offices grounds we returned back to Bolton's Bench Car Park.

Birds	Flowering Plants	Others
House Sparrow	Gorse	Frog spawn
Blackbird	Hazel Catkins	Drone Fly, <i>Eristalis tenax</i>
Mistle Thrush	Daisy	
Redwing	Hedge Mustard	
Great Tit	Lesser Celandine	Fungi
Blue Tit	Daffodil	Turkeytail
Buzzard	Hairy Bittercress	Southern Bracket
Robin	Groundsel	Birch Polypore
Song Thrush	Common Mouse-ear	Hairy Curtain Crust
Starling		
Wood Pigeon		
Pied Wagtail		
Carrion Crow		



Boltons Bench, Lyndhurst by Lyn Traves



Frog spawn at Boltons Bench by Lyn Traves