

# THE RIVER TEES USER GUIDE

**A practical guide for river users**



River Tees  
**Rediscovered** 

Front cover image of Tees Barrage



# The River Tees User Guide

A guide by Rivershack CIC in  
collaboration with river stakeholders



Drone's Eye View of the River Tees from Eaglescliffe





This guide has been supported by the River Tees Rediscovered Landscape Partnership, thanks to money raised by National Lottery players and awarded through the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

It was compiled by Rivershack CIC

(Rivershack CIC is a not-for-profit organisation aiming to improve access to the River Tees and to positively promote the Tees Valley.)





[Google Map of the River Tees from Yarm to Teesmouth](#)

Expand this link to see a full size map of 137 miles of the River Tees.



Maze Park, just beyond Tees Barrage.

# CONTENTS

Foreword .....8

1. Understanding the River Tees .....9

2. What you'll see on the River Tees .....16

3. Activities on and around the River .....30

4. Considerations for River Users ..... 38

5. Contact points ..... 45

6. Further information ..... 46

7. Acknowledgements ..... 47



All information is correct at date of production, October 2019.

# Foreword

Groundwork NE & Cumbria work on hundreds of projects every year, helping communities find practical solutions to challenges they face. The River Tees Rediscovered Landscape Partnership, with funding raised by National Lottery players and awarded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, is an exciting initiative involving a wide range of partners, stretching from Piercebridge to the mouth of the Tees.

Our vision is for the Tees Valley to be renowned for its rich landscape, heritage and culture. We aim to connect people and communities to the built and natural heritage within the Tees Valley, bringing our heritage to life, by offering new ways for people to see, hear, touch and enjoy it. This is one of a series of projects, which helps to increase learning about our landscape and its heritage.

This guide is specifically aimed to encourage more use of the river and riverside areas. By raising awareness of this wonderful natural asset we hope to encourage people to nurture it and help to evolve its role in the future of Tees Valley.

We hope you enjoy it!

**Lucy Chapman**

River Tees Rediscovered Partnership Manager  
Groundwork NE & Cumbria



## Understanding the River Tees: Start point, route and end point

**This guide aims to provide all the information river users may need to get the most out of the River Tees, and hence focusses on the most populated part of the river, from Yarm to Tees Barrage.**

**This guide is for all river users – that includes everyone from ramblers, cyclists and anglers on riverside paths to boats and powered vessels, or small craft such as paddleboards and kayaks.**

The River Tees has a unique and special role within the Tees Valley, responsible for bringing life, culture, heritage and economic growth to the region.

The role of the river within the Tees Valley has evolved dramatically, and will continue to do so. This guide aims to showcase what the river has to offer now and by increasing awareness and usage, to release the potential opportunities ahead.

In the last few centuries the River Tees has undergone a huge transformation, with the most extreme changes happening in the 25 years since the Tees Barrage was built.

For more information on the Heritage of the Tees, please see section 2, meanwhile here are some facts that all river users may be interested to know about the Tees.

Current maps of the River Tees can be found via links below (full URLs on page 46):

[CRT Map](#) [Education Map](#)





This area of the Tees inspired creative works including **John Atkinson Grimshaw** who painted '**On the Tees, near Barnard Castle**'\* in 1868, (see left) and J.M.W. Turner's work called 'The Junction of the Greta and Tees'.

\*We are only able to represent this image in a low resolution, however felt it valuable to set the scene for how the river was portrayed in the 1800's.

## Source and Upper Tees: Cross Fell

There are a range of activities in this region, including walking, cycling, horse riding and canoe, and kayaking. Kayaking is allowed by permit from Raby Estates on the River Tees in Upper Teesdale. The most popular spot is between High Force and Wynch Bridge at Low Force but please be aware there are grade 4 sections here. Permits can be obtained from Raines Ironmongers and the Raby Estate Office in Middleton-in-Teesdale and the High Force Gift Shop in Forest-in-Teesdale.

rambe and boating opportunities are available at Talkin Tarn Country Park on the north western edge of the North Pennines. There are a number of organisations and businesses that offer canoeing and kayaking instruction in this area. Please visit <https://explore north pennines.org.uk/things-to-do> for more information.

## Middle Tees

The scenery becomes gentler and more picturesque as the river descends past Middleton-in-Teesdale (Durham). See Darlington Council's website for information on activities on and around the River Tees in this area.

## **Facts about the River Tees you may not know:**

- The Tees travels 137km from source to sea.
- The Tees has over 100 tributaries including the River Greta, River Lune, River Balder, River Leven and River Skerne.
- The port at Teesmouth (Teesport) is the third largest port in the UK.
- The Tees has one of only three barrages in the UK.
- Seals, Kingfisher and Heron are often seen on the Tees.
- The Pennine Way traverses the source of the Tees.
- The River Tees once formed the boundary between Durham and Yorkshire.
- The most famous bridge on the Tees is the Transporter Bridge. It is the only bridge in the UK where bungee jumping is allowed.
- The Infinity Bridge in Stockton, together with its reflection looks like the infinity symbol.
- High Force, a waterfall on the Tees where water drops 170 feet, features in many films.
- Anglers using the River Tees enjoy fishing to rival that found in Scotland – so some say!
- One of the largest towns along the Tees is Middlesbrough, the birthplace of the explorer Captain Cook that also has a large collection of Picasso paintings.
- The heavy industry near the mouth of the river is so well managed that the area provides an important habitat for animals and plant life.

## Lower Tees

Just past Yarm, the River Leven joins the Tees, before passing the settlements of Egglescliffe, Ingleby Barwick and Thornaby-on-Tees. Now nearing the sea, **the Tees becomes an important commercial waterway, with the ports of Stockton-on-Tees and Middlesbrough** on its banks. It passes through the Tees Barrage between these ports, turning tidal downstream from the barrage.

Downstream of Tees Barrage, Teesport is built on reclaimed land on the south side of the Tees estuary below Middlesbrough. This beautiful stretch of the river from Yarm to Tees Barrage has a number of access points and activities – please see section 3 for more details.

Once at the southern area of Teesmouth, you will find **South Gare, Paddy's Hole and the South Gare Fisherman's association green huts**: Visit Ian Forsyth's website which accompanies information with atmospheric photos of this area and the folks who use it.

Paddy's Hole, Ian Forsyth, [www.room2850.com](http://www.room2850.com)



## Tees Barrage

The Tees Barrage is a barrage across the River Tees in the borough of Stockton-on-Tees, opened 17 July 1995 by the Duke of Edinburgh. It is used to control the flow of the river, preventing flooding and the effects of tidal change. At the time of construction, it was the largest civil engineering project in the UK. It is believed that the barrage was built following Margaret Thatcher's iconic 'Walk in the Wilderness' during her North East visit in 1987.

