Touring the Twelve New Forest Airfields

Routes to Follow by Car

Route Two

Route Two - From the North and East side of the New Forest

This route visits RAF Calshot, RAF Beaulieu, RFC/RAF East Boldre, RAF Needs Oar Point, RAF Lymington, RAF
Sway, and continues to RAF Holmsley South and the New Forest Airfields Memorial, RAF Sopley and the FONFA Heritage Centre for those who have not driven airfield route one.

The starting point for this route is the M27 junction two or the A326 between the M27 and Fawley.

If you are continuing from airfield route one, you will join the A326 at Netley Marsh.

RFC / RNAS / RAF Calshot and Eaglehurst Camp

RAF Calshot, which is located at the far end of Calshot Spit, was opened in 1913 by the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) to test sea planes. During the First World War it was taken over by the Royal Navy Air Service, (RNAS) and finally became an RAF station with the merger of the RNAS and the RFC on the 1st of April 1918.

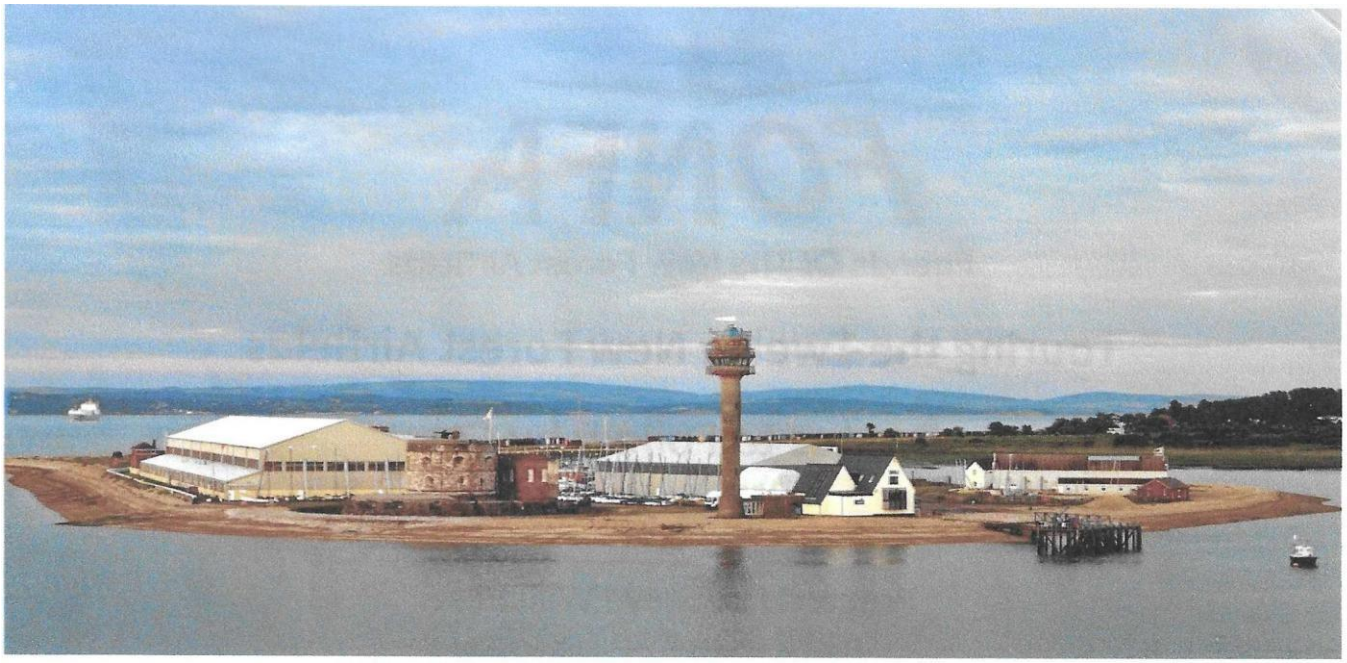
The relatively calm water of The Solent and Southampton Water provided the "Runways" and the ramps out of the sea can still be seen along the Southern side of the Spit.

Between the Wars, Calshot provided a base for Sea Plane training, operations, and development as well as a unit providing training for motorboat crews. Calshot became home for the High-Speed Flight which conducted much of the development and flying for the Schneider Trophy.

