

A WALKING GUIDE TO
RIVER ANTON WAY

SAFETY WHILE WALKING

Use pavements where they exist.

Take care when crossing roads and junctions, using marked crossing points where available.

Be considerate to other road users.

On country roads with no pavements:

- walk in single file on the right, facing oncoming traffic, except on bends where you should walk on the outside of the bend
- be prepared to move off the road to the verge if traffic comes
- be seen when walking in the dark e.g. wear fluorescent clothing
- wear appropriate footwear.

CONTACTS

Any comments on the River Anton can be sent to:

Community&leisure@testvalley.gov.uk. Full copies of the River Anton Enhancement Scheme can be downloaded from **www.testvalley.gov.uk**

For more information about how you can get involved in projects along the River Anton please contact:

Countryside Officer
Community and Leisure Service
Test Valley Borough Council
Beech Hurst
Weyhill Road
Andover
Hampshire
SP10 3AJ
01264 368000

For details of Andover Ramblers contact: **secretary@andoverramblers.org.uk**
or visit the website at **www.andoverramblers.org.uk**

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THE RIVER ANTON WAY - A BRIEF HISTORY

THE ORIGINAL RIVER ANTON WAY – CHARLTON LAKES TO ROOKSBURY MILL LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

The River Anton is one of Andover's most important natural features. It is a chalk stream fed by spring water of exceptionally high quality that supports a rich and diverse array of wildlife. Historic development and inappropriate river management has had a serious effect on the River Anton's wildlife and amenity value. A partnership set up in 2008 between Test Valley Borough Council, the Environment Agency and Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust aims to improve the River Anton and its environment for both people and wildlife.

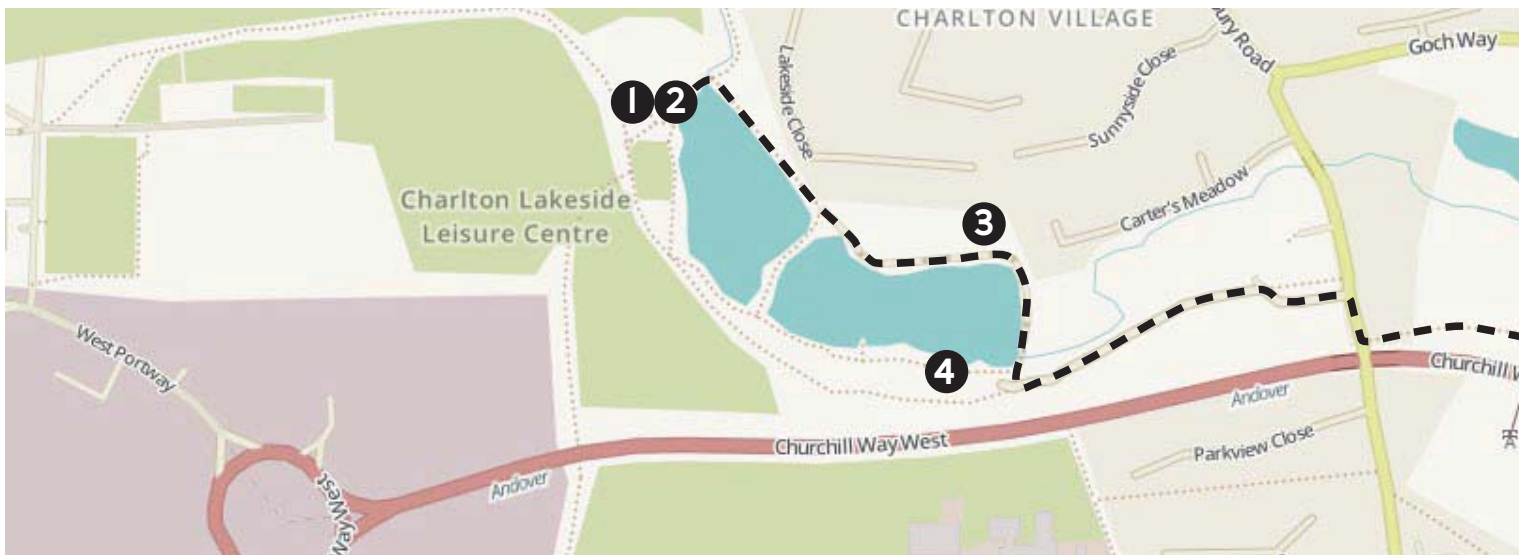
Created as part of the River Anton Enhancement Scheme, the River Anton Way was originally a scenic 3.8 mile walk along the River Anton from Charlton Lakes in the north, via the town centre to Rooksbury Mill Local Nature Reserve in the south. With level bankside footpaths, the walk offers views into the crystal clear waters and opportunities to watch some of the very special wildlife which make their home on the River Anton. Finger posts and interpretation boards make for easy navigation and allow walkers an insight into the history and management of the River Anton. Benches positioned along the route provide ideal places to rest and take in the scenery and maybe even do a spot of wildlife watching.

