



Itchen Navigation: Segment 2 of 3

The Itchen Navigation has so much to discover. This stretch from Shawford to Eastleigh is quiet and rural, a very lovely waterside ramble.

Distance 7.9 kilometers / 4.9 miles

Duration 3 hours



Water feature



Great views



Refreshments



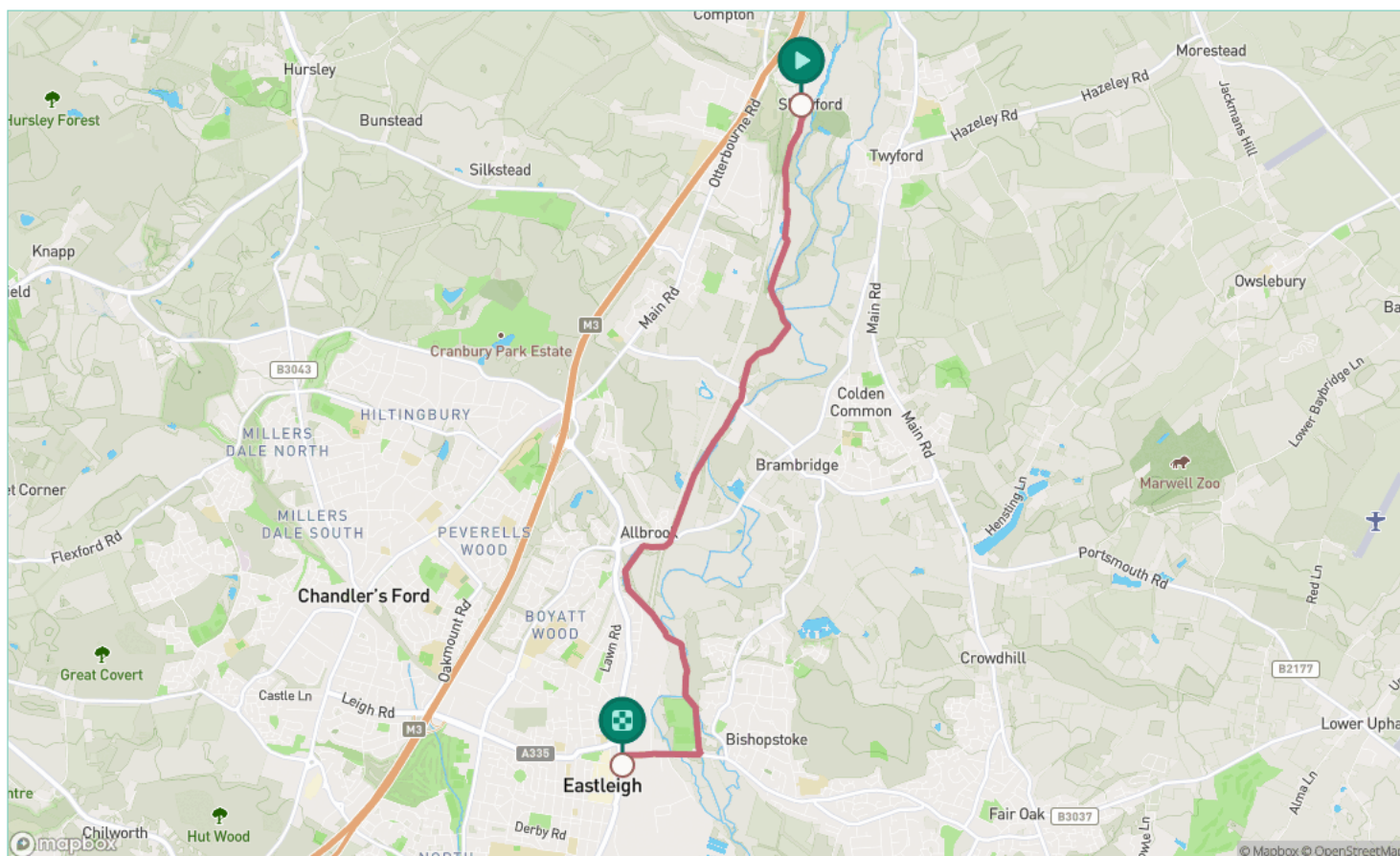
Public transport



Dog friendly

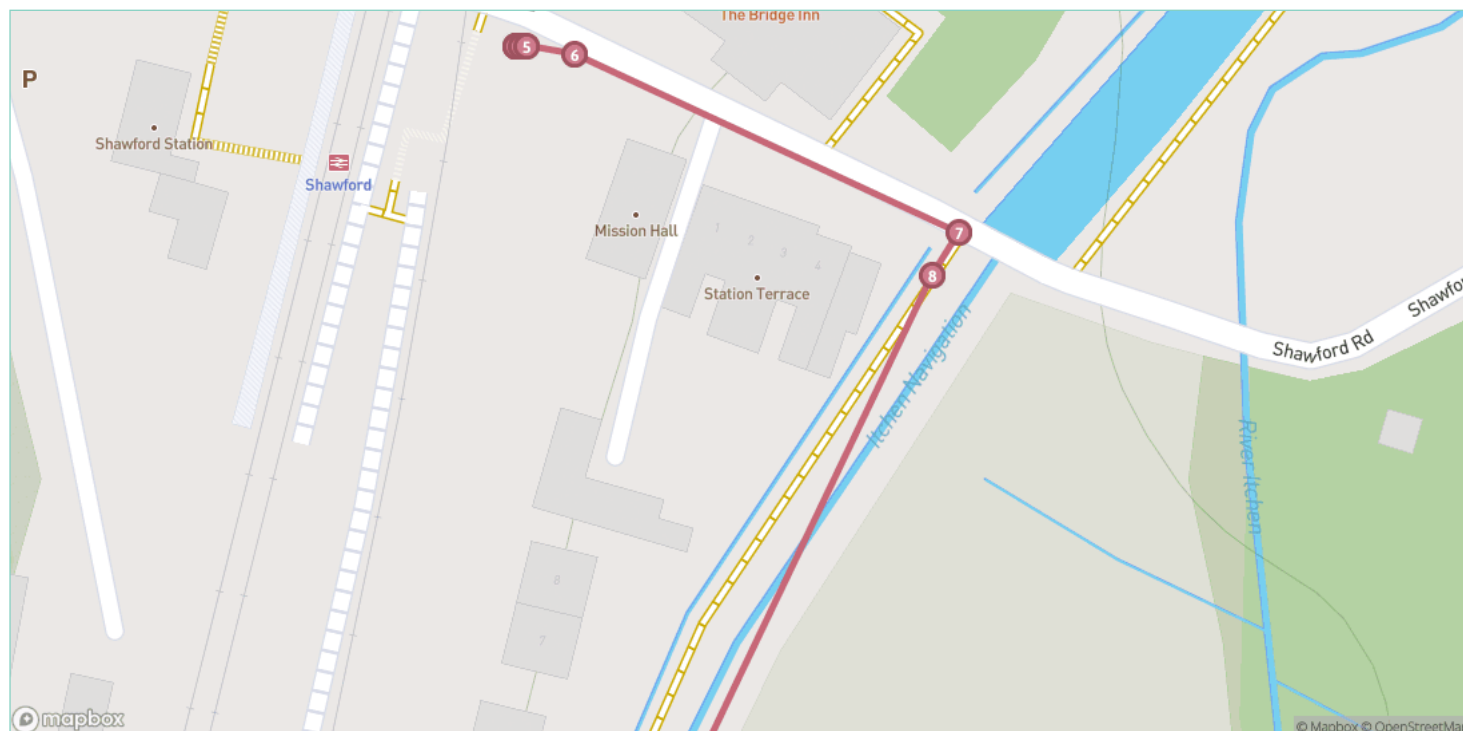


Botanics



Disclaimer: Directions are provided as guidance only. Weather, construction, closures or other factors may affect routes. Please take care when crossing roads and avoid private land. Always follow local signage and use common sense.

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Step 1: Welcome to Shawford! This is Section 2 of the Itchen Navigation which runs between Winchester and Southampton. This route ends at Eastleigh.

Step 2: Marco's is a wonderful café at Shawford, which was lovingly restored after 40 years by Three Rivers Community Rail Partnership.

