

You may see waterbirds such as Great Crested Grebe and Tufted Duck along this stretch of the river.



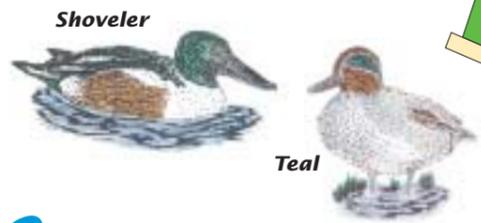
Great Crested Grebe



Tufted Duck

7 From here, the view southwards opens up. In the distance you will see the tower of St. Michael and All Angels Church, Alvaston. Built in 1857 to the designs of Henry Isaac Stevens of Derby, this is a mainly Victorian church. The previous church was a low medieval building with Saxon stonework.

North of the river, but not visible from the path, are the Severn Trent Water sludge lagoons. These wetlands and areas of open water are an important wildlife site. They provide food and shelter for many birds such as Mallard, Teal, Shoveler, Waders, Pipits and Finches.



Shoveler

Teal

Continue along the riverside path.

8 Further along the river, you will see the large flood barrage built by Ransomes and Rapier of Ipswich. The need for a barrage was recognised as early as 1845 by the philosopher Herbert Spencer following his experiences of the flood of 1 April 1842. However, the present barrage was only built after another disastrous Derby flood in May 1932. Its operation largely follows Spencer's original idea and allows water quickly to bypass the very large bend, or meander, in the river.

The island formed by this meander in the river, and the cut through, is owned by Acordis. In use since 1916, their Spondon site uses cellulose, a renewable natural resource, to produce a wide range of products such as photographic film and adhesive tape. The island has been managed as a private nature reserve since 1987. It has two man-made lakes, constructed during the late 1920s, surrounded by woodland. They act as a reservoir and allow silt in the river water to settle. This cleaner water is then circulated around the site. Acordis use up to 204 million litres a day from the river, simply for cooling and most is returned directly to the river. A small amount goes to Severn Trent Water for cleaning in their treatment plant.

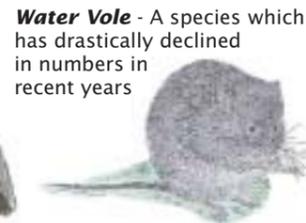


British Celanese, now Acordis, from Nottingham Road, Spondon in 1935

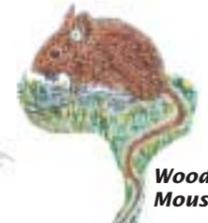
Species such as Herons, Kingfishers, Grebes and other water-birds are found on the lakes, while wood mice, voles, rabbits, stoats and foxes occur in the woods. Many different flowering plants and trees grow throughout the site. For more details on Acordis' nature reserve, telephone their Public Relations Manager on **01332 661422**.



Heron



Water Vole - A species which has drastically declined in numbers in recent years



Wood Mouse



Fieldfare



Wren

10 On your right is an area of scrub which provides food and shelter for many birds such as Blackbird, Song Thrush, Wren, Dunnock, and Fieldfare in winter. It is a mixture of grassland and scrub with many species of grass. Common Bent and Yorkshire Fog are the most dominant. You may also find plants such as Lady's Bedstraw with its straggling stems, narrow leaves and yellow flowers during July and August in the open grassland. Meadow Vetchling and Creeping Cinquefoil are also common here.



