



River Thames Handbook



NRA

*National Rivers
Authority
Thames Region*

The National Rivers Authority, Thames Region, encourages the pursuit of a variety of recreational activities along the 136 miles of the freshwater River Thames for which it is the managing authority.

It must cater for:—

Anglers, Boating enthusiasts, Canoeists, Dinghy sailors and Yachtsmen, Holidaymakers in hired craft, Naturalists, Oarsmen, Swimmers and Sub-aqua divers and Walkers.

With so many interests competing for space, is the River large enough to accommodate them all without conflict and risk to personal safety?

The answer is yes – provided that all river users are safety conscious and practise good river manners. The NRA, Thames Region's job is to ensure everyone has an equal

opportunity to enjoy their activity, without impairing the enjoyment of others.

This booklet aims to help everyone to conduct their own activity in safety and to foster good relations and a spirit of understanding amongst all river users by explaining the needs and limitations of each different activity. Please read the sections about activities other than your own since this will help you to appreciate the problems of others.

Nine River User Groups have been established to encourage better understanding amongst rivers users. Between them they cover the length of the Thames, including the tidal section between Teddington and Tower Bridge which

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falls under the navigational control of the Port of London Authority. They are made up of representatives from the various clubs, sporting associations, commercial firms and others who use the River. The appropriate District Navigation Inspector (see "useful addresses") will be able to give you the name and address of the Group that covers your stretch. If you belong to a club that uses the river, encourage it to seek representation on the appropriate Group.

The NRA, Thames Region are grateful to the R.U.G.s for all the help they have given.



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GENERAL GUIDANCE NOTES



● Learn about other activities by reading the whole of this booklet so you can appreciate their needs and help them if possible. Learn and watch out for the various signals used to indicate other sporting activities.

● Obtain a copy of "The Water Sports Code" from the Sports Council for further advice.

● Show understanding to others when they are engaged in organised competition.

● For river activities to run smoothly, it is necessary to coordinate organised activities with those of other river users and ensure the Manager and Chief Inspector, Navigation is consulted in advance of any event (see useful addresses).

● Peace and quiet is one of the attractions of the river and sound carries well, particularly at night. Remember that excessive noise is a source of nuisance to others.

● Please avoid pollution. Never throw litter

or rubbish into the water or leave it on the banks.

● Conserve the environment and try not to damage river banks, vegetation and wildlife. The river is a nature reserve and a range of animals depends upon it for their existence.

● Sometimes items of historical or archaeological interest may be found. The Recreation and Conservation Manager (see useful addresses) should be contacted with regard to ownership or importance of such items.

Regulations

● There are various regulations governing the use of the Thames and its banks for boaters of all sorts, anglers, riparian owners, towpath walkers, etc. Whether you want to erect a landing stage or hold a regatta, organise a fishing match or a sponsored walk – please – check with the relevant NRA Thames Region department (see useful addresses) and the Specific Activity Sections of this booklet.



GENERAL RIVER SAFETY



● The River can be both fun and dangerous and due account must be taken of prevailing river conditions. All river activities can be enjoyed with minimum risk if some simple guidelines on safety are followed. You will find some of these in the "Specific Activities" sections.

● Be aware of the potential health risks associated with water recreation. Obtain a copy of the NRA Thames Region's leaflet 'Water Wisdom' for advice on healthy water recreation. Contact the Public Relations Office (see useful addresses).

Learn how to avoid accidents

● Unfortunately, every year there are accidents on the River, many of which are very serious – some even fatal:–

● Weirs are dangerous areas; warning signs should always be respected. It is both dangerous and illegal to interfere with weir gates and sluices. If this appears necessary in an emergency, seek the advice and help of the lock-keeper.

● Any river activity is at greater risk when there are strong currents, high river levels or cold weather conditions. Don't take risks and never underestimate the power of the River. In strong stream conditions it is advisable to keep off the River.

● When large red 'Caution Strong Stream' warning boards are displayed at locks, all craft are advised to moor up until the stream abates.

● When large, yellow 'Caution Stream increasing/decreasing' warning boards are displayed at locks, all unpowered craft are advised to moor up until the stream abates. When 'increasing' stream is indicated, powered vessels are advised to seek safe mooring. When 'decreasing' stream is indicated, powered vessels may proceed with caution.

● Children should always be accompanied by an adult when visiting or playing on or near water.

● In the event of a river accident, ring the emergency services on 999 or tell the nearest lock-keeper who will summon assistance.

Learn how to cope if an accident should occur

● You should:–

- Know how to help a person in difficulties in the water
- Learn an approved resuscitation technique – a small booklet, "Resuscitation Guide" is available from the Resuscitation Council at a cost of £1.00, with a discount for bulk orders. (See useful addresses).



- Learn how to administer First Aid
- Learn how to deal with hypothermia

If in doubt, do not put yourself at risk – get help



GUIDANCE FOR SPECIFIC WATER SPORTS

Governing bodies of water sports produce rules for safety and other matters. These should be read and understood before taking part in any activity.

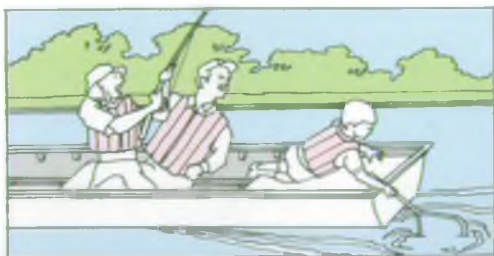
ANGLERS

Before going fishing

- Check you are carrying a valid rod licence (if you are over 12). These are obtainable from tackle dealers or from the NRA, Thames Region (see useful addresses).
- Check you have permission to fish; fishing in the Thames above Staines is not necessarily public and possession of a rod licence does not give you the right to fish.
- You may fish certain weirs with a permit. For further details, please contact Craft Registration and Rod and Line Licences (see useful addresses).
- Observe the fishing rules and byelaws applicable to the stretch you are fishing. Fishing in lock cuts and approaches to locks is not permitted between 15 March and 31 October inclusive. At no time is it permissible to fish from or over lock lay-bys;

On or by the River

- Take care when casting and ground baiting and remember your hooks, lines and ledger weights can be dangerous. Look behind and in front to ensure the area is clear.
- Beware of fishing near overhead electric cables. Contact or close proximity



between cable and fishing rod may cause fatal injury.

- Keep an eye on any children with you, to check they do not get into difficulties.
- Take your litter home, especially discarded tackle. Fishing hooks, and nylon line are dangerous to birds and animals. Wasted line should be taken home and burnt.



The use of lead shot (between the weights 0.06 and 28.35 g) for fishing is now prohibited – use lead-free alternatives.

- Follow the Country Code; shut gates, keep to footpaths, guard against fire and respect wildlife.
- All craft have a right to navigate the full width of the river. Although asked to take care, they can inadvertently carry away fishing tackle as it is often difficult to see the line. This often



happens accidentally when anglers are hidden from view by bankside vegetation and should not be regarded as a deliberate spoiling of your sport.

- If fishing at vacant regular mooring places, please be prepared to move if a vessel wishes to moor.
- Take particular care when fishing from a boat. Wear a buoyancy aid or lifejacket and take care not to obstruct the main navigation channel.

CAMPING AND PICNICKING

- When camping and/or picnicking, please take care not to:
 - camp or light fires without permission
 - throw rubbish into the river
 - light fires near to dried foliage
 - chop down trees for firewoodPlease, always:
 - clean up the site before you leave
 - take your rubbish home or put it in a litter bin
 - follow the Country Code.

