

Avon Valley Path, Sopley to Christchurch



HAMPSHIRE
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SERVICE

Distance:	3.5 miles
Start:	Woolpack Inn

The Avon Valley Path is a 34-mile, long-distance walking route that takes you from Salisbury – one of the most beautiful cathedral cities in England – to Christchurch Priory and the sea. It was opened in 1992 and runs from Wiltshire due south through Hampshire to finish in Dorset. The Path is named after the river whose course it follows. Please bear in mind that this route can become seriously waterlogged from December to May. The Path has been divided into five sections, each providing a really good day out.

Directions

Sopley is a charming village with a mill that is now a restaurant. Close by on a mound is the 13th century church of St Michael and All Saints which has a fascinating oak beam interior. The Path passes the 17th century Woolpack Inn and enters Sopley Park by North Lodge and the old well.

Continue on, crossing the fields to Staple Cross, and once past The Lamb Inn, follow the stream to Burton through a housing estate to the B3347. After this, the route returns to the calm of the water meadows, home to numerous water birds. Look across the valley for views of St Catherine's Hill and its Bronze Age barrows.

The Path crosses the river at the weir by the Water Works, passes under the railway line, and turns right to a row of cottages. At the end of this row it continues to the High Street with the Priory directly ahead. The Path ends at this splendid medieval monastic priory, built in 1094. Christchurch is a historic town with a strong smuggling history and many places of interest to explore, including Place Mill and Constable's House. Why not enjoy a picturesque walk by the river or even take a boat trip using the network of ferries. Take a break in one of the cafés, restaurants and pubs, or browse in the shops before finishing with a walk to the nearby harbour.

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