

# Souvenir Guide Windsor to Boveney

Sightseeing Guide & Brief History

Windsor to Boveney Reach  
of the Royal River Thames



**FRENCH  
BROTHERS** 

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Clewer Boathouse, Clewer Court Road, Windsor, Berkshire SI4 5JH

Price 25p

Welcome aboard this French Brothers vessel!

**Eng**

The following information is given for your safety. Should an emergency occur please listen for the Captain's instructions and obey them quickly and in a calm manner.

The vessel is equipped with float-free buoyant apparatus and lifebuoys. In the event of an emergency the equipment will either be launched or float off the vessel.

Passengers will be instructed to proceed to the nearest accessible exit. These exits are on either side of the vessel at the main gangways; through the windows of the saloon; and over the railings of the upper deck.

Exits are marked with green signs. Should it not be possible to beach the vessel and you have to enter the water, you should take hold of the grab lines around the buoyant apparatus or lifebuoy. Each lifebuoy will support two persons and the buoyant apparatus will support twenty or fourteen persons as marked.

**Fr**

#### Measures de Sécurité

En cas d'urgence messieurs les passagers sont priés d'écouter avec attention les instructions du capitaine et de les suivre rapidement tout en gardant leur calme.

Cette embarcation est munie de radeaux de sauvetage à lancement automatique et de bouées de sauvetage. Ce matériel se trouve rangé sur le toit et le long des bastingages.

S'il fallait évacuer l'embarcation, on dirigerait les passagers vers la sortie de secours la plus proche. Celles-ci sont indiquées par des écriteaux peints en vert et comprennent les portes d'entré principales, les vitres du salon, et la route par dessus le bastingage de pont supérieur. S'il vous fallait entrer dans l'eau, vous devriez empoigner la saisine d'un des radeaux de sauvetage, dont la capacité est de 20 ou de 14 personnes, selon les indications là-dessus, ou d'une des bouées de sauvetage, dont la capacité est de 2 personnes par bouée.

**D**

#### Sicherheits - Information

Im Notfall horchen Sie bitte auf die Anweisungen des Kapitäns und befolgen Sie diese schnell und ruhig. Dieses Schiff ist mit freischwimmenden Geräten und Rettungsringen ausgerüstet, die sieg am Verdeck sowie entlang und an der Außenseite der Reling befinden.

Muß das Schiff evakuiert werden, werden Passagiere zum nächst erreichbaren Ausgang gewiesen. Diese sind grün markiert und sind die Haupteingänge, die Fenster im Salon und über die Reling am Oberdeck.

Solten Sie ins Wasser gehen müssen, fassen Sie eine der Greifleinen am schwimmenden Gerät, das 20 oder 14 Personen, je nach Markierung, unterstützen oder die Rettungsringen, die je zwei Personen unterstützen.

**Sp**

#### Instrucciones para emergencias

En caso de emergencia se reuga a los señores pasajeros escuchen con atención las instrucciones del capitán para seguirlas rápidamente pero sin pánico.

Esta embarcación está provista de balsas de botadura automática y de boyas salvavidas que están colocadas en el techo y en la parte exterior de las barandillas de la cubierta.

Si fuera necesario abandonar la embarcación, se les indicaría a los señores pasajeros la salida de urgencia más cercana. Éstas están señaladas con letreros verdes. La salida se efectúa por las entradas principales, por las ventanillas del salón, y por encima de la barandilla de la cubierta superior.

Si Usted se ve en la necesidad de entrar en el agua, deberá agarrarse a las sogas de la balsas, que tienen cabida para 20 ó 14 personas, según lo indicado en ellas, o de las boyas salvavidas que sólo tienen capacidad para 2 personas cada una.

## Windsor to Boveney - 40 Minute Trip

For the return trip to Boveney Lock, turning below the weir, we shall be travelling at just under 5 miles an hour, or 4 1/2 knots if you prefer to be nautical. The freshwater River Thames is 140 miles long measured from Thames Head in Gloucestershire to Teddington on the outskirts of London and there are 44 locks. Starting from Windsor to Boveney Lock we will be travelling “uphill”. At Windsor Bridge the Thames is 43 feet above sea level and at the tail of Boveney Lock it is 45 feet. So in the course of our upstream trip we shall have climbed 2 feet. This is known as the gradient of the river and is the result of its flowing downstream.

