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Old Windsor Lock

OLD WINDSOR

French Brothers

Pat's Croft Eyot

Magna Carta Island

Kennedy Memorial

Runnymede National Trust

Ankerwyke Priory

Runnymede Pleasure Grounds

Runnymede Hotel

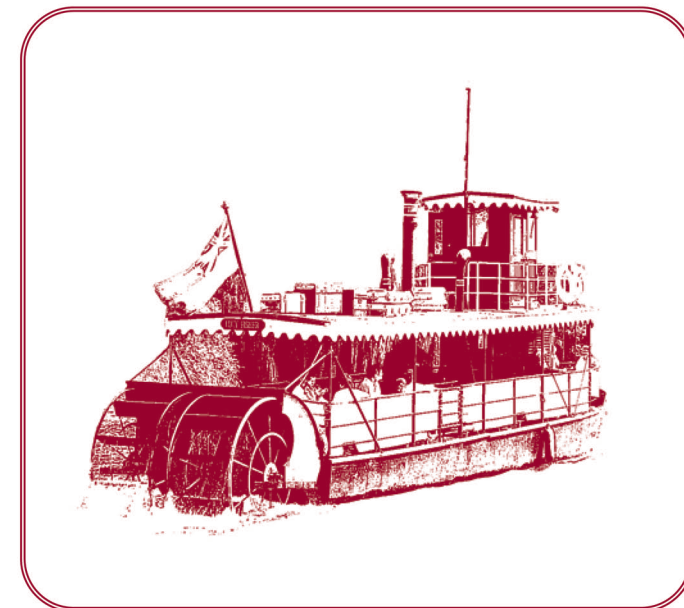
Bell Weir Lock

We would ask that you please pay attention to the safety announcement and take the opportunity to read the safety notices around the vessel.

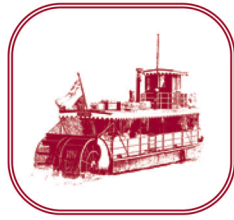
Lucy Fisher

Sightseeing Guide & Brief History

Old Windsor Lock to Bell Weir Lock on the Royal River Thames



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 Clewer Boathouse, Clewer Court Road, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 5JH



The **Lucy Fisher** was built in 1882, at the Turks Boatyard in Sunbury, as a replica of an African paddle steamer of the Victorian era, for the Tarzan film ‘*Greystoke*’. Since then, it has been a feature of the Runnymede stretch of the Thames, except for a short time when it was relocated to Cliveden for the filming of ‘*Chaplin*’.

The **paddles turn by virtue of the boat’s movement** through the water and the funnel and boiler are also for ‘appearance only’, as today the boat is driven by a regular propeller powered by a six cylinder, six litre marine diesel engine.

*Leaving on the hour from the National Trust dock at Runnymede, we shall be travelling at a comfortable **speed of just under four knots**.

Travelling upstream, the County of Surrey shortly gives way to Berkshire on the left bank as we approach **Old Windsor**. The pub/restaurant on the left is known as the **Bells of Ouzeley**. There has been a pub on that site for more than eight hundred and fifty years, for records show that an inn was there in AD1150. On the opposite side of the river is the inlet that led to the wharf, in earlier centuries, for landing copper ore for smelting at the mill in Coppermill Road before being taken to London.

When we continue further ahead, **Old Windsor Lock** is visible. This lock was built in 1953, replacing one built in 1889, the original being built in 1822. The lock is situated in a ‘cut’ that bypasses the natural bow in the river.

As we turn and leave Old Windsor, it is interesting to note that in the floods of January 2003, the river rose high enough to cover some of the main road by the Bells of Ouzeley, severely damaging riverside properties and destroying the wooden dock.

The **Brunel University Boat Clubhouse** sits adjacent to the French Brothers boatyard, with **Pat’s Croft Eyot** visible to the left.

At this point **Runnymede** comes into view on the right. It is one of the many flood plains on the river Thames.

Two National Trust buildings, one each side of the A308 road, can be seen at the northern end of the meadow. They are the **Fairhaven Memorial Lodges**, designed and built by Edwin Lutyens and given to the National Trust in 1931 by Lady Fairhaven. They are matched in design by a pair of kiosks at the southern end of the meadow near the Runnymede Hotel.

On the Wraysbury bank, a hundred yards or so downstream from the lodges, is the **Magna Carta Island**. The island was created in 1834 by a family that built a lodge on the river bank and then cut a channel behind it, thus forming an artificial island.

Opposite to the island, at the base of Cooper’s Hill, the temple like structure is the **American Bar Association Memorial to Magna Carta** – designed by Sir Edward Maufe, it was erected in 1957 as ‘a tribute to Magna Carta, Symbol of Freedom Under Law’.

The nearby **Kennedy Memorial**, erected in 1965 on an acre of soil given to the United States by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, is obscured by trees and cannot be easily seen from the river. It is sited about a hundred yards or so to the north and forty yards up Cooper’s Hill.

As the river widens on our way downstream to Egham Pleasure Ground, keep a look out for **herons and kingfishers** as this is the most popular stretch of the river to spot them.

The white tower at the top of Cooper’s Hill, above the tree line, is **The Commonwealth Air Forces Memorial**. It was also designed by Sir Edward Maufe, and completed in 1953 as a memorial to the 20,455 personnel of the RAF and Commonwealth Airforces who died in the Second World War and for whom there are no known graves. A quiet and serene place, it stands on a six acre site and has a spectacular viewing platform at the top of the tower.



As the river narrows, through the trees on the left bank might be seen the remaining white chalk and flint wall of the ruins of the 12th century **Ankerwyke Priory**. Just out of sight of the river is the Ankerwyke Yew – a tree some 2,500 years old and 31 ft in girth. There are many that believe that this is the most likely site for the sealing of the Magna Carta on June 15, 1215. Historians also confirm that in Tudor times Henry VIII used to rendezvous with Anne Boleyn at the tree.

The Runnymede meadow extends southwards to the A30 Egham Bypass and comprises some 188 acres in area. It was given to the National Trust in 1931 by Lady Fairhaven. The meadows were used as a site for the Egham Racecourse for the years 1734 to 1884 when racing was moved to Kempton Park due to large gangs of London pickpockets invading the meetings. On 31st December 1943, a US Airforce B-17 bomber crash landed on the meadow and all ten crewmembers escaped unhurt. Beyond the meadow is Cooper’s Hill Woods – 110 acres in area and was given to the National Trust by Egham Urban District Council in 1964.

As we round the bend, on the right is the **Egham Pleasure Ground** where we will dock to discharge and take on passengers as we return upstream.

For those on a longer cruise, we will continue downstream before turning short of the **Bell Weir Lock** by the **Runnymede Hotel**. Bell Weir Lock was first operated in the winter of 1817-18, and named after the first lock-keeper, Charles Bell. It was rebuilt in 1867 and in again in 1877 before the current one was built in 1961 and modernised/enlarged in 1973-74. The Runnymede Hotel was built in 1974 to replace the Anglers’ Rest, which had stood on the site since at least 1856.

After leaving the dock at the Egham Pleasure Ground, it is a short journey back to the National Trust dock at Runnymede.

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

We hope that you have had a pleasant trip.

*Occasionally, this trip may take place on a different vessel.