

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF THE LYMINGTON TO BROCKENHURST LINE



NUMBER 38: APRIL 2018

Dear Friends,

It was nice to see many of you at the AGM, with the lovely filmshow about Scenic Railways of Europe which followed it, thanks to John Canavan. I hope you all had a Happy Easter.

Now for the Summer, for which plans have changed a bit. First, it was decided at the AGM that we wouldn't have a Spring Talk, as not enough of the Friends support it and the fee to the Community Centre is quite expensive. But we already look forward to the first of John Canavan's excursions, **on 2nd June – this time to Brighton**, with the added attraction of the Volk's Electric Railway along the sea-front: see next page for full details. With the afternoon at leisure, some people might like to visit the Brighton Pavilion – an over-the-top extravaganza in the Moorish and Chinese style (really!) from the Regency period. (I plan to go myself.)

We still hope to run an excursion to Swanage sometime, but they are not ready for us – trouble with the bogies, I understand.... But you had better ask an expert!

Meanwhile, something I have read about but haven't visited: according to the New Forest Post there is a small **Local History museum** in the **disused railway station at Hythe, in Dominy Close**. The opening hours are limited as the staff are volunteers: Thursday and Saturday mornings from 10.15 am and Tuesdays by appointment; phone 023 8029 2953. Would anyone who visits please write me a paragraph, and take a photo? I can put it in the next Newsletter.

Finally, in the Appendix I can offer another in our **Railway Rambles** series: this time a circular walk starting and finishing at Hamble station. Here again I am indebted to John Canavan.

With best wishes from your committee and from

Georgina Craufurd

Hon. Secretary g.craufurd@gmail.com 01590 672406

FRIENDS of the LYMINGTON to BROCKENHURST LINE

An Excursion to Brighton's



Volk's Electric Railway

SATURDAY 2nd JUNE 2018

Cost: Members £21.00 Non Members £29.00

MEET at 8:20am LYMINGTON TOWN STATION CAR PARK

Cost of trip includes: -

- Return rail travel from Lymington Town to Brighton**
- Return travel on the Volk's Electric Railway**

Paid Locally:-

Return travel by bus to the Sea Front (free to Bus Pass holders)

Return to Lymington Town Station at 17:50 pm

To book please phone 07505 123826 (leave a message)

By Saturday 19th May 2018

Volk's Electric Railway Excursion Itinerary

Saturday 2nd June 2018

We will be meeting at 08:20 in Lymington Town Station car park. The excursion costs £21 to members and £29 to non-members; this includes return travel to Brighton and return travel on Volk's Electric Railway.

We travel with SWR to Southampton Central via Brockenhurst, where we board 09:26 Southern Service to Brighton arriving at 11:21

We then walk to the Bus Stop outside Brighton Station and catch a local bus down to the sea front and travel on the Volk's Electric Railway.

Magnus Volk, a pioneer British electrical engineer, was the son of a German clockmaker and was born on 19th October 1851 in Brighton. He built this narrow-gauge railway as a visitor attraction along the sea-front in August 1883, and it is the oldest operating electric railway in the world. It is similar in design to the Hythe Pier railway but rather longer at just over a mile long.

After travelling on the Volk's Electric Railway, it's time at leisure in Brighton where visits can be made to Sealife Centre, BA i360 Tower or Brighton Toy and Model Museum, not to mention the Brighton Pavilion, etc.

Rendezvous is at Brighton Railway Station at 15:20 for the return.

We depart Brighton on the 15:32 Southern Service to Southampton Central and return to Lymington on the 17:24 SWR Service to Brockenhurst, arriving back at Lymington Town at 17:50. *(If there is industrial action on our excursion day we will probably have to change at additional stations, so we recommend that you make available an extra hour minimum if you going to meet anyone when we return or have a table booked for dinner etc.)*

Please phone John on **07505 123826** (leave a message) to book your place on this Excursion to Brighton and Volk's Electric Railway

Payments have to reach John by Saturday 19th May 2018.

