



DISABLED ACCESS TO VESSELS

Although the boats were purpose built for passenger use on the River Thames, the design and facilities of these historic boats does not favour modern disabled requirements.

All of the vessels are restricted in terms of disabled access, and it is not possible to board a motorised wheelchair.

A lightweight non motorised chair can be boarded if the wheelchair user is able to leave the chair and step on board with assistance of the crew. The chair can then be lifted on board to allow use on board. The crew are more than happy to move seating to allow the wheelchair user the preferred seating location.

Access to toilet facilities varies from vessel to vessel, but in all cases is not accessible to wheelchairs, and requires mobility for use.

Access to lower and upper decks is not possible for wheelchairs, as varying levels of steps access these decks.

Crews on all boats will always do their utmost to facilitate the needs and requirement of any passengers that require extra assistance in any way.

Thames River Boats

DISABLED ACCESS TO PIERS

WESTMINSTER PIER

The pier is accessible from the tube station and from Victoria Embankment by a ramp that can be used by a wheelchair, however at low tide the gradient of the ramp can be very steep and would be far greater than would be acceptable to most wheelchair ramp guidance regulations.



KEW PIER

Westminster Passenger Service Association are the exclusive owners and operators of Kew Pier

The pier is accessible from the riverbank by a ramp that can be used by a wheelchair, however at low tide the gradient of the ramp would be far greater than would be acceptable to most wheelchair ramp guidance regulations.

In addition the variance of tides and continued silting of the river around Kew can have a detrimental effect on water levels.

In all cases access from the pier to the boats requires a step to access vessels



Thames River Boats

RICHMOND Landing Stage

Westminster Passenger Service Association are the exclusive owners and operators Richmond Landing Stage

The pier itself is accessed from the towpath by a very low step, and as such can be accessed by practically all levels of ability.

The pier is a fixed pier, and as such boarding of boats is subject to tidal variations.

Boarding is by way of a series of steps, the number of which vary greatly subject to the tide, and embarking/disembarking is onto the nearest available step.

As such wheelchair access is impossible unless the passenger can negotiate the steps, and the wheelchair can be carried down the steps and on board



Thames River Boats

Hampton Court Landing Stage is owned by Hampton Court Palace

And operated under licence to WPSA

The existing pier is fully open for access 24 hours a day with no gate to the entrance or barriers to the steps to prevent unauthorised access, as have our own piers at Richmond and Kew.

The pier is currently only accessible by steep steps, which would be impossible to negotiate in a wheelchair, and would prove extremely difficult for anybody with mobility issues



As quoted in the Hampton Court website

“Visitors with access needs should be aware that the piers at Hampton Court Palace are fixed so do not ride up and down with river water levels. There are also either slopes or a number of steps to get to them”



Vessels

Westminster Passenger Service Association operate fleet of vessels, with historic association with The River Thames.

The Connaught
The Cockney Sparrow
The Princess Freda

All the vessels were purpose built for service on the River Thames, and are ideally suited for the varying and particular reaches of the river above Hammersmith where the tides and conditions, and heavily silted sections of the river require a shallow draught.

Although the boats were purpose built for passenger use on the River Thames, the design and facilities of these historic boats does not favour modern disabled requirements.

All of the vessels are restricted in terms of disabled access, and it is not possible to board a motorised wheelchair.

A lightweight non -motorised chair may be boarded if the wheelchair user is able to leave the chair and step on board with assistance

Thames River Boats

The Connaught

This historic vessel, built by Salter Brothers Oxford in 1911, has plied the river for nearly a century. She has been completely renovated by Colliers Launches and is now, probably the finest example of an Edwardian pleasure boat on the river Thames and still retains her worldly charm and reflects the elegance of the period.



The Cockney Sparrow

The Cockney Sparrow was built in 1976 at Eel Pie Island. She is a two level boat with a deceptively large enclosed saloon and an open top deck. The Cockney Sparrow can carry up to 107 passengers



The Princess Freda

This pretty Thames river boat has been restored to a particularly high standard with open front and top decks and an attractive oak and mahogany lined saloon. The Princess Freda saw active service in the second world war when she joined the fleet of 'little ships' in June 1940 and crossed the English channel to help rescue British troops stranded on the beaches of Dunkirk. She has taken part in two subsequent commemorations of this event, and on each of these occasions the Princess Freda has crossed the channel to Dunkirk with other surviving 'little ships'.

