

The Alver Valley



Nestled between the urban areas of Gosport and Lee-on-the-Solent, the Alver Valley is a two hundred hectare green space, home to a rich mosaic of habitats. Part owned by Gosport Borough Council and the MOD, the valley is carefully managed by conservation groups and the Council's Countryside Section, to heighten the wildlife interest and enhance visitor enjoyment.

History

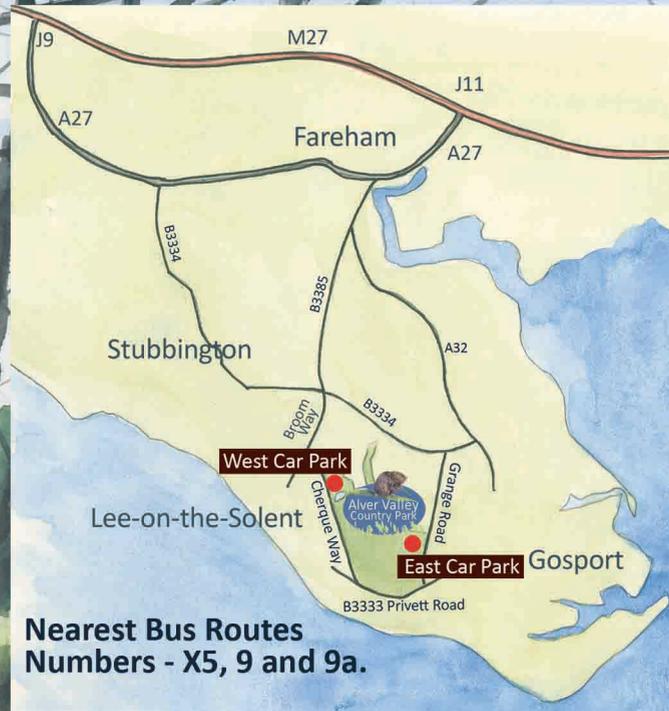
During various Ice Ages, flood waters from melting ice spread fine silty clay and gravel over the peninsula of Gosport. Temperatures increased, allowing woodland to spread across the coastal plain, forming a dense cover of vegetation. Remnants of this huge woodland are still found on the common lands of The Wildgrounds and Browndown, they are of rare ecological value.

The River Alver drains land from Peel Common through to Browndown. Its course has changed over time, now entering the sea at No 2 Battery rather than at Fort Gilkicker as it once did.

Early settlers cleared the woodland, exposing the fertile soil for agriculture. Maps from 1803 show an intensively farmed landscape of small enclosures and commons, supplying the local population with fresh produce.

The valley itself consists of deep peaty soils close to the river, surrounded by gravel deposits. Being a valuable resource, the gravel was extracted for use in building projects, resulting in the creation of many gravel pits.

Subsequently in the 1970's much of the area was then used to bury refuse. After which the land went through a period of renovation. It was fashioned into a diverse range of habitats and became home to the beautiful flora and fauna that can be seen today.



**Nearest Bus Routes
Numbers - X5, 9 and 9a.**

Enjoy your visit but please leave it in a good condition for other people and wildlife.

- PLEASE**
- Control your dog and remove any mess
 - Take your litter home or put in it bins provided
 - Do NOT start fires
 - Do NOT pick wild flowers
 - Cyclists show consideration to other visitors
 - Close all gates

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Alver Valley Gosport's wildlife haven



GOSPORT
Borough Council

Finding your way around the Alver Valley



- 1 West Car Park and Picnic Area.
- 2 Noah Lake.
- 3 Zigzag Bridge.
- 4 Hilbury Meadow.
- 5 Junkett Hill.
- 6 Sandhill.
- 7 Sandhill Pond.
- 8 West of River Nature Reserve.
- 9 Browndown MOD.
- 10 The River Alver.
- 11 Apple Dumpling Bridge.
- 12 BMX Track.
- 13 Adventure Playground and Meadows.
- 14 East Car Park and Picnic Area.
- 15 Carter's Copse.
- 16 Little Woodham Village.
- 17 Wildgrounds Nature Reserve.



