



River Mersey Paddle

Guide



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The River Mersey stretches a total of 69 miles (111km) a total of 39.5 miles (67km) is navigable by paddle craft.

The name 'Mersey' originates from Old English 'Maere' meaning boundary and the river was the boundary of the ancient Saxon kingdoms of Mercia and Northumbria. The river forms at the confluence of the River Tame and the River Goyt in Stockport, where the route begins. The length of the Mersey is 110km but don't worry, you don't have to paddle all of it!

In the 18th Century industrial expansion along the river was huge and it played a major part in the growth of the area. As a result the quality of the water suffered and, 50 years ago, the Mersey was considered one of the most polluted rivers in Europe. This is no longer the case, water quality in the Mersey has improved following an intensive clean up operation and fish, including salmon, are now thriving, a sign that the water quality of the river is getting better.



The River Mersey

Burnage Rugby Club

At the rugby club, paddlers can request use of changing and shower facilities, there is ample car parking 150m from the river, toilets (including facilities suitable for people with disabilities), a bar and usually hot breakfast bar each weekend morning.

Portage to and from the river is down the path between the club and the industrial estate. If a large group with trailers etc then access may be possible around the inside of the grounds The Club can be contacted on 0161 432 2150.

For paddleboarders with no transport Burnage Rugby Club is about a 10 minute walk from East Didsbury Tram stop.

Northenden - Riverside Pak

This location is both an end point, a starting point and also is suitable for a fixed 'up and down paddle' especially suited to Paddle Boarders.

Access above the weir is via a set of stairs on the river right just below the bridge. This can be used as portage around the weir or as a starting point to paddle up stream. (be aware of the conditions and height of the weir - see information below - before making decisions whether to paddle this section or go down the weir).

Groups regularly go down the weir and then either have a break on the island before travelling on or finish by exiting the river on the concrete platform on the river left.

Jackson's Boat Pub

At Jackson's Boat Pub in Sale there is a pay and display car park - free for Pub users (or a 5 minute walk away there is free car parking at Sale Water Park Visitor Centre). The pub was named after a local farmer named Jackson who cultivated land in the area and who regularly ferried people across the river by boat, charging them a small fee. Broad Ees Dole is a wetland site, designated as a Local Nature Reserve. Access to the river is made next to the flood Barrier about 100m down river from the bridge on river left.

For paddleboarders with no transport there is Sale Water Park Metro station 300m away.

The site is nationally important for birds and you can expect to see a huge variety including heron,

snipe and kingfisher. There are no footpaths running through the reserve but there is a perimeter path offering great views of the wildlife.

There is another reserve at The Mersey Valley Wardens visitor's centre. The centre has seasonally changing displays and is the start of 5 "health walks", all of which are accessible by wheelchair users. There is a café at the site and toilet facilities.

Trafford Metrovick Rugby Club

This club is open every weekend and often during the week. Access to the river is on the far side of the car park up and over the embankment. There are concrete steps down to the river...unhelpfully built when the river was higher than usual so can at times be a small challenge. This is a good end point or easily a starting point for the last section.

Ashton Weir

This weir is dangerous and should not be paddled under any circumstances, regardless of your skill level! This is because the weir has a hidden wall below the weir to prevent erosion of the riverbed. Portage around Ashton Weir is provided via a set of steps on the left bank before the road bridge. You can re-enter the Mersey from a small beach area below the weir.

Banky Meadow

This section of the river has not been canalised so offers a glimpse of how the river used to be before the Environment Agency and its predecessors carried out works to protect against flooding. There is a colony of sand martins on the north side of the riverbank. The sand martin is a summer visitor and is the smallest of the martin and swallow family. The best time to see it is between March and October before it migrates to Africa for the winter. These birds have become rarer in recent years and sand martins and their nests are fully protected by the Wildlife and

Countryside Act 1981. Banky Meadow is managed as a nature reserve and has a large circular path taking you through a meadow of rough grassland, great habitat for ground nesting birds and small mammals. Model aircraft are often flown from a designated field, flying times are posted at the site.