During World War II Calshot was primarily responsible for the repair, maintenance and modification of flying boats, the operational and training units having moved to other bases.

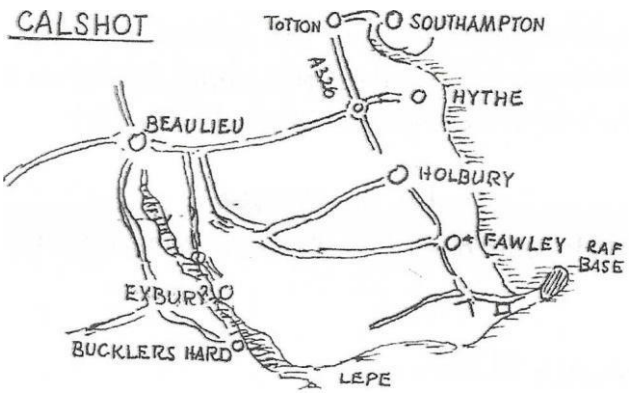
During its last operational years, Calshot was a marine craft station and it finally shut down in 1961.

Eaglehurst Camp was an accommodation camp for those that were based at RAF Calshot. It was located off the spit, just to the south of Calshot village, on the right side of the B3053. The site of the camp is now occupied by a cemetery. The camp and the spit were joined by a narrow-gauge railway known as The Calshot Express.



Calshot Spit and the former RAF Calshot site in 2010

Driving Directions to RAF Calshot



From junction two of the M27 take the A326 south towards Hythe and Fawley. and then pick up brown tourist signs for Calshot Castle.

Continue on this road to Fawley and then join the B3053, Fawley By-pass and then pick up brown tourist signs for Calshot Castle.

Continue on the B3053 to Calshot village. After the village and the former site of Eaglehurst camp on your right, keep left past the Calshot car park to join Jack Maynard Road, which runs along the waterfront of Calshot spit. You will see the former Officers Mess and the large hangers ahead of you.

Just before the former Officers Mess, the large red brick building on your right, the road turns into a large car park that covers the rest of the spit. To access the former RAF site, you must go into this car park. You take a ticket on entry and pay at one of the pay stations before you leave the car park.

Continue along the spit between the hangers to the car park near Calshot Castle. From here you will have great views along Southampton Water, and you will be in the heart of what was RAF Calshot.

What3Words junior.blend.nook Lat/Long 50.8202 -1.3081

0ptional Diversion - Lepe D Day Memorial

The coast to the Southeast of Lepe Country Park, to the west of Calshot, played a very important role in the preparation and execution of D Day as a place of embarkment for troops but also for the construction of a number of the casements for the Mulberry Harbour. The remains of some of the infrastructures are clearly visible and there is a memorial to D-Day, and those who took part, on the site.

The site is about a half mile walk along the path or the beach from the Lepe Country Park car park.

There is a cafe in the Country Park for refreshments and a comfort break.

ddaylepe.org.uk is an excellent web site where you can find out much more from the D-Day Lepe Heritage Group and the important role that this area played in Operation Overlord.

Views of the remains of the Mulberry Harbour construction site and landing craft loading dock

Directions to Lepe D Day Memorial

Return along Calshot Spit to the village and the B3053. There are toilets just after you exit the car park barrier on the Spit.

After 2.2 miles from the end of the one-way system in Calshot, turn left onto Blackfield Road, signposted to Beaulieu and Exbury.

After a few hundred yards take the left fork signposted to Exbury and Lepe.

After about one mile at the cross-roads in Blackfield, turn left onto Hampton Lane which becomes Lepe Road.

After about two miles the entrance to Lepe Country Park car park will be on your left.

Walk from the car park towards the beach and follow the path or the beach to the left for about half a mil tothe Lepe D Day remains and the memorial.

An excellent drone tour of Lepe is at *https:1/nfknowledge.org/contributions/lepe-beach-drone-tour*

RAF Beaulieu

RAF Beaulieu opened in August 1942, and it was used by bombers and fighters of both the RAF and the USAAF units. During the war, Beaulieu was also used for special operations flights associated with the SOE who had a training facility located in Beaulieu.

