

River Thames Walks Around Buscot

Buscot and Eaton Hastings – Walk Three

This walk is approximately 3 miles long and takes you around Buscot and east to Eaton Hastings and Kelmscott. It gives options along the way to take different routes.

From Buscot Lock take the track leading to the village, but turn left following the yellow waymarkers across the weirpool grass. Cross a small footbridge, and follow the edge of the field to a group of cottages on the site of Buscot Wharf. Note the shallow ditch between the cottages and the river; this was once a 'cut' which allowed barges to deliver salt, coal and other 'dirty' cargoes to the Buscot Park Estate.

At the lane, turn right, and walk to where the lane meets the road. Here you have 3 possible routes to follow; turning right again and following the path beside the road will bring you back to the end of Buscot village; turning left up the path beside the road will take you to Buscot Park. The third choice is to follow the waymakers across the fields to the left of the road, until you reach the site of Old Hart's Weir and the Anchor Inn at Eaton Hastings. All that remains of Hart's Weir and the Anchor Inn is a footbridge and a small outbuilding. The Anchor, which lay to the right of the bridge, was a very popular public house and campsite until it was destroyed in 1980 by a tragic fire. The National Trust, which owns the land, decided to let the site go back to nature. Traces of the foundations are all that remain.

Old Hart's Weir was the last 'flash' lock and weir on the Thames. Its removal in 1936 alleviated local flooding. Traces of the weir's concrete edge can be seen upstream of the footbridge.

The keeper at Hart's weir often doubled as a publican; the inn was used by those crossing the river as well as boatmen, and also by workers who maintain the 2 waterwheels. They lay behind the Anchor on the small backstream that you would have crossed to reach the Thames. The waterwheels supplied Buscot Park Estate, and were built at the time of Campbell's great agricultural expansion (see our "Historic Walk around Buscot" fact sheet for more information) but went out of use when the weir was removed. Look closely and you can see the concrete and brick foundations, and marks of the wheels, in the walls of the back cut.

Crossing the river, you again have a choice of routes: if you turn right; a short walk over the fields takes you into Kelmscott village where you can visit Kelmscott Manor, once the home of William Morris (famous textile designer).

Turn left at the bridge to return to Buscot, walking along the riverbank. Somewhere on this walk you will pass the site of another flash weir, known as Farmer's weir. It was removed in the middle of the 18th century and the exact position is not known. You will also see more modern relics, which really stand out, 2 lines of Second World War bunkers.

You will return to Buscot Lock by crossing the end of the new weir cut.