



Walk on the

WILD SIDE

JO VAUGHAN TAKES A RIVERSIDE STROLL AND ENJOYS VIEWS OF THE THAMES THAT WILL BE FAMILIAR TO HENLEY REGATTA ENTHUSIASTS

Those who never miss the Henley Regatta will, no doubt, already know the nearby Four Oaks site in Henley-on-Thames, but it was my first visit to this famous town. The campsite is just a 10-minute walk from Henley's centre, giving easy access to

this attractive market town, as well as to one of the most beautiful stretches of the river Thames. But, other than the scenery and the Regatta, there are other reasons why you should head here – not least because of the network of local footpaths.

As you walk along the Thames Path, which we follow along the river, there are boats of all shapes and sizes to spy, as well as a wide variety of wild flowers and waterfowl. Then once you've returned to Henley's centre, there are many eating places that just may prove too tempting after such a long walk. Don't forget to take lots of water with you during the summer, and avoid alcohol in the pubs – nothing will dehydrate you quicker!

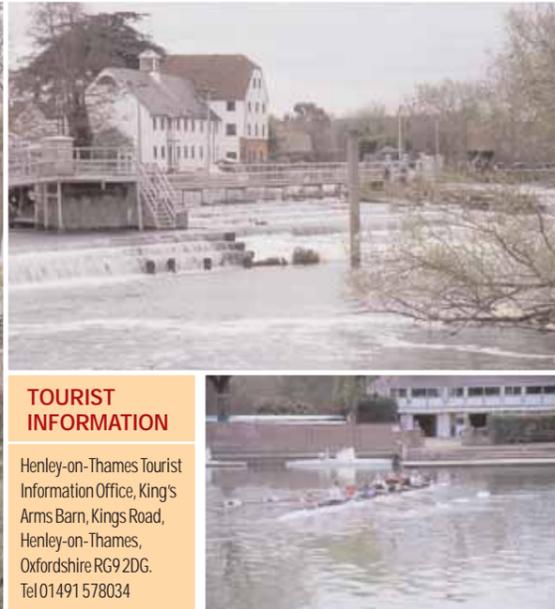
GENERAL INFORMATION

NEAREST CLUB SITE: Four Oaks Caravan Club Site, Marlow Road, Henley-on-Thames RG9 2HY. Tel 01491 572312
DISTANCE: 10.2 miles (16.3km)
TERRAIN: Mostly grassy and tarmac paths
NUMBER OF STILES: 5
ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT: OS Explorer map 171 (1:25,000)
LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY: Moderate
REFRESHMENTS: Pubs at Aston and just before the bridge when returning to Henley town centre
TOILETS: Henley town centre



TOURIST INFORMATION

Henley-on-Thames Tourist Information Office, King's Arms Barn, Kings Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire RG9 2DG. Tel 01491 578034



LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

- River & Rowing Museum, Mill Meadows, Henley-on-Thames RG9 1BF. Tel 01491 415600 or see rrm.co.uk. Open: All year. Cost: £6 for adults, £4 for children and £5 for seniors (60+). Three galleries are devoted to the river Thames. There is also a walk-through exhibit about the Wind in the Willows. There is full access for the disabled and wheelchairs available for loan
- Fawley Court Museum, Henley-on-Thames, Oxon RG9 3AE. Tel 01491 574917. Open: 1 May to 31 October on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays. The museum holds many private collections once belonging to the Polish monarchy, as well as army memorabilia
- Chiltern Valley Old Luxters Vineyard, Winery and Brewery, Hambleton, Henley-on-Thames RG9 6JW. Tel 01491 638330 or see chilternvalley.co.uk. Cost: £10 per person. Tours of the brewery are available upon arrangement. Some disabled facilities are provided

DIRECTIONS

1 Head through the site's main gates and turn right to walk along the pavement. When the pavement ends, cross over and continue. At the roundabout turn left, and then follow the one-way system around to the left into New Street. Continue along the riverside and cross the bridge that spans the Thames.

2 Almost immediately after the bridge turn left (sp Thames Path – Hambleton Lock, 2 1/2 miles). Continue along the Thames Path.

3 Head past the island with the ornamental building on it, and follow the path as the river bends to the right. Continue past Hambleton Lock. Opposite the weir, where the tarmac lane bends to the right, carry on ahead along the now grassy Thames Path.

4 At the sign for the Flowerpot Hotel, turn right and continue up the lane. At the hotel, turn left along Aston Lane then turn left (sp Thames Path), entering the Culham Court Estate.

5 Where the lane bends to the right, again follow the footpath sign. Go through a wooden gate and veer slightly to the left, returning to the riverbank. Go through another wooden gate and carry on straight ahead.

6 When you come to a metal gate, turn sharp right up a grassy track. At the tarmac road turn left and then, at the cattle grid, turn right, following the yellow footpath arrow.

7 At the top of the hill turn left to follow the fence, then turn right through a wooden kissing gate and then immediately left.

8 Just before you reach the main road, follow the path around to the right behind some houses. Cross the

stile, then veer left to cross another stile. Turn right down Aston Lane. When you get to the last house on the right (number 8), turn left (sp Public Footpath).

9 At an angled T-junction turn right, but don't go through the gate to Common Barn – instead go to the left of the gate. Cross another stile and head through a gate and across the lane veering left to cross another stile.

ABOVE: A private mooring near the town; Hambleton Mill (now private apartments) and weir; rowing clubs abound here

10 In the woods, where the path splits, take the left fork where you'll see a white arrow painted on a tree ahead of you. At the gateway to a house on your right (there's also a tarmac lane on your left), continue ahead down a narrow path until you reach the main road.

11 Cross the road and turn right down the pavement, across the bridge into Henley, and retrace your steps to the site.

HENLEY-ON-THAMES WALK: 10.2 miles (16.3 km)