**The Tees has one of only three barrages in the UK** (the others being Cardiff and Swansea). Thames Barrier differs from a barrage as it aims to protect Greater London from flooding, whereas the Tees Barrage is designed to control river flow, to better facilitate use of the river as a leisure facility.

The Tees Barrage comprises a river barrage (four huge hydraulic flood-gates), road bridge, lower footbridge, barge lock, fish pass and white water course. **The Fish Pass allows migratory salmon and trout to swim upstream** – there is a viewing platform next to the North Bank pavilion.

**The waters above the barrage are permanently held at the level of an average high tide** and are used for water sports such as canoeing, jet skiing, dragon boat racing and incorporates a 1 km rowing course. Previously the river was tidal for 21 km before the barrage was built.

The Tees Barrage and Tees Barrage International White Water Course are developments of the Teesside Development Corporation (TDC).

## Tidal Tees, Tees Barrage to Teesmouth

Downstream of Tees Barrage the river reverts to its natural tidal state. Therefore all river users should consult tide information via the following sources for activities on the river.

### Commercial Ports

The port at Teesmouth (Teesport) is currently the third largest port in the UK and one of ten largest in Western Europe, handling over 56 million tonnes of domestic and international cargo per year.

**PD Ports is the organisation responsible for both the navigation of this section of the river, and the handling of cargo, which means managing all activity including large shipping vessels to smaller private craft.** River users should familiarise themselves with the conventions for this section of the river, and in each instance contact Tees Port before entering this area to inform them of your intentions.



For example, taking a motor cruiser from the River Tees out to sea, (via Tees Barrage) river users must:

1. Contact Tees Barrage on your approach – use VHF Channel 37 or contact number below.
2. Contact Teesport once in the tidal channel, on VHF CH14 (Tees VTS 01642 2777205).
3. Tuning into VHF CH16 once at Sea.
4. Contact your port of entry upon approach, such as Hartlepool Marina or Whitby Harbour.

Whilst it is possible, using small vessels such as canoes and kayaks in the commercial channel is not advised. Please contact Teesport for more information via VHF or Tees VTS 01642 2777205.



## AV Dawson

Celebrating 80 years of supporting manufacturing supply chains by handling and moving freight, AV Dawson operates from its 100-acre port on Riverside Park, Middlesbrough, providing connectivity by road, rail, land and sea. The port includes shipping and rail freight terminals, warehousing and a supporting road transport fleet.

This unique facility provides berthing for deep-drafted vessels and an onsite shipping agency. **With four combined rail terminals linked to the East Coast Mainline via Middlesbrough Goods Yard, this is one of the largest and most flexible rail freight facilities in the North of England.**

The Automotive Steel Store Terminal provides a rail-link directly into a temperature and humidity controlled, state-of-the-art distribution centre for coil and plate used in automotive and 'yellow goods' (construction sector) supply chains. The remaining rail terminals provide links to the quayside, an intermodal container and tank storage facility and warehousing for bulk and dry goods.



Aerial images of AV Dawson, Middlesbrough

## What you'll see on the River Tees

Along the 109km of river there is always something to see, from Kingfisher and Heron, to the construction of off shore wind turbines. We'll start this chapter with landmarks most associated with the Tees, bridges, starting at Yarm Viaduct and heading downstream out to Teesmouth.

### Crossing Points and Bridges

There are dozens of crossing points in the upper and middle parts of the Tees. As the river increases in size footbridges and small road bridges are usurped by larger bridges, of which there are 14 between Yarm and Teesmouth, which are described below starting with Yarm Viaduct and then in order as one would encounter them heading downstream. **For more detailed information on the many crossings and bridges please see Crossing the Tees: Fords, Ferries and Bridges Heritage Guide available at <https://www.riverteesrediscovered.com/resources>.**

Although the bridges are unlikely to have any impact on leisure activities, **all river users should be aware of the following:**

- Bridge headroom will vary with fluctuating river levels. The published maximum air draft for any craft on the river is 5.5m from mean high water level. Any vessel close to or in excess of this should contact Tees Barrage for further information.
- The navigable channel is generally mid position through the centre bridge arches; Note that whilst river traffic must keep to the right, many powered craft, especially the larger vessels will need to pass through the centre of bridges and crossings, due to the increased height (draft) and depth of the channel.
- Some bridges can be particularly susceptible to debris build-up.
- Un-authorised swimming and anti-social behaviour may occur at or close to bridges, be alert to incoming missiles or youths jumping in on summer days!

### **Yarm Viaduct (North TransPennine Line only, no public access)**

An elegant Victorian railway viaduct between the towns of Yarm and Egglescliffe and which dominates the town of Yarm as it soars over the rooftops. Its 43 arches are mainly in brick (7.5 million) but those over the river are of stone and are skewed. The bridge carries the line from Stockton/Middlesbrough to Northallerton, Thirsk and York, and is used by both passenger and freight trains. It also facilitates a direct train service from London Kings Cross to Egglescliffe, a great local facility.



Yarm Viaduct with Yarm Road Bridge in the foreground.

### **Yarm Road Bridge (A67 road, cycle and footbridge)**

The bridge was an important crossing point and was **the first point from the sea at which the Tees could be crossed** until a bridge was built at Stockton. Yarm, an old town, was the major port on the Tees until the 18th century. **The George and Dragon pub hosted the meeting in 1820 at which the decision was taken to build the Stockton and Darlington railway.** The Teesdale Way footpath, running the length of the Tees, skirts the town, providing beautiful riverside walks upstream and downstream through the spine of the Tees Heritage Park.



Preston Pipe Bridge in the Winter

**Preston Pipe Bridge (water pipe. Not publically accessible)**

This bridge shown above, is known affectionately as the Pipe Bridge, carrying water. There is no crossing point available here by land.

**Jubilee Bridge (carrying Queen Elizabeth Way)**

The Jubilee Bridge was opened in 2002. The Jubilee Bridge is a road and pedestrian/cycle bridge carrying the Queen Elizabeth Way north south across the River Tees linking Stockton-on-Tees with nearby Ingleby Barwick. The bridge is over 5 kilometres upriver from Stockton town centre.

**Surtees Bridge (A66 road) and Surtees Rail Bridge (Tees Valley Line)**

This appears to be one bridge however it is in fact two separate bridges in parallel to each other.

It's worth noting the visibility is somewhat restricted here so take caution through here – they may also be large tree debris in the side sections, so stay central.



### **Victoria Bridge (A1130 road)**

Just downstream of Victoria Bridge you will see a large group of swans, often 30-40 and sometimes a black swan too. Please do all you can to provide them with eco-friendly swan and duck food – rather than bread, which isn't healthy for them, or the balance of the river chemistry either.

