

le boat

THE RIVER THAMES

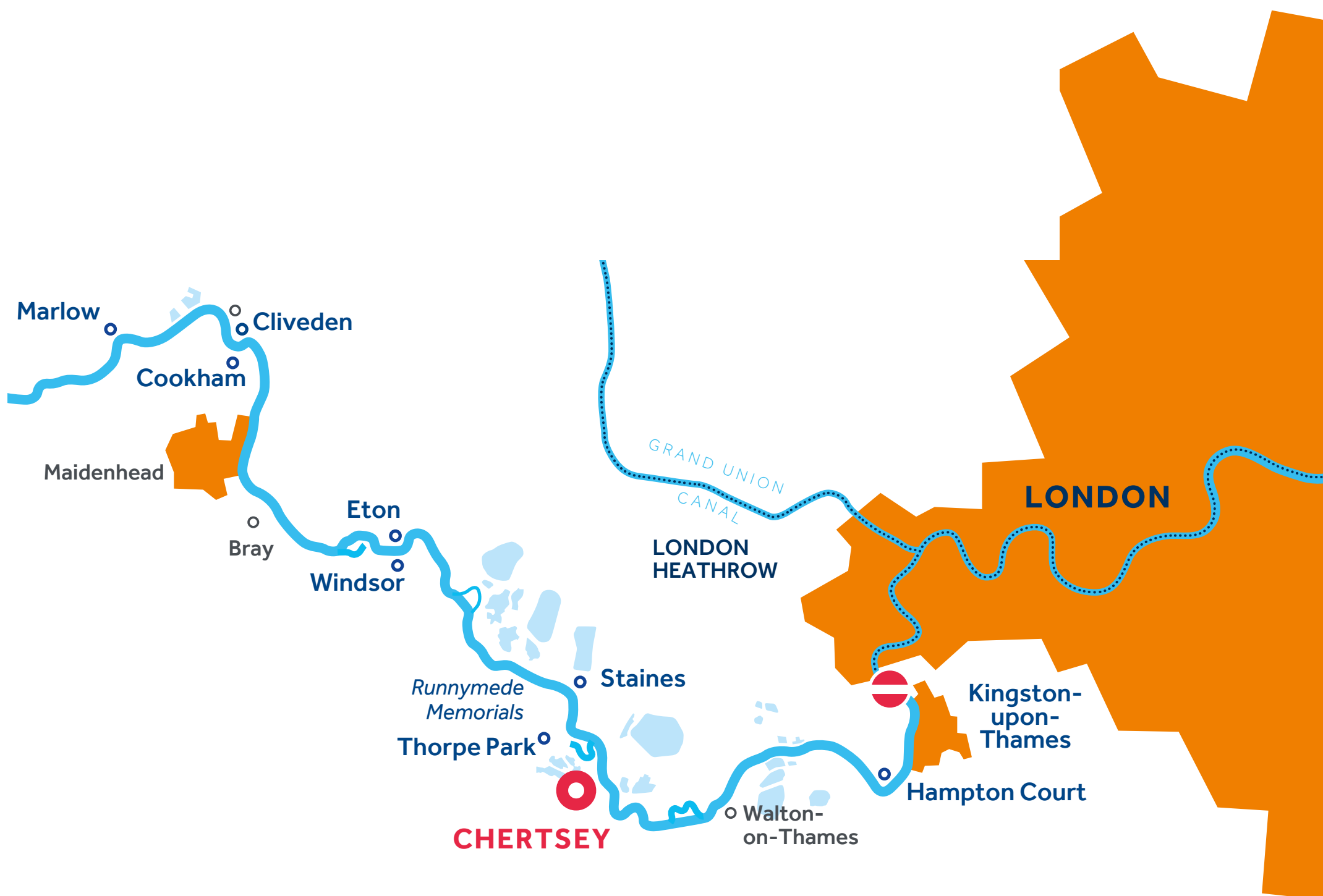
Region Guide





River Thames		Approx time		No. of locks	
	Oxford	2 hr 50 min	6 hr 15 min	2	6
	Abingdon	2 hr 45 min		3	
	Dorchester	40 min		0	
	Benson (Le Boat)	30 min	6 hr 25 min	1	9
	Wallingford	50 min		0	
	Moulsoford	40 min		1	
	Goring	45 min		1	
	Beale Park	15 min		0	
	Pangbourne	50 min		2	
	Reading	50 min		2	
	Sonning	1 hr 45 min		2	
	Henley-on-Thames	2 hr 20 min	6 hr 20 min	3	8
	Marlow	1 hr		1	
	Cookham	30 min		1	
	Cliveden House	45 min		1	
	Maidenhead	1 hr 50 min		2	
	Windsor / Eton	1 hr 50 min		2	
	Runnymede Memorials	50 min	3 hr 20 min	2	4
	Staines-upon-Thames	45 min		1	
	Chertsey (Le Boat)	45 min		1	
	Weybridge	1 hr 30 min	3 hr 55 min	2	4
	Hampton Court	1 hr 40 min		2	
	Surbiton	35 min		0	
	Kingston-upon-Thames	10 min		0	

Times are an approximation only and are calculated on the basis of an average speed of 7.5km/h and an average time of 12 minutes to pass through a lock. Your speed, the flow of the water and the time it takes to go through locks will all affect your progress.



8 Maximum speed allowed on waterways in km/h

3 Maximum speed allowed in ports/marinas in km/h

 Pass oncoming boats on the right-hand side

BETWEEN BENSON AND OXFORD

Oxford



The river is peaceful and scenic as it wends its way through the rolling hills and countryside between Benson and Oxford. You will pass Dorchester-on-Thames with its quaint Abbey and award-winning Cloister Gallery, and historic Abingdon where you can stroll around the remains of the Abbey and through the impressive 1920's folly in the Abbey Gardens. The County City Hall Museum is also worth a visit, if just for the panoramic views from its roof. Abbey Meadow Water Park is a safe environment for youngsters to enjoy water fun on a hot day. Your final destination (in this direction) is Oxford, renowned for its history & heritage and home to England's oldest university – its dreaming spires won't fail to enchant. Effortlessly combining old and new, there's lots to see within the small radius of the city centre including the many University buildings, best seen on an open-top bus tour.