Step 3: The Itchen Navigation is well sign-posted. As it follows the route of a waterway, the trail is mainly flat and level, however there are some locations with stiles, gates or gradients. Additionally, the route can get muddy and wet.

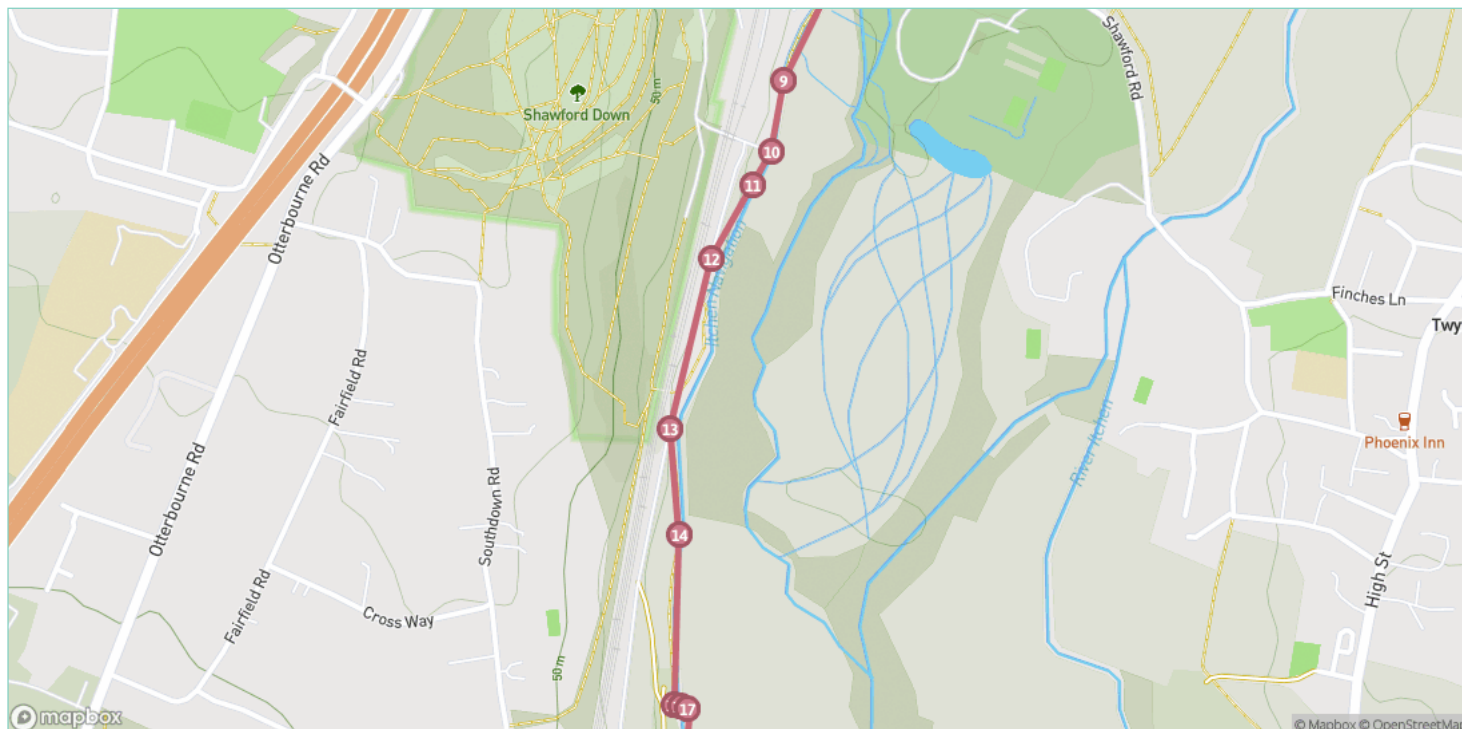
Step 4: Be sure you've packed plenty of water and snacks, and you're wearing good, comfortable walking shoes.

Step 5: Shawford is a rural country station. There's usually at least one Southwestern Railway train per hour from the north and south, so be sure to check the timetables before setting off.

Step 6: Head out of the station onto Shawford Road. Turn right and head down the right-hand side of the street, past the Chef and Brewer opposite.

Step 7: Keep going along the street until you reach the Itchen Navigation. Winchester is to the left, and Eastleigh is to the right. Turn right.

Step 8: The route starts along this flat, tarmac path.



Step 9: The Itchen Navigation, a channelised waterway formed from the Itchen River, is to your left.

Step 16: Cross over the Itchen Navigation and then turn right up ahead.

Step 10: Keep straight ahead. Go through the gate here where the tarmac path ends and becomes a dirt track.

