

REMS RIVER WALK – THAMESHEAD

There are several guides to the Thames Path walks. The official National Trail Guide has been divided into two parts. “Thames Path in the Country” by David Harp and Tony Gowers and covers the Thames from the source to Hampton Court. Another useful guide is the Globetrotter “Walks along the Thames Path” by Ron Emmons. The whole route is clearly waymarked. Sections near the source can be subject to flooding and become impassable. The other consideration is public transport, which is fairly infrequent or non-existent. Hence the earlier “in the Country” walks will cover sections of the Thames Path, either as circular walks or linear walks up or down stream.

The first “in the Country” Thames walk was on the 27 October and seven well insulated members set out from Kemble Station. The day started cold with snow flurries in Bracknell, frozen rain drops in Newbury and -2C in Reading. On the walk it was beautifully sunny but with a keen north wind. Gill and David Pick took us on a circular walk which included the Thames Head. From Kemble Station we walked to the Thames Head sign. Even with all the rain we have had, no water was flowing but in the next field it was marshy and the juvenile river was flowing. Within ½ mile it was a fast flowing stream with lots of tributaries helping. At Ewen (Anglo Saxon for source) we were forced to leave the Thames path and walk along a quiet country road to reach Somerford Keynes for lunch in a country pub the Baker’s Arms. We then headed back to Kemble along a quiet country lane (with the obligatory grass growing in the centre of the road) to Poole Keynes. (One bus to Cirencester on Tuesday at 8.30.) Hence by a footpath to Kemble. It was surprising to see how much land was growing canes for organic fuels. Unfortunately the path, although clearly way marked, disappeared into ploughed fields, where the path had not been reinstated and we had to make our own. The ground was very sticky and one member lost his boot to the mud. The area has been wealthy for centuries as shown by the number of good Elizabethan buildings. Overall it was a very good day. See flyer for picture of the pub.

Text by David Pick and George Freeman, photos by GF.



River head



Hopeful signage



Infant Thames



Getting bigger



In flood at Somerford Keynes



The Manor House at Somerford Keynes



And bigger



Until in London – looking upstream towards Greenwich