

Knowing where to access the river and where you can leave a car to paddle down to are important factors when considering paddling any river.

Some paddlers will be happy to leave a car by the side of the road or in a public car park whilst others may want the security that a commercial site can offer.

In effect, this is a list of places that I have recently used to get in and out of the river with a canoe with a couple of extra possible places that I've seen being used and will try to check out soon.

Please read this list in conjunction with my 'places to camp' list as some commercial sites also offer camping as well as launching & parking.

My knowledge of the river Nene's parking ends just outside Peterborough so if you do know of anywhere that you can leave a car in that fair city, please let me know and I can update this list.

Hopefully all will appear in a downstream order starting in Northampton and where appropriate I have included Google Street View links along with information on height restrictions etc.

Please note that not all will be suitable access for paddlers with mobility issues or with very young children.

Lastly, in this strange litigious age we find ourselves in, I would just mention that neither I nor Friends of the River Nene can take any responsibility for any mishaps that might befall you after reading this.

I wish you happy & safe paddling,

Dick Whitehouse

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St James Mill Road East, Northampton

Free on street parking with a walk/cycle way down to the river which at this point is above the 'navigation' on the Badby Arm of the Nene. As you paddle downstream you reach the Naseby Arm of the Nene by the famous Carlsberg Brewery which in turn is opposite the start of the flight of locks leading to the Grand Union Canal.

Street View <https://goo.gl/maps/sD6Q1APrzeT2>

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Becketts Park, Northampton

This is a very recent addition to my list and I am grateful to Sue Cant of the Environment Agency for pointing it out to me; drive into the park at the entrance shown here on Street View <https://goo.gl/maps/rLmw6Bdw4JA2> and you can unload for 30 minutes under the metal bridge and use the various platforms at Northampton Lock which is the start of the EA Navigation (upstream & downstream portage platforms here) to launch.

You can then park your car at the multi-storey opposite <https://goo.gl/maps/8agDwVGNf8w> or at the next parking suggestion in this list.

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Midsummer Meadow Car Park

This is a council car park with an open aspect and a 2.25m height restriction - overnight parking is permitted. The river can be accessed over grass at the rear of the car park.

It's Pay & Display and takes cash and cards.

Street View <https://goo.gl/maps/KAnEmBv2x512>

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Rushmills, Northampton

As you can see from Street View <https://goo.gl/maps/jmQw4sUU5op> you can get very close to Rushmills Lock BUT it is a private car park on a trading/industrial estate. I do not recommend using this for anything other than an emergency take out and then, only after asking permission.

Then next lock downstream, Abingdon, is similarly situated on an office complex for the County Council and is barrier controlled <https://goo.gl/maps/wMYeHScBnnx> but in an emergency it would be worth asking for permission.

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Billing Aquadrome

I have been told they allow parking and launching for £5 a day but have yet to confirm this - contact details on camping list.

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Billing Mill, The Causeway, Northampton

This car park is adjacent to a marina and owned by the Billing Mill pub - launching can be awkward down a stony, tree lined bank but far from impossible. The height restriction of 2.4m should be OK for all but vans and I should say I have never left a car here - my wife drops me off to paddle while she shops. A word in the pub and a promise of patronage on your return may work wonders.

Entrance shown here on Street View <https://goo.gl/maps/6EHV1sy9FGz>

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White Mills Marina <https://goo.gl/maps/ueqLa88Zfc12>

A great supporter of Friends of the River Nene - please see my camping list as this site will allow you to park, launch, camp and eat in the excellent cafe.

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Station Road, Grendon

A free riverside car park just downstream of White Mills Lock with easy launching.

Street View here <https://goo.gl/maps/8Jq2JHeasj72>

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Hardwater Road, Great Doddington

Close to the FotRN Doddington and Hardwater moorings.

Limited parking. Access to the river is via a public footpath shown here in Street View <https://goo.gl/maps/Usr5YreHyUF2>

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Wollaston Lock

Accessible by car along a byway with a few potholes - limited parking before bridge in area shared with walkers and fishermen.

Launch into backwater from field accessed by a public footpath.

Street View showing start of byway as it leaves Hardwater Road <https://goo.gl/maps/vSGMpGcVivD2>

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Wellingborough Embankment

A free public car park with 2.05m height restriction and a bit of a carry across to the river.

Street View here <https://goo.gl/maps/LdxC75NwpVq> Handy for Tesco too!

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Glebe Meadows, Ditchford

Street View here <https://goo.gl/maps/m4cZJykpCkw>

See my camping list for full details and contact details.

Site of the only radial lock on the Nene.

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Station Road, Irthlingborough

Not the easiest access but free parking here <https://goo.gl/maps/NqfzqmnbgGF2> in Station Road.

Access to the river is either by lowering boats and kit over the railings or by accessing the field further along through a gate.

Closest launch point to the spectacular twisting backwater around Stanwick Lakes - although be aware of strainers and low bridges in fast flows along the backwater.

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Lower Ringstead Lock

The downstream portage platform is visible in this Street View Image <https://goo.gl/maps/32HVg5G9bz92> If you spin the image around the gate has been set back towards the lock so you can quickly unload a car.

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Denford War Memorial

Parking in a layby here <https://goo.gl/maps/G7Vo1KJhgk52> and easy access into a long backwater.

