

The Mill Trail:

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

This is one of three Basingstoke Heritage Trails

Laverstoke Mill

The hamlet of Laverstoke grew up around the Laverstoke paper mill, which was founded in the 15th century. The existing mill building dates from 1719 and became of national significance since it supplied the paper for the banknotes of the Bank of England. One could almost state the Portal family became rich by making banknotes! Sadly today the mill is defunct and it is planned to be converted into residential use.



▲ Laverstoke Mill, circa 1920's (Hampshire Record Office)



▲ Mill cottages in Laverstoke Lane

Laverstoke Lane and the Millenium Green

The Portal family built many houses for their mill workers. A distinctive row of properties line the adjacent lane. Built in the early 20th century their quality of construction and spacious setting reflect the philanthropic ideals of that time. Wall plaques on two properties along the road record their benefactors.

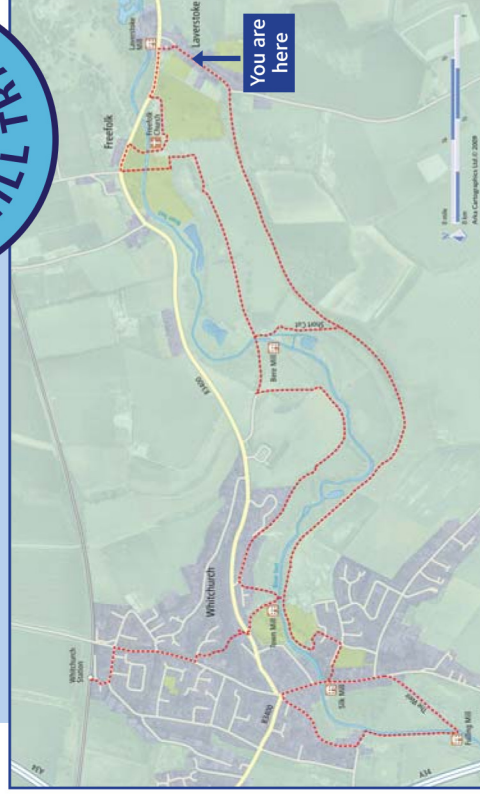
Most recently Laverstoke's Millenium Green was created in 2000. It offers a natural environment in a parkland setting and includes a children's play area, woodland walk and a contemplative garden. The Green is managed by local Trustees and volunteers.

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:



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The Church of St Nicholas, Freefolk.

The settlement of Freefolk is small but ancient; its name is thought to relate to it being a free settlement outside of the feudal system.

This tiny single-cell church has white walls of flint rubble and lime plaster, topped by a tiled roof and a white painted bell-cote. The church was founded in 1265 but its current appearance is probably more characteristic of the early 18th century. Its decorated interior exudes a simple charm, the royal coat of arms of King William III still hang inside.

Services are held monthly and the church remains in use. It is cared for by the Churches Conservation Trust.



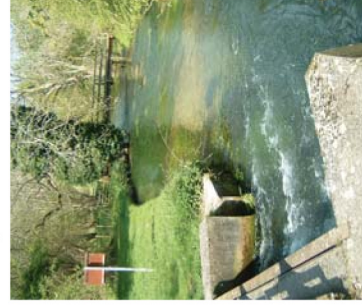
▲ St Nicholas Church, Freefolk



▲ Manor Cottages, the longest thatch in England?

Manor Cottages

This is rather an oddity; a thatched terrace of eighteen estate workers cottages, which fronts the main road. It was architect designed as recently as 1939 and is certainly one of the longest, impressively thatched, buildings in England. However, its striking frontage contrasts with a rear view that is more utilitarian.



▲ The River Test

River Test

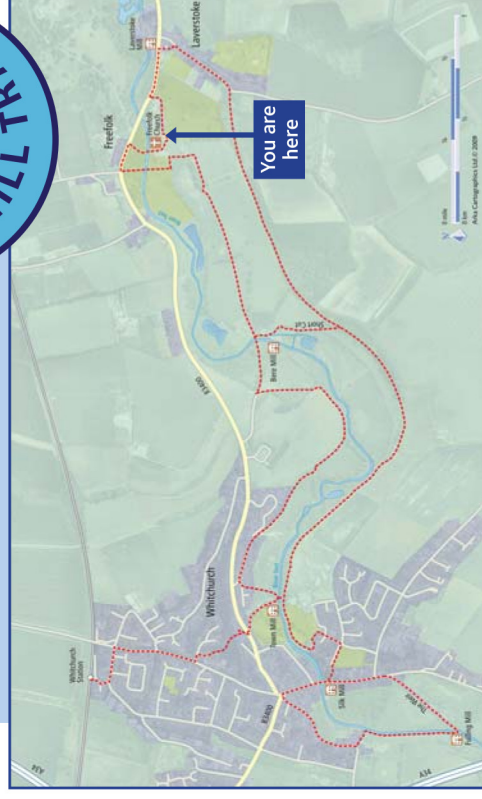
The Trail crosses the River Test several times at Freefolk. Public access is very restricted throughout the whole length of this river; due to the valuable fly fishing rights being controlled by private owners. But since this Trail uses public rights of way you too can enjoy the beauty of one of the most unspoilt, unpolluted rivers in lowland Britain.

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Laverstoke &
Freefolk PC