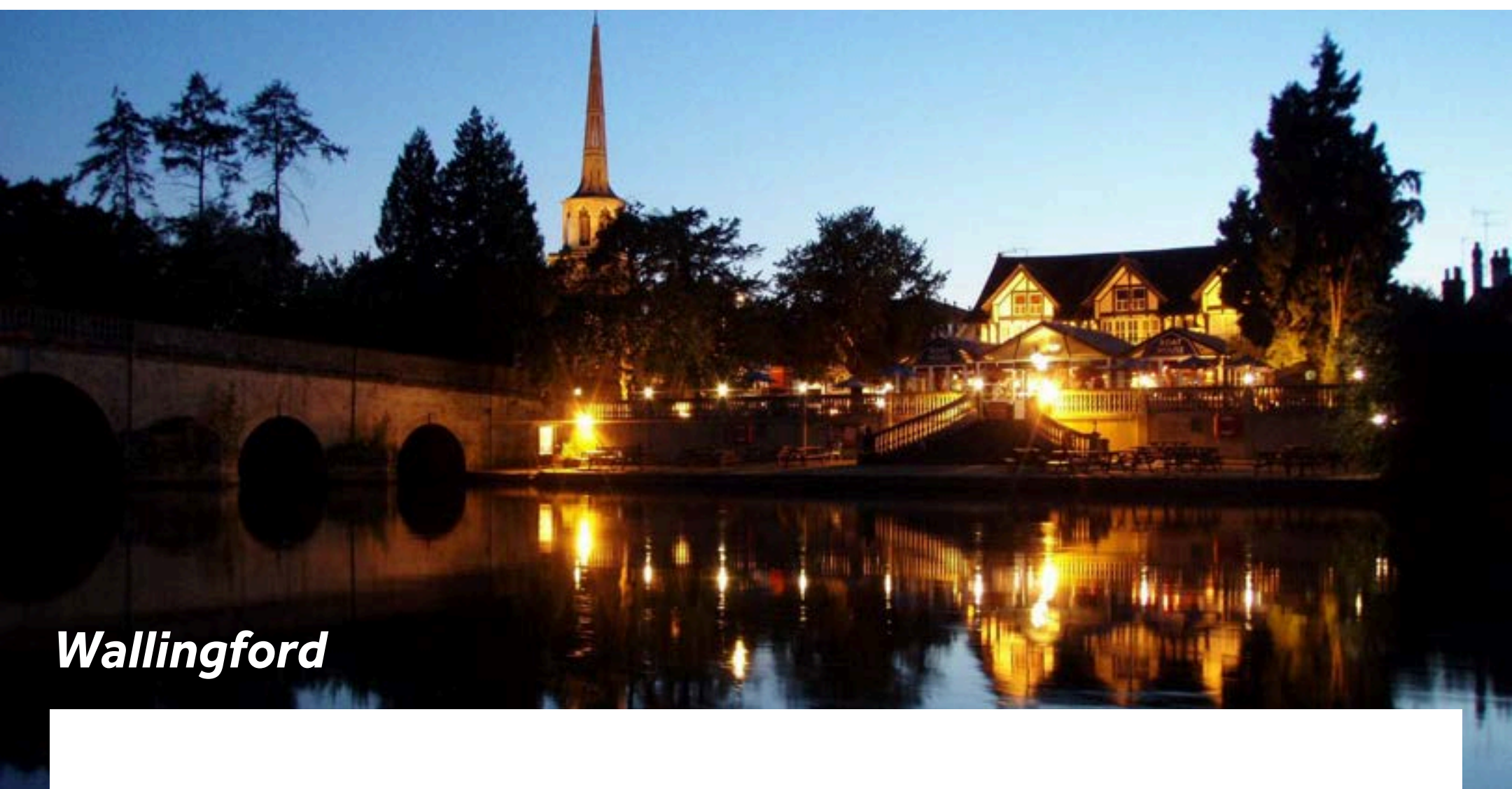


Recommended restaurant: The Folly, under the Folly Bridge. Book for afternoon tea! The Nag's Head, on Abingdon bridge.



Amenities: Abingdon and Oxford have plenty of shops, supermarkets and restaurants.

WALLINGFORD



Wallingford

The Royal Borough of Wallingford was once home to 14 churches! While most are long gone, there's still plenty to see, from independent shops and markets to cafés and restaurants. The castle ruins and gardens are a nice place for a picnic. Wallingford is perhaps most famous for being the home of Agatha Christie and the setting for many of her stories. Wallingford hosts two major festivals in June and September; the Blues and Beers Festival and the Bunkfest, respectively. The latter attracts over 20,000 visitors – look out for the Morris dancers.



Recommended restaurant: Wallingford has plentiful restaurants and pubs for you to enjoy. Le Clos bar a Vin deserves a special mention – enjoy their fine wines and quality meats from Italy and Spain.



Amenities: There are plenty of shops, supermarkets and restaurants in Wallingford

Markets: Wallingford Charter Market (all day on Fridays), Country Market (every Sat 09.30am-12pm).

