

The Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail

...by train or bus



- from:
- Winchester
 - Shawford
 - Eastleigh
 - Swaythling

Produced in association with:

The Itchen Navigation

The Itchen Navigation is not a proper man-made canal, but a straightened, controlled and diverted part of the River Itchen. It has a long history, and although its industrial use ended around 150 years ago, today it provides a pleasant natural strand of waterway which is ideal for exploring and gentle exercise. As the source of the water which fills the Navigation is the main River Itchen, the two are never very far apart. Whereas the main river flows at its natural pace, twisting and turning along its course, the Navigation was designed to be mainly straight and have very little water current, so it is quite different in its nature.



Walking the Trail

The **Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail** stretches from Winchester in the north, to Woodmill near Swaythling in the south. As it follows the route of a waterway, the trail is mainly flat and level, however there are some locations with stiles, gates or gradients. The walking route is well way-marked with the Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail logo directional arrows on posts.

Thanks to the hard work of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, the footpaths alongside the Navigation have been restored and improved for most of its distance, and various structures along the way have been repaired or made safe. Without this wonderful work, the waterway would have remained a stagnant, derelict and unappreciated shadow of its former self.

The route

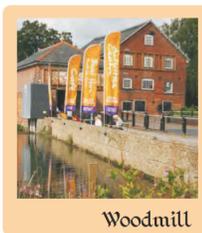
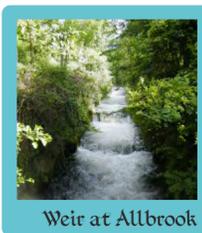
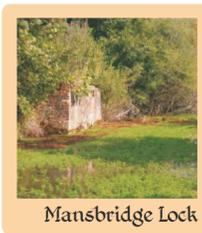
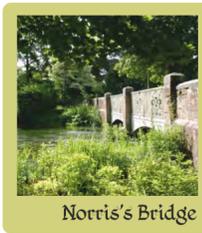
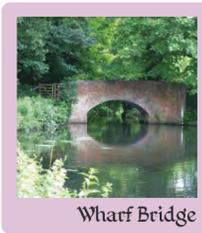
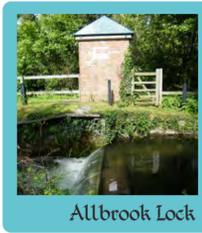
The route is around ten miles, or 16km from Winchester to Woodmill, and can be walked in one day if you are an experienced walker. For many people, breaking the route into smaller sections is probably more manageable. This also allows for several visits to be made, and that increases the chances of seeing something different on each occasion.

Accessibility

Whilst the majority of the route alongside the Navigation is flat and easy to walk, few sections are fully accessible, or suited to buggies, pushchairs, wheelchairs or mobility scooters.

Public transport access to the Itchen Navigation

The route of the Navigation is never very far from a railway station, or local bus route.



History

The first serious moves to improve the River Itchen for commercial use was contained in an Act of Parliament dated 1665. Progress was not very fast however, and it was not until 1710 that the necessary works were completed, and the Itchen Navigation was ready to use. A second act in 1767 established a Commission to oversee its operation.

The main role of the Navigation was to transport various items of heavy or bulky freight from the ships docked in Southampton, inland up to Winchester. This trade largely consisted of moving coal, but other commodities such as corn, iron, timber or other bulky items were carried by the horse-drawn barges which used the waterway.

However, the commercial success of the Navigation was not great, and its use was quite limited. With the coming of the railway which paralleled its route in 1839, the speed and capacity of the trains led to an almost total loss of any remaining business. The last barges operated around 1869.

Restoration and repair

After many years of gradual decay and the effects of nature on a quiet backwater, by the mid-1960s thoughts turned to making some use of the industrial relic. In 1976 a society was formed to restore and conserve the Navigation. In more recent times, the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, along with various sponsors and other official bodies, has spent much time, effort and money in restoring many of the footpaths and structures along the route.

