

## Kennet & Avon Canal Wootton Rivers to Crofton Easy/Moderate Trail

### Route Summary

This linear canal route passes through lovely countryside and small villages, and finishes at the highest point of the Kennet and Avon canal, which crosses from Reading to Bristol. The canal gives views of many narrow boats, locks, aqueducts, and landscapes, with a level towpath to either walk or cycle on. Many paddlers know the stretch from Devizes (west of this route), to London, through taking part in the annual Devizes to Westminster Canoe Race, run every year since the 1960s.

This trip finishes at the famous Crofton Beam Engine pumping station near to the canal, which, at 450 ft. above sea level, and 40 ft above other local water resources, was built to pump up water to keep the canal full from local springs

**Nearest Town** - Pewsey

**O.S. Sheets** - Landranger 173 Swindon & Devizes

**Start** - 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.

SatNav - postcode is SN8 4NQ.

**Finish** - Crofton Pumping Station SN8 3DW

Crofton Pumping Station (pay car park), or on grass verge alongside Lock 59 but do not block the footpath. GR SU 261622

Crofton is reached from Marlborough, to the north-west, via the A4 east to a turn south for Great Bedwyn, and then brown tourist signs; or from Hungerford west on the A4, to the same turn.

**Waterways Travelled** – Kennet and Avon Canal

**Type of Water** - rural canal

**Distance** – 5-6 miles

**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](#)

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

**Local Facilities** - There is nothing at the start but there is at Crofton. Check the Crofton Beam Engine website as they steam up on certain weekends and have a tea shop too.

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**Vehicle Shuttle Required** - This is a one way that so a car shuttle is needed.

### **Portages and Locks**

This is a short trip in distance but it crosses the summit level of the canal and as a result includes 10 locks and the 502 yard (459m) long Bruce Tunnel.

The portages are mainly up grassy banks, which can be slippery. The locks are now being supplied increasingly with mooring and portage points, which are always on the towpath side of the canal.

### **Description**

Launch over the bank to the east of Wootton Rivers Bottom Lock. Then paddle north. Enjoy the rural scenery and

The Bruce Tunnel is on the summit pound of the Kennet and Avon Canal between Wootton Top Lock and Crofton Locks in Wiltshire, England.

This is the only tunnel on the canal and it is 502 yards (459 m) long. It is named after Thomas Brudenell-Bruce, 1st Earl of Ailesbury (1729–1814), the local landowner, who, when the canal was being built, would not allow a deep cutting through his land, and insisted on a tunnel instead.

Take care at the tunnel as this is a two way tunnel and there may well be other river traffic ie narrow boats passing through the tunnel. If you intend to go through the tunnel rather than use the very difficult portage over the top then wear head torches which will mean you will be seen by any oncoming river traffic.

### **Useful Information**

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

[www.croftonbeamengines.org/intro.html](http://www.croftonbeamengines.org/intro.html)

[www.katrust.co.uk/index.html](http://www.katrust.co.uk/index.html)

### **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.

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### ***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.
- 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.

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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.
- 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)

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