

Fairford to Quenington along River Coln

Park in the free car park at the top of Fairford High Street, beyond the church.

Walk distance 5¼ miles. Duration approx. 2½ hours. ***Please note this walk is not possible on Tuesdays due to permissive path being closed at the Oxpens.**

Path conditions generally good except for low field section before Quenington which may be muddy after wet weather conditions, when walking boots are required.

The walk is not suitable for push-chairs.

1. Leaving the car park, turn R along Mill lane, passing the Mill (2) on R and crossing the Mill pond bridge (3) to reach the Oxpens (4). These ancient wooden stalls remain from the time when pairs of oxen were used for ploughing. The buildings and all the land around belong to the Ernest Cook Trust.

Step through the doorway in the rear wall (*closed on Tuesdays) and follow the permissive path over the stream and along the field edge, keeping the waterways on R. Please observe notices regarding nesting birds/wildfowl (B).

2. After about 1 Km you reach a path T- junction with a tree trunk seat. This is the point you will come back to on your return journey, but for now, keep straight on towards Pitham Copse, and follow the path through the woods, until it rises and comes to an open field.

3. Turn R and follow the field edge to where a sign gives direction down a slope to the water's edge, where the path turns L and runs by the River Coln. Here the path narrows and can be muddy and slippery so care is needed. Follow the path until it opens out and the river veers away on R, until a metal squeeze gate (muddy at times) gives access to a lower field and a level track along the valley bottom, which soon comes to farm buildings and arrives at the bottom of Church Road, Quenington.

To the R is the Old Priory gateway, marking the home of the Knights Hospitallers in medieval times, and just beyond is St. Swithin's Church (28/29). This has two fine carved Norman doorways and is well worth a visit before continuing the walk.

4. On reaching Quenington you can either cross over Church Rd, direct into Victoria Rd, or you can turn L up Church Road as far as The Keepers Arms, then take next R into Mawley Road. Follow Mawley Road and then turn L at the junction into Victoria Road. Here take care on the high level footpath. At the next T-junction, go R towards Lechlade, and cross the Coln River bridge at Netherton.

5. After a short uphill road section, turn R, by Hope Cottage, along the access drive to Netherton House. A lane on the L leads you to a field path, which gives lovely views along the meandering river and across to Quenington on the opposite hillside. On leaving the field, turn R, and then L at the road and walk back towards Fairford.

6. After passing the Obelisk in the field to your R, look out for a large gateway on R and a wall plaque for 'The site of Fairford Polish camp 1947-1959' (19). Here a stone stile gives access to the Pitham brook path, a track which leads across the field and downhill to a pumping station. Follow the path to the Right past the pumping station and at the rear on L is a squeeze gate which leads to the riverside. This is where two foot bridges cross the river with weirs, an attractive spot known as 'The Cascades' (18), and shortly the track reaches the tree seat at the T-junction where, turning L, leads back to the Oxpens and Fairford Town.