THE EXTENDED RIVER ANTON WAY – ROOKSBURY MILL LOCAL NATURE RESERVE TO CHILBOLTON

In 2015, proposed by the Andover Ramblers and sponsored by Test Valley Borough Council, the original River Anton Way was extended by 5.5 miles through the parishes of Upper Clatford, Goodworth Clatford, Wherwell and Chilbolton. The route meanders through typical Hampshire countryside and makes use of existing rights of way and country lanes. Unlike the nature reserve paths, the surfaces can be muddy during rainy periods. Where the route is along footpaths, it is not suitable for cyclists or horse riders.

With a total length of almost 10 miles, the route follows the River Anton, crossing it some 17 times. There are four pubs, two village shops and a café along the route.





CHARLTON LAKES AND ANTON LAKES

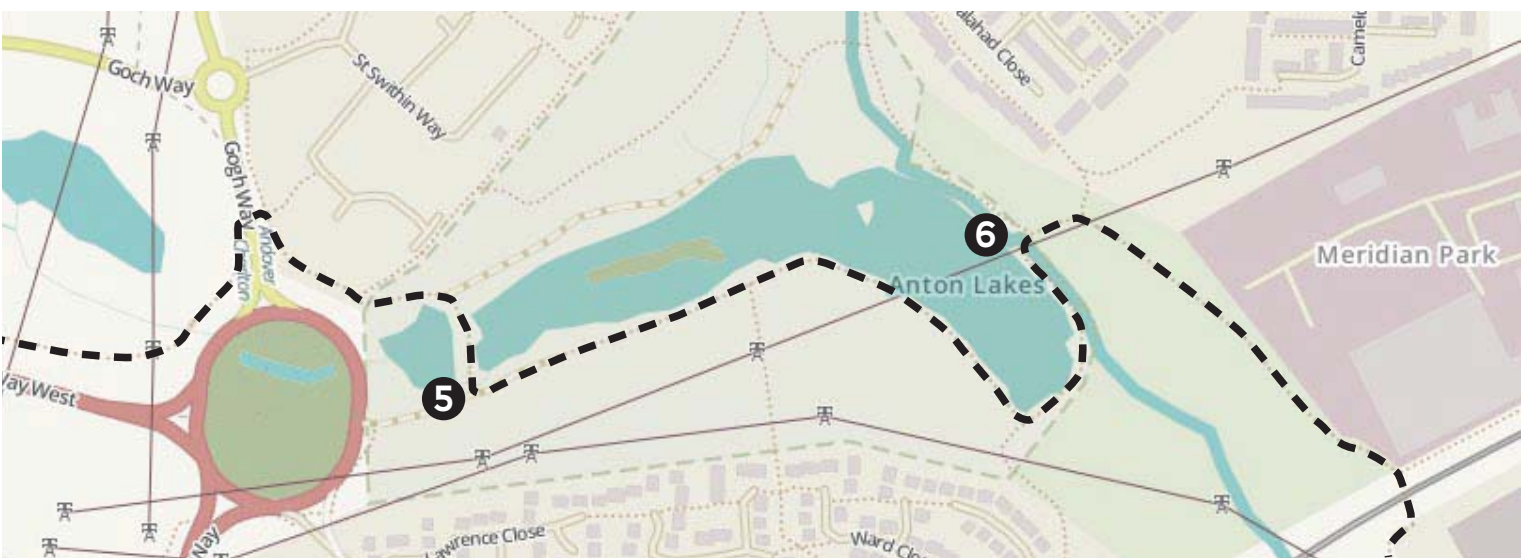
For convenience, this guide describes the route from Charlton Lakes to Chilbolton. The River Anton Way starts outside the pavilion at Charlton Lakes, it follows paths around the edge of the lakes and it continues on to Anton Lakes. The way-marking also allows for a start at Chilbolton.

CHARLTON LAKES

Here the natural chalk has largely disappeared as a result of historical landfill operations and gravel extraction which has created two small lakes. The lakes are highly valued for fishing and recreation as well as for their wildlife. Water fowl can be seen feeding on the lake all year around, with many species of mammal also using the site including pipistrelle bats, water voles and otters.