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Protecting wildlife. Inspiring people.

Features of the waterway

There are many reminders of the industrial past of the Itchen Navigation along its route. Look out for these on your walk.

Locks

These were sections of the canal closed off by gates between which the water level could be altered. As the lock gates were opened and closed, 'stepped' areas of water were made for barges. This enabled barges to ascend and descend gradients between sections of canal.

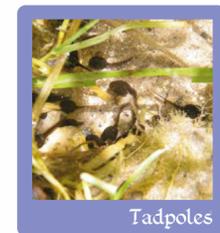
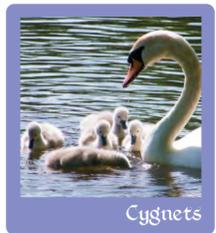
Weirs

These were an adjustable means of controlling and diverting the water levels in the Navigation. Weirs at Withymead lock and Allbrook lock are good examples. The rate of water flow was controlled with 'sluice gates' - panels set against the water flow, which could be wound up and down to let more or less water pass through.

Wildlife along the way

Today's Itchen Navigation is a linear nature reserve. Unlike some relics of the industrial revolution, it is now a pleasant feature of the landscape. The waterway is very much in harmony with its surroundings, and offers a wonderful variety of wildlife to observe and enjoy.

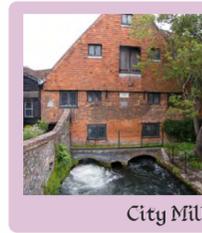
There are various plants, trees, flowers, birds, small water creatures and all sorts of insects to discover. Keep your eyes peeled for trout or pike in the water, water voles scooting about between the banks, and if you are very lucky - the flash of a colourful kingfisher!



Places to visit

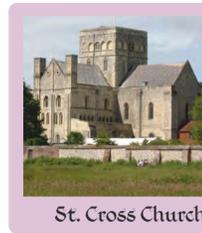
City Mill

The River Itchen flows through Winchester's historic water mill, where you can watch the water wheel working. There are milling demonstrations throughout the year. There is a charge to enter the Mill, but admission to the gift shop and South Downs National Park information centre are free. nationaltrust.org.uk/winchester-city-mill



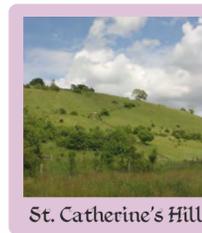
The Hospital of St Cross

In Winchester's Water Meadows is the Church and Almshouse of St. Cross, founded in 1132, and famous for its wayfarers dole. There is an entry fee payable, but admission to the gift shop is free, and there are public toilets. hospitalofstcross.co.uk



St. Catherine's Hill

This Iron Age hill fort is now a Nature Reserve managed by Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. Steep paths lead to the top for spectacular views and the area abounds with chalkland flowers. hiwvt.org.uk



Hockley Viaduct

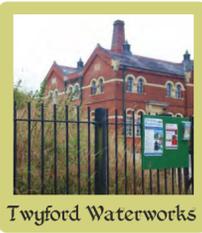
This 600 metre long Victorian railway viaduct was once part of the Didcot, Newbury and Southampton railway line. It has 33 arches and is now part of the Viaduct Way walk and cycle path.



Places to see

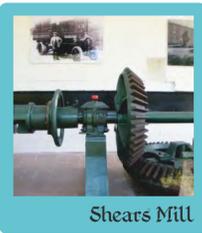
Twyford Waterworks

This Edwardian works was built to extract water from bore holes, soften it and then supply it to Southampton. The site features Lime Kilns, a complete Boiler House, Narrow Gauge Railway and Pumping Engines. Regular Open Days throughout the year. Admission charged. twyfordwaterworks.co.uk



