

Walk 20

Goring and Thames Path

This walk starts in the picturesque village of Goring with its historic flint buildings and wonderful riverside setting which inspired Turner. Follow the Thames Path through wildflower meadows and between wooded hills for spectacular views back towards Goring and the North Wessex Downs beyond.

Distance: 4 miles (allow 2½ hours)

Start: Goring and Streatley train station. Parking at the station car park or in the village.

Access Information: One short steep hill after leaving the Thames Path on the outward route. For those who may find the hill difficult, you can return along the Thames Path at ④ by the same route (still a very attractive 3 mile walk).

Refreshments: Pubs and cafes in Goring.

Route:

From the station, turn left and go past a pub on your right, then left to cross the bridge over the railway. Walk down Goring High Street to the end of the village to where the bridge crosses the Thames.

Just before the bridge, on the left hand side of the road, you will see a sign for the Thames Path; follow it alongside the bridge to the towpath. ① Turn left along the towpath as it curves slowly round with the river on your right to go under a railway bridge after about a mile. ② The brick railway bridge was designed during the 1830's by Isambard Kingdom Brunel, one of the greatest engineers of all time.

Continue under the bridge for about another ½ mile to where the Thames Path turns left away from the river by the side of Ferry Cottage. ③ Continue along the Thames Path as it turns right by the side of horse paddocks with views of the hills ahead.

For those not wishing to do the short but steep uphill section, it is recommended that at this point you return to Goring by the same route. Otherwise continue as below.

When you meet the edge of a wood, ④ turn sharp left uphill away from the Thames Path, and along the side of the wood, to go through a gate at the top at the entrance to Hartslock Wood Nature Reserve. Once through the gate, turn right along a steep footpath to the top of the hill. The chalk grassland provides a blaze of colour in spring and early summer. You will be rewarded with splendid views over the river and hills beyond. At the end of the last ice age meltwater broke through the hills to make its way to the sea, cutting through the chalk and creating the 'Goring Gap'.

Walk downhill to the gate at the bottom of the field, go through it and turn left along a track which soon joins a road. ⑤ Turn left along the road, ignoring the road to Gatehampton Manor, and shortly after you enter the outskirts of Goring. Continue straight on to return to the station.



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