

Key Information

Start: Putney Slipway, Putney Embankment, Putney, SW15 1JW

Finish: Isleworth Draw Dock, Church St, Old Isleworth, TW7 6BG

Portages: 0

Time: 2-4 hours

Distance: 8 miles

OS Map: Explorer 161 London South & 173 London North



For more information scan the QR code or <https://bit.ly/2Lyh5k1>

This is a busy and tidal part of the River Thames. You must visit boatingonthames.co.uk to check tide times and safety advice before undertaking this trail.

Travel amongst the historic ghosts of London, if you dare, on this phantom packed paddle! We recommend you paddle with the assistance of the tidal flow, departing from Putney in the first 2 hours of the flood tide. Closely timing the tides can allow a return trip.

1. Put in at the public slipway, crossing to the Fulham side of the river and turning left, for correct rules of travel. You are alongside the grounds of Fulham Palace. Can you spot Bishop Bonner who tortured Protestant prisoners during Tudor times and is thought to still stalk grounds?

2. At Hammersmith Bridge, beware of the tide pushing you into Dove Pier after the bridge.

3. At just over 2 miles you are level with the Black Lion area of Hammersmith on your right. A ghost in the 1800's here was blamed for the death of a local woman, who collapsed and died a few hours after witnessing the entity. A hunt for the spook resulted in another local man being shot & killed by mistake (he was wearing white clothing).

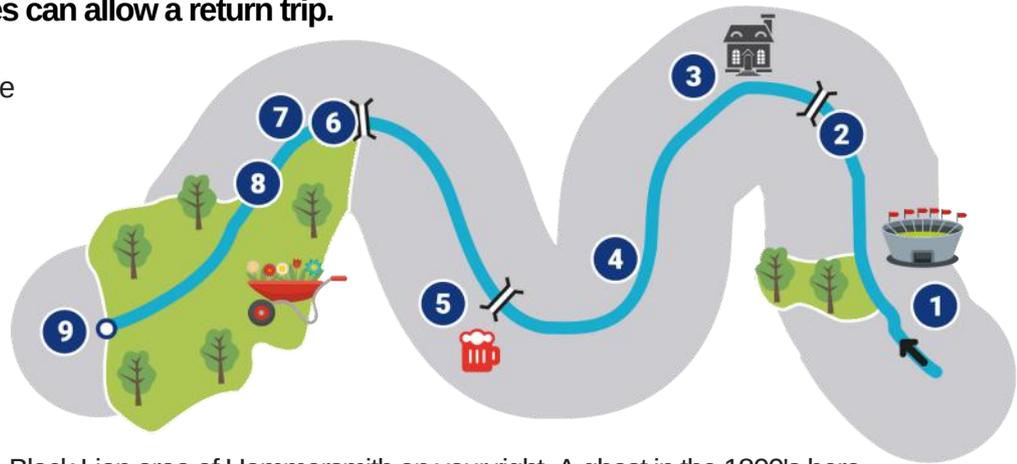
4. Chiswick Pier signals a crossing point for a change in navigation rules. Keep the green marker buoys on your right on this sweeping bend of the river to Chiswick Bridge.

5. Just short of Chiswick Bridge, is your next crossing point. Move to the right hand side before the bridge and for the remainder of the trail to the finish.

6. Passing to the right of Oliver's Island, at just over 5 miles, you are now approaching the grounds of Kew Palace to your left. At Kew Bridge go through the right hand arch for a better sightline. After the bridge the side channel behind the Brentford and Lot's Aits can be taken as the flood tide increases.

7. Kew Palace and its gardens are positively packed with historic spooks. Will you spot royalty in the form of young Prince Octavius? Octavius was only 4 yrs old when he passed away from smallpox here. His small form is still said to roam the palace. Or perhaps you'll see the late botanist, George Bentham emerging from the Herbarium. The faint smell of toast often detected in this area is attributed to George making his breakfast in the fireplace.

8. Rejoin the main channel by the lock entrance to Brentford Marina. From here to Old Isleworth, on your right, is scenic tree lined Syon Reach, with views of Syon House to your right. Don't relax here though, Syon House has a grim past to reveal. Henry VIII's body was bought here before his funeral and was said to explode overnight! Perhaps it was some sort of revenge from beyond the grave — his fifth wife Catherine Howard was imprisoned at Syon for five months before being executed at the Tower of London in 1542.



9. (This point is not explicitly described in the text but is marked on the map at the start of the trail.)



Find out more information at: gopaddling.info

9. Isleworth Eyot comes into sight in the final mile to reveal the finish, with a backdrop of fine Georgian houses, a 15th century church tower and your finish point at the London Apprentice public house. Of course your fears are not over yet! As you land on the slipway will you be accosted by a transparent young boy with no feet? He's believed to be the ghost of one of the 149 parishioners who died from the plague in the 17th cent. and were buried in a mass grave in All Saints Churchyard.

Before you leave the area, be sure to raise a glass to Nell Gwynne, mistress of King Charles II. She still frequents the London Apprentice looking for her lost love.

The Thames is home to over 125 different types of fish, and since efforts to improve the water quality in the 1960's there have been seals, porpoise, and even seahorses spotted there! What might you find!?

An ait or eyot is a small island - the term is often used to refer to river islands found on the River Thames and its tributaries in England. Aits are typically formed by the deposit of sediment in the water, which accumulates over a period of time.

Kew Gardens houses one of the largest and most diverse botanical and mycological collections in the world. The herbarium has over 7 million preserved plants! It is one of London's top attractions and a World Heritage Site.

London Wetland Centre is a great place to get up close and personal with some wildlife that cannot be found anywhere else in London!

Oliver's Island takes its name from a story that Oliver Cromwell once took refuge there, connecting it to his headquarters at the Bull's head via a secret tunnel. So far no evidence of a tunnel has been found.

For more information about British Canoeing visit: britishcanoeing.org.uk

For more information about getting started in paddling visit: gopaddling.info

Our members and the wider paddling community can get in touch with us at: T. 0300 0119 500

It is important to choose trails which sit within your paddling ability and that you do appropriate research before choosing to paddle one. If you are considering paddling on the Thames visit boatingonthethames.co.uk first for the latest safety advice and waterway rules and regulations.

Licence

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 & suncream!

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 Port of London Authority (PLA) 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

**New to
paddling?**

Check out the
Paddle Awards!