



English Canoe Classics

TWENTY-EIGHT GREAT CANOE & KAYAK TRIPS

Vol. 2
SOUTH



*Eddie Palmer
& Nigel Wilford*



VOLUME 1 NORTH

WALES

**SOUTH
MIDLANDS**

**EAST MIDLANDS,
FENS AND BROADS**

**SOUTH OF
ENGLAND**

**SOUTH
WEST**

**SOUTH
EAST**

BIRMINGHAM

Peterborough

King's Lynn

Norwich

Cambridge

Colchester

Oxford

Reading

LONDON

Guildford

Maidstone

Southampton

Eastbourne

Ross-on-Wye

Gloucester

Bristol

Bath

Taunton

Exeter

Plymouth

Bure

Little Ouse

Stour

Thames

Thames

Medway

Arun

Wye

Avon

Bideford Bay

Torridge

Taw

Exe

Tamar

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SOUTH

Eddie Palmer
& *Nigel Wilford*

First published in Great Britain 2013 by Pesda Press

Tan y Coed Canol

Ceunant

Caernarfon

Gwynedd

LL55 4RN

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Important notice – disclaimer

Canoeing and kayaking are healthy outdoor activities that carry some degree of risk. They involve adventurous travel, often away from close habitation. Guidebooks give an idea of where to access a river, where to egress, the level of difficulty and the nature of the hazards to be encountered.

However, nature being what it is, river valleys are changed by time and erosion, water levels vary considerably with rain and man-made features can be updated or altered – therefore weirs, walls and landings are not always as expected. Coastal sections, large lakes and estuaries are also subject to change due to wind and weather. This guidebook is no substitute for personal inspection at the time of paddling and your own risk assessment and judgement. Your decision to paddle or not, and any consequences arising from that decision, is your responsibility.

Introduction

Welcome to English Canoe Classics – South, a collection of what the authors, both experienced canoeists, think are the best of rivers, navigations, and coastal trips in the south of England (defined as being south of Birmingham). This is not a guide to all canoeing rivers, but the ones we have enjoyed, whether for the water, the scenery, the interesting surroundings, or nearby attractions to visit.

The rivers featured in the book have been paddled for longer sections than those described. However, the point of the book was to select enjoyable trips that are suitable for all levels of paddlers. All of the routes can be paddled with loaded open canoes, and therefore with kayaks.

The regional divisions are ours, and they seemed to make sense.

Acknowledgements

From Eddie – Thanks to all paddling friends over the years. From my first colleagues who took me on moving waters in the Midlands, and then on white water in North Wales to my most recent paddling friends ... they are too many to mention. Thanks also to people met on the recent expeditions in England. Most were very friendly and helpful. A special thanks to Ellie for her patience.

From ‘Wilf’ – There are so many people to thank, not just for their assistance with the production of this book, but for their help in general. To my wife Ruth and our children Emily and Dominic, thank you for sharing my passion for boating and adventures, your enthusiasm and tolerance is so important. For the endless encouragement and support from the rest of my family and to those who have paddled with me, helped explore new routes, had your photograph taken, driven to places to pick me up or looked after my family whilst I’ve been elsewhere, a most sincere, thank you. I’d like to thank one friend in particular for his considerable assistance in writing sections of this guide book - Neil, I could not have done it without you. Thanks.

The photographs were all taken by the two of us, unless otherwise indicated.



📷 Nigel Wilford and Eddie Palmer

The Authors

Eddie Palmer

Eddie bought his first kayak over 50 years ago. It was a wood and canvas one in which he set out to paddle rivers in his part of middle England and Wales. Since then, he has kayaked and canoed extensively in the UK, Ireland, western and eastern Europe, the USA and Canada and southern Africa. He is also a sailor of various types of boat, and his passion over the past few years has been for long-distance canoe-camping. After a competitive career in slalom and whitewater racing, he still paddles whitewater.