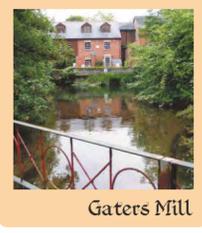
Shears Mill

This mill on the River Itchen at Bishopstoke was demolished in the early 1930s, but some of its turbines and gears have been recovered and restored, now forming a fascinating public exhibition in a sealed glass room on Bishopstoke Road. hampshireremills.org



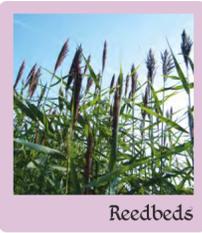
Gaters Mill

This mill on Mansbridge Road was once a paper mill, and more recently a corn mill. No longer used for milling, it is now home to several businesses, and is part of a conservation area.



Winnall Moors Nature Reserve

The entrance to this Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust Reserve is at the Durrnate bridge, opposite the Willow Tree pub. The recently restored area of River Itchen reedbeds and former water meadows, is a level circular walk with easy access paths. hiwvt.org.uk/reserves/winnall-moors



Refreshments along the way

There are plenty of places to eat and drink close to the route. Please check opening times to avoid disappointment.

- **Winchester:** Discovery Centre hants.gov.uk/libraries
The Black Boy theblackboypub.co.uk
- **Shawford:** The Bridge Inn chefandbrewer.com
- **Twyford:** The Bean Below Café find us on Facebook
- **Otterbourne:** White Horse idealcollection.co.uk/whitehorseotterbourne
- **Colden Common:** Brambridge Park Garden Centre bluediamond.gg
- **Eastleigh:** The Ham Farm harvester.co.uk
- **Bishopstoke:** The River Inn tobycarvery.co.uk
- **Eastleigh:** The Wagon Works jdwetherspoon.com
- **West End:** Haskins Garden Centre haskins.co.uk
- **Mansbridge:** White Swan tobycarvery.co.uk
- **Swaythling:** Fleming Arms hungryhorse.co.uk



Hensting Alpacas

Kiln Lane, Brambridge, Otterbourne, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 6HT

Come and join us for a 2-hour walk along our private stretch of the Itchen Navigation, walking our lovely animals. Bookings at: alpacas-hampshire.co.uk



Railway stations

The Itchen Navigation can be accessed from the following railway stations:

- **Winchester** This main station is served by all services on the line from London Waterloo to Bournemouth and Weymouth, plus all the trains which run between the south coast area, the midlands and the north of England. The start of the Itchen Navigation walk is at the other end of the city, some distance from the station. Local buses call outside the main station entrance and will take you much closer to the starting point. Alternatively, the gentle downhill walk from the railway station allows you to see some of this beautiful historic city, including the famous Cathedral and City Mill.
- **Shawford** This small country station has a service of one train per hour at most times of the day, with additional trains in the early morning and later evening on weekdays. It is very close to the Itchen Navigation and is a useful point at which to start or end a section of the walk. The small village of Twyford is a short distance eastwards along the main road.
- **Eastleigh** (for Bishopstoke) This busy station is served by some of the same trains which call at Winchester, and also has the hourly services on the 'Three Rivers' Romsey-Southampton-Salisbury route. The closest point on the Navigation from Eastleigh station is at Bishopstoke, which is about half a mile level walk to the east.
- **Swaythling** This small suburban station has an hourly train service, seven days a week. There is a walk of around half a mile to reach the start of the Itchen Navigation at Woodmill.

Train times & operators

See the back of this leaflet for information.

Local buses

Several bus routes come close to sections of the Navigation and the main river. These can be used either as a part of your walk, or to start or finish your day at a railway station.

Bluestar 1 operates frequently between Southampton city centre, Chandler's Ford, Shawford Down, St. Cross, and Winchester City centre. There are comfortable, modern, double-decker buses on this route, featuring luxury seating, tables at some upstairs seats, free Wi-Fi and lovely views across the countryside. The buses are fitted with passenger 'Next Stop' announcements and displays. Mon-Sat every 15 mins daytime. Suns every 30 mins daytime.