CANOEISTS

- Canoes must be currently registered with the NRA, Thames Region. Registration certificates usually expire on 31 December, although short period certificates may be obtained for craft entering the Thames from other waterways. There are also reduced charges available for craft only in use late in the year (see useful addresses).
- Obey the general rules of navigation and know the "rules for the avoidance of collisions" issued by the NRA, Thames Region (see useful addresses). Craft should avoid

collisions by keeping to the right – the normal practice of seamen and oarsmen.

- Buoyancy aids or life jackets should be worn at all times and helmets when in wild water. Canoeists should preferably have had formal instruction, and be able to swim.
- Some weirs and sluice gates provide ideal conditions for wild water canoeing but should only be used under the supervision of experienced canoeists after obtaining permission from the Manager and Chief Inspector, Navigation. Other weirs are dangerous and must not be used. If in doubt, consult the local District Navigation Inspector (see useful addresses). Do not canoe just above weirs or try to shoot weirs.
- If on the water after sunset, an all-round white light should be displayed and canoeists should wear light coloured tops.
- Keep a sharp lookout for anglers, who normally fish from the bank. Keep a good distance from them, avoid their tackle and create as little disturbance as possible.
- Keep clear of sailing boats, motor cruisers and rowing craft (sculls, pairs, fours and eights) particularly when racing or coaching is taking place.

- Remember it is difficult for rowing craft to see canoes.

- Do not get in the way of other craft by suddenly altering course, particularly in narrow waters. Remember that larger boats are less manoeuvrable and canoes can use much shallower water than other craft.

- Do not follow close astern of larger vessels.
- It is safer for unpowered craft to remain at the back of a queue of traffic at a lock and to enter the lock last.





DIVERS

- All diving activities should have prior approval in writing from the appropriate District Navigation Inspector (see useful addresses). The diving area should, after consultation with the District Inspector, be marked with suitable surface marker buoys.

- Warn other river users that divers are below the surface, either by flying the diving flag (International Code Flag 'A') or by displaying a similarly painted board



visible to upstream and downstream traffic. Mark diving boats so that you and your club and activity can be easily identified.

- Do not dive in areas of heavy boat traffic or near bridges and weirs.

- Never leave a support boat unattended when diving is in progress and never dive alone or without proper support crew.

Divers should have had formal instruction and should always adhere to the British Sub Aqua Club code of practice.

- Other river users may appreciate offers of help, e.g. to recover lost equipment.

MOTORISED CRAFT

General Navigation Information

- All pleasure craft must be currently registered with the NRA, Thames Region. Registration certificates usually expire on 31 December, although short period certificates may be obtained for craft entering the Thames from other waterways. There are also reduced charges available for craft only in use late in the year (see useful addresses).

- The NRA, Thames Region must be notified by the registered boat owner of any change of ownership taking place during the registration period. Failure to do so is an offence.

- No craft with an engine may navigate without a licence. A licence is issued without charge to a registered launch, provided it is constructed and equipped in accordance with the current specification issued by the NRA, Thames Region, (see useful addresses). Licences are not transferable and the licence plate must be displayed in a prominent position.

- All mechanically propelled vessels must conform to the safety and construction specifications published in a special leaflet available from the NRA, Thames Region on request (see useful addresses). These details also appear on the registration application form.

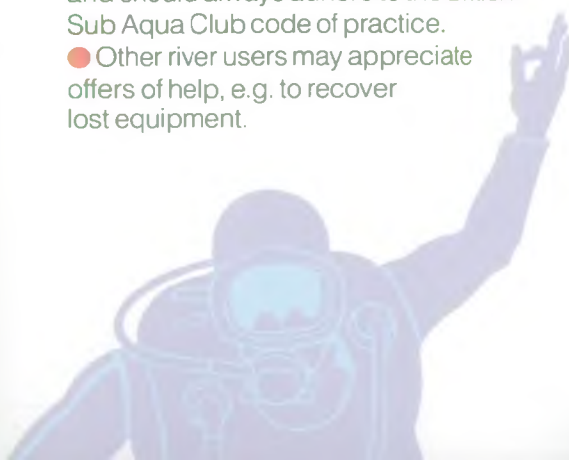
- The launch name, shown exactly as it appears on the launch certificate, must be clearly marked on either side of the bow and on the stern in plain letters in the following minimum sizes.

2" (5.1cm) for a launch no more than 20' (6.09m) long.

3" (7.6cm) for a launch between 20' (6.09m) and 30' (9.14m) long.

4" (10.2cm) for a launch between 30' (9.14m) and 50' (15.23m) long.

6" (15.2cm) for a launch exceeding 50' (15.23m).



● The launch name must be easily distinguishable from any trade name and no other advertising sign or notice may be displayed on any vessel except in relation to its trade or business.

● You are recommended to have a public liability insurance policy and third party insurance cover.

● Your craft must be "river worthy", that is conform where applicable to the Thames Water byelaws and should not carry more people than it was designed for or the law permits. It is an offence to carry more than 12 passengers, without a passenger certificate from the Marine Office of the Department of Transport (see useful addresses).

● All skippers should endeavour to have some training in the handling of their craft and should ensure that at least one other person on board knows how to handle the vessel, where the emergency equipment is and how to operate it.

● The only lavatories approved for use on launches on the freshwater Thames are the chemical types or those which discharge into holding tanks. Lavatories discharging overboard must be sealed by a Navigation Officer – or other steps must be taken to render it inoperable. Sealing is undertaken without charge, by arrangements with any navigation office, (see useful addresses).

● Avoid pollution. It is an offence to discharge sewage, oil, or any other matter likely to cause pollution into the river, or to leave rubbish on the banks. Take special care with petrol when refuelling. Oil-contaminated bilge water is another potential source of pollution and must on no account be



pumped into the river. See under: "Lock Facilities" for sewage and rubbish disposal sites.



Basic Equipment

● **Fire Extinguishers:** Fire extinguishers must be carried. The number of extinguishers depends on the size of craft (see the NRA Thames Region's Specification leaflet for details).

● **Horn:** Every craft must be fitted with a horn or whistle.

● **Anchors:** Carry at least one anchor, preferably two. The safety of your boat may depend on its prompt use if the engine or steering gear should fail. Keep the anchor on deck and ready for use at all times. In general, anchors should be heavier in pounds than the length of the vessel in feet. When anchoring with chain cable use at least three times the depth of water. If using synthetic warp, use about five times the depth.



● **First-Aid:** Facilities are available at every lock and on patrol launches but please, carry a first-aid box on board.



Other Equipment

● **Bilge Pump:** Carry an efficient bilge pump or baler.

● **Mooring Lines:** Make sure mooring lines are in good order and long enough for use in deep locks when empty.

● **Radio:** Craft fitted with a marine band radio need a licence from the Department of Trade and Industry, (see useful addresses). Reception can be severely marred by geographical location. Do not rely upon it as a means of summoning assistance in an emergency. Although maintaining a listening watch, the NRA, Thames Region's Navigation Service will respond to emergency calls only. Remember help may be some way away.



● **Flags:** Normally British craft may only fly the Red Ensign. It is illegal to fly any other national British flag unless permission is granted by the Ministry of Defence (see useful addresses).

● Craft should carry sufficient, approved life jackets or buoyancy aids for every person on board.

Once aboard

● Use suitable footwear with non-slip soles.

● Use the "grab rails" when you walk around deck, even when moored.

● Never run around deck.