Eddie is a Board Director of the SCA and is the author of *Scottish Canoe Classics* and co-author of *Scottish Canoe Touring*, *Irish Canoe Classics* and *English Canoe Classics – Volume 1 North* (all published by Pesda Press).

Nigel Wilford

Nigel has been involved with canoeing for most of his adult life, paddling throughout the UK, mainland Europe, Canada, USA and New Zealand. Born in northwest Leicestershire, his first canoe experience was on the gentle River Soar. Not long after, he moved to Yorkshire to attend university. The enjoyment he found while paddling the rivers of the northeast firmly established canoeing as his activity of choice. In 1991 he joined the British Canoe Union's coaching service, helping others to improve their canoeing or to become better coaches. Nigel has held various roles within the BCU including Local Coaching Organiser and English Whitewater Safety Coordinator. He is a BCU Level 5 Coach and member of Team Pyranha.

Nigel is the co-author of *English Canoe Classics – Volume 1 North* (published by Pesda Press).

Using the Guide

To use the guide, you will need an up-to-date and appropriate Ordnance Survey map of the relevant area and the ability to use it. In addition, for any tidal area you will need up-to-date tide tables.

Each route begins with some quick reference information, relevant Ordnance Survey (OS) Landranger 1:50,000 maps, length of the route in kilometres, vehicle shuttle distances, portages and start and finish points. This is followed by an overall description of the area, details of access points and water levels, and finally a route description with distances between the main features.

TYPES OF WATER



Canals, slow-moving rivers and small inland lakes which are placid water, and easy to cope with.



Inland lakes, still with no current or tide, but which in high winds can produce large waves.



Rivers where flood conditions can make paddling difficult, and requiring a higher level of skill. The grade of any rapids is denoted from 1 to 3 within the icon.



Estuaries, where the direction of the tide is all-important, and usually cannot be paddled against.



Open sea, safer coastal routes suitable for placid water touring kayaks and canoes (in calm, stable weather).

Warning

Many of the rivers in this book are slow-flowing with many weirs – weirs are especially dangerous – do not shoot them unless confident of your competence.

Portages









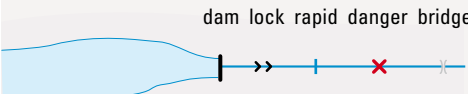


‘Portaging’ – carrying your boat (taken from the French *portage*, to carry) is necessary when encountering weirs and locks. The portages mentioned in this book are hopefully of about 50 metres at most. They are much easier with a canoe trolley, especially with a heavy canoe full of camping equipment. Paying £70–100 for a good sturdy and long-lasting trolley is a very wise investment, and thoroughly recommended.

RIVER GRADES

This book does not include whitewater paddling of Grade 3 or above. Rivers are graded by the international river grading system from Grade 1 to Grade 6:

- GRADE 1** Easy. Occasional small rapids or riffles, waves regular and low. Most appropriate course, with deepest water, easy to see from canoe or kayak and to steer down. Obstacles e.g. pebble banks, very easy to see. Presents no problems to paddlers able to steer canoes and kayaks. Steering is needed, especially on narrow rivers.
- GRADE 2** Medium. Fairly frequent rapids, usually with regular waves, easy eddies, and small whirlpools and boils. Course generally easy to recognise, but may meander around gravel banks and trees etc. Paddlers in kayaks may get wet, those in open canoes much less so.
- GRADE 3** Difficult. Rapids numerous, and can be continuous. Course more difficult to see, landing to inspect may be wise. Drops may be high enough not to see water below, with high and irregular waves, broken water, eddies and whirlpools/boils. There is no water with rapids of above Grade 3 advised in this guide. Where there are Grade 3 rapids, avoiding or portaging is possible.
- GRADE 4** Very difficult. Long and extended stretches of rapids with high, irregular waves, difficult broken water, strong eddies and whirlpools. Course often difficult to recognise. High falls, inspection from bank nearly always necessary.
- GRADE 5** Exceedingly difficult. Long and unbroken stretches of whitewater with individual features, and routes very difficult to see. Many submerged rocks, high waterfalls, falls in steps, very difficult whirlpools and very fast eddies. Previous inspection absolutely necessary, risk of injury, swims always serious.
- GRADE 6** Absolute limit of difficulty. Definite risk to life.