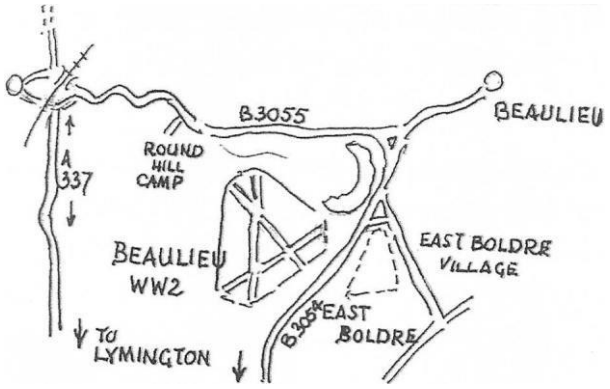
After the war, Beaulieu was used by the Airborne Forces Experimental Establishment until 1950. No further flying took place after they moved to RAF Boscombe Down and the airfield finally closed in 1959.

RAF Beaulieu from the Beaulieu Heath Car Park

The remains of the start of runway 34 at RAF Beaulieu

Directions to RAF Beaulieu (from Calshot)

Lyndhurst Beaulieu & EAST Boldre



Return along Calshot Spit to the village and the B3053. There are toilets just after you exit the car park barrier on the spit.

After 2.2 miles from the end of the one-way system in Calshot, turn left onto Blackfield Road, signposted to Beaulieu and Exbury.

After a few hundred yards take the right fork onto Newlands Road, sign posted Beaulieu. At the traffic lights go straight ahead onto Rollestone Road.

At the T junction with Beaulieu Road turn left to approach Beaulieu

Continue through Beaulieu following signs for Lymington.

After passing through the village, at the T junction turn left onto B3054, Hatchet Lane.

After 1.2 miles at the junction with the B3055 bear left and continue on the B3054 towards Lymington

After a mile turn right into the Beaulieu Heath car park. ***{Caution*** *- last time we were there the track to the car park was full of potholes) Follow the track to where the road divides and turn right into the second car park and model aircraft flying area which is at the Eastern end of the Main 27/09 runways.*

What3Words impulse.shiny.warblers Lat/Long 50.8044 -1.4927

Directions to RAF Beaulieu (from Lepe)

From Lepe Country Park car park, turn left and follow Lepe Road along the coast through Lepe village to Exbury.

In front of Exbury House, follow the road right onto Summer Lane.*

There is a cafe at Exbury House that is a good stop for refreshments and a comfort break.

Continue North along Summer Lane to the B3054, Beaulieu Road and turn left to approach Beaulieu.

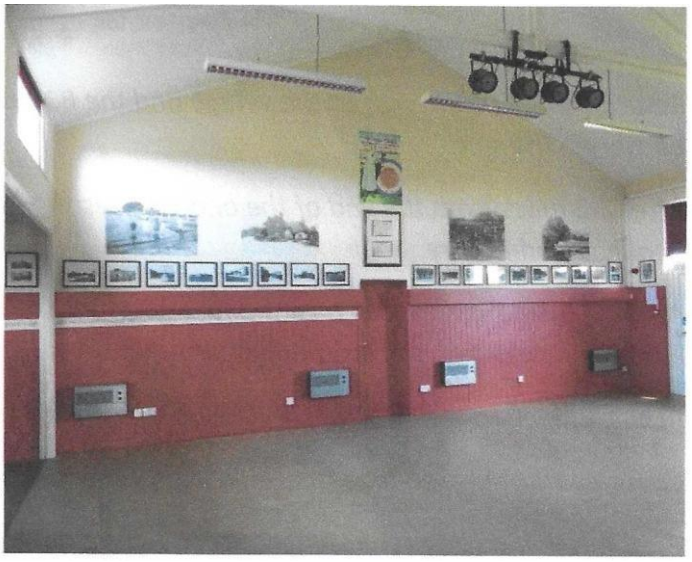
Continue through Beaulieu following signs for Lymington. Follow directions above to RAF Beaulieu.

*Exbury House played a vital role in WW2 when it became Her Majesty's Stone frigate "Mastodon", which was one of the centres for D-Day planning and it was also occupied by Naval intelligence.

