

Welcome to Twickenham Yacht Club.

If it wasn't for the locks the Thames would be tidal up to Staines or thereabouts. The tide now stops at Teddington Lock but the Thames is partially tidal between Richmond Half Tide Lock and Barrier and Teddington. Without the Richmond barrier the river would drain away at low water to a mere trickle at Twickenham. The barrier maintains a minimum depth (known as the "maintained level") while allowing the top of the tide to come through.

This means we get about two hours of rising tide just before high water as the barrier is raised and about two hours falling tide before the barrier is lowered again. In winter, for about a month, we have what we call the 'draw-off' when the barrier is left raised and the river runs out to its natural level. We can then walk out and inspect our mooring chains. Your boat will settle on the mud at low water and rise with the tide. If not suited to such conditions you will have to find temporary mooring elsewhere.

The time of High Water varies, being a little later each day. The newspapers give the time for London Bridge. Add on about 1 hour 15 minutes for Twickenham (but beware! Tide Tables are usually given in GMT so you have to add another hour during the summer months). The height of the tide also varies. The highest tides (Springs) occur more or less fortnightly and are always in the afternoons. They are higher at the equinoxes than at other times. For more detailed tide tables and future projections go to [BBC Weather](#).

The Moorings

Each trot, line or string of moorings is joined to a heavy ground chain anchored to the riverbed. The mooring chains themselves (known as the 'risers') with their buoys are shackled to the ground chain. There is sufficient scope of chain to allow for the rise and fall of tides. The mooring buoys themselves are joined together by bridles - these are ropes just below the surface. Bridles are a nuisance but necessary to keep the whole system at an even tension, regardless of how many boats are on the moorings, and stop the boats wildly swinging. As long as you have a bridle in place you are complying with paragraph 11 of the Moorings Byelaws. If you tried to cross a string of moorings you would foul your propeller on the bridle so to give access to the middle and inner trots a gap with no bridle has been left open between the wooden post at the stern of the mooring currently occupied by *Alhandra* and the mooring approximately 20ft downstream currently occupied by *Arion*. Similarly at the same place in the

MIDDLE TROT THERE IS A GAP FOR ACCESS TO THE INNER TROT. THE RISER TO WHICH YOUR BOAT IS MOORED AT THE BOW IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AND YOU MUST INSPECT IT AT THE DRAW-OFF.

Mooring fees are charged for complete years calculated in advance from each 1st November. There are no deductions for a shorter period but a discount is allowed if payment is made before the end of that year. On the Application Form accompanying payment you are required to confirm that your boat is insured.

You should have two mooring lines at the bow and two at the stern, (one for each quarter). When you see the river in flood you'll understand why we say you should double up. The four mooring lines should be

separate and fixed independently to the lower ring of the mooring buoy (the manufacturers specify that their buoys are not designed for mooring to the top ring). Lines should be attached to the ring by a shackle of carabiner. Never pass a running line through the top of the buoy, as movement will cause it to wear and probably break. For extra security one bow line could be chain, locked to the boat to deter casual thieves - nothing stops the professionals!

However, so far we have suffered little theft or vandalism on our moorings.

If you leave your moorings lines on the mooring when the boat is away they need to be attached to something that floats which you supply, or clipped back to the upper ring so when you approach your mooring you can pick them up more easily. Mooring up is easier if the lines are all the right length for your boat. There are a number of different ideas and arrangements for mooring lines and you should speak to other owners to sort out the best system for you, particularly if you expect to moor up single-handed.

When you leave your mooring you must ensure that the bridle is attached to the fore and aft mooring buoys so maintaining the correct tension along the whole trot. When on moorings your boat, if correctly moored, maintains the correct tension. In fact, most owners leave the bridle permanently attached. You must keep propellers clear of the bridle. If it tangles with the rope you will find that untangling it can really spoil your afternoon apart from the damage to the bridle

Moor with the bow pointing upstream.

USE OF CLUB PONTOONS

In order to ensure that the pontoons are accessible to everyone boats, other than tenders and club boats, must not stay longer on the pontoons than is needed cleaning, taking on stores or picking up guests. If the boat has to be left unattended the form on the cruiser notice boat must be completed.