Map symbols in this book

	start & alternative start		ferry, passenger & car
	finish & alternative finish		campsite / bivi site
	waypoint		bunkhouse
	portage	• Place name	town / buildings
	described route	▲ Peakname	significant peak
			castle
			prohibited area

USING THE INTERNET

Maps and satellite images found on the internet are useful resources for people unfamiliar with areas they intend to paddle. There are various mapping programmes derived from the British OS system, and taking either a paper OS map with you or a printed page off the internet (maybe waterproofed!) is a good idea. The access and egress points for the trips included in this book have been chosen for their proximity to easy parking for vehicles. Also, the use of Google Earth means that the whole course of a river may be followed to view weirs and other hazards.

Improved facilities may develop over time, offering new opportunities for canoeists; the use of satellite images, along with other internet-based resources, can be helpful in identifying them. Up-to-date information when planning shuttles and identifying rendezvous points is most useful and, provided the information online remains current, it is well worth reviewing parking locations and shuttle routes before embarking on a long journey.

Campsites

Please note that we have referred sometimes to very specific sites, perhaps because they are actually on the river. However, campsites frequently come and go or change, for instance from taking tents to only taking caravans. For these reasons, we strongly urge readers to carry out an internet search for current open campsites.

Canoe England (CE) Licence

‘CE Licence’ refers to the very useful licence available to Canoe England members, which covers many thousands of miles of navigation and rivers in England, under the control of the new Canals and Rivers Trust (formerly British Waterways), the Environment Agency, and the Broads Authority (for the Norfolk Broads).

Access in England

This is our personal understanding of the opinions and situation at the time of writing in 2013, and these notes are written without prejudice.

Unlike Scotland, canoeists in England and Wales do not enjoy unequivocal access arrangements to all inland waters. This means that on occasions landowners may not wish to have people journeying through their land. This book endeavours to provide information about sensible access points to rivers from public highways and includes journeys which have been free of significant access impediments for many years. However, the situation

on legal access to rivers is changeable and canoeists are strongly advised to check the access situation before embarking upon a trip. The latest legal opinion (of the Rev. Douglas Caffyn PhD) is that there has never been an Act of Parliament which rescinded the original rights of access and navigation on all rivers. To date, no legal adverse opinion or court judgement is being sought to challenge this opinion.

No canoeist has ever been taken to court for 'trespassing' on a river in England or Wales, and 'trespass' is a breach of the civil rights of the owner and not a police matter. One day we hope to secure a fair and unambiguous arrangement for access to all of our waterways. Until then, canoeists must anticipate that they may be challenged about the legitimacy of their presence on our beautiful rivers.

Our best advice is for you to use the services of the volunteer Local River Advisors for Canoe England, who should be able to provide you with up-to-date information (visit <http://www.canoe-england.org.uk>). Canoe England is the Sports Governing Body for England for all types of kayaking and canoeing. We strongly recommend membership as a way of supporting their efforts. (From a pragmatic point of view the automatic third party insurance cover should be essential for anybody undertaking outdoor activities and the CE licence is essential on canals and waterways.)

Environmental concerns

A large responsibility now rests with paddlers to do their best to keep our total environment clean and tidy. This not only includes not dropping litter but also, in a community-spirited way, cleaning up after other people. Be aware of the many issues associated with camping in the wild and in the prevention of the transfer of Non-Native Invasive Species (NNIS) from one river system to another.

