

Arrow Mill, Alcester and the River Arrow, Warwickshire



Moderate Terrain

4 miles
Circular
2 hours

210718



Access Notes



1. The walk is relatively flat, with just a few short slopes along the way.
2. It follows a mixture of roadside pavements and grass meadow paths.
3. The meadow paths can be muddy at times and, as some of the meadows are flood plains for the River Arrow, the walk should not be attempted after unusually prolonged periods of heavy rain.
4. You will be sharing some of the meadows with sheep, so take particular care with dogs.
5. You will need to negotiate a few kissing gates, two wooden stiles (with fence gaps suitable for dogs up to Labrador size) plus two footbridges that have metal bar-type stiles at each end (these should be simple for dogs to negotiate, but humans may need to stretch a little to clear them!).

Arrow Mill is surrounded by a spectacular, secluded riverside setting and has been beautifully refurbished to create the ideal country pub.

A 4 mile circular pub walk from Arrow Mill near Alcester in Warwickshire. The walking route heads north, visiting the isolated church in Arrow and emerging into the meadows alongside the River Arrow. A quick loop around the Roman market town of Alcester reveals a wonderful mix of historic buildings, some dating from the 1400s, before the riverside meadows lead you back to Arrow Mill.

Getting there

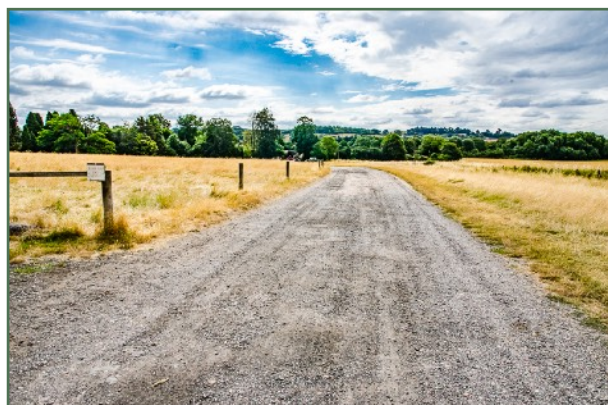
The Arrow Mill pub sits on the banks of the River Arrow, just south of Alcester and about 8 miles west of Stratford-upon-Avon. The mill is accessed from the road that runs between Alcester and Wixford and is opposite the entrance gates for Ragley Hall (which is marked with brown tourism signs). If you are coming by car, the pub has its own large car park and if you are coming by bus, there are bus stops at the end of the pub's driveway.

Approximate post code **B49 5NL**.

Walk Sections



Start to Holy Trinity Church



Leave the Arrow Mill car park and follow the access drive leading you back to the road. Cross over to the far pavement with care and turn right along this, passing the entrance gates for Ragley Hall on your left. Continue past the 40mph signs and then, as you draw level with the black-and-white Walnut Cottage on your left, turn right, crossing back over the road to take the entrance drive signed to the church and saw mill. Pass alongside the cattle grid via the kissing gate and keep ahead along the stone access drive.

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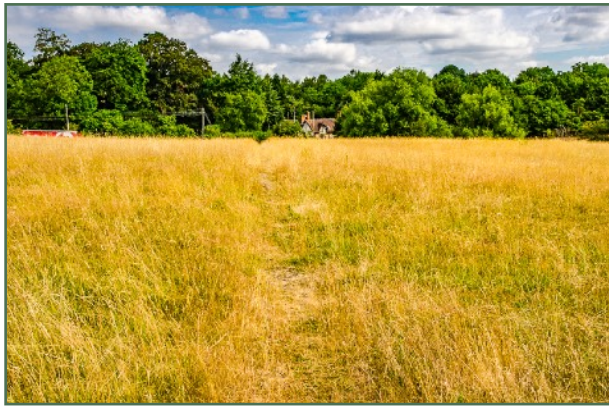
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As you reach a fork in the drive, take the left-hand branch which leads you to the next cattle grid. Pass alongside this grid (there is an old kissing gate just to the left of it) and you will reach Holy Trinity Church on your right. This is worth a quick visit if you have the time. Holy Trinity Church has stood here on the banks of the River Arrow since at least 1086. The current tower has a datestone which reads 'Built at the expense of the Rt Hon the Earl of Hertford 1767'. The family seat for the Earls of Herford is Ragley Hall, just across the road from here. The church was expanded to double its size in the Victorian era.

