

# THE RIVER THAMES



ALVECHURCH  
WATERWAY HOLIDAYS

We are happy to allow our narrowboats to cruise the River Thames but we ask that you take note of the following points:

## **NOTE 1:**

The Thames between Brentford and Teddington is tidal. You are permitted to make a single passage between these two points provided that it is done as promptly as possible. This stretch of water comes under the jurisdiction of the Port of London Authority and no additional licence is required. You must ask and accept the advice of the lock keepers at either Brentford or Teddington regarding the timing of your passage. They will ensure that you get the maximum benefit of the tides. You must not attempt the passage before sunrise and you must satisfy yourself that the passage can be completed and the boat is once again on non-tidal waters well before sunset.

You may not **under any circumstances** cruise on the Thames downstream of Brentford.

### **Passage on the Thames between Brentford and Limehouse is not permitted.**

Prior to your holiday you should obtain a copy of the Nicholson's Ordnance Survey Guide to the Waterways No. 7 (River Thames and the Southern Waterways) available from any of our marinas. Pages 101, 161 & 162 give important navigation information. **Please note that this latest edition is not very specific about Richmond Lock and half-tide barrier.**

*Richmond Lock is the only lock operated by the Port of London Authority. It is manned 24 hours a day and is free to leisure users. However, for 2 hours either side of high water, the weir sluice gates are raised, allowing free passage of craft. Two orange lights will be shown above each navigable arch.*

*When the sluices are down the following signals will be in operation: a triangle (apex down) made up of 3 red lights will show above each navigable arch; in addition to this, an illuminated sign on the upper end of the lock entrance will read 'Weirs are closed please use lock'.*

*Proper consultation with the lock keepers at either Brentford or Teddington should ensure that you are able to pass through without having to use Richmond Lock.*

The illuminated signs at Teddington will indicate which lock chamber is in use. On the Grand Union canal, both Brentford and Thames locks have double chambers although only Thames Lock is manned. Brentford locks are electronically controlled and user operated so simply follow the instructions on the control pedestal.

The Port of London Authority has stated that all craft of more than 20 metres (66 feet) in length using any part of the tideway must be equipped with a VHF radio allowing the skipper to monitor Marine Band transmissions on Channel 14. **However**, it has made a concession for narrowboats bearing in mind that hire craft such as our own are not equipped with such devices, as detailed below:

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## ***NAVIGATION OF NARROWBOATS ON THE TIDAL THAMES***

(taken from the Notice to Mariners issued by the Port of London Authority in 1994)

**This notice applies ONLY to narrowboats of between 20 and 25 metres in length overall which are in transit between the Grand Union Canal and the non-tidal Thames via Brentford and Teddington locks.**

Direction 2 of the General Directions for Navigation in the Port of London 1991 states, inter alia, that vessels of more than 20 metres in length overall shall be equipped with an operational VHF radio telephone. However, an exemption to this direction has been agreed for the above mentioned category of craft in the circumstances stated above, providing that:

- a) Where no VHF set is carried the person in charge of navigation of the vessel must report to the PLA Navigation Centre (TNS) at Woolwich by telephone (0208 855 0315) prior to entering the tidal Thames, to obtain clearance to proceed. It will need to be established that the person in charge of the vessel is fully conversant with all PLA's rules and regulations, including Notices to Mariners relevant to the area.

- b) If there are no events or other navigational restrictions taking place on the river at the time, the vessel will be given permission to proceed and the duty Harbour Service Launch will be advised by TNS.
- c) If river events or other navigational restrictions are taking place at the time, then the vessel must comply with any relevant directions from TNS or the PLA Harbour Service before proceeding.
- d) In the event of the vessel being involved in any incident while navigating on the tidal Thames, details must be reported to TNS by telephone as soon as possible.
- e) The person in charge of the vessel must report to TNS by telephone as soon as possible after leaving the tidal Thames.

All vessels navigating the tidal Thames must, in all other respects, comply with the PLA's river bylaws 1978 (as amended) and the General directions for Navigation in the Port of London 1991.

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### **NOTE 2:**

On the River Thames upstream of Teddington you come under the jurisdiction of the Environment Agency and you are required to purchase an additional licence on joining the river.

The cheapest option is the purchase of a 15 day licence which should cost between £70 to £100, depending on the length of your boat. This can be purchased on entry at either Kings, Godstow or Osney locks at Oxford, or Teddington lock at London.

Payment can be made in cash or by cheque with a valid cheque card but not by credit or debit card. If you give us prior warning of your wish to cruise the Thames we will ensure that a completed licence application form is on your boat at the start of your holiday.

### **NOTE 3:**

We are happy for you to cruise the Thames in either direction, but if you have not handled a narrowboat before on a river, you may find it **easier to control your craft if you plan your holiday so that you cruise upstream against the current.** However, this will mean that your passage of the Thames takes slightly longer.

### **NOTE 4:**

All Thames locks between Teddington and Oxford are electronically operated by lock keepers and are only open between certain hours. It is possible to operate some of them manually out of hours but this is not advisable, as they are very hard work!

When using a Thames lock you will need a crew-member both fore and aft in order to control the boat, using your ropes around the lock bollards. Most lock keepers will ask you to switch off your engine whilst in the lock.

### **NOTE 5:**

When planning your cruise, please do not overlook the possibility that navigation on the Thames can be suspended at times of high water following heavy or prolonged rainfall.

### **USEFUL CONTACTS:**

Environment Agency Head Office:	Telephone: 01454 624400 Website: <a href="http://www.environment_agency.gov.uk">www.environment_agency.gov.uk</a>
British Waterways (Grand Union Canal at Brentford):	Telephone: 0208 571 8900 Website: <a href="http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk">www.britishwaterways.co.uk</a>
British Waterways (Oxford canal):	Telephone: 01788 890666

### **USEFUL PUBLICATIONS:**

Available from The Environment Agency either via their website (above) or from Kings Meadow House, Kings Meadow Road, Reading RG1 8DQ:

A Users Guide to the Thames  
Cruising on the River Thames

Locks and Weirs on the River Thames  
Discover the River Thames Path

(Revised 02/04)