Windsor always has a large population of swans, encouraged by the tourists who feed them. To own swans has always been a privilege granted by the Crown. Today there are three owners of swans, the Monarch, the Worshipful Company of Vintners and the Worshipful Company of Dyers. During Swan-Upping, which takes place in July the swans are marked to show ownership. Until recently the swan was a game bird, eaten at tables as a delicacy, but it disappeared from kitchens when the turkey was imported into England. More recently many swans were dying through lead poisoning caused by them eating discarded lead weights left on the banks by fishermen. Lead weights for angling have now been banned.

The River Thames is probably the most popular of the Royal rivers, granted Royal status by Edward the Confessor in 1066. William the Conqueror travelled up the Thames as far as Wallingford, where ten centuries earlier Julius Caesar is reputed to have crossed the river in a pincer movement on London. King John of Magna Carta fame had wine and provisions brought to him up the Thames when he occupied Windsor Castle. Edward II hired boats to send his son and his knights and clerks to the Tower of London. Henry VIII usually travelled by boat from Windsor to the capital. The state barge built by William III in 1689 was last used as recently as 1919 and is now at the National Maritime Museum. When the present Queen travelled on the Thames from Hurley to Wraybury in 1974 she used Windsor Regent, still in service with this company.

Windsor Bridge behind us is a cast iron and granite structure, completed in 1824. The architect was Charles Hollis and the consulting engineer Thomas Telford, the well-known bridge and canal builder.

The foundation stone was laid in 1822 by Frederick, Duke of York. There were many problems and the contractor, William Moore, collapsed and died on the site. The pier nearest to Windsor was a major headache but was eventually laid with the help of four chain pumps, a steam engine working day and night and 50 Scots Fusilier guardsmen as navvies. The original tolls were sixpence (2p) for a horse drawn carriage; threepence (1p) for a wagon or cart; one shilling and eightpence (8p) for a score (20) of oxen; and tenpence (4p) for a score of calves. Until 1898 a toll house stood on the Windsor side. Now the structure is weak and the bridge is only used for pedestrians, being closed to vehicles in 1970.

On your right is Eton. Facing the river above Windsor Bridge are the Eton College boathouses. The college was founded in 1440 by Henry VI and some of its buildings survive from this date. It was in the late 18th Century that rowing first began at Eton. Early in the 19th century a river procession celebrating Founder’s Day, on 4th June, was started. Rowing races against Westminster School began in 1829, the year of the first Oxford and Cambridge boat race which started at Henley. Eton College took part at Henley for the first time in 1861.

On your left now comes Jacobs’ Island, where the original boathouse was located for our predecessors and is still in use by French Brothers. Then Deadwater Eyot which is now joined to Baths Island under the rail bridge, where the Windsor Swimming Club was located just short of the new leisure pool where they now meet. The rail bridge constructed for the branch line of the former Great Western Railway was designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel. The main span of 187 feet is not fixed, but rests on pads at the abutments each side of the river. The bridge, which originally carried two tracks of 7’0” gauge, was opened on 8th October, 1849 to serve Windsor and Eton Central Station.

Clewer Village on the right bank (left as you proceed upstream) is one of the original settlements in the Windsor area. The first Clewer Church was built in 1040 but the present building dates from Victorian times. Beyond the church there was a mill, certainly established prior to the Norman conquest of 1066. Milling continued here until around 1900. The stream that supplies water to the mill above Boveney and forms a large island originally known as Rays Meadow. On this island in 1866 the first ever race on the newly constructed Windsor Racecourse was run. The river scenes for the film *Young Winston* were shot here.

Opposite the racecourse jetty is Clewer Point, one of the sharpest turns in the river. Now sporting a Danger! notice, the bargemen's roller post can still be seen on the corner. This allowed them to guide their craft round the point without being pulled ashore by their horses. You can still see the scores made by the ropes in the post.

