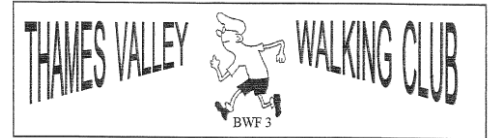


# READING RIVERS AND BUILDINGS WALK (PT52)



- CONTACT:** Geoff Bullock - 11a Budes Road, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 1PL  
Telephone - 07974 974236 E-mail – gblock11a@gmail.com
- DISTANCE:** 10km
- ENTRY FEE:** £1.00 per walker (Cheques made payable to Thames Valley Walking Club)
- AWARD:** Cloth badge at £2.00 each.
- START VENUE:** Riverside Car Park, off Richfield Avenue, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 8BD.  
(OS Landranger Map 175 GR: SU 710747).
- DIRECTIONS:** Follow signs towards Caversham. At roundabout by 'Crowne Plaza Hotel', take road towards 'Rivermead Leisure Complex' (with 'Crowne Plaza Hotel' on right) and then first right into 'Thames Side Promenade' to reach car park. The walk can also be started at Reading railway station at point marked (\*\*) after question 1.
- CAR PARKING:** At start venue (can be very full on weekdays). There are also several car parks located around Reading town centre & station areas.
- TRANSPORT:** Train & bus services to Reading, then the walk can be started at Reading railway station at point marked (\*\*) after question 1.
- FACILITIES:** Various cafe's, pubs & restaurants are available along the route.
- TERRAIN:** Roads & riverside footpaths. Suitable for pushchairs.

The organisers are not liable for accidents, thefts and/or damage to property. Every effort will be made by the organisers to make this a safe, enjoyable and memorable event.

## ROUTE DESCRIPTION

(Updated 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025)

### PLEASE REMEMBER TO TAKE GREAT CARE ON ALL ROAD SECTIONS OF THIS TRAIL

Leave car park & turn right on riverside footpath. Go under bridge & go ahead on riverside footpath with river on left. After approx 300m, pass Thames Avenue and continue ahead on riverside footpath to reach next road on the right by 'Isis Court'.

#### **Question 1: Looking across the river, what is the name of the boating business on the island?**

Turn right on road passing 'Isis Court' on your left. At end of road go ahead to cross dual carriageway using pedestrian crossing. Turn right & at roundabout turn left, passing 'TGI Fridays' on left. Follow road passing Fire Station on right and go under railway bridge. Take next road on left (Tudor Road) towards the railway station.

Follow road & at end, go ahead up steps beside station entrance to reach 'The Three Guineas PH' (\*\*). Bear right to roundabout, then turn left. At Heathrow Railair Coach Stop & Lounge, turn right to cross road. Turn left, then turn right into Blagrove Street.

At road junction, go straight ahead (passing Museum on left) to reach statue of Queen Victoria outside Town Hall. Turn right into Friar Street, passing 'O'Neil's' on right and Reading County Court on left.

#### **Question 2: On right is 'Slug & Lettuce' – above the end entrances, what was the building's former use?**

Go ahead crossing Station Road on right, then turn left to cross road using crossing, then turn right to continue along Friar Street for a further 80m. Immediately after 'Mystic Lounge Tattoo', turn left into narrow walkway (this is Union Street, locally known as "Smelly Alley" due to number of fish and butchers shops which used to trade from here). Continue to end and turn right into pedestrian area called Broad Street.

At road junction go straight ahead on left hand side of road (passing Metro Bank on left) & immediately after passing 'Reading Biscuit Factory', turn left through bollards onto Queens Walk, with 'Penta Hotel' on right. Head towards a red "Hexagon" post sign in the distance at the end of the walkway. At 'Hexagon', turn left & follow walkway, then road heading towards church to reach t-junction.

Turn right & follow road for approx. 50m to reach traffic lights (note the memorial on your left, on island in middle of road to Queen Victoria to commemorate her 50th year of reign in 1887). Go ahead to cross road & turn right into Castle Street. Pass 'Sun Inn' on right & at mini roundabout go ahead to reach lane of Alms Houses on left (opposite Police Station).

**Question 3: On right hand row of Alms Houses is a plaque – who erected the Alms Houses?**

Continue to roundabout & turn left down slope. Go under footbridge & bear left on road. Turn right into New Bright Street & follow to reach 'Asantewa House' (crossing the last remnant of Reading's tram lines). Continue to follow road to reach t-junction by 'House of Fraser'. Go ahead to cross road using traffic island on your left, then turn right. Turn left just before river bridge through metal bollards onto riverside footpath. (NB - No dogs are allowed through the 'Oracle' but this can be by-passed by continuing ahead on road over river bridge and walking towards the flyover. At traffic lights before flyover, bear left and walk along side of road on cycle/footpath underneath the car park to reach next major road junction. Go ahead to cross road and turn right to cross dual carriageway. Go ahead on road known as London Street passing 'Hotel 1843' on left to rejoin route at \* below).

