

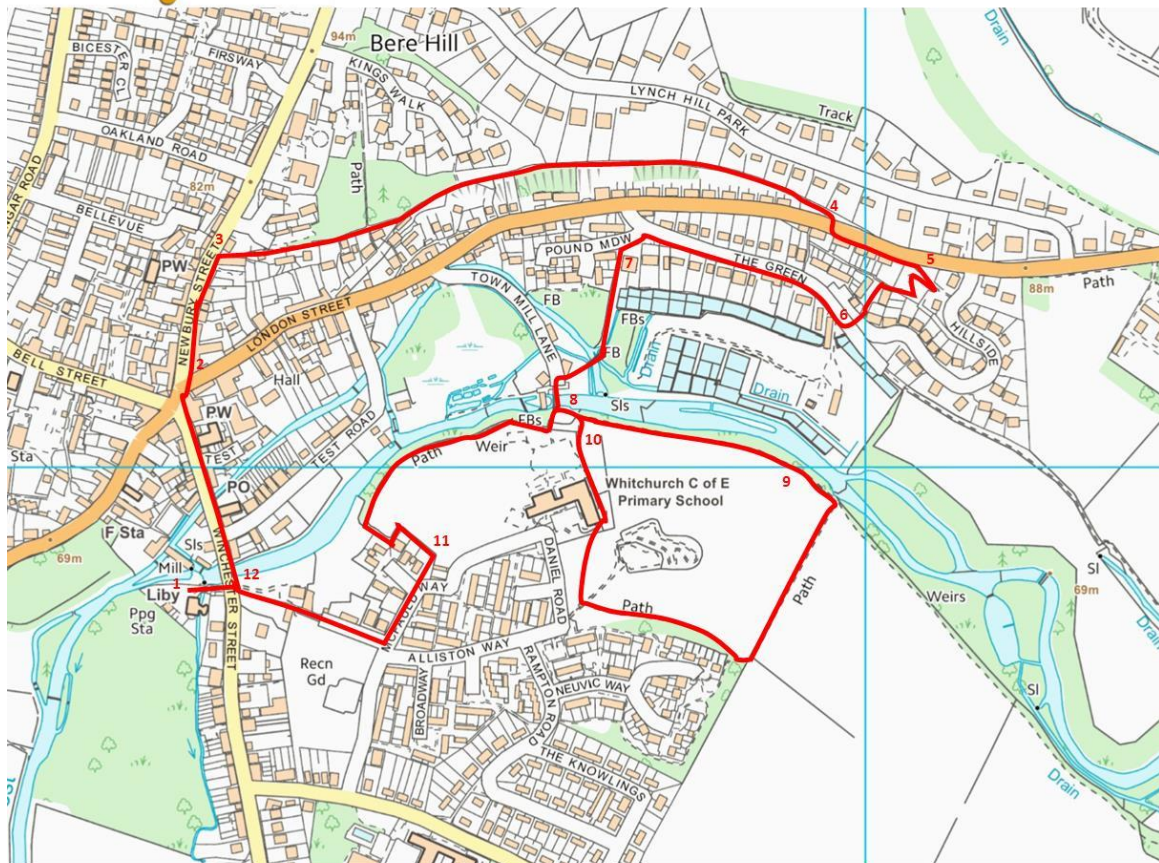


## SECRET PATHWAYS & the RIVER TEST (2 miles - about 40 mins)



ParishOnline

Whitchurch CP 



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The walk begins at the Winchester Street car park next to the Silk Mill. (1)

Leave the car park and turn left along Winchester Street crossing over the River Test at Town Bridge. Whitchurch Silk Mill on your left dates from 1815 and is the oldest surviving silk mill in the country still weaving in its original Regency building. Continue along Winchester Street until you reach the town square. Cross the road to the corner at the front entrance of the historic White Hart Inn, once a busy coaching stop on the old London to Exeter turnpike road (2).

With The White Hart on your right, walk up Newbury Street until you reach a path on the right hand side – Chatter Lane (3). Continue along Chatter Lane, ignoring side turns, as it takes you behind houses and eventually gives you far-reaching views over Whitchurch to the south. The far end of Chatter Lane takes you along the top of the man-made 'cliff', created by the 19<sup>th</sup> century Whiting Works, before dropping to the side of London Street opposite the Prince Regent public house (4). Cross the road very carefully, and continue uphill on the right hand side of London Street.

Before you reach the next road on the right hand side, look for a path (5) which zig-zags down to the right and follow this path down. At the bottom turn left, cross over the road slightly to the right passing through a gap with bollards by an attractive wooden house, and turn right to walk along The Green (6).

Continue along The Green, bearing left at the junction and within a few yards, turn left onto a footpath (7) between houses. On the left behind the houses you will see the disused Whitchurch watercress beds adjoining a small private nature reserve. Following the path through the trees you will cross small footbridges from which you can view several river channels and the sluices controlling the flow of water.

You emerge by Town Mill and the footbridge over the main part of the River Test. The present structure is 18th century, although there has probably been a corn mill on this site for at least a thousand years. In 1966 Ronald and Rosemary Eastman (owners of Town Mill) filmed a pair of common kingfishers at their underground nest on this stretch of the River Test. The Private Life of the Kingfisher screened in 1967 was the first BBC natural history film to be shown in colour. (8).



Cross over the footbridge and turn left to follow a path under the trees until, a few yards further on, there is a path to the right into the bottom corner of Daniel Park. Turn left and circuit the meadow edge in a clockwise direction (9) before exiting at the corner where you entered (10) and returning to Town Mill. Do not cross the footbridge – instead, turn left and follow the path around the perimeter fence of the school playing field, turning right at the end (11).

Cross over the entrance to the cul-de-sac on your right and then take the path on your right opposite Alliston Way (keeping the beech hedge to your left). In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the land to your right, now occupied by housing, was a hop garden.

The path continues after a kissing gate, running between flint and brick walls before emerging onto Winchester Street (12) and opposite the car park entrance that marks the end of your walk. Please take care when crossing the road.