● Life jackets or buoyancy aids should be worn:

a) by children and non-swimmers at all times:

b) by everybody in adverse weather conditions



When underway

● Obey the rules of navigation and byelaws. Steer on the right hand side when it is safe and practical. Remember that even when you have the right of way you have an over-riding responsibility to avoid collision. Avoid turning vessels around near bridges, bends and lock approaches.

● The Acts and Byelaws for the River Thames are displayed at each lock. If in doubt as to what these mean or if you need to have them clarified, consult the Manager and Chief Inspector, Navigation, (see useful addresses).

● Keep a sharp lookout ahead and astern for anything that may require your attention and anticipate the necessary action in good time.

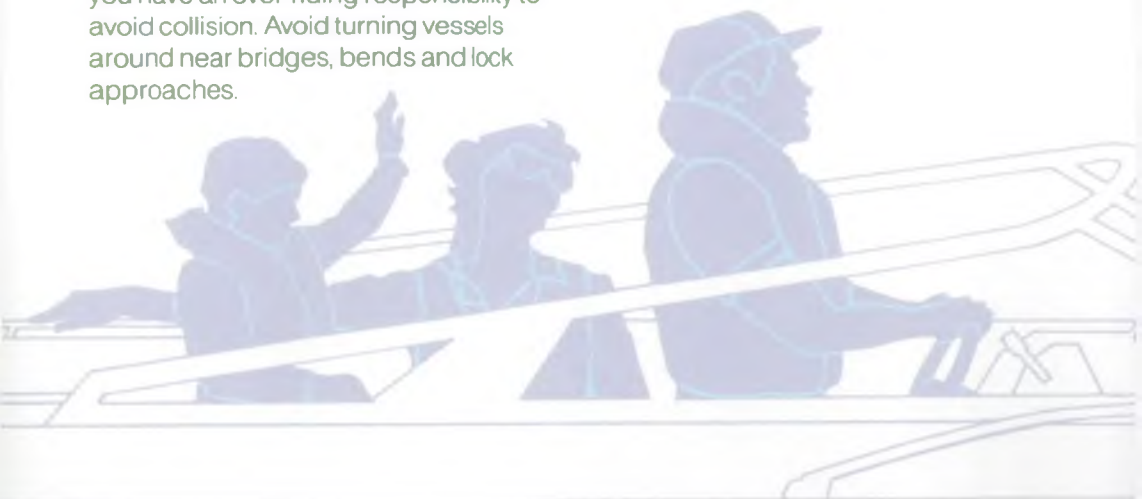
● Take care at all times when overtaking. You have the legal responsibility to avoid collision.

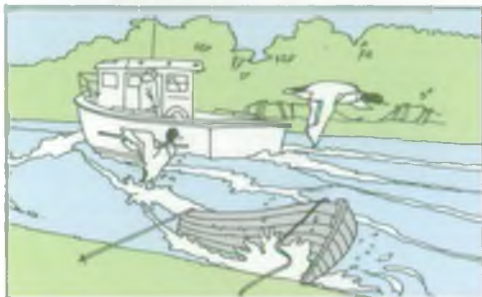
● In the vicinity of bridges or sharp bends, a vessel going upstream must give way, if necessary, to any vessel coming downstream.

● Speeding is dangerous and illegal. Accidents occur more easily at high speeds, particularly from the wash such speeds create. Unlike a car, a boat will not "stop in seconds" and therefore needs longer stopping time. Cruising speed should not exceed walking pace.

● All moving craft make wash. Excessive wash from launches can:

- damage moored craft
- harm wildlife





- endanger swimmers
- cause accidents in galleys of moored craft
- force water into small craft
- damage river banks
- interfere with angling

● Due to their differing shapes, some boats make more wash than others at the same speed. The maximum safe speed for most boats is a fast walking pace. Do not exceed the safe speed for your boat and keep a frequent check on your wash. Even at a slow speed, your wash will be increased when in convoy. Resist the temptation to keep in a convoy going faster than your safe speed.

● Think ahead; slow down and check your wash where:

- the channel ahead narrows
- the banks are eroded
- there are moorings ahead
- there are small craft, swimmers or anglers.

● It is often sensible to stop briefly to allow your wash to settle to an acceptable level.

● Do not let time rule your journey. It is an offence to navigate without care and caution, or in a manner likely to endanger the safety of others, or damage the banks of the Thames.

Sound Signals

● Skippers should give notice of their intentions using the following official sound signals:



1 blast – going to starboard (right)

2 blasts – going to port (left)

3 blasts – my engines are going astern

4 blasts (pause) 1 blast – turning right round to starboard

4 blasts (pause) 2 blasts – turning right round to port

4 blasts – unable to manoeuvre

No other sound signals are permitted.

Lights must be shown when navigating between sunset and sunrise or in restricted visibility as follows:

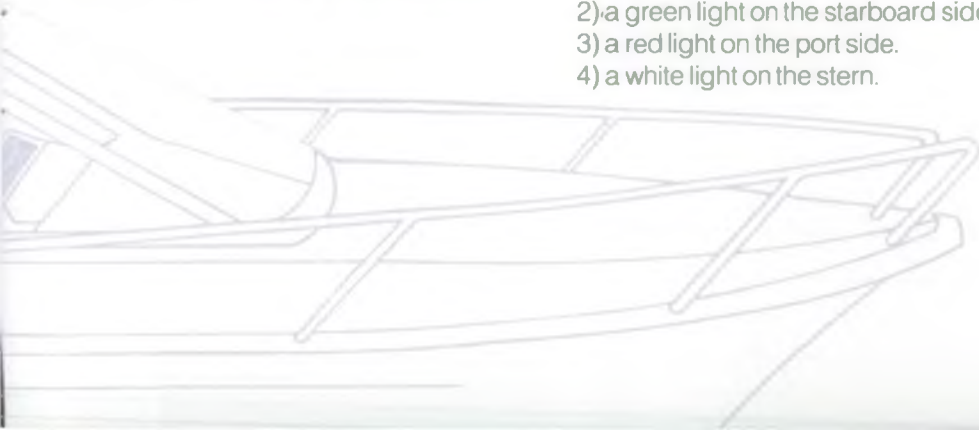


1) a bright white light on the mast or staff at the bow, not less than 4' (1.2m) above the hull.

2) a green light on the starboard side.

3) a red light on the port side.

4) a white light on the stern.



Locks

- In narrow lock cuts, please remember that some pleasure craft draw up to four feet or more and might not be able to manoeuvre.
- When waiting for a lock, form an orderly queue at the lay-by moorings. Queue jumping is bad manners, arouses ill feeling and can cause confusion and delay entering the lock. Always moor on the lay-by as near as possible to the lock so that later arrivals can moor astern of you. When a lockful of craft is admitted any remaining boats should move forward along the lay-by to enable those "holding off" (perhaps in difficult conditions) to moor at the back of the queue.
- Obey instructions given by the lock-keeper and stop your engine once the craft is moored in the lock. Remember to make fast, head and stern. When the water is rising or falling in the lock, adjust your mooring lines to keep them fairly taut and make sure your boat does not become caught up as the lock is emptying. Turn off any radio, or other form of music or noise.
- If you have a dog on board, please keep it on your boat, or on a lead, while passing through locks.