### **Teesquay / Stockton Millennium Footbridge**

Journeying through a modernized Stockton, next up is the Millennium footbridge (below) which adds its elegant outline to the landscape. Look out for the old warehouse building close to the berth of the Teesside Princess, a reminder of Stockton's role as a principal port on the Tees in the 18th and early 19th centuries.



Millennium Footbridge

### **The Princess of Wales Bridge**

Often referred to as the Diana Bridge - was opened in 1992. The Princess of Wales Bridge is a dual carriageway road bridge carrying the Teesdale Boulevard which links Stockton and Teesdale.



## **Infinity Bridge (foot and cycle)**



The Infinity Bridge

The Infinity Bridge, left, is a public pedestrian and cycle footbridge across the river. Sitting between the Princess of Wales Bridge and the Tees Barrage it links the Teesdale Business Park and the University of Durham Queen's Campus on the south bank of the Tees with the Tees Valley Regeneration's £320 million North Shore development. The Infinity Bridge also provides a wonderful photo opportunity at night.

## **Tees Barrage (road, cycle and foot)**

Tees Barrage and the White Water course are shown below, for more information see section 1 above.



Tees Barrage

## Crossings over the tidal Tees, downstream of Tees Barrage:

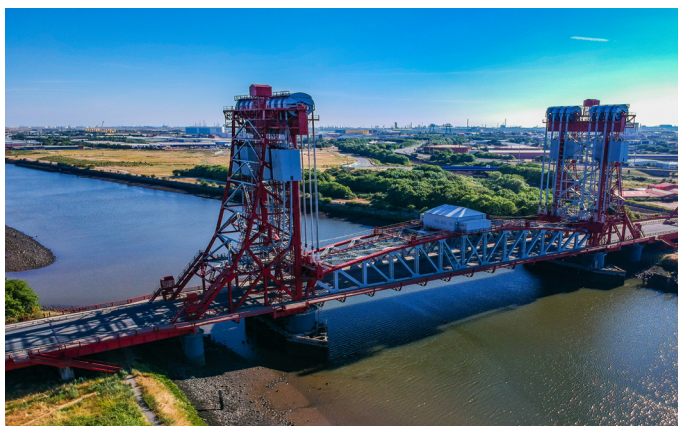
### Tees Viaduct (A19 road)

The A19 Tees Viaduct or Tees Flyover is a high-level six-lane dual carriageway road bridge carrying the main A19 trunk road north/south across the River Tees.

The bridge is located between Middlesbrough and Stockton-on-Tees just north of the A19 interchange with the A66 trunk. See image below left.



Tees Viaduct



Newport Bridge

### Tees Newport Bridge (A1032)

The Tees Newport Bridge, above right, is a vertical-lift bridge spanning the River Tees a short distance upriver from Tees Transporter Bridge, linking Middlesbrough with the borough of Stockton. It was completed in 1934. It no longer lifts, but still acts as a road bridge in its permanently down position.

### **Middlesbrough Transporter Bridge (A178 road)**

What is a transporter bridge? A transporter bridge, also known as a ferry bridge or aerial transfer bridge, is **a type of movable bridge that carries a segment of roadway across a river.** The gondola is slung from a tall span by wires or a metal frame. The design has been used to cross navigable rivers or other bodies of water, where there is a requirement for ship traffic to be able to pass, with fewer than two dozen built. There are just twelve that continue to be used today.

**The Tees Transporter Bridge, often referred to as the Middlesbrough Transporter Bridge, is the furthest downstream bridge across the River Tees, England.** It connects Middlesbrough, on the south bank, to Port Clarence, on the north bank. The gondola can carry 200 people, 9 cars, or 6 cars and one minibus. It carries the A178 Middlesbrough to Hartlepool road. Locally, the bridge is often referred to simply as ‘the Transporter’.

The River at Preston Park as Juno heads to Yarm





## Landmarks and buildings

For more detailed information please see ‘Industry in the Tees Valley’ . Heritage Guides are available at <https://www.riverteesrediscovered.com/resources>

### The Worlds First Steam Powered Passenger Railway

The world's first steam-powered passenger railway was opened in 1825 running between Darlington and Stockton. The first booking office for the railway is a short walk from the original Stockton wharf where the remains of old wooden staithes are visible just downstream of Victoria bridge.

### Preston Park

Preston Hall began life as a Georgian gentleman's residence. In 1882 the estate and lands were sold to Robert Ropner, a wealthy shipping and industrial magnate. Part of the original railway line ran through the western edge of Preston Park alongside the old turnpike road and it was here that the celebrated contest between the “Locomotion” and a stagecoach took place, at around 12mph!

The River at Preston Park, from Eaglescliffe



## Tees Heritage Park

Tees Heritage Park, map opposite, is the green space that stretches along the river between Stockton and Yarm, contains a mosaic of environments from reed beds to ancient woodland and supports a host of different species. **The Teesdale Way, a 148 km long distance walk along the Tees** starts from high in the Pennines and ends 20 km downstream at Teesmouth.

**River Tees Rediscovered has produced a range of maps and guides, which provide a vast depth of information on this area.** These should be available from Preston Park Museum and other public points along the river such as Tees Barrage. The gateway to the Heritage Park is Preston Park Museum and Grounds.

Heritage Maps:

- Wildlife in the Park
- Gateway Signal Posts and Artworks
- Heritage and Places of Interest

**Digital copies of Heritage guides are also available online in addition to a wealth of other information on the River Tees Heritage Park:**  
<https://www.riverteesrediscovered.com/tees-heritage-park>

## Artworks

There are a range of artworks on and around the River Tees, from the Signal posts the stone sculptures to Tees Heritage park, to the latest graffiti art on bridges in the Tidal Tees (A19 Tees Flyover).

Existing artworks are located on the Tees Heritage Park maps, though do look out for new artworks – including sculptures - due on and around the riverside areas in the Tees Valley in 2019/2020, delivered as part of the River Tees Rediscovered legacy. See 'Gateway, Signal Posts & Artwork' Heritage Map for more information.



# TEES HERITAGE PARK

## Key

- Tees Heritage Park Boundary (indicative)
- Signal post / Park entry
  - Boat landing stage
  - Parking
  - Public / private slipway
  - Woodland
  - Combined footpath / cycleway
  - Footpath (some paths are permissive only \*)
  - Bridleway (some bridleways are permissive \*)
  - Public byway open to all traffic
  - Artwork / rest area

## Symbols

- Public Footpath: for walkers only
- Public Bridleway: for walkers, cyclists & horse riders
- Public Byway: open to all traffic

\*Permissive routes are granted by the consent of landowners, however changes to these permissive routes may occur in the future.