Bluestar 2 operates frequently from Southampton city centre, through St. Denys, Swaythling, Eastleigh town centre, Bishopstoke and Fair Oak. Mon-Sat every 15 mins daytime. Suns every 30 mins daytime.

Winchester Park & Ride (Stagecoach). The South car park is close to Hockley Viaduct, and Barfield car park can be used for reaching the start of the Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail. These buses also stop near Wharf Hill for an even closer access point. The Park & Ride services to the St. Catherine's car park call at the stops in Chesil Street which are also very close to the start of the walk.

Stagecoach E1 operates between Eastleigh town centre, Allbrook, Twyford, Hockley Viaduct, St. Cross and Winchester city centre. Mon-Sat approx. six journeys each day.

Stagecoach E2 operates between Eastleigh town centre, Allbrook, Otterbourne, Shawford, St. Cross and Winchester city centre. Mon-Sat approx. five journeys each day.

Stagecoach 69 operates from Winchester to Fareham via St. Cross, Hockley Viaduct, Twyford and Fair Oak. Mon-Sat hourly daytime.

Bus times

For all current bus times, either consult the operator's own website, or plan your journey using Traveline 0871 200 2233. Calls cost 10p per minute from BT landlines, other operators charges may vary.

Bus operators

Bluestar 2 bus stop Bishopstoke

Station Walks

Over 30 self-guided river themed walks for all abilities from rail stations in South Hampshire and Salisbury

Dr. Clare Diaper

£5 MRP

Produced in association with: Three Rivers, Your Journey, Transition.

Have you got your copy of the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership Station Walks book yet?

This lavishly illustrated, 88 page guide gives you over 30 self-guided river themed walks from rail stations in South Hampshire. Copies cost £5 plus £1.20 p&p. Just send your email address to threeiversrail.com for details.

CrossCountry trains serve Winchester, Southampton Airport (Parkway) and Southampton Central stations.

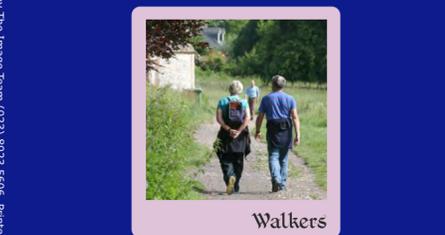
Plan your journey and book tickets now at crosscountrytrains.co.uk or via the Train Tickets app.

Download the XC Community Hub app from the App Store or Google Play, then hold your phone over the Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership logo on the back of this leaflet to play our latest video.

Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership

threeiversrail.com facebook.com/threeiversrail twitter.com/threeiversrail

The rail routes which the Partnership covers run alongside or cross the Itchen, Test and Hamble rivers - hence 'Three Rivers'.



The Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership is a 'not for profit' organisation which provides a link between the railway industry and local communities. Partners can include any individual, business or organisation who wants to positively develop the local rail route and stations. This includes practical initiatives to improve station facilities and services, enhance integration with other forms of transport and create a better, more sustainable local railway.

Train Information

For information about train fares and times, please ask at your local station, or contact one of the following:

- National Rail Enquiries:** 03457 48 49 50 or visit nationalrail.co.uk
- South Western Railway:** 0345 6000 650 or visit southwesternrailway.com
- Cross Country Trains:** 03447 369 123 or visit crosscountrytrains.co.uk

Weekend engineering works may affect your train journey. Please check National Rail Enquiries for details.

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Getting to the Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail by train and bus.



