



Thames and Wey Bridges Chertsey Meads, Shepperton Riverside

Distance: 8 km=5 miles + one Ferry Crossing easy walking
or 11½ km=7 miles, starting at Walton Bridge
or 13½ km=8 miles, via Shepperton Village

Region: Surrey

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Refreshments: many great riverside pubs

Map: Explorer 160 (Weybridge) *but the maps in this guide should be sufficient*

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River towpaths, islands, bridges, green meadows, colourful villas

In Brief

Here is a river walk over countless bridges, through green meadows and past a phantasmagoria of houseboats, chalets and opulent river mansions. The southern section is intricate, full of secrets and unexpected turns, along the River Way and across the meadows to meet the River Thames again. The colourful northern section is along the Thames towpath.

You have a choice of closing the loop via the Shepperton-Weybridge Ferry. The Ferry runs daily on demand every 15 minutes, starting 10 am Sundays, earlier on other days. The one-way charge is £2.50 as at 2020. This Ferry option gives you two further choices of starting at a nearby small car park or starting at the large Walton Bridge car park with a double 1-mile stretch along the Thames. The “non-Ferry” option takes you through Shepperton Village, returning over Walton Bridge, with some quiet road walking.

The nominal starting point for the 5-mile walk is the smaller Walton Lane car park, but remember that it *closes at dusk*. There are various other small car parks along the route, as well as roadside parking. Another important consideration is that you cannot do this walk in the dark! Apart from the Ferry closing, several of the bridges are private and *close at dusk*.



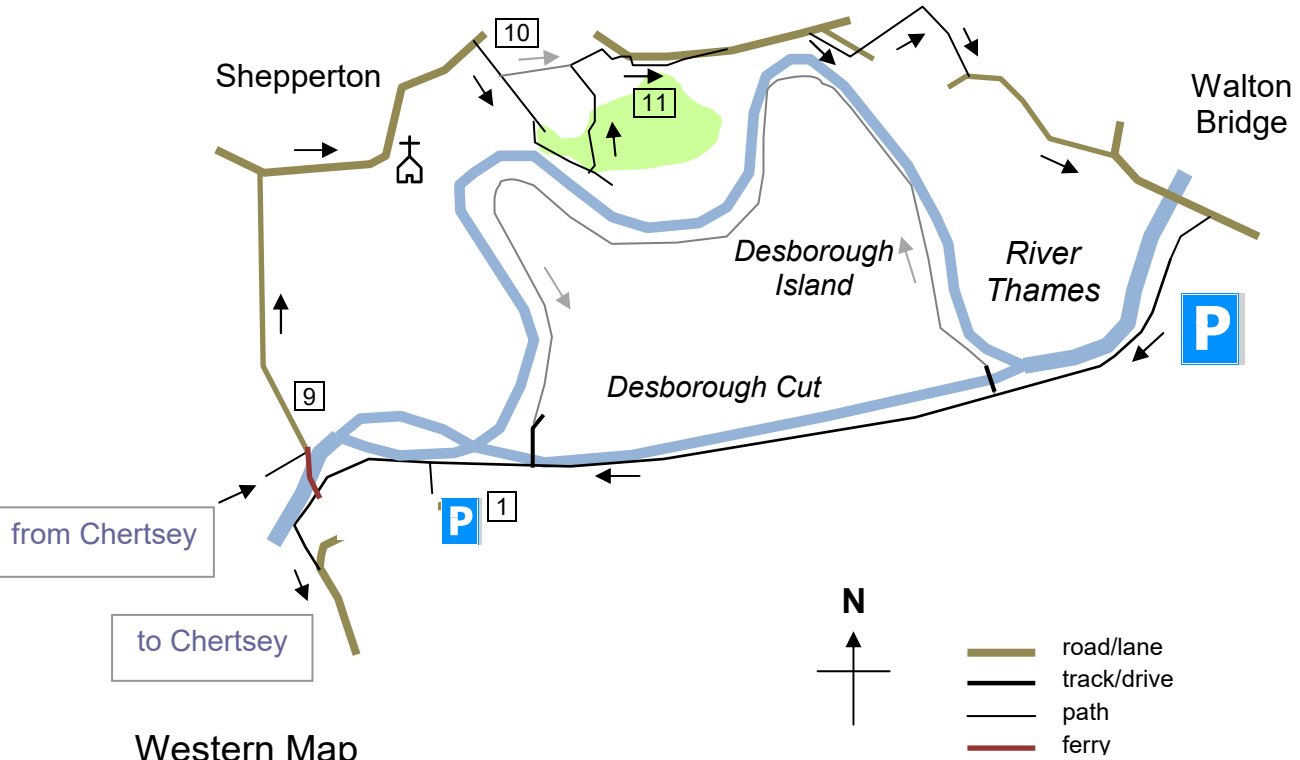
There are no restrictions as to footwear or clothing on this walk, at worst long stretches of grass, at best tarmac. With no stiles or main roads on the shorter walk, your dog is welcome too.



