

River Relay 2026 – Instructions to Runners

Updated 22.7.2026

Please note these instructions are intended as a guide to runners and also to alert you to any points of potential danger. Make sure you read the section relating to the leg you are running. Also take care to look at the route maps which show the route for each leg.

All changeover times are based on an assumed fastest average pace of 5.30 mm, and a slowest of 11.00 mm. If you think your team performance will be outside of these parameters, please adjust accordingly.

Please note that we have amended the rule changeovers this year. To ensure that no teams fall far behind the main pack, there will be a release time for each stage, based on a pace of 11 minute miles. (In 2025 we operated a release time of 12 mm). Any outgoing runners still awaiting changeover will be released once a time of 11 minutes a mile for the stage has been reached. Incoming runners will still be timed and given their actual finish time.

General note to all runners:

The race is run on areas of open public access with no road closures. Runners in the River Relay have no special rights and must respect the rights of members of the public on the route. If members of the public on foot, bike etc are on the course take care. When approaching pedestrians from behind shout a polite warning if you need to alert them to your presence. Take especial care if dogs are in the area (especially if they are not on a lead). On road sections look out for cars or bikes, especially when crossing roads. Where marshals are present, listen to and obey any instructions given. Please read the notes below in conjunction with the route map which you can download from the race website at:

http://www.stragglers.org/river_relay

Please also note that there have been some minor changes to the route, changeover points etc over the years. We have rechecked the distances and the current measurements are shown below by each stage. These may marginally vary from the distances shown on the website.

There is one significant change this year. Please note that there is a diversion in place on stage 2, This is owing to the continued closure of the bridge on the towpath shortly after Bell Weir lock, which has now been blocked off and is completely impassable. See Stage 2 notes below for details.

Leg 1. Race starts at Lock Path near Boveney Church, Post code SL4 6QQ

Race starts at 08.45 Stage length 5.6 miles

There is a car park near the end of Boveney Road adjacent to the start. Runners must arrive at the car park by 08.20. Registration will be from the Race Organiser's car in the Car park. Runners will assemble on the green space at the end of the car park for a briefing at 08.35, then jog a short distance to the start at 08.45 prompt.

Leg 1 route. The Start is just beyond a new metal barrier pole at the start of the Lock Path. Go straight along the Lock Path which is a narrow tarmac lane between open fields. After 0.3 miles continue on the path slightly to the left alongside a field (the river is to your right glimpsed through trees). After 0.6 miles cross a small bridge and turn right to join the river path, heading towards Windsor. A bit after 1 mile cross a bridge and then follow the obvious main path which cuts across the meadow to rejoin the river. Pass under a motorway bridge and follow the river path to Eton. Enter Eton just after 2 miles and turn right to cross Eton bridge (pedestrians only). Turn immediately left at far side of bridge down the steps to join the river path on the other side. Follow the river path through a small boatyard heading at approx. 45 degrees towards a wooden kissing gate, and rejoin path (slightly tricky navigation). When recently checked a large boat lifting device was parked by the gate, but the chain from last year had gone so it is easier to access. Continue until just before 3 miles you approach the Victoria Bridge. The path veers right away from the river to the road. There is an obvious scramble path up the bank and over a white rail which most people take and this is an allowed option. At the road turn left and cross the bridge and follow the footpath on the left hand side. Follow the Windsor Road and at approx. 4 miles cross Queens Road and High Street junctions (*Take Care on crossings!*). Continue on the left on mixed paved and grass paths until you reach the Albert bridge (5 miles). Cross the bridge keeping to the left hand path and turn left and down the steps to rejoin footpath. Then follow path by river (now on your left hand side) to the changeover point (approx. 0.7 miles).

The changeover point is at the end of the path just past a barrier before an iron bridge at the crossing of Ham Lane. Stage length 5.6 miles

Risk: Much of the route is on the Thames path. Risks are mainly from and to other pedestrians, cyclists and dogs. The road section from Victoria Bridge until rejoining the Thames path at Albert Bridge is approx. 2 miles. The danger points are crossing the Queens Road and High Street junctions. Please take care at these points!

Leg 2. The leg starts at Ham Lane by Ham Bridge, Post Code SL4 2JY

Changeover times estimated at **09.16-09.47**

Distance 4.7 miles

Release time 9.47

A tarmac road leads to Old Windsor Lock (0.3 miles). Follow through lock and continue on river path. A pleasant riverside run with the Thames to your left takes you through to the roundabout at Priest Hill. Follow river path to left and stay on it through Runnymede, alongside the river. This leads out onto grass surface car park. Follow the main path from there for about a mile until you reach the Runnymede Pleasure grounds. The river is always on your left but the path sometimes moves away from the river and closer to the road on your right. At Runnymede Pleasure ground stay close to the river on the grass, more or less following a line of benches, until you reach a gravel path by a green wooden café building (3.1m). *Do not attempt to cut across the corner at Runnymede Pleasure Ground (see map). Any runner observed to do so will pick up a time penalty.* Follow the gravel path for about 0.1 mile until it turns sharp right, then continue straight on a earth path which brings you back to the riverside. Continue on river path towards Staines. Pass Bell Weir lock at 3.7m.

Diversion 2026

The original route continued straight on the river path to Staines bridge. The Environment Agency have blocked the path where there is a damaged bridge. The route we have chosen as a diversion is in our opinion the safest and best option, avoiding any major road crossings. We will endeavour to post marshals at critical points,.