At the next turn we come to the Long Bridge or "Chinese Bridge" which crosses the entrance to the Cuckoo Weir stream. This stream, which fed a very early water-mill, runs out into the river again just above the Brunel Bridge and was considered as a site for the lock which was eventually built at Boveney. There is no weir in it now and the small craft of French Brothers' Explorer Trips can still navigate the route which cuts off Clewer Point. The present bridge was built with a bequest from the parents of a Chinese pupil of Eton College who was tragically drowned here. Upstream of the bridge is the area known as Athens, which was a bathing place for Eton College where the boys were taught to swim. Once owned by the Crown, it was purchased in 1917 by the father of a boy killed in a flying accident and presented to the College as a memorial.

On your trip you may like to see if you can spot some of the interesting water-birds. Along this stretch, apart from the swans, you may see a Heron, Canada geese, Mandarin and Mallard ducks, Coot, Grebe and Moorhen. Now and again we are assured that you might see a Kingfisher!


The name Boveney appears in the form ABOVENHYTHE as far back as 1255. The present lock island was an island long before the lock was made with a backwater running round it on the Buckinghamshire side. The first lock was built in 1838, on the same site as the present boat rollers but was rebuilt in its present position sixty years later. Locks exist to pass boats up and down the Thames and weirs are there to hold back the level of water so that they have adequate depth to float. The weir is the centre of the lock-keeper's life and regular adjustment of the rymers and paddles had to be made to maintain head water level. Now most weirs consist of moveable gates, raised and lowered by low geared windlasses or even electricity. Turning below Boveney Weir we pass the racecourse and after Clewer Point approach the Queen Elizabeth Bridge, opened in 1966. This links Windsor to Slough and the M4 motorway. Just under the bridge on your right is a public slipway and then the Windsor Leisure Centre.

Once through Brunel's graceful iron bridge, one has a splendid view of Windsor Castle, its familiar Round Tower which flies the Royal Standard when the Monarch is in residence, St George's Chapel to the right and the Curfew Tower, while to the left is the North Terrace. The Precincts of the Castle remain open throughout the year (including Sundays) except on the day in June when the Garter Service is held in St George's Chapel. There is now a charge for admission to non-residents of the Royal Borough.

Over the Brocas meadows to your left you can see parts of Eton College and get a view of the College Chapel, the design of which was copied for St George's Chapel by Edward IV, who was jealous of the superior chapel Henry VI had built. The church with the tower is Eton's Parish Church, St John's. Originally, it had a spire but this was removed as unsafe in 1953. Our trip finishes with a circuit of Fireworks Eyot.

Please wait until the crew have secured the mooring lines before attempting to disembark.