- Itchen Navigation
- Itchen Navigation (dry)
- Itchen Navigation walk
- River Itchen
- Site of canal lock
- Footpath
- Suggested walking route from railway station
- Building or feature of interest
- Place to eat
- Nature Reserve
- Garden Centre
- Railway station
- Bus station
- Main bus stop
- Park & Ride site
- Bluestar 1
- Bluestar 2
- Stagecoach 69
- Stagecoach E1
- Stagecoach E2



Winchester

From Winchester ➔
 Exit from Platform 2. Walk down Station Hill, and at the bottom use the subway to reach City Road which is directly ahead of you. Walk along City Road and at the end (before the traffic lights) turn right into Jewry Street. Walk along Jewry Street, passing the Discovery Centre on your right. At the end of Jewry Street, cross the road into the pedestrianised High Street. Walk down the High Street until you reach the Buttercross monument. (Here you can turn right through an arch into The Square to the City Museum then bear left to reach the grounds of Winchester Cathedral). Alternatively, at the Buttercross, carry on down the High Street. After the pedestrianised section ends, carry on down the High Street into The Broadway towards the statue of King Alfred. **passing the statue on its right-hand side, shortly afterwards you will reach the City Bridge, with the City Mill on your left. Turn sharp right just before the bridge at the 'South Downs Way' and 'Viaduct Way' signs, and walk alongside the River Itchen through the gardens, until you reach the converted Wharf Mill building which straddles the weir. Turn left and enter crossing the water in front of the building, turn right and follow the footpath up to meet Wharf Hill. You will see the 'Black Boy' pub, named after the small boys who got dirty unloading cargoes of coal from the barges at the nearby wharf on the Navigation. This pub has very interesting décor, featuring old curios and artefacts, making a visit interesting as well as refreshing! After a short distance cross Wharf Hill into Domum Road. At the end is a signpost pointing left, marked 'Itchen Navigation Southampton 1.0mi'. Follow this direction and you will shortly see a wooden gate with 'Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail', 'Mills and Meadows' and 'Itchen Way' way-markers. This gate is the northernmost entrance to the Itchen Navigation footpath.

From Winchester ➔ by bus:
 Exit from Platform 2. Buses into the City centre leave from bus stop B. Right outside the station in Station Hill. Alight at Winchester Bus Station. Turn left out of the bus station and with King Alfred statue on your left, cross the Broadway on the pedestrian crossing. Turn left and follow the instructions from ** above.

From the bus station:
 By Bluestar 1, or Stagecoach 69, E1, or E2 bus:
 Alight at Winchester Bus Station. Turn left and follow the instructions from ** above.
 the Broadway on the pedestrian crossing. Turn left and follow the instructions from ** above.

Shawford

From Shawford ➔:
 Exit from Platform 1 or 2 down covered steps to emerge at pavement level.
 *Staying on the pavement on the station side, turn right, and after passing The Bridge Inn over on the left, you will come to a river bridge with white railings.
 To access the Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail towards Southampton, turn right at the wooden finger post carved 'Itchen Navigation, Southampton 8 mi'. There is also a 'Keble Way' way-marker on the post.
 To access the Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail towards Winchester, carefully cross the road (the river bridge has no pavement and is on a blind bend), to the wooden finger post carved 'Itchen Navigation, Winchester 3 mi'.

From the bus stops:
 By Bluestar 1, or Stagecoach E2 bus from Winchester:
 Alight at the 'Shawford Down' bus stop on Otterbourne Road.
 **Right next to the stop is a wooden kissing gate with a 'Shawford Down Downland' sign, and a 'Valley of Fields' way-marker. Pass through this gate and head straight down the hill through Shawford Down Nature Reserve towards the station. The War Memorial is an iconic feature in the landscape. Pass through the car park and under the brick railway arch and follow the instructions from * above.

By Bluestar 1/Stagecoach E2 bus from Southampton:
 Alight at the 'Shawford Down' bus stop. Carefully cross Otterbourne Road to the bus stop opposite. Follow instructions from ** above. Alternatively, use the pavement on Shawford Road around and down the hill to reach the station.

To see the River Itchen, carry on a short distance along Shawford Road to a flint and brick bridge named 'Shawford Mill No. 1'. Further on, towards Twyford, is Norris's Bridge. This bridge which is brick-built with decorative white railings has no pavement and the road is quite narrow, so beware of traffic as you take in the view of the Itchen.