PANGBOURNE



Pangbourne Meadows

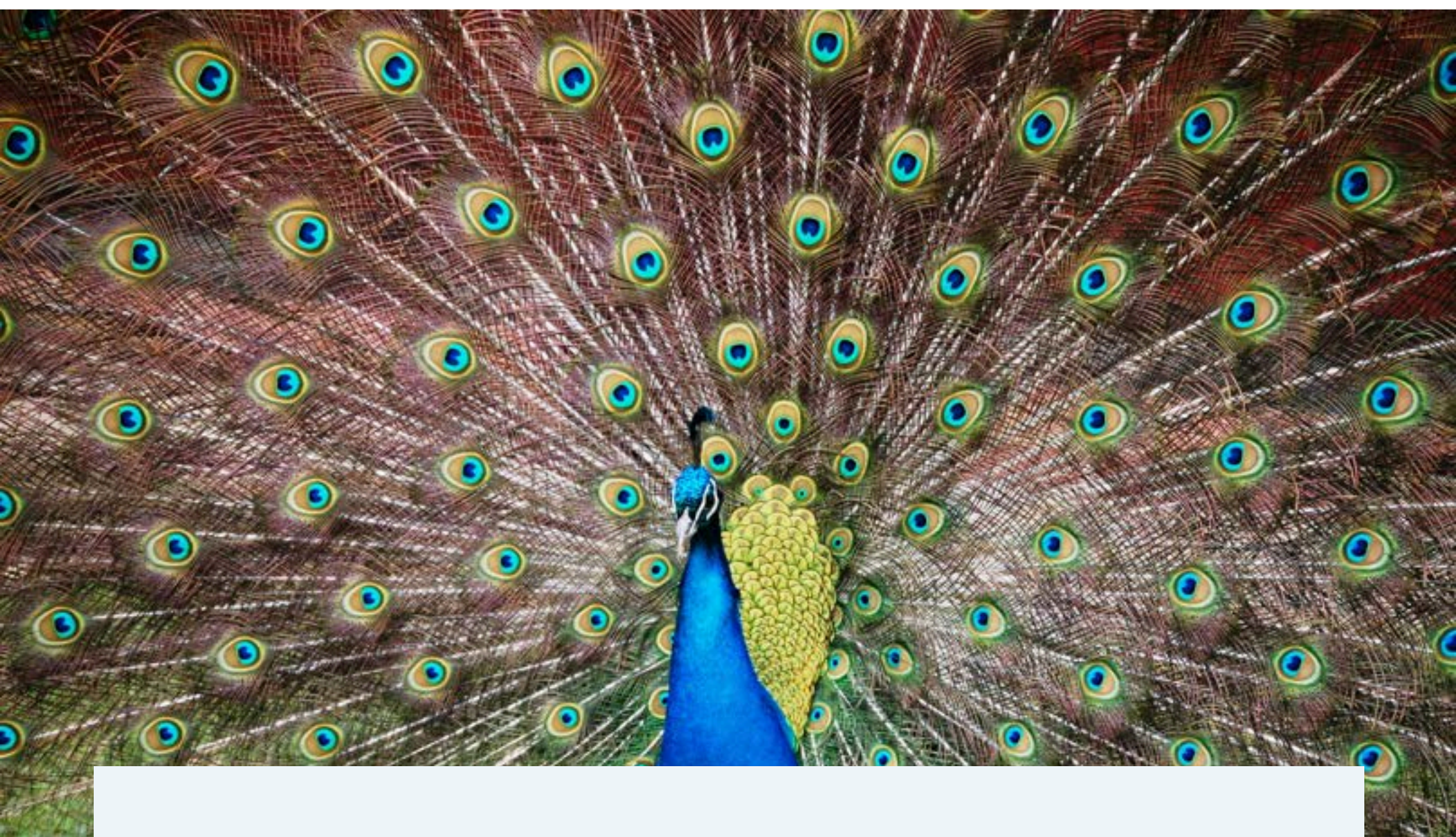
This Thames-side meadow offers a good open space for picnics and games. There's a big grassy meadow adjacent to the tow path, while further inland (behind the treeline) there is a large field and children's play area, including toilets. Moorings available adjacent to the Meadows.



