

Useful Information



Travelling to Alresford

Alresford lies just off the A31 between Winchester (7 miles) and Alton (12 miles). If using SatNav key in New Alresford or SO24 9JG. Follow the brown and white tourist signs to the Watercress Line. The Millennium Trail begins in the Station Yard where parking is available. Buses run at least hourly from Alton & Winchester.

Further information

Winchester Tourist Information Centre, Guildhall, High Street, Winchester, SO23 9GH.

Tel 01962 840 500
Fax 01962 850 348

Email tourism@winchester.gov.uk
Web www.visitwinchester.co.uk
See also www.alresford.org



Facilities & accessibility

Toilets in Station Road. Pay and Display parking in Station Yard and Perin's School, accessible from Jacklyns Lane, is free on Sundays and some Bank Holidays. Perins Car Park is closed Bank Holiday and Sundays after 1pm. On-street parking with time limit. The Millennium Trail is suitable for wheelchair and pushchair users.

If you would like this leaflet in a larger format please contact the tourist information centre on **01962 840 500** or e-mail tourism@winchester.gov.uk

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The Alre Valley Trail, this circular walk loops off the Millennium Trail and rejoins it here. ↓ End of Millennium Trail

The Alre Valley Trail (optional diversion)



Within a three-mile radius of St John's, the parish church, there are some 60 miles of paths and tracks. Many of these are hundreds of years old. The Alre Valley Trail gives you an opportunity to see at closer hand some of the lovely countryside that surrounds Alresford. Also, for the more adventurous, the trail leads to more opportunities for longer walks if you so wish.

➤ Following on from overleaf you begin this trail by the gate at the bottom of Arlebury Park recreation ground. Follow the footpath going west along the bank of the River.

As you walk along the river bank you will cross a number of small streams flowing under the footpath. They are now used to take water to the adjacent fish farm, but in earlier times one of them, called Ram Stream, led water to an intake chamber from which a ram pump kept Arlebury House supplied.

At the end of this stretch you will reach the Eel House.

➤ Use the footbridge to cross over the river and continue down the other bank.

The Eel House



Built in the 1820s and recently restored, this is where eels were trapped on moonless autumn nights, as they undertook their once in-a-lifetime migration to breed **a**. The Eel House sluices still control the water levels in the river and the surrounding fish farms.



The Eel House sitting astride the river **b**, can be viewed externally at all times but it is also open to the public on certain public holidays and Alresford Watercress Festival day **c**. For details see www.towntrust.org.uk or town notice boards.



You have now crossed the parish boundary and are in Old Alresford. As you climb up the slope you reach an area called New England. The two cottages on your left are known as New England Cottages, built in 1700 **d**. Records show that in 1891 they were occupied by agricultural labourers from the Arlebury Estate.

➤ Please keep to the footpath at this point as it skirts a private parking area.

As you walk beyond the cottages you will see a footpath in the field on your right. If you want a birds-eye view of Alresford and the upper Alre Valley **e**, climb this path. Cross the road and continue 100 metres up the next field before you look back over the town. If you continue on this route you will join a series of paths and tracks that allow extensive walks in the countryside to the north. (Retrace your steps back to the trail).

On your left you will get glimpses of the 18th century Arlebury Park House once the 'big house' of New Alresford **f**; today it comprises private apartments. You will also have a panoramic view of the roof-tops of Alresford and the tower of St John's Church.

Many of the ponds of the Alre Valley Fishery are of recent construction, but the oldest date back to the 18th century when they were created for the pleasure of the owners of Arlebury House.



➤ You have now reached Drove Lane. Please take extra care on the first section where, as you turn left, visibility is limited.

About 200 metres down Drove Lane you re-cross the river and on your right are the water meadows **g**, referred to on the board at the beginning of the trail. This is a good place to spot water birds especially during migration periods in Spring and Autumn. The river here was used in the Second World War by tanks practicing river crossings. It is also one of the possible sites of the 'ford over the river where the alder tree grow' from which Alresford takes its name.



➤ A further 350 metres brings you to Winchester Road, formerly a turnpike road, where you turn left, back towards the town.

At the junction are the lodge and gates, which were once the main entrance to Arlebury Park House.