HEADWATERS AND ANTON LAKES LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

Altered by watercress farming and gravel extraction, the headwaters and lakes support an excellent habitat resulting in a largely underdeveloped and wild river corridor. An area of high nature conservation, Anton Lakes exhibits a vast variety of habitats to be explored. Its quiet meadows and footpaths allow visitors to experience nature up close, and the return to historical management techniques such as grazing has led to the spread of species such as the Southern Marsh Orchid and local rare Long Stalked Yellow Sedge.



1 THE PAVILLION AND START OF THE RIVER ANTON WAY



2 THERE ARE MANY INFORMATION BOARDS ALONG THE PATH



3 CHARLTON LAKES



4 THE RIVER ANTON LEAVES CHARLTON LAKES



5 THE RIVER ANTON ENTERS ANTON LAKES



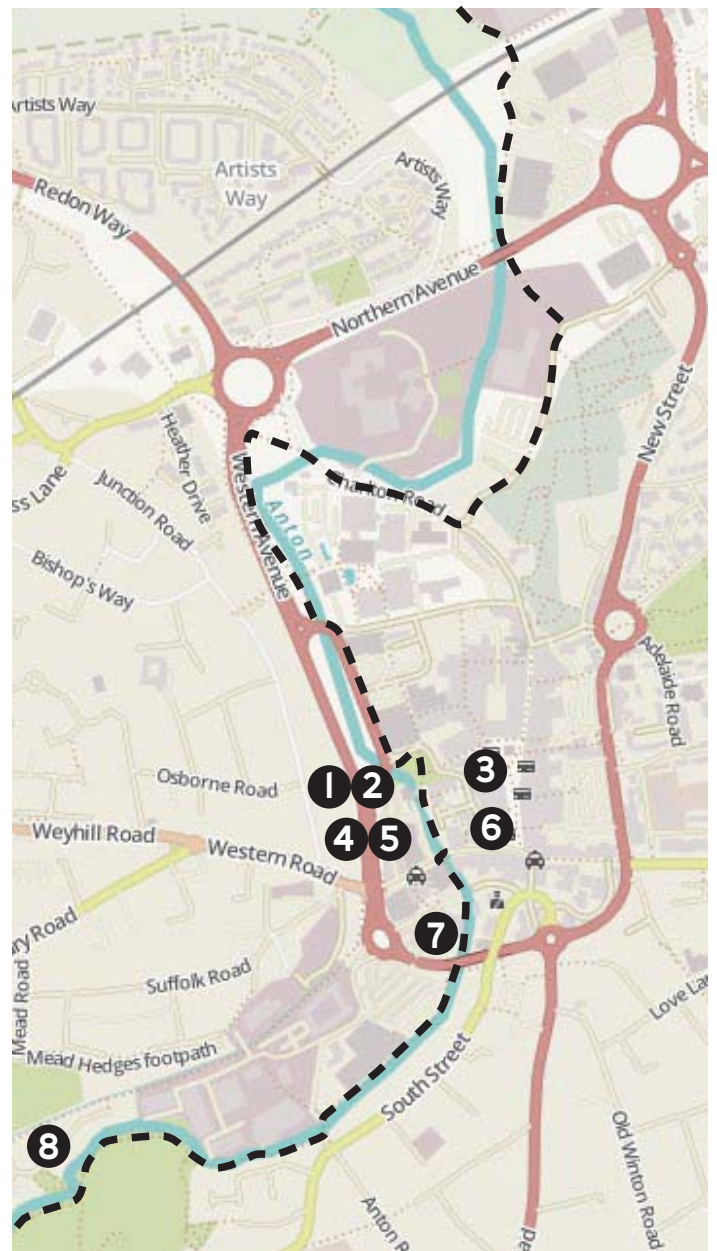
6 THE BRIDGE WHERE THE RIVER ANTON LEAVES ANTON LAKES

ANDOVER TOWN

The path leaves Anton Lakes where it goes under the main railway line. It then follows the river until it goes under the A3057. After this point you walk along Shepherds Spring Lane and Charlton Road without seeing the River Anton, but soon it can be glimpsed from the bridges. The path follows the river through the centre of Andover and out past Asda into Watermills Park where it continues on to Rooksbury Mill Local Nature Reserve.

RAILWAY TO ANDOVER TOWN CENTRE

As the walk enters the town some important areas of habitat still remain. However, the river channel is generally too wide to support a good flow of water, resulting in important river gravels becoming smothered in fine sediments which affect the spawning patterns of fish and invertebrates. Historic structures such as weirs and sluices interrupt the flow of water and act as a barrier to the migration of fish and mammals such as the water vole. However, otters have been seen travelling through the town centre between Anton Lakes and Rooksbury Mill Local Nature Reserves.



TOWN CENTRE

As you enter the town centre the river becomes heavily constrained and little of the natural river channel still exists. However, recent development in this area has provided an opportunity to restore important wetland habitat areas adjacent to the river channel, encouraging species such as kingfishers back to the town.



