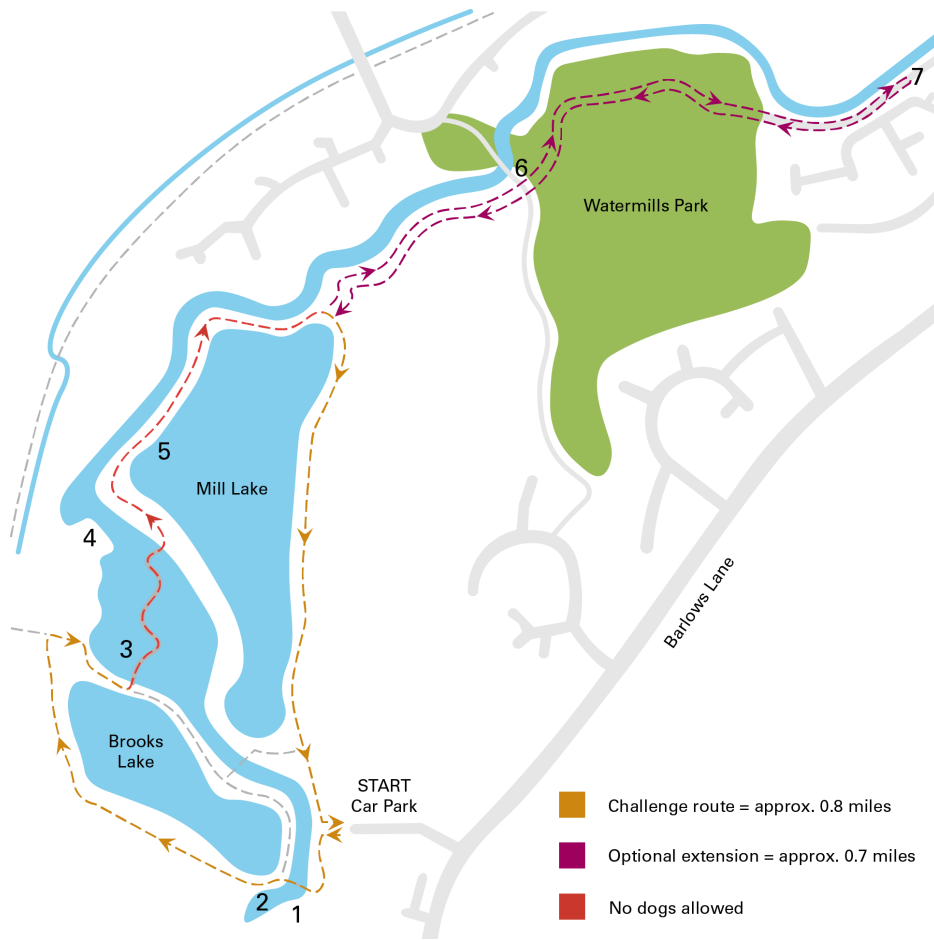


Route Map



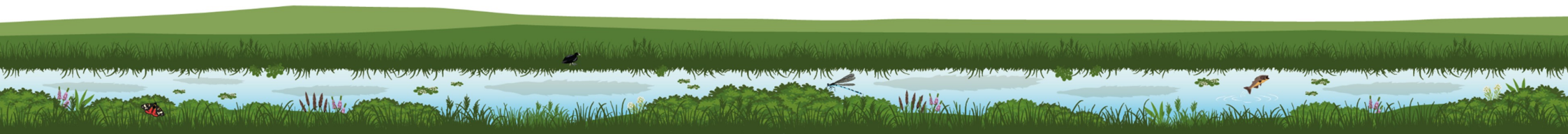
Watercress and Winterbournes is a Landscape Partnership Scheme that is protecting, enhancing and celebrating the seven chalk streams that make up the headwaters of the Rivers Test and Itchen: the Bourne Rivulet, Candover Brook, Cheriton Stream, Pillhill Brook, River Arle, Upper Anton and Upper Test. The scheme is supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and brings together 16 partner organisations. To learn more visit www.hiwwt.org.uk/winterbournes



Chalk Stream Challenge



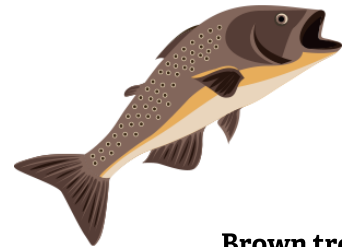
**Challenge Route:
The Upper Anton
at Rooksbury Mill, Andover**



Route Guide

Follow the short path from the car park off Barlows Lane to the Rooksbury Mill Nature Reserve entrance. At the information board turn left. After a short distance cross over the bridge (1), pausing a while to look for fish in the river below or play pooh sticks.

Once over the bridge take the left hand footpath. After a short distance, notice the A303 on a bridge up to your left and the river leaving the reserve. The steps leading down to the river would be a suitable place for spotting fish and other wildlife or scooping up some of the river water for a closer look (2).



