

FIT FOR A KING

- Kingston to Richmond

by Penny Parkin

KINGSTON-upon-Thames is a thriving market town with a bustling shopping centre, whose link to Richmond via the Thames make it a riverside honey pot at weekends.

Literally meaning 'Kings town' the town has been the coronation place of seven Anglo Saxon kings and the coronation stone still exists outside the Guildhall at Clattern Bridge, over the river Hogsmill.

The Kingston riverside boasts a host of up market eateries and coffee bars including Carluccios, the Ha Ha Bar and amongst the several riverside pubs is the tranquil Boaters Inn, next to Kingston rowing club, where you can while away a few sunny hours before taking to the river.

It's possible to walk the entire towpath between Kingston and Richmond, which takes about an hour and offers the opportunity to study the riverside plants and wildlife in closer detail. If you want to relax in style however, a boat trip will do the journey in roughly the same time. Passing under Kingston Bridge, the river winds away from the town and past several jetties, slipways and tennis courts; to your left, you'll come to this stretch of river's first point of interest, Teddington Studios where *Who Wants To Be A Millionaire* is filmed.

Close by, to your left you'll encounter two pleasant riverside pubs, The Anglers and the Tide End Cottage. The Anglers was founded in 1795 to cater for local fishermen but then went on to become a hotel. The pub no longer offers a bed for the night but offers an attractive place to moor before having a pint and a hamburger at one of the regular summer barbecues on its large riverside terrace. Similarly, The Tide End Cottage is well worth a visit and sits amongst a row of Victorian cottages (originally for boatmen and fishermen) opposite Teddington Lock.

Further upstream on the right, the river passes Ham Lands, a nature reserve with a combination of vegetation and grassland, which attracts many species of butterflies and birds with abundant wildflower cover in summer. Ham house, a famously haunted Stuart mansion, has many tales to tell including that of the evil Duchess of Lauderdale who reportedly roams the corridors with a silver topped cane. Strawberry Hill House, a little further upstream provides further intrigue in the form of Horace Walpole's popular turreted Gothic monument.

Eel Pie Island

Nearby Twickenham offers another curious attraction in the form of Eel Pie Island, once famous for its connection with the Rolling Stones, which seems to have carried its rock theme on in the form of its individual, sometimes rather eerie gardens, including one bedecked with curious plastic dolls. The town itself offers a sedate contrast and a



Richmond Riverside from Richmond Bridge.

chance to rest, recuperate and experience some fine riverside pubs including popular local The Barmy Arms, which has a large outdoor seating area and its distant neighbour The White Swan, a more up market option with a large pleasant beer garden overlooking the Thames.

Leaving Twickenham, Orleans House Gallery and Marble Hill House are both worth investigating for their artistic and historic connections. Petersham Meadows marks another point of artistic interest at King Henry's Mound. Situated at the bottom of Richmond Hill, the site marks the longest view from St Paul's cathedral in Britain and frames the building to the exclusion of all others. Unsurprisingly an Act of Parliament preserves it as an artistic site.

So special is the view of Richmond Hill in fact that it is represented in the painting 'A View of Richmond Hill' which shows Wick House, home to the painter Joshua Reynolds. The view was created in the 18th century and is considered an arcadia or 'idyllic pastoral landscape' and was part of the English Landscape movement that inspired Horace Walpole, Daniel Defoe, JM Turner, Charles Dickens, Benjamin Britten and more recently, The Rolling Stones, including Richmond's most famous resident, Mick Jagger.

Richmond itself is named after Henry VIII's favourite Earldom, Richmond in Yorkshire and the town retains a regal air. Its many riverside pubs are packed in summer and you can even feed the hungry local swans. More traditional pubs include The Waterman's Arms, possibly the oldest pub in Richmond and The White Cross on Water Lane,



Richmond Bridge.

which attract the die-hard locals. The Pitcher and Piano and The Slug and Lettuce cater for a hipper, younger crowd and overlook the river, as does Henry's, a cocktail bar that has river views. Further along, Richmond boathouse offers the chance to hire skiffs, dinghies and launches.