RFC East Boldre

East Boldre was one of Britain's first airfields when it opened in 1910, as the New Forest Aviation School, only seven years after the Wright Brothers first flight. The flying school only lasted for a couple of years and the airfield lay idle from 1912 to the start of World War 1. Between 1914 and 1918, East Boldre was used by the Royal Flying Corps for pilot and air crew training. At this time, it became officially known as RFC Beaulieu. Not long after the end of the War, the airfield ceased operation and was returned to nature.

There is little remaining of the original airfield except for East Boldre Village Hall (which has recently been refurbished), that originally served as the Officers Mess. An information board is on the wall of the Village Hall. You might be lucky and find the village hall open. If so, see if you can have a look inside, it is like a small museum, and the original rooms that date back to 1910 give you an idea of what it was like during the early days of flying.



East Boldre Village Hall *East Boldre Village*

The area once occupied by East Boldre Airfield with the corner of the Village Hall on the right.

Careful inspection of the grass areas reveals foundations for some early buildings.

There is a very good, well documented walk around East Boldre available from the Village Hall or the FONFA website.

Directions to RFC East Boldre

Lyndhurst BEAULIEU & EAST BOLDRE

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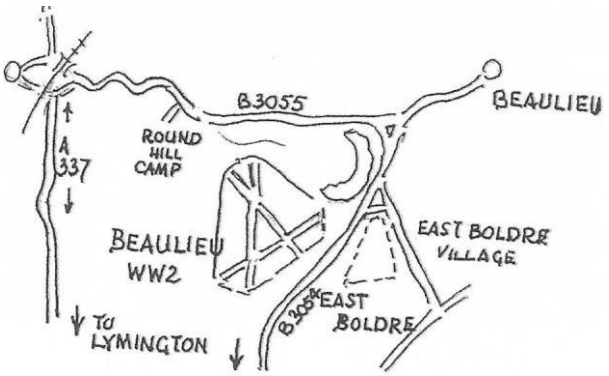


Return to the B3055 and turn left towards Beaulieu.

Take the first right turn onto East Boldre Road and the village. The Village Hall and the former airfield is on your right.

What3Words push.clipboard.crunchy Lat/Long 50.8038 -1.4720

RAF Needs Oar Point

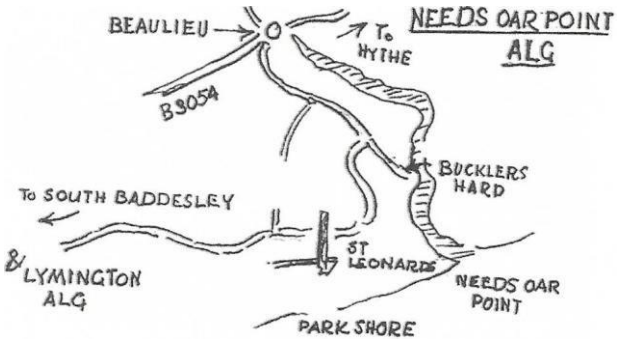
RAF Needs Oar Point was constructed with two Sommerfeld Tracking runways during the later part of 1943 and became operational with 4 RAF squadrons flying Typhoon fighter bombers. This was the only Advanced Landing Ground in the New Forest used by RAF aircraft. The airfield was operational until June 1944 when the squadrons moved to RAF Hurn before going to France at the end of June 1944. The airfield was returned to agricultural use in 1945.

During the three weeks up to D Day, there were up to 120 operational aircraft at Needs Oar Point conducting multiple sorties each day. During the busiest times there was a landing or take-off every 45 seconds making it the busiest airfield in the country and all of this without any radar operation.

There are no visible signs of the former airfield at Needs Oar Point today but there is an information board that provides an explanation of the airfield, and you can see the general lines of the runways.

Looking south from St Leonard's Road

Directions to RAF Needs Oar Point



Continue along East Boldre Road to the edge of the village and a 4-way road junction. Turn left onto Cripple Gate Lane signposted Beaulieu and Lymington. Follow Cripple Gate Lane to bear right onto Lodge Lane and continue to the T junction at St Leonards Cottages.