After a maximum of six hours you must return your boat to its moorings. If necessary the Club Support Boats can be used to tow it back. If you require help in doing this please contact any member of the Harbour Committee.

Longer periods may be granted in exceptional circumstances by the harbourmaster on receipt of a written (or e-mail) request. Approval must not be assumed until you receive his written reply setting out the conditions which then be fixed to the Cruiser Notice Board. Please remember that boats left on pontoons are much more susceptible to vandalism.

Boat may be rafted up - no more than two abreast. The custom is for the heavier craft to take the inside berth and the lines of the outside boat are taken back to the pontoon - not to the other boat.

These procedures are for the benefit of all boat owners so that there should always be some boat space at the pontoons. The Harbourmaster is authorised to order the removal of boats from the pontoon and if owners persistently disregard these procedures he may require the boat to be removed from Club moorings.

Tenders

There are three club tenders for members' use. Admittedly these are not marked but if the standard club padlock key unlocks their chain it will be a club boat! Oars are stacked against the wall of the Club House lower deck.

Tenders must be padlocked to the pontoon with a single loop of the chain so that it can move freely along the bar. Don't tie it in knots. It is not necessary to tie the rope painter as well.

Club tenders must not be left on your mooring when you go away but be returned and locked to the pontoon - someone else might need them.

You can also, on payment, have your own tender on the pontoon which you can leave on your mooring when your cruiser is away.

You will need a key obtainable at the bar to unlock the veranda patio door, to give you access from the pontoons into the Club. Always make sure you leave all doors of the Club locked when leaving, including when leaving the pontoons to go to your boat.

Going Places

Upstream

Upstream of Teddington Lock you can do the length of the non-tidal Thames up to Lechlade, and, with great care, to Hannington Bridge. You can also branch off at Shepperton for the River Wey Navigation to Guildford and Godalming; at Reading for the Kennet and Avon Canal to Bath, Bristol and the Bristol Channel; and at Oxford on to the Southern Oxford Canal, which takes you on to the main canal network leading eventually to Ripon in Yorkshire or Lancaster. However, before leaving the Thames make sure your boat is suitable for the canal in question, particularly width (6' 10" max on the Southern Oxford), height (6' maximum on the Wey Navigation) and draught (always a problem on canal summits). All you need is time and a license. You will need a separate license for the Thames, the Wey and for the Canals and for all of them, if you are taking out an annual license, you will need a Boat Safety Certificate. The Boat Safety Scheme is mainly concerned with fire risk and merely sets out good practice but there is a charge for the inspection. A free schedule of the requirements is available at www.boatsafetyscheme.com.

Downstream

If you head off downstream towards Richmond you can, of course, get to the sea and beyond but it's not to be undertaken lightly and your boat must be well prepared. For many of us the roughest part is getting through central London where the current is strong, the traffic heavy and the wash from fast RIB's quite disturbing. Everything must be lashed down or they'll

break your crockery. Things you think never could move will. You also need a strong anchor and gear to hold you against what could be a 4-knot current. What can happen is that all the bouncing around stirs up sediment in the fuel tank, which then blocks pipes and filters. Then what do you do?

You also need to time your departure carefully as it is quite pointless to try and make against the current. The PLA publishes a guide for pleasure boaters with do's and don'ts and details of marinas and moorings on the way.

A marine-band VHF radio is a sensible addition for traveling through London and beyond. This allows you to be in touch with London marine radio and their information broadcasts for the Thames. To operate a marine-band VHF radio you must pass a test of competence and take out a license. The radio itself requires a separate license.

And one more thing. Don't forget to read the PLA's web site, the bye-laws, your obligations to rowers on the tideway and Notice to Mariners posted on the Cruiser Notice Board. These could save you an embarrassing run-in with the PLA.

More Information

For more information on any of the information in the Guide please approach any of the members of the Harbour Committee. The names of Current Harbour Committee members will be found in the Club Fixture List.