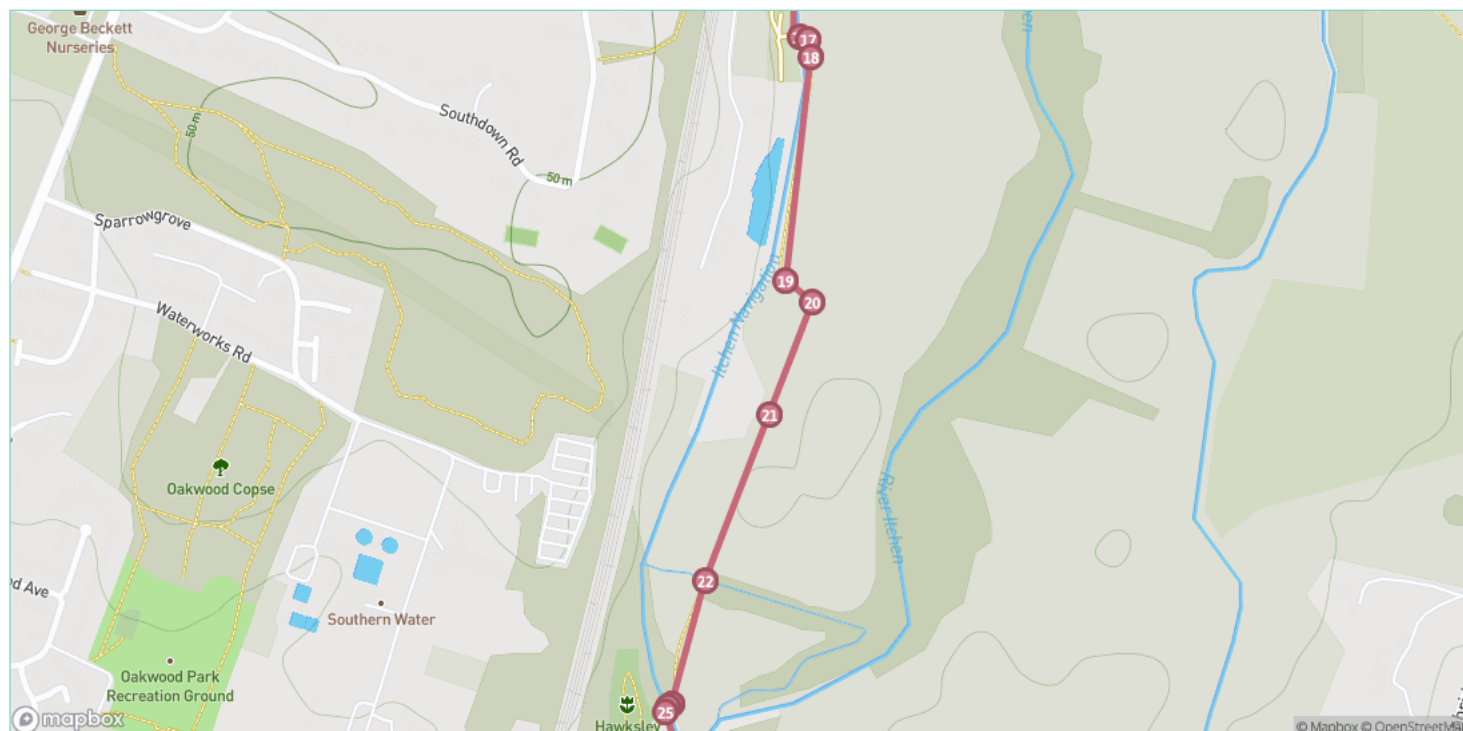
Step 11: Depending on the season, you might encounter a bit of mud as you continue along the path here.

Step 12: The dirt footpath emerges out onto a paved road. There's very little vehicle traffic but be aware as you turn left to walk along the road.

Step 13: After a short stretch along the road, veer left to turn back onto the dirt path.

Step 14: Continue on. The ground is more uneven here and the path is narrower in places.

Step 15: When you come to the gate, walk past it and turn left.



Step 17: Walk past the metal gate here, noting the yellow Itchen arrow guiding your way.

Step 18: Head down the path to rejoin the water which is now to your right. Continue straight ahead.

Step 19: Keep following the dirt track along the fence as the path bears to the left away from the water.

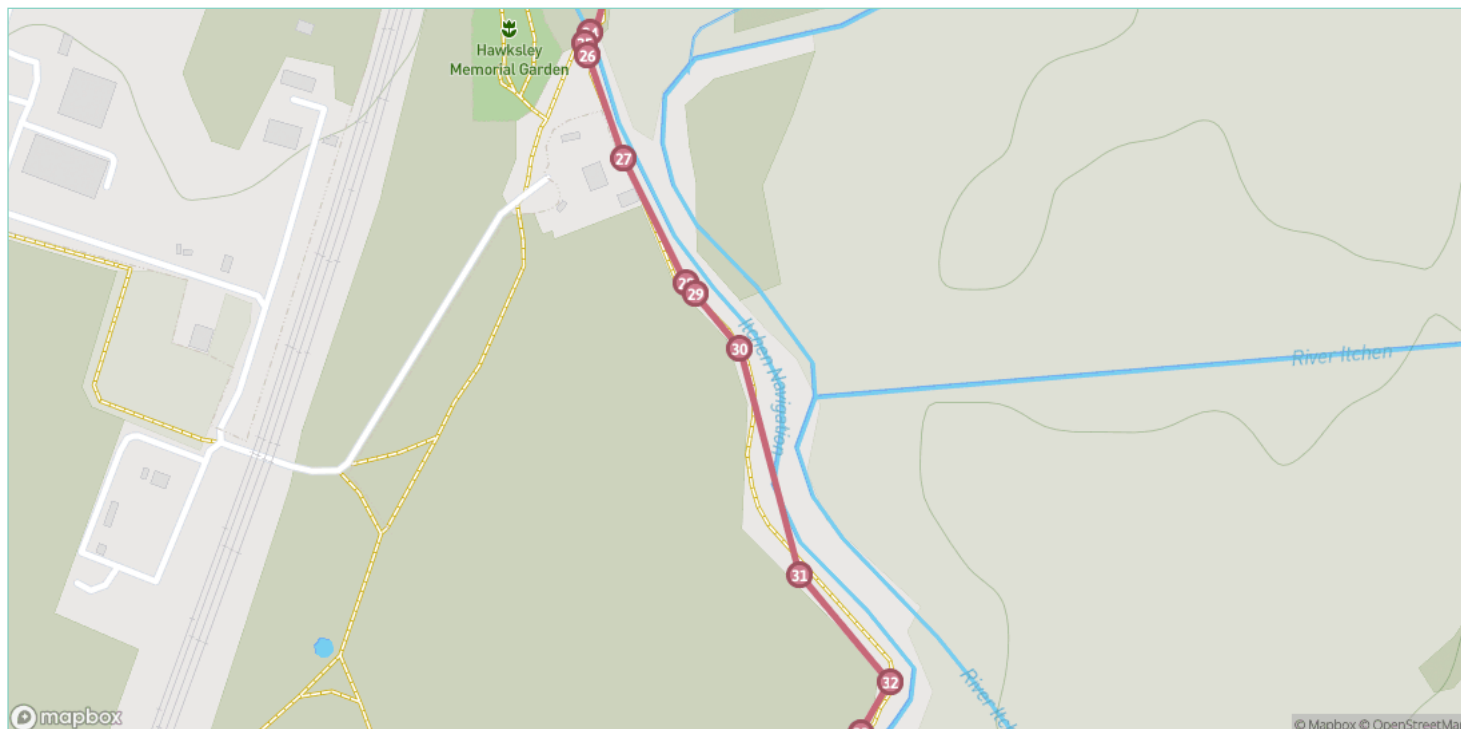
Step 20: Follow the path as it then turns right here, walking along the much wider dirt track.