Continue along Finches Lane to the village of Twyford and its High Street, where buses on Stagecoach route 69 and E1 call. Refreshments are available from Twyford Post Office and Stores, and the Bean Below café.

A longer walk along Hazley Road brings you to Twyford Waterworks. For dates of Open Days, visit their website (see overleaf).

Eastleigh for Bishopstoke

From Eastleigh ➔:
 Exit from Platform 1. From the station forecourt, walk to the pavement. (Over the other side of Southampton Road is The Wagon Works which is a Wetherspoon pub full of historic framed photographs of Eastleigh). Turn right and up a curved slope to Bishopstoke Road, and cross the metal panel-edged road bridge over the railway.
 Walk along Bishopstoke Road carefully crossing the end of Chickenhall Lane. With playing fields over to the left, and the Barton River in a culvert close to the road on the right, continue until the road crosses the culvert on a small bridge. On the other side of the road is Bishopstoke Recreation Ground. Slightly further on are the access points to the Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail, either side of a larger metal-railed bridge over the water.

**To access the Trail towards Southampton, turn right onto a gravel path between two concrete bollards and two wooden posts with 'Itchen Way' and Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail way-markers. There is also a Public Footpath metal sign marking the path, pointing to a metal kissing gate through which the path continues.
 To access the Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail towards Winchester, carefully cross the road, to the metal mesh barrier and Public Footpath sign. On this side the path is wide, with a tarmac surface, but signs new, and very old, make it clear that cycling is prohibited.

From the bus stops:
 By Bluestar 2 bus from Fair Oak (towards Eastleigh):
 Alight at the 'River Inn' bus stop on Riverside. (Opposite you on the other side of Bishopstoke Road road is The River Inn which is a 'Toby Carvery'). Turn right and continue along the pavement on Bishopstoke Road until access points for the Itchen Navigation are reached. Follow instructions from * above.

By Bluestar 2 bus from Southampton: Alight at the 'Bishopstoke Recreation Ground' bus stop. Follow instructions from * above.

Swaythling

From Swaythling ➔:
 Exit from Platform 2. Turn right into Wessex Lane and follow the road past the University Halls of Residence until you come to the junction with Woodmill Lane. Turn left, and follow the road until it narrows to become a single width as it crosses the bridge outside the Woodmill Outdoor Activities Centre. A short distance further along a footpath crosses the road. Turn left to cross this to follow the start of the Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail all the way through Riverside Park until you reach Mansbridge stone bridge.

(To see more of the River Itchen and to explore further southwards, turn right to follow the path through the southern part of Riverside Park (with the river on your right), which leads to Cobden Bridge and Bitterne Triangle).

Alternatively, exit the railway station from Platform 2, cross the road immediately and turn left along Wessex Lane. At the end of the road, you will see the 'Fleming Arms' pub, and traffic lights. Turn right. The road crosses the shallow 'Monks Brook' stream here. At the roundabout, bear right and walk a fair way along Mansbridge Road until you reach the bridge (Mansbridge) over the Itchen Navigation. At this point you can take the footpath on the left and follow the path across a field, and head towards the M27 motorway via the path besides the Navigation after a small lock.

Or, you can turn right at Mansbridge and cross the Navigation by the old stone bridge and then turn right to follow the path alongside the water. This leads you through Riverside Park until you come to the road at Woodmill Lane. Turn right onto this road to pass the Woodmill Outdoor Activities Centre. Follow the road across the single width bridge and when you see the junction with Wessex Lane on the right-hand side, turn right and follow it all the way along back to Swaythling station.



A useful cycling leaflet is available to download from the South Downs National Park website: southdowns.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Cycle-Rides-around-the-River-Itchen-2017.pdf and Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust have produced an excellent leaflet about their Itchen Navigation Trail: hiwt.org.uk/itchen-navigation