1 → 2 Holy Trinity Church to Oversley Mill View



When you are ready to continue, turn right out of the church to continue a few paces further along the driveway. The driveway forks at this point, with the drive for The Old Rectory on your left and the drive for The Coach House on your right. Take the left-hand option (don't worry that this appears to be a private driveway – we are following the public footpath) into The Old Rectory and stay directly alongside the tall hedgerow on your right. This will lead you to a small, old, metal gate ahead.

Pass through the gate to enter a large meadow and walk straight ahead, following the path which soon becomes partially tarmac. Continue towards the kissing gate at the far side but, just a few paces before you reach this gate, turn sharp right to join a grass path leading you along the left-hand edge of the meadow. The path leads you to a metal footbridge over the stream on your left, with metal barriers at each end (which you need to step/climb over). Cross the bridge (or if you prefer, there is also a small ford/rough stepping stones stream crossing point just a little further along) and, once on the far side, bear right to follow the grass footpath. At the end of the meadow, you will reach a wide metal gate with a stile alongside.

Cross the stile and follow the enclosed stretch of path, winding and undulating through the trees and swinging hard left to pass under the road bridge. As you emerge from this underpass, you will see a choice of two paths. Take the left-hand path which leads you to another wide metal gate with a stile alongside. NOTE: You are likely to come across sheep within the fields from this point.

Cross the stile to enter the pasture and turn immediately right, following the fenced hedgerow on your right. Where the hedgerow bends right, follow the grass path ahead which meets the next line of trees at a footbridge. Cross this footbridge (the metal barrier steps are lower on this one – indeed they seem to pose no problem for the spritely lambs!) to enter a second pasture. Keep ahead along the right-hand edge of this pasture to reach a waymarker post with a choice of two paths. Take the right-hand branch, staying alongside the hedgerow on your right. At the end of this second pasture, go through the metal kissing gate to enter a third meadow.

2 → 3 Oversley Mill View to High Street

Walk ahead for just a few paces along the right-hand edge and then pause to look back over your right shoulder. On the opposite banks of the River Arrow, you will be able to see Oversley Mill. There has been a watermill here since at least 1086. The mill was



used to grind corn for most of its lifetime, although for a period between 1825 to 1844 it was converted into a needle mill by the local needle manufacturing firm, Holyoake of Redditch. After further time as a corn mill, the mill ceased operations in 1925. The three-storey, red-brick building is now a private dwelling, but the attic level door for taking in the corn can still be seen.

Continue along the right-hand edge of this third meadow, with the hedgerow and river running on your right. At the far side, pass through a kissing gate to reach a junction with a tarmac footpath, with a pedestrian river bridge just to your right. Do NOT take this, instead turn left to join the tarmac footpath leading you directly away from the river. This path leads you between a children's play area and allotments, to reach the end of a residential road, Bleachfield Street. Go ahead along the roadside pavement and continue to the T-junction with Swan Street. Cross over to the far pavement with care (there is a pelican crossing to the left should you need it), turn right and then immediately left into Alcester High Street.

3 → 4 High Street to St Nicholas Church



Follow the left-hand pavement leading you along the pretty and bustling High Street. About half-way along, look out for the gold post box on the right-hand side of the road – this was painted gold to celebrate the Olympic Gold Medal won by showjumper Nick Skelton during the London 2012 Games, Alcester being his home town.

The High Street makes the perfect place to pause and understand the town's history. Alcester is a market town of Roman origin, founded by the Romans in 47AD as a walled fort. The site was strategically important, sitting at the junction of the River Alne and River Arrow and also sited on Icknield Street, a Roman road that ran the length of Britannia from the north near Hadrian's Wall to southwest England. Today the town features architecture from the Medieval, Tudor, Georgian and Victorian periods as well as from the 1900s. Alcester is thought to be home to oldest inhabited Tudor house in Warwickshire.

As you reach the top of the High Street you will see the tower of St Nicholas Church ahead. The clock sits in a very unusual position, on the corner of the tower rather than one of the tower

sides, to ensure it can be seen from the High Street. The church tower dates from the 1300s with the remainder being a Georgian addition from about 1730.

4 → 5 St Nicholas Church to Parkland Path



Do NOT enter the churchyard, instead take the paved, wide alleyway which runs immediately to the left of the church wall. This alleyway is known as Butter Street, it is one of the town's oldest streets and is home to a number of important historic houses. You will pass Church House and Verger's Lodge on your left as well as Castle House on your right. Look out for the last house on your left, Number 3 The Beehive, which dates from 1444.

