

## River Wey Navigation - Guildford to Pyrford

**Moderate Trail:** 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

The Wey was one of the first British rivers to be made navigable and opened to barge traffic in 1653 and it is quite unusual. The Wey has two separate sources in two different counties. The two River Weys unite near the historic Tilford Oak in Surrey

The Wey and its two Navigations flow across 87 miles (140 km) of countryside yet drop a mere 98 feet (30 m) by the time the waterway joins the Thames at Weybridge.

This 15½-mile waterway linked Guildford to Weybridge on the Thames, and then to London. The Godalming Navigation, opened in 1764, enabled barges to work a further four miles upriver. The award-winning visitor centre at Dapdune Wharf in Guildford tells the story of the Navigations and the people who lived and worked on them. Visitors can see where the huge Wey barges were built and climb aboard Reliance, one of three surviving barges.

### Start Directions

Riverside Road, Bellfields, Guildford, just off the A320 by Stoke Bridge MR186/997512

Park in the Riverside Road but do check to see that there are no events on at the Waterside Centre (home of Wey Kayak Club) as the roads can be very full. Park down by the river to the left of the Row Barge Public House. Do not launch or land from the fenced public house grounds and use the small triangular area of land nearest the road bridge

Otherwise walk down to Wey Kayak Club and put on and off there.

**Distance:** 8 miles

**Approximate Time:** 3-5 Hours

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

**Type of Trail:** One Way

**Waterways Travelled:** River Wey Navigation

**Type of Water:** River, with locks and backwaters

**Portages and Locks:** 7 locks (2 are flood gates and normally open)

**Nearest Town:** Guildford

**Start:** Riverside Road, Bellfields, Guildford, GU1 1LW

**Finish:** Anchor Pub, Riverside Road, GU23 6QW

**O.S. Sheets:** Landranger No. 176 – West London, and No. 186 – Aldershot and Guildford

**Licence Information:** A licence is required to paddle on this waterway. See full details in useful information below.

**Local Facilities:** In Guildford, and in local villages

From the A3, take the slip road off, and either left into Stoke Road, or right, and under the bridge into Stoke Road. First left into Maple Grove, turn right at the river.

## Description

The start is downstream, to the left from the Waterside Centre, under the A320 to arrive at Stoke Lock. Portage right and cross over the towpath to launch into the backwater from the pontoon, returning to the canal by passing under the metal footbridge

One mile further on is a tight bend. Take a sharp right to avoid the weir dead ahead, two bridges follow, and then sluice gates under the towpath on the right side. This is Bowers Lock, with a portage on the right side.

Below the lock, the backwater re-joins the canal, and also water from the sluice gates on the right. The A3 road is alongside on the right, and can be noisy.

Turn sharp left after passing under Broadoak Bridge to avoid the weir straight ahead. Sutton Place is to the left, a former home of Henry 8<sup>th</sup> and more recently the Getty family.

Send Church Bridge and Wareham's Bridge are just above the next lock, Trigg's. Portage on the right, and there is a weir chute to the left.

Below here, the river re-joins on the right, the weir chute from the left. It is only 0.8 of a mile to Worsfield Gates, and on the right, an overflow joins, and you should keep right, as the next weir is on the left. The Gates are normally left open, but if not, portage on the right.

Paddle under Ashburton footbridge, and then there are sluice gates on the left. The A247 passes over on Cart Bridge, a large brick bridge next to the New Inn. River turns right, passing under two footbridges, High Bridge and Tanyward Footbridge. The next lock is only 1.6 miles down, and on arriving at Papercourt Lock, portage on the right. There is a large three level weir on the left, near to the lock gates, so take care getting back on the river.

After this, go under a footbridge, the river re-joins the canal on the left, followed by a backwater on the left. On the right, a small weir chute, go left to paddle under the B367 single-track Newark road bridge. (There is a car park here (height restrictor) for arranging a shorter 6 mile paddle)

Keep left and after only 0.7 miles, portage left at Newark Lock. Cross over the towpath footbridge and launch immediately below the lock. The river re-joins the canal on the left, followed by a millstream on the right near the ruined remains of Newark Priory. Downstream, there is another large weir immediately to the right of Walsham Gates. Keep left to enter or portage what is the last of the original turf-sided locks. It is only a mile before reaching the last lock, at the Anchor pub, Pyrford Lock with two footbridges in between.

At Pyrford Lock land on the right bank, where there is plenty of room to sort out boats and equipment before transferring to vehicles parked nearby over the bridge.

## Finish Directions

The Anchor pub, next to the lock – MR187/054593, Pyrford, Surrey (The Anchor pub car park is for customers only and barrier controlled)

From Guildford, take the A3 towards London. Just before the junction with the M25 take the slip road signed for Wisely Royal Horticultural Society and turn into Wisely Lane. Continue on this minor road that leads to Pyrford Lock and cross over the bridge (tight width restriction) for the limited on road parking opposite the Anchor pub.

## Useful Information

**License Information:** The waterways in this trail are managed by The National 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 [The National Trust](#), Dapdune Wharf, Wharf Road, Guildford Surrey GU1 4RR tel 01483 561389. 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](#)

The National Trust has a map and guide to the Navigations, and a book of circular walks from the river. These are available at Thames and Stoke Locks, Dapdune Wharf, Pyrford Basin, Guildford Boat House, Farncombe Boat House and Guildford Tourist Information Centre.

Nicholson Guide to the Waterways No. 7 with Ordnance Survey mapping. Published by Harper Collins.

All weirs can be dangerous, and you should only shoot a weir if you are confident of your ability to do so. An inspection should be made of the weir to assess conditions. If you are unsure of the conditions for you and fellow paddlers, either use the portage point or do not attempt to shoot the weir.

## 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 capsize

**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 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 on the [British Canoeing website](http://www.britishcanoeing.org.uk).

*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 September 2013***

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