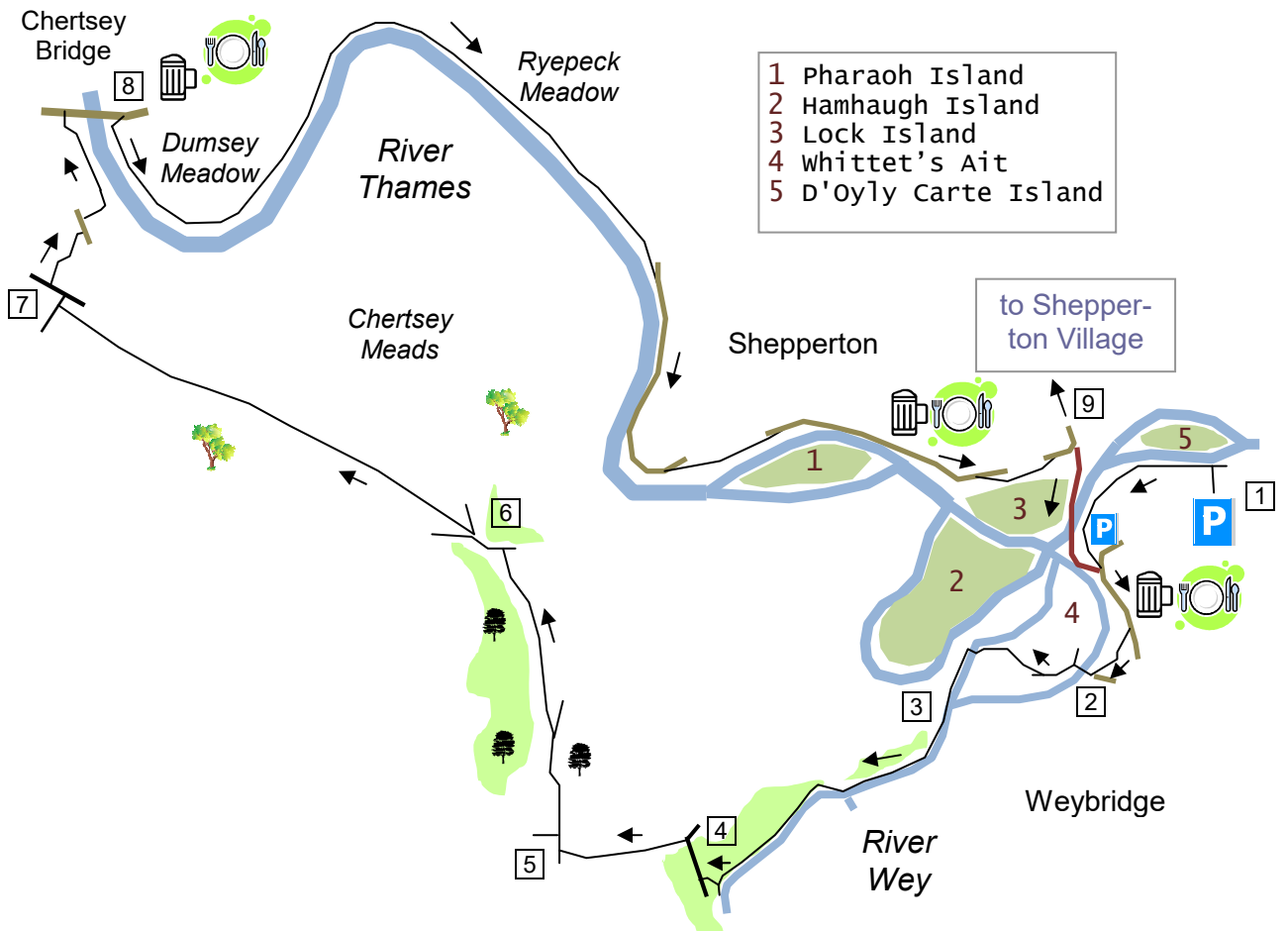
The 5-mile walk begins nominally at the free **Walton Lane car park** next to the *Elmbridge Canoe Club*, in Weybridge, www.w3w.co/noted.admit.driver, postcode **KT13 8LY**, or at other nearby car parks, or on the roadside. The longer walks begin at the large Walton Bridge car park, postcode **KT12 1AR**, www.w3w.co/little.dime.unwanted (free parking!). For more details, see at the end of this text (→ **Getting There**).