Carrington Playing Field

This is the end of the trail. Carrington is the smallest district within the borough of Trafford. There are several theories as to how Carrington got its name, one of which is that it is derived from the Old English word “caering” meaning “river bend”. Until recently most of the land in Carrington was the property of the Earls of Stamford. Continue for a further 900m after Flixton Road bridge and under the pylons. Egress point is river left. A short walk will bring you up to the playing fields.

Public Facilities are available at various places some of these are:

A. Burnage Rugby Club

Bar, changing rooms, showers and toilets

B. Northenden - Riverside Park - Common Ground Coffee Shop

Open most days with a toilet

C. Jackson's Boat Pub

Bar, restaurant and toilets

D. Trafford Metrovick Rugby Club

Bar/cafe, toilets

E. Riverbank Coffee Ltd

(If you don't mind a scramble up the river bank... past Trafford Metrovick and before Ashton Weir)

Hire & Guided trips

There is one company who operate on the River Mersey www.venture-out.co.uk they offer self guided and guided trips down the river. If you choose a Paddle UK Delivery Partner you will know they have agreed to a Delivery Partner Charter, which requires high standards of safety, value for money, sustainability and customer service. When searching for a paddling experience on the Go Paddling website, look out for the Delivery Partner Logo/Icon.



Head to the Go Paddling website to find a hire or holiday provider who's the perfect fit for you: gopaddling.info/paddling-equipment-hire-finder/

Rapids and Natural Weirs

It is essential to inspect these river features before travelling down them. Look out for boulders/rocks that might be in the river and plan a route down the river which avoids these. Pick a clean route down the rapid by looking for sections of water that are still green coloured (these may often form a V shape). If in any doubt just get out and walk around the rapid from the bank.

We do not recommend that those using stand up paddleboards paddle weirs. If paddling rapids then you must be suitably experienced and wear the appropriate equipment, including a releasable waist leash, white water helmet etc. If you are not experienced in reading and paddling these kinds of waters do not attempt to go down them.

If you do capsize in a rapid try to stay out of the way of your canoe or kayak. Get on your back and float, with your feet on the surface and facing downstream, until you reach the end of the rapid and are able to swim to the shore.

Northenden Weir

River level and water level can be accessed here <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/station/5101?direction=u>

This is an indicator for the water levels at the Northenden Weir. Weirs change with every extra cm of water that flow over them and must be considered with great caution. There are portage steps on river right just after the green footbridge when approaching.

River and Weather Conditions

Know the weather forecast before you set out and be prepared for this to change; sometimes quickly and without warning. If you are unsure of your ability to deal with the weather conditions, leave the trip for another day.

River levels can change rapidly on the Mersey due to rainfall across a large catchment area. You will need to be aware and take account of changing water levels in and immediately after heavy rainfall. The river should not be paddled in flood conditions unless you are a very experienced paddler.

If you are hiring a boat, the hire company can advise you on conditions and safety.

River levels can be checked and viewed at www.riverlevels.uk or check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk.

Wildlife on the Mersey



The River Mersey along the Mersey Paddle Trail is a river recovering from 200 years of industrial and urban impact from the start of the industrial revolution to the 1980s when the river was nearly biologically dead. Substantial investment and action by many organisations working in partnership since the early 1990s has significantly improved the water quality and ecology of the river. The river is classified as being at moderate ecological status overall.

Although there is still much more to do to bring the Mersey up to a good ecological status, the river is now home to 19 different species of fish, from the small stickleback and minnow to larger species such as carp, dace and roach, plus brown trout.

Since 2000, with improving water quality a small number of Atlantic salmon have started to return the River Mersey. Despite numerous weirs on the journey from the Atlantic ocean, the adult salmon are able to swim up the River Mersey and into the River Goyt upstream of Stockport to spawn. The endangered European eel is also present in the River Mersey, with young eels swimming from the Saragosa Sea near Bermuda all the way to the River Mersey.

As well as fish, otter are starting to return to the river as fish numbers increase. Paddlers should see plenty of birds along the Mersey trail, with kingfishers, cormorants, goosander, herons and several species of duck on the river and swift, willow tit and wagtail among 40 or more species along the river valley. Several species of bat feed along the River Mersey in the spring, summer and autumn.