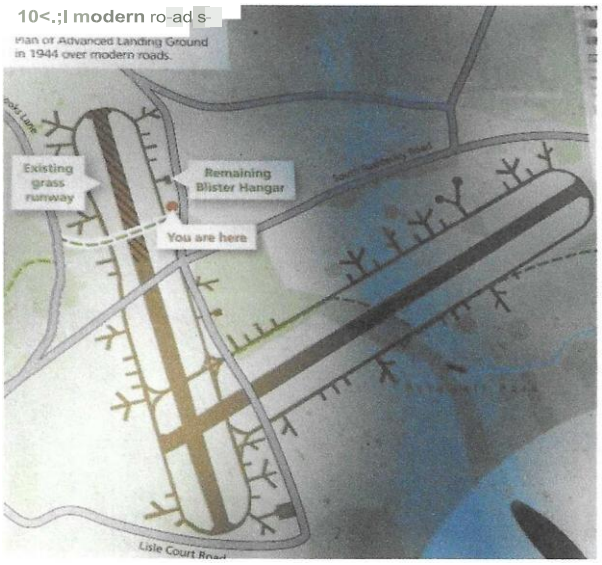
Turn left onto St Leonards Road, signposted Bucklers Hard and St Leonards. After approximately a mile, after having passed the old church and a couple of cottages on your left, the road crosses what used to be the North/South runway at RAF Needs Oar Point, there is an information board on the right. The main runway runs parallel to St Leonards Road, on the right of the road as you approach the information board.

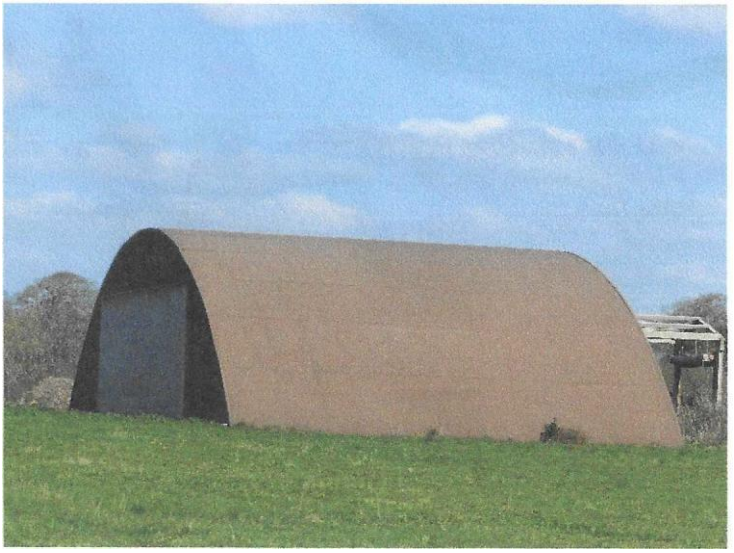
What3Words phones.bikes.butcher *Lat/Long 50.7783 -1.4316*