Please take care and do not:

- fend off with hands, feet or boathook.
 - open fuel tanks or strike matches.
 - moor upstream of the vertical white line.
- Lock-keepers' hours of duty are displayed at locks. When the lock is unattended, the public may work the locks themselves, but entirely at their own risk. Instructions for the hand operation of powered locks are posted on the operating pedestals.
 - Lock gates must always be properly closed before slowly opening the sluices



to fill or empty the lock. Always leave the gate shut when the lock is empty or emptying, as in many cases there is a public right of way over the gates.

- Telephones at locks may be used in emergencies where no public telephones are available (see under Telephones).

Anchoring and Mooring

- In general vessels have a right to anchor in the Thames for up to 24 hours in any one place. You may need permission to moor to the bank. Place mooring stakes well back from the bank edge and take care they do not cause a hazard to



- passers-by. Always respect private rights and when in doubt, obtain permission from the owner of the bank before tying-up.
- When stopping overnight, or leaving the launch for any appreciable time, do not moor in shallow water or with a tight rope or chain as water levels may fluctuate by as much as 2 or 3 feet in a few hours. If the level drops and a craft is moored aground or in shallow water, it may be careened or damaged. If the level rises, and mooring ropes or chains are tight, the launch may take on water, be pulled under or even broken free. Always ensure there is over 2 feet of water below your keel and at least 2 feet of vertical play on any mooring rope or chain.
 - You may land on or embark from the towpath but there is no right to moor up to private towpath property without the landowner's consent. Do not trespass on private banks or moorings.

Navigation Rules and Hints

- Keep a sharp lookout for other river users and if in doubt, STOP.
- Keep a sharp lookout for anglers, who

normally fish from the bank. Keep a good distance from them, avoid their tackle and create as little disturbance as possible.

● In the vicinity of bridges or sharp bends, a vessel going upstream must give way to a vessel coming downstream. Avoid turning vessels around near bridges, bends and lock approaches.

● When sailing boats are near, maintain a slow, steady course but be prepared to give way to avoid collision. In times of no wind a sailing boat has no control and it will be up to you to avoid it. If in convoy, ensure that there is ample space between each boat to allow good vision ahead and room to manoeuvre.

● In the vicinity of events, take advice from officials or marshals. Sailing races are usually held round a series of buoys and cruisers should avoid these turning marks. There may be congestion near sailing clubs when dinghies gather to race. This should clear within minutes. Motorised craft should be prepared to STOP and when clear, proceed at a slow, steady pace.

● When rowing craft are near, remember that the crew of an uncoxed boat have a problem keeping a lookout ahead and even a cox has a limited field of vision.

● When approaching a regatta course, navigate very slowly and cautiously, complying with any instructions issued by the NRA Thames Region's Navigation Inspectors, Guardboatmen, etc. Dates and other information regarding regattas may be displayed at adjacent locks.

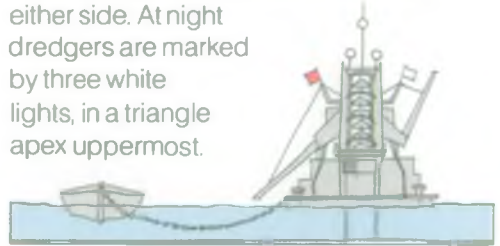
● When approaching swimmers or sub-aqua divers, rowing boats, canoes and sailing craft which are manoeuvring to find wind, powered craft should slow down and in case of doubt, give clear indications as to intention. Always be ready to give way.

● Take care at all times when overtaking.

● On some boats children can be "out of vision" – they often sit in dangerous positions and a sharp turn, change of speed or wash from another boat can toss them into the water.

Dredgers and Tugs

● Dredgers' anchors are marked by yellow buoys. Slow down and navigate past the dredger on the side showing a WHITE flag. A RED flag marks the side where chains and other obstructions may exist. If WHITE flags are displayed on both sides, it is safe to navigate – with care on either side. At night dredgers are marked by three white lights, in a triangle apex uppermost.



● Tugs and barges should be allowed plenty of room to manoeuvre in lock cuts and other narrow channels. Laden barges need deep water and may swing wide on bends. Take care not to pass between a tug and its tow. A tug with tow or a diver's barge with a diver down, may display a flashing amber light.

COMMERCIAL USERS – ADDITIONAL ADVICE

● Skippers of commercial craft should look out for other river users and allow for the fact that many may be inexperienced or intimidated by the size of passenger boats or tugs with barges.

● Care must be taken in overtaking. The size and 'drag' of the larger commercial craft can be very disturbing to smaller craft.

● In narrow lock cuts, remember that some pleasure craft draw up to four feet or more and might not be able to manoeuvre.



ROWING AND SCULLING

- Rowing vessels must be currently registered with the NRA, Thames Region. Registration certificates usually expire on 31 December, although short period certificates may be obtained for craft entering the Thames from other waterways. There are also reduced charges available for craft only in use late in the year (see useful addresses).
- Obey the general rules of navigation and know the 'rules for the avoidance of collisions' issued by the NRA, Thames Region (see useful addresses). Racing craft should avoid collisions by keeping to the right – the normal practice of seamen and oarsmen.
- Keep a sharp lookout for anglers, who normally fish from the bank. Keep a good distance from them, avoid their tackle and create as little disturbance as possible.
- Look out for others on and in the water and change speed and direction as necessary to avoid incident.
- The cox or steersman is considered to be the "master" of the craft.
- Remember when you are travelling faster than other craft that "overtaking vessels must keep clear". Do not turn across the bows of oncoming craft, wait until it is safe.
- Remember it is difficult for other users to see fast moving, rowing craft which lie low in the water.
- When taking casual exercise, ensure your activity does not interfere with other organised activities.
- Coaching/rescue vessels must watch their speed and wash.
- Comply with the Codes of Practice issued by your own club and/or association.

- When visiting stretches of the river other than those you use for training, ascertain and comply with the Code of Practice of local clubs before taking out any craft.
- In strong stream conditions, crews should avoid weirs, obstructions and bridges, especially whilst turning round. At such times a rescue boat should be in attendance and novice crews are advised to stay off the river.
- If on the water at dusk, after sunset or in restricted visibility, rowers and scullers should wear light coloured tops and an all-round white light should be displayed.
- It is safer for unpowered craft to remain at the back of a queue of traffic at a lock and to enter the lock last.

SAILING AND BOARDSAILING

- Sailing boats and sail boards, must be currently registered with the NRA, Thames Region. Registration certificates usually expire on 31 December, although short period certificates may be obtained for craft entering the Thames from other waterways. There are also reduced charges available for craft only in use late in the year (see useful addresses).
- Keep a sharp lookout for anglers, who normally fish from the bank. Keep a good distance from them, avoid their tackle and create as little disturbance as possible.
- Boardsailers should look out for other river traffic and keep clear of weirs and busy channels.
- Do not suddenly alter course immediately in front of other craft. Power driven craft are not always as manoeuvrable as sailing craft, especially at low speeds when sailing craft have reasonable winds.
- If sailing at dusk, after sunset or in restricted visibility an all round white light should be displayed.



● Tacking is often essential, but can present a hazard to navigation. Keep a proper lookout; failure to do so is the cause of many accidents.



Racing

a) Lay starting lines where they cannot cause trouble to passing traffic. If in doubt, consult the District Navigation Inspector (see useful addresses). Sailing marks should not be placed near locks, lock cuts, marinas, fuel wharves, passenger boat landing stages or narrow and shallow places.

b) The length of the starting line must allow a clear passage to craft proceeding up and down the river. A navigable channel should be available for non-racing vessels.

c) Starting signal intervals: keep the time between Warning and Starting signals to a minimum.

d) When there are several starts in succession, allow an interval between races. During this interval craft intending to race should avoid congregating in the starting area. This allows other vessels to proceed and avoids annoying delays.

e) Control the number of craft racing at any one time, or the areas they occupy. Novices should keep out of busy channels.



