

Longparish, Riverdance Walk



**HAMPSHIRE
COUNTRYSIDE
SERVICE**

Distance: 3.5 miles

Start: Village Hall

Longparish consists of numerous hamlets, including Forton, Middleton, Longparish Station, West Aston and East Aston, lying along the west bank of the clear braided waters of the River Test. The valley is about half a mile wide, flanked by low ridges, with Harewood Forest to the north and west.

The village has many attractive thatched cottages and St Nicholas Church, which dates from the 13th century. An excellent network of footpaths including part of the Test Way links the settlements and provides some memorable views of the old cottages, the landscape and of the river.

The low lying fields of the valley are used for grazing livestock, while the rising ground is used for arable crops such as barley, wheat and oilseed rape. Small spinneys and areas specially planted provide cover for game birds and other wildlife.

Harewood Forest, in Saxon and Norman times a royal hunting forest, is now managed for forestry, hunting and wildlife. Harewood Forest was used in World War II for storing and marshalling ammunition. This was then taken by rail to Southampton, so many rides were concreted and are still used for forestry operations.

Directions

This walk offers a chance to see some attractive parts of the village and stunning views of the river from the many bridges.

Start in the car park opposite the village hall and watch out for the red waymarks as you follow this route. Start by visiting the 13th century church and walk east down the village street. By the stream you will pass the grindstone and Ashburn Rest, a 19th century seat recently rebuilt.

Following sometimes paths and sometimes the road you continue through West and East Aston until the last house, where there is a footbridge on your right. Walk across East Aston Common and pause on the long wooden footbridge to enjoy the river.

On the way back, look at Upper Mill, a 19th century corn mill which has been restored to working order. You then cross the water meadows behind Longparish House, and follow the route back to your starting point.