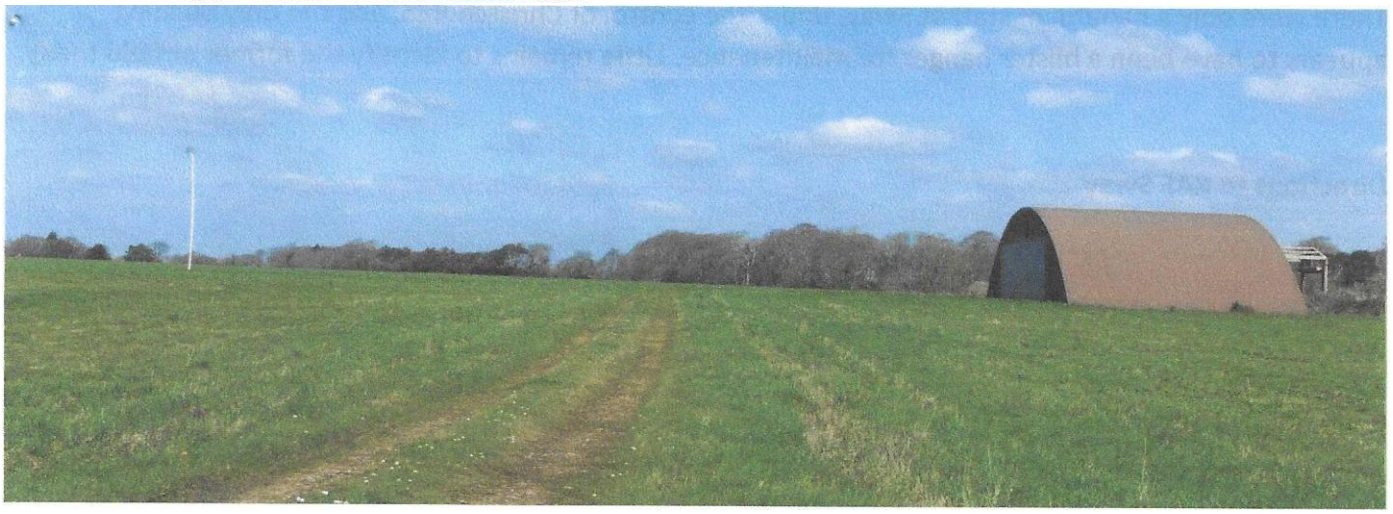
RAF Lymington

RAF Lymington opened in early 1944 as a prototype of the Advanced Landing Grounds that were going to be built in France and Germany to provide the advancing troops with close air support. There were two Sommerfeld Tracking runways and a couple of blister hangers built on the site with the rest of the accommodation being tented. The airfield was home to three USAAF squadrons flying the P-47 Thunderbolt. Flying operations ceased when the squadrons moved to France after D-Day and the site was used for Naval storage until 1946 when it was returned to agriculture.

One of the blister hangers is still in use and there is a private grass runway along the line of the North/South runway.

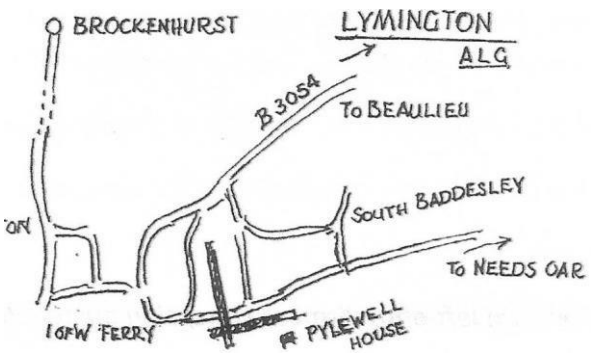






Looking towards the North along the line of the runway at Lymington ALG.

Directions to RAF Lymington



Turn around and return along St Leonards Road

After a mile continue on St Leonards Road

After 1.3 miles continue on Lymington Road

After 0.8 of mile follow the road right onto South Baddersley Road, sign posted Lymington. After 1.3 miles turn right into Shotts Lane (the sign is on the left of the road opposite the turn)

Stop at the entrance to the first track on the left.

[What3Words sweetened.undertook.talent] *Lat/Long 50.7652, -1.5148*

There is a small information board at the entrance to this lane. The North/South runway crossed this lane and to the right you can see one of the original blister hangers.

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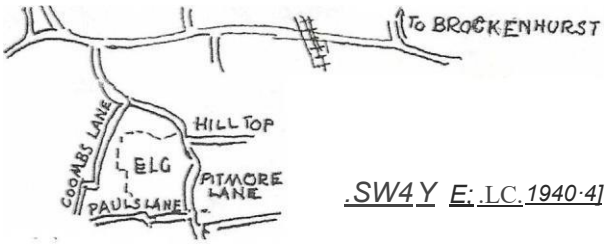
RAF Sway Emergency Landing Ground

Sway Emergency Landing Ground was established in 1940 as a grass airfield to provide a safe haven for aircraft from the Christchurch based Special Duties Unit, some of which were flown to Sway for overnight storage, as Christchurch was believed to be a target for bombers. However, this is at odds with the secondary objective for Sway and that was to be what was termed a "J" site or decoy airfield. These were developed to draw attention away from the major operational airfields and the fact that Sway attracted some bombing suggests that it was successful as a decoy airfield, but not that safe for the Christchurch aircraft!

There were only a handful of staff at Sway, under the control of Christchurch, and the only building appears to have been a blister hanger for maintenance. Little remains to identify the former airfield today.

Directions to RAF Sway



.SW4 Y E: .LC. *1940·4]*

Return to South Baddersley Lane and turn right. You will shortly cross the path of the North I South runway.

Continue to join Undershore Road past the entrance to the car ferry terminal, to the junction with B3054. Turn left onto 83054 towards Lymington.

