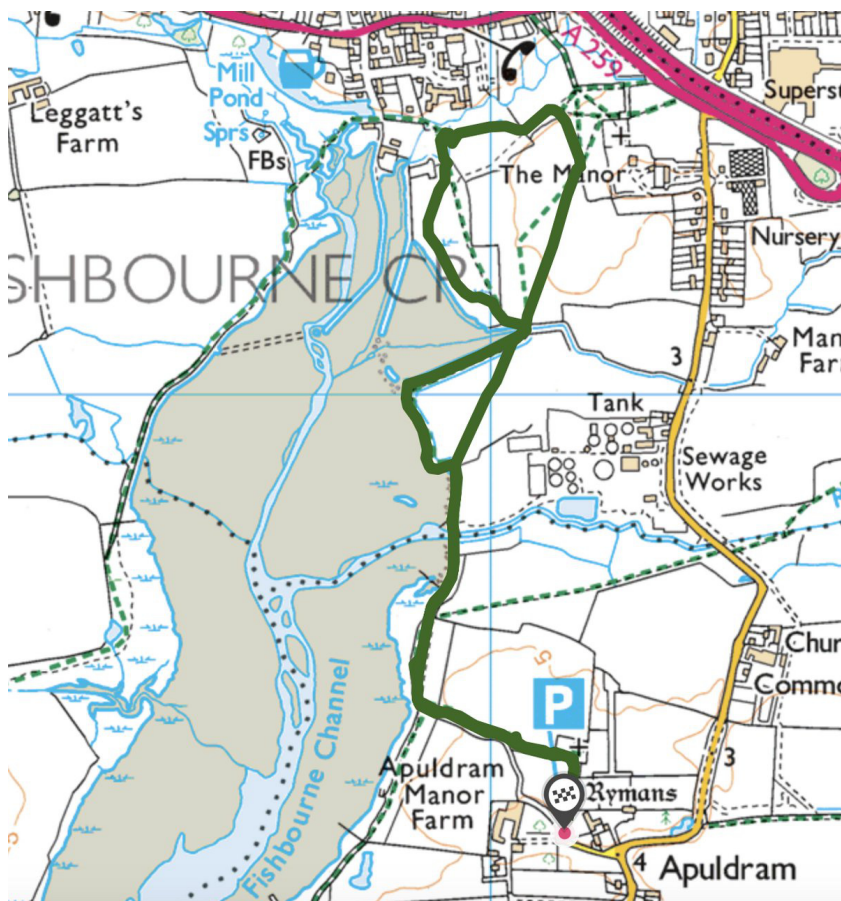

Favourite Nature Rambles Around Chichester

by David & Lynda Thornley

Fishbourne Meadows

The head of the harbour at Fishbourne is one of the most interesting parts of the harbour as are the



adjacent meadows; this short walk of just over two miles covers them both.

Whilst you could start from the north by parking near the pond it's much easier to use the little car park near St Mary's church at Apuldram that's well marked and usually has free space. There's a pleasant path leading past the little riding school to the churchyard where you bear left across a field to the harbour.



Please keep dogs on a lead to respect the graves that you pass through; there's some interesting ones there from the Second World War including a flying boat pilot.

The harbour has many moods dependant upon the weather and tides. At times it's just an expanse of mud, at high water springs it's almost covered with water with the moored yachts floating happily instead of leaning at unnatural angles. Heading north you're soon on the sea wall and passing over the outfall of the Lavant which follows a winding channel out to the sea. This is not to be confused with the sewage farm outlet which is underground.



This channel is a favourite spot for wildfowl that like to preen themselves in the fresh water; there's usually mallard and swans, in winter many more migrants.

The sea wall winds around and protects a small meadow that juts out into the harbour; at the end it's possible to climb down onto the marsh. Here, there are fine views of the northern part of this arm of the harbour which is a favourite roosting site for Dunlin, Lapwing and other waders. In the middle are the remains of a tidal mill that stood there, it's ponds are now reed-beds, an important and increasingly rare habitat.



The path follows another stream leading out into the channel, at the end head out across the field towards the other church and the meadow. These meadows are regularly grazed by cattle preserving some particularly interesting flowers, in particular orchids and Chequered Fritillaries. In spring it's a haven for butterflies, especially orange tip.

The stream that flows along the side of the meadow adds interest and is a



favourite playing ground for children in the school holidays, there's not much life in it but it's fine for poo sticks. The pond that's nearby attracts plenty of Mallard so you'll often see them flying overhead along with Kestrels and even a Barn Owl if you're lucky.

Returning to the harbour there are fine views towards Dell Quay; closer by the hedgerows are magnets for songbirds. The overgrown areas you



pass on the return to St Mary's provide cover for deer that often venture near the paths even though they are so popular with walkers.

Although it's only 2.3 miles long it's a charming walk which provides more opportunity than most to see interesting bird and plant life, remember to take your binoculars!