The Walk

Eastern Map



Western Map



From Walton Bridge (begin with Eastern Map)

Do this section if you are starting either of the longer walks at **Walton Bridge**. Otherwise, skip forward to Section **1**.

Beginning in the Walton Bridge car park, walk down to the river side and turn **left** along the tow path. In 500m you pass under the bridge that goes across to Desborough Island. You have the option here of turning **right** over the bridge and taking the "Desborough Loop", coming back over the next bridge. The footpath follows the river side and adds 1½ km=1 mile to the walk. Before 1930 boats had to follow the wide meanders. Then this straight section, the Desborough Cut, was built, making an artificial island. In a further km beside the river, counting the swans and watching the boating crews, you pass under the second bridge from the island. In a further 200m, on your left is the Elmbridge Canoe Club. There is usually a coffee van here. The smaller car park immediately on the left is a nominal starting point for the shorter walk.



From Weybridge Riverside (use Western Map)

- 1 Beginning at the Walton Lane car park, walk across the grass to the river side and turn **left** along the towpath. The curious little private island with its bow-shaped bridge and big gloomy mansion is D'Oyly Carte Island.

This island was called Folly Eyot until Richard D'Oyly Carte bought it in 1890 as an annex to the Savoy Hotel which he built in the Strand. Unfortunately he was denied a liquor license so he built this large Eyot House as a private residence. His visitors included Gilbert and Sullivan whose operettas he staged. His macabre sense of humour led him to keeping a crocodile on the island, presumably not free to swim in the Thames. The house seemed to be still for sale at the time of writing.

As you round the headland, you have the wonderful sight of white water flowing in four directions. Ahead is the great weir between **Hamhaugh Island** and **Lock Island**, a promontory cut off by Shepperton Lock. The River Wey discharges through another lock on your left. A further 300m from the Eyot, rounding the headland opposite Shepperton Lock, you reach the ferry stop.

The main stop is on the other side and travellers from this side have to ring the little bell by the waterside. Unless you take the Shepperton Village route on return, you will be returning to here from the far bank.



You come out through a small car park onto a road. Keep **right** along the pavement. The *Minnow* pub with its large garden terrace is on your left whilst shortly you reach the *Old Crown*, a historic whiteboard pub with a river deck and a good selection of real ales. Immediately before the *Old Crown* (don't miss!) turn **right** on a narrow passage signed to *Wey Navigation Towpath*.

- 2 The passage leads out to a road, Jessamy Road, of terraced houses. Turn **right** and go over a painted iron bridge onto Whittet's Ait. *This is another small island, this one being between the Wey and the Wey Navigation. It contains some gated apartment blocks and, in the centre, a public park where it is worth taking a pause.* Turn **left** on the drive and, in 50m, keep **right** on a path that runs beside the fence of the park. Follow the main path round to the **left**, meeting the River Wey. You come past a *National Trust* sign for the Wey

and Godalming Navigation. Go over the lock bridge and turn **left** beside Thames Lock along the Wey towpath.