Camping in England is only allowed with the consent of the landowner, and paddlers should always seek to use formal campsites. 'Wild camping' is probably better experienced in the wilder areas of Scotland and Ireland.

Further information

For more details on the above issues, visit the Canoe England website (<http://www.canoe-england.org.uk>). The other home country websites (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) also contain useful advice.





South Midlands

This area is quite vast – it stretches across two great river basins, the Rivers Severn and Wye and their tributaries, and east to the dividing line between the aforementioned rivers and the east of England. You then reach the large east-flowing rivers such as the Nene and Great Ouse, and the Trent catchment to the north. The two canal sections included here can take the paddler from London to the industrial north, and we have suggested day-long trips on sections without locks.

The Severn's main tributary in its lower reaches, the Avon, flows through Warwickshire and Worcestershire. It drains a large area to the east and south of Birmingham, and joins the Severn at Tewkesbury. The Avon is a very pleasant navigation all the way from above Stratford, and is well known for very pretty villages and towns, many with the traditionally-built black and white Tudor-style houses.

Some way to the west is the equally lovely valley of the Wye, a river that has been a first canoe-camping trip for many paddlers. It was tempting to include the whole of the river (and there are many guides), but we decided to concentrate on a sure-fire popular section, that passing through Symonds Yat, one of the most spectacular geographical features on any river in England, and a great viewpoint.

Unusually, one of the small tributaries of the Wye, the Lugg, is also both paddleable, and open for access. One of the authors first paddled this in his younger years, when his canoe club was exploring such small rivers in kayaks. The whole of the Welsh border was covered, and the Lugg, Arrow and Monnow notched up; beautiful waterways in lovely countryside.

For the final two waterways in this section, we go further east, to some of the canal stretches. The Oxford Canal runs north from Oxford to Birmingham, and a remote part north of Banbury is included. There are lovely quiet villages which many people would never visit unless they had a reason to leave the M40 or M1, yet which are not far from large cities such as Coventry and Birmingham. Next and last we return to within touching distance of Leicester for part of the Grand Union Canal, known as the 'Leicester Line'. This is a good expedition on an interesting canal.





01 River Avon - Worcs



OS Sheet 150 | Bidford to Eckington Bridge | 42km

Shuttle

From Bidford to Eckington Bridge, via the B439, A46 to Evesham, and then the B4084 to Pershore, B4536 past Pershore, and A4104 and B4080 down to Eckington, about 17 miles, 45 minutes.

Portages

Nine – locks and weirs at Marlcliff, Harvington, Offenham, Evesham, Chadbury, Fladbury, Wyre Mill, Pershore, Nafford.