1 2 TOWN MILLS WAS RECORDED IN THE DOMESDAY BOOK. IT CEASED BEING A MILL IN 1974 AND IS NOW A PUB.



3 AN IMPRESSIVE SCULPTURE



4 VIEW TOWARDS BRIDGE STREET



5 THE VIKINGS COME TO ANDOVER



6 THE RECENTLY RENOVATED RIVERSIDE WALK



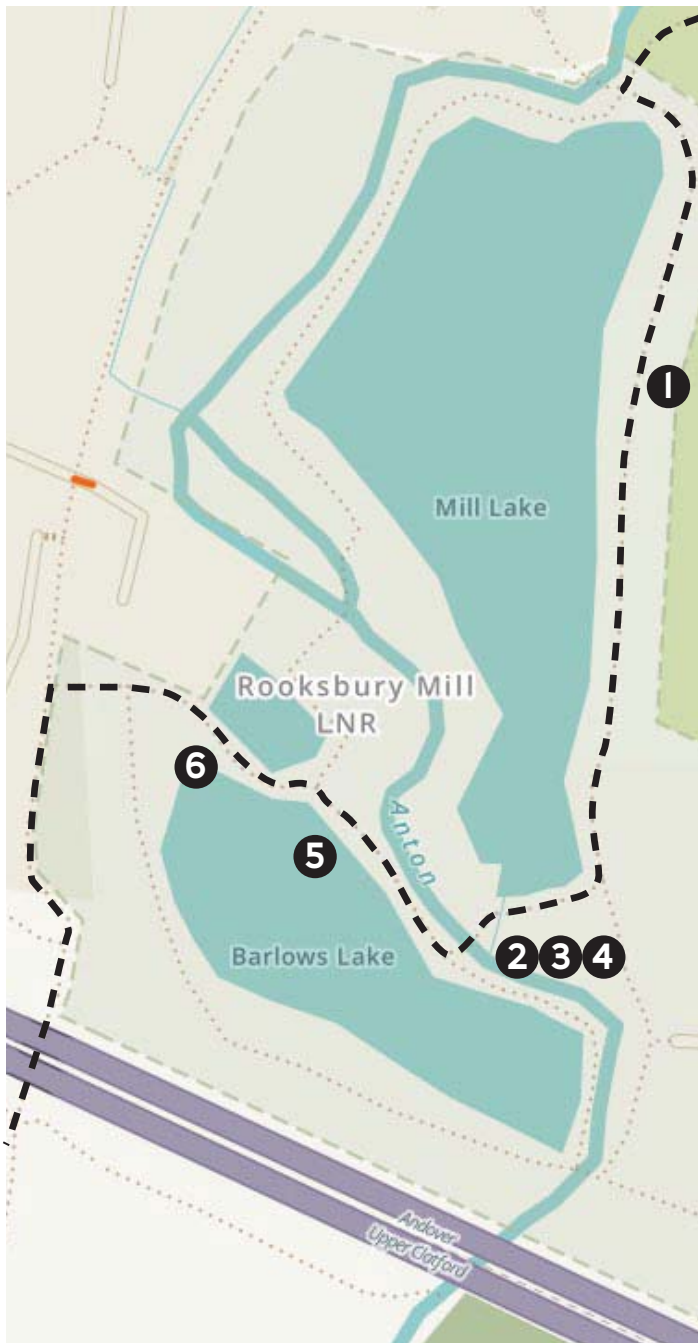
5 MODERN SAFETY RAILS DESIGNED BY A LOCAL SCHOOL



5 THE RIVER ANTON FLOWS ALONGSIDE WATERMILLS PARK

ROOKSBURY MILL LOCAL NATURE RESERVE

After following the river we turn left into Rooksbury Mill. Lake creation and historical water level management associated with its past use as a mill and more recently a fish farm, has disrupted and degraded the natural chalk river habitat. However, as with Charlton Lakes and Anton Lakes upstream, these lakes are important for wildlife and recreation in their own right. Lakeside seating provides ideal opportunities to observe wildlife in its natural setting. Great Crested Grebe, Heron and Kingfishers to name a few can be seen on the lake. Animals such as water voles, otters, foxes, stoats and water shrews also use the reserve.