Pass Bell Weir Lock, follow river path under the large concrete M25 Road Bridge. Turn right immediately past bridge and follow a steep scramble path with the bridge supports on your right. At the top step over a low metal barrier (take care), then turn left (continuing in the same direction as the path you have just ascended) following pavement alongside a very busy dual carriageway. follow pavement. After approx. 100 metres, turn sharp left onto steep foot path which zig zags down to the road below. Run in direction away from the bridge, cross road by roundabout and head towards Staines on a raised path alongside the A308. After just over half a mile take a left turn onto River Park Avenue which brings you onto the Thames Path. Turn right and you are back on the original route towards Staines.

At Staines Bridge, run under the arch and take the sharp right up steps, then cross bridge on right hand side pavement.

Once over Staines bridge continue on the pavement which bears to the right (Clarence Street) After 100m turn right into Market Square (sign on wall), then diagonally across the square to pass the Town Hall on your right. Continue under the stainless-steel Swan Arch, then on to river bank and turn left to the finish and changeover point by the pagoda. **(Stage length 4.5 miles)** (Diversion adds 0.2 miles, total 4.7 miles)

Risk: No special risks on this section.

Leg 3. Start at Pagoda behind the Staines Riverside Car Park (C2).

Changeover times estimated between **09.42 – 10.39**

Distance 6.5 miles

Release time 10.39

From the start continue East on main river path, then follow it through a 90 degree left turn at black railings. Turn right onto pavement on Thames Street and continue straight on until the railway bridge, which you pass under to rejoin the river path.

Continue keeping river on right hand side. Some parts of the route are on grass and some on minor roads. There is very little traffic but be aware of potential risk.

Please note the route section through Dumsey Meadow. After crossing under Chertsey Bridge you pass through a new metal kissing gate (you need to find the catch to open it, or jump over the fence!) leading into Dumpsey meadow. Stay with the main path which follows the river on your right.. The river here makes a pronounced curve before you reach another gate to exit the meadow. Do not follow the rather vague path to the left when you enter the meadow, which runs parallel to the Chertsey Road. This is a short cut and not a legal route option. Any runner using this will be subject to a time penalty. There is also some danger from a herd of rather large cows!

The River path finishes at 5.8 miles with a forced left turn away from River onto Ferry Lane. Keep on to end then turn right into Church Road. Follow the road until the changeover point by the Manor Park car park on your right. **(Total leg distance 6.5 miles) Take care crossing road to the finish.**

Risk: Possible danger from (and to!) pedestrians, dogs cyclists etc on the river paths which are narrow in places. Take care on minor roads and use footpaths on grass where possible. Be aware of traffic on Ferry Road and Church Road.

Leg 4. Start on Church Road by Manor Park Car Park. (C3)

Changeover times estimated between **10.18-11.51**

4.9 miles

Release time: 11.51

Leave changeover point staying on the pavement on the right hand side of Church Road. Turn right into Russell Road staying on pavement. The route follows a short wooded section (marked Thames path) before rejoining Russell Road. Here the pavement narrows considerably and care needs to be taken. Runners will be on road facing traffic for a short section. Follow path to right and join Walton Lane following it until the junction with the **A244 Walton Road (Busy Road, Danger)**, just alongside Walton Bridge.

At Walton Road turn right and cross over the bridge. Turn right again and follow the path that leads down to the riverside, then right again to cross under the bridge. From here, keep the River on your left. The route is absolutely clear on the river path. Just before Sunbury lock the path by the river becomes a nature trail. Take the alternative tarmac road to the right which runs alongside it. Continue through the lock. The changeover point at Hurst Park is by the car park. **Leg distance 4.9 miles**

Risk: Russell Road is busy but run mostly on the pavement on the right. Take care on the section just before Walton Lane.

Leg 5. Start is on river path just behind the Hurst Park Car Park. (C4) Changeover times estimated between 10.45 – 12.45

Distance: 5.8 miles

Release time 12.45

Please note: The finish is at:

Bushy Park Sports Club, Pavilion Road, Teddington, TW11 0EL

The route follows the river path all the way to Hampton Court Bridge, with the river Thames on your left hand side. Runners pass Molesey Boat Club. At the end of the river path by the war memorial take a short road section towards the bridge. There is a cycle lane on the left, but take care of traffic.

Runners turn left and cross the bridge on the left hand side. At the far end of the bridge, cross the road at the Pelican crossing, towards Hampton Court (**Important. You must obey instructions from marshals. This is a potentially dangerous road crossing! Any runner failing to follow these directions may be subject to a time penalty**) Turn right then immediate left to rejoin the towpath (Barge Walk).

Follow the Thames path past Hampton Court palace, keeping to upper tarmac path (not the unmade path at the river edge). At Kingston Bridge, the route is changed from previous years. See the new route instructions below.

At the end of the ramp leading up to the bridge, turn left. Follow the pavement left around the corner and turn right to cross road using Zebra crossing. At far side turn left, then right at junction with Church Grove. After 100 metres turn left, cross road using Zebra Crossing, then turn right.

Follow the road on left hand pavement. After about a mile, cross the entrance drive to Bushy Park, keeping straight on road until mini roundabout. Turn left onto Queens Road, then take the second left into the entrance the National Physics Laboratory. At the roundabout take the second left, then left through gates into the grounds of Bushy Park Sports Club. This finish section will be well marked and marshalled.

Risk: Potential hazards at Molesey boat club with crews and boats being carried to and from riverside to boat club. At end of path by war memorial (just through the Hampton Court Lock) runners should join the road for a short section to the bridge, keeping to the left in cycle lane. Be aware of traffic! Take care at Pelican crossing on Hampton Court Bridge. At Kingston, pedestrians and cyclists on path approaching bridge. Take care crossing roads, using Zebra crossings. The pavement between Hampton Wick and Teddington (one continuous road but named Church Grove, Park Road and Sandy Lane) is narrow in places.

Leg distance 5.8 miles

Finish on the grass playing field in front of the sports pavilion. Finish times estimated at **11.17 - 13.49**