Mersey Valley Way

The Mersey Paddle Trail runs along much of the land route of the Mersey Valley Way national river walk. The Mersey Valley Way runs from Stockport town centre and down the river through south Manchester and Trafford, ending at Ashton-on-Mersey. Around half of the route is also a bridleway for cyclists and horse riders to enjoy the River Mersey.

Further information:

[Mersey Valley Way River Walk](#) | [Mersey Rivers Trust](#)



Paddle Safety

- Always wear a buoyancy aid or personal floatation device
- Ensure you wear the correct leash when stand up paddleboarding
- Have the right equipment & clothing for the conditions
- Plan your trip within your capabilities
- Check weather, tides, water levels and hazards. At the coast avoid paddling if there is an offshore wind
- Carry a means of communication about your person
- Paddle together and inform others of your plans
- In an emergency call 999. If you are at the coast ask for the coastguard. If you are inland ask for the fire & rescue service.



The Paddlers' Code

Respect · Protect · Enjoy

<p>Respect</p> <p>If you need to drive, team up with others to reduce pollution and congestion on roads.</p>	<p>Respect</p> <p>Park respectfully, do not cause obstructions or damage the local area. Leave space for emergency vehicles.</p>	<p>Respect</p> <p>Keep group sizes small and discreet where possible.</p>	<p>Respect</p> <p>Unpack equipment and change in a discreet and considerate way.</p>	<p>Respect</p> <p>Avoid climbing over and damaging fences and walls.</p>
<p>Respect</p> <p>Give other users space, avoid lingering and causing a disturbance. Pass others on the right hand side.</p>	<p>Respect</p> <p>Be friendly, be welcoming and respectful of those you meet along the way. Be nice, say hello and share the space!</p>	<p>Protect</p> <p>Be kind to nature and wildlife. Be aware of breeding and nesting seasons. Minimise noise and keep a distance.</p>	<p>Protect</p> <p>Avoid gravel beds in rivers. Disturbing spawning grounds for fish and other species can be considered a criminal act.</p>	<p>Protect</p> <p>Banks can be sensitive to erosion or home to vulnerable species. Try to avoid them by sticking to established paths.</p>
<p>Protect</p> <p>Avoid dragging or sliding craft on the bankside. Try to float your craft for launching and landing.</p>	<p>Protect</p> <p>Always check, clean, & dry your kit after each trip. This is key to helping stop the spread of invasive, non-native species.</p>	<p>Enjoy</p> <p>Be prepared! Always wear a buoyancy aid and carry a means of contacting the emergency services on your person.</p>	<p>Enjoy</p> <p>Check you have the appropriate leash for the environment if paddling SUP. Or your craft/equipment before each trip.</p>	<p>Enjoy</p> <p>Plan your adventure! The weather can change rapidly due to rain, wind or tide. Check river levels and avoid offshore winds.</p>
<p>Enjoy</p> <p>Ensure you are equipped for the trip and that it is within the capabilities of you and your group.</p>	<p>Enjoy</p> <p>Be aware of potential hazards such as weirs, overhanging trees and tidal waters. Look out for warning signs.</p>	<p>Enjoy</p> <p>Look out for bacteria, viruses or toxic algae. Don't enter water that looks or smells bad. Report to the Environment Agency.</p>	<p>Enjoy</p> <p>Leave no trace, take only photographs and leave only ripples.</p>	<p>Enjoy</p> <p>Having the correct waterways licence helps to preserve our precious rivers and canals</p>

SUP LEASHES

PADDLE^{UK} Lifeboats

Coiled or Straight?

Coiled or straight? Straight leashes should only be used in the surf. Paddling anywhere else should be done with a coiled leash.

QUICK RELEASE BELT
Moving or flowing water where there is a risk of the leash being caught on something

CALF or ANKLE LEASH
Anywhere that the water has no movement and there is LOW risk of the leash being caught on something

Your Environment...

Where are you paddling? What are the conditions? Depending on where you're paddling and the conditions you face, you might need to wear your leash in a different place for safety and security. Take a look at the diagram to see which leash system suits the environment you paddle.