1 A VARIETY OF SEATING IS AVAILABLE IN THE RESERVE



A DETAILED MAP OF THE RESERVE



2 WE CROSS THE RIVER ANTON AT THE FOOTBRIDGE AS THE PATH SNAKES BETWEEN TWO LAKES



3 A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE IN WINTER



4 A VIEW FROM THE BRIDGE IN SUMMER



5 SWANS CROSSING THE RIVER ANTON WAY



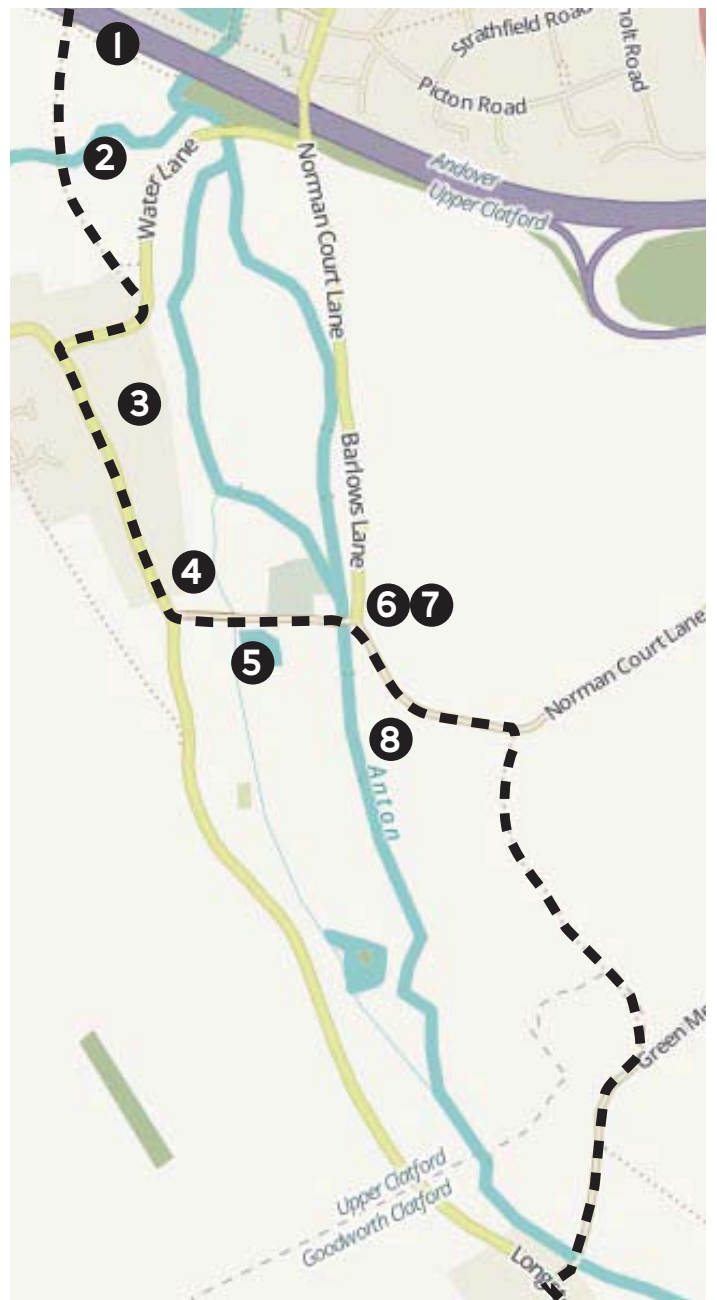
6 ONE OF THE TWO ROOKSBURY MILL NATURE RESERVE LAKES



A GREAT CRESTED GREBE

PARISH OF UPPER CLATFORD

As you leave Rooksbury Mill, and turn left onto the old railway line, approaching the underpass under the A303, you enter the parish of Upper Clatford. After a short distance you cross an old railway bridge over the Pill Hill Brook which joins the River Anton. The path emerges onto Watery Lane and soon passes the Crook and Shears Pub. At the end of the village the route turns left onto Church Lane, where from the bridge over the old dismantled railway line you can see an old signal. The route passes the church and cross the River Anton before turning right past Norman Court Farm. The path then turns right along field edges until it enters the parish of Goodworth Clatford.



1 THE PATH GOES UNDER THE A303



2 THE OLD RAILWAY BRIDGE OVER PILL HILL BROOK



3 THE 17TH CENTURY CROOK AND SHEARS PUB ON UPPER CLATFORD HIGH STREET



4 OLD RAILWAY SIGNAL MADE FROM RAILWAY TRACK



5 ALL SAINTS' 12TH CENTURY CHURCH



6 CROSSING THE RIVER ANTON AT THE FISHERMAN'S COTTAGE



7 A VIEW OF THE RIVER ANTON OPPOSITE THE FISHERMAN'S COTTAGE



8 THE QUEEN ANNE FARMHOUSE OF NORMAN COURT FARM

PARISH OF GOODWORTH CLATFORD

The path joins Green Meadows Lane which, until it bends to the left, is the parish boundary with Upper Clatford. After bending left, the lane goes down to a ford and a foot bridge over the River Anton. It then goes along the high street of Goodworth Clatford and passes the Royal Oak Public House before turning left onto Church Lane just before the community shop on the left. The road crosses the River Anton just after the riverside park on the right. After crossing the bridge, the River Anton Way turns right and follows the river southwards. The sharp-eyed may spot a thatched fisherman's hut on the far bank of the river. As you go under the electricity cables you leave the parish of Goodworth Clatford.





