

Touring The Thames Valley: Part 1, Chertsey

The Thames Towpath has been on our list of places to visit for quite a while now, but as with all these things, things get bumped up/down, life or sometimes long haul trips get in the way, you know how it goes. We both naturally enjoy being around water and enjoy walking and cycling along Rivers and Canals. For one thing, they are usually dead flat – so no sneaky hills for us to contend with!

This Summer Holiday gave us the ideal opportunity to get cracking on our Thames Tow-

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path walk, and luckily we were able to get booked on to a couple of Club sites in ideal locations for us. So, after a gig on Friday morning, we threw everything we needed into Ruby the VW Campervan and set off south, only getting caught up briefly around Heathrow, which wasn't bad considering it was the Friday before the last bank holiday and we were travelling in the afternoon.

Our first campsite base was the **Camping and Caravan Club site at Chertsey** – situated right on the banks of the Thames, overlooking Chertsey Lock and Weir it was an ideal location for us. The Club Site was clean, spacious and tidy and we were very happy with our pitch which had a lovely view of the river.

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Last night I made a homemade Chicken Dhansak which I'd portioned up for our dinner tonight – an easy and delicious meal for our first night. Across the road from the club site is a 24 hours Spa and Petrol station so after a quick wander down the Thames and a pint at the local pub, The Kingfisher, we popped in and picked up a samosa to accompany our DIY curry night. The fresh samosas heated up very well in our **Ridgemonkey**.



As the site is situated close by to Heathrow, you get to watch the planes as they are ascending. We downloaded an app called Flight radar which was amazing as it told us where the flight was going and how long its flight

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was. We are so nosy and probably a bit geeky but we enjoyed ourselves!

We had a great night sleep and actually didn't wake up until 10am – which must be a camping first for us! The noise of the planes or the M3 certainly didn't bother us!

After a quick bacon bap, we made a packed lunch and donned our walking boots – we were heading off onto the Thames Path for a walk towards Shepperton.

The walk was a suggested walk off the **C&CC website** and took in the section of Thames Towpath between Chertsey and Shepperton, then we crossed the river via a 500 year old passenger ferry, before returning back to

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Chertsey via Weybridge and the River Wey. It was a lovely walk – and there were some absolutely magnificent riverside houses to admire the entire way round.



We enjoyed a half way beer at The Old Crown in Weybridge which was a quirky and historical little pub with a lovely terrace overlooking the river. The second half of the walk passed by a charming lock-keepers cottage, managed now by the National Trust.



You can view the walk as a PDF here: **Chertsey-Shepperton**

When we got back to Ruby, I put two jacket

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potatoes in the slow cooker (see recipe [here](#)) and settled in our chairs outside with a cider watching the planes and making the most of the late summer sun. 3 hours later, I reheated up a mexican bean and beef chilli that mum had made us whilst we were away in Cuba (thanks mum!) and we served it along with the jacket spuds and tacos and salad. It was delicious, and just what we needed after a long walk – plus the temperature was just starting to drop – proper comfort food.



Sunday dawned wet, wet, wet!

☒ Well, it wouldn't be a bank holiday would it without some rain. Actually we didn't mind it at all – some on the site were packing up and

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heading home, but we made the most of the enforced rainy day, but staying in bed till almost 2pm and having a massive chill- reading, catching up on crappy tele. All the things you don't do when its clear and you feel you should make the most of the day!



A break in the rain around 5pm meant a mad dash to the pub (well we had to walk Jazz!) for a swift pint – Keith enjoyed the local Windsor and Eaton Brewery Ale whilst I had a glass of fizz. Dinner on Sunday was a delicious Swartz Slow Cooker mix – chicken in red wine, served with mashed potatoes. It was gorgeous even if I do say so myself!



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Bank Holiday Monday arrived and it was time to move to our next site. We'd brought the Kayak and Stand Up Paddleboard with us to try out, as the Chertsey site has a launch point onsite. However because of the rain yesterday, we didn't get chance to launch, so we decided to stop enroute to our next site in Henley on Thames for a go instead. On our walk on Saturday we had spotted somewhere suitable for us to drive to and launch, so shortly after breakfast we waved bye to the Chertsey Club site and drove the short distance to Chertsey Mead B **carpark**. *This carpark has a height barrier of 2.1m in height

The Aldi Stand Up Paddleboard was fantastic – it took less than 10 mins to roll out and inflate. The Kayak sadly had picked up a hole

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in its bottom chamber and therefore we couldn't use it. We both had a good go on the SUP and I even managed to STAND UP! (for roughly a minute and a half!) It was exciting and we both felt proud that we'd given it a go and got across the Thames and back without drowning! (we do wear lifejackets!)



After a clean down of both the board and ourselves, we made our way to Runnymede National Trust- the site where the Magna Carta was signed and sealed over 800 years ago! The National Trust Parking is right on the river bank and is the perfect place for a picnic – something which everyone was doing. It was wonderful – I loved having a picnic of pizza (cooked in the ridgemonkey) and cheese,

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and salami whilst watching the boats going by. If I'd have realised we would have been picnicking here, I would have gone to far more effort - but we will definitely return here.



After lunch, we took a wander down to see the JFK memorial - apt as we will be visiting the site where he was assassinated in just a couple of months in Dallas. We also looked at the Magna Carta monument. There were tons of walks that were available and wonderful open meadowland. I really recommend a visit before the summer is out if you've not been and have time.



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Next stop before our next campsite was Ankerwycke – which is just across the river from Runnymede, but 15 mins in the car. Here lies a 2500 year old yew tree which is just astonishing.



There are some theories that now say that this was the site of the sealing of the Magna Carta, not across the river, due to it's proximity to a Benedictine Abbey – the remains of which you can see by the tree. The tree has a girth of 8 metres and is said to have been a location that Henry VIII canoodled Anne Boleyn. National Trust have devised a short circular walk that takes in some more of the Thames across the bank from Runnymede and some ancient woodland. It's very pretty

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but not brilliantly signposted so watch out!

We really, really enjoyed our visit to the Chertsey and Shepperton area of the Thames Valley- but for now it was time to move upstream for our next leg of our adventures.

Until Next Time

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