

Henley to Marlow River Thames



Start – Start at the car park in Mill Lane Henley. The car park in Mill Lane is free (just check it has not changed to Pay and Display) other car parks in Henley are expensive and even more so during Henley Regatta time.

Mill Lane is off the A4156 Reading Road. If you are doing a car shuffle you need do not need to cross the river but go through Henley following signs to Medenham and then on to Marlow. From Reading take the main Reading road A4156 go through Shiplake, you come across a roundabout right is to Tesco but go straight on and Mill Lane is just past a small garage on the right a hundred metres or so past this roundabout. From Henley take the Reading A4156 road ... as you head out you pass a garage on your left and a few yards later Mill Lane is one your left too.. before the next garage)

Length - 9 miles and 3 locks - (It is possible to use the locks instead of getting out to portage them therefore this route is suitable for those with ambulant problems).

Licence – 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 and sticker with you)

Duration – ½ to 1 day depending on your speed and the desire to stop and look at the scenery etc

Start at the car park in Mill Lane Henley. From the car park walk across the field and you can put in on the river front along there. In times of low water the put in is quite high so you may need to walk down the tow path a bit to find an easier put in.

Following the River down stream you pass Eyot Boat Club (<http://www.eyot.org.uk/>)
The official Henley Royal Regatta Headquarters are located next to Henley Bridge.
Henley Regatta HQ (<https://www.hrr.co.uk/acatalog/home.html>).

You pass under Henley Bridge which is a five arched bridge built in 1786 that crosses the River Thames from Remenham to Henley. There is an Ordnance Survey benchmark carved into Henley Bridge. From here down for the entire straight of the river is Henley reach and this is the site of the famous Henley Regatta which is held in the first week of July every year. During regatta time the scene is very colourful if not somewhat busy with river traffic. Many moor up alongside the posts which mark the edges of the course to watch. (<http://www.hrr.co.uk/>)

This area was also the site of the 1948 Olympics Rowing and Flatwater canoeing course. In the canoeing there were nine events contested, eight for men and one for women. This marked the first time that a women's canoeing event had been contested in the Olympics. Sweden won four gold medals (two by Gert Fredriksson) and Czechoslovakia three.

This stretch can be very windy but it is beautiful... Do watch out for the rowers here as there are many rowing clubs based on the Bucks Bank. Leander (<http://www.leander.co.uk/>) Upper Thames Rowing Club (<http://www.utrc.org.uk/>) and so on..

Temple Island is situated a mile and a half downstream of Henley. This majestic building marks the start of the famous Henley Royal Regatta Course and delivers spectacular views of the course. The Temple itself is a delightful folly, designed by James Wyatt as a fishing lodge for Fawley Court, the Christopher Wren mansion on the Henley Reach. Built in 1771, the Etruscan style interior has been beautifully restored and is an elegant and exclusive venue available for hire. (<http://www.riverconnections.co.uk/temple-island.html>)

From here the river bends to the right and leads in to Hambleden Lock. Hambleden was the site of a mill in 1086 when the Domesday Book was being written. It is possible that a flash lock existed on the river here at the time. A pound lock, with heavy wooden manual beams, was built in 1773. Hambleden Mill is a historic watermill. It is next to Hambleden Lock and has now been converted into flats.

The first Oxford and Cambridge University boat race was rowed in 1829 between Hambleden Lock and Henley Bridge. Oxford won in a time of 14 minutes 30 seconds.

Come in to the lock cut and the portage is almost up at the lock gates on the right hand side. It is a good clean portage and you can walk along side the lock and put back in immediately after the lock.

When leaving the lock if the river is flowing fast be aware of the flow from the left after the Groynes End. Hambleden is well used by slalom paddlers for training and competitions.

Travelling down the river there are some beautiful old properties to look at. There is even a ruin which has been partly restored.

The next lock is Hurley and here again the weir is well used by freestyle canoeists practising their sport. To get in to the lock you follow the line of the weir (keep to the right hand bank in strong flow) and then under the footbridge at the start of the lock

cut to portage almost immediately on the left. Cross over the island and put back in from the low portage area behind the building.

There is only a short distance now to Temple Lock .. about 1000 metres. There are a lot of marinas and boats on this section but the scenery is still beautiful. Once in the lock cut portage left almost up against the lock. The put in is immediately after the lock. During the summer months one can buy snacks and drinks here.

When you continue your journey you will come across Bisham Abbey on your right hand side (not long before your journey is over). Bisham Abbey is a Grade I listed manor house at Bisham in the English county of Berkshire. The name is taken from the now lost monastery which once stood alongside. The abbey church proper, previously Bisham Priory, was the traditional resting place of many Earls of Salisbury. The complex surrounding the extant manorial buildings is now one of the National Sports Centres run on behalf of Sport England. The British Canoe Union is one of the many National Governing Bodies who have offices there.

Your get out is before Marlow suspension building on the right hand side on to the field next to a relational centre. The car park is behind the building and can be reached via Pound Land. This is a Pay and Display car park so do be prepared for that.

Marlow has been an important town for many years. This is because of its location on the River Thames, a major trade route from London. As early as 1299 the town had its own Member of Parliament. The town name is Anglo Saxon in origin, and means 'land remaining after the draining of a pool'. The name is first attested as Merelafan in 1017. In the Domesday Book in 1086 it is recorded as Merlaue.

Marlow has a lot to offer .. Plenty of places to eat in too.

Under Marlow Bridge is Marlow Canoe Club and on the opposite bank is Marlow Rowing club. (<http://www.marlowrowingclub.org.uk/>)

There has been a bridge across the Thames at Marlow since before 1227. The present bridge was built between 1829 and 1832 to replace the wooden bridge sited further downstream. OS Grid Ref [SU8586](#) .

