

The Steep section of The Shipwrights Way.

Many of our readers will be aware that the 'Shipwrights Way', a long distance route from Alice Holt near Farnham to Portsmouth, most of which opened earlier this year, runs through our Parish for about 1.5 of its 50 miles. Some of you may have walked all or part of it already, but for those who have not, here is a brief summary about 'our' section. There are small blue signs along the route but they are not always that obvious depending on which direction you are walking.

Starting from the northern (Liss) end, the main path enters the Parish at the bridge over the River Rother just to the east of the railway on Stodham Lane. A new bridge for cyclists and walkers has been erected to avoid the danger of the old 'kissing gates'. There have been a few complaints from cyclists that the bridge is very difficult to negotiate and indeed my wife and I found it very hard both to push bikes up the 'cycle gutter' as well as down the other side. Once across the railway the route follows Tankerdale Lane westwards past Petersfield Golf Course and up to the main A3 road where you turn left.

If you don't wish to negotiate the railway bridge there is an alternative route from Liss via Andlers Ash Road to the level crossing there, after which you follow the road past Hilliers to the A3.

This is a section where you have to walk alongside the road on the cycle path but then you drop down to join Steep Marsh Lane near Burnt Ash cottages. Here you have to turn westwards and go under the A3 and continue until you reach a small crossroads at Sandy Lane. Turn left here and go down the slope until, at the bottom, you take a left fork as the road turns sharp right. Follow this path with fields on your left and a drop to your right until you emerge at Kettlebrook Cottage and the Kettle Brook. Cross the brook via the footbridge and continue up the road until just before you reach The Harrow Inn. The Shipwrights Way map suggests that the path goes around the back of the pub on the footpath emerging onto Church Road by the post box, but the signs direct you straight past The Harrow. So go past the pub and cross the road. Just on the left at this point is one of the 20 different sculptures which can be found on the whole route, this one is a stack of books to indicate the literary heritage of Steep and to commemorate three notable ex-residents, John Wyndham, Edward Thomas and Sir Alec Guinness. The path then continues up Harrow Lane to cross the A3 and then continues into Petersfield.

Full details about the Shipwrights Way including detailed maps of each section can be found on the Hampshire County Council site: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/shipwrightsaway>