

Eton, Dorney and the Jubilee River



The Route

Family Friendly Ride

Distance: 11 miles

Terrain: flat, mostly traffic free

Getting there: stations at Windsor, Slough and Maidenhead

Bike hire: Windsor Cycle Hire, Alexandra Gardens in Windsor - 01753 830220

Maps: Jubilee River/ Slough Linear Park cycle leaflet – free from Sustrans, the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead and Slough Borough Council offices

OS maps: Explorer 160, Landranger 175

Tourist information: Windsor - 01753 743900



This splendid family friendly circuit takes in Windsor Castle, Eton College, Dorney Lake, the Jubilee River and the River Thames. Easily accessed from Paddington to Slough and Maidenhead stations, and from Waterloo to Windsor and Eton Riverside Station, it is ideal for those looking for a day out from London.

Before starting, it is worth getting hold of the new Jubilee River cycle leaflet which shows the whole of this route together with the various ways in which the circuit can be lengthened or shortened. It also shows the link routes from Slough and Maidenhead stations, each about 2 miles in length.

Windsor and Eton Riverside Station is directly adjacent to the route and therefore a great place to start. From the station turn right into Datchet Road and onto Route 4. Continue straight across at the lights, follow the road right into River Street and cross the road after the pedestrian crossing to pick up the cycle path adjacent to the river. This is not an easy manoeuvre for inexperienced cyclists, so if you prefer, simply dismount and cross at the pedestrian lights.

Follow the riverside cycle path westwards, pass under the railway viaduct, and stop to admire Brunel's wrought iron Bowstring bridge of 1849. Continue past Windsor Leisure Centre under the Relief Road bridge and then turn immediately right up the narrow ramp to make your first river crossing. On descending the ramp on the other side, do not follow the Route 4 sign; instead, turn right to follow the short cut across the field to pick up the

riverside path. After 600 metres, just before the narrow bridge over Boveney Ditch, turn right and then immediately left at the Millennium Milepost towards Maidenhead. You are now back on Route 4 so follow the signs, pausing to see Boveney Lock and the 12th century Church of St Mary Magdalene, currently undergoing restoration, in its idyllic riverside setting.

After the church, turn left into Dorney Lake Park, home to Eton College Rowing Lake, now a major attraction for rowing and triathlon events and a venue for the 2012 Olympics. Route 4 follows a specific cycle path (some of it grass surface only) which is accessed by turning right before the field gate, but if the gate is open and no event is in progress, you can continue through to view the lake and follow the tarmac road which runs parallel to it. About 200 metres before the main gate, turn left off the access road, or straight across if you have followed the cycle path, and follow the grass and shingle path back to the river.

At the river, turn right along the towpath for 100 metres and cross the river via the wooden Summerleaze Bridge, turning right again onto the unmade road which eventually becomes Monkey Island Lane. Immediately before the road rises over the M4, turn right to cross the River Thames again alongside the motorway. This is the point where you would join the circuit from Maidenhead. The roar of the motorway traffic is soon left behind as you bear right at the end of the path onto Oak Stubbs Lane, then right again onto Marsh Lane. After just 200 metres on Marsh Lane,

looking out for traffic, turn left onto the permitted cyclepath that leads directly to the Jubilee River.

The Jubilee River was opened in 2002 after five years of major engineering and landscaping. It is primarily a flood alleviation scheme, designed to reduce the risk of flooding in Maidenhead, Eton and Windsor. Our circuit follows the riverside path, Route 61, for the next 4 miles. Amongst the highlights along this section is the area known as Dorney Wetlands, a specially constructed breeding and feeding habitat for many bird species. Above the wetlands, higher ground formed from excavated material provides an excellent viewpoint over the surrounding area and a perfect picnic opportunity.

After crossing the A332 at the toucan, you reach a wooden suspension bridge, which is the joining point for the Slough station link. At this point, turn right along a straight tree lined path, then right again at its end onto Pockocks Lane; care is needed here as the road can be busy. At the roundabout, turn left towards Eton and continue past the college buildings along the picturesque Eton High Street and thence over Windsor Bridge for the final river crossing and back to the start.

The greatest choice of refreshment facilities are at or near the start points, where there are also public toilets. Out on the route, The Pineapple public house, just off the Jubilee River on Lake End Road, or the café at Dorney Court Garden Centre are the best bets.