

*The other building in this area was the ferryman's house which was built by the rector in the 1840s behind the church. Although the ferry no longer exists, it operated until 1948 and was at its busiest when the cement works were active on both sides of the river.*

**7** At the end of Church Field the road bears round to the right and you will see a path continuing straight ahead which you need to take. You will be adjacent to the train line on your left hand side. When you come to the next path on your right follow this across the stile. You are now entering Holborough Marshes.

*Take time to enjoy the sights and sounds of Holborough Marshes, a beautiful nature reserve. In spring listen for the distinctive song of the nightingale with an impressive range of whistles, trills and gurgles. It returns to this site and a few others along the River Medway year after year.*

**8** Turn left at the old World War II pillbox and follow the embankment with the river on your right.

*Admire Burham old church (St Mary the Virgin) nestled alongside Burham Marshes on the other side of the river and Snodland Paper Mill upstream. Keep an eye out for wildlife on the marshy grassland to your left and along the river itself.*

**9** After a few hundred metres you will see a footpath taking you through scrub on your left. Take this path and follow it to its end through the scrubby vegetation and then alongside the stream on your right hand side.

**10** Go through the kissing gate at the end of the path and turn left to follow the path back to Snodland train station via Church Field, keeping the railway line on your right hand side.

If you would like to explore Holborough Marshes further, instead of going through the kissing gate go through the motorbike barrier on your right and follow this main track to the river's edge. You will see a bird hide along the way and also old tram tracks; a reminder of the rich industrial past of this area.

**Distance:** 2.9 miles / 4.7km. Can be extended for another 1.4 miles / 2.3km via Holborough Marshes.

**Time:** 1½ - 2 hours approximately (2 - 2½ hours with extension).

**Terrain:** The route is reasonably flat but some paths can become muddy. One stile, some gates and one train line crossing.

**Start point:** New Hythe train station.

**End point:** Snodland train station.

**OS Explorer Map:** 148.

# Lakes & Marshes

## New Hythe

A 2.9 mile / 4.7km walk (with optional loop of 1.4 miles / 2.3km) from New Hythe train station to Snodland train station taking in the fantastic scenery and wildlife of the wetland areas of Leybourne Lakes, Holborough Marshes and the River Medway.



Snodland Paper Mill (johnmillerphotography.com)



Valley of Visions and the Kent Community Rail Partnership gratefully acknowledge funding or other assistance received for this project from the Heritage Lottery Fund, ACORP, Network Rail, Department for Transport, Interreg Iva, Kent County Council Members Local Engagement and Highways fund grants, the Halling Association, Southeastern, Explore Kent and the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership.

This walk is endorsed by Explore Kent.

Photo credits cover: Snodland Paper Mill and Burham old church - St Mary the Virgin and Nightingale (johnmillerphotography.com). Water Vole (Andy Vidler www.andyvidler.co.uk)



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A relatively easy and short walk from New Hythe train station to Snodland train station through the stunning wetland landscape of Leybourne Lakes Country Parks. The optional short loop around Holborough Marshes is well worthwhile, with its abundance of marshland wildlife and stunning views along the River Medway.

**1** Turn left out of New Hythe train station onto New Hythe Lane. Before the roundabout you will see a restricted byway sign on your right. Cross over the road and follow the byway. After 100 metres go through the motorbike barrier. You are now entering Leybourne Lakes Country Park.

