

## **Basingstoke Canal Barley Mow, Winchfield to Odiham (Greywell Tunnel) Return Easy Trail Grading**

### **Route Summary**

This trail is an out and back paddle with no need to arrange a vehicle shuttle, and there is always the option to turn around at a point of your choosing. Whatever your choice, you can have a peaceful day out enjoying the natural environment on this very rural and attractive lock free section of canal. For cyclists and walkers there is a continuous tow path.

### **Nearest Town – Odiham**

**O.S. Sheets** - Landranger 186 Aldershot and Guildford

**Start and Finish-** Barley Mow Bridge and pub, Winchfield, Map Ref SU777537 (RG27 8DE)

Winchfield is about 2 miles south west of Hartley Wintney, and one and a half miles by road west of Crookham. To reach the area via the M3 from London, exit at Junction 5, then east towards Farnham on the A287. After 3 miles, take the turning on the left signed for Dogmersfield.

The pub and public car park are quite obvious, being very busy in the summer. The car park is large, next to the canal with a slipway, and just over the road from the pub. This is a great base to paddle the canal either east or west.

**Destination –** Odiham (King John's) Castle and Greywell Tunnel, Map Ref SU725519 ((RG29 1HQ)

**Waterways Travelled –** Basingstoke Canal

**Type of Water** -rural canal

**Distance** - 9.6 miles return journey

**Licence Information –** A license to paddle the river is included in the [Canoe England membership](#) fee. Otherwise licences can be obtained from [Canal & River Trust](#) (Take your Canoe England membership card with you as it is your licence as well)

Licences and navigation information (stoppages and events) can also be obtained from Basingstoke Canal Authority, Canal Centre, Mychett Place Road, Mychett, Surrey, GU1 6DD. - Tel. 01252 370073

**Local Facilities –** There are pubs and picnic areas at the start and finish.

**Vehicle Shuttle Required –** No

**Portages and Locks** - none

### **Description**

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Launch by the slipway where a visitor information board is provided with navigation information and the route of the canal. Move off in a westerly direction going under the adjacent Barley Mow Bridge for Odiham.

The canal is in quiet countryside, but it can be interrupted by the passing of helicopters from RAF Odiham nearby. After passing under two bridges in the first mile, Sprat's Hatch Bridge (footbridge) is reached that is a crossing point for the Three Castles footpath.

In the following tree and meadow lined mile or so, Sandy Hill and Broad Oak Bridges are passed and the busy A287 crosses the canal close by a cruiser hire centre on the left. A right hand turn then brings Colt Hill Bridge and Odiham Wharf into view with a public landing, car park and picnic benches on the right. The Water Witch pub also on the left is gained by going over the bridge from the car park.

After the bridge the A287 follows the straight line route of the canal for just under one mile and there can be some summer weed growth in this section. Thereafter a sharp left turn, takes the waterway winding through North Warnborough and under the B3349. Please note that parking in the village is very limited.

Within a few hundred yards a lift bridge is encountered and it is quite feasible go under this structure. Paddling further on for a few minutes sees the ruins of Odiham (King John's Castle) Castle come into view on the right. This is an interesting place to stop for a break before turning back as this is effectively the end of the navigable section of the canal.

Boaters are requested not to proceed beyond the adjacent viaduct over the River Whitewater as the area that leads up to the entrance of Greywell Tunnel is a conservation area. From a walk along the tow path you will see the tunnel is gated and used as a boat house by the canal authority.

### **More about the canal**

The Basingstoke Canal runs westward from its junction with the Wey Navigation, only 3 miles from the Thames, to Basingstoke. It was conceived in 1769 as an economical means of transport to develop agriculture in Central Hampshire, and transport goods to market. The canal was never profitable, and by the 1960s was neglected and no longer navigable. In the 1970s, Surrey and Hampshire County Councils took the canal into public ownership, and funded a programme of restoration supported by volunteer work parties. In 1990, the work was completed, and the 31 mile canal formally reopened in 1991.