1 A VIEW OF THE FORD AND FOOTBRIDGE ON GREEN MEADOWS LANE, GOODWORTH CLATFORD



3 THE ROUTE PASSES THE ROYAL OAK PUB. THE PREVIOUS PUB WAS DESTROYED IN WWII BY A FLYING BOMB



3 THE GOODWORTH CLATFORD COMMUNITY SHOP IS ONLY 10 METRES FROM THE ROUTE



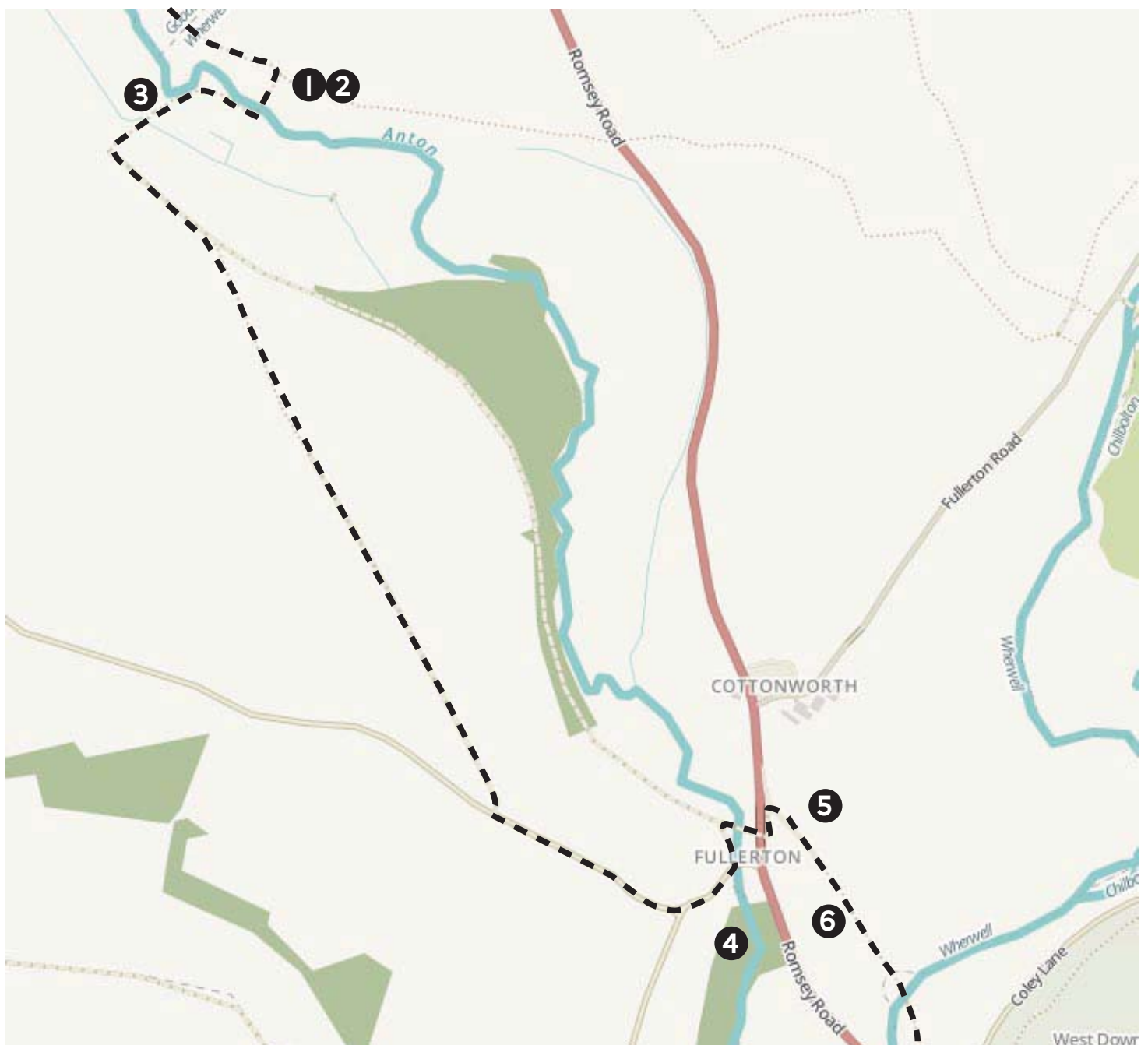
4 RIVERSIDE PARK IN GOODWORTH CLATFORD



5 A FISHING HUT ON THE RIVER ANTON



6 THE PATH FOLLOWS THE COURSE OF THE RIVER ANTON



PARISH OF WHERWELL

After entering Wherwell Parish the path turns right and crosses the River Anton. It then starts to climb out of the valley to reach its highest point before descending again to Fullerton where the river is viewed for the last time. Then rejoin the course of the old railway and head for the Parish of Chilbolton.



