

Take in the sight of Hampton Court Palace from the water on a route with much activity on the water. Enjoy mixed landscapes of parkland and town, and historic landmarks. The trail is suitable for all abilities by either canoe or kayak in normal river conditions.

## Key Info

Start: Hurst Park, West Molesey, London KT8 1ST

Finish: River Lane, Petersham, Richmond TW10 7AG



Scan or visit [bit.ly/river-thames-1](http://bit.ly/river-thames-1) to find the map in Mapometer and download the GPX file

Distance: 7.8 miles

Time: 2-4 hours

Locks/Portages: 2 locks

OS Map: Explorer 161 London South



- 1 Put in and turn right along the river. The island by the launch point is Garrick's Ait and Hampton and its church across the river on the Middlesex bank, provide a fine backdrop for your start.
- 2 Garrick's Temple comes into view, then a short distance on is Taggs Island. This is best seen by taking the channel on the Hampton side and going under the bridge to the island.
- 3 On rejoining the main navigation channel, keep well to the right to avoid any pull from the weirs that flank the cut to Molesey Lock.
- 4 To the right and just before the lock gates, rollers provide a short easy portage or lock through. Public toilets across the road from the lock.
- 5 As you travel away from the lock the majestic towers of Hampton Court Palace come into view. It is a magnificent sight! The River Mole enters the Thames opposite the Palace.
- 6 The first 2 1/2 miles to Kingston Bridge curves round Hampton Court Park, whilst the opposite Surrey bank is London suburbia. Approach Thames Ditton Island on the right and you can take the backwater channel that leads to the Crown Inn and a public slipway.

- 7 Ravens Ait sits, like a boat, in mid-stream. Take the right hand channel and spot the Thames Sailing Club, home to sailing craft with high masts known as Thames A Class Raters.

Find more paddling trails at:  
[gopaddling.info](http://gopaddling.info)

- 8 Kingston Bridge now comes into view and the riverside promenade area nearer to Ravens Ait provides a stop off point for a break with kiosks open in summer months.
- 9 On your way to Teddington Lock, look out for the Royal Canoe Club; the world's oldest canoe club, founded in 1866.
- 10 Teddington Lock cut is flanked by a continuous weir and can have a noticeable pull. The portage across the rollers to the tidal Thames is easy and to the left of the lock entrance.



- 11 Back on the water and 265 yards below the lock is an obelisk marking the boundary of the Environment Agency and the tideway under the control of the Port of London Authority. High water: Dover plus 4 hrs 4 mins (London Bridge plus 1 hr 15 mins).
- 12 Further on to the left is Alexander Pope's Villa, an imposing large red brick building.
- 13 At around 7 miles pass Eel Pie Island on its left side. There is a landing on the left and the facilities of Twickenham town centre are a few hundred yards away.
- 14 Arrive at Petersham Meadow, on your right, with a slipway at the end of River Lane marking the end of your journey.

Tide times are posted on the PLA web site ([www.pla.co.uk](http://www.pla.co.uk)). Whilst useful to know if you are leaving a car next to the river, the influence of the tide in the 3 miles from Teddington to Richmond is small. The water level and flow is controlled by a half-tide sluice below Richmond and normally the river in this reach can be canoed in either direction without difficulty.

Garricks Temple was built by the great 18th century actor-manager David Garrick in 1756 to celebrate the genius of William Shakespeare.

The Corporation of the City of London built the first pound lock at Molesey entirely of timber in 1815 along with the lock keepers house. In 1906 it had to be rebuilt and enlarged by the Thames Conservancy. The current house was built in 1925.

Thames A Class Raters are unique to the Thames. They are specially designed for sailing conditions at Surbiton and extremely fast with the large sail area.

Pope's Villa was built on the original site of the poet's mansion. His famous grotto is underneath the present building and is open to the public.

At Eel Pie Island, unseen from the river, are two historic residences. Marble Hill House is to the left and Ham House to the right. In full view is the magnificent sight of Richmond Hill and the Star & Garter Home set behind Petersham Meadows.

For an alternative finish, continue through Richmond past Richmond Canoe Club and Richmond Bridge to see the impressive riverside development noted for the mix of English and Italian influenced architecture. You could turn here and return to River Lane.

The other finishing point is a further ¼ mile past the mansion of Asgill House, the railway and Twickenham Bridges to arrive at Ranelagh Drive on the left hand bank. Work your way through the moorings to land at the steps between the road bridge and the half tide sluice. Keep well away from the sluice if the gates are down.

This trail moves from the non-tidal Thames under the Environment Agency jurisdiction above Teddington to the tidal Thames, which comes under the control of Port of London Authority. Both issue navigation notices for river closures and temporary restrictions and it is always best to check beforehand:

For up to date information visit: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk/thamesclosures](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/thamesclosures) with a link to flow conditions.

<http://www.pla.co.uk/> see Notices to Mariners and information for recreational users.

Further useful information can be found on the following websites:

<http://www.richmondcanoeclub.com>

<http://www.royalcanoeclub.com>

<http://www.hrp.org.uk/hamptoncourtpalace/>

## Safety and Licenses

**We want you to enjoy a safe trip, so here are a few tips for staying safe and paddling responsibly.**

### Paddle Safe:

Be prepared and take the right kit:

- Wear a correctly sized buoyancy aid
- Mobile phone – in a waterproof case
- Whistle – to attract attention in case of emergency
- Map and / or route description
- Appropriate clothing for the weather conditions + spares in a dry bag
- Food, drink & sunscreen!

### Paddle Responsibly:

Respect the natural environment and other users:

- Respect other waterway users #sharethespace
- Be environmentally aware, minimise your impact
- Ensure you have the correct licence if required
- Observe navigational rules – keep right and give other users space
- Check, Clean, Dry after every trip!

**Licences:** The waterways in this trail are managed by The Environment Agency and require paddlers to hold a licence. British Canoeing membership includes a full annual licence for this waterway - please take your membership card with you as this acts as your licence. Non-members can either purchase a British Canoeing membership from [www.britishcanoeing.org.uk](http://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk) or buy licences direct from [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency)

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