Step 21: The path narrows again into a dirt footpath straight ahead. Keep going along.

Step 22: Pass over the small stream that meets the Navigation just ahead to your right.

Step 23: A bit further on now, walk over the Itchen Navigation using the wide wooden bridge.

Step 24: We stopped here for several minutes, admiring the waterfall at the weir. Enjoy the sights and sounds of nature.



Step 25: On the other side of the bridge, go left down the smaller path.

Step 26: Rejoin the water here. The path once again runs alongside the Itchen Navigation.

Step 27: Pass through the waterworks area here, continuing straight ahead along the water as you pass by the fences. There's a paved ramp here.

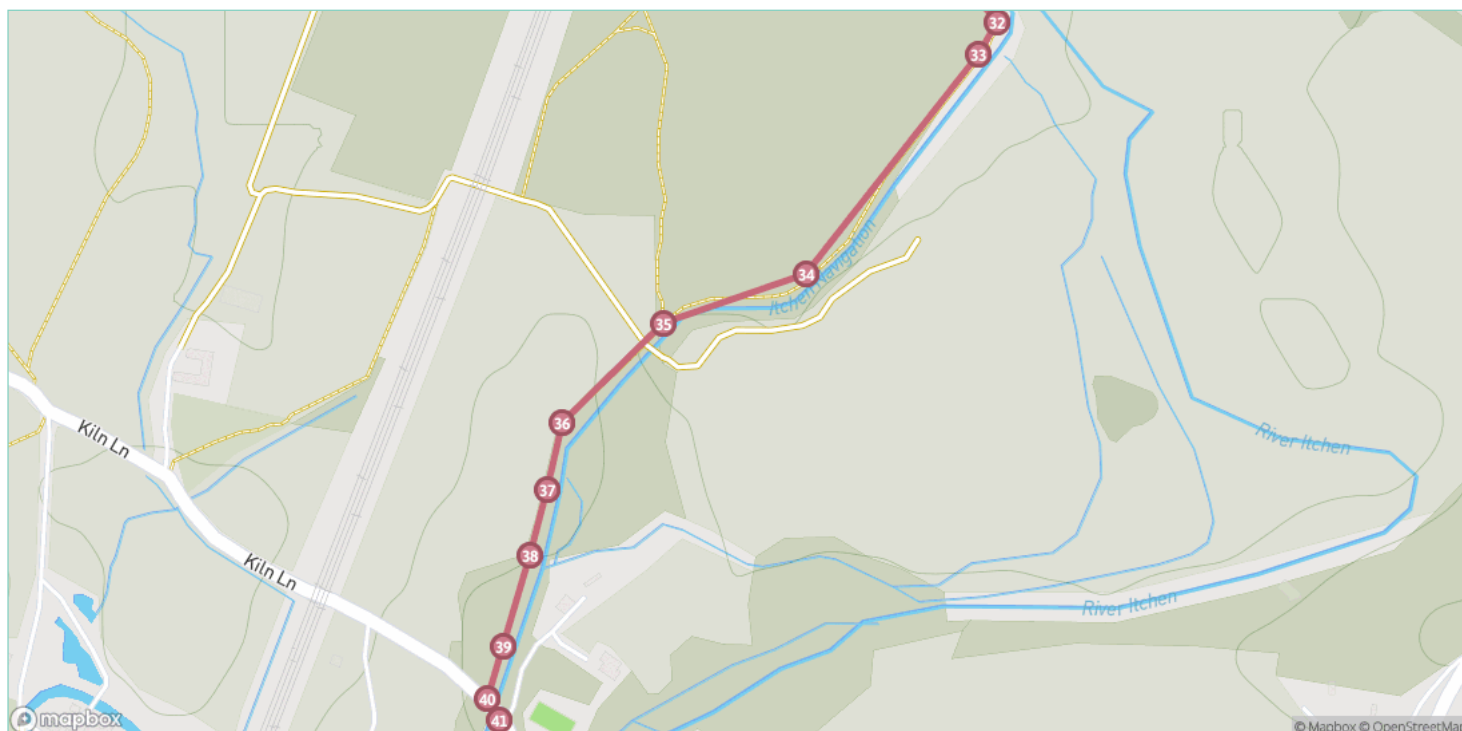
Step 28: Past the waterworks on the other side, the route returns to feeling quiet and natural.

Step 29: If you're lucky, you might spot some wildflowers here - the snowdrops were in bloom in February when we walked.

Step 30: This stretch of the route can be tricky - you might encounter mud, flooding, or very uneven and slippery segments. Tread very carefully.

Step 31: We carefully climbed over the sticks placed down over the water here, for example. Take care as you tread.

Step 32: The river bends right, and the path follows it. Continue alongside the water's edge, ignoring any paths into the woods to the right.



Step 33: There was more thick mud here and the path was quite narrow.

Step 34: Despite the mud, we loved this stretch. It felt so quiet and secluded, even with a fair number of other walkers about.

Step 35: Stay straight ahead following the river as it gently meanders, keeping the water to your left.

