

# The Spring

## Self-led Heritage Walk: Springs and Streams

Our heritage walks are a chance to discover evidence of the past in the modern landscape and, by providing a little explanation and interpretation, enable you to understand what you are looking at – all while enjoying a healthy walk!

This is a 3-mile circular walk that should take around 2 hours to complete.

Directions are provided together with some information at key points. The walk starts and finishes at Homewell spring. The spring can be found at the south end of Homewell – a road off West Street, by St Faiths church – around 30 metres beyond The Robin Hood pub.

Please note that some areas of the walk are uneven and overgrown so appropriate clothing and footwear is required.

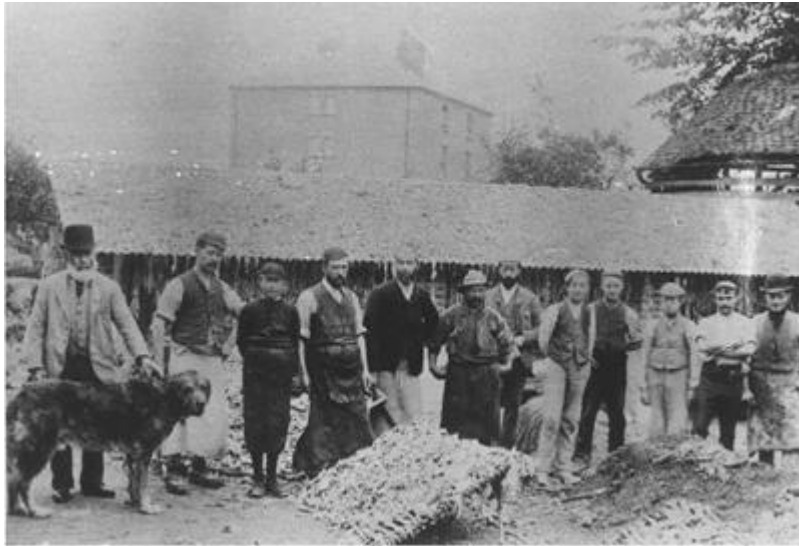
*The following information was researched by Lyn Davies and compiled by Nigel Brown.*

### Start at Homewell Spring, PO9 1EE

#### 1 - Homewell Spring

Our walk starts at one of the twenty or so springs that rise in the Havant area. Clear water bubbles up here due to a layer of water-carrying chalk rising up to the surface and meeting a layer of clay. These springs are the probable reason that a settlement was established here at Havant. Two Roman roads crossed here – linking Chichester and Southampton and Rowland's Castle and Langstone harbour – and roman remains have been found beneath St Faith's church. By 935 AD, the town was called Hamafunta ('funta' meaning spring) from which the modern town name was derived. These springs were important in the development of industry in the area.

One of these industries was parchment making. The buildings you can see just to the south of Homewell spring were, originally, used for the production of parchment. Here calf, sheep and goat skins would be washed, soaked for 8 days in tanks or pits containing lime to remove hair, then stretched and scraped. The factory closed in 1936 so ending an industry that had been employing people in the Havant area for many centuries.



*Stallard's Tannery and Parchment Works, Homewell 1900*

Parchment was used to write on – we have examples from Egypt dating back to 2,500BC. The advent of the printing press in the 15th Century created demand for cheaper writing materials and paper, increasingly, replaced parchment. However, important documents continued to be written on parchment for centuries and Havant was famous for the quality of its product. There is good evidence that the 1919 Treaty of Versailles – the document that formally ended the war between Germany and the Allies – was written on parchment produced here.

**With your back to the Spring turn left and walk towards the multi-storey car park, turn left into Bullbeck Road and follow the road to the main road. Turn left at the main road (Park Road South) towards the pedestrian crossing. Cross over the road, towards Tesco, pausing by the entrance to Langstone Gate.**

## 2 - Havant Town Mill



*Havant Town Mill (from the south)*

The car park in front of you was once the site of a large millpond that supplied water to Havant Town Mill, a large 5 storey building that stood just beyond the modern office block. The Domesday Survey (1085-86) lists two mills in the manor of Havant so a mill probably stood on this spot for well over a thousand years. The millpond was fed by the river Lavant – a seasonal watercourse that emerges near Idsworth church, around 6 miles to the north of Havant, after prolonged rainfall – and by a number of the local springs. The mill was once owned by the monks of St Swithuns before transferring to the Bishop of Winchester and then a series of private owners. It was sold to Portsmouth Water Company in 1934. Flour production had stopped by 1917 but the mill continued to produce animal foodstuffs and other products, before it was demolished in 1958 to make way for the by-pass.

