





north  
500 Metres (approx)

**Key**

- Towpath
- Footpaths
- Bridleway
- Car Park
- Public House
- Railway Station

**Exploring the Stort Valley**

There are lots of opportunities for walking and cycling in the Stort Valley. For routes and maps visit The Countryside Management Service website at [www.hertsdirect.org/cms](http://www.hertsdirect.org/cms)

Maps and guides are also available from local libraries, tourist information centres and councils:

East Herts District Council  
**01279 655261**

Harlow District Council  
**01279 446655**

Or why not try to make up your own route with Ordnance Survey Explorer **Map 194** (Hertford & Bishops Stortford).

Remember, if you plan to cycle the towpaths, you need a permit from the British Waterways website [www.waterscape.com](http://www.waterscape.com)

**Places to stop along the way:**

**Bishops Stortford:**  
Rushy Mead Nature Reserve  
Waytemore Castle  
Sworders Fields

**Sawbridgeworth:**  
Pishiobury Park  
Sawbridgeworth Marsh

**Harlow:**  
Hunsdon Mead Nature Reserve,  
Parndon Mill  
Harlow Town Park.

**Things to see:**

Whilst exploring the river, watch out for some of the local wildlife associated with it such as Kingfishers, Purple Loosetrife and Dragonflies.



**Black Poplars**

The Black Poplar is one of Britain's rarest trees but was once a common tree of east Anglian riverbanks. Constable depicted Black Poplars in his early nineteenth century painting, *The Haywain*, but today's artist would have to search hard for similar examples.

These native Poplars were once extremely useful because their springy wood was suitable for manufacturing clogs and cartwheels. It also resisted fire making ideal floorboards and the wood's ability to absorb paraffin was exploited by match manufacturers

However, other materials came to replace Poplar wood and with drainage of the floodplain where they lived, the trees disappeared.

Just a few native Black Poplars have survived in the Stort Valley into the 21st century.

Now, sympathetic landowners are looking after the remaining older trees and planting carefully-selected young trees. These will improve the Stort Valley's landscape for future generations to enjoy.



Black Poplar Leaves

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