Recommended restaurant: The Swan, situated directly after the Whitchurch Lock (travelling upstream). Moorings available outside.



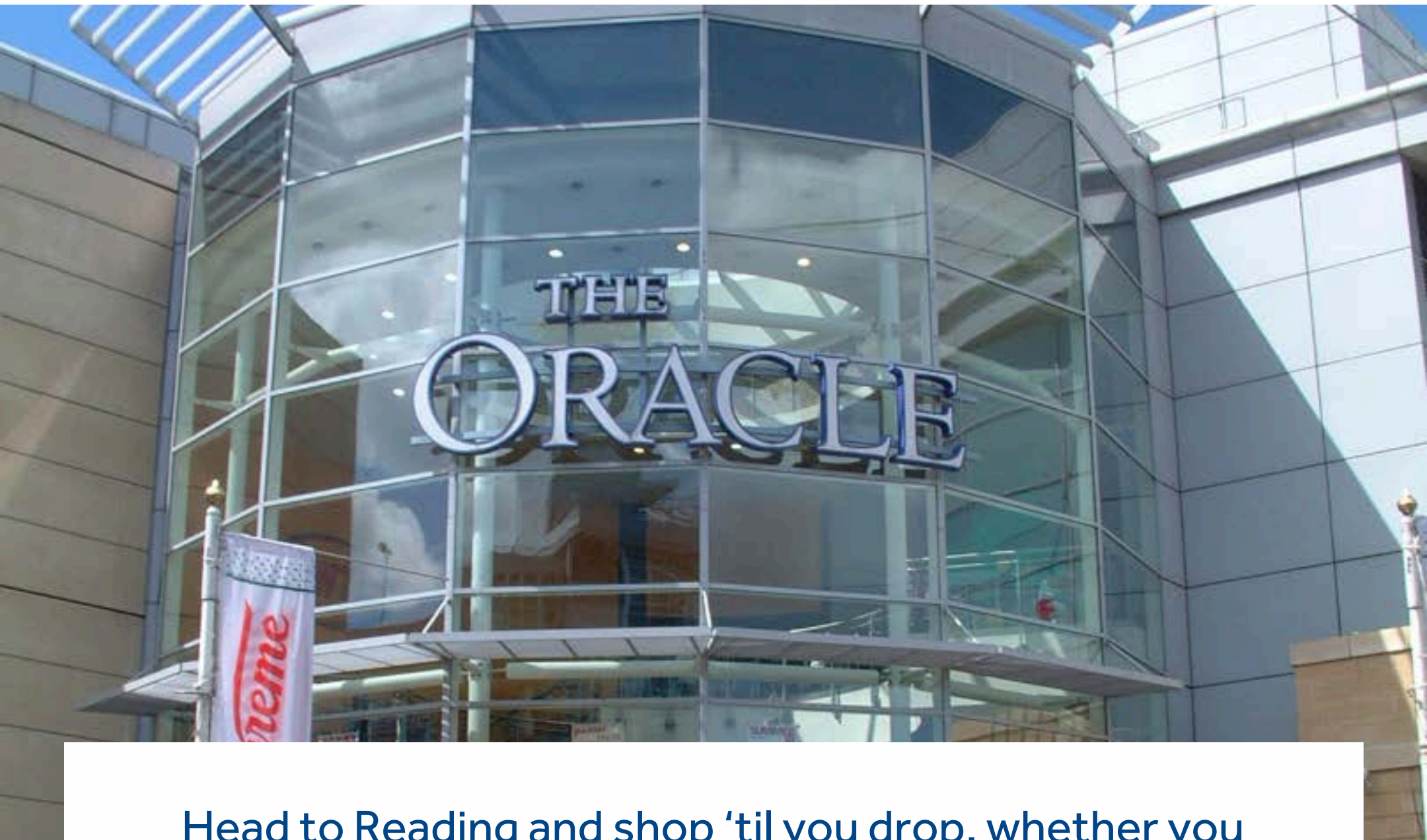
Amenities: There are plenty of shops, supermarkets and restaurants in the village centre.