Start

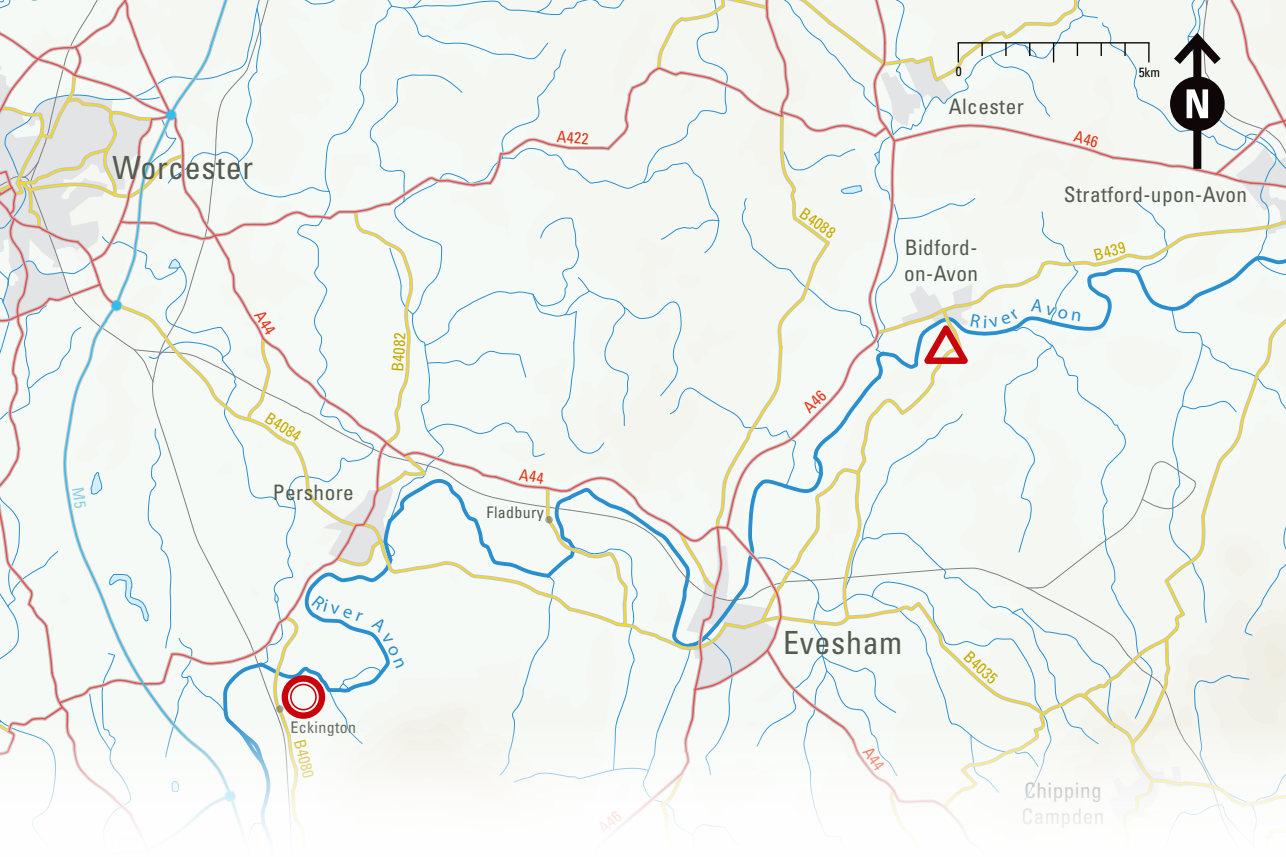
Bidford-on-Avon Bridge, SP 099 517

Finish

Eckington Bridge, SO 922 423

Introduction

The Avon is the Severn's longest tributary, flowing for a total of 145km from Rugby, and winding its way south-west across the south Midlands through historic towns such as Warwick, Stratford, Evesham and Pershore to the Severn at Tewkesbury. The current navigation goes up to above Stratford, and this section has been chosen because there is always water, even in dry summers, and the vehicle parking is good at both start and finish.



The upper reaches are winding, wooded and pretty, Bidford being a picturesque start place. Below Evesham, the bold outline of Bredon Hill dominates, and on this trip, the paddler will nearly circumnavigate the hill.

The whole area is worth visiting; Stratford, the home of Shakespeare, is only just upstream and the little market towns of Evesham and Pershore are charming. It is an intensive fruit growing area, with many orchards, glasshouses, and berry fields, famous for the vast areas of tree blossom in the spring. Motorised craft are far fewer here than on other navigations, and on weekdays canoeists can be very much by themselves.

Water level

Maintained navigation.

Campsites

This is not a tourism area, apart from day trips to see the fruit blossom in the spring. The only campsite on the river is at Offenham, SP 067 473, and there is a caravan site between the weir and bridge at Evesham. There are also caravan sites at Bidford and Tewkesbury, and campsites around Worcester and at Ashton under Hill south of Evesham.

Access and egress

The Avon is a navigation, CE licence required.

