

## Three walks at Monmouth

- A Dixon Church and riverbank 2km (1 hr)
- B Hadnock and Peregrine Path 1.2km (40 minutes) to Hadnock Halt and back, but the walk can easily be extended for up to 5km
- C Monnow Bridge and the two rivers 1.9km (1 hr)

### About Monmouth

Monmouth is one of the main gateways into Wales. It grew up around its Norman Castle, which was the birthplace of Henry V in 1387 on a site close to the confluence of the two Rivers, Wye and Monnow. Walk C takes you to this location. The Medieval fortified bridge at the lower end of Monnow Street is the last of its type in the country. By the 1600s Monmouth was firmly established as a wealthy and thriving town and its trade was facilitated by the town's location on the navigable River Wye and also its position astride some of the important routes between the two countries of England and Wales. The town is now a popular centre for touring, sightseeing and enjoying the activities and attractions that are available in the nearby Forest of Dean and Wye Valley AONB.

You could combine any of these walks with a visit to the town centre which would be enhanced by obtaining a free copy of the Monmouth Visitor's Guide, available from the Monmouth TIC in Priory Street or the One Stop Shop in the Old Market Hall in Priory Street, close to Agincourt Square.

### Relevant OS Maps

Explorer OL14 – Wye Valley and Forest of Dean

Outdoor Leisure 162 – Gloucester and the Forest of Dean

### Walk A Dixon Church and Riverside

#### Brief description of the walk, path conditions and facilities

This is a 1¼ mile (2km) linear route using a stretch of the Wye Valley Walk along the riverbank from Monmouth Rowing Club to Dixon Church, returning the same way. The first 600m of the route follow a level path with gravel surface, and *the remaining 400m to the church*

*are grass paths across meadows that may contain livestock. There are three bridges on the walk, each with a pair of easy access gates, and a kissing gate at the entrance to the churchyard. The field path is generally level, but with some tufty and uneven sections and two places where the grass has been worn away by walkers, leaving an earth surface that may be slippery in wet weather.*

*Please note that in wet conditions paths with natural surfaces can become more uneven and difficult to negotiate.*

### **Start point for the walk**

Please note that the nearest toilet facilities are those in Agincourt Street, just off Agincourt Square, in the town centre.

Start this walk from the free public car park at the Rowing Club, located between the A40 dual carriageway and the river.

Visitors arriving along the A40 from Raglan should turn left at the traffic lights into Wye Bridge Street. Those coming from the Forest of Dean (Coleford) or Chepstow should cross the Wye Bridge and keep ahead at the A40 traffic lights. At the T-junction, turn right into St James Street to reach St James Square. Turn sharp right around the island, dominated by a large Catalpa tree, and turn left into Old Dixton road. Take the second right into a short cul-de-sac leading under the A40 road to the riverbank. The parking area is on the right.

Visitors arriving along the A40 from Ross should turn right at the Dixton roundabout (on the A40 signed for Monmouth) and follow the Dixton Road to traffic lights. Turn left into Monk Street and follow the road round to St James' Square. Turn left out of the square down Old Dixton Road, then take the second right into a short cul-de-sac leading under the A40 road to the riverbank. The parking area is on the right.

### **Detailed Walk description**

A longer version of this walk may also be downloaded from the Monmouthshire County Council web site

[http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/Monmouth/English/Environment\\_and\\_Planning/Countryside/Explore\\_the\\_Countryside/Local+and+Barrier+Free+Routes/](http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk/Monmouth/English/Environment_and_Planning/Countryside/Explore_the_Countryside/Local+and+Barrier+Free+Routes/) .

Leave the car park and use the concrete path in front of the rowing club to join the riverside path leading to Dixton Church. This path has a good gravel surface and extends along the bank for 600m, giving good views of scullers, rowers and canoeists using this part of the river. There are several benches along this path. Pass through the kissing gate into a field. From here on, there may be livestock in the fields – cattle, horses and sheep. Walk across the field using the worn grass path near the river back to reach a short footbridge (gated) and enter a second field. At the far side of the field cross another short bridge, to reach the third field. Take care on the first 10 metres of path, which is uneven and has a crossfall towards the river. Cross this field to pass through a kissing gate into St Peter's Churchyard, Dixton.

The present St Peter's replaced an earlier church which, with others along the Border, was ransacked by the Welsh Prince Owain Glyndwr in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It has existed on the present site ever since, though there have been later additions and the building was considerably altered in Victorian times. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Welsh Church Act allowed border parishes to vote on whether they wished to remain in Wales or return to England. Dixton voted 209 to 29 in favour of returning to England and thus is in the Diocese of Hereford. The Church is frequently subject to flooding, and there are brass plates set into the left side of the chancel arch, recording the more memorable flood dates. Note the balcony at the back of the church so that precious items can be put out of reach of the water. During the Monmouth Festival in July, the space at the rear of the nave is used for exhibitions, the church calling itself 'Dixton on the Fringe'.

There are two seats next to the path through the churchyard which provide a view of the river, before you return to the rowing club car park.

### **Walk B Hadnock and Peregrine Path**

### **Brief description of the walk, path conditions and facilities**

The Peregrine path is a cross border easy access route linking Monmouth (Hadnock Road) and the small riverside settlement of Symonds Yat East. The traffic-free section follows part of the former Ross-on-Wye to Monmouth railway and is an ideal walking and cycling route, suitable for all abilities and disabled access. It has been constructed by Sustrans to meet exacting standards in view of the highly sensitive nature of this area of international conservation significance.