Until very recently, watermills were familiar, and important, features in the landscape. There is evidence of a Roman-era watermill in London and the fact that over 6,000 watermills were listed in the Domesday Book indicates that a national network developed during the Anglo-Saxon period. Under the Norman, feudal system all farmers were required to use the Lord of the Manor's mill to grind their corn and the fee for this was called a 'banality' – from which we get our word meaning a boring or ordinary commonplace. 'Corn' is a general term for cereal crops – wheat and barley, for example – rather than what we call sweet corn, which is actually maize!

**Carry on over the stream and turn immediately left at the Totem Pole to follow the footpath alongside the Langbrook stream. At the end of the path on your left, just before the underpass is a waterwheel.**

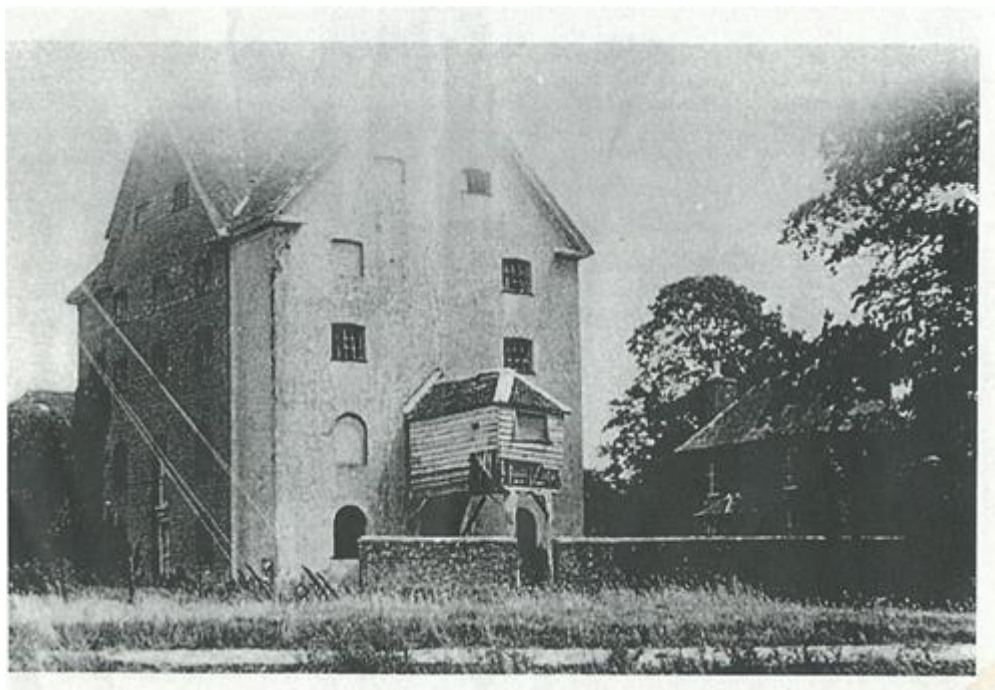
### 3 - Waterwheel

This replica waterwheel is on the exact spot of the Havant town Mill wheel (see picture above). It was made in 1987 by apprentices from Highbury College and renovated in 2017.

Water wheels harnessed the energy present in flowing water. This energy was used to drive millstones – made from very hard stone, originally imported from France or the Rhinelands – which ground up cereals, like wheat, to make flour. The millwrights who built these structures were highly skilled, crafting oak to make the wheels and drive shafts and beech and applewood to make the cogs as well as carving grooves into the millstones so that the ground flour could spill out. The millstones were expensive probably costing around the same as a year's wages for a skilled craftsman. The two stones (a top stone, which rotated, and a bottom stone which remained still) weighed over a ton and moved at around 125 revs per minute – pretty fast!