At 'The Oracle' entrance (toilets inside), turn right to cross river on footbridge, then turn left. Follow riverside footpath through pedestrian area with river on left to reach road. Go ahead, across two roads using pedestrian crossings & turn right. Cross slip road and at road junction, go straight ahead to cross dual carriageway. Continue ahead on road known as London Street passing 'Hotel 1843' on left. \* After approx 100m turn left into South Street (opposite former 'Reading Savings Bank' building). At cross roads go ahead crossing over East Street and after approx. 20m, look at the first building on left (opposite 'Southern Court').

**Question 4: What is written over the top of the doorway?**

Continue on road to reach cross roads. Turn left into Sidmouth Street. At t-junction turn left to reach pedestrian crossing. Cross dual carriageway using crossing & turn right. After 10m turn left into Sidmouth Street & follow to reach river. Turn left, cross bridge with metal railings & bear right onto riverside footpath. Go up ramp & turn right to cross river using footbridge. Go down steps & turn right to reach main road.

(If the bridge is closed, continue along the riverside path to the next bridge, cross bridge, immediately turn right into Highbridge Wharf and down the steps/slope to riverside path, turn left with river on your right towards the closed bridge. Through wooden bollards, immediately turn left, then bear right to main road. At corner cross road to Reading Central Library and ahead into Abbey Square\*\*). At t-junction turn left & after approx. 100m turn right into \*\*Abbey Square (note Holy Brook flowing under library).

Follow road round right hand bend & continue on road to reach t-junction (note Abbey ruins & former Reading Prison in front of you). Turn left & follow road past Abbot's House on right to pass under Abbey Gateway. Turn left passing the Crown Court on your left & continue ahead. As road turns left, turn right & cross road to church. Bear left, then right to go round front of church. Immediately turn right along narrow walkway on other side of Church & follow through churchyard.

**Question 5: On the right before the exit is a wooden memorial to Henry West – what caused his demise?**

Continue ahead down steps to reach road. Cross the road & go ahead through gateway to enter Forbury Gardens. (This gateway is sometimes locked. If it is, turn left to reach another gateway into the gardens opposite Valpy Street.) After entering the gardens, head towards the Lion statue bearing right and pass to the left of the Maiwand Lion and to the right of the bandstand & head towards refreshment kiosk & Abbey Gateway. Exit gardens through gate next to refreshment kiosk and turn left on road.

Just before the end of the road, turn right & go ahead on walkway with lamp posts in middle. Go ahead, down steps & continue ahead on tarmac road bearing left to reach path junction by river. Turn left on riverside footpath passing Abbey ruins on left & with river on right. Just before road, go through green ‘Oscar Wilde’ gates. (If you wish to view Reading’s ‘Banksy’ - go ahead to reach road, then turn left towards roundabout and the ‘Banksy’ is on the wall of the former Reading Gaol on your left. Then retrace your steps back to the ‘Oscar Wilde’ gates). Bear right on footpath down slope with river on right. Follow footpath under road & continue ahead on riverside footpath to reach road.

**Question 6: What is the date on the crest opposite?**

Turn right on road & follow to reach t-junction. Turn left, cross river & immediately turn left down steps onto riverside footpath. Go straight ahead with river on left. Pass ‘Blakes Lock’ & continue ahead on riverside footpath to pass under two brick railway bridges. After approx 30m at junction of rivers (the mouth of the River Kennet entering the River Thames), turn right & immediately turn right onto the footbridge (Horseshoe Bridge). Follow bridge over river & at end of bridge go ahead, bearing left on riverside footpath. Follow footpath with river on right to reach playing fields known as ‘Kings Meadows’. Continue to follow footpath on right hand side of playing fields keeping river on right to reach Caversham Lock. Continue ahead on riverside footpath to pass under road bridge (Reading Bridge). Continue ahead on riverside footpath for a further 800m to reach Caversham Bridge. Go under bridge & continue ahead on riverside footpath passing ‘Crowne Plaza’ hotel to return to car park and end of walk.

\* \* \* \* \*

## PLACES OF INTEREST ON THE WALK

Horseshoe Bridge:	This was built principally to take the horses pulling the barges on the River Thames across the River Kennet. It is one of Isambard Kingdom Brunel’s lesser known works.
Huntley & Palmers:	Redevelopment has taken place on the old biscuit manufacturing site, although one original building still remains as a listed building (now converted into flats).
Reading Abbey & Gateway:	The Abbey gateway is the first part of the ruins you encounter on the walk & the best preserved. The Abbey was founded by King Henry 1 & it is believed that he is buried within the ruins.
Reading Prison:	The Victorian buildings are hidden within the perimeter wall. A notable prisoner was Oscar Wilde whose interment resulted in his famous work “The Ballad of Reading Gaol”.

\* \* \* \* \*

To claim your IVV stamp, please use the ‘Permanent Trail Completion & IVV Stamp Claim Form’ which is downloadable from the BWF website and send with your record books to the walk contact.