

The Route

Where: Hampton Court to Staines via Shepperton ferry

National Route: 4

Distance: 15 miles one way

Terrain: mostly traffic-free to Weybridge (9.5 miles) then a mix of on-road and traffic-free routes to Staines

Public transport: stations at Staines, Shepperton, Addlestone, Hampton Court (western edge) and Kingston, although not all are directly linked and some changes may be necessary

OS maps: Explorer 160/161, Landranger 176

Tourist information:
Kingston upon Thames TIC
- 020 8547 5592

Towns to search for on Sustrans website mapping: Hampton Court, Shepperton, Staines

Hampton Court to Staines via Shepperton ferry



Along the Thames at Staines

The ride begins at Kingston station, from which you follow the signs to Hampton Court. Then you are away from the traffic, following a riverside path through the grounds of one of Britain's great historic palaces. It was originally built for Cardinal Wolsey, but he was ejected by Henry VIII. It was here that the King James Bible has its origins, and during the civil war Charles I was held prisoner here for 3 months before escaping, and Oliver Cromwell made his home here as Lord Protector.

Out of the park, the route continues along the Thames in relative tranquility as you leave the city further and further behind. Enjoy the slower pace of riverside life watching the boats and the birds whose home you are visiting. You pass Lutyens' Hampton Court Bridge, then Molesey Lock and the houseboats of Tagg's Island. The island now bears few signs of its heyday as an elaborate

casino, theatre and hotel complex early in the twentieth century. You also pass Hurst Park, a former racecourse.

From here you can either follow the southerly braid of National Route 4 via Chertsey to Staines, or take the Shepperton and Weybridge ferry across the Thames. The ferry runs every 15 minutes until 5.30pm, and intending passengers should ring the bell provided. The route continues on road to Chertsey Bridge, passing close to Shepperton (famous as the home of Pinewood film studios), then northwards along a minor road before rejoining the towpath. Along the way you pass Laleham Abbey, now a religious community but once the seat of the ill-fated Earls of Lucan – the third earl gave the order to attack to the Light Brigade at Balaclava in 1855, and the seventh earl is still wanted for questioning about a notorious murder in 1974. The Thames towpath brings you into Staines.