

# The Mill Trail:

An attractive circular walk of up to 7 miles (shorter circuits are available)

This is one of three Basingstoke Heritage Trails

## The Mill Trail

Whitchurch is a mill town. Once a working mill was located along the River Test every half mile through the town. Today all but one of the mills have been converted into private houses. This picture was painted at a time when water power in Whitchurch was nearing its peak of industrial production.



▲ Whitchurch in the Regency era. (Hampshire Record Office)



▲ Whitchurch railway station circa 1940's. (photo Hampshire Record Office)

## The Railway

Rail power followed the decline of water power. Now railway transport has in turn given way to roads. This photo shows Whitchurch station in busier times.

## The River Test

To follow the Mill Trail turn left from the Station and look for the waymark arrows on lampposts and follow them to the first mill on the Trail, the Town Mill.

These waymarks will take you to the footpath in Kings Walk, a small cul-de-sac off of the main road into town. They then lead down this footpath, across a road and along to Town Mill Lane.

At the Town Mill you will find a choice of a circuits to take.

The shortest is a mile walk which takes you west to the Silk Mill and Fulving Mill then back.

Alternatively, the Trail takes you east to Laverstoke and Freefolk and back. This 3 mile circuit, crosses and re-crosses the River Test by footbridges, and passes two more mills and the charming church of St Nicholas at Freefolk.



▲ The River Test

**The Mill Trail is a waymarked walk along the River Test which includes several river crossings which creates several separate circuits. This Trail features:**

- A start point at Whitchurch Station, or alternate start points at Laverstoke or Whitchurch Silk Mill
- An attractive walk along the River Test which passes five different historic mills, The Silk Mill is the only one remaining in manufacturing use; the others are now residential properties.
- Short cuts to create walks of either, 2, 3.5 or 4.5 miles

**Interpretation panels are located at key points along the trail which describe the various features of interest en route**

**Follow these waymarks:**



Hampshire  
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**SOUTH WEST TRAINS**



Laverstoke &  
Freefolk PC

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## Town Mill

A mill on this site was mentioned in the Doomsday Book. The Town Mill was still in regular use milling corn until 1940, the last miller being Henry Lloyd. However after the war the mill fell into disrepair, until it was purchased and adapted into a private residence in 1969.



▲ Town Mill, circa 1950 (photo Hampshire Record Office)



▲ Bere Mill. This and Laverstoke Mill were both paper mills owned from the early 18th Century by the Portal family. It is now a private house

## Choice of Routes

From here you can walk east to Laverstoke and Freefolk, by crossing the river and turning left. To Laverstoke and back is about 3 miles, but you can reduce this by taking a short cut to Bere Mill. Alternatively, cross the bridge and turn right to follow the path to the Silk Mill. This is a shorter circular walk of about a mile.

## The River Test

This is a chalkland river of great wildlife diversity; it is also nationally renowned for its fly fishing. From the footbridge you can often see large brown trout below.

The unimproved grassland bordering the river courses forms a habitat particularly rich in wild flowers and valuable to birdlife. Once such habitats were more widespread but they are now much diminished elsewhere due to agricultural improvements.



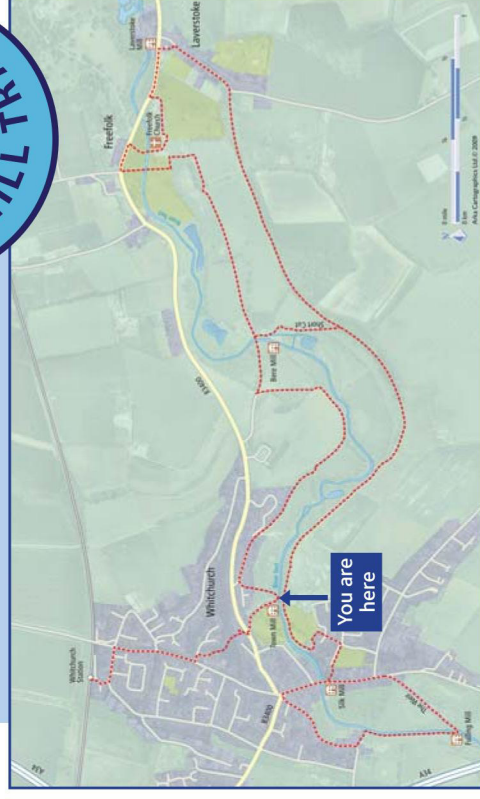
▲ The River Test in spring (photo Hampshire Record Office)

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