

Walk 17

Henley on Thames to Lower Shiplake

An attractive linear walk along the River Thames between the picturesque town of Henley and the village of Lower Shiplake. The Thames Path offers gentle walking for all abilities, with wonderful views of the river winding its way through green meadows. On your return you can reward yourself with a cream tea in Henley!

Distance: 2½ miles each way (allow 1½ hours). You can get the train back (approximately hourly service).

Start: Henley on Thames station (or Shiplake station)
If you are coming by car, follow signs to long term parking at the station or at Mill Meadows.

Access Information: Level walk throughout. The Thames Path from Henley to Marsh Lock is a wide tarmac path suitable for wheelchairs. From the end of the Marsh Lock footbridge the Thames Path passes through meadows and can get muddy. There is a footbridge with a short slope to it near Bolney Court.

Refreshments: There are lots of pubs and tearooms in Henley. There is a pub in Lower Shiplake.

Route:

Head out of Henley railway station. ❶ You will shortly reach Station Road; turn right and follow the road to the river front. If you have parked at Mill Meadows simply walk across the green to the river front. When you reach the river front turn right and follow the Thames Path towards Shiplake. You will soon see the River and Rowing Museum on your right, ❷ this is well worth a visit, and a good place to stop for refreshments. You will pass through Mill Meadows, then on to a track past 'The Old House' on your right and a hundred yards further the footbridge leading to Marsh Lock on your left. ❸ Go over the footbridge which will give you spectacular views over the Thames and the rushing weirs. On the Lock Keepers Cottage you can see floodmarks from some of the most severe floods, dating back to 1894.

After Marsh Lock the walk becomes more rural, with wide open views of water meadows on your right and steep wooded hills on your left; you can see the exposed chalk which is so characteristic of the Chilterns. Look out for the 'Happy Valley' estate, with its stone bridge (the stones came from Reading Abbey) and The Druids Temple graves which stretch back for 200 metres underground.

At the end of the meadow the path swings to the right, away from the river and over a footbridge. ❹ Follow the narrow path which goes past Bolney Court and leads to a surfaced lane. Continue along this road (following signs for the 'Thames Path'), passing many large houses. Towards the end of Bolney Road, you will see the Thames Path signed on your right, just after 'Rivermead House'. ❺ Follow this to Shiplake station.

Walk 17

