

10 Leisure Walks of Discovery

A Boot Up

ROYAL BERKSHIRE

Mike Cope

The county of Berkshire is bordered by Oxfordshire, Surrey, Hampshire, Buckinghamshire and Wiltshire, and its county town is Reading. Since the nineteenth century, it has been referred to as a Royal County due to the presence of a royal residence, Windsor Castle, in the north east of the county. This was formally recognised by the Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth in 1958, and letters patent confirming this were issued in 1974. This book focuses on those parts of Berkshire most closely associated with that royal influence.

Windsor Castle is a favourite home of the Royal Family and the largest castle in England. Just across the river is Eton College - the most famous public school in the world. It has educated nineteen British Prime Ministers and sent forth 'a cohort of distinguished figures'. Windsor Great Park is owned by the Crown Estate and comprises 4,800 acres of woodland, farms and open fields, much of which is now open to the public. In former times it used to be part of a huge Royal hunting forest, dating back to the mid-thirteenth century.

The ten circular walks, eight of which include the Thames Path as part of the itinerary, range from 4 - 9½ miles. They suit the needs of families, groups of friends or individuals looking for a gentle stroll or a longer walk, and reflect the many varied facets of the area - its people, its history, and its working landscape and will help first time visitors to experience some of the great scenery the area has to offer. Many of the walks feature a pub along the route. Halsgrove's new-format guidebook, containing maps, photographs and useful information will ensure a great walking experience. Packed with colour, the book is an ideal reminder of a visit to the area.

Walks included are:

Pangbourne and Purley on Thames • Reading and Shiplake • Henley-on-Thames • Hurley and Marlow Cookham • Dorney and Bray • Windsor and Eton • Windsor Great Park • Ascot Heath • Swinley Forest



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

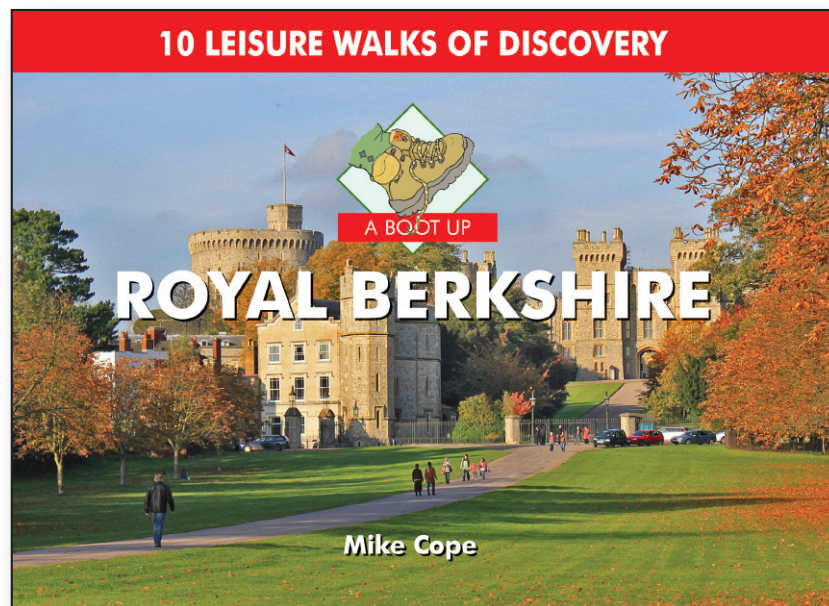
Mike Cope lives in Woking, Surrey and has been walking the Berkshire countryside with local and national walking groups for over 15 years. He is a freelance writer for *Country Walking* magazine, and has published over 30 walking routes for Surrey, Hampshire and Staffordshire. He has a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry, and when he isn't walking or writing, works as a consultant to the pharmaceutical industry. One of his ancestors (Richard Cope) was once the Chapter Clerk at St George's Chapel, Windsor and Eton College.

HALSGROVE CATALOGUE

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Halsgrove Publishing
Halsgrove House,
Ryelands Business Park,
Bagley Road, Wellington,
Somerset TA21 9PZ
Tel: 01823 653777
Fax: 01823 216796
www.halsgrove.com
e-mail: sales@halsgrove.com

HALSGROVE TITLE INFORMATION



Format: Hardback with full colour cover, 64pp, 110x155mm, illustrated with colour photographs and sketch maps.

Price: £4.99

ISBN: 978 0 85710 042 9

Imprint: PiXZ Books

Published: July 2011



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A BOOT UP ROYAL BERKSHIRE



Eton College from the playing fields



Spring azaleas in the Valley Gardens



Black Potts Weir



The Long Walk to Windsor Castle



Boat house on the Buckinghamshire bank of the Thames

2
Reading and Shiplake

right hand edge of cattle field with water on right hand side. Go through two narrow gates before reaching a way-marked junction.

10 Turn left here towards Shiplake and along the edge of high first wall. Zig zag right and then left at junction along narrow enclosed path, bounded by large conifer hedge. Go through two more gates and then bear left over a bridge.

11 Turn right along road and continue until you reach a T-junction. Turn right for the station car park or left if you've parked your car along Station Road. If you come by train, then there is a regular service (every 40 minutes) to Reading (changing at Fawley).

3 Henley-on-Thames
Follow the famous Henley Royal Regatta course on this 5 mile circuit along the Thames Path

1 Henley Regatta was inaugurated in 1839, and Prince Albert became its first Royal Patron in 1851. Since then the reigning monarch has always consented to being patron of the event. Unlike most rowing events, Henley operates a knock-out draw with only two boats in each heat. This can involve up to 90 races per day comprising of Eights, Fours, Coxed Pairs and Double Sculls. The length of the course is 1 mile and 550 yards – 112 metres longer than the standard international distance of 2000 metres.

Lock: 100m
Length: 3 miles (3 km)
Terrain: Fairly flat ramble along Thames Path, through woodland and across fields paths.
Park and Start: The Flower Pot pub car park in Aston (parking only).
Alternative start: Park in Henley and proceed to Henley Bridge. Pick up walk from point 4.
Start ref: 01753 6142
Postcodes: RG9 3JG
Public transport: Henley Station is around 500 metres away from point 4.
Refreshments and facilities: The Flower Pot, Aston, pubs in Henley.

3
Henley-on-Thames

Example of a double-page spread.