- Horses give way to pedestrians
- Cyclists give way to pedestrians and horses
- Wear suitable clothes and shoes

© Crown copyright and database rights 2013 Ordnance Survey 100023297.  
You are not permitted to copy, sub-license, distribute or sell any of this data to third parties in any form.  
We have taken all reasonable steps to ensure that the information contained in this leaflet is accurate and correct at the time of writing. However, Friends of Tees Heritage Park does not accept any liability caused by reliance on this information.  
Cartography © Fourpoint Mapping, [www.fourpointmapping.co.uk](http://www.fourpointmapping.co.uk)



Bowesfield Wetland

## Wildlife

The River, now clean, provides a rich environment for an abundance of wildlife. Since the barrage was put in place, removing the tidal impact on the riverbank, the ecosystem has had to re-balance itself. There are mixed opinions on this bringing both positive and negative impacts to the river wildlife immediately in the vicinity of the tidal range.

The river now has migrating salmon and trout and an abundance of wildlife reserves, listed below. For more information see Tees Heritage map (Wildlife in the Park) at <https://www.riverteesrediscovered.com/resources>

## Bowesfield Wetland, Tees Valley Wildlife Trust

This wetland reserve, shown above, is contained in three loops of the River Tees, each with its own character and special wildlife.

## Brewsdale

Brewsdale is an intimate reserve, a quiet spot on a small tributary of the River Leven where woodland flowers, birds and butterflies can all be found. For more information please visit <https://www.teeswildlife.org>

## Maze Park

Maze Park is a green oasis right at the centre of the Teesside – close to Tees Barrage. Visitors can climb one of its landscaped mounds to enjoy panoramic views of the conurbation.

## Portrack Marsh

This is one of the area's most important wildlife sites given its location at the very heart of Teesside. The wetland nature reserve attracts hundreds of birds each year and it provides a home to an exciting variety of mammals, amphibians, insects and wildflowers. Deer have also been seen here - please visit <https://www.teeswildlife.org> for more information.

### **Non-Tidal waters**

The Tees has a population of Salmon, Sea Trout and coarse fish. These in turn support Kingfisher, Heron, Cormorant and Otter. You may even see a Seal come alongside you in a boat. Seals have been spotted further upstream than Yarm, over 9 miles upstream of the barrage. The Fish Pass at Tees Barrage allows migratory salmon and trout to swim upstream – there is a viewing platform next to the North Bank pavilion.

### **Seal Sands (Tidal waters)**

Part of Teesmouth National Nature Reserve, Seal Sands is a 294.37 hectare biological Site of Special Scientific Interest in Cleveland, England, notified in 1966. Situated in the mouth of the River Tees next to Greatham Creek and Seaton-on-Tees Channel, and accessible from the A178 road running between Seaton Carew and Port Clarence. (Teesmouth National Nature Reserve is managed by Natural England, who welcomes voluntary help on the site.)

### **RSBP Saltholme (Tidal waters)**

If you're new to birdwatching, Saltholme is the perfect place to start. These family-friendly wetlands have a helpful visitor's centre, hides and screens which let you get up close to water rail, yellow wagtails and terns, plus a family discovery zone, cafe, play area and accessible trails. For more information please visit their Facebook page or website.

### **Tees Rivers Trust**

Like all Rivers Trusts around the UK, they are predominantly a 'feet wet' organisation – preferring to 'get in there and find out what's going on'. They work closely with many community groups and the Tees and its tributaries benefit greatly from the work that they put into improving local watercourses. See [www.teesriverstrust.org/](http://www.teesriverstrust.org/) or [@Teesriverstrust](https://www.instagram.com/teesriverstrust) for more information.



Stockton Riverside

## Heritage & Culture

The role of the river in transporting coal and later steel is well documented, however it is worth reiterating that these industries, including Shipbuilding, were all facilitated by the River Tees. Without the River the towns of Yarm, Stockton and Middlesbrough would not have existed. For more information on river heritage please see the Heritage information and Guides: <https://www.riverteesrediscovered.com/resources>

Yarm was the first port to develop on the Tees in the 12th Century. **Until the building of the bridge at Stockton in 1771 hundreds of years later, Yarm was the nearest point of crossing the Tees to the sea.** Because of this ability for people and goods to cross over the river, Yarm became an important place for trading which included exports of wool and imports of wine from Gascony, Flemish cloth and other luxury goods including butter, bacon, cheese, paper, leather and coal. Many products manufactured locally, including paper, grain and corn were also transported by steamer down river and onwards south to London.

However as the river then was tidal, ships travelling from Yarm had to wait for four tides to be able to make the journey down river and out to sea. **This could take around two days – whereas the journey from Yarm to sea now takes around 3 hours.**

**Please read ‘A brief history of the River Tees’ for more in-depth information on the heritage of the River Tees,** which is available on Stockton Council’s website or Stockton Library.

### Stockton

The Borough of Stockton-on-Tees owes much of its development to the River Tees. With the expansion of the coal trade in the 17th century, Stockton became the major river port when coal was carried to the docks from the Durham coalfield by railway to be shipped to London and overseas.





SIRF Festival 2019

In the early 19th century the River Tees was altered between Stockton-on-Tees and Middlesbrough. The river previously meandered first south and then north of its current channel, the river was straightened, thus saving money and time in navigation.

In 1995 the Tees Barrage International White Water Centre opened on the north bank of the River Tees. The purpose built, artificial white water course helped regenerate the area and has since been transformed into a world class facility.

Visitors to the riverside in Stockton will see a vibrant and changing water-level light installation on the riverbanks (top left), showcasing the river as it flows through Stockton Town Centre.

### **SIRF Festival**

The Stockton International Riverside Festival (SIRF) is an annual free outdoor arts and street theatre festival in Stockton-on-Tees, one of the world's oldest and best international outdoor art festivals. SIRF is supported by Arts Council England and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council. Please visit [www.sirf.co.uk](http://www.sirf.co.uk) for more information.

### **Tees Regatta**

Tees Rowing Club offers a wide range of rowing events including the annual Tees Regatta. Using a four-lane fully buoyed 850m course on the Barrage straight immediately upstream from the Tees Barrage, it finishes outside the River Tees Watersports Centre.

Rowers on the Tees, part of the Great North City Games 2019





## Activities on and around the River Tees

### Activities

**Tees Barrage effectively turned the water upstream of this location into a long 'lake', due to its non-tidal, calm and current-free state, creating the potential for an array of leisure uses upstream from the Barrage area in Stockton.**

The barrage development also includes a renowned white water course - a canoe slalom to the northeast - in addition to a range of other facilities.