At the end of the alleyway you will emerge into a parking area and you will see the magnificent Grade I listed Alcester Town Hall ahead. In 1618 the Lord of the Manor of Alcester, Sir Fulke Greville III, provided the sum of £300 for the building of this market hall. Prior to that traders and customers would have gathered at a well and market cross. The timber-framed upper floor, with its magnificent roof, was constructed at the later date of 1641. The arches of the ground level were open, and all kinds of produce would have been traded using the space between the pillars, particularly those which needed shelter from the sun like cheese, or expensive goods such as silk which had to be kept out of the rain. The basement was used as the town prison and lock-up until 1850 when a police station was opened in Henley Street. Today the hall is used for all kinds of community events and meetings, from grand weddings to fitness classes.

When you are ready to continue, pass just to the right of the town hall and, taking particular care, cross over the road. Turn right along the pavement, heading back on yourself with the church across to your right. This short stretch of Church Street leads you past several Georgian properties on your left. Where the road bends right, go straight ahead to join the next pedestrian street, known as Malt Mill Lane. On your right is the impressive black-and-white Old Malthouse, dating from around 1500.

Follow the pretty street, leading you ahead. Despite the fact that the properties are lacking front gardens, all the residents make a great effort to create an impressive flower display in the summer months. At the end of the pedestrian stretch, follow the road as it bends right and, immediately after passing a large horse chestnut tree, turn left to join a tarmac path leading you through an area of parkland.

5 → 6 Parkland Path to Riverside

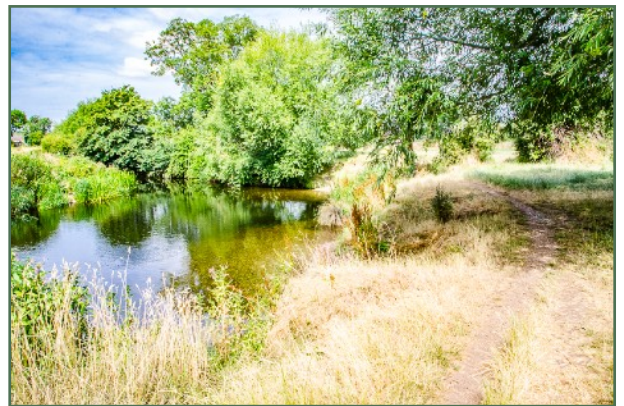
At the end of the parkland, you will emerge to a T-junction with the Stratford road. Cross over (using the designated crossing just to your right) and, at the far side, turn left to join the pavement which leads you into the side road at the edge of Oversley Green.

Where this right-hand pavement ends, swap to join the left-hand pavement and follow this along the pretty, leafy road. There are several impressive old trees on this road, including willow, lime, cherry and sycamore. The road leads you to a beautiful old stone



bridge over the River Arrow. Do NOT cross the bridge, instead turn right immediately beforehand, passing through a metal kissing gate to enter a riverside meadow.

6 → 7 Riverside to End



Follow the path along the left-hand edge of this riverside meadow, with the river running to your left. The path meanders ahead, leading you past a beautiful knotted willow tree on your right and an idyllic beach-like bend in the river on your left. Stay with the meadow path, passing a large ash tree to reach a kissing gate on your left (just before a tarmac path begins ahead). Turn left through this gate and continue along the left-hand edge of this second meadow (with the river still on your left). At the far corner, the path leads you through a hedgerow gap and continues along the left-hand edge of a third meadow.

At the far side you will reach a junction with a tarmac path, which you should recognise from the outward leg (with a kissing gate ahead and a river footbridge to your left). From this point, we will be retracing our steps back to Arrow Mill. Go ahead through the kissing gate and continue along the left-hand edge of this first meadow. At the far side, go through the kissing gate, continue along the left-hand edge of this second meadow and cross the footbridge to reach the third meadow. Bear left along the grass footpath to reach the gate and stile on the far left-hand side.

Cross the stile and follow the tree-lined path which soon swings right under the road and winds on to reach a stile. Cross the stile to enter the meadow, keep ahead and then cross the stream via the footbridge (or ford/stepping stones). At the far side, turn right to meet the tarmac meadow path (alongside the kissing gate) and then turn sharp left to join the tarmac path (leading you away from the gate).

At the top, pass through the old metal gate, keep ahead along the driveway and then past the church to reach a cattle grid. Pass alongside the grid and follow the driveway as it swings right and exit via the gate alongside the next cattle grid. Cross over the road with care to the far pavement and turn left along this. Pass the Ragley Hall entrance and then cross back over the road to turn left into the entrance drive for Arrow Mill. Follow this drive up to Arrow Mill for some 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.

