

Lower Thames Classic

[Read a typical Lower Thames Classic trip below](#)

Because each trip has a different make up of guests, with different accommodation preferences and rowing speeds, each trip is different. But you can read how a typical trip worked out below.

Sunday

We meet in Oxford for a brief look around the city, paying particular attention to the river of course! Our walk takes in Christchurch College and meadow, which lies next to the Thames and is where Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) set off with Alice Liddell on the rowing trip north which would inspire the book 'Alice in Wonderland'. Our walk also takes in the famous botanical gardens.

www.chch.ox.ac.uk/visiting/alice

Following our tour we have a picnic lunch followed by a safety briefing. It's not a busy day so we have plenty of time to get used to our boats and make sure we're carrying the right gear.

Monday

A full day of rowing ahead! We leave Oxford through Sandford lock and pass Radley (where the Oxford Cambridge boat race was once held during the Second World War). Through Abingdon lock (dated 1649) Lunch in the pretty town of Abingdon.



Abingdon Church

In the afternoon we row through pretty countryside to Sutton Courtney – the bridge hasn't always popular with the locals. This was written in 1909 by J E Vincent:

Sutton Bridge ... a toll bridge by the way, the existence of which as such is a great nuisance locally. In fact, not long since a County Council candidate stood successfully on the "free-bridge ticket", but the three years came and went and he stood no more, and the tolls go on as before. It takes more than three years to get rid of a time-honoured English grievance.

Here we begin the long sweep around the Wittenham clumps, which we will complete tomorrow. Which are of historical and natural interest. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wittenham_Clumps

www.earthtrust.org.uk/Places/at-little-wittenham/Wittenham-Clumps.aspx



Wittenham Clumps

We stay for the night in Long Wittenham. 12 miles rowing today. Not a difficult pace. Everyone looking forward to an evening meal and a pint in 'The Plough Inn', and more rowing tomorrow of course! www.theploughinnlw.co.uk

Tuesday

Several hours of rowing takes us to Days Lock where we stop for a look around Dorchester Abbey and lunch in the town which is a short walk from the river. www.dorchester-abbey.org.uk

A short row to Shillingford Bridge near the town of Wallingford, and then another few hours to Moulsoford where the boats are kept overnight and we have dinner in the Beetle and Wedge www.beetleandwedge.co.uk.

On the way to Moulsoford we pass the papist Way slip:

'During the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Roman Catholics of England were persecuted. One of the Catholic families - Hildesley/Hilsley/Ilisley - lived at Littlestoke Manor across the river from Littlestoke ferry. Other significant Catholic groups lived up and down the Thames and as a result the river became a means for them to communicate with each other and meet for mass. The ferry lane here became known as Papist Way.'

Wednesday

A short row to the beautiful town of Streatley and Goring on Thames where we stop for coffee and a look around the villages. A very beautiful place to spend a few hours. In this area (called the Goring Gap) the river is squeezed between the Berkshire Downs on one side and the Ridgeway on the other. It is one of the most naturally beautiful stretches on the river.

On one bank we pass Hardwicke House http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hardwick_House but further on, Mapledurham House is worth a special mention, it's thought to be the inspiration for Toad Hall of Wind in The Willows fame. www.mapledurham.co.uk/index.php

Afternoon to Reading where we finish for the day. Our guests stay either in the Beetle and Wedge or in Moulsoford, or the Great House at Sonning www.greathouseatsonning.co.uk

Thursday

We row to the picturesque conservation village of Sonning-on-Thames for lunch at the French Horn www.thefrenchhorn.co.uk. In the afternoon we have a longer row of about 9 miles to Henley.

In the evening we are booked in for the evening for a play at The Mill Theatre in Sonning.

With much of the original structure retained, this 18th Century Flour Mill has been converted into a renowned Dinner Theatre. Patrons enjoy a fresh home-cooked meal – with not a microwave in sight! – Before watching the performance in our 215 seat air conditioned auditorium. Pre-dinner drinks with a view of The Thames or watching the working Waterwheel in the bar, is an added treat.

Friday

A longer rowing day for us today. A total of 15 miles which is a few miles longer than we've rowed to date on this trip. But first we have a look around the Henley River and Rowing www.rrm.co.uk voted one of the top 50 UK museums!

We row for a good few hours, appropriately enough at a fast pace along the course of the Henley Royal regatta, www.hrr.co.uk/ to lunch in Marlow.

Leaving Marlow past Gibraltar Island and the splendid houses in the vicinity. Also pass the beautiful Quarry Woods of which Samuel Ireland wrote in 1792 'the scenery of this neighbourhood is truly beautiful: the Quarry Woods extend a considerable distance, and form a noble screen on the Berkshire side of the river''

Pass Cliveden House and Estate which is now a hotel owned by The National Trust. We take a stop for a tour of the Estate and historical house.

We pass through Cliveden Deep of which George Leslie wrote in 1881 'The reach from Boulter's Lock to Hedsor [i.e. Cookham] Lock is generally allowed to be the most beautiful of any on the river; it certainly is a very stately and noble bit of scenery. There are three eyots, which divide the river in the middle of the reach into four streams, the most charming and romantic of which is the one on the Cliveden side.'

Finally ending our day at Boulters Restaurant & Bar before ending in Maidenhead.
www.boultersrestaurant.co.uk

Saturday

Our final day is divided into two. We start with a row to Windsor of a few hours. Passing the beautiful Ruddles Pool and home of rowing of Eton College at Dorney. Lunch at Windsor with a tour of Windsor Castle, the official residence of the Queen and which of course cannot be missed!
www.royal.gov.uk/theroyalresidences/windsorcastle/windsorcastle

Finally past Magna Carta Island to Runneymede where we end our Journey.