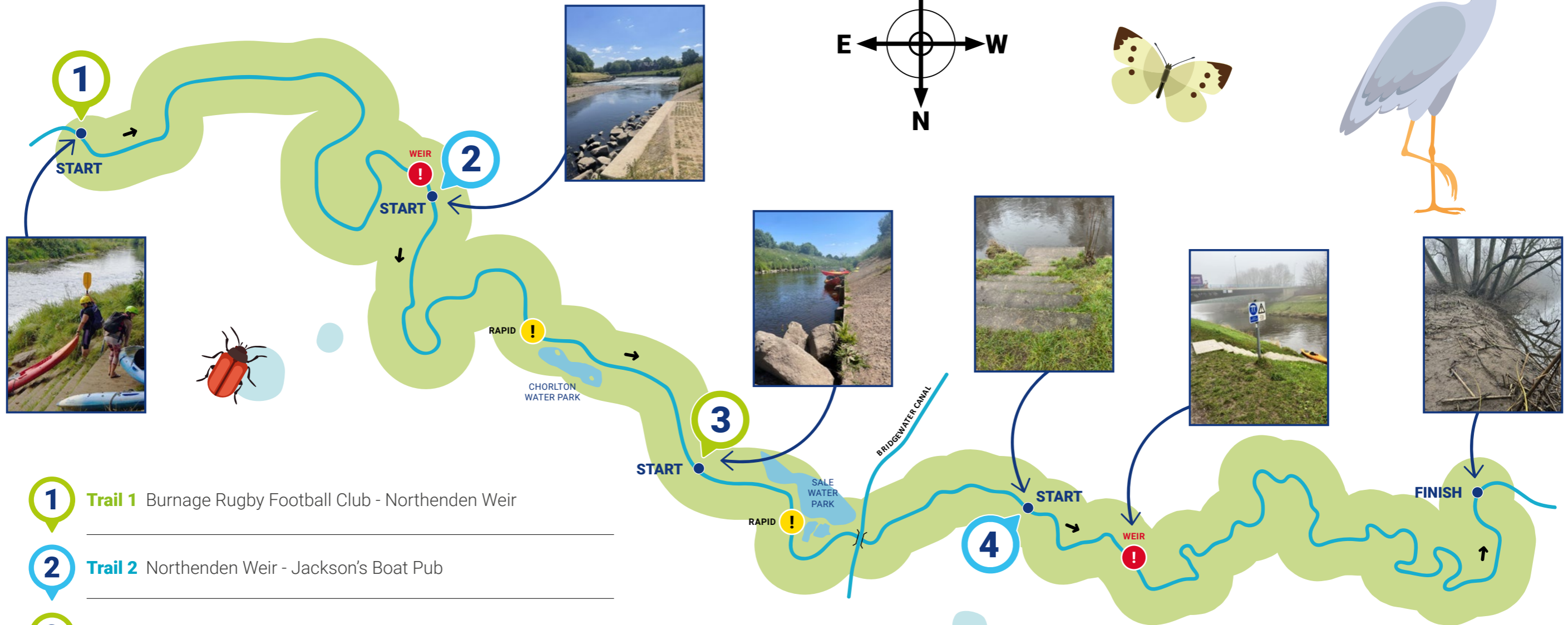
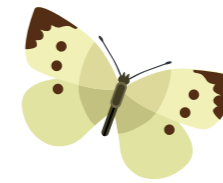
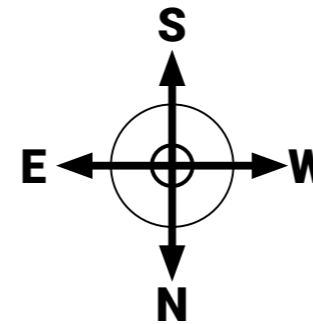
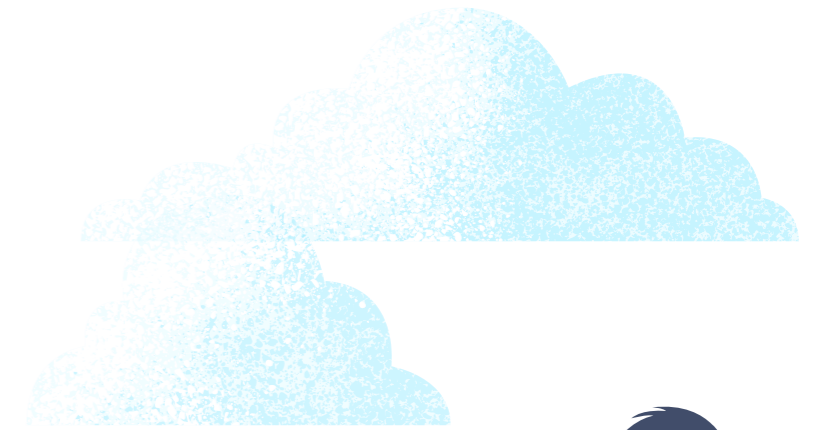
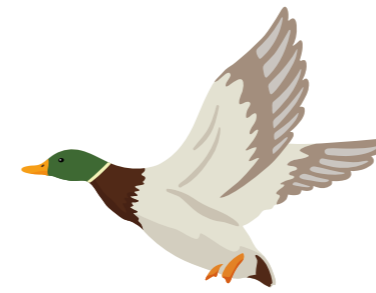
For a whitewater environment we recommend that no leash is used

