

Day 9: Windsor to Chertsey Bridge



The day begins with a riverside stroll through Home Park, with some majestic views of Windsor Castle over your shoulder. There's a long road walk along the edge of Datchet, but the Thames Path returns to the river and on to Runnymede, where we enter the county of Surrey. Sadly, a damaged bridge over a tributary means a road diversion as you approach the M3 before reaching Staines. The walk ends with a pleasant amble down to Chertsey Bridge. By now you will be accustomed to the aircraft noise!

Distance: 12 miles

Duration: 4¾ hours, not including breaks.

Maps: OS Explorer 160

Car parking: Windsor is

expensive! At Chertsey Bridge, there are two pub car parks (but you may need to get permission) as well as a small free one, and a paying one (Dumsey Meadow, £2 for the day).

Public transport: Windsor has two stations: Windsor and Eton Riverside with half-hourly trains via Staines to Waterloo; and Windsor and Eton Central with a 6-minute shuttle every 20 minutes to Slough (GWR and Elizabeth Line). There are stations at Staines and Chertsey (the last about a half hour's walk from the bridge, or an hourly bus, 557).

Refreshments: Runnymede; town facilities in Staines; and pubs (with a good car park) at Chertsey Bridge.

Toilets: Runnymede, and Staines.

Short Walk Option:

Windsor to St Peter & St Andrew's Church, Old Windsor (3½ miles). Directions 1 to 5.

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Directions:

1. From Windsor Bridge, follow the riverside path on the Windsor side of the river, heading north-east. At The Boatman pub keep left along the Thames Path, and at the end of Romney Path pass through the boatyard, keeping close to the river.
2. As you approach Victoria Bridge just before Datchet keep well to the right, joining the road about 150 yards away from the bridge. Here you pass the end of the railing fence and cross the road. Cross over the bridge and then continue along the river the other side. *The sign tells us that Victoria Bridge was constructed for the Conservators of Her Majesty's Woods and Works.*

Datchet

Reference in chronicles to a gift of land in the area by King Aethelwold (reigned 990 – 994).
Mentioned in the Domesday Book.

3. The Thames Path now follows the road until well past Datchet Village until you reach a signposted path to the right which soon turns down towards the river.
4. At Albert Bridge go under the bridge and left up the slope, then cross the river on the bridge, continuing on the bank on the other side.
5. Just after Old Windsor Lock a signposted path leads to the church of St Peter and St Andrew (250 yards), open Tuesdays and Saturdays 10.30am-5pm, April to October.

Old Windsor

There has been a church on this site since Saxon times, when it served the nearby 9th century Kingsbury Palace, owned by Edward the Confessor. Saxon kings visited regularly, and here six National Assemblies and several Ecclesiastical Councils met between 1070 and 1106 before the Normans built a castle at nearby Windsor, preferring its more defensible position, with the Saxon palace becoming a royal hunting lodge.

6. There are benches at Old Windsor Lock if you're ready for a picnic, but another 40 minutes' walk will take you to the café and toilets at Runnymede.
7. As you leave Runnymede, stick to the paved path: don't be tempted by a grassy path to the left to follow the river bank too closely, or you'll find a dead end!
8. *Immediately past the Runnymede Hotel, there is an informative plaque about a late Bronze Age settlement at Runnymede Bridge.*

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9. Unless the Environment Agency has magically found the funds to repair a bridge across a stream just beyond the M3 bridge, the diversion signs take you up beside the Runnymede Hotel on the A308 towards the A30. Please use the pedestrian crossing to cross this road as it can be extremely busy. Once across the A30 you will pass underneath the M25 and follow the horrible Causeway (A308) for 0.6 miles (roughly 12 minutes' walk) until you reach River Park Avenue on your left. Turn down this road, passing Halfords on the right, and its end you will be able to rejoin the Thames Path, taking you into Staines.

Staines-upon-Thames

An Anglo-Saxon settlement grew up around St Mary's Church (probably a Saxon minster), and was possibly one of Alfred the Great's line of fortified burghs along the Wessex-Mercia border. Its predecessor settlement, the Roman town *Pontes*, was the bridging-point across the Thames for the road from London to the important communications hub of Silchester (*Calleva Atrebatum*). A late-Saxon execution cemetery, excavated in 1999, contains the incomplete remains of up to thirty skeletons, suggesting that the town was an important local centre for the administration of justice. In 993, the Norwegian King Olaf sailed up the Thames as far as Staines with a fleet of 93 ships, inflicting great damage on the many settlements on both banks of the river, probably including Kingston upon Thames. The manor of Staines was granted to Westminster Abbey by Edward the Confessor as part of the newly-built Abbey's endowment. The manor reverted to the Crown in 1540, following the Abbey's dissolution, and its ownership subsequently passed into private hands. Staines Bridge is first mentioned in a medieval manuscript of 1222, which authorised its repair using a tree from Windsor Forest. The bridge was destroyed during the English Civil War and was not rebuilt until the 1680s. The current (fourth) bridge was opened in 1832. Its architect was George Rennie, who modelled it on Waterloo Bridge, designed by his father John Rennie.

10. Cross Staines Bridge, turn left and walk along the river path to **St Mary's Church**. From the centre of Staines, continue to follow the river path; you have to go round The Thames Lodge and then return to the river, passing under the railway bridge.
11. At Chertsey Bridge, just beyond Chertsey Lock, there's a good car park at the Kingfisher pub; there's also The Bridge pub on the other side of the river with a car park. You may have to pay at either, or at least speak to the pubs.

Chertsey

Abbey founded in 666 by St Erkenwald, Bishop of London from 675 to 693. Funded by Frithwald, Bishop of Whithorn in Northumbria from 735 to 766. The Abbey was sacked by the Danes in the 9th century and re-founded by King Edgar in 964.

12. Chertsey Station and buses are about half an hour's walk from the bridge (1¼ miles).

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Timings for Tuesday 2nd September (approximate):

09:45 -10.00	Registration and briefing (Windsor Bridge)
10:00	Set off from Windsor
11:40-12:30	Stop at St Peter & St Andrew's Church , Old Windsor (3½ miles)
13:15-14:15	Runnymede Café (5½ miles)
15:15-16:00	Stop at St Mary's Church , Staines (8½ miles)
17:30	Arrive at Chertsey Bridge (12 miles)

With

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