At the roundabout, after crossing the railway, turn right onto Marsh Lane. Go straight ahead at the next mini roundabout and follow Marsh Lane to the roundabout with the A337.

At the roundabout with the A337, Southampton Road, take the second exit towards 8rockenhurst.

At the next roundabout take the first exit and stay on the A337 towards 8rockenhurst.

After about 3/4 mile turn left onto Shirley Holms, sign posted for Sway.

After 1.2 miles, at the T junction turn left onto Pitmore Lane, sign posted Pennington. As you drive along Pitmore Lane, the Emergency Landing Ground was to your right.

What3Words headset.balloons.unlocking *Lat/Long 50.7816 -1.5845*

If you have not yet used the other New Forest Airfields Drive, you might like to continue on to RAF Holmsley South and the FONFA New Forest Airfields Memorial and RAF Sopley and the FONFA Heritage Centre.

If you are interested in visiting the FONFA Heritage Centre, we are open every Sunday April to October please see the FONFA website at https://fonfa.co.uk for latest information

If you have visited RAF Holmsley South and RAF Sopley using route one, you can ***exit the New Forest*** *by re-tracing your route along Pitmore Lane and Shirley Holms to re-join the A337. Turn left onto the A337 to travel North-East towards 8rockenhurst and Lyndhurst.*

At the traffic lights in the centre of Lyndhurst, turn left onto the A337 to Cadnam and back to the M27.

The Filly Inn on the A337, before Brockenhurst, is a good place for refreshments and a comfort break.

RAF Holmsley South and the New Forest Airfields Memorial

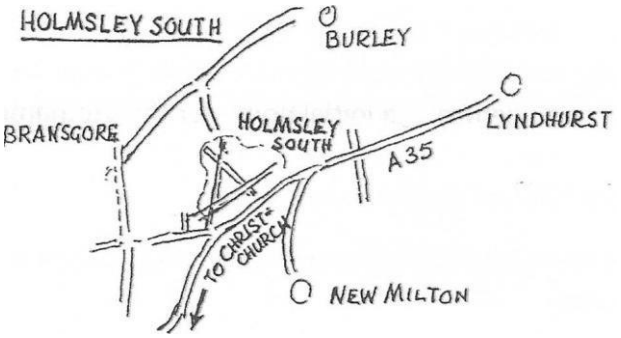
Holmsley South was one of the major concrete runway airfields. It was operational from September 1942 to October 1946. Holmsley South supported anti-submarine, bombing and fighter operations of both RAF and USAAF units.

An aerial view of Holmsley South still clearly indicates the overall layout of the station but only small amounts of the runways, taxi ways, perimeter track and aircraft parking bays remain today. There are a number of buildings, some hidden in the woods and most on private land. There are two caravan parks on the former airfield site as well as a small industrial and storage site.

The Friends of the New Forest Airfields New Forest Airfields Memorial is situated in the South-West corner of the airfield on one of the aircraft parking bays.

The Airfields Memorial was erected in 2002 to remember the 25,000 service personnel and 10,000 civilians, many from overseas, who operated the twelve airfields during early 1944, during the preparation for, and execution of Operation Overlord, or D-Day. Services of remembrance are held each year on Memorial Day, Remembrance Sunday and in early September to mark the anniversary of the dedication of the memorial.

Directions to Holmsley South Airfield



Return along Pitmore Lane and continue to the end of the Lane at the T junction with the 83055.

Turn right onto the 83055.

Take the first left on to Wilvey road and continue past Setthorns campsite to the A35.

At the A35 turn left towards Christchurch

The Old Station Tearooms at the junction with the A35 is a good place for refreshments and a comfort break. To go to the Tearooms, pass the left turn to Christchurch, go under the road bridge, and take the left turn towards Lyndhurst. The tearooms are on your left on the slip road to the A35. You will need to return under the bridge to the south bound access slip to the A35 to continue your journey towards Holmsley South.

After 1.8 miles turn right onto Lyndhurst Road, sign posted to Holmsley Camping

After 0.5 mile turn right onto Forest Road and the Holmsley Airfield site. Signposted to the Airfield Memorial.

Airfield Driving Directions

You are now following the course of Holmsley South's 36 I 18 runway.

