

Navigation

AND THE ENVIRONMENT AGENCY

The Agency holds various legal responsibilities for inland river, estuary, and harbour navigations in England and Wales.

The aim of the Agency's Navigation function is to improve and maintain inland waterways and their facilities for use by the public in the areas where the Agency is the navigation authority. The Agency is a navigation authority in it's Thames, Anglian and Southern regions. In total, over 800km of Britain's finest river navigations are managed by the Agency and there are approximately 44,000 boats holding Agency licences.

The rivers under the Agency's management contrast greatly, ranging from the remote fenland rivers in East Anglia to the grandeur of the river Thames which stretches from the Cotswolds to the City of London. Steeped in history and winding their way through some of England's most beautiful countryside, these rivers provide a host of recreational activities for all to enjoy. Activities range from quiet riverside walks, watching boats travelling through locks, ferry trips and fishing to the more active pursuits of canoeing, rowing and boating.

The river corridors are also important habitats for many types of fish, animals, birds and plants.

FACTS

The Thames navigation extends from the Town Bridge at Cricklade to the boundary obelisk approximately 230 yards downstream at Teddington lock, a distance of 135 miles (229km). In addition, the navigation extends up the River Kennet from its junction with the Thames to a point

Thames

On its course from the edge of the Cotswolds to the nation's capital, the Thames passes through beautiful countryside, picturesque villages and historic towns. It passes numerous country mansions set in spacious parks, while Windsor Castle, Hampton Court and Runnymede are just three of the many locations with royal connections. The river has played an important part in the nation's history and has been an inspiration to writer, composers, and artists.

The river is popular for both cruising and hire boats. The Thames is famed for its rowing; clubs are found all along the river from Oxford, and the internationally renowned Henley Regatta is held on the Thames. There are canoe clubs in most towns along the river and some of the weirs are used for white water events. The lower reaches of the river support a number of sailing clubs. There are a number of stretches of riverbank

70 yards downstream of the High Bridge at Reading.

The Agency own forty four lock and weir sites on the River Thames and one lock on the River Kennet. There are seventy five lock keepers and fifteen patrol launches.

Approximately 35,000 craft are registered on the Thames per year.

Windsor Castle

University town of Oxford

University Boat Race - Oxford (Isis)



VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

Henley Regatta

Canoe rodeo and slalom events



where free fishing is allowed. At a number of Agency sites anglers may buy a permit and have exclusive access to fishing in the vicinity of a weir. All anglers in England & Wales fishing for freshwater fish and eels require an Agency Rod Licence.

There is a towpath along the River Thames which provides superb walking. A new National Trail, The Thames Path, is soon to be opened which follows the river from its source near Kemble in Gloucestershire to the Thames Barrier. Many of the locks provide an attractive settings in where visitors can relax by the riverside, enjoy a picnic, or simply watch the boats go by.

FURTHER READING

A User's Guide to the River Thames

Locks and Weirs on the River Thames

Navigation Levels of Service

FACTS

The Medway navigation gives access to 19 miles (31km) of the freshwater River Medway, above its tidal limit at Allington. There are ten locks and associated sluices and weirs, and a lifting bridge at Yalding. The upstream limit of navigation is the

footbridge immediately downstream of the Leigh flood regulating barrier, just west of Tonbridge. Approximately 2,000 boats are licensed on the Medway per year. Lock keepers operate the tidal lock at Allington, and staff are available to operate the lifting bridge.

Southern

The River Medway was opened to navigation some 250 years ago when water-borne transport was in its heyday. Today, the river between Maidstone and Tonbridge is maintained as a public right of navigation, enabling water users to experience the delightful scenery of the Garden of England. The navigation is supported by a well maintained and signposted footpath network which allows visitors unique access through beautiful Kentish scenery of hop fields and orchards.

Much of the towpath between Allington Lock and the Leigh Barrier has been re-established by the Medway River Project. The project is a partnership between the Agency, Countryside Commission, local authorities and industry.

The river is popular with canoeists and anglers and trips can be taken on the river by pleasure boat or under your own power in a rowing boat.

Aylesford Priory

The Malta Inn, Allington Lock

Cobtree Museum of Kent Life

Archbishop's Palace, Maidstone

VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

14th Century Bridge, Teston

Yalding village (Including Geoglan houses, working forge, moated vicarage, Warde's moat)

Tonbridge and Tonbridge Castle

Haysden Country Park



There are opportunities to visit the locks or parks near the river and enjoy the views of weirs, meadows, pastures, medieval bridges and oast houses. There are several villages on, or close to, the river which provide ample occasion for the traveller to explore and take refreshment.



FURTHER READING

River Medway leaflet

Guide to the Medway Navigation

FACTS

The Agency has navigational responsibility on the rivers Ancholme, Welland/Glen, Nene, Great Ouse (and its accompanying system) and Stour, covering 293 miles (507km) of navigable waterways. The region registers approximately 6,000

vessels per year. The Agency owns 70 lock structures. All operational activities associated with maintenance of the navigation system are combined with those of flood defence and carried out by District Engineers and their staff.

Market towns – Northampton, Bedford, Brigg, Market Rasen, Market Harborough, Stamford

Anglian

The Rivers Ancholme, Welland, Glen, Stour, Nene, and the Great Ouse system form an important part of a navigable river network in the Eastern counties.

The rivers of this region are uncrowded and flow through miles of rural tranquillity bringing the individual directly in touch with some of the most unspoilt and naturally rich water environments in Britain. These rivers have a great deal to offer the discerning visitor. As well as outstanding architecture, the area is rich in historical connections stretching back into Roman times.

The unique nature of this area, with vast expanses of artificially drained land reclaimed from its natural marsh state, offers the visitor an unusual choice of various types of activity encompassing angling, birdwatching and visiting towns and villages with strong historical and cultural associations.



VISITOR ATTRACTIONS

Remains of a Roman canal

Dutch style of water front architecture in Wisbech (River Nene)

River Nene linked to Grand Union Canal and Middle Level

Cathedral town of Peterborough

Famous Denver land drainage sluice

Cardington Canoe Slalom



There are over 250 miles of cruising available on these East Anglian rivers, yet this delightful area is probably the least known of our inland waterways. The rivers are quiet and relaxing with many charming waterside Inns to provide traditional English food and ale.

FURTHER READING

Navigation - the Anglian Experience

The River Nene Navigation Guide

A brief history of the River Stour Navigation, 1705-present day

Agency Navigations In the Anglian Region

Navigation Notes – Advice to Boat Owners