

## A leisurely stroll alongside the River Avon from Stratford sub Castle.

1.3 miles linear walk with just a short stretch of quiet road-walking. No stiles.

*Caution - water hazard - children should be supervised at all times.*

The paths described were walked in April 2017 after several weeks of dry weather. Images show the ground conditions at that time which were found to be suitable for buggies. Access for wheelchairs or mobility scooters has not been tested. Do use your own judgement about the prevailing conditions if you choose to follow this route, especially when the river level is high. Note that this is a linear walk - suggestions for returning to SsC or to extend the walk are given on page 4. Please read through all of these directions before setting off.

**START:** from the junction of Mill Lane and Stratford Road - OS Map reference SU132 323



*Mill Lane/Stratford Road junction*

Walk into Mill Lane, passing on your right: an attractive thatched cottage; a small working garage business; school playing fields; then open fields where cattle sometimes graze.



Continue along the lane, with a cob and flint wall on your left. Cob walls in this area were originally built with a thatched top - examples of these can still be seen elsewhere in the village. The hanging tiles shown here give a hint of the earlier style of the wall.

The next point of interest, a narrow bridge with bricked side walls, crosses over one of the many man-made water channels around Stratford sub Castle.



*Looking north-west*

In a past age the channels irrigated the fields, creating water meadows and encouraging earlier spring-growth for pasture or crops.

If you stop here and look to the right, you may see a Little Egret (a member of the heron family) in the field or fishing nearby - it's often here.





In medieval times there were at least two water mills in the area. The route of a disused Mill 'Race' can be seen either side of a section of raised road bounded by metal fencing. Some remaining mill stonework is visible to the right.

The tarmac road ends at the entrance gate to a house. Follow the footpath as it curves to the left and pass between the two staggered metal fence panels. Note the 'No Cycling' sign.



After passing through the 'pinch point', look left across the field for a view of the spire of Salisbury Cathedral.

*In spring-time there are splendid displays of Marsh Marigolds to the right of the footpath as you approach a pedestrian bridge.*

*Further examples of these and other plants of marshland can be seen further along the route.*



*Distance from Start 0.23 miles*

Follow the footpath as it crosses over the River Avon via a pedestrian bridge. Look out for swans, ducks, moorhens, coots and if you're lucky, a kingfisher.



*View from the bridge to the right*



*Looking south, towards Salisbury*

Exit the bridge and just past the wooden fencing, turn left through the wide gap and follow the footpath towards a wooden bench.



*Eastern bank looking towards St Lawrence Close*



*View looking back from the bench.*



At the end of the field, the path goes through an open gateway, rejoining the river bank.

*Distance from Start 0.61 miles*

Keep to the right of the bench and follow the path away from the river, crossing a large field.



*Note the cathedral spire approximately 1.5 miles away.*



Follow the path alongside the river before reaching a raised boardwalk. The surface is buggy-friendly and dogs happily walk it.



*Distance from start 0.75 miles*

*The raised boardwalk section aims to provide an all-weather route alongside the river.*

*In 2013 an earlier structure was swept away by the unusually high water levels.*



*Willow trees and wild flowers make this a very attractive section of the walk.*

**Another boarded path joins from the right at 0.84 miles but our route continues straight on, alongside the river.**



*Distance from Start 1.1 miles*

At the end of the boardwalk is an information board for the Avon Valley Nature Reserve. Ignore a path to the right and instead continue on the river path as it rises gently onto a raised bank. To your right, there's a recreational area and as you progress along the path, you will see a fenced play area suitable for young children.



*Five Rivers Leisure Centre is behind the trees.*



*Distance from Start 1.25 miles*



The raised earth bank slopes down to join another footpath. Unless you are visiting the play area, **turn left** and follow the footpath over a small bridge, crossing a stream. Sluice gates have been installed here to assist with flood prevention.



You are now at 'Ashley Road Open Space'.  
OS map ref SU139 309

*Distance from Start 1.3 miles.*

To your right across a wide grassed area is Ashley Road, the Studio Theatre, fire station, and service/pedestrian entrance to Waitrose and other stores.

**Retrace your steps to return to Stratford sub Castle**



**ALTERNATIVELY** you could extend your walk by joining the town path featured in 'A Walk into the City', another of our detailed walks. To do that, continue along the riverside path for 0.12 miles until you reach a pedestrian bridge on your left. At that point, use the 'Walk into the City' route from page 2 onwards to walk southwards into the city centre. (NB - additional download needed.)

**OR** you could return to Stratford sub Castle via the shared footpath/cycleway. When you reach the pedestrian bridge described above, turn left and walk over it, then cross the Five Rivers Leisure Centre entrance road and look for blue signs indicating the cycleway/footpath. It's 0.5 miles to Stratford Road where you turn left towards Mill Lane, another 0.5 miles further north.