

River Severn- Bridgnorth to Upper Arley

Easy: Please be aware that the grading of this trail was set according to normal water levels and conditions. Weather and water level/conditions can change the nature of trail within a short space of time so please ensure you check both of these before heading out.

Route Summary

This is one of the prettiest river trips in England, on one of the longest rivers: between wooded slopes, with a good flow of water, and small villages providing stopping places. There is continual interest, very small rapids and no difficulties.

Start Directions

Public car park, upstream of bridge on east side, Bridgnorth WV15 4AL – SO 719933

Finish Directions

Upper Arley – a very small village, with grass car parking in the summer upstream of the old ferry landing, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY12 1XA

Description

The launch point in Bridgnorth is upstream of the road bridge (the one in the town, not the new by-pass bridge south of the town). Approaching from the north, the Telford direction, on the east side of the Severn, the large riverside park is fairly obvious, with plenty of parking. A ramp leads down to the river, and on summer weekends, this area can be very busy. Several commercial outfits regularly use this part of the Severn for taking groups canoeing. If the passage under the bridge in the town is shallow and a scrape, the river is low, but the Severn often floods to an enormous extent in the winter.

Bridgnorth is an ancient market town, and well worth visiting. It is known as 'Italianate' with an obvious church tower rising above the trees on the hill, which is 'High Town'. 'Low Town' is down by the river, and the two are linked by a funicular railway.

Distance: 10.5 miles

Approximate Time: 2-4 Hours

The time has been estimated based on you travelling 3 – 5mph (a leisurely pace using a recreational type of boat).

Waterways Travelled: River Severn

Type of Water: Natural River

Nearest Town: Bridgnorth

Start: Public car park, upstream of bridge on east side, Bridgnorth WV15 4AL – SO 719933

Finish: Upper Arley – a very small village, with grass car parking in the summer upstream of the old ferry landing, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY12 1XA

O.S. Sheets: Landranger No. 138 – Kidderminster and Wyre Forest

Licence Information: A licence is not required to paddle this waterway.

Local Facilities: In Bridgnorth

High Town has many black-and-white Tudor buildings, and is very pretty. Low Town is a bit more of a working place, and the last of the riverside warehouses, with its block and tackle for lifting cargoes off barges was only converted into flats a few years ago.

The start through Bridgnorth is great – a fast current through the bridge, and soon out into countryside, although the main road down to Kidderminster will be following you on the left side. On the right bank, the noise and clouds of steam on the right bank will be the Severn Valley Railway, also well worth a ride on.

For most of the year coarse angling will be carried on in any weather.

The bypass bridge is over you after a half mile, and then the river bends to the left towards the village of Quatford, on the A442. Caravans and chalets abound on the banks. A bend to the right takes the river over towards the railway, and the hamlet of Lower Forge. The Chelmarsh Reservoir is high on the right bank, and invisible.

The paddler is now approaching Hampton Loade, which is a useful halfway stopping point. The Lion Inn is on the left bank, and a campsite on the right bank. A small passenger ferry crosses the river during summer, useful for late night drinkers from the campsite! All of these Severn Valley villages become very crowded on weekends of good weather in the summer, so be warned. Paddling in higher water in spring or summer might be a good idea.

After the village, peace returns with the railway close on the right bank, great for steam train photography.

The next village is Highley, on the right side, a former coal-mining village, and a remnant of the Shropshire coalfield to the north, obvious from the brick terraced cottages. There is a pub here, for those with the energy to climb the steep bank.

The banks become a little lower, as the Severn approaches Upper Arley via a corridor of leafy trees on both banks. On a busy weekend, the large field used for a car park announces the village coming up, on the left side, and eventually the metal footbridge becomes visible. This replaced the car ferry which plied its trade over the river during the 1950s and 60s. The former ferry ramps are very convenient for canoeists to land on, and on most days, the empty boats signal that the occupants are either shopping for ice cream at the village shop, or in a pub!

Useful Information

The waterways in this trail are managed by Canal and Rivers Trust and require paddlers to hold a licence. If you are an existing British Canoeing member the good news is that your membership includes an annual licence for the waterways covered within this trail – please ensure you take your membership card with you on the water as this acts as your licence, if stopped with no licence, you will be at risk of being fined.

