

River Thames Hurley Lock to Maidenhead Moderate Trail

Route Summary

A beautiful trip past Marlow to Boulter's Lock, just upstream from Maidenhead, with scenic locks, and historic Bisham Abbey on the south bank.

Nearest Town - Marlow

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

Start - Hurley car park, off Mill Lane, SL6 5NB

Finish – Raymead Road, Lower Cookham Road SL6 8JB

Waterways Travelled – R. Thames

Type of Water - River, with locks

Distance – 9 miles

Licence Information – A Thames Licence is required (<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/homeandleisure/recreation/boating/31605.aspx>)

Canoe England Membership includes a Thames licence (take your membership card, as it is your licence, with you)

Local Facilities – In Marlow and Maidenhead

Vehicle Shuttle Required - Yes -

Portages and Locks – 4 locks (5, if also passing through Hurley Lock at the start)

Description

Head east (downstream) through Hurley Lock. Alternatively, go over the footbridge onto the island (public toilets) and launch at the canoe portage/landing stage on the backwater to the weir. After half a mile portage Temple Lock on the left hand side. During the summer months tea and ice creams are sold in the lock keeper's garden.

This is Marlow reach and, depending on the time of day, you may well find many rowing boats training for one of the many Thames regattas or sailing dinghies from the National Sports Centre at Bisham Abbey, where the GB Canoeing Sprint canoeists are also based. The 800-year-old Bisham Abbey also has a fitness centre, and a bar/restaurant.

The manor house of Bisham Abbey is a Grade I listed manor house at Bisham. Bisham Abbey was previously named Bisham Priory, and was the traditional resting place of many Earls of Salisbury. Now it is a Sport England centre and has a few of the national governing bodies for sport based there.

We have taken great care to ensure the currency, accuracy and reliability of this information. We cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions but where such are brought to our attention, the information will be amended accordingly. Users should be aware that environmental conditions outside of our control can change the nature of the Trail within a short space of time. It is recommended that weather and water conditions are checked beforehand, and tide timetables where applicable.

At the end of this long wide stretch is Marlow Suspension Bridge, opened in 1832 and restored in the 1960's after the failure of plans for it to be replaced with a ferro-concrete structure!! Under the bridge on the north bank is Marlow Canoe Club.

The approach to the lock passes a long weir on the right. Care needs to be taken if the river is flowing as the draw on the weir can be quite strong at times. The portage is on the left and you stay on the left bank and put back in just below the lock.

Not long after the Lock you travel under the Marlow by-pass bridge and pass the Longridge Watersports centre.

As you paddle down here you will notice a lot of countryside and some very attractive riverside properties. Just past Longridge is a home in the shape of a castle! There is an island after about a mile and you can pass either side of it. Soon after that on the left is Spade Oak where there is often an ice cream stall. From here and on the other side of the level crossing is the Spade Oak pub.

Round the next corner is Bourne End. Do watch out here as there are often sailing dinghies out and the occasional race too! There is a pub on the right bank, The Bounty, which could be another good place to stop. Further downstream there are lots of fields where one can picnic. Further still under Cookham Bridge is The Ferry public house. Cookham Bridge was first opened in 1840 in place of a ferry but the present structure dates from 1867. Since its opening a toll was payable but this ceased in 1947 when Berkshire County Council bought the bridge from its private owners. It is a beautiful iron bridge.

Once you turn off the main river in to Cookham Lock cut there is quite a long paddle with no flow. Portage the lock on the left hand bank and put in below the lock on the left bank. A short and interesting diversion is to canoe upstream, under the footbridge into Hedsor Water to explore this quiet backwater. This backwater was deemed private and the right of navigation denied for over 100 years. A successful action in the High Court by the Environment Agency restored public access in 2005.

It is at Cookham that the powerful waters of the Thames meet the Chiltern chalk at Cliveden Cliff. This causes the river to change direction suddenly. Centuries ago this area would have been a maze of narrow river channels between wooded, marshy islands but now it is full of foliage. After Cookham Lock you come into Cliveden Reach with the large mansion (now a hotel) that was the scene of the Profumo Scandal that brought down the Tory government in the 1960s. Two miles further on will bring you to Boulter's Lock. During Victorian times, Boulter's Lock won fame - and notoriety - across the country as thousands of people flocked to the river here to mess about and watch the wealthier classes indulge themselves. Nowadays the weir at Boulter's Lock is a popular kayaking site. A canoe/kayak flume is installed annually on the weir during the summer and there is a permanent fixed ramp in front of the third of the weir's six gates.

This is your destination so portage on the far right of the island just above the lock. The lock island has a cafe and public toilets.

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Useful Information

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-cliveden>

http://www.visitthames.co.uk/text/211/cookham_lock.html

<http://www.longridge-uk.org/home/>

<http://www.marlowcc.org.uk/j/>

There is camping and public toilets available on Hurley Lock Island so this could form part of a longer trip!

Marlow is a lovely historical market town ... well worth a visit too. <http://www.marlowtown.co.uk/>

Cookham - <http://www.windsor.gov.uk/site/discover-the-area/cookham-p281711>

http://www.visitthames.co.uk/text/203/boulter_lock.html

Ray Mill Island is the island at Boulter's Lock. The island is now a park administered by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. It is named after the Ray family who once had a flour mill here. The mill was constructed in 1726 on the site of a previous mill, and continued to produce flour until the 1920s.

Recommended Next Trail

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

Safety Information

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.
- Familiarise yourself with the local area, it's sensitive places and protected areas.
- Leave the environment as you found it. Please read [You, Your Canoe and the](#)

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environment

- Take your litter home with you.
 - Follow the navigation rules for the waterway you are on.
 - Keep noise to a minimum.
 - Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing. (No Seal Launching)
 - Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
 - Canoe a safe distance away from wildlife.
 - 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.

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.

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- 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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