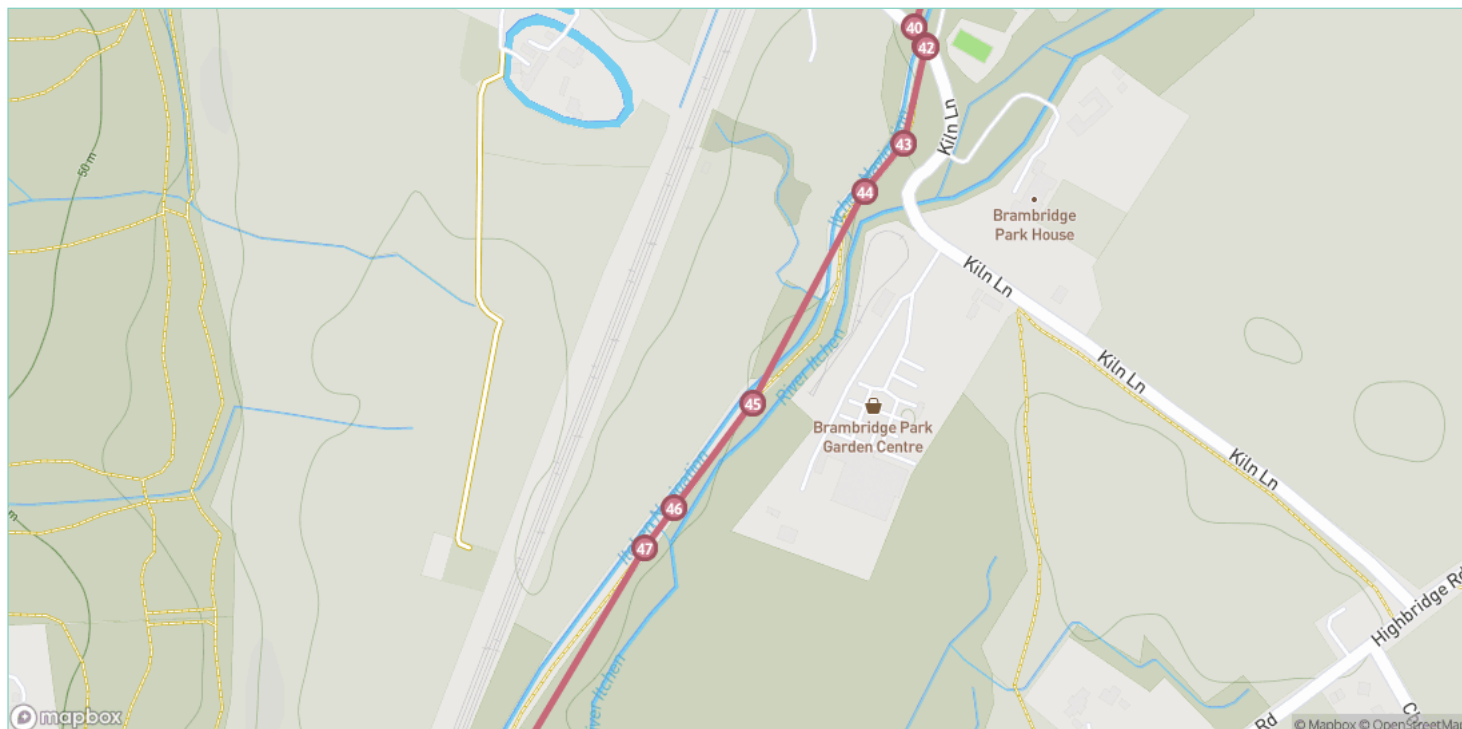
Step 36: The Itchen Navigation is a linear nature reserve, a pleasant landscape where the waterway is in natural harmony with its surroundings.

Step 37: There are relics of the industrial past to admire, like locks and weirs that were used to control the water levels.

Step 38: Continue straight onto the boardwalk.

Step 39: Off the boardwalk, keep going along the dirt path which is narrow here. There are some low hanging branches too.

Step 40: At Kiln Lane, turn left to walk briefly along it. Take care and stop to notice vehicle traffic.



Step 41: Carefully walk along the road just to cross the channel. The turn right to head down back to the water on the opposite side.

Step 47: Continuing on, watch your head on overhanging branches...

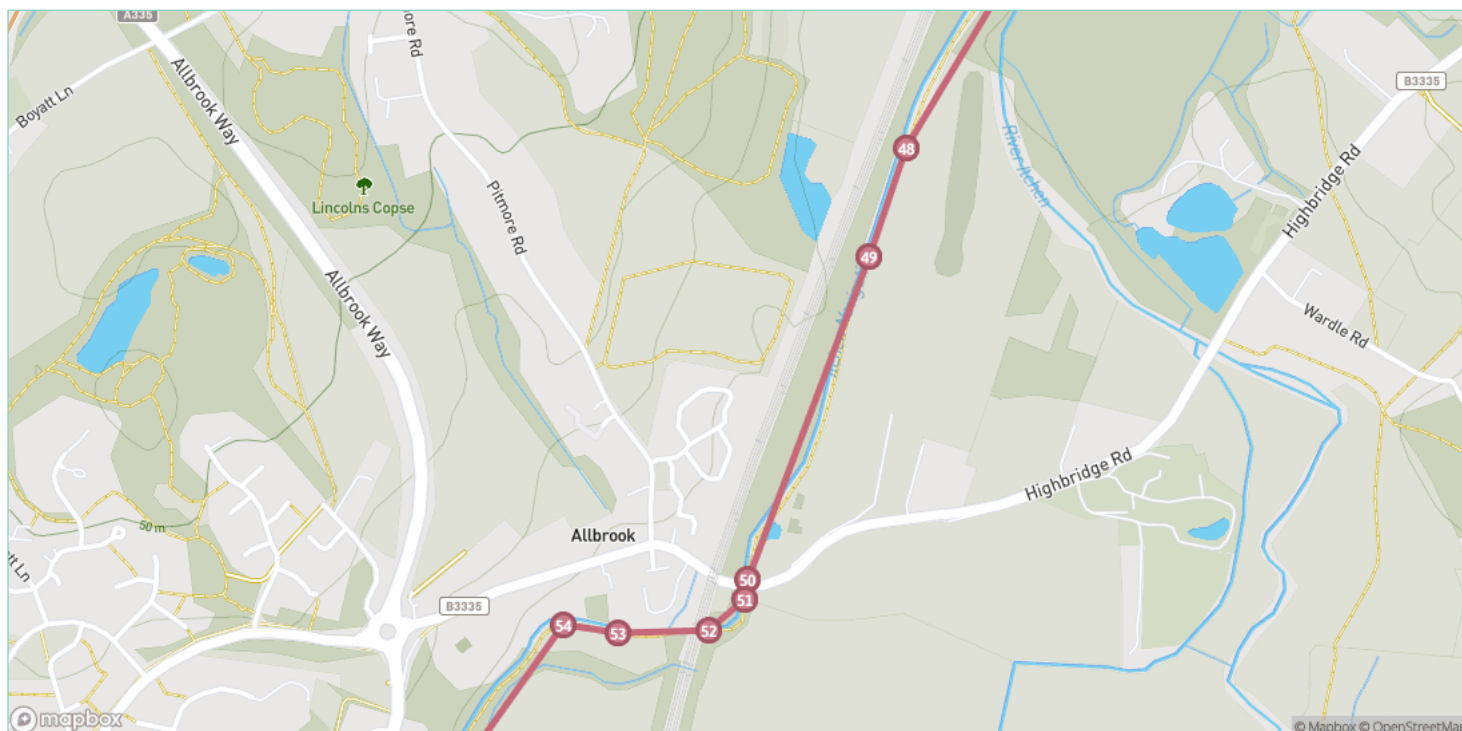
Step 42: If you're in need of refreshments, continue down Kiln Lane to Brambridge Park Garden Centre which has a cafe.