River Mersey

Full Paddle Route

The River Mersey runs for 69–70 miles (110–112 km) starting at the confluence of the Rivers Goyt and Tame in Stockport. It flows westwards through Greater Manchester and Cheshire, passing Warrington and widening into a large estuary at Runcorn before emptying into the Irish Sea at Liverpool Bay.

This full paddle route runs along a section of the Mersey starting at Burnage Rugby Football Club and finishing at Carrington Recreational Field – the route has been divided into 4 trails.

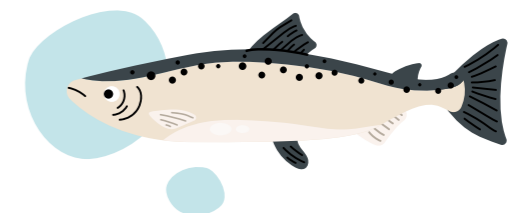


1 Trail 1 Burnage Rugby Football Club - Northenden Weir

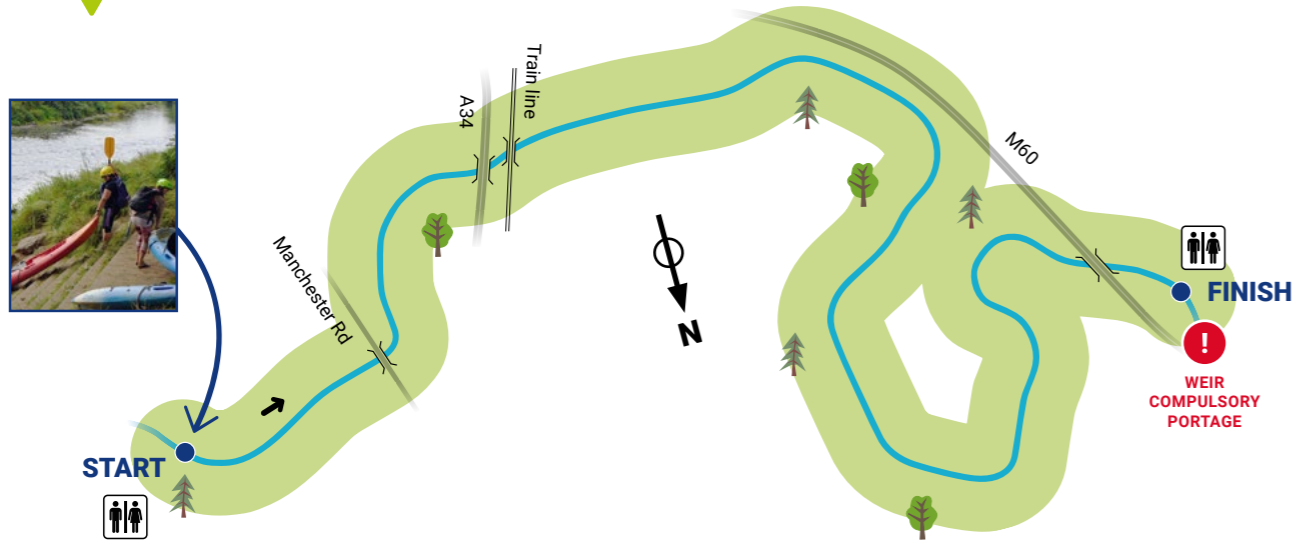
2 Trail 2 Northenden Weir - Jackson's Boat Pub