The remainder of the trail is along the footpath on The Avenue, gifted to the town by the Bishop of Winchester for recreational purposes in 1869. In spring-time the many beds of daffodils **h**, originally planted by the Rotary Club, line the way and in summer the two lines of 114 mature limes **i** give pleasant shade. Part way along you will pass The Old Toll House **j** a fine red-brick hexagonal building that was originally the tollhouse for the Winchester to Alresford turnpike. A little further down you will pass the front gates of Arlebury Park House with its fine Cedar of Lebanon tree.

➤ Rejoin the Millennium Trail at the gates of Arlebury Park Recreation Ground.



Millennium Trail continued Pound Hill

At the end of The Avenue you will walk down Pound Hill **22**, the site of a 'pound' for stray animals. It was also the location of the Hurdle House where hurdles for the sheep markets were stored. As you cross the top of The Dean, immediately on your left is the original Perins School building **23**. Founded in 1697, it remained here until 1932 when it was moved to its present site at the beginning of The Avenue.



In the remaining walk up West Street you will notice a number of small lanes associated with Alresford's brewing trade. At one time the town is reputed to have had over two dozen pubs. Two old coaching inns, The Bell **24**, and The Swan **25**, remain.

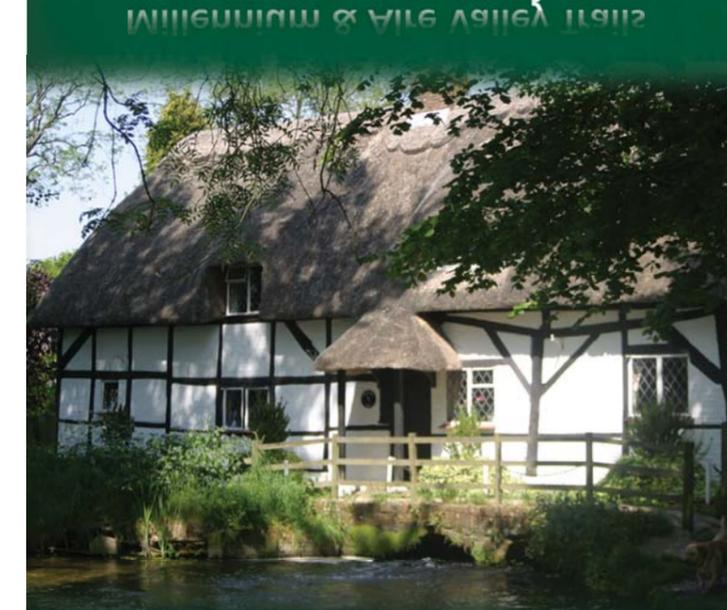
➤ At the pedestrian crossing the trail ends, perhaps a good time for a cup of tea or a bite to eat before returning to your car or the station.

Alresford is home to the Mid-Hants Steam Railway, the Watercress Line. Why not spend a day in the UK's watercress capital and ride the route the crops once took to market?



ALRESFORD

Millennium & Alre Valley Trails



'The ford over the river where the alder trees grow'.

Alresford (*pronounced Allsford*) is a beautiful Georgian town, one of Hampshire's finest. Famous for its watercress, specialist shops, old-fashioned inns, and the Watercress Line steam railway, Alresford is also renowned for its lush scenery and riverside walks. A lovely place for strolling, there is plenty to see in the town and by its attractive riverside.

The Alresford Millennium Trail links together footpaths around the town with illustrated boards which give information on the history of Alresford, its inhabitants, wildlife and countryside setting. If you would like to explore a little further then add on the optional loop known as the Alre Valley Trail.



www.alresford.org

The Millennium Trail

Look out for the display boards round the trail with details of what to see and local history and don't forget the bread for the ducks!

The Station Yard

The Millennium Trail begins in the Station Yard where parking is available. The railway came to Alresford in 1865 and greatly assisted the developing watercress industry as it allowed access to markets in London and beyond. Watercress remains a significant local industry and is celebrated at the annual Watercress Festival on the third Sunday in May. The steam trains running on the Watercress Line are now a major tourist attraction. The restored building to the right of the platform is the Goods Shed, it has a visitor information point and railway shop.

➤ Leave Station Yard and walk down Station Road to the diagonal path, opposite the toilets, leading into the churchyard on your right. Turn left into the churchyard towards the church tower and west door.



Churchyard

The tower is the oldest part of Alresford's parish church of St John the Baptist. Above the door is a small Saxon rood, a sculpture of Christ. Opposite are the graves of four French Napoleonic prisoners of war, and one of their wives.

➤ Continue on the path towards the junction of East, West and Broad Streets.