SWIMMING AND PADDLING

The NRA supports the view of safety organisations which recommend **AGAINST** swimming or diving in open watercourses. If you decide not to accept their advice bear the following in mind:—

- Swimmers should see and be seen.
- Never swim near moving craft. Boats cannot stop dead and need room to manoeuvre.
- Never swim around moored craft, fallen logs or 'blind corners'.
- Never jump or dive into the river from any bridge, bank, craft or otherwise. It is not only dangerous to those who do it but also to any craft passing by.
- If children are swimming or paddling, always watch them carefully as river depth varies suddenly and wash from boats can cause them to fall over. There may be broken glass or other sharp material on the river bed and so it is advisable to wear bathing shoes.
- Never swim when there is a strong current.
- Never swim in locks, lock cuts, narrow channels or cuttings.
- Keep away from weirs and weir pools.
- Never attempt to swim across the river – it is wider than you think.
- Non-swimmers on airbeds or inflated rubber tubes can easily float or be blown into deep water where sudden loss of buoyancy could be disastrous.

WALKING

● There are many rights of way along the river – please use them responsibly.

Do not:

- allow young children to wander near the river's edge
- leave farm gates open
- walk on crops; always keep to the public right of way
- annoy farm animals
- let your dog annoy animals or wildlife or run loose at locksides
- leave litter.



GENERAL NAVIGATION INFORMATION

● The NRA Thames Region's navigational jurisdiction extends over the River Thames between the Town Bridge at Cricklade and the boundary obelisk approximately 230 yards downstream of Teddington Lock. Jurisdiction also covers the River Kennet from its mouth upstream to a limit 70 yards eastwards of the High Bridge at Reading.

Maximum dimensions of craft

● At certain times of the year some parts of the Thames between Cricklade and Lechlade are only navigable by the smallest boats. Below Lechlade the fairway is normally available for vessels of the following approximate draughts:

Lechlade to Oxford	3' 0" (0.9 m)
Oxford to Reading	4' 0" (1.2 m)
Reading to Windsor	4' 6" (1.3 m)
Windsor to Staines	5' 6" (1.7 m)
Staines to Teddington	6' 6" (2.0 m)

Overhead Cables

● In open reaches below Oxford, cables are usually 40' (12 m) above summer water level – allow a clearance of at least 13' (4 m). If in doubt, lower masts or aerials. Take particular care in locks, lock cuts, backwaters and in reaches above Oxford, where cables may be much lower.

CONNECTING WATERWAYS

The River Wey to Guildford and Godalming may be entered from the Thames at Weybridge. The navigation authority is the National Trust, Dapdune Lea, Wharf Road, Guildford, Surrey, telephone (Guildford) 0483-61389, and all visiting craft must be registered.

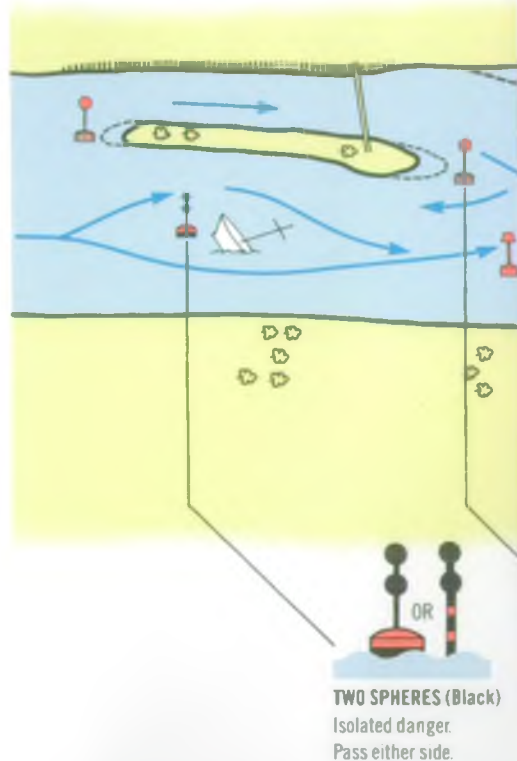
The River Kennet leading into the Kennet and Avon Navigation at a boundary

70 yards below High Bridge in Reading is managed by the NRA, Thames Region. Further details are given on page 26.

The Kennet and Avon Navigation

extends from the NRA, Thames Region's navigational boundary in Reading to the Port of Bristol and renovated sections will be opened over the next few years. Before entering the waterway your launch must first be licensed by the British Waterways Board, Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford, Herts., telephone (Watford) 0923-26422.

The Oxford Canal for vessels not exceeding 7 ft. beam gives access to the Midlands and the rest of the waterways system. The navigation authority is also the British Waterways Board and entry from the Thames is either via the Sheepwash Channel above Osney Bridge or via Dukes Cut, above Kings Weir.



MARKING OF OBSTRUCTIONS

● The NRA, Thames Region has adopted a system of markings for shoals and other obstructions in the navigation. This is particularly required in the early months of the year, before reeds have grown through the surface of shallow water.

● On this page the four shapes of topmarks used – can, triangle, sphere and two sphere – are illustrated, together with directions for passing them safely when you proceed upstream. Remember when you navigate downstream that the *can* and *triangle* shapes must be passed on your opposite hand.

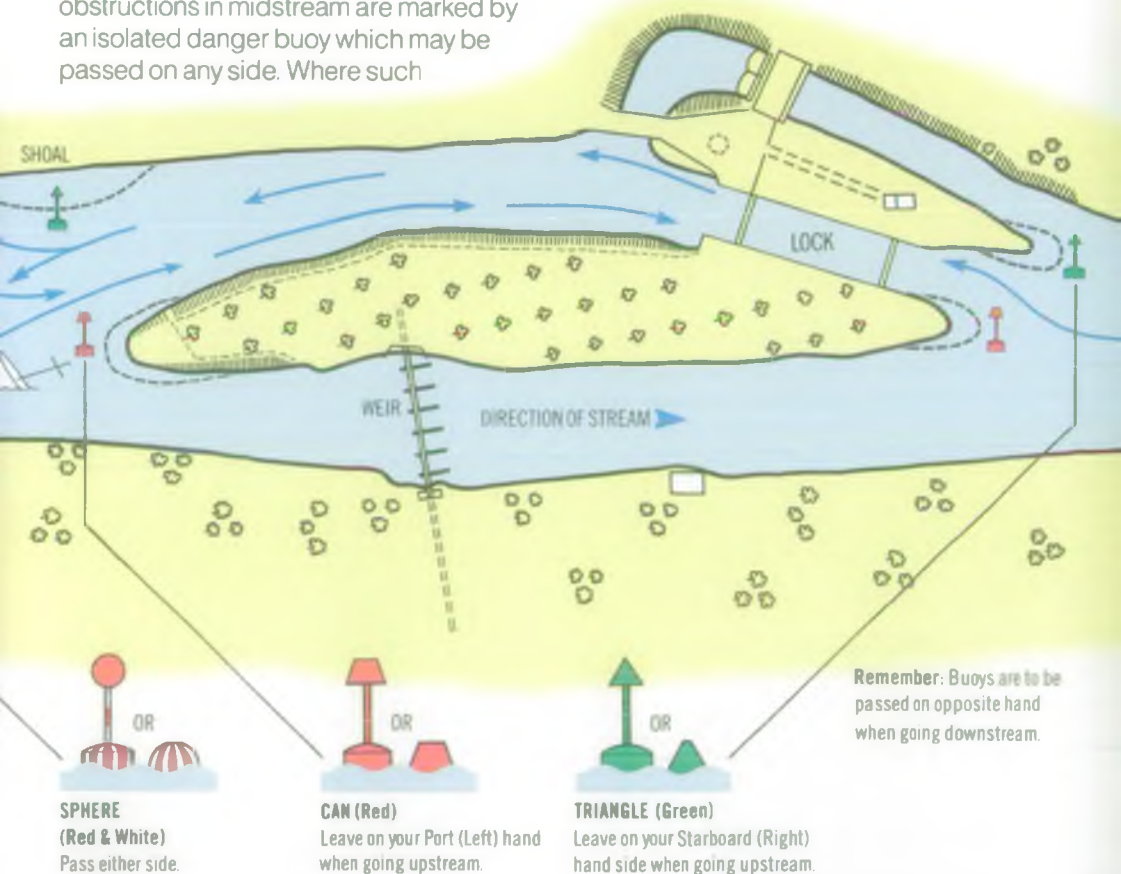
● Wrecks or other temporary obstructions in midstream are marked by an isolated danger buoy which may be passed on any side. Where such