Brown trout

Continue along the footpath with Brooks Lake to your right. When you reach the next junction turn right, then turn left through the kissing gate (please note dogs are not allowed on this part of the route, to bypass it continue straight on, cross over the bridge on your left then bear right. On reaching the next path junction either turn right to head back to the car park or turn left to follow the path along the edge of Mill Lake).

After passing through the kissing gate you can see the remains of old watercress beds on your left (3). Carry on to look at the old mill building (4) which straddles the River Anton. You can see this from the boardwalk. There were six mills listed for Andover in the Domesday Book begun by William the Conqueror in 1066 and this mill is on the site of one of them. The present mill dates from 1759.

Continue along the path, the river will be on your left and Mill Lake on your right. In the early 20th century, the site was used as a trout farm so the channels were cleared to provide oxygenated water for the fish. You should still see brown trout in the river. The meadows around the trout farm continued to be used until 1969 when there was a demand for gravel for the bypass (A303). The two lakes, Brooks and Mill, were dug at this time and the processing plant was where you parked.

As you walk along the path notice the fishing swims (5) along the edge of Mill Lake. If they are not in use when you pass you could walk out onto them to look at the lake. In some of the lake margins and smaller pools you should see wild watercress growing, but remember not to eat this.



Otter

When you reach the next kissing gate, go through and turn right to follow the path back along the edge of Mill Lake to the car park.

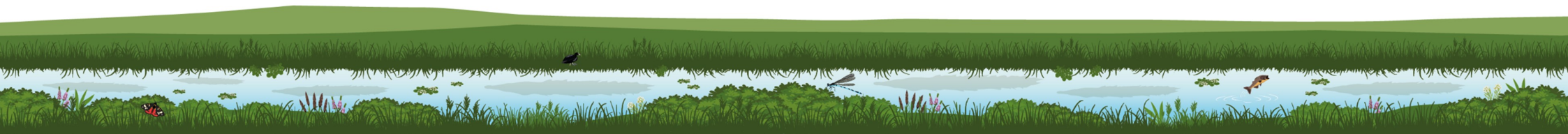
You should be able to cover these parts of the challenge on this walk:

Section 2: 2, 3

Section 3: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Section 4: 12, 13

Section 5: 16, 18, 19



Route extension: Part of the Anton Way to Andover

Instead of taking the path back along the edge of Mill Lake to the car park, you could walk a short stretch of the Anton Way as it heads towards the centre of Andover.

As you follow the footpath, look at the slower flow rate of the river in front of the gardens. Notice the different materials that have been used to protect the banks, and therefore gardens, from erosion. How many different types can you see? Engineered solutions such as boards or brickwork will always require maintenance and will eventually need replacing completely - water is very good at finding its way through even the smallest of gaps to start eroding the materials behind.

A more natural alternative would be to allow a variety of marginal plants to become established instead. Marginal plants are those that can be found growing either completely underwater, from the river bed but breaking the surface of the water, or growing on the river bank itself. Such plants would help protect the banks from erosion as the soil is bound together by their root systems. In addition, marginal plants would provide important habitat for the fish, insects and mammals that live in and around the river.

When you get to the next bridge, you will have reached Watermills Park. By the bridge there is a dog dip (6) providing access to the water and a play park and playing field up to your right. From the bridge you could measure the flow or play Pooh sticks.

Keep following the course of the river a little further, bearing left at the next path junction to leave Watermills Park - at this point the river will be down to your left. Notice the river goes under one industrial unit so disappears from view. As the river emerges you will see the remains of an old metal sluice gate on the river bank by the footpath. The gate would have been used like a valve, to control the amount of water leaving the river and entering the water meadows downstream.

Re-trace your steps at this point back to the car park, taking the left hand path when you reach Mill Lake for a quicker way back to your car.

Interesting addition: Andover town centre

When you're next in the town centre, don't forget to look at the river and see if you can spot any fish - there are usually good views of brown trout and grayling here.

Just off Bridge Street (looking upstream towards the Town Mill) you will find a sculpture of a Viking longboat, created for the Millennium celebrations in 2000. The sculpture remembers Olaf the Viking, later King of Norway, who was baptised in Andover when he promised to only visit in peace in future.

The river splits in two before the Town Mill, which is now a public house.

Additional information (please check opening times and costs)

- Useful map OS Explorer 131
- Parking at Rooksbury Mill Local Nature Reserve Car Park, off Barlows Lane SP10 2HA (W3W /// left.dates.ticket)
- No facilities in the nature reserve but there are toilets in the town centre at the Chantry Centre and at Asda
- Paths are a mixture of tarmac and bare ground, the latter can get muddy after prolonged or heavy rainfall
- Dogs are permitted at the nature reserve but must be kept on a lead. They are not permitted on one part of the route, however this part could be bypassed.

Useful websites

[Rooksbury Mill Local Nature Reserve](#)

[Test Valley Borough Council](#) (landowner)

[Andover Heritage Trail](#)

[The Test Way](#)

[River Anton Way](#)



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