

The River Dee

The **River Dee** (Welsh: *Afon Dyfrdwy*, Latin: *Deva Fluvius*) flows through North Wales and Cheshire, England. The majority of the river is located in Wales, with the stretch between Aldford and Saltney within England and two other sections forming the border between the two countries. The length of the section from Bala to Chester is 113 km (70 miles).

Approaching Aldford, the river crosses entirely into England. Aldford Iron Bridge links the village with Eaton Hall, the Duke of Westminster's country house. The bridge was designed by Thomas Telford and built by William Hazledine for the 1st Marquis of Westminster, and was completed in 1824.



The river then continues northwards past the Roman Eaton Road to the Chester suburbs of Huntington and Handbridge before reaching the city centre. Here the river passes around the Earl's Eye(s) meadow at Queen's Park and is crossed the Queen's Park Suspension Bridge, which forms the only exclusively pedestrian footway across the river in Chester. On the bank of the river is the 'Groves', a paved promenade complete with bandstand, cafés, restaurants and public houses.

Below Queen's Park Bridge is Chester Weir, which was built by Hugh Lupus to supply power to his corn mills. The same weir was used as part of a hydroelectric scheme in 1911 with the help of a small generator building which is still visible today, used as a pumping station for water since 1951. We cannot row past the weir, but just below it is the Old Dee Bridge, a road bridge and by far the oldest bridge in Chester, being built in about 1387 on the site of

a series of wooden predecessors which dated originally from the Roman period.

A little further downstream stands the Grosvenor Bridge (designed by architect Thomas Harrison of Chester), which was opened in 1833 to ease congestion on the Old Dee Bridge.



View of the Grosvenor Bridge

The rowing clubs on the Dee are Royal Chester Rowing Club (hosting also Chester University Rowing Club) and Grosvenor Rowing Club. King's School Rowing Club and Queens Park High School are school-dedicated rowing clubs. All these share the slightly meandering Chester/lower reach above the weir.

West of Chester and below the weir, the river flows along an artificial channel excavated by the **Dee Navigation Company** between 1732 and 1736. which runs in a straight line for 8 km (5 miles), passing into Wales and Flintshire at Saltney, before opening out into the Dee Estuary.