obstructions must be passed on a particular side the appropriate can or triangle topmarks will be used.

● In all cases craft should pass well clear of a marking buoy.

● The closure of a navigation arch of a bridge is usually indicated by a large red disk.

● It is emphasised that the NRA, Thames Region does not accept responsibility for the marking of obstructions that lie outside the fairway. You must therefore proceed with particular caution when approaching any bank or if you depart from the main navigation route.



Remember: Buoys are to be passed on opposite hand when going downstream.



24 – HOUR MOORINGS

● The NRA Thames Region has provided the following sites for 24-hour moorings free of charge. In each case the extent of the mooring site is indicated by Notice Boards:

- TOWPATH ABOVE PINKHILL LOCK
- TOWPATH BELOW ISIS BRIDGE NEAR IFFLEY
- TOWPATH ABOVE ABINGDON LOCK
- TOWPATH BELOW GORING BRIDGE
- RIGHT BANK BELOW GATEHAMPTON RAILWAY BRIDGE
- TOWPATH ABOVE SONNING LOCK
- TOWPATH AT LOWER LASHBROOK BELOW WARGRAVE
- TOWPATH ABOVE BOVENEY LOCK
- TOWPATH BELOW RUNNYMEDE PLEASURE GROUND, EGHAM
- TOWPATH BELOW STAINES BRIDGE
- TOWPATH AT LALEHAM WHARF
- TOWPATH AT WEYBRIDGE OPPOSITE SHEPPERTON LOCK
- TOWPATH (OLD RIVER) ABOVE DESBOROUGH CHANNEL LOWER ENTRANCE
- RAILWAY WHARF, KINGSTON
- STEVENS EYOT BELOW KINGSTON RAILWAY BRIDGE

● Fishing from the bank at these sites is not allowed between 1st March and 31st October.

PUBLIC SLIPWAYS AND LAUNCHING SITES

● You may launch a boat at the sites listed below, but there is not necessarily a right to park a car or a boat trailer.

- TEDDINGTON DRAWDOCK
- KINGSTON AT THAMESIDE
- THAMES DITTON BY SWAN HOTEL
- EAST MOLESEY DRAWDOCK
- WEST MOLESEY, HURST PARK
- SUNBURY, LOWER HAMPTON ROAD
- WALTON WHARF BY ANGLERS HOTEL
- COWEY SALE, WALTON
- SHEPPERTON VILLAGE WHARF
- WEYBRIDGE, THAMES STREET
- BRAY VILLAGE
- COOKHAM BRIDGE BY FERRY HOTEL
- MARLOW, ST. PETER'S STREET
- MEDMENHAM FERRY
- ASTON FERRY, FROM EITHER BANK
- HENLEY, WHARF LANE
- WARGRAVE, FERRY LANE
- CAVERSHAM BRIDGE
- CHOLSEY, PAPIST WAY
- ABINGDON, ST. HELEN'S WHARF

● These sites are not necessarily suitable for large or heavy boats and trailers. If in doubt, please check first.

LOCK STAFF HOURS OF DUTY

● It is anticipated that locks will be manned during the following hours but river users are advised to check with the notices displayed at each lock.

● Teddington Lock – 24 hours attendance.

For all other locks except Blakes Lock, see following table:

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR
09.15-16.00	09.15-16.00	09.15-16.00*	09.00-17.30
MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
09.00-18.30	09.00-19.00	09.00-19.00	09.00-19.00
SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
09.00-18.00†	09.00-17.00	09.15-16.00	09.15-16.00

* When Easter falls in March:

09.00-17.30 Good Friday to Easter Monday inclusive.

† 09.00-18.30 Saturday and Sunday

Note: Individual locks may be found closed to traffic on weekday mornings between 07.00 and 09.00 for cleaning.



Locks on River Thames

LOCK FACILITIES AND DIMENSIONS

A note for the following tables

● These figures are issued for guidance only and may be found to vary with water levels and for other reasons. When considering the length of craft able to navigate through the locks, always allow 10 ft or 3 m for the closing of the lower gates.

● The measurements given in the tables are:

1. Length of lock between heel posts.

2. Minimum width of lock between walls or rubbing piles.

3. Depth on Upper Sill taken at standard head water level.

4. Depth on Lower Sill taken from standard head level of the lock below, no allowance having been made for the gradient of the intermediate reach.

5. Fall from standard head water level to that of the lock below; again, no allowance is made for river gradient.




LOCK DIMENSIONS IN METRES (FE)

LOCK	FACILITIES	LENGTH	WIDTH
ST. JOHN'S	(S) (P) (R) (L) (W)	33.60 (110.3)	4.52 (14.10)
BUSCOT		33.47 (109.10)	4.47 (14.8)
GRAFTON	(H) (W)	34.59 (113.6)	4.59 (15.1)
RADCOT	(R) (L) (H) (W)	34.59 (113.6)	4.57 (15.0)
RUSHEY	(S) (W) (P)	34.59 (113.6)	4.59 (15.1)
SHIFFORD	(L)	34.64 (113.8)	4.59 (15.1)
NORTHMOOR	(W)	34.59 (113.6)	4.59 (15.1)
PINKHILL	(W)	34.59 (113.6)	4.90 (16.1)
EYNSHAM	(S) (R) (H) (W) (P) (L)	34.51 (113.3)	4.97 (16.4)
KINGS	(W)	34.46 (113.1)	4.97 (16.4)
GODSTOW		33.52 (110.0)	4.95 (16.3)
OSNEY	(L) (W)	34.64 (113.8)	5.25 (17.3)
IFFLEY	(R)	46.96 (154.1)	6.47 (21.3)
SANDFORD	(W)	53.03 (174.0)	6.62 (21.9)
ABINGDON	(S) (R) (H) (W) (P) (L)	36.57 (120.0)	5.71 (18.9)
CULHAM	(L) (W)	39.87 (130.10)	5.33 (17.6)
CLIFTON	(W)	39.57 (129.10)	5.79 (19.0)
DAY'S	(S) (R)	46.93 (154.10)	6.45 (21.2)
BENSON	(W)	40.56 (133.1)	5.46 (17.11)
CLEEVE	(L) (R) (W)	40.71 (133.7)	5.53 (18.2)
GORING	(R) (W)	54.68 (179.5)	6.40 (21.0)
WHITCHURCH	(S) (R)	41.22 (135.3)	5.48 (18.0)
MAPLEDURHAM	(R)	61.69 (202.5)	6.42 (21.1)
CAVERSHAM		40.03 (131.4)	5.46 (17.11)

KEY: (S) Sewage disposal. (P) Sewage pump-out. (R) Refuse. (L) Lavatory. (W) Drinking water tap for portable containers only
(H) Water hose provided for bulk supplies. NOTE Water supplies in sanitary stations are unfit for drinking.