1 A FOOTBRIDGE ACROSS THE RIVER ANTON



2 A VIEW FROM THE FOOTBRIDGE



3 WALKING BESIDE THE RIVER ANTON



4 FULLERTON MILL. THE LAST VIEW OF THE RIVER ANTON BEFORE IT JOINS THE RIVER TEST DOWNSTREAM FROM THE MILL



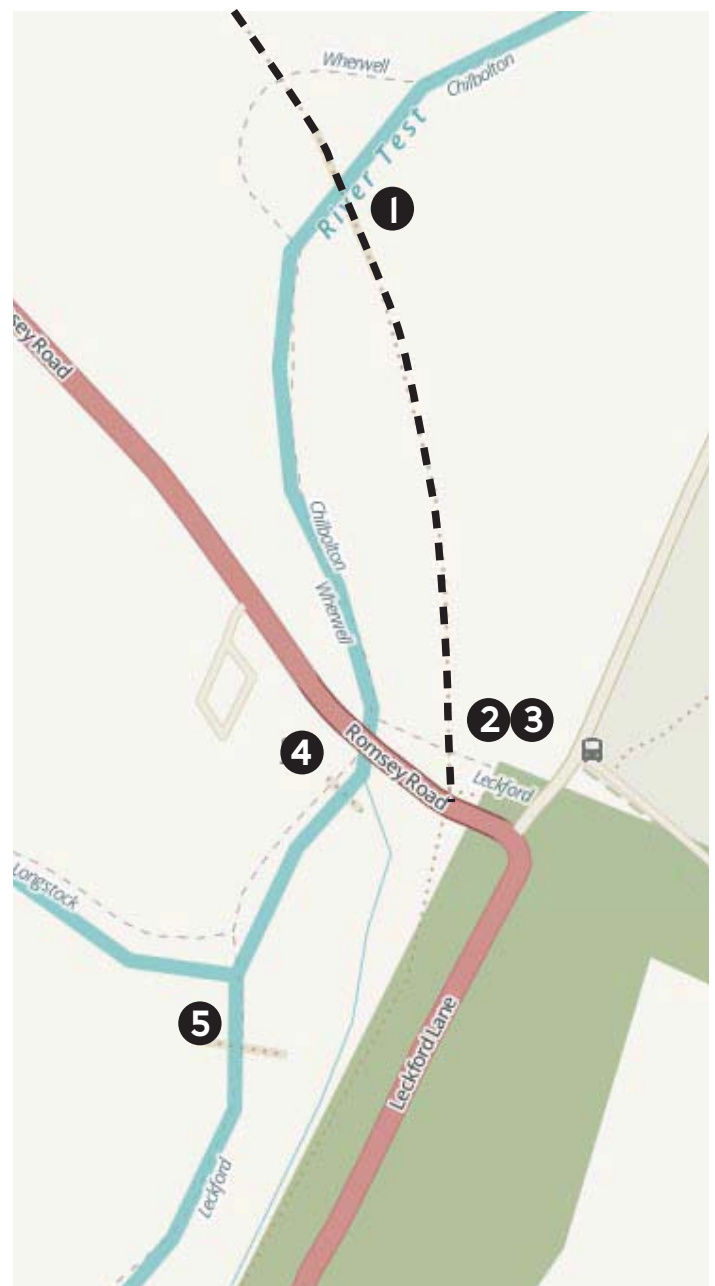
5 FOLLOW THE COURSE OF THE OLD RAILWAY UNDER THE A3057



6 THE OLD PLATFORMS AT FULLERTON RAILWAY STATION WHERE THE LINE NORTH DIVIDED TO ANDOVER AND WHITCHURCH

PARISH OF CHILBOLTON

The River Anton Way enters Chilbolton when it crosses the River Test using the old railway bridge. It follows the course of the dismantled railway until it meets the Test Way under the A3057 road bridge where it ends. The Test Way is a 44 mile walk from Inkpen Beacon to Eling. The River Anton itself joins the River Test 200 yards to the south west from where the path ends. Over the river is the Mayfly pub (take care if crossing the road bridge by foot). Within 100 yards of the path end is the West Down car park.