There are also other water-based activities available at Hartlepool Marina. Redcar also has Flowrider, which combines surfing, snowboarding, skateboarding and boards derived from wakeboarding.

**A useful place to find activities on and around the River Tees is the Enjoy (Tees Valley) website - [www.enjoyteesvalley.com/things-to-do/](http://www.enjoyteesvalley.com/things-to-do/)**

### Boating - private boats

There are two private boat clubs on the Tees: Castlegate Boat Club (Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TQ) and Tees Motor boat club. Please contact them directly for more information.

### Rowing, sculling and Dragon boats

These are the terms used for what most people know to be professional rowing. You will often see rowers or scullers (either alone, in a pair, a quad or an eight) training with a cox and a safety boat. This can happen at on any day throughout the year.

There are two boat clubs – one being Tees Rowing Club – based in Stockton and Yarm Independent School, based in Yarm.

**This means that river awareness is vital.** Around any bend there could be groups of inexperienced young rowers out on the river heading for you. Be prepared to take evasive action, and then smile and wave!



RiverShack's Juno, participating in Tees Flotilla, part of the Great North City Games 2019

## Boat trips – public

### RiverShack CIC

RiverShack CIC is a not for profit organisation that aims to improve access to the River Tees and to help create positive perceptions of the river. RiverShack operates a scheduled passenger boat service, rowing boat hire and delivers educational sessions and skills training for community groups and schools.

For more information visit [@rivershacktees](#)

### Teesside Princess

The Teesside Princess is a purpose designed leisure cruiser that lives on the River Tees moored in Stockton. It departs from the Castlegate Quay area and travels to Yarm and Preston Hall Museum and Grounds. Please visit their website or Facebook page for more information.



Participants in the Tees Flotilla, part of the Great North City Games 2019

### Jet ski and Water-ski

Jet skiers and Water-skiers can use the area of the Tees between the infinity Bridge and Tees Barrage as per the usage schedule below – which has designated time slots each week for activities over 5mph.

Keen jet skiers can also head out on the water at Hartlepool Bay guided step by step by **water sports company On-Water**, who offer an excellent range of courses and on water experiences.

## Tees Barrage Reach Usage Guidance:

**ALL VESSELS MUST REGISTER WITH TEES BARRAGE BEFORE USING THE RIVER. 5MPH SPEED LIMIT – DO NOT CREATE EXCESS WASH: CONSIDER OTHER USERS.**

- All Jet Ski users must be a member of the Jet Ski club: [teespwc@gmail.com](mailto:teespwc@gmail.com) (Jet skis not to be launched from the barrage slipway).
- All Water-skiers users must be a member of the Water Ski club: [teeswaterski.co.uk](http://teeswaterski.co.uk) (Water-ski slots will not be in use between Nov. – Feb. inclusive).
- Non-powered includes rowing boats, Dragon boats, canoes and sailing craft – coaching and safety launches are also allowed.
- Non-powered craft may use the reach area if the timetabled users are not there but must vacate should one appear.
- All vessels transiting the reach area must use the North shore, passing other craft port to port, giving a wide berth to other reach/river users.
- For more information please visit [canalrivertrust.org.uk](http://canalrivertrust.org.uk) or call Tees Barrage.

Usage Schedule below

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6am-7am	Non-Powered	Non-Powered	Schools	Non-Powered	Water-ski Club Members Only	Jet Ski Club Members Only	Water-ski Club Members Only
7am-8am							
8am-9am							
9am-10am							
10am-11am	Jet Ski Club Members Only	Water-ski Club Members Only	Non-Powered	Water-ski School	Non-Powered	Non-Powered	Non-Powered
11am-12am							
12am-1pm							
1pm-2pm							
2pm-3pm	Water-ski Club Members Only	Jet Ski Club Members Only					
3pm-4pm							
4pm-5pm							
5pm-6pm							
6pm-7pm							
7pm-8pm	Water-ski Club Members Only	Water-ski Club Members Only					
8pm-9pm							
9pm-10pm							



## Training and Courses

Tees Active is a charitable leisure management organisation based in the Tees Valley. Established as a non-profit company set up to take on the management of facilities provided by Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, Tees Active caters for over 2 million visits per year and has a presence at Tees Barrage where it offers bell boating, canoeing, flat-water kayaking, sailing, power boating, white water kayaking and rafting. For more information see [www.teesactive.co.uk/](http://www.teesactive.co.uk/).

### Tees Barrage International White Water Centre

The Tees Barrage International White Water Centre opened in 1995. It is an artificial white-water course situated on the north bank of the River Tees, in North East England. It was purpose built as part of the £50 million Tees Barrage Project – to help re-generate the area of Teesside.

After successfully running for 15 years, the decision was made to upgrade the existing course to increase opportunities for participation in paddle sports, as well as to attract visiting Olympic and World Class Teams to the venue. It was also identified that the upgrade would ensure a sustainable future for the course and provide adventurous activities for people of all ages and abilities.

In February 2016 Tees Barrage introduced its first land based activity, the mighty fixed ropes attraction **Air Trail, which at 18m is the UK's biggest – it's the same height as four double decker buses.**

### Canoe and Kayak

The River upstream of Tees Barrage is non-tidal by default however please check weather and river conditions before paddling as there may be flow or floods at any time of year.

A license to paddle the river is included in the Canoe England membership fee. Otherwise licenses can be obtained from [www.british-waterways.co.uk/license-it](http://www.british-waterways.co.uk/license-it).

### **Paddle boarding**

Stand up Paddleboarding, or SUP, is a growing activity, which anyone can try on the river. We recommend starting with a managed session via an accredited group such as SUP Adventures (who sometimes operate from Preston park) or On-Water training.

### **Open water swimming**

Swimming is authorised on the Tees for swimmers adhering to the recommended behaviour for open water: using bright floats to make swimmers clearly visible in the water and swimming in a group. The North East Open Water Swimmers meet on the Tees, please visit their Facebook page for advice and guidance.

Unauthorised swimming – where the recommended behaviours are not followed – is not allowed on the Tees, and any such activity should be reported to the Incident Police on 101.

### **Walking and Cycling**

There are so many walking and cycling routes in the area that intersect with the River – Darlington has eight walks along the River Tees!

**Let's Go Tees Valley has compiled an up to date list of all the walking routes and maps for the area** with details of self-guided routes around the Tees Valley as well as details of where to get hold of rural and urban folded walking and cycling maps for each of the five local authority areas:

- Darlington
- Hartlepool
- Middlesbrough
- Redcar & Cleveland
- Stockton-on-Tees

For walks and walking activities and cycling in Stockton-on-Tees, please visit **The Hub**, where you will find a selection of self-guided maps for walking routes in the area, great for weekend walking.