BEALE PARK

A wildlife park with meerkats, monkeys, lemurs, alpacas and more, plus over 120 species of birds from peacocks to macaws as well as one of the UK's largest owleries. There's an indoor and outdoor play village, narrow gauge railway, model boats and the animal athletics challenge where your wits can be pitted against members of the animal kingdom in a series of ten challenges dotted around the park.

READING



Head to Reading and shop 'til you drop, whether you browse the independent boutiques or head to one of the huge shopping centres, The Oracle or Broad St Mall. With both shopping centres located on the high street, Reading is a one-stop-shop for fashion, jewellery and home wares. And why not take some time out to visit Reading Museum to see the World's only full-scale copy of the Bayeux Tapestry – the Victorians who created it covered up all the nude male figures! When you're ready for a break, head to the peaceful oasis of Forbury Gardens and Abbey Ruins, a pleasant place to eat lunch or enjoy the sunshine.



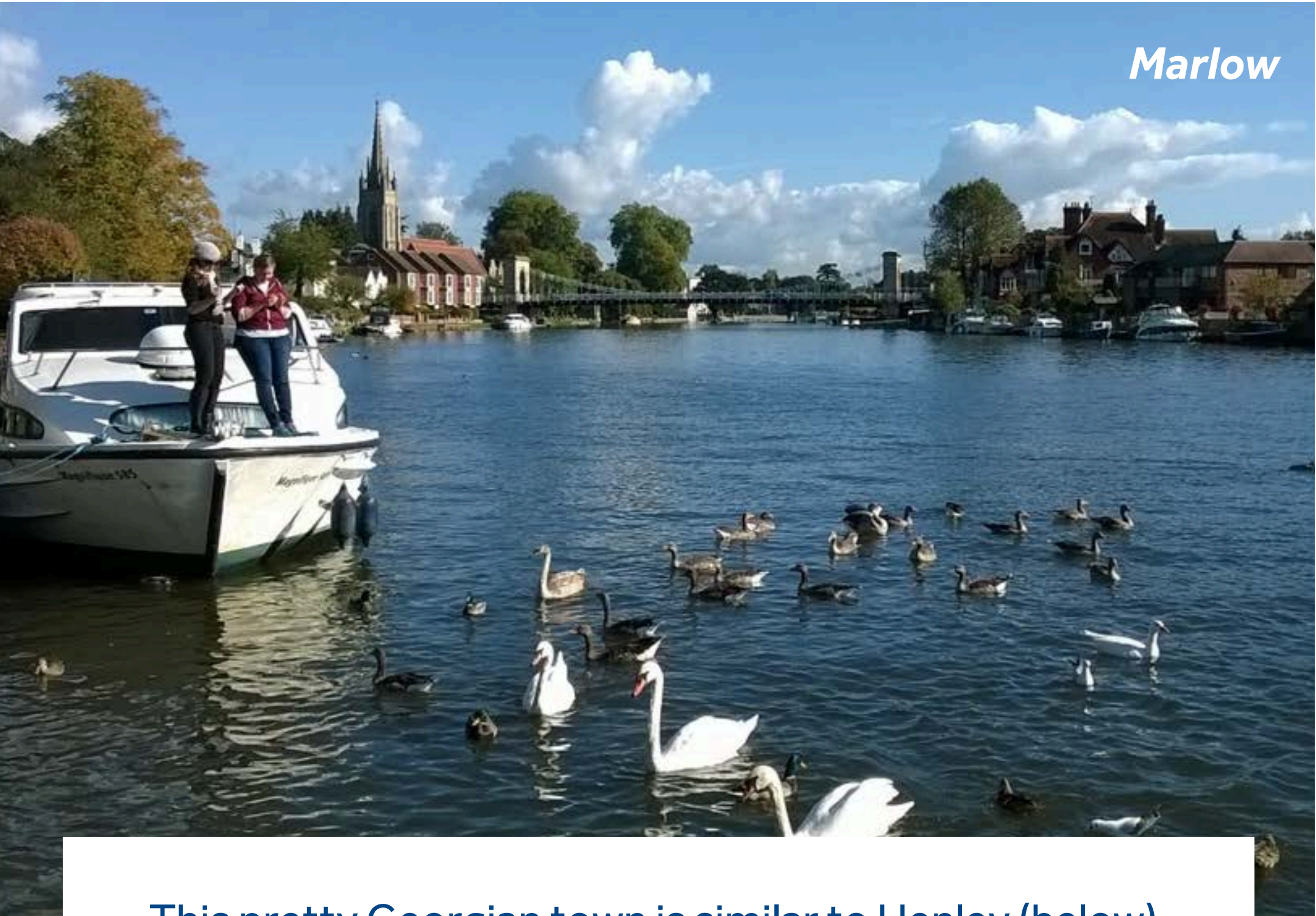
Recommended restaurant: The Shed Café on Merchants Place, a 15 minute walk from the Christchurch Meadows mooring.



Amenities: A bustling city, with plenty of shops, supermarkets and restaurants.

MARLOW

Marlow



This pretty Georgian town is similar to Henley (below), yet retains its own personality with a wide variety of small shops and boutiques and several restaurants. Marlow has also produced many British Olympic rowers: see Sir Steve Redgrave's statue in Higginson Park and find the town's gold post box which marks Naomi Riches' 2012 Paralympic gold in the mixed rowing.



Recommended restaurant: The Coach (walk to end of High Street and turn left). Or the Riverside Restaurant, in the Compleat Angler Hotel, for something really special.