Bidford, SP 099 517

Offenham, left bank, SP 067 473

Evesham, left bank, downstream of bridge, SP 040 435

Fladbury, Jubilee Bridge, left side upstream, picnic site, SP 001 456

Pershore Bridge, left side, picnic site, SO 953 451

Eckington Bridge, left side, upstream, parking and picnic site, SO 923 422

Description

This is a very pleasant and trouble-free trip, with locks that are easy to portage, and a good range of facilities en-route; among them riverside pubs. The weirs can often be portaged on the side, but if in any doubt use the lock channels, which always have portage routes. The Avon plain is on the north side of the Cotswolds, with the Birmingham conurbation, the large industrial area of the West Midlands, not far to the north. It is nonetheless a very rural area. The many small villages and towns have a peaceful feel to them; there are numerous historical connections, and lovely black-and-white Tudor buildings.

This is either a very long one-day trip or an easy two days, the halfway break being conveniently taken at Fladbury. The haul-out and carry at the locks is greatly aided by using long bow and stern lines, as the drops at the side of the river can be quite high.

The start at Bidford uses the riverside parking just downstream of the old bridge on the left side, a very convenient place. The main part of the village is on the other side of the bridge, and the river sweeps fast under willows, a lovely stretch. Embarking can be via a small landing-stage on the riverside. The first lock and weir is Marcliff, the lock on the left, the weir on the right. The River Arrow then joins from the right side, flowing down through Redditch and Alcester to the north. Flat water-meadows follow, the main A435 road is on the right bank, and then there is interest at Harvington mill and weir, the lock on the right side, the weir leaving left. Portage past the lock. Just below this is Offenham campsite on the left bank, a pub, and a sharp bend to the right and the next lock; a cut on the right side leads to the lock, the left channel has the weir.

A long sweep of the river to the left takes the paddler past many glasshouses, under the main road bridge which is the Evesham by-pass, and then among houses to the weir at Evesham, the upper limit for many of the powered boats on the river. There is a portage on the left side, and it is only a hundred metres or so to the first bridge at Evesham (13km).

The town and high street are to the right side, and at the waterside it is possible to see many signs showing levels of the recent floods. The left side has a number of landing stages that could be used to egress the river.

The second bridge is not far, and then the Avon bends to the right; the town is left behind, and a small ferry crosses the river. This next stretch is popular with powered craft, as there is a marina not far out of Evesham on the right. This is above the long weir and lock at Chadbury, the lock being on the left. The nature of the fields hints at these being long-term water-meadows, as this is the part of the river, down and through Fladbury, that floods in wet winters. The wooded hills on the right are known as the 'Lenches', forming the names of the small villages nestling in them.

A long bend to the left and a railway bridge herald arrival in Fladbury, its famous canoe club on the right side as you enter the village. The club has produced many great racing canoeists, and so it will be sprint and marathon kayaks you might see out training. The village has mills on both the left and right banks, Fladbury Mill on the right, and Crophorne Mill on the left. The lock channel leaves on the left, and the portage route is on the left side of this channel. The weir can be carried over in low and medium water. The Jubilee Bridge follows (22.5km), a useful access point, with parking and a picnic site on the left, and after this the river valley broadens out quite a bit.

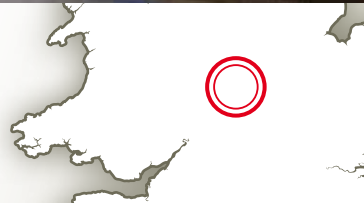
It is long bend to the right, and 5km, to Wyre Piddle, a wonderfully-named village high on the right bank, but with a very convenient riverside pub with its own landing stage. Wyre Mill and lock follow – the weirs on the right side of the river maybe shootable. If not the portage is over the island, and you are now near the second town of the Vale of Evesham, Pershore. There is a picnic site on the right, the leisure centre, and then a weir on the left stream (portage on the left) announces the proximity of Pershore Lock on the right branch. The next road bridge is visible, with the former bridge before it, and on the left bank, good parking, picnic site, and toilets (30.5km).