Railway Rambles no. 5: Hamble Rail Trail

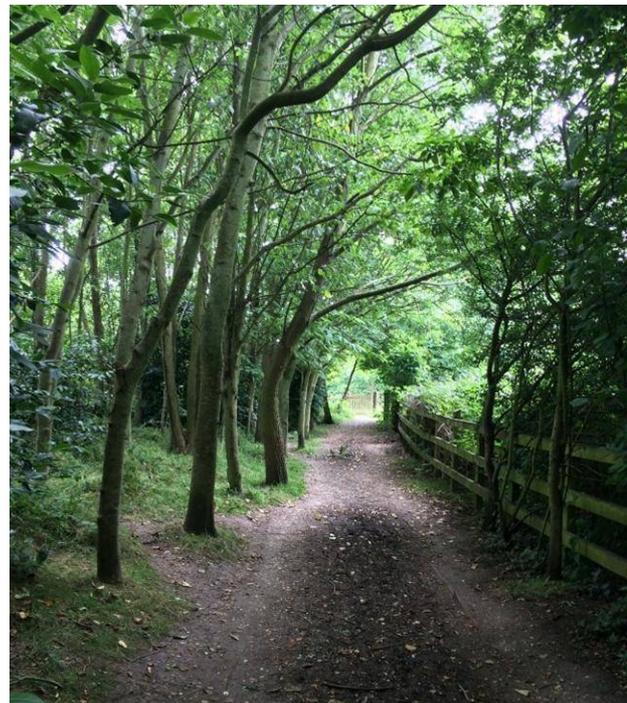
A pleasant relatively easy 4½ mile walk linking Hamble Common, Royal Victoria Country Park and the Solent Way to provide a circular route.

South Western Railway calls at Hamble Station where our Hamble Rail Trail starts.
Allow two hours, plus time for any refreshment stops.

Leave Hamble railway station from the platform 1 side of the station; take the narrow path to the south for 200yards. Turn to your left and continue along the main path, where you can see the overgrown disused railway line to your left. Cross a footbridge over the pond (which may well be dried up in summer). Over to your left, across the railway line, you should be able to see an old ‘pillbox’ – a brick building about the size of a large shed – which was a defensive position during WWII. This has been converted to a bat roost to help ensure the survival of both bats and the pillbox!

Cross the road to the entrance of Victoria House, the Hampshire Police Training College. This was originally the mental asylum for Royal Victoria Hospital, where it is believed that at least 15,000 servicemen were treated for shell shock during WWI. In the 1960s it also became the main Navy psychiatric hospital and the training centre for RMN psychiatric nurses from the Army, Navy and RAF, before finally closing in 1978. Pass Hamble Primary School on your right and you come out onto Hamble Lane. For your own safety, as this can be a very busy road, please use the pelican crossing 200yds south to access the trail route opposite this exit. Rejoin the trail path. The disused railway line is now on your right. On your left is Hamble Airfield, where during the 1920s and ‘30s Hamble Aeroplane Club flourished with members including RJ Mitchell, who designed the Spitfire, Amy Johnson, one of the foremost female aviators, and Bert Hinkler, the first pilot to fly solo to Australia. Today it is home to abundant wildlife, including barn owls, kestrels, goldfinches, stonechats and skylarks.

Along the way you will pass a wooden seat designed by artist Alison Crowther as part of the Millennium sculpture project. The trail then opens out onto housing and roads, with Hamble Parish Pavilion and Spitfire Way on your left. Head right and cross over the railway lines embedded in the road to follow the pedestrian path, below which a pipeline transports products from the Esso refinery at Fawley (which is located on the other side of Southampton Water). Along the left of this path, meadow planting is a blaze of colour in summer, attracting butterflies and insects.



