



NEW FOREST  
NATIONAL PARK

## TOURISM AND RECREATION

# 4

## Lyndhurst: a classic honeypot site



View down the High Street

**Dominating the skyline of the village is the impressive St. Michael and All Angels Church which is rich in pre-Raphaelite influence.**

In the graveyard of the church lie the remains of Alice Liddell, the inspiration for Lewis Carroll's 'Alice in Wonderland'. In fact Alice Liddell lived much of her life in Lyndhurst. Over the centuries Lyndhurst was a magnet for artists and writers including the famous William Cobbett amongst others.



Alice Liddell's grave

## Introduction

**The village of Lyndhurst is a hub of activity and receives a large number of visitors each year. Its wide array of shops, eateries and accommodation provide a lure for tourists wanting to enjoy a typical slice of New Forest village life. However the increasing pressures being placed on the village have had an impact on the very thing people flock to see. This factsheet investigates the rise of Lyndhurst as a typical honeypot site and looks at the impacts of its popularity.**

## History of the village

The recorded history of Lyndhurst begins in 980AD. The name is of Saxon origin and literally means 'lime wood'. Its location was determined by the crossing point of a number of tracks through the forest from surrounding places. At this time it was a royal manor granted to the Abbey of Amesbury in Wiltshire.

In 1099 the first Norman King, William Duke of Normandy, who became known as William the Conqueror, designated a large area as his nova foresta, or new hunting ground. The area stretched from the River Avon in the west, to Southampton Water in the east, from the Wiltshire downs in the north to The Solent in the south: an even larger area than the present day National Park.

The village of Lyndhurst began its life as a royal hunting lodge and soon took its place as the 'capital' of the New Forest. Kings and queens regularly came to visit and stayed at the royal manor which is now known as The Queen's House, now the headquarters of the Forestry Commission. The Verderers' court adjacent to the Queen's House is also a remnant of Norman times. The name Verderer derives from the French word vert meaning green, thus the Verderers were the official keepers of the green. The court was created to deal with issues concerning the Forest commoning system and is still in operation today.

The life of the New Forest in Stuart times is vividly described by the following extract from Celia Fiennes book 'Through England on a Side Saddle in the Time of William and Mary' (1695):

"From Lymmington to Lindhurst is 6 mile, where is a house of ye Kings wn he comes to hunt in the new fforest, and ye Lord Warden of the fforest is there when he Comes to hunt and Hawk, to Whome Comes all the Gentry of the Country to waite on him. He has power to dispose and order ye Concerns of ye forrest for ye timber for shippes and to have it Cherrish'd and secured from Spoyle, as also the deare and Game to be preserved, ye disposing of the Lodges are in his power...I think its ffellony for any to kill ye Kings deare there are severall Rangers of ye fforest and 6 verderers yt are their justices or judges of all matters Relateing to ye fforest, these ought allwayes to reside in ye fforest and are to attend the King when he Comes into ye new fforest."



## The Village Architecture

The earliest surviving building in the village is the Queen's House. This is a large brick building of late Jacobean styling which has been significantly altered and restored over the last two centuries. Inside, however, there are still small areas of Tudor brickwork and stone plinths in evidence.

During its growth Lyndhurst was a small place without any urban characteristics. In fact most people would have been employed in agriculture. Any service industry there would have involved servicing the needs of the community. That community would periodically have swelled with the presence of the royal hunting parties at Queen's House. This meant that the village would have occasionally been needed to provide lodgings and stables for the hunting party. Because of this it is possible that the few older outbuildings that survive may actually predate the frontage buildings.

Elsewhere in the High Street the 18th century buildings are much smaller in scale and clustered around the Romsey Road junction. The most important of these is the Fox and Hounds public house. Apart from this pub, the earlier buildings in the High Street are low, only two storeys high and two or three bays wide. These buildings look modest and relatively inconspicuous.



Traditional building

During the start of the 19th century that pattern was continued and the buildings were not large. However, when the period of expansion started in the 1870s a new kind of architecture was introduced. This used contrasting materials and the buildings were much taller and imposing. On the High Street today these taller, newer buildings dominate the scene.

The most radical change came during the building of the Victorian parish church between 1858 and 1868. St Michael and All Angels Church contained work by many of the finest and most famous artist-craftsmen of the age. Opposite the church is the Crown Hotel. This massive building was built in 1896 in the Domestic-Revival style and is far larger than any other domestic building in the village centre. Lyndhurst school and the school house were built in 1849 to serve the growing population.

The major period of growth and consolidation of the village was between the 1870s to the 1920s. The main reason for growth was not the Southampton to Bournemouth railway (which was built in 1847 and swept away from the village to the south), but the rise of the private motorcar and charabanc. This meant that Lyndhurst was seen as a fashionable and exclusive location to live in and visit.