## Angling

**Fly-fishing** in the Upper Tees has a reputation to rival that in Scotland we are told. Why not try for yourself via a local fishing expert? The River Tees must have one of the highest populations of brown trout in the whole of the UK, not big fish, but certainly lots of them. There are grayling present in the river from just above Middleton-in-Teesdale downstream for a considerable distance', says [www.yorkshire-dales-flyfishing.com](http://www.yorkshire-dales-flyfishing.com)

**Coarse Fishing** is a regular activity on the lower parts of the river with Yarm Angling club offering this advice: 'We have over 5 miles of prime fishing on the River Tees around the historic town of Yarm, and we have 1 mile of water on the middle Tees at Bowl Hole (Low Middleton). The fishing at Yarm is mainly for the good stocks of Bream, Roach, Perch, Chub, Dace And Pike. The Bowl Hole area is mainly Chub, Barbel, Bream, Perch, Dace, Roach, Trout And Grayling'. Contact Yarm Angling Club for more information.

Sea fishing trips are also available via boats from Hartlepool marina, and also via Rivershack (Stockton).

## Events

The River Tees provides great opportunities for a wide variety of events. Any event organiser considering holding an event here needs to apply to the CRT for an event license two months in advance: [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/planning-an-event/step-one-event-application-form](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/planning-an-event/step-one-event-application-form)

It may on occasion be necessary to close sections of the river for some events. Where this is the case provision will be made for craft to moor at the navigation lock before or during the event to allow uninterrupted access to the river downstream of the barrage.

All such events and closures will be provided as a notice – please check CRT notices here: <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/notices#form> using 'Tees Navigation' as the area, rather than River Tees. One can also sign up for location specific alerts on this website too.

## Riverside amenities and attractions

### Tees Barrage

Parking, toilets and a café are situated at the Barrage. The Talpore pub and restaurant is also based at Tees Barrage (Talpore is named after a 377 feet long ship built in Teesside). Stockton centre is only a mile away and Teesside Park is situated to the south of the Barrage, all within easy walking distance. Parking is available on both the North and South sides of the barrage.

### Stockton

Stockton Centre is a short walk from the riverside with a range of eateries and amenities. Please visit [www.enjoyteesvalley.com](http://www.enjoyteesvalley.com) for more information on Stockton. Green Dragon yard is known for its craft ale pubs and live bands often play at the nearby Georgian Theatre.

### Yarm

A traditional Georgian high street with a forward-thinking outlook Yarm has over 100 high street businesses and a rich heritage too. With a range of food offerings, live music, retail and events, please **visit** [www.visityarm.co.uk](http://www.visityarm.co.uk) or **@visityarm** on Facebook for details.

Stockton Council has produced a booklet on walking and cycling in Stockton-on-Tees – a great resource. **Links to both can be found at** [www.letsготeesvalley.co.uk/ways-to-travel/walk/](http://www.letsготeesvalley.co.uk/ways-to-travel/walk/)

## Water Safety

**The best way to ensure a safe experience on and around the river is to plan ahead, be aware of river and weather conditions, adhere to the speed limits and be considerate to other river users.**

The highest incidence of accidents is by runners or dog walkers falling or slipping in. Therefore please be vigilant by the waters edge.

All emergencies on the river should in the first instance be reported to the emergency services by dialling 999. The CRT is not an emergency service however they will always assist with an emergency where it is appropriate.

**In order for CRT to monitor incidents on the river all river users are asked to report all near misses, unsafe practices and accidents to the CRT at the Tees Barrage.** Monitoring incidents on the river will allow CRT to identify any trends and help prevent accidents and incidents.

Safety equipment may be provided at some of the access points listed below: this could include life rings / buoys, ladders and grab chains. Any reports of river pollution should be reported to the Environment Agency using the contact details listed in the content section of this guide.

## Licensing and insurance

**All vessels using the river are required, powered and non-powered, to have a valid license and insurance in place.** A licence for the river Tees may be obtained either via the Lock office or via the CRT website. For questions, please call Tees Barrage 01642 633273.

## Considerations for River Users

### River guidance

Canal & River Trust (CRT) are the navigation authority for the River Tees from a point 200m downstream of the tidal barrage at Stockton on Tees to the extent of the tidal reach a point approximately 200m upstream of Holme Farm at Low Worsall, a total distance of approximately 22Km. The river can be used further upstream of this area.

The navigable part of the river described above is used by a variety of users including:

- Commercial passenger boats (Teesside Princess and Juno – both operate daily in summer)
- Leisure craft – powered and unpowered including rowing boats
- Smaller craft involved in various river events and activities including canoes, kayaks and paddleboards
- School children on rowing or sculling boats
- Water Skiing and Jet Skiing
- Athletes in unpowered boats training for local, national and international competitions
- Angling, walking and other land based activities
- Canal & River Trust (CRT) maintenance vessels also operate at various locations on the river

The stretch of water from Low Worsall to the end of the tidal reach may not be suitable for navigation by larger powered craft.

Canal & River Trust have joint responsibilities for the ornamental canals which run from a point 100m downstream of Princess Diana Bridge to a point 250m downstream of Victoria Bridge covering a distance of approximately 1.1km.

**The ornamental canals are not navigable** and CRT's responsibilities are limited to that of landowner only. Some sections of the ornamental canals are managed by adjoining third party landowners.

In addition to the ornamental canals CRT also have responsibility for the river basins located on the south side of the river in Stockton on Tees. The basins are not navigable. Barclay Basin is used for canoe polo.

## Access points, Moorings and Slipways

Slipway	Location	Ownership/ Management	Details
Barrage Slipway	Upstream of barrage navigation lock	CRT	Public slipway for general use – permission from CRT required. Licenses required for access. No public mooring (Barrage does have mooring locations, subject to annual charge.)
River Tees Watersports Centre	North Shore Stockton on Tees TS18 2NL	River Tees Watersports Centre	Leased access managed by watersports centre and Castlegate Marine Club
Castlegate Quay (Previously watersports centre)	Moat Street, Stockton, TS18 3AZ	Managed by Rivershack CIC, (Leased by SBC/ CRT from private owner.)	Slipway is in a locked compound, so permission and access via RiverShack required beforehand. Mooring by prior arrangement.
Castlegate Marine Club Slipway	By the rowing Club	Private ownership	Tees River Users Trust has leased access to use the slipway and controls access via a road barrier.
Preston Park Museum and Grounds: Slipway and public pontoon; large jetty for passenger vessels; wooden fishing jetty	Eaglescliffe, TS16 3RH	Stockton Borough Council (SBC)	Small slipway approx. 2.5/3m wide suitable for small craft. However as there is no access road, users must park in the car park and walk 500-600m to the riverside. Temporary Mooring only.
Stockton Car Park Slipway	Riverside road, Stockton centre	Stockton Borough Council	Not presently available for use
Tees Motorboat Club	Tees Motorboat Club		Private use club members only
Tees Barrage pontoon	Just upstream of North Shore centre and Facebook	CRT, leased to Tees Active.	Public access via prior arrangement with Tees Active or Rivershack
Yarm Wharf	Silver Street, Yarm TS15 9AT	Environment Agency, leased to SBC	Three zones: Passenger craft, Public craft and private pontoon (seasonal) contact Rivershack for supervised access.



