

The Architect and River Dee, Chester, Cheshire



Moderate Terrain

6 miles
Circular
2 to 2.5
hours

210114



Access Notes



1. The walk is relatively flat and follows mostly well-made surfaces.
2. There are just a couple of short stretches which follow grass bank paths which can get a bit muddy after rain and in winter.
3. There are no stiles or gates on route, just a few flights of steps and staggered barriers.
4. You will be sharing the riverside paths with cyclists so take care with children and dogs.

The Architect is a classic pub restaurant within Chester's city walls overlooking the racecourse at Roodee.

A 6 mile circular walk from the Architect in Chester, Cheshire. The walking route has real variety with something for everyone: the bustling city streets, quiet suburban residential lanes, modern commercial estates, a section of the ancient city walls and very long peaceful stretches of paths alongside the River Dee.

Getting there

The walk starts and finishes from the Architect, which is sandwiched between Nun's Road and Nicholas Street in Chester.

Approximate post code **CH1 2NX**.

There is a very small pub car park accessed from the Nicholas Street side, but whilst you are completing the walk please use one of the public car parks nearby. The easiest is Little Roodee Car Park (alongside Grosvenor Bridge and accessed from Castle Drive, **CH1 1SL**) which costs £3 for 3 hours (correct Summer 2013). From this car park come out of the steps to the right of the cafe, cross over the road junction into Nun's Road and walk up past the racecourse on the left – you'll find the pedestrian entrance to the Architect just a little way along on the right.

Walk Sections



Start to Grosvenor Bridge



From the courtyard garden in front of the pub, come down the steps and along the paved path to leave the pub grounds through the gate into Nun's Road (with the racecourse directly opposite). Cross over with care and turn left along the pavement with the racecourse and part of the old city wall running on the right.

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Chester Racecourse, known as the Roodee, is according to official records the oldest racecourse still in use in England. Towards the centre of the in-field is a raised mound which is decorated by a small cross known as a rood. The course's name, Roodee, is a corruption of the term Rood Eye, meaning The Island of the Cross.

You will come to a junction with Grosvenor Road. Turn right along Grosvenor Road and follow this over Grosvenor Bridge across the River Dee. Grosvenor Bridge, at one time the longest single arch masonry bridge in the world, was designed by the architect Thomas Harrison and opened in 1832. Harrison, born in Yorkshire and completing his early training in Rome, also designed much of Chester Castle. The Architect pub is named in his honour. He designed the pub building as his own residence, and lived there for many years.

1 → 2 Grosvenor Bridge to Mount Pleasant



At the far side of the bridge, pass by the cemetery gates on the left and, immediately afterwards, turn right over a footbridge which has beautiful lattice iron-work sides. This leads you to the bottom of the road called Dingle Bank. Follow this to the T-junction with Curzon Park North. Turn right along this residential road and further on, at the next major fork, keep left into Earlsway.

This Chester suburb, Curzon Park, is well known for having some of the city's largest and most prestigious residences. Continue for some distance along this quiet suburban road and, just after a bus stop, turn right into Mount Pleasant.

2 → 3 Mount Pleasant to Dee Footbridge



Immediately after the garden fencing and brick sub-station, fork right down a signed stone footpath. Keep straight ahead at the bottom of the slope as this path passes under a pretty old railway arch. Pass through the staggered barrier and continue on the path which passes through a tunnel of trees with a golf course to the right.

As you emerge from the trees keep ahead for a few more yards to reach a T-junction of paths with the river immediately in front of you. Turn left along the grass embankment. After a little distance the path passes out through a staggered barrier to reach a T-junction with the main road within a commercial park. Cross over with care and turn right along the pavement. You have now crossed the border into Wales. Keep ahead for some distance on the road, passing a whole range of commercial and industrial businesses.

Where you reach a width restriction section in the road, bear left, cross the side road and keep right to continue on the pavement. You will pass a large superstore selling outdoor equipment on the left. When you reach the post box, turn right across the road to join the tarmac cycle path which swings left alongside the river. Keep ahead on this riverside path for some distance, and eventually you'll reach a footbridge over the river.

3 → 4 Dee Footbridge to Border Crossing



Turn right across the bridge towards the collection of houses known as Higher Ferry and, at the far side, turn sharp right to join the cycle path (Number 568 to Chester) heading back along the river. Follow the tarmac track with the river now to your right.

The River Dee flows for 70 miles, rising in Snowdonia and discharging to the sea in an estuary between the north-east Wales coast and the Wirral Peninsula.

At the second left hand bend in the path, where the industrial units on the opposite bank end, you will reach a pair of granite pillars which mark the border crossing where you re-enter England. Take a moment here to inspect the inside surfaces of these which are polished and then etched with series of pictures including footsteps, horse tracks, a lighthouse and various birds.

4 → 5 Border Crossing to End



Continue on the (now very straight and seemingly endless!) path with the river still on the right. Some people consider walking on

this sort of long straight path to be lacking in interest, but I always believe a path is what you make of it. Take time to appreciate the peaceful setting and look out for the many birds that make the river their home (you may be lucky to see a heron and/or cormorants drying their wings); a great opportunity for reflection.

As the river begins to swing right you'll come to a fork in the path. Keep right and then right again at the next fork a few paces later, with the river still to the right and a pretty line of trees to the left. At the end of the park the path swings left to reach a pavement alongside the road.

Turn right along the pavement, passing a number of new flat developments which have been created in this area of the old port. Pass over the old lock and if you look to the left you'll see a dead end branch of the Shropshire Union Canal. When it was opened, the Chester Canal had locks down to the River Dee. Canal boats could enter the river at high tide to load goods directly onto seagoing vessels. The port facilities here at Crane Wharf made an important contribution to the commercial development of the north-west region.

Continue into New Crane Street and keep straight ahead at the crossroads, passing the old Chester Electric Lighting Station on the left (an ornate red brick building dating back to 1896, still with a carved stone crest adorning the top of the balustrade).

Keep ahead on the pavement passing under the railway arches and you'll pass the buildings of Chester Racecourse on the right. The road swings left and you'll come to a gate within the red sandstone city walls, Watergate. Pass under the small stone arch within the walls and turn right into Nun's Road. Go up a couple of steps to join the path along the top of the walls. Continue for just a little distance and you'll come to the Architect on the left for some very well earned hospitality.

Disclaimer

This walking route was walked and checked at the time of writing. We have taken care to make sure all our walks are safe for walkers of a reasonable level of experience and fitness. However, like all outdoor activities, walking carries a degree of risk and we accept no responsibility for any loss or damage to personal effects, personal accident, injury or public liability whilst following this walk. We cannot be held responsible for any inaccuracies that result from changes to the routes that occur over time. Please let us know of any changes to the routes so that we can correct the information.

Walking Safety

For your safety and comfort we recommend that you take the following with you on your walk: bottled water, snacks, a waterproof jacket, waterproof/sturdy boots, a woolly hat and fleece (in winter and cold weather), a fully-charged mobile phone, a whistle, a compass and an Ordnance Survey map of the area. Check the weather forecast before you leave, carry appropriate clothing and do not set out in fog or mist as these conditions can seriously affect your ability to navigate the route. Take particular care on cliff/mountain paths where steep drops can present a particular hazard. Some routes include sections along roads – take care to avoid any traffic at these points. Around farmland take care with children and dogs, particularly around machinery and livestock. If you are walking on the coast make sure you check the tide times before you set out.