Amenities: There are plenty of shops, supermarkets and restaurants in Marlow.

Farmers' Market: First and third Sat of every month (10am-2pm) – opposite Cross Keys pub.

HENLEY-ON-THAMES



Famed for its annual Royal Regatta, Henley-on-Thames attracts the World's best rowers each year to compete in an ancient regatta tradition. A pretty Georgian town, Henley is a lovely place for a stroll and a bite to eat. Mill Meadows is a large riverside recreational area, to the upstream side of the River & Rowing Museum, which includes a couple of really good playgrounds for younger and older children, as well as acres of open space and a wildlife walk.



Recommended restaurant: The Three Tunns, near the top of the High Street.



Amenities: There are plenty of shops, supermarkets and restaurants in Henley.

Market: Every Thurs, with an additional farmers' market held on the fourth Thurs and second Sat of each month.



RIVER & ROWING MUSEUM

While in Henley, make sure to visit the River & Rowing Museum. The Rowing Gallery covers the history of rowing, the River Gallery gives a fascinating insight into many aspects of the river including environmental issues, natural history and river & water and a third gallery delves into the history of Henley. Downstairs, the Wind in the Willows exhibition is a delight for the little ones. The museum has its own jetty and moorings.



COOKHAM



Pretty Cookham has lots of pubs and restaurants including The Bel and The Dragon. It was built in 1417 and claims to be one of the oldest pubs in England. Cookham is also the former home to both Kenneth Grahame, author of 'The Wind in the Willows' and Sir Stanley Spencer, an artist who depicted biblical scenes as if they were occurring in Cookham. The Stanley Spencer Gallery on the High Street houses more than 120 of his artworks.



