

Good to know

Distance: 7km (3.75 nautical miles) each way

Time: Around 3 hours return trip

Type of Water: Sheltered tidal estuary. No weirs, locks or rapids.

Launch Points:

Totnes - Longmarsh Slipway. Steamer Quay Road, TQ9 5AL. Ample pay & display parking adjacent

Stoke Gabriel Quay (high tide) or Point (low tide). TQ9 6RD. Small paid car park. At low tide park at the quay and walk along the foreshore to the pontoon. Don't drive along the foreshore.

Tides: Totnes dries at low tides, but has enough water for paddling from a couple of hours either side of low water. For an easy life, do the Totnes – Stoke Gabriel leg on a falling tide, and come back with the flood! There are mudbanks for much of this route – take care not to run aground on a falling tide, you may be stuck for some time! Tidal information is available on dartharbour.org or easytide.co.uk

Weather: This section of the river is well sheltered, and so the water is mainly calm. Near Stoke Gabriel the river is wider, so can get rough on windy days. The wind does tend to funnel through the valley, remember if you have the wind behind you on the outward leg, it will probably be against you when you return! Always check the forecast – for example on dartharbour.org or metoffice.gov.uk

Other Boats: This section of the river is fairly quiet. Large ferries do run to Totnes, and there are often fleets of rowing skiffs at Totnes, so do follow the 'rule of the road' advice in this guide

Licence: It's free to launch or use an unpowered boat on the Dart

Hire & Training: Paddling is safer and more fun when you are trained or with a guide. These operators are licensed by Dart Harbour:

Canoe Adventures -Big canoe guided trips canoeadventures.co.uk

Kayakhub -Totnes: Kayak & SUP trips & hire kayakhub-totnes.co.uk

Paddle Shack -Dartmouth: SUP tours & lessons thepaddleshack.co.uk

Paddle the Dart -Dittisham: Kayak & SUP hire paddlethedart.co.uk

Sea Kayak Devon -Dartmouth: Kayak trips, lessons & hire seakayakdevon.co.uk

Totnes Kayaks -Stoke Gabriel: Kayak, Canoe & SUP trips & hire. totneskayaks.com

Winding River Canoes –guided canoe trips windingrivercanoe.co.uk

Clubs: The following clubs welcome new members and have kayaks, canoes, SUPs and other boats available for their members to use:

Totnes Boating Association - totnes-boating.co.uk

Totnes Canoe Club - totnescanoecub.org.uk

Stoke Gabriel Boating Association - sgba.org.uk

Dartmouth Yacht Club - dyc.org.uk

More info: Visit dartharbour.org call 01803 832337 or visit the Harbour Office, 6 Oxford Street, Dartmouth, TQ6 9AL.

For more safety advice, see RNLI.org/kayaking

In the event of an emergency – Stay calm, stay with your boat and call the Coastguard on VHF Channel 16 or 999 on a phone.

Protect our estuary

We burn no fuel (except chocolate!), use no antifouling, and are virtually silent, so paddle sports are kind on the environment, but we can do more!

When launching and landing, please avoid delicate foreshore – where possible use slipways, jetties or stony beaches. If you can, come by public transport, if not then please park considerately. Remember that your craft can transfer invasive species between waterways, so please clean and wash them carefully between trips.

Avoid passing through weed beds and seagrass, and paddle gently if you do – avoiding hitting the river bed. Tempting as it is to get close under the trees, remember that this may disturb shy wildlife. If you do come upon wildlife, keep your distance and pretend to ignore them.

Please don't drop any litter in the river, especially cigarette ends. If you can, why not collect any plastic you may see in the water.

Remember that you are in a privileged position to observe things – report any pollution to Dart Harbour.



Rule of the Road

The Dart's a busy river, and though this trail follows quieter sections, you still need to know what to do when you meet another boat.

- Keep to the right (starboard) side of the channel
- Keep out of the way of large vessels and sailing boats – they can't manoeuvre as easily as you can
- If you are on a collision course with another vessel
 - If head-on, then both vessels should turn right
 - If you are overtaking, then keep clear
 - If crossing, then the vessel with the other to starboard should keep out of the way
- Always make your intentions clear – manoeuvre early.
- Vessels might use sound signals. One whistle means turning to starboard, Two means turning to port (left), Three means going astern (backwards). Five means they're in doubt about your actions
- We don't recommend paddling on the Dart at night. If you do decide to, then make sure you bring a torch



Dart Harbour

Paddle Trail



Totnes – Stoke Gabriel

A peaceful glide through the most tranquil, and stunning, part of our estuary. Leaving the quirky town of Totnes behind, you'll soon be surrounded by saltmarsh, between the green of the Devon hills, before entering the iconic bends around Sharpham, your paddles gently disturbing the reflections of the high woods on either side. Stoke Gabriel is a picturesque village, and the perfect place to refuel for an hour before your return trip.

Discover a thriving cafe culture and independent shops nestled under the towering Norman Castle which overlooks this bustling, historic town. Whether you want to fuel up before, during, or after your paddle, there's a wide choice of cafes, pubs, restaurants and farm shops all with a strong emphasis on using the best local produce and catering to every taste. Fridays and Saturdays throughout the year are market days, where you'll find even more on offer. See www.visittotnes.co.uk for more inspiration on what to see and do.