Turn left onto Hamble Lane where the disused railway terminates. This is a good opportunity to stop and buy refreshments if you carry on down Hamble Lane (¼ mile) to Hamble village, which is packed with pubs, tea rooms and restaurants. Hamble is a delightful old maritime village with superb views over Hamble River from the Quay at the bottom of the High Street. Otherwise, turn left and find a safe place to cross Hamble Lane to continue down Copse Lane. Opposite Copse Lane Surgery turn right onto the footpath into Hamble Copse, where the path passes through woodland. Here you will pass a Totem Pole sculpture, close to a pond. This was carved by Russell Franklyn, of Winchester School of Art. Continue along the path to Hamble Common, following waymarks to Hamble Point. Much of Hamble Common is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and has a wealth of history, with evidence of life dating back to the Iron Age. In 1543 Henry VIII had St Andrews Castle built here, one of several sited along the Solent to defend against possible French invasion. Today, all that remains are a few

foundation stones at low tide. Upon reaching the pebble beach to your left you will see Hamble Point Marina, and just before this is an anti-aircraft Bofors gun, which was positioned to protect Southampton and the nearby oil terminals during WWII.



Follow the beach to the right, joining the Solent Way. At high tide, you can take the footpath which is raised on concrete above the beach. At low tide, you may see wading birds such as oystercatchers, turnstones and ringed plovers, which feed on shellfish and worms from the mud. Along on your right you pass reed beds and Westfield Common. Take the narrow grass path alongside the beach, passing another 'pillbox' defensive position on your left; they are believed to be called such because of their similarity in shape to medicinal pill

boxes. Continue along here before joining the tarmac path past Hamble Cliff apartments on your left, and the restored building, Hamble Cliff Stables, on your right. Walk past the boatpound on your left. The path opens out to a panoramic view of Royal Victoria Country Park with Netley Hospital Chapel ahead and Royal Victoria Railway to your right.

The Chapel contains a heritage exhibition of the hospital's history from Florence Nightingale to today, and is worth a visit if open. At the edge of the path is an information board which highlights the points of interest within the park, including, off to the right, the peaceful military cemetery which contains 3500 graves of military and also wives and staff of the hospital. Royal Victoria Country Park also hosts a host of seasonal events throughout the year (The hospital itself, built in 1856, was demolished in 1966). The ruins of the 13th century Cistercian Netley Abbey lie to the west beyond the village: well worth a separate visit.



Continue your walk towards The Cedar Tearooms within Royal Victoria Country Park. This building was presented to Royal Victoria Hospital by the British Timber Trades Federation which donated wood from 100 rare tree species from all over the British Empire, hence its name. Opened in 1940, it was used by the YMCA to provide entertainment for patients and staff. Take the road to the right of the Empire Room, and behind the toilet block, for 100yds. Continue along a narrower grass path on the other side of the road when you reach the road junction. This was the cutting along which the railway line ran from Netley Station to the hospital. Cross the road which enters the Hampshire Police Training College and enter the orchard. This orchard was established by the Itchen Hamble Countryside Project in 1995 and contains around 90 trees of mainly old English cider and eating apple varieties, plus some pear and plum varieties, and including delightful names such as Howgate Wonder, Bess Pool and Bloody Ploughman! Follow the path through the orchard and turn right alongside the main Southampton – Portsmouth railway line. Further on you can see where the old disused line could link into the main line if it were needed. A narrow path tapers off left which returns to Hamble railway station, approximately 200yds away.



NOTES:

- (1) For a free leaflet detailing the Strawberry trail, call **023 8046 6091** (Itchen Valley Country Park)
- (2) For opening times and details of events at Royal Victoria Railway, call **023 8045 6246** or **www.royalvictoriarailway.co.uk**
- (3) For information on local aviation history, call Solent Sky on **023 8063 5830**, or visit **www.spitfireonline.co.uk**
- (4) For a free information leaflet about Hamble Common, call **023 8046 6091** (Itchen Valley Country Park)
- (5) For opening times of Netley Chapel Heritage Centre, as well as details of numerous events held within the park, call **023 8045 5157** or visit **www.hants.gov.uk/countryside/rvcp/history.html**