

## St Mary Bourne, The Drove Walk



**HAMPSHIRE  
COUNTRYSIDE  
SERVICE**

**Distance:** 5 miles

**Start:** St Mary Bourne Recreation Ground

The wooded areas around St Mary Bourne, especially to the south side of the lake contain a wide variety of wildlife, while the traditional water meadows on either side of the Bourne Rivulet (a chalk tributary of the River Test) form pastureland from the lake towards the viaduct. Upstream views from the Summerhaugh Bridge in the village square include buildings dating back to the 16th century.

St Mary Bourne parish includes the larger village of that name together with Stoke and the surrounding hamlets of Binley, Dunley, Egbury, Upper, Middle and Lower-Wyke (pronounced “Wick” or “Week”) and Wadwick. The parish is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the villages of St Mary Bourne and Stoke form a Conservation Area. In the past the Parish’s main income was from farming, with supporting industries and trades. Swampton Mill was the earliest recorded business; it was mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086.

### **Directions**

This walk passes through woodland with bluebells and cowslips in spring, taking you along an ancient Drovers’ track with views towards Stoke and Hurstbourne Tarrant, dropping down to the Bourne Rivulet and then returning to the Recreation Ground via the Test Way and gateposts showing children’s poems.

Leave the Recreation Ground and walk to the village square, cross the bridge and bear left into Springhill Lane. At Hirst’s Bank Top Yard entrance turn right, climb the footpath steps and continue on this path past the Woodland Burial Ground.

Pass through 3 stiles with dog latches and cross the road opposite the farmhouse, follow footpath (ignoring all paths off to your left) until you pass through a gap in the hedge leading to a wide track. Turn left and follow the track into Wadwick.

Turn left and walk along this quiet road until the next junction where you turn right towards Binley. Walk up the hill, ignoring the 1st footpath on the left and continue, taking the 2nd path on your left. Follow the Drove Path through a tree lined section before reaching open fields.

After the next tree lined section, bear right following the path along the field edge. Turn left at the field end, following the path along the hedgerow, through a gap in the hedge and then bear right diagonally across the field until meeting the Byway.

Turn right and follow the Byway to Gangbridge Lane and Bourne Rivulet. Turn left along this lane until meeting the main road opposite the school. Cross the road and turn right into School Lane. At the top of the lane bear left, following the Test Way and “Walk to School” route to the Recreation Ground, taking care when crossing the road.

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