The Avon then describes a very long bend to the right, to the south of Pershore, and then, after a left bend, a long semi-circle to the right to reach Eckington, in the process circumnavigating the village of Birlingham. Bredon Hill, to the left, now dominates the view. Nafford Lock has also two streams, and a portage, and then the only feature of note left is the strange 'Swan's Neck', a very tight bend to the right and left, which does in outline from above, look like the neck of a swan.

Eckington Bridge has an obvious car park and picnic site on the left bank before the lovely old brick bridge, its side arches showing where flood water runs down each side when required. It is a further 13km down to the Severn just beyond Tewkesbury, but the scenery is a bit limited.



02 Grand Union Canal



OS Sheet 141 | The Leicester Line | 16-17km

Shuttle

From Husbands Bosworth take A5199 then east on Saddington Road, 8 miles, 15 minutes.

Portages

One possible portage – Foxton Locks.

Start

Honey Pot Bridge, Husbands Bosworth, SP 645 849

Finish

Smeeton Road Bridge, Saddington, SP 666 924

Introduction

The Grand Union Canal was originally intended to link Birmingham to London. The extension known as ‘The Leicester Line’ came about through an amalgamation of once independent canals. One of the most notable features of this stretch of water is the decision of the engineers to use tunnels in preference to providing locks to navigate the hilly countryside. Two tunnels of significance guard either end of this journey and canoes are not permitted to travel through them. However, there is a notable exception to their tunnelling exploits – Foxton Locks, right at the geographical centre of the proposed route,



boasts a staircase of ten locks, which in a narrowboat takes around forty-five minutes to pass through.

The locks can be the start, mid or end point for any journey on this section of the canal. Being a tourist attraction, the locks at Foxton have great facilities including toilets and a fine restaurant and bar.

At Foxton the canal forms a ‘T Junction’, giving boaters three possible directions of travel (and the author a dilemma as how to write this guide logically, as no circular route is possible). The journey described in this guide suggests passage from tunnel to tunnel. From the pleasant village of Husbands Bosworth, down past Foxton Locks, then heading northwest towards Saddington, but there is nothing to prevent paddlers either starting or finishing at Market Harborough to the east of Foxton Locks.

Water level

Maintained navigation.

Campsites

There are sites at Sibbertoft, near the southern end of the route, and at Market Harborough.

Access and egress

CE Licence required.

Honey Pot Bridge, Husbands Bosworth, SP 645 849

Mowsely Road Bridge, SP 652 869

Laughton Hills Bridge, SP 662 875

Laughton Road Bridge, SP 682 882

Foxton Road Bridge, SP 690 891

Foxton Locks, SP 692 897

Debdale Wharf, SP 694 915

Gumley Road, SP 680 915

Smeeton Road Bridge, Saddington, SP 666 924

Description

Finding the access point through the village of Husbands Bosworth may be the most difficult part of this journey. From the A4303, turn into Honey Pot Lane, then right into Broad Lane. Follow the uneven track for 300m where, after passing over the canal, the track ends at three gates. There is space for two or three carefully parked cars here and a short footpath leads down from the bridge to the canal. About 250m to the west of the bridge is Bosworth Tunnel which is over a kilometre long, has no towpath and canoes are not encouraged to pass through.

As in keeping with the majority of canals, there is a reasonable bank height from which boats must be lowered into the water. This generally causes very few issues with open canoes, but getting in and out of closed cockpit kayaks can be a pretty strenuous affair.

Once on the water, examine the tunnel and take a photo or two, then head in the opposite direction, north-east through the wooded banks of the Leicestershire countryside. Paddlers can't see too much on the first part of the journey, steep wooded sides can make it feel like the canal is still passing through a tunnel, albeit a green and leafy one. The trees very soon thin and paddlers are treated to a more open experience, often tree lined, but not nearly as enclosed as the beginning of the trip.