AND INCHES). SEE NOTE ON PAGE 19



DEPTH UPPER SILL	DEPTH LOWER SILL	FALL	TELEPHONE
1.32 (4.4)	1.32 (4.4)	0.85 (2.10)	FARINGDON (0367) 52309
1.98 (6.6)	1.47 (4.10)	1.69 (5.7)	FARINGDON (0367) 52434
1.67 (5.6)	1.44 (4.9)	1.11 (3.8)	CLANFIELD (036 781) 251
1.49 (4.11)	1.54 (5.1)	1.48 (4.10)	FARINGDON (0367) 20676
1.67 (5.6)	1.52 (5.0)	1.82 (6.0)	BUCKLAND (036 787) 218
1.67 (5.6)	1.60 (5.3)	2.23 (7.4)	BUCKLAND (036 787) 247
1.65 (5.5)	1.44 (4.9)	1.24 (4.1)	OXFORD (0865) 862923
1.67 (5.6)	1.62 (5.4)	1.05 (3.6)	OXFORD (0865) 881452
1.65 (5.5)	1.72 (5.8)	0.84 (2.9)	OXFORD (0865) 881324
1.67 (5.6)	1.67 (5.6)	0.77 (2.6)	OXFORD (0865) 53403
1.52 (5.0)	1.62 (5.4)	1.57 (5.2)	OXFORD (0865) 54784
2.74 (9.0)	2.10 (6.11)	1.89 (6.3)	OXFORD (0865) 247050
2.26 (7.5)	2.26 (7.5)	0.81 (2.9)	OXFORD (0865) 777277
2.31 (7.7)	2.31 (7.7)	2.69 (8.10)	OXFORD (0865) 775889
2.64 (8.8)	1.52 (5.0)	1.89 (6.2)	ABINGDON (0235) 23044
2.41 (7.11)	1.62 (5.4)	2.41 (7.11)	ABINGDON (0235) 22061
2.36 (7.0)	1.75 (5.9)	1.03 (3.5)	CLIFTON HAMPDEN (086 730) 7821
2.26 (7.5)	1.93 (6.4)	1.58 (5.2)	CLIFTON HAMPDEN (086 730) 7768
2.23 (7.4)	2.13 (7.0)	1.87 (6.2)	WALLINGFORD (0491) 35255
2.13 (7.0)	2.22 (7.3)	0.90 (2.3)	GORING (0491) 872608
2.97 (9.9)	2.56 (8.5)	1.77 (5.10)	GORING (0491) 872687
1.85 (6.1)	1.93 (6.4)	1.01 (3.4)	PANGBOURNE (0734) 842448
2.18 (7.2)	2.13 (7.0)	2.05 (6.9)	READING (0734) 417776
1.82 (6.0)	1.88 (6.2)	1.44 (4.9)	READING (0734) 575764

CONTINUED OVERLEAF



LOCK DIMENSIONS IN METRES (FE)

LOCK	FACILITIES	LENGTH	WIDTH
BLAKES		37.39 (122.8)	5.75 (18.11)
SONNING	(R) (L)	47.57 (156.1)	5.46 (17.11)
SHIPLAKE	(S) (R) (L) (W) (H)	40.64 (133.4)	5.56 (18.3)
MARSH	(R)	41.19 (135.2)	6.42 (21.1)
HAMBLEDEN	(R)	41.19 (135.2)	5.33 (17.9)
HURLEY	(S) (R) (L) (H) (W)	39.82 (130.8)	6.07 (19.11)
TEMPLE	(L)	41.02 (134.7)	5.46 (17.11)
MARLOW	(R) (L) (W)	46.10 (151.3)	6.07 (19.11)
COOKHAM	(H) (W) (Being installed 1990)	55.77 (183.0)	7.62 (25.0)
BOULTERS	(W)	60.80 (199.6)	6.47 (21.3)
BRAY	(R) (L)	40.94 (134.4)	5.46 (17.11)
BOVENEY	(S) (R) (L) (W) (H) (R)	45.59 (149.7)	5.43 (17.10)
ROMNEY	(L) (W)	78.50 (257.7)	7.45 (24.5)
OLD WINDSOR	(W)	54.55 (179.0)	7.36 (24.2)
BELL WEIR	(R) (L)	78.51 (257.7)	7.44 (24.5)
PENTON HOOK	(R) (W)	81.28 (266.8)	7.56 (24.10)
CHERTSEY	(H) (W)	61.16 (200.8)	6.40 (21.0)
SHEPPERTON	(S) (R) (L) (W)	53.16 (174.5)	6.04 (19.10)
SUNBURY OLD	(L) (W)	47.14 (154.8)	5.86 (19.3)
SUNBURY NEW		62.78 (206.0)	7.41 (24.4)
MOLESEY	(S) (P) (R) (L) (H) (W)	81.78 (268.4)	7.56 (24.10)
TEDDINGTON BARGE		198.12 (650.0)	7.54 (24.9)
TEDDINGTON OLD	(H)	54.22 (177.11)	7.41 (24.4)
TEDDINGTON SKIFF		15.08 (49.6)	1.77 (5.10)

KEY: (S) Sewage disposal. (P) Sewage pump-out. (R) Refuse. (L) Lavatory. (W) Drinking water tap for portable containers only
 (H) Water hose provided for bulk supplies. NOTE: Water supplies in sanitary stations are unfit for drinking.

AND INCHES). SEE NOTE ON PAGE 19



DEPTH UPPER SILL	DEPTH LOWER SILL	FALL	TELEPHONE
1.80 (5.11)	1.63 (5.5)	1.07 (3.6)	READING (0734) 572251
2.00 (6.7)	1.93 (6.4)	1.63 (5.4)	READING (0734) 693992
1.98 (6.6)	1.90 (6.3)	1.55 (5.1)	READING (0734) 403350
2.18 (7.2)	2.18 (7.2)	1.33 (4.4)	HENLEY (0491) 572992
2.48 (8.2)	2.21 (7.3)	1.44 (4.9)	HENLEY (0491) 571269
1.88 (6.2)	1.88 (6.2)	1.05 (3.5)	LITTLEWICK GREEN (0628) 824334
2.13 (7.0)	2.10 (6.11)	1.23 (4.1)	LITTLEWICK GREEN (0628) 824334
2.13 (7.0)	1.95 (6.5)	2.16 (7.1)	MARLOW (062 84) 2867
2.51 (8.3)	2.48 (8.2)	1.30 (4.3)	BOURNE END (062 85) 20752
3.12 (10.3)	2.13 (7.0)	2.39 (7.10)	MAIDENHEAD (0628) 24205
2.13 (7.0)	2.13 (7.0)	1.46 (4.9)	MAIDENHEAD (0628) 21650
2.38 (7.10)	2.13 (7.0)	1.47 (4.10)	WINDSOR (0753) 862764
2.83 (9.3)	2.62 (8.7)	2.01 (6.7)	WINDSOR (0753) 860296
2.48 (8.2)	2.54 (8.4)	1.74 (5.9)	WINDSOR (0753) 861822
2.61 (8.7)	2.61 (8.7)	1.82 (6.0)	EGHAM (0784) 432333
2.74 (9.0)	2.56 (8.5)	1.22 (4.0)	STAINES (0784) 452657
2.66 (8.9)	2.46 (8.1)	1.22 (4.0)	CHERTSEY (0932) 562208
2.43 (8.0)	2.59 (8.6)	2.03 (6.8)	WALTON-ON-THAMES (0932) 221840
3.07 (10.1)	2.26 (7.5)	1.87 (6.2)	SUNBURY (0932) 782089
2.76 (9.1)	2.48 (8.2)	1.87 (6.2)	
2.84 (9.4)	2.41 (7.11)	1.85 (6.1)	081-979 4482
3.15 (10.4)	2.61 (8.7)	2.68 (8.10)	
4.26 (14.0)	2.79 (9.2)	2.68 (8.10)	081-940 8723
1.09 (3.7)	1.34 (4.5)	2.68 (8.10)	

