

## River Thames Henley to Marlow Easy to Moderate Trail

### Route Summary

This is a lovely part of the Thames, starting in historic Henley, and famous for two quite different canoe sports. Henley itself was the site in 1948 of the Olympic flat water kayaking course, as well as the more well-known rowing held here. Nine canoeing events were contested, eight for men, and one for women, and Sweden won four gold medals, and Czechoslovakia three. As the river winds down, it passes two weirs famous for slalom paddling, and now freestyle, Hambleden and Hurley.

**Nearest Town** - Henley and Marlow

**O.S. Sheets** - Landranger No. 175 –Reading and Windsor

**Start** - Mill Lane, Henley – SU 772817

**Finish** - Court Garden Leisure Centre, Marlow – SU 848860

**Waterways Travelled** – River Thames

**Type of Water** - River

**Distance** – 9 miles

**License Information** – A Thames license is required. Canoe England membership includes a Thames license (take your membership card with you as it is your license too) Licenses can also be purchased from the Environment Agency <http://environment-agency.resultspace.com/search?p=UK&srid=S8-UKSR01&lbc=environment-agency&ts=ev2&pw=boating%20licence4s&pu=201964&uid=382364828&isort=score&w=boat%20licence&rk=2>

**Local Facilities** – Both Henley and Marlow are sizeable towns with all facilities

**Vehicle Shuttle Required** - Yes

**Portages and Locks** – 3 locks

### Description

From Marsh Lock, follow the river downstream and under Henley Bridge, the Royal Regatta H.Q. next to the bridge.

The bridge is one of five arches, crossing from Remenham to Henley, built in 1786. The next straight is Henley Reach, site of the famous regatta, taking place every first week in July. The river and town are very busy during this time, but also very colourful.



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A mile and a half downstream is Temple Island, marking the start of the regatta course, and with spectacular views. The Temple is a folly, designed by James Wyatt as a fishing lodge for Fawley Court, the Christopher Wren mansion further back up the river. Built in 1771, the folly is available for hire for events.



The river then bends to the right, leading to Hambleden Lock, possibly site of an old flash lock in days gone by. A pound lock, with heavy wooden manual beams, was built in 1773. Hambleden Mill is now flats.

The first Oxford and Cambridge boat race was rowed between Hambleden and Henley in 1829.

The portage is almost at the lock cut, on the right side. There is a fast flow from the left on leaving the lock gates downstream, and often you might see slalom paddlers training here.

Many nice houses on the way down the river, and the next portage is at Hurley Lock, again with a weir paddled on. To reach the lock, the line of the weir is followed, keeping near to the right bank, and then under the footbridge at the start of the lock cut to portage almost immediately on the left side. Cross over the island and put in from the low portage area behind the building.

It is only a short distance to Temple Lock, with many boats and marinas on this stretch. In the lock cut, portage left almost up against the lock, with a put-in immediately after the lock. During the summer, drinks and snacks available for sale here.

Soon after Temple, on the right is Bisham Abbey, a Grade 1 listed manor house, the name taken from a former monastery here. The complex here is now a National Sports Centre run by Sport England. GB Canoeing have offices here.



It is only around a bend now to Marlow, with the get-out above the suspension bridge on the left.

### Useful Information

Henley Regatta – [www.hrr.co.uk/acatalog/home.html](http://www.hrr.co.uk/acatalog/home.html)

[www.riverconnections.co.uk/temple-island.html](http://www.riverconnections.co.uk/temple-island.html)

[www.leander.co.uk/](http://www.leander.co.uk/)

[www.utrc.org.uk/](http://www.utrc.org.uk/)

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[www.marlowrowingclub.org.uk/](http://www.marlowrowingclub.org.uk/)

### Recommended Next Trail

If you have enjoyed this trail why not try out one of the many trails available.

Spending an afternoon canoeing can be a fun way to experience nature, get a great workout and spend time with family and friends. However, it can also be a dangerous journey, if safety guidelines are overlooked. Always follow these basic rules and comply with navigation rules – keep to the right of on-coming boats. Please be careful at points along the trail where there are sharp bends on the waterway and keep a look out at these points for oncoming traffic.

### **Wear appropriate clothing**

Always wear shoes. Rocks, rough terrain and river beds present serious hazards to boaters without the proper attire. Nearly 90per cent of all boating injuries are attributed to lack of proper footwear. Other canoe safe clothing includes hats, additional dry clothing towels, and layered items which can easily be removed.

Be sure to

- Know the weather forecast before you set out canoeing.
- Check your equipment.
- Observe the navigation rules for this waterway.
- Check to see if there are any events on the waterways when you wish to travel.

Use the checklist below to make sure you have everything you need.

Checklist:

1. Boat
2. Paddle
3. Buoyancy Aid
4. Bailer/sponge
5. Small First Aid Kit
6. Penknife
7. Mobile telephone (in a waterproof bag....Please note that in some areas due to the location mobile telephone reception might be nonexistent)
8. Fresh drinking water
9. Sun cream, hat and sunglasses
10. Light waterproof jacket
11. Footwear
12. Licence

**ALWAYS** be certain to let others know where you're going and when you're expected to return.

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### Specific Environmental Information:

Please ensure you don't remove or damage any plants or animals from the waterway as they may be protected or harmful if transferred to other catchments.

Canoeists and kayakers take very seriously environmental concerns and already follow existing voluntary environmental codes of conduct, including Canoe England's own guidance notes outlined in the "You your canoe and the environment" publication.

By following the simple steps below you can ensure your presence is not detrimental to the freshwater environment, minimize and avoid accidentally disturbing wildlife and their habitats.

- Find out about the area before you go, noting its sensitive places, species and breeding seasons.
- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home with you.
- When clearing litter left by others, handle it with care.
- Leave the environment as you find it
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Do not "seal" launch or drag boats to avoid wearing away natural banks. Float your canoe for launching, lift out when landing and carry it to and from the water.
- Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing.
- Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
- On rivers, avoid paddling over gravel banks in low water conditions – they may contain fish spawn.
- Constantly assess wildlife. If you see signs of disturbance move away quietly.

Be the eyes and ears on the water. Report pollution, wildlife problems, damage, incidents etc to the relevant authorities.

Canal & River Trust - Emergencies- Telephone 0800 47 999 47

RSPCA for wildlife and animals in distress – Telephone 0990 55 59 99 (24 hours)

Environment Agency - Telephone 0800 80 70 60 (24 hours)

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