Step 43: Back on the path, the sound of the road already fading. The path is muddy here and narrow with some low hanging branches.

Step 44: Along this stretch, you'll see the Itchen Navigation to your right and the Itchen River to your left. Head over the small wooden bridge.

Step 45: The Navigation was created to transport heavy or bulky freight from the ships docked at Southampton, inland to Winchester.

Step 46: On the opposite side of the water, wave hello to the alpacas and, beyond, the Southwestern Railway trains.



Step 48: ... and tread carefully across any trail flooding and uneven surfaces. There are many tree roots along this stretch.

Step 54: It's very green and natural on this side of the water, but you'll start to see more buildings on the opposite side as we approach Eastleigh.

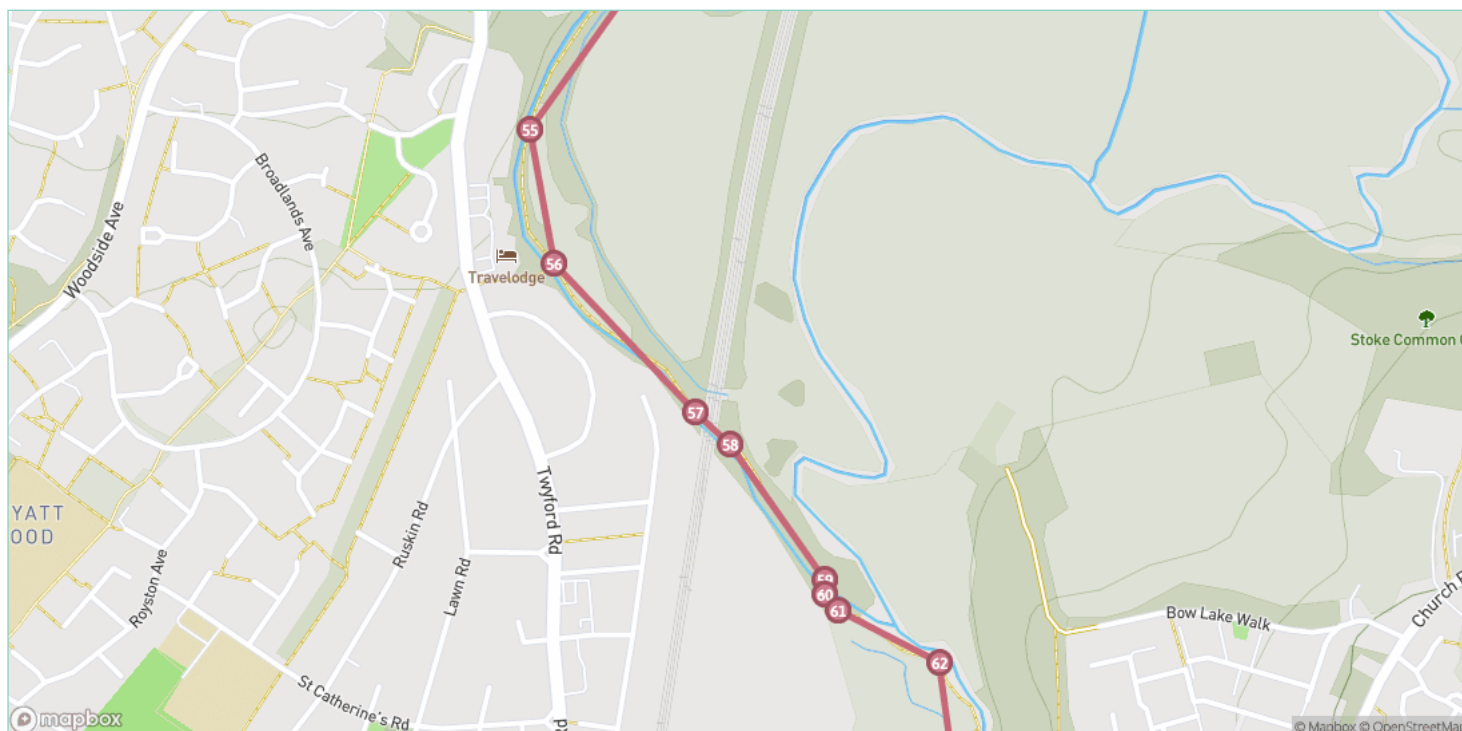
Step 49: After many years of decay, the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust has spent much time restoring footpaths along the navigation.

Step 50: When you come to Highbridge Road, you're more than halfway done! Excellent job so far. Carefully cross to the other side when it's clear.

Step 51: Head straight, down the small slope, and back onto the path along the water. It's stunning with the sun coming through the trees.

Step 52: The route bends to the right, following the navigation under the railway line. The path is less muddy through the tunnel.

Step 53: There are various plants, trees, flowers, birds, water creatures, and insects to discover. If you're lucky, you might even spot a deer.



Step 55: Keep going along the dirt track as the water meanders to the left.

Step 56: Here, ignore the bridge to your right and continue straight ahead.

Step 57: Pass underneath the railway once more by heading through the tunnel.

