

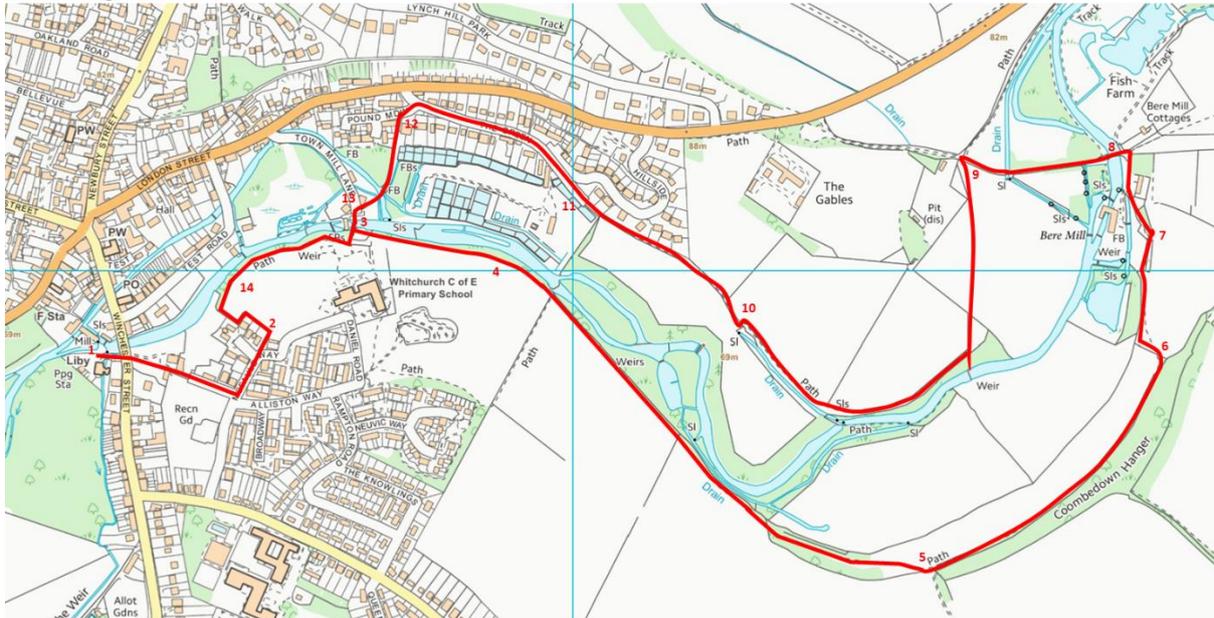


## CIRCULAR WALK via THE HANGINGS and BERE MILL (3 miles, about 1 hour)



ParishOnline

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 19th century the land to your left, now occupied by housing, was a hop garden. At the end of the road, turn left and ahead of you, you will find a path which turns left at the boundary of the school playing field (2) and then runs around the outside of the field in a clockwise direction.

The path comes out by Town Mill (3) and you can make a short detour here to look at the River Test from the footbridge. The present mill 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.

Take the path with the river to your left side – this emerges to run along the bottom, left side of fields, with open views across farmland (4). Eventually the path reaches a kissing gate, go through it and follow the path through trees until it emerges with a field on the left, and you reach another gate (5). Expect to find livestock in the next field; **DOGS MUST BE KEPT ON A LEAD.**

Pass through the gate and walk along the path on the right hand side of the field, with a wooded bank to your right (Coombedown Hanger, known locally as “The Hangings”).

At the far end of this field, pass through another gate (6) and follow the path to the left and then bearing right, along the bottom of this field until you reach and pass through another gate (7). The path then runs slightly up and then down, with a wall on the left, until you emerge at Bere Mill. Walk along to the brick bridge over the River Test ahead of you (8) This is a great spot to take a break to admire the river setting, the mill and to look for wildlife.

Built on the site of one of the 5 mills mentioned in the Domesday Book, Bere Mill was owned by the Portal family of papermakers in the early 18th century and was the first mill to produce paper for the Bank of England bank notes.

Continue along the road (Bere Mill Lane) until you reach a point where there is a path off to the right, but instead take the path to the left (9) into fields, through another kissing gate. Expect to find livestock in this field; **DOGS MUST BE KEPT ON A LEAD.**

The path runs diagonally, slightly to the left, across the field and through a kissing gate. Follow the path as it runs around to the left of a fence, with a field on your right hand side.

Eventually you reach a point where, by a gate (10), the path turns left down a short slope, then immediately right, following a fence and a meadow on your left hand side. At the end of the path, pass through a gate and continue through trees to reach the end of The Green, by an attractive wooden chalet (11).

Continue along The Green, bearing left at the junction and within a few yards, turn left (16) onto a footpath 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 (13). Continue to follow the path until you emerge by Town Mill.

Crossover the footbridge, bear right and retrace your steps around the school playing field (14). Arriving at the residential street, turn right and walk ahead. Just before the recreation ground turn right into a narrow lane, keeping the beech hedge to your left and continue ahead to your starting point at the Winchester Street car park next to the Silk Mill.