Recommended restaurant: The Ferry, right by the river.



Amenities: The grocery store in Cookham is quite a walk from the river. A choice of pubs and cafés are closer by however.

CLIVEDEN HOUSE



Cliveden House

Cliveden House and its surrounding estate have been home to an earl, three countesses, two dukes, a prince of Wales and, most recently, the Viscounts Astor. It is now owned by the National Trust, although the house is let as one of the UK's most luxurious hotels. The gardens and grounds are still open to the public to be enjoyed by all. The grade I listed gardens and horticultural wonders include the fragrant rose garden, the fantastical topiary in the long garden and the tranquil escape of the water gardens. And not forgetting the impressive six-acre 'Parterre', planted with colourful spring and summer displays in stunning symmetrical designs. It is best viewed from above, atop the very grand South Terrace. There is also a maze and acres of woodland to walk around, as well as children's playgrounds and adventure trails.



Recommended restaurant: For lunch, there is a café and tea rooms in Cliveden grounds, but for dinner, head to Boulters Restaurant & Bar – next to Boulters Lock in Maidenhead.

WINDSOR & ETON



*The Long Walk and
Windsor Castle, Windsor*



The royal town of Windsor and its scholarly neighbour, Eton, are full of history and charm. With a bustling town centre full of shops and countless restaurants, coffee shops and bars, it's well worth stopping for the day. Windsor Castle is the oldest and largest inhabited castle in the World, home of British kings and queens for almost 1,000 years. Look out for the Royal Standard, which flies from the Round Tower when the King is in residence. Inside, you can see the State Apartments which are lavishly decorated and the walls are adorned with some of the finest works of art including Rembrandt and Rubens. Marvel at the sheer magnificence and royal finery of over 20 rooms. Time your visit with the 'changing of the guard' – a colourful and musical spectacle of British pageantry. The 45 minute ceremony takes place at 11am within the Castle grounds on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.



An open-top bus tour is a good way to see the rest of Windsor, or see the sights in true style aboard a horse drawn hackney carriage down the Long Walk, the impressive and majestic straight road that stretches three miles from Windsor Castle to Windsor Great Park in the south.



Recommended restaurant: The Boatman, nestled below Windsor Castle, or Côte Brasserie, on the Windsor/Eton footbridge – for exquisite French food and wine right on the water's edge.



Amenities: A bustling city with plenty of shops, supermarkets and restaurants.

LEGOLAND® WINDSOR



Just outside of Windsor, LEGOLAND® Windsor Resort is a theme park specially designed for children aged 2-12 years old. It has over 55 LEGO®-themed interactive rides, live shows, building workshops, driving schools and attractions, all set in 150 acres of beautiful parkland.

RUNNYMEDE MEMORIALS



Magna Carta Memorial, Runnymede

Nearly 800 years ago, King John met with a group of barons on Magna Carta Island in Runnymede. It was here he signed a historic document which is seen by many as the symbolic first step on the road to modern democracy. Moor on the banks just upstream from Runnymede Pleasure Ground (small charge applies). You will see the Magna Carta Memorial in the distance from your boat. Take care when crossing the busy road and walk across the field towards it.

Nestled in a quiet spot on a gentle slope looking out towards the Thames, the memorial is the perfect place to pause and reflect on the ongoing struggle for liberty. Make sure to visit the Magna Carta Tea Rooms for a classic English tea room experience. After this, follow the line of trees for 150 yards (upstream direction), where an entrance will lead you back among the trees and up some steps towards the JFK Memorial. Set in a symbolic acre of land which Britain donated to the United States of America in 1965, this memorial commemorates the life of President John F Kennedy following his tragic assassination.



Recommended restaurant:



Runnymede Hotel's Lock Bar and Kitchen, directly opposite Runnymede Lock.



Amenities: Enjoy a visit to the Magna Carta Tea Rooms (right by the Runnymede memorials) for a classic English tea room experience you won't soon forget.

STAINES-UPON-THAMES



In Staines you can find the Two Rivers Shopping Centre located near to the pedestrianised high street, so everything you could want is in one place, from high street brands to a cinema and a Saturday farmers' market.



Recommended restaurant: The Swan, next to the road bridge. Free 24h mooring available right outside.



Amenities: Only a 5 minute walk from the river you'll find a bustling town with plenty of shops, supermarkets and restaurants (now is the time to grab a few groceries).

