

## The River Test (SSSI)

This section of the River Test is a Site of Special Scientific Interest because it is a classic chalk stream and one of the most species-rich lowland rivers in England. The source of the river is two miles upstream. The riverbed has a shallow flat gravel bottom and the purity of the water made Flashetts an ideal watercress bed in former times.

## Historical points of interest

**Community Centre (A)** Built as a primary school (later the village infant school) in 1868 on the site of the Poyntz Arms, a coaching inn on the route from London to the West.

**Town Mill (B)** Mentioned in the Domesday Book, site of the main corn mill, now converted to residential accommodation.

**St Mary's Church (C)** Place of worship since the 12<sup>th</sup> Century; note the extensive use of flint as the local building material.

**Quidhampton Mill (D)** Built in the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, used as corn and fulling mill with a fishery, ceasing operation in the 1930s.

**Old House at Home (E)** Second public house in Overton with this name – the first was on the other side of the road.

**Overton Memorial Institute (F)** Built as a memorial to all those who served their country in the First World War.

**The White Hart (G)** Another inn that used to serve the stage-coach traffic from London to Exeter.

## How to find us

This walk begins at Overton Community Centre, OS Explorer 144 map reference: 515 497.

**Road:** From Basingstoke take the B3400 to Overton. Free parking is available on the right on Overton Hill and on the left in the London Road car park.

**Train:** Overton railway station is on the London Waterloo to Salisbury line. From the station, walk straight down Station Approach continuing onto Station Road. At the bridge join the nature trail at point 10.

**Bus:** Overton is on the Stagecoach route 76/86 between Basingstoke and Andover/Winchester. Alight at the Community Centre.



## Further Information

If you are interested in joining Overton Biodiversity Society, please visit our web site

[www.overton-biodiversity.org](http://www.overton-biodiversity.org)

# LITTLE MEADOW AND FLASHETTS

## OVERTON HERITAGE AND NATURE TRAILS



**1 mile (1.6km) walk  
highlighting nature and wildlife  
by the River Test**

A fairly level walk on paths and stony track with some short sections of road.

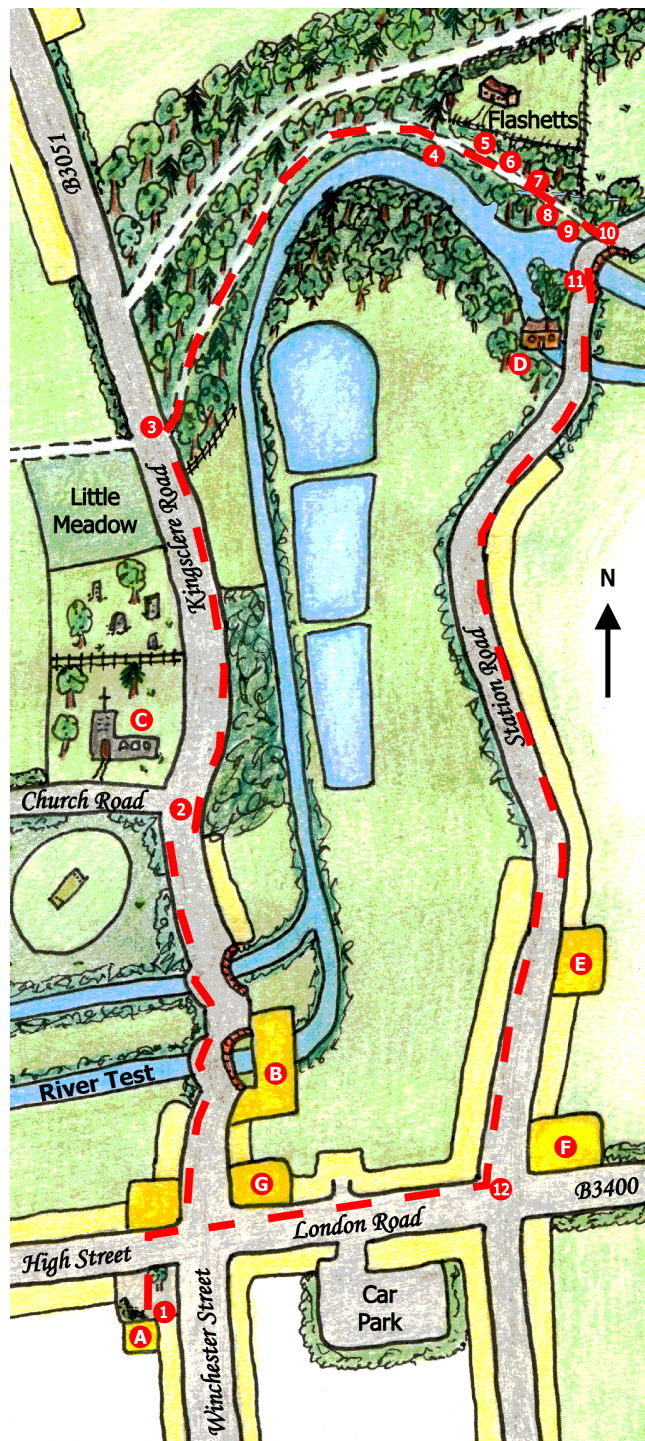
**Allow around 1 hour**

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# Little Meadow and Flashetts trail

*Remain on the public footpath when walking through private land.*

1. From **Overton Community Centre (A)** head north down Kingsclere Road passing **Town Mill (B)** on your right. As the bridge passes over the River Test there is a chance to see trout, swans, ducks and coots. Continue along the pavement. The ivy flowers and berries in the hedge are an important source of food for birds and insects in the autumn and winter. The next bridge offers views to the left across to Overton Recreation Centre, a former water meadow.
2. Before Church Road, cross Kingsclere Road onto the opposite pavement. Continue past **St Mary's Church (C)** on your left. Beyond the graveyard is "Little Meadow" which Overton Biodiversity Society is developing into a Community Garden; cross over and have a look around.
3. Continue along Kingsclere Road and turn right along the gravel path at a footpath sign. This watery area called **Flashetts** supports willow, watercress, yellow flag, reeds and sedges.
4. Opposite **Flashetts House** is a picturesque vista onto the open water with overhanging trees and a resident wildlife population. Look out for ducks, moorhens, coots and other water birds.
5. Continue into the woody part of the trail with broadleaved semi-natural woodland and scattered areas of scrub and swamp. These differing habitats support a great diversity of plants and animals.



Dead wood is a vital wildlife haven and can provide shelter for insects and small animals.

6. At the small bridge, pause to note the clarity of the River Test. The shallow chalk stream and its flat gravel bottom is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).
7. As you pass through the avenue of trees, ahead and to the left, you can see the site of a Norman Chapel at **Quidhampton Farm**.
8. Further along, the river divides into two channels but before you reach the footbridge it is worth having a look to the right for views of a small waterfall and the mature ash trees at **Quidhampton Mill (D)**.
9. The shallow area of open water is a favourite local beauty spot. If you look closely at the water's edge you may be able to spot very small fresh-water shrimps hiding under leaves.
10. Continue through the gate where, from the bench under the tree, you can admire the beauty and tranquility of Flashetts and the juvenile River Test.
11. Turn right along Station Road and cross over. Take care where there is no pavement. You will notice an old building on the right which is **Quidhampton Mill (D)**. Continue along the pavement and cross the road by the **Old House At Home (E)**.
12. Pass **Overton Memorial Institute (F)**, and then turn right into London Road. Cross London Road near the **White Hart (G)** and return to the Community Centre.