

Kennet & Avon Canal Honey Street to Wootton Rivers Easy Trail

Route Summary

This linear canal route passes through lovely countryside and small villages, and finishes a few miles before the highest point of the Kennet and Avon Canal, which crosses from Reading to Bristol. The route takes you through some rural chalk down land and past the village of Pewsey.

Pewsey is a large village, at the centre of the Vale of Pewsey in Wiltshire about 80 miles (130 km) west of London. The Pewsey White Horse hill figure is located on a steep slope of Pewsey Hill about a mile south of the village and can be viewed from several places in the surrounding area.

It was cut in 1937 and is one of the smaller Wiltshire white horses. It replaces an earlier one which was possibly cut in 1785.

It can be seen from Milk Hill, the location of the bigger Alton Barnes White Horse. It is located at 51°19'16.40"N, 1°45'23.51"W.

O.S. Sheets - Landranger 173 Swindon & Devizes

Start - The Barge Inn, Honeystreet, Pewsey, Wiltshire. SN9 5PS

The Barge Inn is located right on the towpath of the Kennet and Avon Canal, and you can see it as you come to it from the water. The pub is a magnificent Georgian building constructed from Bath stone and was purpose built at the same time as the canal in 1810, to act as the 'motorway services' of its time.

<http://www.the-barge-inn.com/index.php>

There is a campsite here too so you can make this a longer trip. Do call to check out spaces for parking and events.

Finish - Wootton Rivers SN8 4NQ

Wootton Rivers is 5 miles south of Marlborough. Take the A346 south east from Marlborough for about three miles (passing through Cadley). Turn right where signposted to Wootton Rivers and pass through the village, parking on the right as you approach the canal bridge. There is a small parking area here so do park neatly.

Waterways Travelled – Kennet and Avon Canal

Type of Water - rural canal

Distance – 7.00 miles (but there is the opportunity to make it an out and back trip just simply turn around and head back to the start)

Licence Information - A licence to paddle the river is included in the [Canoe England membership](#) fee. Otherwise licenses can be obtained from [Canal & River Trust](#)

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(Take your Canoe England membership card with you as it is your licence as well)

Local Facilities – There are facilities at the start which is a Public House.

Vehicle Shuttle Required - This is a one way trail, so a car shuttle is needed, unless you choose to do an out and back as you can turn anywhere easily.

Portages and Locks

There are no locks or portages as this is part of the Long Pound.

Description

Launch on the canal going east (right) alongside the Barge Inn.

This is a peaceful paddle through mainly open chalk downland.

This area is also known for crop circles so if you leave the canal here enjoy a drink or meal at the Barge Inn and look at the latest crop circles (time of year dependent!)

At Pewsey Wharf is a public house and a lovely place to stop and picnic. Waterfront Cafe / Bar, Pewsey Wharf, Marlborough Road, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 5NU

The famous international Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race all started with a group of men in "The Greyhound" pub in the village of Pewsey, just outside Devizes. It was 1920 and a national rail and bus strike was looming. Alternative means of transport were discussed in the bar, and the outcome, as with all good bar-room talk, was a wager: whether or not it was possible to get down the River Avon from Pewsey to the sea at Christchurch in under three days, a distance of some 70 miles. Four intrepid souls took up the challenge in a 20-foot sculling skiff and duly won the bet with 10 hours to spare.

The journey takes you from

Honey Street	0.0 miles
Cocklebury Farm	1.5 miles
Wilcot Bridge	2.0 miles
Bristow's Bridge	2.8 miles
Pewsey Wharf	3.9 miles
New Mill	5.1 miles
Wootton Rivers	7.0 miles

As you come into Wootton Rivers you will go under a bridge and then paddle in almost as far as the lock to portage on the right (towpath side)

Useful Information

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Then in 1946 a conversation took place in the same pub with one of the original participants. Three RAF men and a local farmer took up the challenge, reaching the sea in a time of 51 hours. A local resident then offered a prize to anyone who could better this time, and the scoutmaster of the 1st Devizes Scouts, Ollie Brown, wanted his scouts to take up the challenge in their home-built canoes, but as the prize was specified for sculling boats and local residents only, they were unable to do so.

In 1947 one of the original Avon descent participants, Roy Cooke, was planning to try to reach London via the derelict Kennet and Avon Canal and the River Thames in less than 100 hours. He was unable to see this through, and the project was taken up by the Devizes Scouts, with the encouragement of locals who put up a sum of money for Scout funds if they could succeed in "taking a boat from Devizes to Westminster in under 100 hours, all food and camping kit to be carried in the boats".

At Easter 1948, Peter Brown, Brian Walters, Laurie Jones and Brian Smith, all aged just 17, set out on the first DW run. Great interest was generated nationally, with progress reports and photographs appearing in the national press, and the local cinema in Devizes interrupting programmes to give reports of their progress. At the finish a large crowd turned out at Westminster Bridge to see them successfully complete the challenge in a time of 89 hours and 50 minutes. Later that year several crews tried to make the run, but were defeated by thick weed on the canal. So it was established then that Easter was the best time to run DW.

<http://devizes.org.uk/>

<http://www.pewsey-uk.co.uk/>

<http://www.pewsey-heritage-centre.org.uk/>

<http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/canals-and-rivers/kennet-and-avon-canal>

<http://www.wiltshirewhitehorses.org.uk/altonbarnes.html>

katrust.org.uk

Recommended Next Trail

If you have enjoyed this trail why not try out one of the many trails available.

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

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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.
 - 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.

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- 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.
- 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.

Canal & River Trust - Emergencies- Telephone 0800 47 999 47

RSPCA for wildlife and animals in distress – Telephone 0990 55 59 99 (24 hours)

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

(Aug 2013)

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