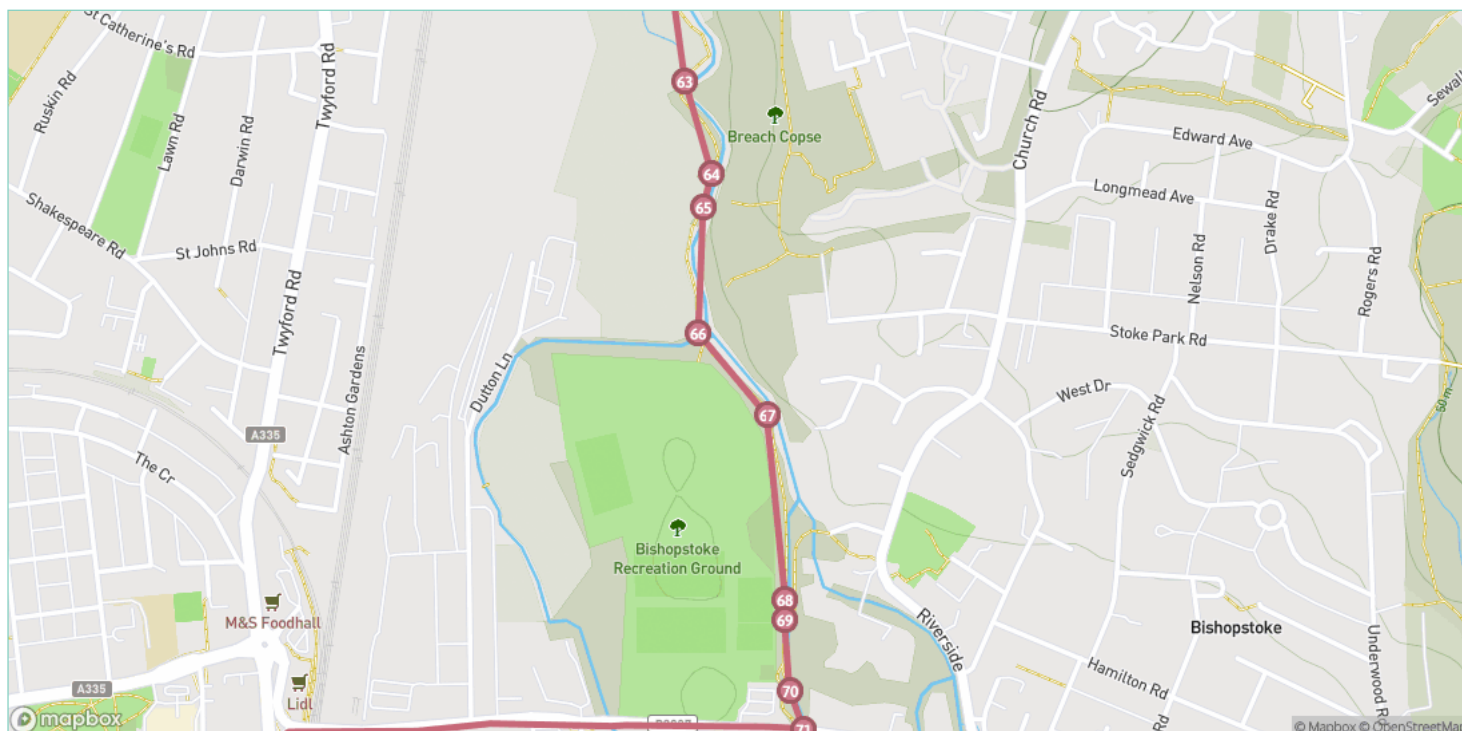
Step 58: Out the other side, you're approaching Eastleigh now.

Step 59: At the metal footbridge, cross to the other side of the Itchen Navigation and then turn left to continue on.

Step 60: This path is popular with families and dogs out enjoying the walk by the waterway.

Step 61: Depending on the weather, you might encounter more mud and flooding on this stretch.

Step 62: Keep going along the path. The landscaped has changed to marshy grassland.



Step 63: Follow the path as it twists and turns along the water's edge.

Step 64: Head through the former stile and kissing gate.

Step 65: Can you hear any birds calling? In some places, they might be so loud it's hard to miss them. What can you spot?

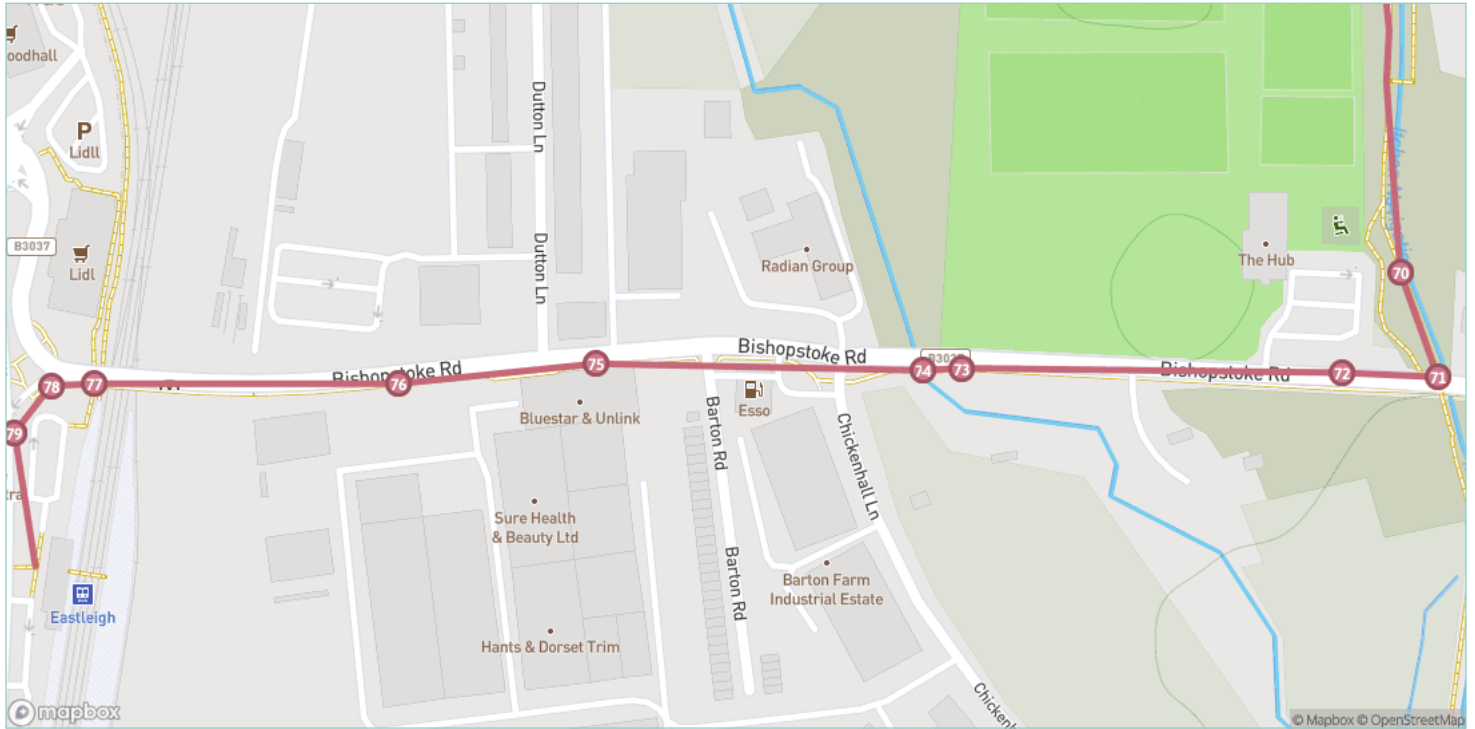
Step 66: Come to this small bridge. The Barton River meets The Itchen here, and there are many branches heading in different directions ahead.