3 Trail 3 Jackson's Boat Pub - Trafford Metrovick RFCC

4 Trail 4 Trafford Metrovick RFCC - Carrington Recreational Field



1 Burnage Rugby FC to Northenden Weir



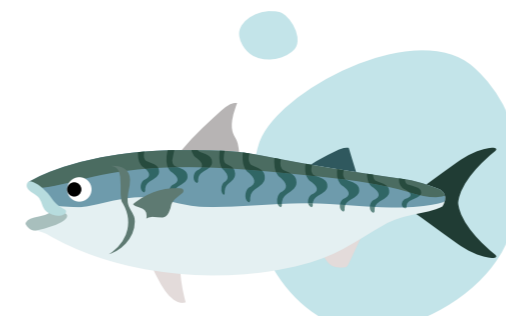
Distance: 3.5 Miles / 5.6 km
Time: 1¼ Hours
Start: Burnage Rugby FC, Battersea Road, Heaton Mersey, Stockport, Cheshire, **SK4 3EA**
Finish: Northenden Weir, Mill Lane, Northenden, Manchester, **M22 4HJ**
OS Map: Landranger No.109 – Manchester

Toilets: Yes, Burnage Rugby Club and Common Ground Coffee Shop near Northenden Weir
Notes: Get out above the weir at the steps on the right bank just after the foot bridge. There is a council car park next to the river on Mill Lane, off Palatine Road, B5167, Northenden.

3 Jackson's Boat Pub to Trafford Metrovick RFCC



Distance: 2.4 Miles / 3.8 km
Time: 1 Hour
Start: Jackson's Boat Pub, Rifle Rd, Sale **M33 2LX**
Finish: Trafford MV RFCC, 34 Finny Bank Rd, Sale **M33 6LR**
OS Map: Landranger No.109 – Manchester
Toilets: Yes, Jackson's Boat Pub and Trafford Metrovick RFCC



2 Northenden Weir to Jackson's Boat Pub



Distance: 3.5 Miles / 5.7 km
Time: 1¼ Hours
Start: Northenden Weir, Mill Lane, Northenden, Manchester, **M22 4HJ**
Finish: Jackson's Boat Pub, Rifle Rd, Sale **M33 2LX**
OS Map: Landranger No.109 – Manchester
Toilets: Yes, Common Ground Coffee Shop and Jackson's Boat Pub

4 Trafford Metrovick RFCC to Carrington Recreational Field



Distance: 5.6 Miles / 9 km
Time: 2 Hours
Start: Trafford MV RFCC, 34 Finny Bank Rd, Sale **M33 6LR**
Finish: Carrington Recreational Field, Carrington Rd, Carrington **M41 6GX**
OS Map: Landranger No.109 – Manchester
Toilets: Yes, Trafford Metrovick RFCC

Become a Member

Did you know you're required to have a waterways licence for many managed waterways in England and Wales?

The River Mersey doesn't require you to have a licence to paddle on it. However, if you paddle regularly you should consider becoming a member of Paddle UK.

Licences are easy to get and the fee from them contributes towards the work that waterways authorities carry out to protect and maintain the waterways you paddle on.

Paddle UK Membership

Membership for all paddling interests and crafts (kayaks, SUPs, canoes, inflatables). Fantastic paddler benefits.

- Waterways licence - most comprehensive licence available, including 4500km of waterways managed by Canal and River Trust, Environment Agency, Broads Authority and many more.
- Insurance - £10,000,000 civil liability cover included, plus the option to purchase craft insurance at a great price.
- Guidance, training and top tips - regular member communications and advice, plus access to training courses and qualifications.
- Discounts - exclusive paddler focused offers



Become part of our community today and support campaigns and projects to improve access and the environment.

<https://paddleuk.org.uk/membership/>

Getting Started?

- Learn to stay safe
- Find places to paddle
- Learn top tips and advice
- Develop your skills
- Find local clubs and centres

Discover more: gopaddling.info

