

HERITAGE WALK

LECHLADE ON THAMES



A circular walk of 6 – 7.5 km (3.75 - 5 miles) Time: 2 – 3 hours

Terrain: Generally level – but includes some footpaths over farmland which may be muddy, and some stiles. Some short sections are on public roads.

8 Guide points along the walk

Historical sites

P Parking and start of walk

Ordnance survey Landranger map:
163 Cheltenham and Cirencester



Ordnance Survey Explorer map:
Southern section: 170 Abingdon, Wantage and Vale of the White Horse
Northern section: Outdoor Leisure Map 45: The Cotswolds

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This circular walk includes some of the surviving medieval and post-medieval remains in the vicinity of Lechlade. It also takes you further back in time to some of the sites of our Saxon, Roman and prehistoric predecessors. More information about the Water Park during these periods is in the booklet "Forgotten landscapes, hidden lives: The archaeology of the Cotswold Water Park" which accompanies this walk guide or is available from Cotswold Water Park outlets

Some short sections of this walk are on public roads. These can be busy, please exercise caution at all times.

1 Park at the Riverside car park and walk towards the River Thames at 2.

2 Turn left and, with the river on your right, cross the footbridge and take the Thames path to a footbridge at 3.

3 Either cross the footbridge and follow the path towards 5, or follow the path along the river bank and across fields towards 4.



1. The Thames and Severn canal. This 30-mile canal joined the River Thames to the right of the tower straight ahead. It was opened in 1789 and linked the Thames with the Stroudwater Canal, which ran between Wallbridge in Stroud and the River Severn at Framilode. The round tower housed the keeper of the lock that linked the canal with the river and the cottage was originally a small warehouse. **NB These buildings are on private land and are not open to the public.**

4 Retrace the path back to 3.



2. Inglesham shrunken village: The earthworks visible on both sides of the path in this field are the remains of the house platforms and roads of the shrunken village of Inglesham, first recorded in 950 AD. The village originally extended south of the lane, but ploughing has now levelled earthworks in this area. Today the village has shrunk to a few houses centred on the church.



3. The church of St John the Baptist: This Church was originally built in the Saxon period. In 1888-89 The architect William Morris helped with a major restoration. The interior of this simple church contains a Saxon relief of the Madonna and Child, the remains of 14th century wall paintings and original box pews.

5 Turn right and follow the footpath, with the hedge on your left. Cross three more fields to 6.

6 Cross over a small stream and follow a narrow track, with the stream on your left, to the main road.

7 Turn left along the pavement, and after about 160 yards, cross the main road. Continue for a further 40 yards to an iron gate signposted cemetery.

8 Go through the gate and follow the path to the cemetery.

9 Walk through the cemetery then follow a narrow path next to houses for about 100 yards before emerging in the corner of a field.

10 Walk along the edge of the field with the houses on your right. Continue beyond the houses and then bear right towards a stile in the field boundary opposite.



4. Saxon cemetery: Butlers Field is the site of the major pre-Christian Anglo-Saxon cemetery. The excavated part of the cemetery below the houses on your right, contained the remains of over 200 men, women and children many of whom were dressed in their finest clothes and jewellery. They were also equipped with the tools and weapons which reflected their status in life and would have ensured they were properly recognised when they entered the afterlife.



5. Multiperiod settlement: Crop marks on both sides of the footpath show this to be the site of an extensive multiperiod settlement, only part of which, the area underneath the present houses, has been excavated. Features recorded on this site included late Bronze Age/early Iron Age land boundaries marked by lines of pits, an Iron Age settlement, and a Roman farmstead.



6-9. Bronze Age barrow burials: This field contains the sites of 4 possible Bronze Age barrows, which have since been levelled by ploughing. Only one of these has been excavated, and this contained the cremated remains of two individuals.



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11 At the stile turn right and follow the field boundary to another stile in the corner of the field.

12 Go over the stile, cross the road and bear left to a stile leading into a field. Follow the path across the field to another stile on the opposite boundary.



10. Old railway: The long narrow strip between the wire fences is the line of a branch of the East Gloucester Railway Company between Witney and Fairford. The line was opened in 1873 and closed in 1962

13 Go over this stile, cross a narrow strip of land and then over another stile into the Richardson Amey Nature reserve. Either follow the path around the lake to 14 or turn right and follow the path which after about 80 yards, becomes an alley leading into an area of suburban housing at 15.

14 At this point you can leave the nature reserve to view the lake to the north, which is the site of the Roughground Farm Roman villa (archaeological site 11) **NB This lake is on private land and must be viewed from the road, as there is no public access to its banks. To continue with the walk follow the path around the lake towards 13 and pick up the path and alley which leads to 15.**



11. Roman Villa: This lake is on the site of the Roughground Farm villa, a comfortable farmhouse built in the early 2nd century AD, within 70-80 years of the Roman invasion. The original house had painted plaster walls, a dining room with a curved wall, and a room with underfloor heating below the mosaic floor. **NB This lake is on private land and must be viewed from the road, as there is no public access to its banks.**

15 At the end of the alley turn right and follow the curving road for about 250 yards to a T-junction.

12. Neolithic Cursus: The parallel ditches of the late Neolithic cursus ran diagonally (northwest to southeast) across the line of the modern road at this point. Most of the cursus has now been buried under modern housing, although its northern terminal survives in the field beyond the houses to your right. No earthworks are now visible on the surface.

16 Turn left and continue along the pavement for about 400 yards to a T-junction with the main road

17 Turn right and walk down the pavement for 600 yards as far as the church.

13. The Church of St Lawrence: This Church was recorded as early as 1305, but was largely rebuilt in the perpendicular style in the late 15th century. Inside the church look out for the small image of St Lawrence holding a gridiron above the east window of the chancel, and also the decorated boss of two men wrestling in the chancel roof.

18 Turn right and after 90 yards turn left to cross the Thames over Ha'penny Bridge



14. Ha'penny bridge: This bridge was constructed in the 1782, when Thames Street, which leads to the bridge, was laid out. The bridge takes its name from the half penny toll levied until 1836. The small square tollhouse, on the Lechlade side, was added in the 19th century.

19 On the other side of the bridge turn right to take the path down to the riverbank. Follow the river as far as 2 and then turn left to return to the car park. **P**

A heritage walk guide in this series is also available for the Somerford Keynes area, and more heritage walks can be found on the Cotswold Water Park website www.waterpark.org.

Go even further back in time - learn more about the fossils and geology, the rivers and the landscape in these related trail guides for the area:

Keynes Country Park - Geology and Landscape Heritage Trail

South Cerney - Geology and Landscape Heritage Trail

Coates and the Thames & Severn Canal - Geology and Landscape Heritage Trail

These are available from Cotswolds Water Park outlets, Tourist Information Centres and Gloucestershire Geology Trust e-mail: info@glosgeotrust.org.uk, Tel: 01452 864438.