What3Words adhesive.punters.blacked Lat/Long *50.7872 -1.7034*

As you drive along Forest Road, you will see part of the remains of runway 12/30 on your left.

Take the first turn right towards the Holmsley camp site and at the entrance to the campsite you will have a splendid view along the main 07 I *25 runway and its taxi ways.*

What3Words relished.things.vine Lat/Long 50.7908-1.6951

Go back to Forest Road and turn right.

Turn first left onto Black Lane and continue on Black Lane. Just before you turn into Black Lane you can see remains of the 18/36 runway.

As the road opens out after the trees, you will see the FONFA New Forest Airfields Memorial on your right.
What3Words regal.itself.hurls Lat/Long 50.7878 -1.7056

RAF Sopley, Sopley Camp and the FONFA Heritage Centre

RAF Sopley was not an airfield; it was a World War 2 secret radar station codenamed "Starlight" which opened in December 1940 with a Type 8 radar developed at the Telecommunications Research Establishment, Purbeck, and the Air Defence Experimental Establishment at Christchurch airfield. The system was known as Ground Controlled Interception or GCI. This guided night fighters from RAF Middle Wallop to their interception targets. The mobile radar was located in a disused farm, about a mile to the west of the main RAF Sopley and Sopley Camp, which were built in the 1950s. to provide training facilities and accommodation for the radar station. In 1959 RAF Sopley became an air traffic control station, for both military and civilian aircraft, and training establishment, both finally closed in 1974. Sopley Camp is possibly best known as the reception centre and initial home for the Vietnamese Boat People. The FONFA Heritage Centre is in the former Sopley Camp emergency generator building, on Mosquito Way at the western end of the Heatherstone Grange development.

For more information I suggest you read Kevin Holmes's fascinating history of RAF Sopley which you can purchase at the Heritage Centre.

Directions to RAF Sopley and Sopley Camp

From the Airfields Memorial continue along Black Lane to Forest Road, turn right.

At the T junction with Lyndhurst Road, turn right.

In about 1 Mile, turn right onto Harrow Lane, towards Bransgore. Where Harrow Lane joins Ringwood Road turn right onto Ringwood Road, towards Bransgore.

At the crossroads in the middle of Bransgore, by The Crown Inn, go straight across and continue on Ringwood Road.

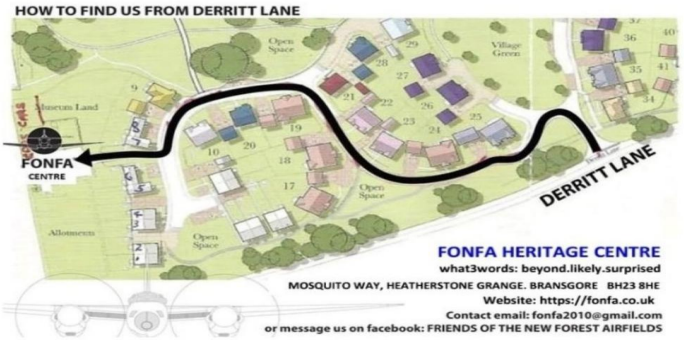
Take the second left onto Derritt Lane towards Sopley

At the Heatherstone Grange estate on the right, take the second turn right onto Marryat Way, and follow the map below to Mosquito Way and the FONFA Heritage Centre.

What3 Words doors.guesswork.suspend Lat/Long *50.7807-1.7536*

Please note that the Heritage Centre is only open on Sundays between April and October. Please see our web site https://fonfa.co.uk *for details.*

How to find FONFA Museum
Mosquito Way, Heatherstone
Grange, Derritt Lane BH23 8HE



Directions back to the A31 and M27

Return to Derritt Lane and turn right towards Sopley.

In Sopley, turn left and follow the road to the right around the back of the Woo/pack pub onto the 83347 towards Ringwood.

The Woolpack is a pub that was used by Servicemen and Women during the War and Churchill and Eisenhower visited the pub during 1944. This is a good place for refreshments and a comfort break.

Stay on the 83347 through Ringwood to the roundabout at the junction with the A31. Take the third exit to Join the A31 towards Southampton and the M27

Thank you for using my Airfield Driving Directions, I hope that you have enjoyed exploring the New Forest and its aviation Heritage.

If you have any feedback and comments, please drop me an email at fonfa2010@gmail.com