

Walk to Menaggio

This walk follows the 'pilgrim's path' the Via Regina, now known as the 'Giubileo' in honour of the last pope's jubilee. Allow an hour and a half to get to Menaggio.

Start at the piazzetta (left out of our house) with the little church of Sant'Abbondio. He was a local bishop who did much to spread Christianity around the Lake Como area. This was the only church in the village before the big church was built. It has been whitewashed but here and there you can see



traces of frescoes, so it must have been all painted at one time. Carry on straight and cross over the bridge that spans the *torrente*.

Acquaseria means 'reliable water' and so perhaps this torrente was and is a source of water that never lets the village down. You can see houses that were once mills, before they were converted. Go straight on, ignoring the signpost for the Madonna delle Fontane to the right.

The road rises up steeply past a couple of new build houses and then suddenly becomes a narrow footpath. This is the Via Regina and once brought pilgrims through the Sasso Ranchio, the big rocky promontory that separates Menaggio from Acquaseria. It is nice to think that the pilgrims would stop to have a drink at the well next to the church and go in to give thanks for getting through without being attacked by bandits.

The path skirts between terraced vegetable gardens, some cultivated now and some not, until it turns downhill over the entrance to the road tunnel, and goes down to meet the old road that once was the main road before the tunnels were built.

Turn right here. You will join the main road but just for a couple of minutes before the old road goes off to the left again. A little way down you will see a post on the right, which marks a stone footpath that rises narrowly and steeply. Believe it or not, this is the path to take! You may still see a small sign on the post showing the Sentiero Giubileo. The climb is quite steep but the path is good. It takes you behind the Villa Gaeta, which was used as a location for the final scene of *Casino Royale*.

The path then descends gently to the village of Nobiallo, with its little church with the crooked tower. There is a bar on the main road opposite the marina, where you can stop for a drink. You will probably need it! At the end of the village, you pick up the old lakeside road again, and this leads you round to Menaggio, past a cliff that is used as a 'climbing gym'.

Alternative

If you don't fancy the climb, you can follow the lakeside old road all the way to Menaggio, although there is a stretch where you have to join the main road for about 60 yards and walk through a tunnel. Going this way, on the flat, takes just an hour.

Usually when we do this walk, we take the bus back.