Market: Wed, Fri & Sat – Staines High Street

THORPE PARK



Located across the road from Le Boat's Chertsey base in Penton Hook Marina. Experience a non-stop adrenaline rush at the nation's thrill capital, Thorpe Park, with some of Europe's most exhilarating rides, including the World's only backward winged rollercoaster (The Swarm), the steepest free-fall drop in the World (The Saw) and the tallest log-flume in the UK. If it's white-knuckle fun you crave – Thorpe Park won't disappoint.



Recommended restaurant: Head to The Swan in Staines or to the Kingfisher, by the river in Chertsey.

HAMPTON COURT



Hampton Court Palace, billed as ‘The Greatest Palace in Britain’, offers a magical journey through 500 years of royal history. Residents included King Henry VIII, William III and Queen Mary, who each expanded and modernised various parts. Queen Victoria opened Hampton Court Palace and its 600 acres of parkland to the public in 1838.

Tour the grandeur and splendour of the state apartments, the largest kitchens of Tudor England; get lost in the UK’s oldest surviving hedge maze (which covers a third of an acre) and relax in over 60 acres of the beautiful Hampton Court Palace gardens, featuring sparkling fountains and glorious displays of over 200,000 flowering bulbs. And not forgetting Bushy Park, the second largest of the Royal Parks of London. It spans 1,100 acres and red and fallow deer roam freely among the woods and grasslands... and you can, too!

KINGSTON-UPON THAMES



Just a short walk from the Thames, Kingston is host to over 500 well-known high street stores. Although a great shopping destination, Kingston is rarely crowded and retains a small-town feel. From Monday to Saturday the ancient market takes place, selling farmers' produce and take-away food from pretzels to tagine and Japanese lunches. Make sure to visit Webster's Fishmongers, which has been trading here since 1866. From Kingston, it is only a 20 minute train ride into central London, so why not spend the day soaking up the historic and iconic sights of the UK's capital city?



Recommended restaurant: Bill's, overlooking the river, next to the road bridge.



Amenities: A bustling city with plenty of shops, supermarkets and restaurants.

Market: Mon to Sat (9am – 5pm), close to the river.

LOCKS

All locks on the Thames are electronically operated and, most of the time, a lock keeper will be present to do most of the work. Moor at the jetty outside of the lock if the gates are closed – take care not to queue-jump if other boats are waiting. All members of the crew should stay on board and throw their lines over the bollards, or hand them to the lock keeper if s/he is available to help. When there is no lock keeper on duty, the lock gates will display a blue ‘self-service’ sign – which means you are allowed to operate it yourself. But don’t worry... it’s easy! Set a crew member ashore before the lock so they can walk to the controls. The crew member should always stay next to the control panel while the lock is in operation, ready to push the red stop button in case of emergencies. Locks are manned by lock keepers at the following times:

MONTH	LOCK KEEPER’S DUTY TIMES
April & October	9am – 5pm
May, June & September	9am – 6pm
July to August	9am – 6:30pm

Lock keepers may leave their lock unmanned over lunch or when they are attending more than one lock at a time. During these times, the lock will remain open, but will become self-service.

MOORING

There is a good choice of public moorings along the Thames. Unless signs state otherwise, you are allowed to moor for a maximum period of 24 hours and may have to pay a charge at some sites – normally between £10-£18 per night. Where charges apply, you will usually get a visit from a warden early the next morning collecting payment. Always respect private rights – there will usually be signs up if mooring isn't allowed but, if you aren't sure, either keep on looking or be prepared to be moved on. Most public moorings will have mooring bollards or rings to tie your boat to, otherwise, mooring stakes and a hammer are provided on board. You also have the option of mooring in a private marina for a charge of between £20-£40 per night. Usually they'll have water refill points, pump-out and electric hook-up facilities (not available on all boats).

WATER

You may need to fill up your water tanks once or twice during the course of a week. Free Water points are available at the following locks: Abingdon, Cleeve, Shiplake, Hurley, Cookham, Boveney and Molesey.



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Disclaimer: We have endeavoured to ensure that all the information in this Guide is correct at time of printing. However, opening times and prices are subject to change. Attractions, restaurants, locks and even stretches of the canal can close without notice. Le Boat is happy to recommend all of the attractions and eating establishments featured within this Guide. However, they are not owned or managed by Le Boat and, as such, we cannot guarantee the quality of your experience at any particular time. If anything in this guide is not correct, we'd love to hear from you at guides@leboat.com so that we can revise future editions.

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