



Points of Interest ▶ General

The **Avon Valley Woodlands** has been designated as a Local Nature Reserve and is home to a wide variety of plants and animals. The steep slopes along the stretch from Conham to Hanham have been quarried extensively for the valuable Pennant Sandstone, used as building material both locally and further afield. At their peak, the 12 quarries employed up to 300 local workers. The River Avon itself was made navigable in the 18th Century enabling material to be transported to both Bristol and Bath. The quarries have now been reclaimed by abundant vegetation, but remain as obvious evidence of the area's hectic past.

Nearby, on Memorial Road, an old slag heap can be seen adjacent to the site of the Hanham Coalmine, which closed in the 1920s. Brass and copper were also obtained locally at the Hanham Spelter Works.

A wide variety of animals and birds can be discovered *en route*, including herons, otters and bank voles along the river. Woodpeckers and butterflies frequent the woodland and common land areas.



Brass and copper being transported

Points of Interest

A	Riverside Cottages	This rank of cottages were formerly known as Couch's Rank. John Couch is described as quarry owner, barge owner, land owner, landlord, brewer and church warden at St George's Church, Hanham Abbots. He was one of the most important industrialists of the valley and lived in his residence to the rear of Riverside Cottages.
B	River Avon Trail	This trail for walkers, (and in part cyclists and horse riders) follows the Avon for 23 miles from Pill in North Somerset to Pulteney Bridge in Bath. The riverbank erosion caused by natural forces, boats and riverside users can be clearly seen along this section of the trail. Mature trees line this part of the river and provide a suitable habitat for bats.
C	Great Western Railway	Opposite the River Avon Trail you will see frequent services on the Bristol – London route built back in the 1830s and designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel.
D	Heron Colony	A colony of herons can be seen high up in the trees on the opposite bank..
E	Hencliff Wood	An overgrown area of broad leaved woodland and brambles hides the remnants of quarrying. Much wildlife can be seen here including common woodland species and birds of prey such as sparrowhawks.
F	Quarries	Extensive quarrying has left scars on the landscape, but these are now disguised by much vegetation. This area was quarried for over 1000 years, with local stone thought to have been used for Bristol Castle!

Within South Gloucestershire lie many hidden treasures that have helped shape the landscape as we know it today. Natural, industrial and cultural forces have played a part in making up the local environment that we live and work in.

Wild Roots is an innovative Heritage Lottery Funded, three year project that is working with local communities to conserve, enhance and celebrate the natural and cultural heritage of South Gloucestershire.

www.southglos.gov.uk/wildroots ☎ 01454 863581

Further information

Friends of Hanham Nature Reserve

www.southglos.gov.uk/friendsgroups ☎ 01454 868000

Kingswood Heritage Museum

www.kingswoodheritagemuseum.org.uk ☎ 0117 960 5664

Forest of Avon

www.forestofavon.org.uk ☎ 0117 9532141

River Avon Trail

www.riveravontrail.org.uk

Guide book available in local libraries

Walking the Way to Health in South Gloucestershire

www.southglos.gov.uk/walkingtohealth ☎ 01454 868006



WALKING TO HEALTH

Avon Valley Woodlands

Heritage Walks

START/FINISH POINT

Small car park on Abbots Road just after junction of Memorial Road and Whittucks Road.

BUSES

4, 44, 44a

PARKING

In car park on Abbots Road

REFRESHMENTS

Shops nearby on Memorial Road

TOILETS

Public toilets on Common Road next to Hanham Common

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Longer Walk ▶ 2.5 miles

A very picturesque walk with abundant historical interest. The past couple of hundred years have seen a variety of industrial activity in the Avon Valley Woodlands, including quarrying of Pennant Sandstone for local homes and buildings and coalmining just off Memorial Road.

Warning: The Riverside section of this walk can get very muddy after rain. This walk is best done after a period of settled weather in Spring or Summer. Includes a climb over rough ground. Walking boots should be worn for safety.

- 1 Turn left out of the car park and walk along Abbots Road.
- 2 Keep going until you reach Castle Farm Road where you should turn right following a sign for 'Avon Valley Woodlands'.
- 3 At the bottom of this road take the left hand turn at Y junction just before the car park. Go straight on (signposted as a dead end road) and continue descending to reach the **River Avon and Riverside Cottages (A)**.



- 4 Turn right to follow riverside path, signposted as the **River Avon Trail (B)**. Take care as this can be muddy in places.
- 5 Look out for trains on the **Great Western Railway (C)** as you walk along the riverbank. Keep going for just under a mile, ignoring two right finger-signposted turns and taking the third just after the **heron colony (D)** and before the river meanders to the right.
- 6 The path curves round to the right through **Hencliff Wood (E)** and then as a series of wooden bollards ends you must take the next left (signposted with a yellow arrow sign)
- 7 Follow this path as it climbs back up to Hanham, looking out for the **abandoned quarries (F)** as you go. At the fork continue straight on and upon reaching the houses and tarmac road, take the right hand turn to skirt round the houses on a gravel track.
- 8 At the end of the track go straight on following a yellow arrow sign and veer left onto the common.
- 9 Veer slightly left onto a grassy path that heads towards a gap in the hedge across the common.
- 10 Continue back to Castle Farm Road on this path.
- 11 Turn left up Castle Farm Road and then left again into Riverside Way. Continue on this road to reach Abbots Road and the car park.



Avon Valley Woodlands

Heritage walks - WALKING TO HEALTH



Shorter Walk

▶ 1.5 miles

Follow instructions 1-2 then

- 1 At the bottom of this road go straight on at Y junction following signs for 'Castle Farm Road No 36-41 and Hencliff Woods'.
- 2 Continue as the track bends to the right and descend to reach a signposted footpath to your right.
- 3 Follow this path and ascend to reach the Common. Go straight on diagonally over the common and then turn sharp to the right in the centre of the common. Head towards the gap in the hedge across the common.
- 4 Follow instructions 10 and 11.



Riverside Cottages