



## River Stour Christchurch, Dorset

### Challenge Trail Grading

#### Route Summary

This is a pleasant out-and-back trip from near the top of the tidal stretch of the Stour, downriver, and around Christchurch before arriving at the harbour.

**Nearest Town** - Bournemouth

**O.S. Sheets** - Landranger No. 195 – Bournemouth and Purbeck

**Start** - Old Bridge Road, Iford Bridge – SZ 136935

**Finish** – Same

**Waterways Travelled** – R. Stour

**Type of Water** - Tidal river and estuary

**Distance** – 5 miles

**Licence Information** – No licence required - tidal

**Local Facilities** – In Christchurch

**Vehicle Shuttle Required** - No

**Portages and Locks** - None

#### Description

Put your boats on the water below the old bridge and turn right towards the sea. After a mile or so of paddling you will pass under two bridges the first is a footbridge and the second is the main rail line to Weymouth.

The river then takes a large meander around Southbourne before running under Tucton Bridge. This bridge was built in 1905. It was commissioned to replace a timber toll-bridge and many features imitate in reinforced concrete the original timber design. This marks the point where the river becomes significantly busier. You can then carry on down to the Sopers lane car park where the Christchurch Circle trail begins or retrace your steps for a cool drink at the Iford Bridge Pub.  
( <http://www.sizzlingpubs.co.uk/theifordbridgebournemouth/>)

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*We have taken great care to ensure the currency, accuracy and reliability of this information. We cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions but where such are brought to our attention, the information will be amended accordingly. Users should be aware that environmental conditions outside of our control can change the nature of the Trail within a short space of time. It is recommended that weather and water conditions are checked beforehand, and tide timetables where applicable.*



The Estuary, by definition, is tidal please ensure that you will have enough water to get back (or be prepared for a muddy wade). At times the tide moves with great speed so be aware of objects that you could become trapped against. Check the tide times and weather conditions before you set out. At low tide there are large mud banks. There can also be very strong tidal flows near the entrance to the harbour (known locally as "The Run").

### Useful Information

Slipways are called that for a reason so do be mindful that they can be covered in slime and when wet are very slippery!

Christchurch harbour has several areas that are designated SSSI please do not land unless you are sure of authorised access. Familiarise yourself with Canoe England's You, Your Canoe and the Environment at <http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/access-and-environment/environment/you-your-canoe-and-the-environment/> and <http://www.canoe-england.org.uk/access-and-environment/canoeing-on-the-sea/>

### 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, 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 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.

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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)

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