An attractive waterway, the Basingstoke Canal is also a notable wildlife habitat. It has one of the largest varieties of aquatic plants and invertebrates in the U.K. 25 of Britain's 39 species of Dragonflies and Damselflies inhabit the canal. The entire length, except for a part through

Woking, is a SSSI (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) ). (Greywell) Tunnel, which marks the end of the navigable section is an internationally important haven for Bats.

It is a delightful canal to canoe on, as it feels quite remote, especially in the more western sections. It is an ideal way to combine cycling and canoeing.....one part on the water, the other on the bank

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### Useful Information

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/museum/aldershot-museum.htm>

(Aldershot Military Museum)

<http://www.airborneassault.org.uk/home/html/museum.html>

Airborne Forces Museum

<http://www.airsciences.org.uk/museum.html>

Farnborough Air Sciences Museum

<http://www.castlexplorer.co.uk/england/odiham/odiham.php>

Odiham Castle, on the route

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three\\_Castles\\_Path](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Castles_Path)

Three Castles Footpath

### Recommended Next Trail

If you have enjoyed this trail why not try out one of the many trails available in this area. We have more 'Out-and-Back' routes, to give the less experienced a variety of experiences, which involve no shuttles, and no portages. Of course the fitter can combine routes – and the whole of the canal is 31.1 miles long.

### Safety Information

Spending an afternoon canoeing can be a fun way to experience nature, get a great work out and spend time with friends and family. It can also be a dangerous journey, if appropriate safety guidelines are overlooked. Always follow these basic rules.

#### ***Wear appropriate clothing***

Always wear shoes. Rocks, rough terrain and river beds present serious hazards to boaters without the proper attire. Nearly 90per cent of all boating injuries are attributed to lack of proper footwear. Other canoe safe clothing includes hats, additional dry clothing towels, and layered items which can easily be removed.

#### **Be sure to**

- Know the weather forecast before you set out canoeing.
- Familiarise yourself with the local area, it's sensitive places and protected areas.
- Leave the environment as you found it. Please read [You, Your Canoe and the environment](#)
- Take your litter home with you.
- Follow the navigation rules for the waterway you are on.
- Keep noise to a minimum.

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- Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing. (No Seal Launching)
  - Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.
  - Canoe a safe distance away from wildlife.
  - Check your equipment.
  - Observe the navigation rules for this waterway.
  - Check to see if there are any events on the waterways when you wish to travel.
- Use the checklist below to make sure you have everything you need.

Checklist:

1. Boat
2. Paddle
3. Buoyancy Aid
4. Bailer/sponge
5. Small First Aid Kit
6. Penknife
7. Mobile telephone (in a waterproof bag....Please note that in some areas due to the location mobile telephone reception might be nonexistent)
8. Fresh drinking water
9. Sun cream, hat and sunglasses
10. Light waterproof jacket
11. Footwear
12. Licence

ALWAYS be certain to let other know where you're going and when you're expected to return.

**Specific Environmental Information:**

Please ensure you don't remove or damage any plants or animals from the waterway as they may be protected or harmful if transferred to other catchments.

Canoeists and kayakers take very seriously environmental concerns and already follow existing voluntary environmental codes of conduct, including Canoe England's own guidance notes outlined in the "You your canoe and the environment" publication.

By following the simple steps below you can ensure your presence is not detrimental to the freshwater environment, minimize and avoid accidentally disturbing wildlife and their habitats.

- Find out about the area before you go, noting its sensitive places, species and breeding seasons.
- Leave no trace of your visit and take your litter home with you.
- When clearing litter left by others, handle it with care.
- Leave the environment as you find it
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Do not "seal" launch or drag boats to avoid wearing away natural banks. Float your canoe for launching, lift out when landing and carry it to and from the water.
- Do not damage bank side vegetation when launching or landing.
- Where possible keep to any designated paths or launching points.

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- On rivers, avoid paddling over gravel banks in low water conditions – they may contain fish spawn.
- Constantly assess wildlife. If you see signs of disturbance move away quietly.

Be the eyes and ears on the water. Report pollution, wildlife problems, damage, incidents etc to the relevant authorities.

Basingstoke Canal Authority Telephone 01252 370073  
RSPCA for wildlife and animals in distress – Telephone 0990 55 59 99 (24 hours)

Environment Agency - Telephone 0800 80 70 60 (24 hours)

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