Lady's Bedstraw



Creeping Cinquefoil



Meadow Vetchling



Hawthorn

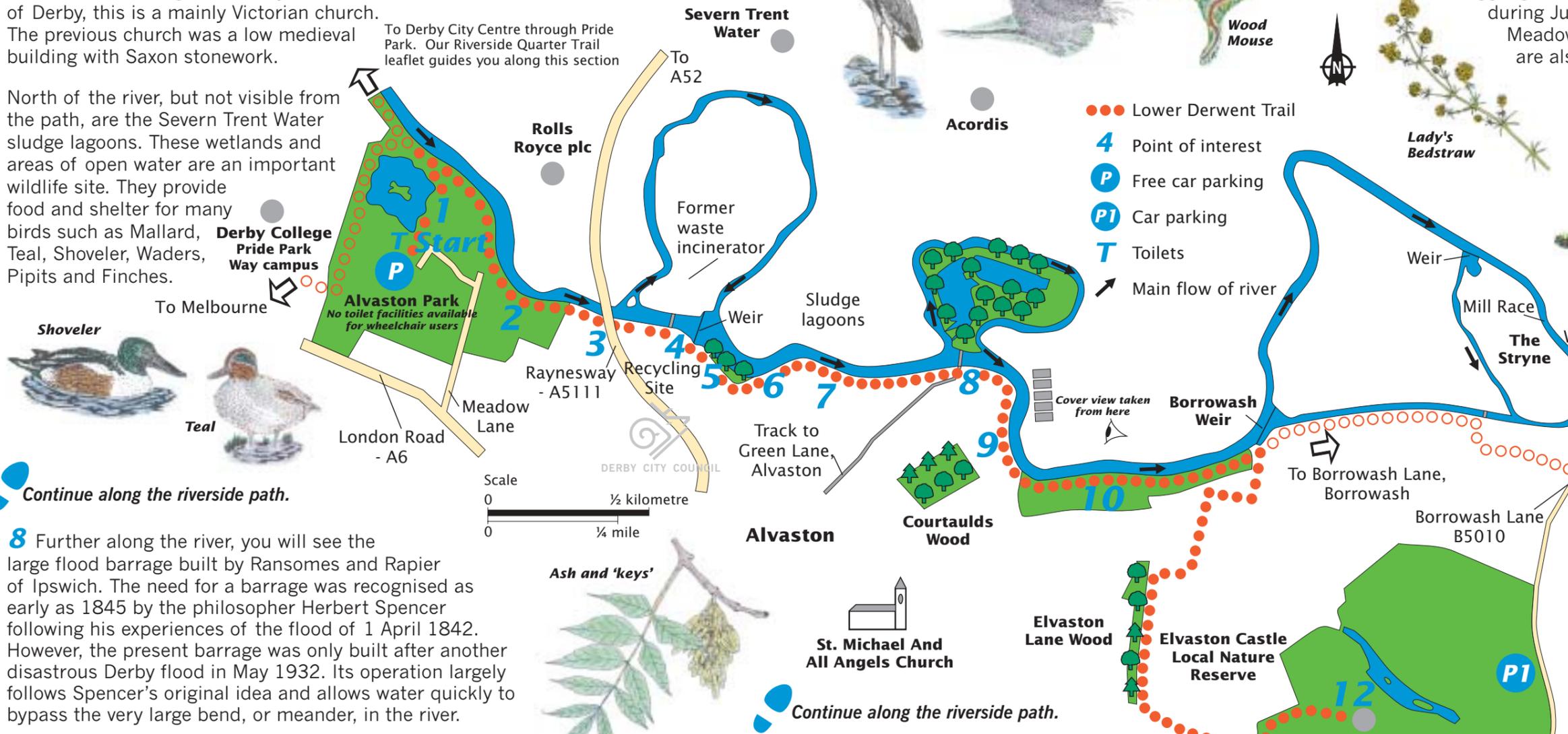
Most of this site is dominated by mature Hawthorn, Elder and Dog Rose with its pinkish-white flowers in June and July. The scarlet rose hips ripen from August to October. You may find plants such as Woody Nightshade, Ground Ivy and Herb Robert with its bright pink flowers from April to November. This plant has a reddish tinge which becomes more noticeable in the autumn.



Ground Ivy



Woody Nightshade



- Lower Derwent Trail
- 4 Point of interest
- P Free car parking
- PI Car parking
- T Toilets
- ↗ Main flow of river



Ash and 'keys'

Continue along the riverside path.

9 On your right you will see a mature woodland. A site of wildlife interest, it provides an important refuge for birds, small mammals and insects. The trees were planted in the 1940s by Courtaulds, now Acordis, as part of the war effort, in an attempt to produce wood for local industry. However, the project wasn't a success as the trees weren't productive enough. As you look at the woodland, you will see there are two distinct sections. On your right are Austrian Pine, on your left Italian Poplar.

Beside the cattle grid you will see an Ash. This deciduous tree can grow to over 40 metres. The clusters of male and female flowers open in April. The fruits or 'keys' turn brown in October and remain until after the leaves have fallen. Each leaf has between seven and 13 leaflets which are slender, pointed and finely toothed. You can easily recognise Ash trees in winter by their obvious black buds.



White Bryony

You may also see White Bryony, a member of the cucumber family, and Garlic Mustard with its white flowers in May and mild smell of garlic.

On the surface of the river, the 'green covering' you may see in summer is Duckweed. This tiny round plant simply floats on the surface with short roots hanging below. Fish such as Chub, Dace, Gudgeon, Perch, Pike, Roach and Barbel are all found in the river here.

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Derby's Lower Derwent Trail

Introduction

The Lower Derwent Trail starts from Alvaston Park and finishes at Elvaston Castle Country Park. It follows a path downstream, through parkland and farmland, beside the River Derwent. About 4½ kilometres long, or 2¾ miles, to walk it could take you up to two hours.

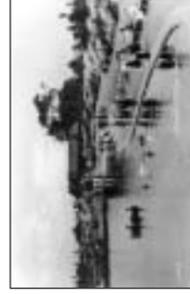
This leaflet tells you about the natural and local history of this section of the riverside. It is one of three guided trails covering the River Derwent in Derby which interpret this part of the 'National Heritage Corridor'. The trail is accessible to manual wheelchair users, but powered mobility equipment users will need a RADAR key for the gates at the access points. You can contact Derby City Council's Access Officer on **01332 255925** to get one.

Start

From the car park, follow the path in front of the pavilion towards the lake. At the lake, carry straight on around the edge.