**We hope you had a pleasant trip.**

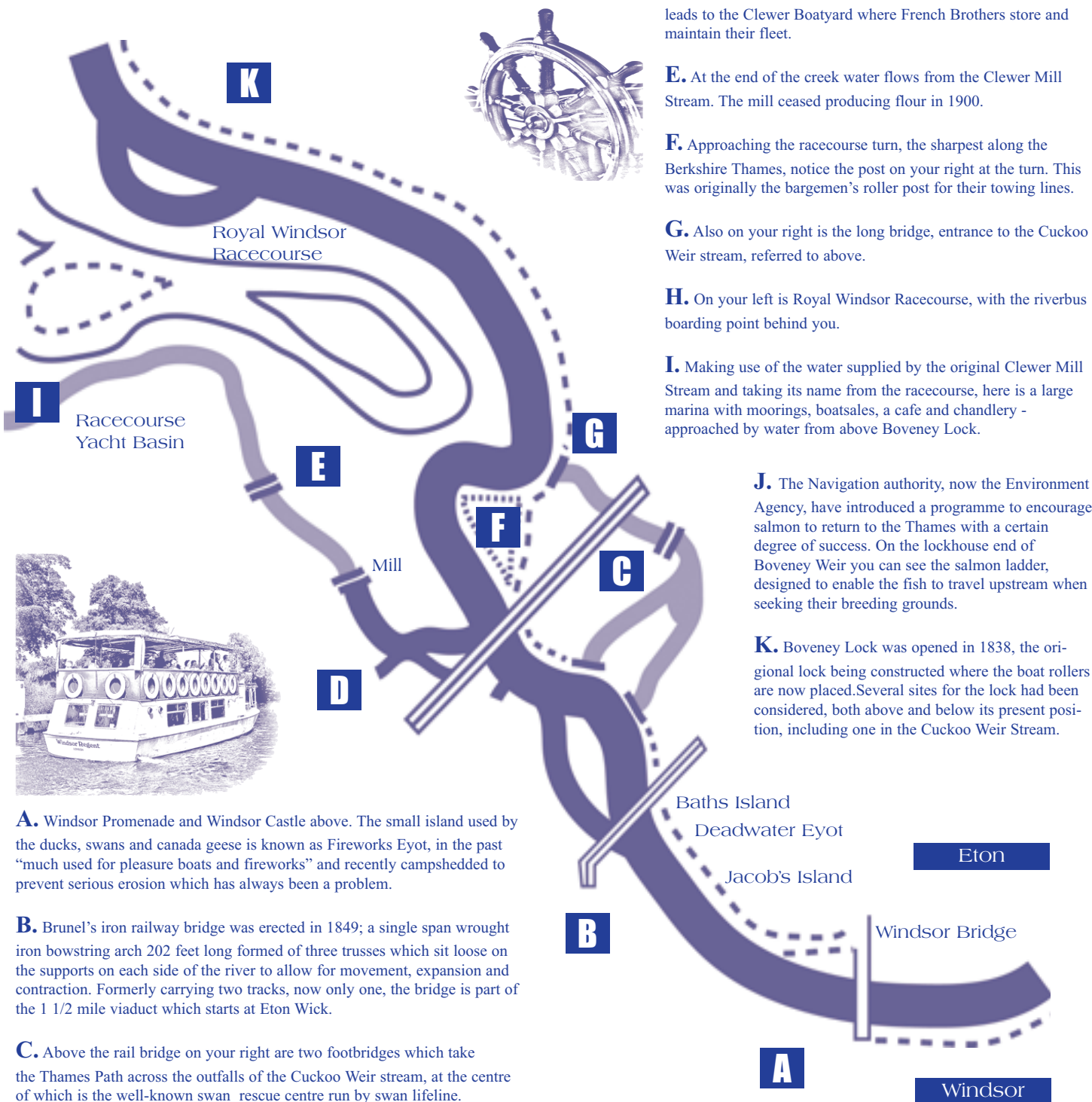


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**A.** Windsor Promenade and Windsor Castle above. The small island used by the ducks, swans and canada geese is known as Fireworks Eyot, in the past “much used for pleasure boats and fireworks” and recently campshedd to prevent serious erosion which has always been a problem.

**B.** Brunel’s iron railway bridge was erected in 1849; a single span wrought iron bowstring arch 202 feet long formed of three trusses which sit loose on the supports on each side of the river to allow for movement, expansion and contraction. Formerly carrying two tracks, now only one, the bridge is part of the 1 1/2 mile viaduct which starts at Eton Wick.

**C.** Above the rail bridge on your right are two footbridges which take the Thames Path across the outfalls of the Cuckoo Weir stream, at the centre of which is the well-known swan rescue centre run by swan lifeline.

**D.** The creek on the left just beyond the Queen Elizabeth Bridge leads to the Clewer Boatyard where French Brothers store and maintain their fleet.

**E.** At the end of the creek water flows from the Clewer Mill Stream. The mill ceased producing flour in 1900.

**F.** Approaching the racecourse turn, the sharpest along the Berkshire Thames, notice the post on your right at the turn. This was originally the bargemen’s roller post for their towing lines.

**G.** Also on your right is the long bridge, entrance to the Cuckoo Weir stream, referred to above.

**H.** On your left is Royal Windsor Racecourse, with the riverbus boarding point behind you.

**I.** Making use of the water supplied by the original Clewer Mill Stream and taking its name from the racecourse, here is a large marina with moorings, boatsales, a cafe and chandlery - approached by water from above Boveney Lock.

**J.** The Navigation authority, now the Environment Agency, have introduced a programme to encourage salmon to return to the Thames with a certain degree of success. On the lockhouse end of Boveney Weir you can see the salmon ladder, designed to enable the fish to travel upstream when seeking their breeding grounds.

**K.** Boveney Lock was opened in 1838, the original lock being constructed where the boat rollers are now placed. Several sites for the lock had been considered, both above and below its present position, including one in the Cuckoo Weir Stream.