Accessibility

- Viewpoint
- All weather paths *
- Grass paths
- Access points

*We strive to make the whole area as accessible as possible. However during periods of wet weather some areas will become difficult to navigate.
Cyclists are able to utilise all paths, but please be considerate to other users.
There is strictly no access to unauthorised motor vehicles.

Whether you stroll, run or cycle in the valley, please spend the time to fully enjoy the charms of the Borough's Country Park.



What to see on your visit to the Alver Valley Country Park

1 West Car Park and Picnic Area.

2 Noah Lake. Aptly named, it takes flood waters from the Cherque Farm estate. Managed especially for wildlife, it is an oasis for wildfowl, dragonflies and other insects.

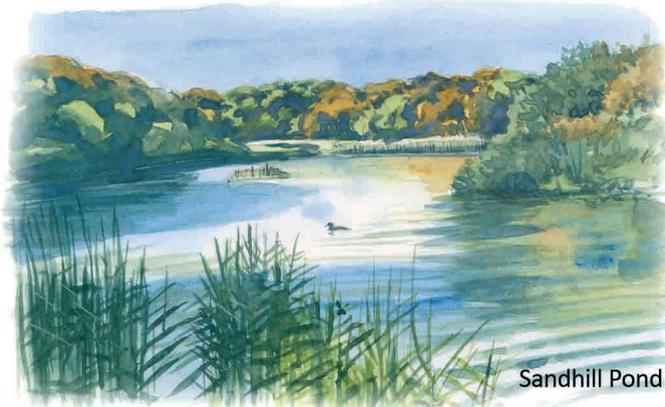
3 Zigzag Bridge. A distinctive walkway over an ancient drain, sheltered by goat willow and alder trees, with tussock sedge growing in the hollows.

4 Hilbury Meadow. A sanctuary grazed annually to form a mosaic of grasses and flowers, creating a haven for insects and small mammals. Being undisturbed it is ideal for raptors such as kestrels to search for food.

5 Junkett Hill. At the top there are panoramic views of the whole Borough and beyond. Junkett, Hilbury, Slades and Shoot Corner are historic names taken from the 1812 Tithe map, when former fields would have grown a variety of foods and arable crops.

6 Sandhill. A man-made landform with great views across the Solent. This former refuse tip is a valuable area for wildlife. Look for basking lizards, feeding butterflies, saluting skylarks and hunting barn owls.

7 Sandhill Pond. An angling pond, stocked with carp, tench and roach. For information on access contact the Portsmouth and District Angling Society www.portsmouthdas.co.uk



Sandhill Pond

8 West of River Nature Reserve. An area of gorse and willow scrub, with grassland cropped short thanks to the rabbits. A cracking spot to look for flowers, butterflies and birds.

9 Browndown MOD. Open to the public except when the red flags are flying.

10 The River Alver. The reedbed that dresses the river is one of the largest in Southern England. Here both reedbed and water birds thrive. Look for water voles feeding along the river edge.

11 Apple Dumpling Bridge. The name is said to derive from the apple dumplings sold to soldiers by a lady during the time of the Crimean War.



12 BMX Track. Freely available to all, when not being used by the BMX Club. For further details on availability and when you can try out some exciting racing visit www.gosportbmx.co.uk

13 Adventure Playground and Meadows.

14 East Car Park.



Carter's Copse

15 Carter's Copse. Named after the Reverend Carter, a land owner in the 1840's. This woodland grows on the site of Gosport's oldest fortification. You can still make out the profile of the Motte and Bailey, that were part of the fort's defences.

16 Little Woodham Village. Experience what life would have been like in a Seventeenth Century village.

For opening times visit www.littlewoodham.org.uk

17 Wildgrounds Nature Reserve. A wildlife gem. Displaying one of the few remaining unspoilt wood pastures in Hampshire.

For visiting arrangements phone (023) 9258 8666 or visit www.gosport.gov.uk/alver_valley



Slades Ground