



SAFETY WHILST WALKING

- Be seen when walking in the dark e.g. wear fluorescent clothing
- Wear appropriate footwear
- Take care when crossing roads and junctions, using marked crossing points where available
- Be considerate to other road users.



Created as part of the River Anton Enhancement Scheme, the River Anton Way is a scenic 3.2 mile walk along the River Anton from Charlton Lakes in the North, through 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 spread along the route provide ideal places to rest and take in the scenery and maybe even a spot of wildlife watching.

We would like to hear what you think of the River Anton and any ideas you may have to further the improvements. Comments 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:

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Front Cover Courtesy of Grant Auton Photography

RIVER ANTON ENHANCEMENT SCHEME



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.

However, all is not well on the River Anton. Historic development and inappropriate river management has had a serious effect on the River Anton's wildlife and amenity value.

Set up in 2008 between Test Valley Borough Council, the Environment Agency, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Hampshire County Council, the partnership aims to improve the River Anton and its environment for both people and wildlife.

SITES OF INTEREST

Charlton Lakes

Here the natural chalk has largely disappeared as a result of historic landfill operations and gravel extraction, which has created the two small lakes that can be seen today. The lakes themselves are highly valued for fishing and recreation as well as for their wildlife value. 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.

Head Waters 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 undeveloped and wild river corridor. An area of high nature conservation Anton Lakes exhibits a vast variety of habitats to be explored. Its quiet meadow footpaths allow visitors to experience nature up close and the return to natural management techniques, such as grazing by native rare breed cattle (Dexter's) has led to the spread of species such as the Southern March Orchid and locally rare Long stalked yellow sedge.

Key
 River Anton Way



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 and important river gravels have become 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 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.

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 into the town.



Rooksbury Mill Local Nature Reserve

Lake creation and historic water level management associated with Rooksbury Mill LNR has disrupted and

degraded the natural chalk river habitat. However, as with Charlton and Anton Lakes up stream, 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. As well as smaller animals such as water voles and water shrews which also use the reserve.

