

## River Severn Tewkesbury Round Trip Easy Trail

### Route Summary

This trip is a short and pleasant one, giving the paddler a short and easy experience around the beautiful old town of Tewkesbury, and using both the main river, and a side stream.

**Nearest Town** – Tewkesbury

**O.S. Sheets** - 150 Landranger Map (1:50 000) Worcester & The Malverns

**Start** - Lower Lode SO 844278, Tewkesbury Gloucestershire

Lower Lode is reached from the centre of Tewkesbury by heading south, as signposted, towards the A38. At the obvious Council Offices on the right side, fork right down a minor road. Lower Lode is signposted, and reached after half a mile.

There is a picnic spot here, and also at the pub over the other side of the river, and also halfway up the Lower Lode stream.

Tewkesbury is near to Junction 9 on the M5, and it has the usual facilities such a toilets and cafes etc.

**Finish** - Same as the start, or egress at Lower Lode, SO 880316,

**Waterways Travelled** – River Severn

**Type of Water** - River rural

**Distance** – 3.5 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** – Tewkesbury is near to Junction 9 on the M5, and it has the usual facilities such a toilets and cafes etc.

**Vehicle Shuttle** – is not required as it is an out and back trail.

**Portages and Locks** - 1 portage

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Two factors will affect the time to paddle the trail – any possible wind, and the flow of the river. Do not attempt if river is very high, as paddling against the flow will be difficult or impossible. If there is a high wind, then paddling this distance would be very difficult against the wind.

The 'official' tidal limit is at Maisemore Weir, 5 miles below Haw Bridge, above Gloucester, BUT at Spring high tides, the tidal affect can be felt up to Tewkesbury. Therefore paddling during, or just after stormy weather is not advised.

## Description

Lower Lode is a public launch point and slipway and parking area (the name is used for both the ferry point, and also for the stream which emerges here into the River Severn). In summer months, a small passenger ferry plies back and forth here, mainly to the pub on the opposite bank. The impressive Cheltenham School Rowing club is just downstream of you on the same bank.

On summer weekends you will have plenty of boats, including rowing eights all around you. It is impressive to think that a couple of hundred years ago, rivers such as the Severn had many ferries, and almost no bridges.

You have a choice now – either tackle the main river, or instead, use the Lower Lode to have a quiet and peaceful paddle first.

At this point, Lower Lode, a tiny stream, winds up for about a mile into Tewkesbury, ending at an old mill, and a large weir. The banks are overgrown in summer with willow and reeds. This is an interesting paddle, but there is no easy way off the river, so you have to retrace your steps. The other side is the main river, and it is nearly a mile up to Upper Lode Lock. It is possible to portage this lock, which is on the left side of the river as you proceed upstream, with the large weir on the right side. It is best to aim up the left bank, and land on the left side before the lock. You can then move upriver to the loop around the lock and weir island, and in half a mile, Tewksbury can be seen, and the lock above which is the River Avon.

Be careful here, as this area is designed to let boats out of the Avon into the Severn, not as a transfer place for canoes, and egress is not easy.

There is not any easy way off the water during this trip, so make sure you want to do it before setting off.

Coming back downstream, obviously, you will have the current with you, and the mile back to Lower Lode will go quickly.

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The Severn is one of the longest rivers in England, rising in Wales, and giving well over 100 miles of very canoeable water. It does not end in an industrial conurbation as do the Thames and Trent, and the towns upon its lowest reaches are all worth visiting, Worcester, Tewkesbury and Gloucester. With experience, a very enjoyable canoe-camping trip can be had upon the Severn. Below Stourport, the Severn is canalized, and then one comes across a series of very large weirs at islands, each with an attendant lock on the other side. As the river valley broadens out near to Worcester, the river is subject to great flooding in wet winters, one of the main reasons for there being few villages or towns on the river.

This trip overcomes two of the main problems in paddling the lower Severn – that of the very high banks, and difficulty of access, and also undertaking a short trip, as access points from roads can be few and far between.

### Useful Information

#### [River Level advice](#)

Tewkesbury is a gem of a town, with its Abbey of the Blessed Virgin Mary being the second-largest parish church in England. It was consecrated in 1121.

<http://canalrivertrust.org.uk/canals-and-rivers/river-severn>

[www.tewkesburyabbey.org.com/](http://www.tewkesburyabbey.org.com/)

[www.ringing.demon.co.uk/abbey/twxbells.htm](http://www.ringing.demon.co.uk/abbey/twxbells.htm)

[www.tewkesbury.cotswolds.info/](http://www.tewkesbury.cotswolds.info/)

### 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

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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 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.

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- 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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