The Cricketers Pub

If you fancy a stroll from the riverside, I'd recommend The Cricketers Pub overlooking Richmond Green. The friendly bar staff will pour you

a pint in a plastic glass which can be taken onto the green to go with fish and chips from the shop around the corner or a take away lamb burger from the Saturday farmers market near the town hall. Cricket, local opera and many other activities provide free entertainment during the summer and Richmond Theatre is at hand if the weather turns grim. All in all the town is a great place to relax and spend a day or two at the end of your boat journey from Kingston before heading on up the Thames towards London.

talkback

YOUR CHANCE TO WRITE TO US ON ANY TOWPATH TOPIC

Expanding on gas safety

Reading the article on the Boat Safety Scheme by Nigel Beckett in the 5 October issue, I felt readers may find it helpful to expand on some of the points made regarding gas soundness checks and gas work in general.

Legally, a boater or person can, on their own or other person's privately owned pleasure boat, carry out a soundness check or gas work providing they are competent. However, should an incident occur, the person who undertook the work could find themselves standing in front of a judge having to prove competency. In contrast, CORGI-registered gas installers are considered competent.

Another point to consider is regarding insurance, as a non-CORGI-registered person is very unlikely to hold insurance for

carrying out gas work. Also, having CORGI registration does not guarantee relevant insurance, clearly this can be checked with your chosen installer.

Holding CORGI registration does not necessarily mean gas work can be carried out in all situations. For example, I can carry out gas work on a cooker installed on a boat, but for the same cooker installed in a caravan, I do not carry CORGI registration.

In respect of Boat Safety Scheme examiners, those with CORGI registration can carry out soundness checks on all boats whereas, those without CORGI registration carry out soundness checks on privately owned pleasure boats only. Therefore, Hire or Day boats and Residential boats have to be soundness checked by those having CORGI registration.

A residential boat is categorised as a boat used as a primary place of residence. If the boat is used as a primary residence this needs to be discussed with the examiner prior to the appointment.

As part of the annual registration in April, Boat Safety Scheme examiners have to provide evidence of required insurance being in place before registration is renewed. All Boat Safety Scheme examiners carry a registered ID card, and similarly, all CORGI installers carry an ID card issued annually which details on the back the type of work that can be undertaken.

Having a bubble tester fitted is an excellent way for a boat owner to check for gas soundness at regular intervals. In respect of the Boat Safety Scheme examination, if a bubble tester is fitted, it is this

that will be used for the test. The bubble tester does not however show operating pressure of the gas regulator, or the correct operating pressure of an appliance.

In general, the Boat Safety Scheme has three check points marked as advisory: Ventilation, Water Heater Flueing and Means of Escape.

The recommended advice is for any shortfall to be corrected, but if the boat owner does not wish to take the advice, a certificate can be issued with any advisory points in error being noted on the certificate. Some boat owners find that their insurance company will insist that advisory items get corrected or insurance will be withheld or certain types of claims rejected.

Chris Williams, Ovation Boat Services.

Gloom and doom

Re Towpath Talk 14 September, article Destination X Ilkeston, by Nigel Beckett.

I was saddened and rather angry at the doom and gloom comment that quoted - "Ilkeston has the canal but no current reason for it being there" - "lack of traffic would close this underused arm."

While true, this very negative comment denies the valiant efforts being made by The Friends of Cromford Canal who are in the process of reconnecting the Erewash to Cromford in the Peak District. It is a beautiful and historic route where work is now under way at the Langley Mill Basin and should have been mentioned as part of that article.

People should contact and help the FCC, which would bring tourism to Erewash in the future. Find out what is really going on.

Angela Hall nb Heavy Metal.

Ed: A good point well made Angela. Towpath Talk is only too pleased to promote the good work of all groups who are involved in maintaining or restoring our waterways. If readers are interested in more information on the work of The Friends of Cromford Canal they should visit the website www.cromfordcanal.org.uk or contact 0115 946 4479.