1 THE PATH USES THE DISUSED RAILWAY BRIDGE TO CROSS THE RIVER TEST AND CROSS THE CHILBOLTON AND WHERWELL PARISH BOUNDARY



2 ANDOVER RAMBLERS WAY-MARK THE ROUTE



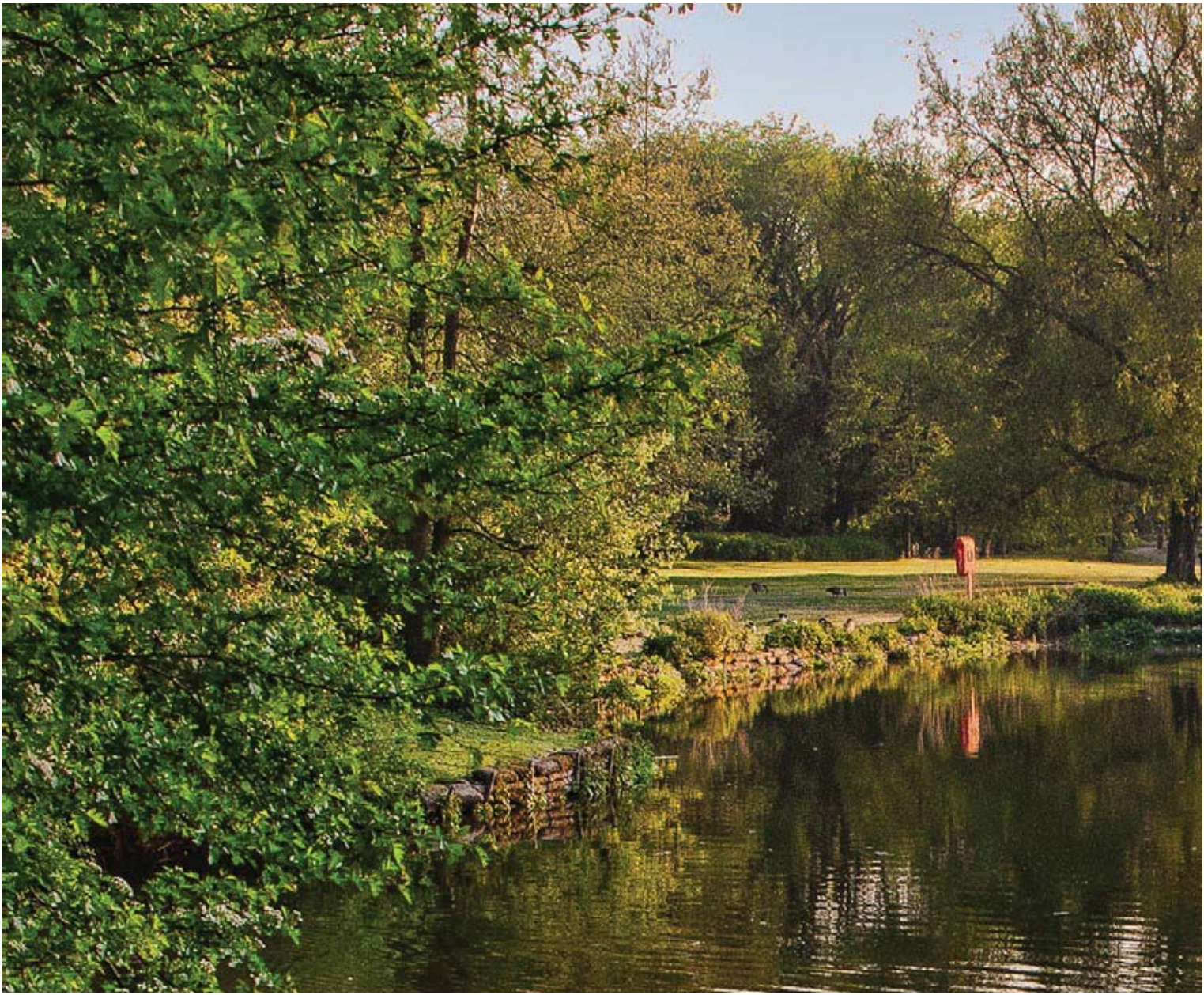
3 THE RIVER ANTON WAY ENDS WHERE IT MEETS THE TEST WAY UNDER A3057 ROAD BRIDGE



4 THE NEARBY MAYFLY



5 THE RIVER ANTON JOINS THE RIVER TEST SOUTH OF THE MAYFLY PUB



PHOTOGRAPHY BY GRANT AUTON AND DAVID CLARK