

Lancaster Canal Garstang to Lancaster Easy Trail Grading

Route Summary

As a navigation the Lancaster Canal is a delight and has a 42½ miles navigable pound the longest in the country.

This trail begins at Garstang once the most important market town in Lancashire. Leaving the town and heading north the canal enters delightful country as it winds its way north past Nateby Hall and on to Cabus and Winmarleigh. After passing over the River Cocker it passes through the beautiful tree lined Ellet Grange Estate which is now a religious retreat.

Soon a branch leads to the left down to Glasson Dock and eventually into the estuary of the River Lune. Your route is straight ahead and immediately past the junction is Galgate Marina, one of the busiest parts of the canal with an excellent café including a craft centre and pub nestled between the navigation and the busy A6 road. From here the waterway continues through more beautiful undulating countryside on an embankment until it passes through Burrow Heights cutting which is an unusually long wooded section before it reaches the outskirts of Lancaster.

Nearest Towns: Garstang, Galgate, Lancaster.

O.S. Sheets: OS Explorer Map OL41 Forest of Bowland and Ribblesdale. OS Landranger Maps 102 and 97.

Start

Kepple Lane Bridge Bridge no.62, Garstang, Preston, Lancashire PR3 1PB. Map ref 489450. Parking is available on Moss Lane near the junction with Church Street which is the continuation of Kepple Lane but is restricted to 2 hours. Access to the canal is along a short footpath past a children's play park.



Finish

Aldcliffe Road LA1 5BE map ref. 469605. There is a long lay-by alongside the canal.

Alternate Access or get out point

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Ellel Village Hall, Galagate, Lancaster LA2 0L2 map ref. 483551. Approximately half a mile north of J33 of the M6 on the A6 road turn left by the Plough Inn car park. **Under no circumstances park in the pub car park** but follow the track past the football pitches and round the back of the village hall. By the cricket field there is parking for several cars and a flight of steps that leads up to the canal. Access or get out by the canal between the boat moorings.

A word of caution- at the weekend when there are football or cricket matches on it may be very busy.

Waterways Travelled: Lancaster Canal

Type of Water: Mainly rural canal.

Distance: 12 miles to Lancaster or 8 miles to Galgate.

License Information-

A license to paddle the canal 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 license as well)

Local Facilities: Full facilities Garstang and Lancaster. There is also an excellent cafe and craft centre at Galgate next to the marina.

Vehicle Shuttle Required: Yes.

Portages and Locks: No locks or tunnels to portage.

Description

Enter the towpath at the bridge, paddle under it and head north. Leaving Garstang the second bridge no. 63A is an ornamented concrete bridge that carries water over the canal and then immediately passing under the A6 road the canal enters delightful countryside as it passes through Nateby, Winmarlwich where there is a large caravan park and on to Cabus Nook where there is another excellent camp site at Greaves Farm.



Although the countryside is quiet and agreeable with the hills of Bleasdale Fell easily visible in the east the canal is never far away from the A6 road and the main rail link to Glasgow.

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After passing over the River Cocker aqueduct the canal passes through the beautiful tree lined Ellel Grange private estate. The bridge that carries the estate's driveway over the canal is an ornamental bridge.



John Rennie the designer basically transformed a standard bridge to suit the needs of the landed proprietor by adding groups of balusters and moulded coping stones. This is followed by another unusual bridge called Double Bridge which basically carries two roadways across the navigation divided by a central wall which marks the boundary of the estate.

At the end of the cutting the Glasson Dock

branch and top lock can be seen. Built in 1826 it was in part an effort to revive the falling trade of the port of Lancaster. It joins the estuary of the River Lune and is the subject of another canoe trail which should only be paddled by experienced canoeists.

Galgate is a busy little village with a marina sitting on the A6 road and close to J33 of the M6 motorway. There is a craft centre which includes an excellent cafe where canoes can be moored so refreshments can be purchased.



Next door is the Ellel Village Hall which shares facilities with the local football and cricket club where the canal can be exited down some steps on the right hand bank by some permanent moorings.



Passing over the River Condor and by a housing estate you again enter pleasant undulating country with the canal sitting on top of an embankment. Past New Park bridge no.89 there are several picnic benches placed on the tow path for the use of walkers or boaters so there are plenty of place to stop and picnic on a warm summers day.

After bridge no.90 an unusually long wooded cutting at Burrow Heights is entered and it is difficult to imagine the canal is manmade as the woodland

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encroaches the water, wildlife abounds all year round including kingfishers which swoop to feed on tiny fish as you chase them down the navigation. In November the autumnal colours of the foliage are absolutely magnificent and a photographers delight.

At the end of the cutting you pass under Ashton Lane Bridge, it is then only a short distance to the large lay-by on Aldcliffe Road where the road runs next to the canal and your final get out point.

Useful Information

Garstang is a pretty market town nestling in the foothills on the scenic Bowland Fell and as a regular winner of Britain in Bloom awards its streets are lined with colourful flower displays. It has a weekly market every Thursday selling an array of local produce which has been existence since 1310.

Greaves Farm Caravan and Camping Site, Cabus Nook Lane, Garstang, PR3 1AA. Tel 01524791726. A fairly basic but pretty site situated on the banks of the canal at bridge no.73.

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 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)

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- 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.

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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