Follow the path to the left, along the underpass and keep straight on the other side, following the gravel path beside the stream. At the end of the path it rises to the road. Cross here and enter the path in the wood on the other side of the road. Keep walking until you reach the a kissing gate, go through the gate and continue on to another kissing gate. At this gate take the path to the right this will lead you to an open field. Follow the well-worn footpath in the direction of the harbour. As it bends to the left it turns to a concrete raised path across the marshes, care should be taken as it is uneven in places. Follow this path to the kissing gate at the end. Go through this gate then turn immediately left through the next kissing gate. Walk across the bridge and follow the path to the slipway. On your left is a brick wall stop here and look over to see the water course.

### 4 - South Mill



*South Mill (with the Miller's house to the right)*

This is the site of Havant manor's second mill. South Mill – at various times also called Langstone Mill or Clarke's Mill – stopped working in 1912, fell into disrepair and was eventually demolished in 1936. However, some parts of the mill remain. The old house that you can see was where the miller would have lived. You will, probably, be able to hear the sound of rushing water. This comes from the brick-built channels, still present in the ground to the left of the house, which directed the water to the mill wheels. Barges could travel up the channel leading from Langstone harbour to the mill when the tide was right.

While many mills have been demolished clear evidence of their presence often remains in the form of millponds and water-carrying channels. The South Mill site has substantial brickwork constructions still in place. This includes a *mill leat*, used to divert water from the nearby stream to a millpond, and a *mill race*, to take water from the pond to the wheel via a narrow, inclined channel which speeds up the flow of water. One obvious problem with waterpower is that the flow of water within rivers and streams varies with the seasons. To overcome this weirs were built within streams to create deeper pools from which mill leats could take water and the millponds also stored water. Both Havant Town Mill and South Mill were, however, mostly powered by water from local springs, which were less likely to dry up. Near to South Mill (by The Royal Oak pub in Langstone high street) are the remains of a tide mill and a windmill – two further solutions to the problem of unreliable water supply.

**Now go back through the kissing gate to the main path and turn left. When you reach Langstone harbour shore follow the path as it bears right along the shore line. Continue for about three-quarters of a mile, the path crosses a car park. Take the path along the shore line on the other side of the car park. The path ends and you walk along the shore for about 300 meters before climbing back up onto the path keep going as you curve inland alongside Brockhampton stream. Follow the path as it turns to head east. You will see the gravel barges and a slipway on your left on the other side of the inlet, continuing, you will arrive at a small bridge over the stream with four white concrete posts. There is a plaque on the far left post.**

## 5 - Brockhampton Mill

You have now walked out of the old manor of Havant and into the manor of Brockhampton, at the time of the Domesday survey described as containing 14 villagers, 4 plough teams and 1 mill. Brockhampton mill was the largest in the area. The mill stood by the footbridge and you can still see, above the bridge, the channel through which water was directed to the mill wheel. Beyond this (upstream) was the millpond, fed by more of the springs that so influenced the industry and landscape of the Havant area. The mill was demolished in the 1930s, so ending at least a thousand years of milling activity on this site.

There are a number of reasons for the disappearance of mills from the British landscape. Rapid industrialisation and population growth in the 18th and 19th centuries increased demand for flour to make bread. The Corn Laws (1815), designed to stabilise the incomes of landowners through a cap on imports, were swept away in 1846 opening the way for Russian and American grain. These imports prompted the installation of huge roller mills, producing whiter flour at lower cost, at ports with improved rail links carrying the produce to major cities and towns. This was the end for small, local mills.

But not the end of water-power! Around 20% of the world's electricity is generated by waterpower. The Itaipu dam, for example, located on the Brazil-Paraguay border, generates

enough electricity to make Sao Paulo, a city of over 12 million people, emission free since 1984, as well as providing most of Paraguay's electricity needs. (By comparison, the power generated by an average medieval watermill was about the same as that generated by a small, modern car).

**Now cross the bridge and continue on the path, with the stream on your right, until it comes out on Hart's Farm Way. Turn right, and walk along the pavement, crossing Southmoor Lane and walking into Brookside Road. Cross over at the small roundabout and take the footpath on your left and follow it alongside the A27 until you reach the end. Turn left here and continue until back at Tesco from where you return to Homewell spring.**