



## FARMS, THE HANGINGS & the RIVER TEST (3 miles - 1 hour)



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Whitchurch CP 



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Begin your walk at the Winchester Street car park next to the Silk Mill (1).

Cross the road to a narrow path straight ahead of you between flint and brick walls. At the end, pass through a kissing gate and continue ahead keeping the beech hedge to your right. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the land to your left, now occupied by housing, was a hop garden.

Cross over at the road junction and continue up Alliston Way (2). At the top, please take the path opposite and bear right along the right hand edge of Daniel Park. At the corner, pass through a gap and turn right following the right hand side of the field. Take some time to enjoy the panoramic views before exiting the field through a gap in the hedgerow between houses at The Knowlings (3).

Go through the gap into the Knowlings, turn left and then left again when you reach Micheldever Road (4). Continue along the road to the end of the housing on the right, where the pavement ends and continue walking inside the hedgerow to the left of a field. At the end of the field exit on to Micheldever Road, and carefully cross over to reach the entrance to a small single track road running between barns at Southfield Farm (5). Continue along this small road passing two bungalows on your left.

The road ends as it bends to the right around Southfield Farm cottages – take the footpath straight ahead (6) and follow it downhill, bending round to the left and then eventually coming to a stile where there are waymarks for the Mill Trail (7). Expect to find livestock in the next field; **DOGS MUST BE KEPT ON A LEAD.**



Cross over the stile and turn left, immediately passing through a gate and then follow the path to the right of Cowslip Bank, and through trees to a kissing gate.

Continue straight ahead with fields on your left before passing through a gap in the hedgerow and in to the bottom of Daniel Park. Continue to follow the path until you exit at the bottom right hand corner and shortly after get to Town Mill and the footbridge over the main part of the River Test (8).

The present structure is 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

Cross over the footbridge and walk straight ahead down Town Mill Lane following a small branch of the main river. The meadow to your left is a good example of a typical valley floor landscape and conserves ancient grazing scenes allowing Town Mill to retain its original setting on the banks of the River Test.

The road goes over a small humped bridge at the junction with London Street. Opposite you can see the tiny 'Voters Cottage' so named because the rental value entitled its owner to vote for the county MP after the town was disenfranchised in 1832.

Turn left along London Street, the old 'Exeter Road' out of London. In Victorian times this was a busy coach road until the coming of the railways in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Walk along until you reach Test Road (9). Turn left down Test Road and cross a small branch of the river running parallel to the main channel. You are now walking on land known previously as Frog Island.

At the end of Test Road, turn left and carefully cross the road by Town Bridge (10). Here you have a good view of Whitchurch Silk Mill; dating from 1815, it is the oldest surviving silk mill in the country still weaving in its original Regency building.

The Winchester Street car park is just beyond the bridge and this marks the end of your walk.