Brick-built bridges will become a common sight on this journey; a dozen will be passed en route to Foxton. Most of them have access from the tow path that follows the entire length of the canal to the roads which the bridges carry across the canal. The road bridges that span the canal on the south side of Foxton nearly all have verge-side parking for at least a couple of cars and could all be used to meet up with friends or to egress the canal if required.

The journey north-east towards Foxton is pleasant and easy going; if keeping track of where you are becomes difficult then note the bridge numbers. Bridge 60 is the one to look out for as this one (Gumley Road Bridge) announces arrival at Foxton Staircase.

Paddlers can egress the canal here via a footpath to the long-stay car park to the east of the bridge. Those not wishing to continue past Foxton are advised to make use of this path and a portage trolley.

Approaching the locks, there is a backwater off to the right that leads to a viewing point. It could well serve as a pleasant place for a picnic. For those who need to discover what is at the bottom of the hill, approach the top lock and portage the staircase using the excellent footpath, the one on the left facing downhill is a less undulating route. The path is around 250m, downhill in this direction and not at all difficult if using a portage trolley. Once at the bottom several tough decisions need to be made. Ice cream? Sweets? Pub lunch? Toilet? A number of facilities are on offer at Foxton Locks, but remember it is a local tourist attraction so expect it to be busy in the summer and at bank holidays. There is a short-stay car park at the base of the staircase, but there is no charge after 5pm, very useful for an evening paddle.

Heading north from Foxton the canal has a different feel to that of the wooded stretch from Husbands Bosworth. There is a greater sense of openness and the grassy and reed-lined banks give a natural feel to the navigation. Dragonflies are plentiful and frequent the banks, darting back and forth like planes in a dog fight. The canal is literally swimming with life, roach being especially plentiful. Keep an eye out for the pike, they are sometimes seen lurking in the shadows at the side of the canal waiting for their next meal. Approximately 2km north of Foxton, paddlers arrive at Debdale Wharf where parking is easy and plentiful. The canal then bends left and heads west for nearly 2km before being crossed by Gumley Bridge. There is very good parking on the north side of the bridge and access to the water is very easy. Although the riverbank is well vegetated by grasses and reeds, at the time of writing a number of natural breaks in vegetation existed, providing ideal landing or launch spots.

Continue north-west for the final 2km of the trip as the canal meanders its way towards the tunnel at Saddington. The egress is at the road bridge that connects the villages of Saddington and Smeeton Westerby. There is parking for two or three carefully placed cars and access to the tunnel to the north.

Variation

After the final lock at Foxton the canal continues northwards, but also branches to the east towards the town of Market Harborough. The 8km journey eastward is highly recommended; the canal is pretty and often quiet. Vehicular access to the canal between Foxton and Market Harborough is not too easy, with only the bridge at Great Bowden Hall offering a realistic possibility of parking and egress. The wharf at Market Harborough, on the other hand, offers excellent facilities including free car parking, toilets with showers, and waterside dining from the bar in the refurbished development. This is a great place to paddle from or to, making a journey between here and Foxton a delightful half-day paddle.



English Canoe Classics

TWENTY-EIGHT GREAT CANOE & KAYAK TRIPS

An illustrated guide to some of the finest tours of southern England's waterways, from the Grand Union Canal in the South Midlands to the River Tamar in the South West. Scenic lakes, placid canals and broad rivers, as they can only be seen from a canoe or kayak.

Eddie and 'Wilf' have chosen the best inland touring routes, which are described in great detail and illustrated with numerous colour photos and maps. The selected routes are suitable for open canoes, sit-on-tops and touring kayaks. Many of them can be tackled as a single voyage or a series of day trips, with campsites en route.

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The journeys are all accessible but highly varied, travelling on lakes, sheltered coastline, rivers and canals. A wonderful book for planning voyages and inspiring dreams, or sharing your experiences with others.



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