Totnes Longmarsh Slipway TQ9 5AL

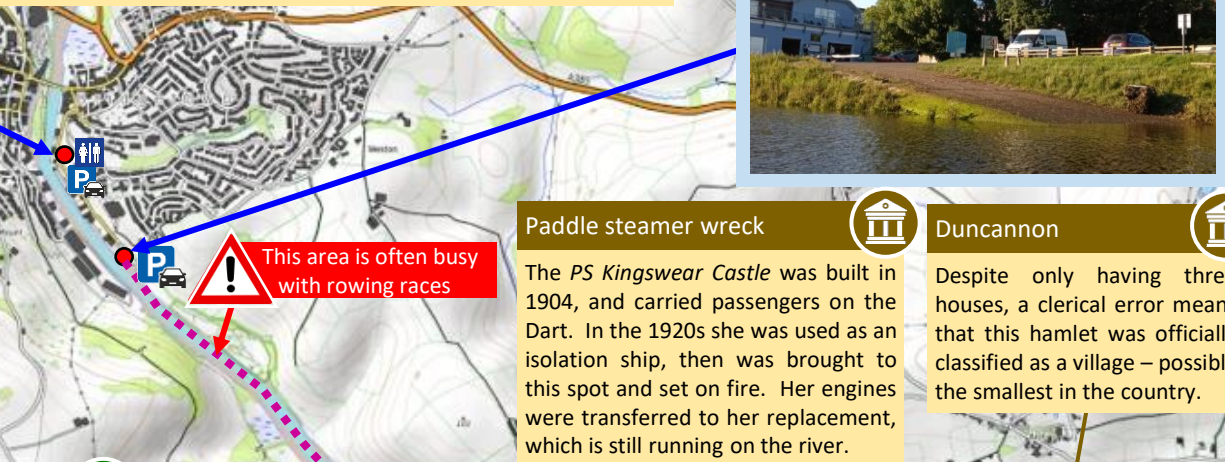
Launch from the public slip near the rowing club and pay & display car park.



- ### Plan Your Trip
- Check tides and weather
 - Know your capabilities
 - Let someone know your plans & expected return time
 - Paddle with a friend
 - Keep a VHF or phone in a waterproof bag on you
 - Wear a buoyancy aid
 - On a SUP, use a leash
 - Dress appropriately and remember sun cream
 - Bring water and snacks
 - Bring a bailer or sponge
 - Check your craft for damage and buoyancy

Totnes Steamer Quay TQ9 5AL

Launch from the steps nearest the café – (not the steps used by the large ferries). There is a pay & display car park, toilets, and café, and it is a short walk to Totnes town.



Paddle steamer wreck

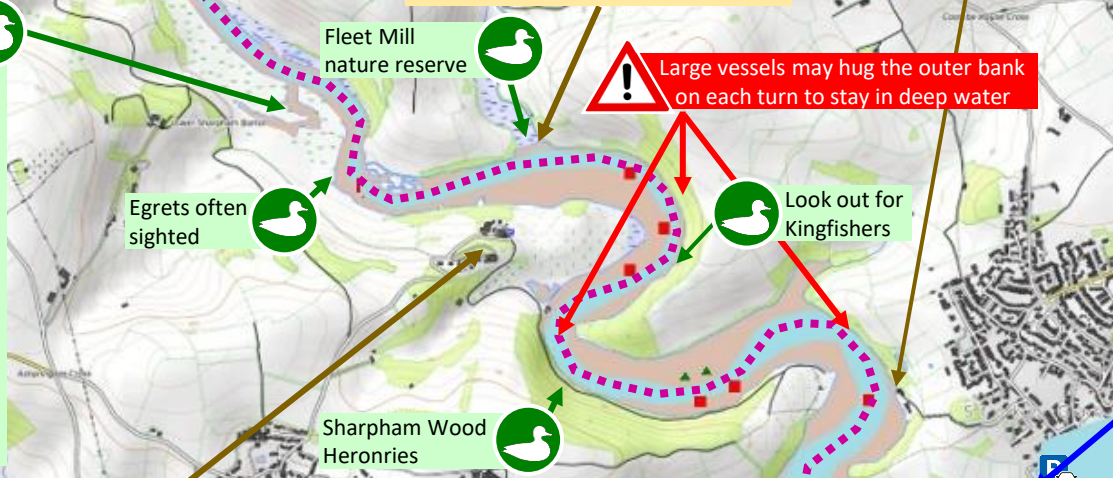
The PS Kingswear Castle was built in 1904, and carried passengers on the Dart. In the 1920s she was used as an isolation ship, then was brought to this spot and set on fire. Her engines were transferred to her replacement, which is still running on the river.

Duncannon

Despite only having three houses, a clerical error means that this hamlet was officially classified as a village – possibly the smallest in the country.

'Hole in the Wall' Saltmarsh

The dry stone wall was constructed by French and American Prisoners of War in the early 19th Century. The reed beds and saltmarsh are breeding grounds for birds such as grey wagtails, reed warblers, dippers, reed buntings and coots. The narrow channels are constantly evolving and are great to explore at high tide, but please stay in your boat, don't damage the marshes!



Stoke Gabriel Quay TQ9 6RD

High tide only. Launch from the beach or pontoon. Limited paid parking and café on the quay. Village Pubs and shops just up the hill.



Sharpham House

High on the hill over the river, it was built in 1770 for Captain Philemon Pownall using around £65,000 of prize money from capturing a Spanish gold ship. Sadly he never lived in the house, being killed in action before its completion.



Long Stream

The 'lake of the Dart' – this wide stretch of the river has five exits, but in the middle, from a small boat, they are all invisible.

Beware of mudbanks on falling tides

This area gets rough in strong winds

Stoke Gabriel Point TQ9 6FX

Low tide only. Launch from the beach or pontoon. No vehicle access – walk along the beach from the quay