This barrier free easy access route is over 5km in each direction. Visitors preferring a shorter route could go as far as Hadnock Halt (600m each way from the start of the off-road route) or perhaps to Biblins suspension footbridge (3.5km each way).

### **Start point for the walk**

There are no facilities, and parking space is limited, though there is dedicated parking for disabled badge holders.

Visitors approaching Monmouth from the Forest of Dean (Coleford) should descend the long hill from Staunton and turn right at the mini roundabout at May Hill (the last or first pub in Wales) into Hadnock Road.

Those arriving from the Chepstow/Tintern should turn right at Lidl supermarket and then turn left at the mini roundabout into Hadnock Road

Travelling south on the A40 dual carriageway, pass the Dixon roundabout, and keep in the left hand lane in order to turn left at the traffic lights to cross Wye Bridge. Keep straight on at the junction (signed for Coleford and Forest of Dean) and then turn left at the mini roundabout into Hadnock Road.

Travelling north on the A40 go straight ahead at the traffic lights (no right turn allowed), go all the way around Dixon roundabout to return to the traffic lights, and turn left. Keep straight on at the junction

(signed for Coleford and Forest of Dean) and then turn left at the mini roundabout into Hadnock Road.

Follow the Hadnock Road through the industrial estate and continue along the narrow single track road for 2.2km to reach a small parking area on the left at the start of the off-road section of the Peregrine Path.

### **Detailed Walk description**

Start the walk on a well constructed gravel surface to reach Hadnock Halt in 600m. Here there is an interpretation panel summarizing the history of Ross-on-Wye to Monmouth Railway. Continue further on to the Biblins suspension footbridge across the river (3.5km), or even go all the way to Symonds Yat East (5.5km) where it is possible to be met by a car for your return. There are 2 pay and display car parks in the village, together with pubs, café, toilet, pedestrian ferry and river cruises.

### **Walk C Monnow Bridge and the Two Rivers**

#### **Brief description of the walk and path conditions**

This is a linear, easy access and barrier free walk (800m each way) along the bank of the River Monnow to its confluence with the River Wye, *using a level gravel track and later a grassy field path.*

*Please note that in wet conditions paths with natural surfaces can become more uneven and difficult to negotiate.*

Monnow Bridge is the last surviving example in Britain of a medieval fortified river bridge, where the gate tower actually stands on top of the bridge. This form of fortification was once quite common throughout Europe. The present bridge was built in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century to replace an earlier wooden bridge which stood on the same site. The gate tower was added a century later. Tolls were collected at this and other town gates for over 500 years. The bridge was closed to vehicles in March 2006 on the same day that a new bridge was opened a short distance downstream.

### **Start point for the walk and facilities**

Use the pay and display car park at the southern entrance into Monmouth, situated between the River Monnow floodbank and Waitrose supermarket. Public toilets are situated near the car park on the corner of Blestium Street and Monnow Street (the town's main shopping street). There is a separate disabled WC, Radar key operated. A Radar key is kept at the Robin Hood Inn, opposite.

### **Detailed Walk description**

Start the walk by visiting Monnow Bridge, which is now pedestrianised, with picnic tables in the street outside The Gatehouse pub. A farmers' market is held on the bridge approach on the fourth Saturday of every month.

It is worth crossing the bridge to inspect the impressive millennium plinth on the left. This incorporates 40 individually designed ceramic tiles, each depicting an important event in Monmouth's long history, starting in the Iron Age and continuing through to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Two seats are provided in the paved area adjacent. St Thomas's Church is next door and serves Overmonnow – that part of Monmouth situated beyond the river Monnow. A late 19<sup>th</sup> century cross now forms the main feature on the traffic roundabout at the end of the pedestrian area.

Return to the town side of the bridge and turn right up a short tarmac ramp to cross the flood bank, and continue along a 3m wide track with graded stone surface. This track is closed to vehicles except those needing to reach the allotment plots ahead. After 100m pass beneath the new Monnow bridge and continue for a further 200m to pass below the A40 dual carriageway road bridge to arrive at the allotments. A seat on the right overlooks the river to the steeply sloping wooded hillside beyond.

Continue straight ahead, leaving the track to follow a grassy earth path leading into the Millennium Field. This large meadow which is bordered by the two rivers is managed by a group of volunteers who are developing it as an accessible area attractive for local people,

visitors and for a diversity of wildlife. Wildflower trial plots have been established in order that a traditional hay meadow may be created in the years ahead.

Continue along the edge of the meadow for 350m to reach the confluence of the rivers. Two seats are provided at this pleasant spot, where you may sight a kingfisher if you are lucky. Further downstream the Wye is crossed by an iron girder bridge which once carried the railway line from Monmouth to Ross-on-Wye. This bridge is to be incorporated into a walking and cycling route in the near future. It will provide a direct traffic-free link between the town centre and the outlying suburb of Wyesham as well as providing a connection to the Peregrine Path (see Walk B).

Retrace your route back under the A40 road bridge. As an alternative route, it is possible to climb the steps over the flood bank and use the path past the Bowling Green and tennis courts to reach Chippenham Mead, the main town park. It is then only a short distance back to the car park.