**Tees and Hartlepool Port Authority** (Known as Teesport) is the navigation authority downstream of the barrage. **In the commercial shipping lane it is worth monitoring CH14 (Tees VTS) and CH9 (Tees River Pilot vessels) on VHF radio.**

The river at the upstream extent of CRT jurisdiction is managed by the Environment Agency and is not classed as navigable river. Flood control is managed by the Environment Agency.

In addition to the River Tees, the Canal & River Trust is also entrusted with the care of 2,000 miles of waterways in England and Wales. For more information please visit [www.canal&rivertrust.org.uk](http://www.canal&rivertrust.org.uk)

#### **Speed limit on the river is 5mph to help ensure:**

- Safety for all users – especially as the River Tees has many blind bends.
  - Environmental protection – to minimize impact to river wildlife
  - Equipment protection – boats can be damaged as they move in the wake created by other boats
  - Anglers – be considerate to their activities
- (excluding emergency vessels and those approved for safety, training or coaching) or by pre-agreement within the authorized zone.

**Skippers of all craft are asked to reduce speed and wash between the Watersports Centre Steps and the Princess of Wales Bridge.**

#### **Barrage Reach Area and Speed Limits – Bye Laws and Regulations**

The Barrage reach area is defined as the stretch of river extending from the Barrage slipway to Princess of Wales Bridge. **The Barrage slipway is located 75m upstream of the Tees Barrage.** The barrage reach area has been allocated for **speed activities**, timetable are available from Tees Barrage office - see section 3 page 32.

Craft travelling upstream past the reach area during activity time should pass on the north side of the river passing craft port to port. Craft travelling downstream should pass the reach to the north side of centre channel passing any upstream craft port to port.

### **Barrage Navigation Lock**

The navigation lock at the Tees Barrage allows passage between the impounded river and tidal water downstream and is operational 24 hours per day. Passage through the lock is however limited by tidal conditions. At low tide there will not be sufficient water to pass the lock cill. On high spring tides passage is not possible for periods of up to one hour each side of high water. The lock may be unavailable at times of high river flows.

Skippers of all craft should not enter the lock or lock approaches unless the green lights are showing. The barrage lock keeper will be able to give advice on lock availability and passage times. Contact Tees Barrage either via VHF (Ch. 37) or 01642 633273 / 07879421534.

### **Tide times**

Please check tide times in advance of planning a route through the barrage lock. Tide tables for the year are available in printed format from PD Port (Middlesbrough) £1 each. Tide times for 'River Tees Entrance' are also available a week ahead via many websites including BBC and tide times:

[https://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast\\_and\\_sea/tide\\_tables/4/185](https://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast_and_sea/tide_tables/4/185)

<https://www.tidetimes.org.uk/river-tees-entrance-tide-times>

### **Wind, weather and river levels and flow**

Weather conditions can change quickly effecting river conditions. Wind can cause a particular issue to vessels that can easily get blown off course. Hence many river users and operators will cease to operate if wind or gust levels exceed safe parameters.

**This applies especially to river levels during or following periods of heavy rainfall. Details of river flows and water levels are available by contacting CRT staff at the Tees Barrage.**

All river users, that includes powered and non-powered craft or swimmers would be wise to check river levels and weather forecast before planning activity on the river. Things change quickly out there!

### River Levels

Information is also available via the Gov. website:

<https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/river-and-sea-levels>

Search 'River Tees' or search 'Yarm' which will provide the following readings of nearby areas: Tees dock, Tees Barrage, Stockton, Yarm, Low Moor, Croft and Broken Scar.

**Applications such as 'River Levels' are also available on Twitter via GaugeMap which provide regular river level readings.**

Low Moor and Broken Scar are each 1 hr. and 2 hrs. respectively upstream of Yarm, which therefore provides notice of what to expect in Yarm 1-2 hours in advance.

Yarm, due to the narrow width and horseshoe shape of the river around the high street, is susceptible to flooding at any time of the year, following heavy rainfall upstream. River users should be vigilant to this as it is the responsibility of the river user to check weather conditions and to take appropriate actions before undertaking any river-based activity. If in doubt, call the helpful folks at Tees Barrage.

The River Tees at Yarm, showing the Viaduct.



### **Water quality**

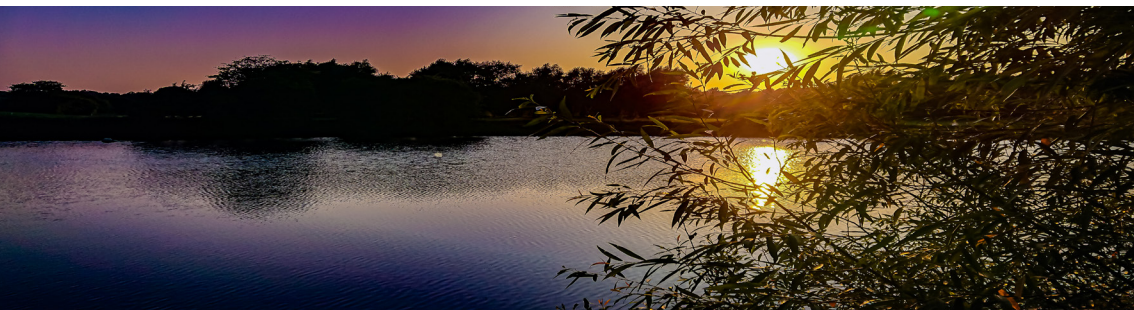
Water quality on the Tees is now reported as ‘good’ to excellent’, as monitored by the Environment Agency. Whilst we would not recommend drinking or swallowing river water, it is safe to swim in – as part of approved activity, such as the North East Open Water Swimmers group. However any open wounds should not be exposed to river water.

Northumbrian Water also monitors the river at various points using their Water Rangers 0345 7171100. If you see effluent or unusual patches of debris please contact these agencies.

### **Debris**

Flood can activate a large volume of debris, which may either travel at speed during a flood, causing an obvious hazard to river users and vessels in the water, or once the flood subsides, debris can collect at bridges and piers causing obstacles to river users. Please report such matters to both the CRT and Environment Agency who will collaborate with the Local Authority to remove.

