

Walk Highlights

Water meadows are areas of pasture within a river valley which were deliberately flooded to encourage better grass growth for grazing or hay production. They were a common feature from the 18th to the early 20th century. Old structures from the water meadows (sluices, hatches, weirs and bridges) can still be seen in the Itchen Valley today as well as traces in the landscape of former carriers and drains.



Three arches near Twyford

Water crowfoot is an aquatic plant closely associated with chalk rivers like the River Itchen. It produces beautiful, white, yellow centred flowers on the surface of the water from May to August. The submerged parts of the plant provide cover for dragonfly larvae and other aquatic creatures and help to maintain water levels in the summer.



Water crowfoot © Lawrence Talkst

As well as being used for barge transport and flooding water meadows, the waters of the Navigation were used for powering corn and timber **mills**. In the 19th century, St. Catherine's Lock was home to a mill, which supplied sawn timber for the Navigation's locks and bridges. The Wildlife Trust has preserved the old brickwork here so the important archaeology survives for people to see.



St. Catherine's Lock and saw mill 1870s

The Itchen Navigation Heritage Trail Project is a Heritage Lottery Fund project managed by the Wildlife Trust, preserving an internationally important chalk river system for future generations. Find out more about the Itchen Navigation at:

www.itchenavigation.org.uk



Hampshire & Isle of Wight
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MILLS AND MEADOWS Winchester



Yellow irises © David Kilbey

Distance:
3 miles / 5km
Walking time:
1 hour
Terrain: flat

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Mills and Meadows

Take a walk along two branches of the River Itchen alongside historic water meadows and the Iron Age hill fort of St. Catherine's Hill nature reserve.

- 1 From the Garnier Road car park, follow the Itchen Navigation path south along the bottom of St. Catherine's Hill.
- 2 Just before the motorway, turn right onto the old Five Bridges Road.
- 3 Turn right onto the footpath off Five Bridges Road. The footpath follows a stream up to St. Cross Hospital. Continue on the path up to Garnier Road.
- 4 Cross the road and rejoin the riverside footpath through Winchester College's land.
- 5 Turn right onto College Walk.
- 6 Turn right onto Domum Road. Take the first footpath off to the right down to Wharf Bridge. Follow the Itchen Navigation back to Tunbridge and Garnier Road.

Alternative route: From Garnier Road, take the path up the top of St. Catherine's Hill and rejoin the route near St. Catherine's Lock.

