



The Lime Tree walking tour (along the former city walls)

The visit can begin anywhere along the route. Place d'Evreux as a starting point is simply a suggestion. Total time: about an hour

Place d'Evreux (1) Looking down Rue d'Albuféra towards the river Seine, start on the right along Avenue Gambetta (at the corner of Société Générale bank), lined with lime trees. Straight on to the next crossroad; there left (still under the lime trees) and straight on, across Place de Paris (with a fountain in the centre) (3) and down to the traffic lights of the main road. Don't cross it, but turn left. A 100m farther, a section of the old city wall (4). Walk a few steps into the next street on the left (rue Bourbon Penthièvre) (5) and back. Now cross the main road (careful, heavy traffic) to the riverside. (6) Follow the path on the left along the river.

At the end of the path (near Côté Marine restaurant), cross the road (pedestrian crossing in front of the restaurant. Careful, heavy traffic). This is Place Chantereine. Continue in front of you (still under the lime trees) in rue de Point du Jour (or take now the short round tour - marked in green) and turn left almost immediately into rue des Ecuries des Gardes. (9) At the end, turn right into Avenue Victor Hugo (10 & 11) to come back to Place d'Evreux.

What to see

1 - Place d'Evreux : this is where Evreux Gate rose, a medieval gate with a drawbridge. it was pulled down in 1771. The 1940 bombings have completely altered the look of the place.

2 - On the right (number 19) notice a garage that has retained the carved pillars and the ornamental front of a former branch of a local bank. After the 1940 bombings that destroyed the city centre, commercial activities were held in wooden sheds or in the few buildings that remained standing - as the bank agency in this garage!

3 - Place de Paris (in the centre : Chérence fountain, -named after its donor in 1884) used to be closed by Mantes Gate, pulled down around 1750. Its

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stones are said to have been used to build the magnificent stables of Château de Bizy. The grounds opposite (where the cinema is) used to be the city's burying ground until 1875. The lime tree avenue farther down on was merely an alley of the cemetery.

3 - Hidden behind the remnants of the city walls, rue Bourbon Penthièvre (5) exhibits interesting half-timbered houses from the 15th - early 17th centuries. Also a beautiful view on the chevet of Our Lady church.

6 - Along the river

Rue Bourbon Penthièvre used to go down to the river. On the left, two monuments recall the sacrifice of Commonwealth troops in 1944 who suffered high losses to cross the river Seine. The carving, damaged in 1944 and now placed on the wall on the right, shows an episode of the life of saint Adjutor, patron saint of bargees, and venerated in Vernon. The large house behind once belonged to the Duke of Penthièvre (Louis XIV's grandson) : he was extremely charitable and was called the «Father of the poor». The house almost had another famous inhabitant later: Claude Monet tried buying it in 1883 but couldn't find the money.... He had to go and live in Giverny, three kilometers away. After walking past the bridge, a beautiful view on the right bank, its hills, the remains of the medieval bridge and Tourelles Castle. In summer the water is dotted with the multicoloured boats of the sailing club and school.

7 - Place Chantereine : Along the Seine there rose a tower and a few meters farther a city gate (being very narrow it was destroyed in 1804 to make room for the traffic) . A tradition says that Queen Blanche de Navarre, who often resided in Vernon, was in a tower of the gate in May 1364, anxiously waiting for messengers to bring her news of the battle (taking place a few kilometers away, at Cocherel) between the King's army and her brother's (Charles II of Navarre).

On the other side of the main road, you can see a large half timbered house (in a bad state of repair). It used to be a select inn in the 18th c. The gallery on the left is where the rooms were. The most famous traveller who stopped there is Napoleon. On the right of this former inn, a section of the 2.66m thick city walls.

Before proceeding to rue du Point du Jour (on the right of the wall), a short (400m long) round tour in an old district of the town is suggested,

8 - In front of the former inn, cross rue Potard on the left, continue towards the city centre into rue Carnot. Very soon on the left a 15th c. looking house, but decorated by a local artist in the 1920s. Farther on he left (8a) several half timbered houses from various times: Nr 102: early 17th c. - Nr 96, late 17th c. (the thick stone moulding, the fairly symmetrical windows, the wrought-iron balconies give the house a very «classical» look in spite of the building material). At the street corner a 15th c. corbelled house with a fine Annonciation carving in the corner. Turn left a few steps into the street (rue du Pont) to look at the facade of a 17th c. private mansion. Turn around to see a large half timbered construction with a medieval tower rising behind. Proceed to this construction at the back of the car park and turn right into rue Potard (8b), one of the oldest streets, lined with several 16th c. houses. On the left, in one or two yards, you can catch glimpses of the city walls . On the right the large stone and wood building used to house the stables and sheds of the coaching inn. At the end of the street (back in Place Chantereine), turn left past the former inn and section of the wall and left into rue du Point du Jour.

9 - Still under lime trees , rue des Ecuries des Gardes (Guards' Stables St.) recalls the time when a regiment of Guards was quartered there. The former barracks were destroyed by the 1940 bombings.

10 - Before turning right to follow the limetree avenue, go 20m straight on , across the gate and into the yard of the former castle built in 1195 by Philippe Auguste, a beautiful modern garden nowadays. The top of the tower on the left, the keep of the castle, offers a great view over the town and valley. (Come back to the limetree avenue)

11- Where the avenue (and the former city wall) turns left towards Place d'Evreux, a nice looking old house on the right : a carpenter's workshop. Back in 1850; its owner certainly wanted prove everyone he was a good craftsman! Proceed back to Place d'Evreux, the starting point.