1 Alvaston Park was laid out for the Earl of Harrington by William Barron and Son Limited of Borrowwash in 1913. The lake was added after the First World War.

The park is one of a number of sites of wildlife interest along the river corridor.



Alvaston Lake during the 1920s

Red Admiral



You may see Red Admiral and Peacock butterflies here.

Peacock



Greenfinch

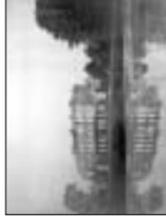
Many birds can be found here, such as Greenfinch, Linnet, Pied Wagtail, Coot, Mallard, Swan, Black-Headed Gull and Kestrel.

Linnet



Kestrel

Derby College, formerly Wilmorton College, to the west of the park, was built in the 1960s on the old Borough Tip. This land used to be part of the grounds of the former Osmaston Hall. Built in 1696, the Hall was the home of the Fox and Wilmot-Horton families until 1888. In 1938, the Hall was demolished. The name 'Wilmorton' is taken from **Wilmot-Horton**.



Osmaston Hall during the 1870s

Join the riverside trail by following the path where it branches away from the lake. Turn right, going downstream towards Raynesway.

2 The Derwent is Derbyshire's longest river. By now it has already flowed 74 kilometres, or 46 miles, from its source on the high moors of north Derbyshire. Along the way, it has passed through Ladybower Reservoir, Chatsworth Park, Matlock and Belper. It will join the River Trent at Great Wilne in another 19 kilometres, or 12 miles.

3 Raynesway Bridge was built as part of the Derby Arterial Road in 1938. The road was named after Alderman WR Raynes 1870-1966. In 1921 he became Derby's first Labour mayor. He was a Member of Parliament in 1923-24 and again in 1929-31.



Raynesway bridge under construction in 1938

Go under Raynesway Bridge.

You will shortly pass under another bridge. This one links the Raynesway Recycling Site with the former waste incinerator. It was closed in 1995 as it couldn't meet new pollution control standards.

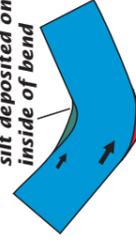
4 Further along, the weir is known as the Derwent Flood Barrier. It was built after the Second World War as an addition to the flood barrage further downstream. On the map overleaf, you will see that this section of the river has been cut through. See also point **8**, and the section to the east of Borrowwash Weir. This work was done during the 1930s to stop the river backing up and flooding Derby during heavy rainfall.

5 Further along on your left, you will see an area of Crack Willow, known as a 'carr'. This term describes trees and shrubs growing on the edge of boggy ground. **Crack Willow and catkins in spring**



6 Just past the 'carr', look back upstream. Notice that where it bends, the river is slower-moving on the inside and faster-moving on the outside. This results in

Slow-moving water, silt deposited on the inside of bend



Fast-moving water, riverbank is worn away on outside of bend

gravel and silt being deposited on the inside curve, while the bank slowly wears away on the outside. This is the bank you are on. This can lead to any loops in a river, known as meanders, eventually being cut off as its course is straightened out. These isolated loops would become 'ox-bow lakes'.

At Borrowwash Weir turn right, away from the river.

Along this path, you pass through Elvaston Castle Local Nature Reserve. For details, contact the Derbyshire Countryside Service, South East Area, at Elvaston Castle on **01332 571342**.

At the gate and chicane turn left along Elvaston Lane.

11 In the fields on your right, you may see Common Poppy. An annual flower, it grows to 50 centimetres high, with feathery leaves and a slender bristly stem. You can see its silky red flowers in June or July on recently disturbed land.

After the small bridge, turn left. Go along the boardwalk towards Elvaston Castle.



Elvaston Castle during the 1880s

12 Elvaston Castle dates from the early 19th Century, when Charles, 3rd Earl of Harrington, commissioned James Wyatt to design a new building. The red brick gabled manor house it replaced had been home to the Stanhope family for two hundred years. Remnants can be seen in the south front.

Here a section with mullioned windows bears the date 1633. Much of the rebuilding occurred from 1813-1819. The grounds were landscaped by William Barron during the 1830s and 1840s. The Stanhope family left Elvaston Castle in the late 1930s. During the war, it was used as a teacher training college. In 1970, Elvaston Castle and its grounds opened as the first Country Park in Britain. For further information telephone **01332 571342**.

How to get there

The trail starts in Alvaston Park. Take the Meadow Lane turn off London Road, A6. For details of bus services, ring Busline on **08706 082608**. Car parking **P**, is free. Pay and display car parking is available at Elvaston Castle, **P**, at the end of the trail.

Further Information

During office hours, contact Derby Museum and Art Gallery on **01332 716659**, or the Ranger Services on **01332 367800** up to 9pm, including weekends.

If you would like to know more about the natural history of our area, visit the wildlife and geology displays at Derby Museum and Art Gallery, The Strand, Derby. Or visit their website at www.derby.gov.uk/museums. You can also contact the Derby Natural History Society on **01332 515859** or the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust on **01773 881188**.

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