The River Tees at Sunset



## Points to remember

- **Speed limit is 5mph** – there are blind bends, (Just imagine a speedboat heading up stream and a club / school training boat travelling downstream, and meeting on a blind bend).
- **Be considerate** to wildlife at the water's edge and anglers too - the wake of a boat carries and can cause damage to boats and river banks.
- **Stay on the right side** of the river.
- **Wear a life jacket** when on and around water
- **Take care** when walking or running on riverside paths
- **Be aware** of changing weather and river conditions
- If in doubt **please call one of the contacts opposite for advice**, who will be happy to help you.



## Clubs organisations and businesses

Organisation	Contact details
Angling club – Yarm	01642 786444 <a href="http://www.yarm-anglingclub.co.uk">www.yarm-anglingclub.co.uk</a>
Environment Agency	Incident hotline 0800 80 70 60
Enforcement Police	101
Environment Agency	Tel. 03708 506 506 <a href="mailto:Enquiries@environment-agency.go.uk">Enquiries@environment-agency.go.uk</a> Local engagement officer S. Duffy 07867441697
Emergency Services	999
Cleveland Scouts (canoe/kayak at Yarm)	<a href="http://www.clevelandscouts.org.uk">www.clevelandscouts.org.uk</a>
Castlegate Marine Club	Stockton-on-Tees TS18 1TQ Bob Godsmark, 07799686137
CRT / Tees Barrage	01642 633273 / 07879421534
Hartlepool Marina	01429 865 744 (24 hrs) <a href="http://www.hartlepool-marina.com">www.hartlepool-marina.com</a>
NE open water swimmers	@NEOWS on Facebook
Northumbrian Water Rangers	0345 7171100
On Water	01429 865744 <a href="http://www.onwater-training.com">www.onwater-training.com</a>
Rivershack CIC (Not for profit)	@rivershacktees 07795613299
River Users Group	Chaired by Stockton Council (Graham Clingan) 01642 393939 (main number)
RSPB Saltholme	<a href="http://www.saltholme@rspb.org.uk">www.saltholme@rspb.org.uk</a> 01642 546625 @RSPBSaltholme
Seal Sands Nature Reserve	Seal Sands, Teesmouth Nature Reserve Teesmouth Field Centre Tel: (01429) 264912
Tees Active Ltd	<a href="http://www.teesactive.co.uk">www.teesactive.co.uk</a> 01642 678000
Tees Motorboat club	Thornaby Place Thornaby England TS17 6BW Ian Cowans 07969557928
Teesside Princess	<a href="http://www.teessideprincess.co.uk">www.teessideprincess.co.uk</a> 01642 608038
Tees Rowing Club	<a href="mailto:info@teesrowingclub.co.uk">info@teesrowingclub.co.uk</a> 01642 628940 / 07772685020
Tees valley Dragons Stockton Powerhouse CBRC	Either call Tees Rowing Club or the mobile 07930813605 (Colin) <a href="http://www.teesvalleydragons.co.uk">www.teesvalleydragons.co.uk</a>
Tees Tigers Stockton	Tees Tigers Canoe Open Group on Facebook <a href="mailto:@Teestigers teestigers.canoeclub@gmail.com">@Teestigers teestigers.canoeclub@gmail.com</a>
Yarm Independent school	01642 786023 (main number), Estate Manager Alan Hodgson, Andy Guest (Head of Rowing)
Wildlife Trust	<a href="mailto:info@teeswildlife.org">info@teeswildlife.org</a> 01287 636382

## Further Information

If you have enjoyed this booklet the following sources of information are also available:

<https://www.riverteesrediscovered.com/tees-heritage-park>

Full details of **speed limits and other regulations** can be found in the River Tees Barrage and Upstream River Byelaws 1993 here in the River Tees Guidance notes <https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/media/original/31933-river-tees-guidance-notes.pdf>

<http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk/license-it>

<http://www.waterscape.com/>

### Current Maps of the River Tees:

<https://canalrivertrust.org.uk/enjoy-the-waterways/canal-and-river-network/river-tees>

<https://esriukeducation.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=020d9903857a44e280dcb0eaa59676a8>



Participants in the Tees Flotilla 2019

# Acknowledgements

## Content

'A brief history of the River Tees' Stockton Reference Library

Jim Moon (Blogspot.com)

Central-systems.co.uk/Teesport

PrimaryFacts.co.uk

Briggs, Katharine (1976). An Encyclopaedia of Fairies. Pantheon Books. pp. 323–324. ISBN 0394409183.

Denham, Michael and Hardy, James (1895). Denham Tracts (Vol. 2). David Nutt for The Folklore Society. p. 42.

Denham and Hardy (1895). p. 78.

RSPB.org.uk

River Tees Rediscovered

Tees Valley Local Access Forum

Wikipedia

## Images supplied by

Lewis Devine-Wilson, Facebook and Instagram 'Drones Eye Views'

Ian Forsyth, Photographer [www.room2850.com](http://www.room2850.com)

PD Ports

AV Dawson

Stockton Borough Council

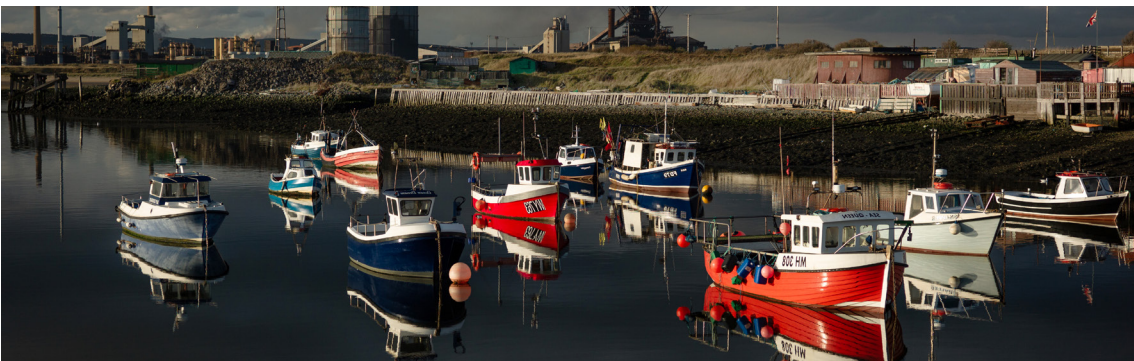
'On the Tees, near Barnard castle'

<http://www.leedsartgallery.co.uk/gallery/listings/l0035.php>









Paddy's Hole, South Gare. Ian Forsyth, [www.room2850.com](http://www.room2850.com)