East Street

Although the Millennium Trail does not take you along East Street, it is worth a visit to see its beautiful colour-washed Georgian architecture. At the end of the street is The Old Sun Inn, once the home of John Arlott, the journalist and broadcaster, for some 20 years.

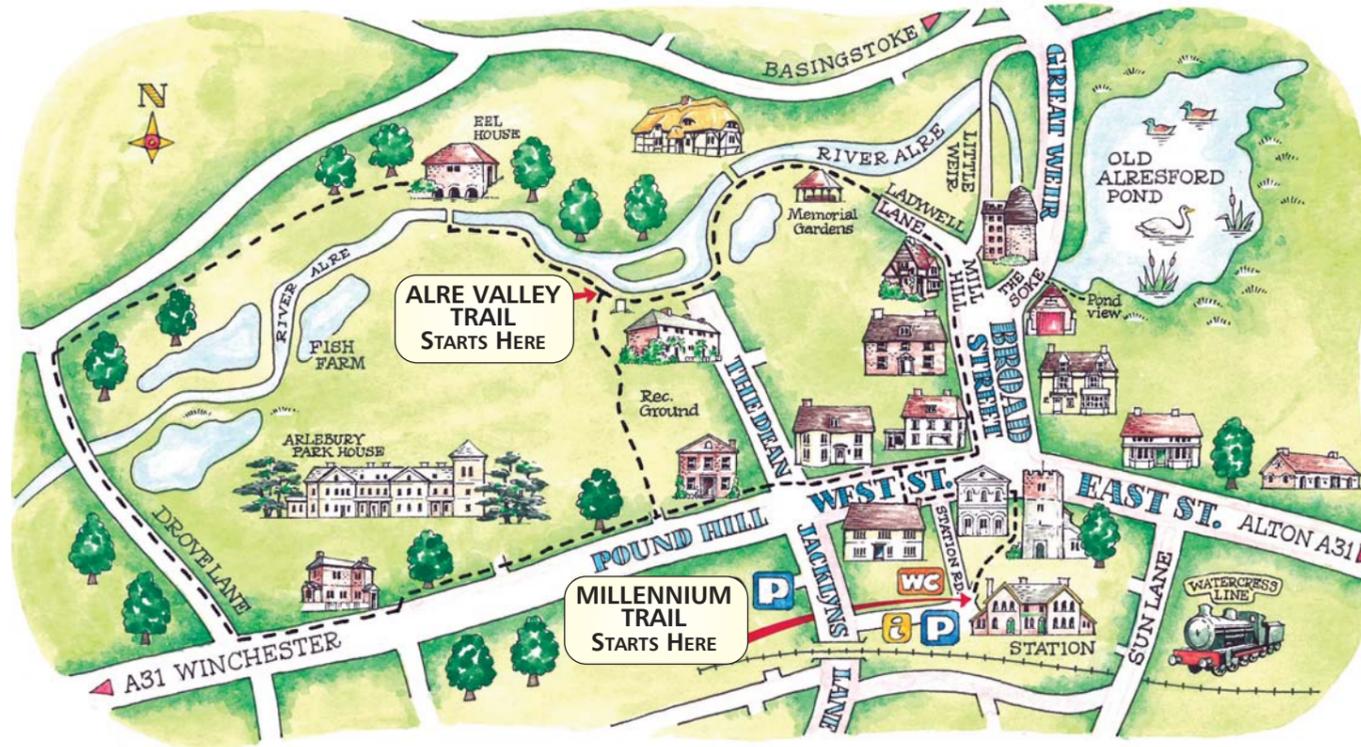


Ahead of you is: Broad Street

One of Hampshire's finest street scenes. Essentially Georgian, it was laid out at the beginning of the 13th century by Bishop de Lucy, who built a town called Novum Forum, Latin for 'New Market'. Alresford is mentioned in the Domesday Book and the new town was for many centuries a prosperous wool centre. A market hall probably stood in the centre of the road at the top Broad Street. Its open ground floor would have been used by traders, while the upper floor may have held general meetings or specialist markets. There have been markets and fairs in Broad Street for 800 years and as many as 32,000 sheep were penned at one time at the annual fairs held in the 19th century. Broad Street still hosts a market on Thursday and the first Sunday of the month.

