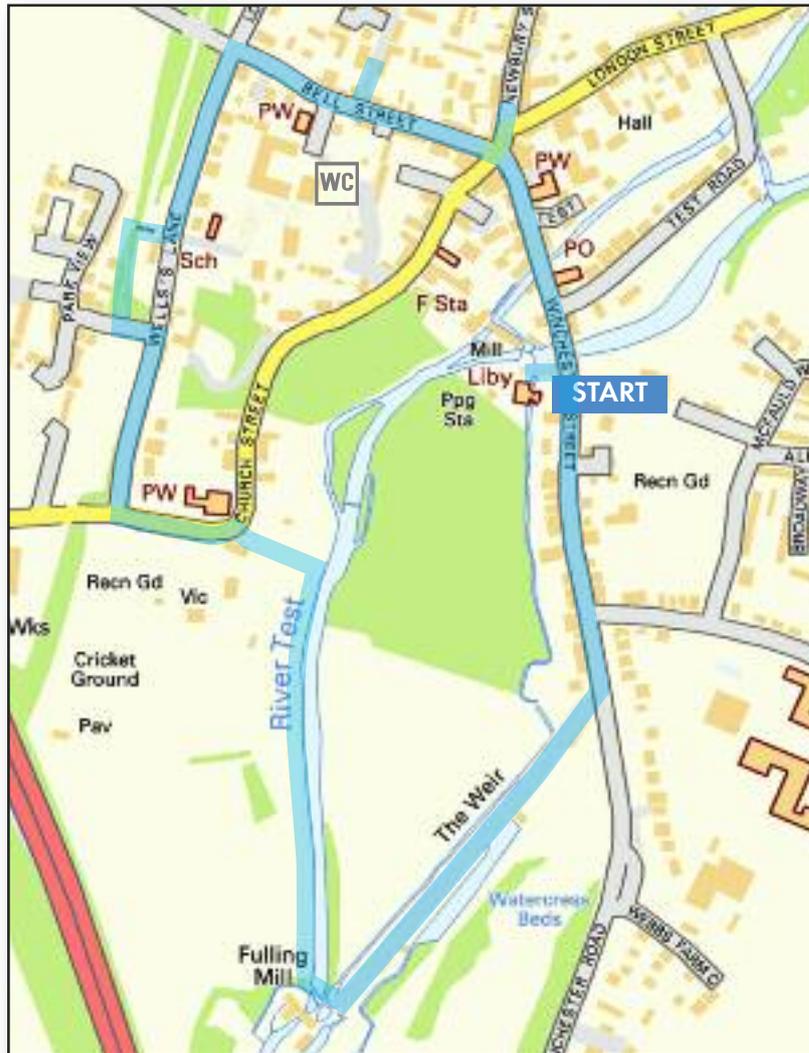


Exploring WHITCHURCH

A FAMILY FUN WALK AND QUIZ



We hope that these notes will help you to enjoy a short walk (1.5 miles, taking no more than 90 minutes) around the historic town of Whitchurch and, in the process, discover a few odd and interesting things about its history.

See if you can spot some of the clues on the way!

The questions are a mix of general knowledge and a test of your observation skills – answers are given at the end.

If you have a GPS device or phone app, the Ordnance Survey map references are given at various places.

1. START – CAR PARK ENTRANCE at the Gill Nethercott Centre (SU 46305 47881)

Turn left from the car park into Winchester Street (once called Duck Street – as you cross the river it's not hard to see why).

Stop on the first bridge and look at the old building across to your left.

Whitchurch Silk Mill, one of the town's most famous buildings, is located on Frog Island. (The Silk Mill is open to visitors – entrance fee required.)

1A – Which country does the silk for the mill come from?

A special black silk (Ottoman silk) was produced here, for use in the traditional gowns worn by barristers – the term 'taking silk', when a barrister becomes a Queen's Counsel (QC), originates from this.

After you cross the second bridge, after passing the ex-chapel/dolls house shop on the left, look at the building on the left, immediately before the pedestrian crossing – it used to be a public house called The Pineapple Inn.

1B – On the outside, can you spot a clue to the fact that it was a pub?

In the late 19th century, Whitchurch had 19 pubs! It was an important market town located at the crossing of two main roads – from Southampton to Oxford, and from London to Exeter.