You can buy a licence directly from [Canal and Rivers Trust](#) for this waterway or by becoming a British Canoeing member you'll have a licence to cover you for a whole year. A British Canoeing membership gives you a whole range of benefits including licenses to paddle on 4500km of Britain's waterways and Civil Liability Insurance, worth up to £10 Million. If you are planning to paddle regularly this will save you great deal of money and hassle alongside having peace of mind. For more information on British Canoeing membership please [click here](#)



Further useful information can be found on the following websites:

Bridgenorth – <http://www.visitbridgnorth.co.uk/>

Severn Valley Railway – www.svr.co.uk/

CANOEING SAFETY ADVICE

Spending an afternoon or day canoeing on a Canoe Trail can be a fun way to experience nature, help you to stay fit and healthy and enjoy spending time with friends and family. It can also be a dangerous journey, if appropriate safety guidelines are overlooked. To help make sure you remain safe at all times, read on to see our canoeing safety advice guidelines.

Wear appropriate clothing

Always wear shoes. Rocks, rough terrain and river beds present serious hazards to boaters without the proper attire. Nearly 90% of all boating injuries are attributed to lack of proper footwear. Other canoe safe clothing includes hats, gloves, additional dry clothing, and layered items which can easily be removed. Take or wear a windproof top and course always wear a buoyancy aid - for children make sure the crotch straps are used.

Be sure to:

- Know the weather forecast and check the water conditions before you set out canoeing. There is an [Environment Agency](#) website where information concerning river levels can be found. We recommend checking this before heading out as the river levels can rise and fall quite quickly in wet or dry conditions.
- Observe navigation rules for this waterway.
- Check to see if there are any events on the waterways when you wish to travel.
- Check that your equipment is well maintained and ready for the water.
- Check that your boat has the required buoyancy to keep it afloat in the event of a capsized

ALWAYS be certain to let others know where you're going and when you're expected to return.

MAKE SURE that the journey you plan is within your capabilities.

MAKE SURE you never paddle alone.

Equipment Checklist

Use the canoeing safety advice checklist below to make sure you have everything you need:

- Boat
- Paddle
- Buoyancy Aid
- Bailer/sponge
- Small First Aid Kit
- Phone (in a waterproof bag)
- Drinking water and snacks
- Suitable clothing for the weather



Photo by James Carnegie

Environmental Good Practice

One of the great things about paddling a canoe trail is enjoying the journey and different environments that you paddle through. So when you are out on the water please consider the following things to help keep the wonderful waterways and environment as you found them and to avoid accidentally disturbing wildlife and their habitats.

- Take your **litter** home with you
- Keep **noise** to a minimum
- Where possible keep to any **designated paths or launching points**.
- **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.
- Canoe a **safe distance away from wildlife**. If you see signs of disturbance move away quietly.
- Familiarise yourself with the local area, its **sensitive places and protected areas**
- On rivers, **avoid paddling over gravel banks** in low water conditions – they may contain fish spawn.
- 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
- When clearing litter left by others, **handle it with care**.
- **Be the eyes and ears on the water**. Report pollution, wildlife problems, damage, incidents etc to the relevant authorities: **Canal & River Trust**, Emergencies: 0800 47 999 47
RSPCA for wildlife and animals in distress: 0300 1234 999 (24 hours)
Environment Agency: 0800 80 70 60 (24 hours)



CHECK, CLEAN, DRY

Help minimise the spread of invasive aquatic species and disease by following the campaign advice before putting your canoe and equipment in and out of the water (some invasive species can survive in damp or wet conditions for five or six days on water recreation clothing and equipment).

- **CHECK** all your equipment and clothing for living organisms and plants fragments. Pay particular attention to areas that are damp and hard to inspect.
- **CLEAN** and wash all equipment, clothing and footwear thoroughly away from water source. If you do come across any organisms, leave them at the water body where you found them. When practical, completely dry out all equipment and clothing before going to a new site.
- **DRY** all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Dry your kit with towels. Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

Canoeists and kayakers take environmental concerns very seriously and already follow existing voluntary environmental codes of conduct. You can find more information about canoeing and the environment in British Canoeing's two publications covering inland and coastal paddling '**You and Your Canoe**'. Both are available [British Canoeing website](#).

*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. **This trail was last reviewed in January 2013***

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