Most of Broad Street's houses have been destroyed by fires over the centuries. After the last major fire in 1689 they were rebuilt; elegant Georgian brickwork was laid over the original Norman cellars. Although No. 43 looks brick-built, it is a timber-framed building faced with less weighty, mathematical tiles. Note the false window, perhaps to avoid window tax, over the front door. No.46, opposite, was the headquarters of the 47th Infantry Regiment, US Army from 1943 to D-Day 1944.

At the bottom of Broad Street is the old fire station, built in 1881. A small diversion past the fire station, towards The Globe on the Lake pub, and then down the footpath immediately to the right takes you to Old Alresford Pond.



Did you know?

Near the pond you can see the commemorative tablet to Capt. James Cogswell, USAF who saved Alresford from disaster by diverting his B17 Flying Fortress with full bomb load to the east of the town.



The pond came into being at the end of the 12th century when Bishop de Lucy built the Great Weir and created not only a fishpond but a head of water to drive the many mills to be built down stream. From this area the Bishop once boarded his boat to cross the pond to his palace at Bishop's Sutton. (Retrace your steps)

➤ Bear left at the bottom of Broad Street.

Mill Hill

The houses in Mill Hill have a chequered history. Near the top on the left is Old Timbers; the central part dates from the 14th century, together with its neighbour they are possibly Alresford's oldest houses. Note the old Insurance



Company firemark on the front of Old Timbers. Further down on the left were workhouse tenements and the overseer, William Wickham, lived next door at Wickham House. At the bottom on your right is the Town Mill, which was rebuilt in the 1890s and fitted with modern turbines instead of paddles. (Retrace your steps)

➤ Turn into Ladywell Lane, opposite the trail board on your right.

As you walk down the lane, you will see the springs that flow all year round. Can you spot the wild watercress? At the end of the lane is the fine, red brick, early 18th century Arle House, once the home of a master tanner.

You can add an optional diversion within the Millennium Trail by branching off onto the Alre Valley Trail, shown overleaf.



➤ Take the footpath that leads off the right side of the lane.

To the right of this stretch of footpath is an area now reserved for wildlife. Through the trees to the right you will just glimpse Weir House, once the home of a local benefactor, Sir Francis Lindley. As you reach the end of this stretch of the footpath, on your left is the Memorial Garden, given to the town by Sir Francis in 1951. This area is still used for family picnics and the site of the original open-air swimming pool can be seen edged in brick.

The River Alre

Just past the garden the footpath runs alongside the Alre for some 200 metres. Looking ahead you will see the thatched, timber framed Fulling Mill, which spans the river. Built in the 13th century it used water-driven hammers to work raw cloth into a useable material.

As you pass the mill, the bed of the river joins Pinglestone Road – an ancient highway which has run along this riverbed for centuries. This is probably the best stretch of the river to see the large variety of local plants and wildlife. Birds range from the ever-present ducks to the elusive Kingfisher.

➤ At the end of the path you will reach the bottom of The Dean. At this point you can take a short cut back to town by walking up The Dean. To continue on the Millennium or Alre Valley Trails, turn right and follow the river along the footpath.



Bordering this part of the river are some fine horse chestnut trees and also some alders from which Alresford is thought to have taken its name. The Saxon name translates as 'a ford where the alder trees grow', and the name of the River Alre was derived from this. Look out for the grave of Hambone Junior, canine friend of American soldiers billeted near Alresford prior to D-Day in 1944.



➤ 150 metres from The Dean you will reach a kissing gate. This is where the 1.6 mile Alre Valley Trail leaves the Millennium Trail to continue down the valley. (Turn over for information on the Alre Valley Trail). To continue on the Millennium Trail pass through the gate and cross Arlebury Park Recreation Ground towards the building at the top of the hill.

Arlebury Park

You are now in Arlebury Park Recreation ground. As you climb the slope past the skateboard park and children's play areas you will see, on your right, Arlebury Park House. Built in the 18th Century and once the 'big house' of New Alresford today it is private apartments. Looking back to the north there is a splendid view across Fobdown and Old Alresford, parish church can be glimpsed through the trees to your right.

➤ When you reach the main gates to the recreation ground, turn left. Do not miss the information board, just to the left of the gates. Here the Alre Valley Trail, which runs along The Avenue, rejoins the Millennium Trail. Please turn over for information on how to continue your walk by taking the Alre Valley Trail.

Did you know?

Alresford was briefly touched by the Civil War on 29 March 1644. The Royalists retreating from the nearby Battle of Cheriton set fire to houses in East Street. The flames were quickly extinguished by the Parliamentarian Army.