Typical architecture



Swan Green cottages

## Lyndhurst today

Lyndhurst has a more unique 'New Forest character' than most of the other villages in the area. This is partly because of the wealth of trees throughout the village and the proximity of the open forest which comes close into the village centre around Bolton's Bench. There are also distinctive styles of architecture in the village centre which themselves prove



The New Forest Centre

attractive to visitors. Nowadays Lyndhurst has a wide range of shops, tearooms, cafés, pubs and restaurants. It is home to the Lyndhurst Museum which chronicles the development of the New Forest and provides a fascinating guide to the forest's history and heritage. The High Street is a popular tourist destination in its own right and a large car park services the needs of locals and visitors alike.

## Conservation in Lyndhurst

Because of its stunning architectural heritage Lyndhurst was designated as a Conservation Area in 1977. Conservation Areas are defined as 'an area of special architectural and/or historical interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'.

The village is still characterised by masses of trees, which either serve as a backdrop to the buildings, or act as screens at the edge of public spaces preventing views into the private grounds beyond. These trees themselves are of historic and landscape value and in order to protect them there are many Tree Preservation Orders in Lyndhurst.

To counteract the pressures of congestion and decreasing air quality in the High Street the Highways Authority has begun a trial re-routing of traffic during busy periods. This involves flashing signs on the M27 to direct traffic into the Forest via an alternative route that by-passes the High Street. It is estimated that this will reduce the volume of traffic along the High Street by around 10% and so help to alleviate the air pollution issue. This trial is likely to continue for some time in order to gather more conclusive evidence.

## A Honeypot site?

Honeypots are defined as "places with special interest or appeal that are very popular with visitors and which tend to be overcrowded at peak times".

Its reputation as the capital of the New Forest combined with its rich historical, cultural and architectural history mean that Lyndhurst is hugely popular with visitors. It also has a visitor information centre that provides visitors with information on places to visit and things to see and do. The wide range of shops, restaurants, cafés and places to stay also add to this attraction. Lyndhurst has the added bonus of being centrally located within the National Park and within very easy reach of the Open Forest.

As a result Lyndhurst has all the characteristics of a honeypot site and the high level of visitors has a marked impact on the nature of the village during the peak holiday season. Unusually, this season also extends into the traditional 'shoulder' months and visitor numbers continue to be relatively high as early as April and as late as October.

This level of additional people passing through and visiting the village leads to several impacts: economic, social and environmental. These impacts can be positive but can also lead to pressures on the very attraction people are flocking to see.



Souvenirs from Lyndhurst

### Census data (2001):

Population	<b>2,973</b>
Average age	<b>47 yrs</b>
Economically active people	<b>37%</b>
Unemployed people	<b>2%</b>
Retired people	<b>20%</b>
Owner occupied property	<b>77%</b>
Rented property	<b>23%</b>

### Economic impacts

The high numbers of visitors contribute to a booming service industry providing accommodation, eateries, bars and shops. A walk down the High Street indicates that a high proportion of these shops are providing a service aimed at visitors, ranging from traditional souvenir shops through to specialist camping suppliers. The economic wealth that visitors bring to the village is unmistakable. Not only does this contribute to the local economy but also provides numerous jobs for the local population.

### Social impacts

The desirability of Lyndhurst as a location has created a booming local housing market. This means that house prices are high and often out of reach of the local population. Some houses are purchased as second or holiday homes whilst others are bought by people moving into the area, often to retire. This has had an impact on the social characteristics of the village.

### Environmental impacts

Lyndhurst still maintains the original road layout that evolved from medieval tracks crossing through the village. This means that the two main road routes across the New Forest (A337 and A35) converge in the village centre. At peak times this creates major tailbacks particularly leading from the M27 motorway into the village centre. The backing up of traffic and high levels of congestion, particularly along the High Street, has led to a marked decrease in air quality. This traffic congestion fuels an ongoing debate about the pro's, con's and feasibility of a Lyndhurst bypass.



Traffic congestion on the High Street

### Further reading/ useful information

Other New Forest National Park Authority factsheets

New Forest Centre Library

*Through England in a side saddle in the time of William and Mary, 1695:* Celia Fiennes

*The New Forest:* Colin R. Tubbs, 2001

*Managing Environments for Leisure and Recreation:* Richard Broadhurst, 2001

The Official New Forest Visitors website: [www.thenewforest.co.uk](http://www.thenewforest.co.uk)

The New Forest Tourist Association website: [www.nfta.co.uk](http://www.nfta.co.uk)

[www.newforestnpa.gov.uk](http://www.newforestnpa.gov.uk) Factsheet available on CD, in large-print, or Braille on request

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