- 3 The Wey Navigation is a vast project and walking the distance would take you far beyond Guildford, after waltzing beneath the M25 and reaching the *Anchor pub, site of several walks on this website*. You will be walking only 750m along the towpath. You pass some fine converted wharfs and a weir on your left. *The spire of St James, Weybridge is visible ahead to your left.* A long bridge takes you over a weir. On your left, the meandering “original” River Wey leads away to another (audible) weir. The river is wide now, with a necklace of opulent houses on the other side. You pass an elongated mansion with its own river deck, followed by another large house with a deck, a Dutch gable and tall pines. The next house, as the river bends left, is a *white ultra-modern* house with a large lawn and a matching garden chalet. Immediately opposite this modern house, go **right** over a 2-plank bridge into woods.
- 4 The path runs through a band of woodland, out to a tarmac drive. Turn **right** on the drive, shortly arriving at a junction where the drive bends right for *Hamm Court*. Turn **left** here by a 2-way footpath sign onto a narrow path that winds through woodland scrub. In 100m you come out through a small metal gate, under power lines, into an open meadow. Welcome to Chertsey Meads! You now have a 2-km walk across the open meadows. Keep straight ahead across the grass, heading for a line of chalet homes.
- 5 When you reach the chalets, turn **right** and **ignore** a stile on your left shortly after. Having passed the last chalet, go **left** and immediately **right** so that you are walking on the other side of the tree line. After walking for 80m beside the trees on your right, you come to a junction where a path joins through a gap on the right. The path forks here, heading for power lines. Take the **left**-hand fork, away from the trees, keeping generally to the left-hand side of the meadow. You are walking directly beneath the first set of power lines with two more sets over to your right. Your path diverges a little to the right of the power lines to go through a gap in the trees into another wide stretch of grass. Stay on the left-hand side of the meadow, heading for a pylon in the far corner. There is a stile in the corner but, by slipping to the **left** on a narrow path on the other side of the trees, you can avoid it.
- 6 After the stile, go past a metal barrier and across a flat bridge over the Bourne (Chertsey’s river). Ignore a stile on your right and keep **left** with the path, leading out into a large grassy open space. There are three paths leading across the grass. Choose the **middle** path which runs diagonally across. (As a guide, this is the only path which leaves the power lines.) In 400m, go straight over a crossing path, avoiding a minor left fork. You are gradually heading for several banks of trees on your right. In 250m, you are walking close to the trees and you can see a tarmac lane 30m away just beyond the trees. Continue for 300m, staying close to the trees and parallel to the tarmac lane until you meet a straight very solid tarmac crossing path. Turn **right** on it to meet the lane by an info board.
- 7 Turn **left** on the lane and, in only 30m, turn **right** at a footpath sign, between sturdy posts, on a wide tarmac path. Follow this bendy path as it threads past Bates Wharf. (The Marina with its outlet to the Thames and its forest of masts is visible over to your right.) You come out to a residential

road of tall apartment blocks. Turn **left** on the road and, in only 30m, immediately **before** the first apartment block, turn **right** on a path which runs between lines of parked cars. At the end, your path becomes a nicely landscaped riverside path. Just before you reach Chertsey Bridge, go **left** and **right** on a path which ascends to the level of the road and turn **right** over the bridge.

Chertsey road bridge is a historic monument and a grade-II construction from the 1780s. It was designed by James Paine who was also the architect of Richmond Bridge and a vast array of country houses. It consists of seven round arches mounted on stone piers and cost £6,813 4s 11d. Just like modern builders, the contractors worked "to spec" and charged an extra £700 to connect the bridge to the roads at each end.



8 After possibly pausing at the *Kingfisher* pub, turn sharp **right** at the other side, down to a small car park, and turn **left** along the waterside, going through a modern kissing-gate. You now have an easy 3-km walk along the Shepperton riverside, with full view of the Thames all the way, perfect for gongoozlers. As the info board tells you, this is Dumsey Meadow, a rarity.

There are not many unfenced water meadows on the Thames this close to the capital. In fact Dumsey Meadow is the only one (even Petersham has a stone wall). You may see cattle and even ponies grazing and you may notice a variety of types of grass (such as Yorkshire fog which is so hated in the USA and Australia).

Follow the river bank, passing info boards, pollard willows and anglers amidst the honk of geese. The river makes a long left curve and finally takes you through a modern kissing-gate. The river now makes a tight right-hand bend and you pass some wealthy houses, one with a delightful chalet in its garden. You next pass through Ryepeck Meadow.

This is a hamlet made of floating homes. Some of them are two-storey and some have a concrete hull, meaning they're watertight but pretty permanent. Some are this side of glamorous, some more so-so. Mooring fees are £9000 p.a. not including utilities and council tax (yes, they don't escape that). Note the boat called 'Luisa' with its line of ducks.

There are now some quite swanky properties on your left. Nearly 2 km from Chertsey Bridge you join a tarmac lane. There is a grass verge if you want to avoid the occasional car. Chalets, bungalows, villas and some quite stylish properties, every one unique, seem to vie for elbow space along both banks of the river. The grass verge becomes a wide willow bank. The island you pass is Pharaoh's Island.

Pharaoh's Island. previously called Dog Ait, was once wild and was given to Nelson as a fishing retreat after his victory at the Battle of the Nile (hence the new name). The first house to be built on it was named "Sphinx". Many more have followed. Access is by boat only and this has caused difficulties on winter nights. In 2011 music producer Keith Lownde was one of two people lost when he was bringing guests ashore after a party at his home.



Soon you arrive at the *Thames Court* pub which offers several real ales and a good beef brisket sandwich, served on its king-size patio. The big weir which you saw on the outward journey is now prominent. As you approach Shepperton Lock, keep **right** on a concrete path to go past the lock.