Be aware that the backwater takes you under a low bridge beneath the A14 and through the dilapidated Mill Marina which can be a bit of a scramble through nettles. Otherwise paddle upstream and get on the main navigation.

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Thrapston/Islip EA 48 hour mooring

Room to unload a couple of cars here <https://goo.gl/maps/em7NSaQR1Vq> before leaving them alongside the pub on the other side of the road.

You may be sharing with a couple of narrowboats but there's always room to squeeze in.

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Aldwincle Bridge, Thorpe Road, Thorpe Waterville

Street View here <https://goo.gl/maps/1GYfLe4N6s42> Please park completely off the road on the grass as the road is very narrow.

Easy access to the river on the downstream side of the bridge.

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Wadenhoe - Church Street Public Car Park

Close to Wadenhoe Lock, the Kings Head riverside pub and a wonderful old church - free parking close to the river but access can be a challenge. Often shared with wild swimmers!

Street View here <https://goo.gl/maps/nzUFRnWkZCz>

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Wadenhoe - Mill Lane

A very pretty place to start a trip - free parking and launch into the Mill Pond

Street View here <https://goo.gl/maps/85XB2cE7mzB2>

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Lilford

This is possibly best kept in mind for an emergency pick up rather than the start or finish of a long trip. The only place I have had a car broken into whilst paddling.

Parking is here as shown in Street View <https://goo.gl/maps/9GZx7EwiUwT2> although new traffic lights have been installed over the two bridges.

There is access into the field on the right via a public footpath but not directly to the river bank. If you are paddling the backwater bear in mind the low bridge over the gauging station weir.

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Upper Barnwell Lock

Large area of free parking with access for canoes upstream and downstream - access to the backwaters through Oundle is by launching upstream, crossing the river and portaging into the inner backwater at a portage platform.

Street View here <https://goo.gl/maps/BW1dnruBa792>

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Oundle Marina

Parking and launching here for a small fee - full details on my camping list.

In between Upper & lower Barnwell locks. <https://goo.gl/maps/KSgUR3E3sYF2>

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Cotterstock

Launch down steep-ish slope into backwater and park either side of the bridge. All should be apparent in this Street View image <https://goo.gl/maps/jdushc2Bgk42>

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Fotheringhay

If you wish to park at the side of the road there are usually a few spaces available as shown here <https://goo.gl/maps/tMij78L11hy>

Unfortunately there is no official public access to the fields/banks either side and, depending on when you visit, this is a popular fishing venue.

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Castle Farm Fotheringhay

Just over the bridge from the last Street View image - please see my camping list for full details. The owner welcomes paddlers and it is possible to launch, park and camp right next to the Nene.

Entrance here <https://goo.gl/maps/vQfB4tqy7z22>

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Elton

As long as you park sensibly the locals don't mind parking on the grass around the green here <https://goo.gl/maps/bfynVh3t5NK2>

It's a bit of a walk but a public right of way exists down to Elton lock past the old mill.

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Yarwell

Please also see my camping list for Yarwell Mill Caravan Park

I have always parked on the wide grass verge where the coach is in this Street View image <https://goo.gl/maps/pC7ErCrYJYt> and at the end of my paddle downstream asked permission to bring the car down onto the site.

I have never been turned down but there is no right of way for vehicles to the river although there is a footpath through the site.

I spoke to the site recently and they will look favourably on requests to leave a vehicle on site on the understanding you use their cafe.

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Wansford

My knowledge of parking as we near Peterborough is sketchy to say the least! Whilst researching this list I came across this apparent access from the A6118 in Wansford <https://goo.gl/maps/btBCLRpT1NL2> - it shows a dog poo bin anyway!

If any of you know what the situation is like, please let me know and I will give you credit when I update the list.

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Wansford Picnic Area

I have never launched from here <https://goo.gl/maps/t5J6quGPrCB2> but have seen the area being used for canoe launching.

Once again, I will try to drive up there and check it out for you but in the meantime any information would be appreciated.

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Stibbington - Nene Valley Railway

Unless you pick a day when Thomas the Tank Engine is visiting there is generally parking available here <https://goo.gl/maps/LMSpyVB3PPq>

I have accessed the river via the EA mooring pontoon although a couple of times I have found a gate locked but nothing that couldn't be lifted over.

Once again, some local knowledge would be appreciated.

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Water Newton

Street View hasn't ventured down the narrow Mill Lane and I mention this venue as somewhere to quickly drop off or pick up. Parking is at a premium unless you are happy to take your car back into the main village.

Google Maps aerial view here <https://goo.gl/maps/xtkwYmYR3c12>

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Ferry Meadows

Full details of this huge leisure park are on the camping list - you can park, launch, camp, caravan and all sorts here. Website here www.neneparktrust.org.uk/ferry-meadows and more details and photos here <https://goo.gl/maps/3dJRa4WdV472>

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Orton Lock, Peterborough

I regularly use this car park to finish trips - paddling downstream you get out upstream of the lock and will have to carry your boat and gear over the sluice and the railway line (not the

Midland Main so don't worry).

Free parking is a bonus <https://goo.gl/maps/L7wXMLVKJeR2>

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I haven't paddled into Peterborough itself for many years so that folks is the extent of my parking knowledge along the Nene.

Please let me know any amendments or additions and I will ensure you are credited.

Happy paddling, Dick