2. THE TOWN CENTRE (SU 46239 48080)

In the Town Centre Square, find the plaque commemorating a decisive 19th century struggle to allow open-air church services and orderly public demonstrations.

2A – What well known organisation was involved?

The plaque alongside tells you that Whitchurch is 'twinned' with Neuvic-sur-L'Isle in the Dordogne in France.

2B – What is 'twinning'?

There is another commemorative plaque on a wall to the right of the Town Hall.

2C – Which former resident does it commemorate, and in what field was he famous?

Another famous resident wrote a book about the adventures of a group of rabbits, and set it in a place only a few miles from Whitchurch. The book was made into an animated film in 1978, and featured the song 'Bright Eyes' performed by Art Garfunkel.

2D – What was the name of the book (and the film)?

3. BELL STREET

Leave the Town Square and head down Bell Street (originally called Wood Street). Very soon you pass the site of what was another of Whitchurch's many pubs – The Plough.

3A – Can you spot which building it is?

Carry on along Bell Street a bit further – The Blue Ginger restaurant was originally a brewery, then a pub called The Old Brewery Inn, before it became a restaurant.

Turn right at The Bell into Bell Yard (SU 46134 48133). Just past the Neighbourhood Watch sign, the outbuildings on the right used to be the site of a farrier's.

3B – What does a farrier do, and who else might have carried out part of the farrier's job?

3C – On one wooden door post, low down, there is a metal ring. What might it have been used for?

After this, return to Bell Street, turn right and carry on to the crossroads, then turn left up Wells Lane.

4. WELLS LANE

On the right hand side of Wells Lane, there's a steep embankment that used to be the site of the line for the Didcot, Newbury and Southampton Railway.

At the top of the hill (SU 45952 48003), cross the road and go through the footpath tunnel opposite the entrance to Fairclose. The narrow tunnel was actually used as an air raid shelter in World War II for school children (the school building is in Fairclose, and has now been converted to residential accommodation).

After passing through the tunnel, turn left along the path. On your left is the old station building, which now has another, newer house (built in the same style) next to it. You'll see other evidence of the house's previous life as a railway station.

4A – What is unusual about the wooden boards under the roof eaves at the gable end (these are called barge boards)?

At Park View, turn left then cross the road and continue to the right along Wells Lane.

5. ALL HALLOWS CHURCH

Continue to the end of Wells Lane and turn left to come to All Hallows Church (SU 45988 47746).

The church is well worth a visit – pick up an information sheet just inside the door on the left. Inside there are memorials to Henri de Portal (above the choir stalls on the right) and to the Brooke family (in the right hand corner). Descendants of the Brooke family, who live in America, regularly visit Whitchurch.

5A – Can you spot an amphibian and a reptile in the St. Patrick stained glass window round to the left inside the door?

Henri de Portal was a Huguenot refugee, who fled to this country in the early 18th century. He established a paper-making business at Bere Mill (on the edge of Whitchurch, in the direction of Basingstoke), and produced paper for a very specialised use. The paper-making business later moved to neighbouring Overton, and is now owned by the De La Rue company.

5B – The special paper is now produced at the mill in Overton, and there is very strict security in force at the mill. What do you think the paper is used for?

The Brooke family, who lived in a house opposite the church, once had a royal guest! King Charles I (who was executed in 1649) stayed there in 1644 on his way to the Battle of Newbury during the English Civil War.

5C – Looking at the house, can you spot the clue to the famous guest who stayed there?

6. ALONG THE RIVER TEST TO FULLING MILL

Cross the road very carefully at the bend, and walk down the footpath opposite to the River Test (SU 46088 47699). The Test is one of the most famous chalk trout streams in the country. Turn right, and enjoy a lovely walk alongside the river until you reach the footbridge at Fulling Mill (SU 46079 47323). On the way you might spot swans, mallards, coots and moorhens. From the bridge you might also spot a brown trout (it's expensive to fish for the trout, but free to look!).

6A – How can you tell the difference between a coot and a moorhen?

Fulling Mill used to be the home of a famous British actor, who starred in films in the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's – James Robertson Justice. He was in the well-known series of 'Doctor' films, starring alongside the actor Dirk Bogarde.

6B – What is 'fulling'?

7. THE WEIR

After crossing the footbridge at Fulling Mill, turn left along the road (The Weir) and walk back towards Winchester Street.