Shepperton Lock goes back to the Norman Domesday Book of 1086! It was built along the route of a narrow watercourse known as "Stoner's Gut". The present-day lock was constructed in 1813. Lock Island is on your right and it has a footbridge over the weir to Hamhaugh Island.

Incidentally, it is worth saying: you are still in Surrey! Well, historically Shepperton is in Middlesex, the Surrey bank being on the south side. In 1965, Middlesex was carved up (like Poland) and in 1974 Shepperton was absorbed into the new district of Spelthorne which is part of the county of Surrey.

Re-join the lane to arrive at a bend in the lane with the Shepperton-Wey-bridge Ferry on your right. The *Ferry Coffee Shop* is on your left.

Decision Point. If you are doing one of the shorter walks, your return route is now across to the opposite bank by the **ferry**. After the crossing, turn **left** along the towpath for either the **Walton Lane** or the **Walton Bridge** car park, retracing that part of your outward journey.

Return via Shepperton Village (use Eastern Map)

Take this section if you are doing the 8-mile walk, staying north of the Thames and ending by crossing Walton Bridge.

- 9 Turn **left** on the road, Ferry Lane, leading away from the river, making use of the footway. In 500m or so, at a T-junction turn **right** on Chertsey Road. Soon you are in Shepperton village with its little old cottages and larger mansions. As the road bends left, you reach the church square, the oldest part of the village, with St Nicholas church and two pubs, the *Anchor* and the *King's Head*. (The lane here is a dead end, only going to the waterside.) Continue on the main road, passing several pastel-coloured cottages until, 400m after the church, you see playing fields on your left. Shortly, opposite it, there is a park, Manor Park. Turn **right** through the park's car park to reach the grassy space.
- 10 The walk described here pays another brief visit to the river. If you do not mind skipping that, go diagonally **left** across the grass to a gate visible on the far side; here you will find yourself in the *small car park described below; otherwise ... Keep to the **right**-hand edge of Manor Park. In the corner, continue straight ahead on a wide path. Near the end, fork **right** to arrive at the riverside. Turn **left** (one way only!) along the river bank. In about 80m stay on the main path as it forks **left** into trees. In only 50m, look for a post with a white acorn symbol. Turn **left** here on a narrow path away from the river. (The lovely grass river edge straight ahead is a dead end, useful only for picnics and occasional canoodling.) As you enter a wide clearing, stick to the main path, shortly going over a flat bridge. You come out into a *small car park (free because it also serves Halliford School). Immediately go **right** between lines of yellow posts, past a white acorn indicating the *Thames Path*.
- 11 Veer **right** just before a water channel to go over a walkway in the direction of the *Girl Guide Hall*. Turn **left** before the closed access gate, to follow the walkway close to the road on your left. Stay on the grass until you join the road, at the start of a footway, by a bend in the river. *On your left now is the Red Lion, a highly-rated cosy pub with excellent tucker and that tasty Three Hop lager, its endearing feature being its large river terrace – with service!* As the river bends away, you see the start of a large green. Immediately fork **right** at a fingerpost on a path along the edge of the green. You come out to a



road near a white house. Cross over the road and walk across the green, keeping to the right-hand edge, parallel to the main road. In 150m you cross a driveway. Turn **right** at the corner of a house, entering a second green. Keep to the right-hand side, next to a brick wall, coming out to a road. Turn **left** on the road. In $\frac{1}{3}$ km you reach the large roundabout with the Walton Bridge ahead. Cross the river and turn **right** on the access lane, back to the car park where the walk began.

*Walton Bridge has been through **six** versions. Bridge no. 1, in 1747, was a pretty wooden structure which was painted by Canaletto on his visit to London. Bridge no. 2 was made of stone and designed by the same James Paine who designed Chertsey Bridge, in the same rounded style. It was portrayed by Turner. After about 70 years it collapsed. Bridge no. 6, opened in 2013, is a stylish single-span thrust arch bridge.*

Getting there

By car: Walton Bridge is easy reachable from any part of the South East. If you are approaching the bridge from the south side, begin as though going over the bridge, but turn **left** on Walton Lane before the main span.

For the **Walton Lane car park**, continue along the lane for 1 mile. The car park is through a hedge on your **right**.

For the **Walton Bridge car park**, go quickly **left** into the car park.

By bus/train: the walk is 1.3 miles from Weybridge Station; several buses take you part way, e.g. route 436, leaving you with only $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to walk up Thames Street. Several buses, such as route 458 run from Walton Station to Walton Bridge. Check the timetables.

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