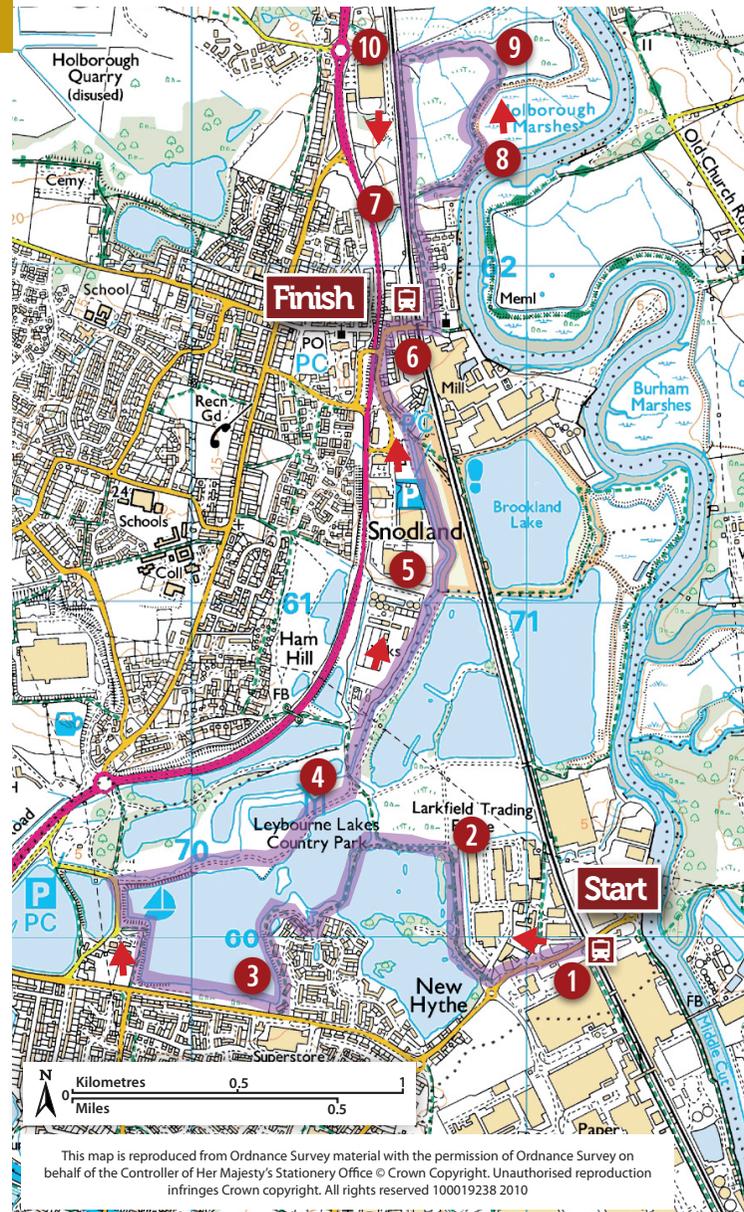
*Leybourne Lakes Country Park was once a gravel workings and has been transformed into a local wildlife site, meaning it is important for wildlife on a county level. Many birds and other wildlife live in this stunning wetland area.*

**2** Follow the track straight ahead keeping the lake on your left. Go through the metal gate then at the brown sign take the left path signposted to the Ocean Lake. Pass the metal gate and continue straight ahead with the path going between two lakes. You will see houses on your left and the lake on your right. Follow this path around the whole of the Ocean Lake.

*A variety of wetland birds thrive on this and the other lakes including kingfishers, tufted ducks, great crested grebes and mute swans.*

**3** You will get to a path that crosses over the main road. Refreshments are available here from the supermarket. Continue on the lake-side path around the rest of the lake until you get to the green sheds. The path straight ahead over the bridge takes you to the main car park (toilets available here). Continue on the lake-side path.

**4** Continue straight ahead at the metal gate. At the crossroads of paths turn left signposted to Brookland Lake and Nevill Park. After 30 metres the path splits again; take the right hand path towards Brookland Lake. Follow the stream on your left for about 1 km.



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All Saints Church (John Miller) Holborough Marsh (John Miller) Great Crested Grebe (Andy Vidler)

*Listen out for the characteristic 'plop' of the water vole as it dives head first into the water. Water voles are the most dramatically declining of all British mammals but they do live at Leybourne Lakes so keep your eyes and ears peeled.*

**5** When you reach a metal gate continue straight ahead. You are now leaving Leybourne Lakes Country Park. Join the road and follow it to the left. Take care here as large vehicles use this road. After 100 metres turn right onto the main road (Brook Street).

For refreshments in Snodland town centre take the road on the left over the main road. Just after the bridge take the path on your right and then turn left at the bottom of this path onto the High Street. Follow this to take you to the town centre.

**6** Follow Brook Street round to the right and straight ahead you will see Snodland train station. You have the option to finish the walk now or carry on for a further 1.4 miles to visit Holborough Marshes.

Take care crossing over the railway line then turn left into Church Field.

*The parish church of All Saints is one of many locally which are sited near the river and offers a contrast to the industrial site next door. Little remains of the church's earliest fabric although it was mentioned in the Domesday Book and today what can be seen is largely 13th to 15th centuries.*