Step 67: Our route continues straight. We loved this impressive row of trees standing guard over the path. There's a recreation ground behind them.

Step 68: Why not stop and admire the rushing water on this stretch? How does the sound make you feel?

Step 69: The route is now paved the rest of the way.

Step 70: Take in your final views of the Itchen on this route, as it's now time to head into Eastleigh.



Step 71: When you intersect with Bishopstoke Road, turn right. The Itchen Navigation continues across the other side - for another day!

Step 78: At the junction, follow the pavement to the left to join Station Hill road.

Step 72: Carefully cross over to the opposite side of Bishopstoke's Road using the median islands here. Turn right on the opposite side to continue.

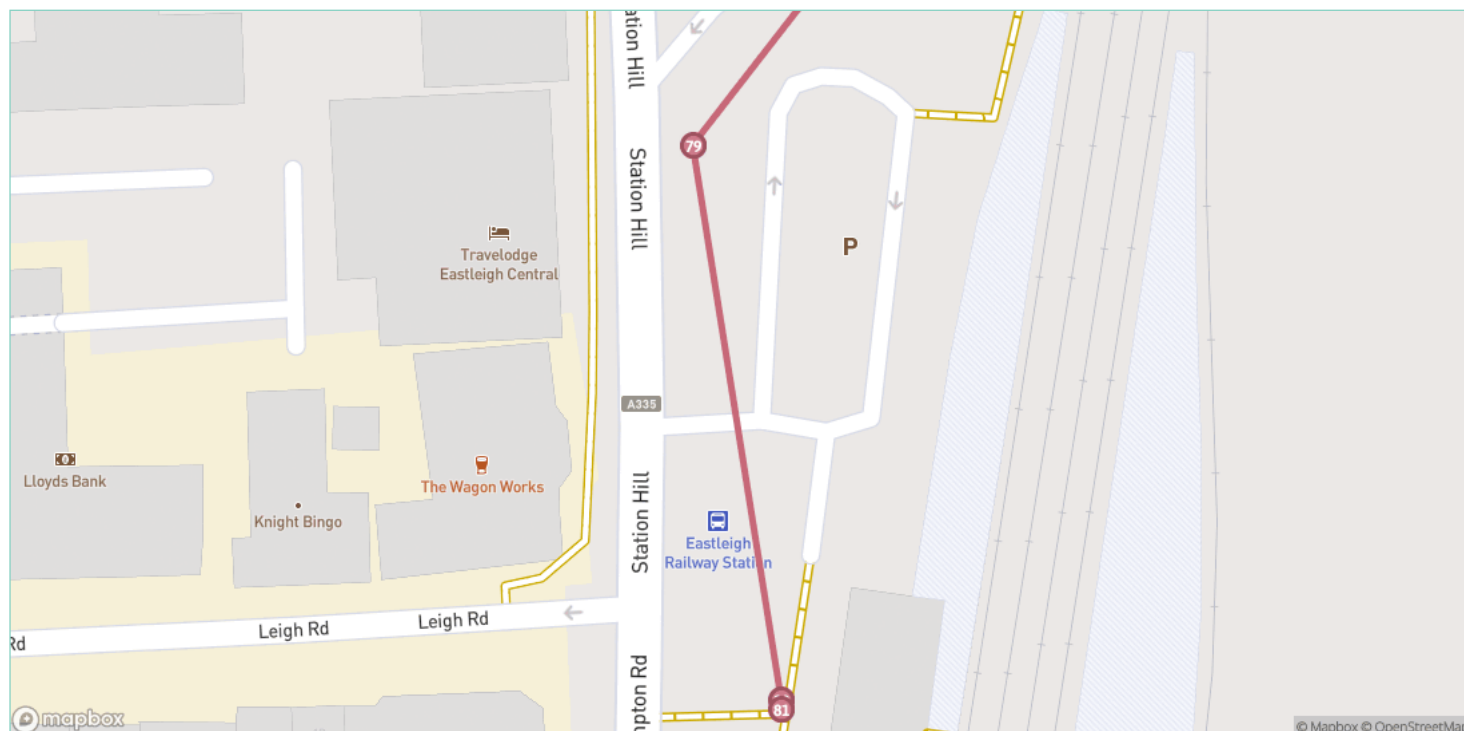
Step 73: Follow the pavement along the road almost all the way to Eastleigh Station.

Step 74: Cross over one of the legs of the Itchen that branched off earlier - the Barton River.

Step 75: Keep going along the pavement, passing opposite the Steam Town Brew Co., an excellent post-walk refreshment stop, if you fancy.

Step 76: Keep going up the slope.

Step 77: Cross over the railway lines once more, this time over the tracks.



Step 79: Keep going just a bit further to reach the station on your left.

Step 80: Eastleigh Station marks the end of this walk. From here, you can catch a Southwest train to London, Southampton, Salisbury, and Portsmouth.

Step 81: As you head back to Shawford or elsewhere along the Southwestern Railway network, we hope you enjoyed this walk today! We know we did. Where will you walk next? Section 3 of the Itchen Navigation is ahead.