SEWAGE PUMP-OUT STATIONS

● The NRA Thames Region has installed coin-operated pump-out units, available to boat crews during lock staff duty hours, at St. John's, Rushey, Eynsham, Abingdon, Boveney and Molesey Locks. Recharging fluid is not provided. Others listed are in private management and usually available only during the months April-October. Individual proprietors should be consulted about hours of operation and there may be some delay at busy hire cruiser bases while the fleet is being serviced. Look for this blue and white sign:



ST. JOHN'S LOCK

RUSHEY LOCK

PINKHILL - CARIBBEAN CRUISERS

EYNSHAM LOCK

MEDLEY - SOMERTON MARINE

ABINGDON LOCK

ABINGDON - ABINGDON BOAT CENTRE

ABINGDON - RED LINE CRUISERS

BENSON - CRUISER STATION

CAVERSHAM BRIDGE - SALTER BROS.

DE MONTFORT ISLAND, READING - BRIDGE BOATS

DE MONTFORT ISLAND, READING - CAVERSHAM BOAT SERVICES

CAVERSHAM BELOW LOCK - BETTER BOATING

RIVER KENNET - READING MARINE

WARGRAVE - JOHN BUSHNELL

WARGRAVE - SWANCRAFT

BOURNE END - BOURNE END MARINE

BOVENEY LOCK

DATCHET - JOHN HICKS

EGHAM - NICHOLS

STAINES - WATERLINE HOLIDAYS

PENTON HOOK - PENTON HOOK MARINA

CHERTSEY BRIDGE - W. BATES & SON

MOLESEY LOCK

THAMES DITTON - THAMES DITTON MARINA

KINGSTON - R.J. TURK & SONS

RIVER KENNET

River Thames navigation Kennet branch

● This short waterway leading from the Thames to the Kennet and Avon Navigation in the centre of Reading is also within the NRA Thames Region's navigational jurisdiction so your registered craft may use it without additional charge or formality. The recommended maximum draught of vessels is 3ft 3in or 1 metre and headways of bridges over the navigation channel are given in the distance table below. Beware of lesser headways if you depart from this channel.

● When entering from the Thames reduce speed and keep a sharp lookout for other craft. The towpath side of this river is frequently not as deep as it looks, so steer well clear of the towpath bank and allow oncoming craft room to do the same.

● Dimensions of Blakes Lock are given in Appendix F. Boat crews may operate the lock when it is unattended by lock staff. Please leave the lock emptying or empty with the gates closed.

TABLE OF DISTANCES AND HEADWAYS

	MILES ABOVE TODDINGTON	MILES BETWEEN PLACES	HEADWAY METRES (FT)
UPSTREAM LIMIT OF THE NRA THAMES REGION'S NAVIGATIONAL JURISDICTION	55.26	0.23	
WATLINGTON BRIDGE	55.03	0.07	2.95 (9.8)
KINGS ROAD BRIDGE	54.96	0.29	2.90 (9.6)
BLAKES LOCK	54.67	0.24	
RAILWAY BRIDGE	54.43	0.03	6.20 (20.4)
GAS MAINS	54.40	0.03	4.77 (15.8)
RAILWAY BRIDGE	54.37	0.04	6.70 (22.0)
KENNET MOUTH AND RIVER THAMES	54.33	0.00	

USEFUL ADDRESSES



National Rivers Authority, Thames Region Headquarters

Kings Meadow House
Kings Meadow Road, Reading RG1 8DQ
Telephone: Reading (0734) 535000

The following can be contacted at the above address:

Recreation and Conservation Manager

Telephone: (0734) 535504

Amenity and Recreation Manager

Telephone: Reading (0734) 535560

Conservation Officer

Telephone: Reading (0734) 535563

Public Relations

Telephone: (0734) 535555

Manager and Chief Inspector, Navigation

Address as above
Telephone: Reading (0734) 535525

District Navigation Inspectors

No 1 District (*Cricklade Bridge to tail of Benson Lock Cut*)
Osney Lock
Oxford OX2 0AX
Telephone: Oxford (0865) 721271

No 2 District (*Tail of Benson Lock Cut to tail of Hurley Lower Lock Cut*)
Kings Meadow House
Kings Meadow Road, Reading RG1 8DQ
Telephone: Reading (0734) 535533

No 3 District (*Hurley Weir Stream to Staines Bridge*)
Boulter's Lock
Maidenhead SL6 8PE
Telephone: Maidenhead (0628) 22491

No 4 District (*Staines Bridge to Teddington*)
Riverside Works
Fordbridge Road
Sunbury on Thames TW16 6AP
Telephone: Sunbury (0932) 781946

Pollution Incidents/Fish Mortalities

Dial 100 and ask for Freefone River Pollution

General Emergency (out of office hours)

Telephone: Reading (0734) 535000

Craft Registration

P.O. Box 214
Reading RG1 8HQ
Telephone: Reading (0734) 535650

Rod and Line Licences

P.O. Box 215
Reading RG1 8HQ
Telephone: Reading (0734) 535651

Department of Trade and Industry

Marine Licensing Section
Room 613
Waterloo Bridge House
Waterloo Road
London SE1 8UA
Telephone: 071-215 2047

Department of Transport

Chief Surveyor, Marine Office
Centre Court
1B Knoll Rise
Orpington, Kent BR6 0JA
Telephone: (0689) 890400

Ministry of Defence

Room 8390
Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB
Telephone: 071-218 7106

Royal Life Saving Society

Mountbatton House
Studley Place
Warwickshire
Telephone: Studley (052 785) 3943

Resuscitation Council

Department of Anaesthetics
Hammersmith Hospital
Ducane Road
London W12 0HS
Telephone: 081-749 9974

River Police

Metropolitan Police (*Thames Division*).
River patrols, upstream as far as Staines, based at
Police Station, Shepperton Lock.
Telephone: Walton-on-Thames (0932) 229281.

Thames Valley Police, *Marine Section*:
Telephone: Slough (0753) 31282.



NRA

*National Rivers Authority
Thames Region*

Public Relations,
Kings Meadow House,
Kings Meadow Road, Reading RG1 8DQ.
Telephone: Reading (0734) 535000.

This booklet is for your guidance only. It is not an authoritative interpretation of all the relevant Acts, bye-laws and licensing conditions concerning the River Thames, as these must be referred to on points of specific detail. Every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the information, but the NRA, Thames Region cannot accept responsibility for any error or omission.

