

## Kennet & Avon Canal Crofton to Hungerford Moderate Trail

### Route Summary

This linear canal route passes through lovely countryside and small villages, and commences 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 starts 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

**O.S. Sheets** - Landranger 173 Swindon & Devizes and 174 Newbury & Wantage

### Start

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.

### Finish

Hungerford Wharf, Hungerford Berkshire GR SU 335687

The wharf can be used to load and unload canoes for a short period. There is a public car park and toilet further up the High St. close to the bridge.

Hungerford is on the A4, 8 miles west of Newbury. The wharf is found near to the main road bridge over the canal.

**Waterways Travelled** -Kennet and Avon Canal

**Type of Water** - Rural Canal

**Distance** - 6 miles

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## 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](#) or [Waterscape](#) (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 a lovely café and small town with public toilets at the finish. Check the Crofton Beam Engine website as they steam up on certain weekends and have a tea shop too.

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

## Portages and Locks

14 - 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

The launch point is at Crofton, with the direction of travel being to the left from the Pumping Station towards the east. Put in below Lock 59, and paddle past Crofton Pumping Station, usually with any prevailing wind behind you, with a first bridge a mile along the route and Locks 60 to 63 en route. The village of Great Bedwyn follows, with a road bridge, (SU 275636) and Bedwyn Church Lock, No. 64. The 11<sup>th</sup> century Bedwyn church is a fine example, with embattlements around the tower. The Bedwyn Stone Museum has stone carvings, tombstones, statues and a dinosaur footprint.

Great Bedwyn was a Saxon city, with thatched cottages, and has many historic features. In quick succession are Burnt Mill lock, No. 65, Potter's Lock, No. 66, and then at Little Bedwyn, Lock No. 67. Little Bedwyn had a Roman camp, and a Saxon mint, and there is a continuous footbridge over both canal and railway here.

It is just over 3 miles to Hungerford now, and Locks 68 to 74 follow. The scenery is pretty, with many flowers and invertebrates, dragonflies being common, and Froxfield is a village just before the canal passes into Berkshire. The village has alms houses and brick-and-flint cottages.

Cobbelr's Lock, No. 72 is followed by Hungerford Marsh, an 11 hectare nature reserve, with many species of birds.

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[Hungerford](#) is a pretty small town, well worth exploring, and the finish is at Hungerford Wharf (SU 335687), with just before it a very low footbridge, near the church, often requiring a 'limbo' in kayaks to get under it, with a portage on the right for canoes.

### Useful Information

[Kennet and Avon canal](#)

[Crofton Beam Engine](#)

[Hungerford](#)

[Kennet and Avon Canal Trust](#)

### 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 workout and spend time with family and friends. However, it can also be a dangerous journey, if safety guidelines are overlooked. Always follow these basic rules and comply with navigation rules- keep to the right of on-coming boats. Please be careful at points along the trail where there are sharp bends on the waterway and keep a look out at these points for oncoming traffic.

### 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, its 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.

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- 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 others 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.
- 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.

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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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