7A – What is a weir?

In the meadow on the left, you'll see a small brick building with a timber frame and a thatched roof, a 'tithe barn'. Have a look at it from by the second 30 mph speed sign (on the right hand side) (SU 46290 47521).

7B – What was a tithe barn used for?

7C – What is the purpose of the stone 'mushrooms' which support the building?

8. BACK TO THE GILL NETHERCOTT CENTRE

When you get to the end of The Weir, turn left along Winchester Road and this will bring you back to the start point at the Gill Nethercott Centre.

We hope you enjoyed this short walk around part of Whitchurch, and having a go at the little quiz on the way. The answers to the quiz, and some more background information, are given on the separate sheet.

Thank you for coming to Whitchurch, and please enjoy the rest of your visit!



FURTHER INFORMATION

Further walks and information about Whitchurch can be found on the Whitchurch Community Website:
www.whitchurch.org.uk

TRAVEL

Whitchurch is accessible by South West Trains – make sure you go to Whitchurch (Hampshire) as there are three stations called Whitchurch.

Stagecoach buses run from:
Andover (76), Basingstoke (76) and Winchester (86)
Travel information is available through Traveline
www.travelinesw.com
or call 0871 200 22 33 (charges apply).



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A FAMILY FUN WALK AND QUIZ

ANSWERS & OTHER STUFF

1. START – CAR PARK ENTRANCE at the Gill Nethercott Centre

1A – The silk used at the Silk Mill is imported from China. The silk is woven into silk cloth at the mill. A range of gift items, made from the silk, is available at the Silk Mill shop.

1B – High up on the building by the pedestrian crossing, you'll see the remains of an ornate bracket, which used to hold the pub sign.



2. THE TOWN CENTRE

2A – A plaque located on the wall to the left of the baker's shop commemorates the action of the Salvation Army.

2B – Twinning is joining up with another town (usually in another country – in this case France) for the purposes of friendship and cultural exchange.



2C – The plaque in Newbury Street, on the wall of H's Coffee Shop, commemorates the famous High Court Judge, Lord Denning. The "Master of the Rolls" is the second most senior judge in the country, after the Lord Chief Justice.

2D – The other famous resident mentioned is the author Richard Adams, who wrote the rabbit saga Watership Down. Watership Down is located a few miles to the North and East of Whitchurch, in the direction of Kingsclere.



3. BELL STREET

3A – The old, cream coloured house on the right as soon as you go down Bell Street is called The Old Plough.

3B – A farrier looks after the care of horses hooves, including the fitting of horseshoes. In many cases, the making and fitting of horseshoes was performed by the local blacksmith, who also made other wrought iron items, repaired agricultural gear etc.

3C – The metal ring – you have to look hard to spot it – was used to tether horses.



4. WELLS LANE

- 4A** – The station building barge boards have a distinctive pierced decoration. This design was used at other station buildings located along the disused railway line (e.g. at Old Burghclere). At the back of the station building, you'll see a collection of railway memorabilia and adverts and a Platform 2 sign.



5. ALL HALLOWS CHURCH

- 5A** – In the church, at the foot of the stained glass window, you'll see a frog and, under St Patrick's feet, a snake (legend has it that St. Patrick drove all the snakes out of Ireland).
- 5B** – The specialised paper is used for banknotes. Henri de Portal secured a monopoly for producing banknotes for the Bank of England. The process nowadays includes incorporation of a whole range of security elements – watermarks, holograms, foil strips etc – and the business has also started to produce plastic banknotes, which last longer. Banknotes are now produced for many different countries.
- 5C** – The former Brookes family house, opposite the church, is called King's Lodge.

6. ALONG THE RIVER TEST TO FULLING MILL

- 6A** – Both birds are mostly black, but a coot has a white face and beak, and a moorhen has a red face and yellow beak.
- 6B** – Fulling is a process for cleansing cloth, to remove any oil, and thickening it.

7. THE WEIR

- 7A** – A weir is a barrier across a river designed to alter its flow characteristics.
- 7B** – The tithe barn was used to store a share of the annual produce of tenants, payable to the landowner as rent for their use of the land, so one of the uses was as a grain store.
- 7C** – The mushroom-shaped supports are to stop rats from climbing into the store to eat the grain.



FURTHER INFORMATION

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