

River Wye

85 Mile Challenge



Take on our longest challenge yet - 85 miles on the River Wye. Few journeys in Britain whether on land or water give you the chance to travel a full 85 miles. Starting from Glasbury, you will take in the beautiful scenery of England and Wales on this four day route to Redbrook.

The route is mainly flat water with some simple grade 1 rapids and fast moving water as well as a grade 2 rapid at Symonds Yat.



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For challenge webpage



"If you have never navigated the Wye you have seen nothing"

William Gilpin 1782



Discover **the challenge:**



Distance: 85 miles
Time: 4 days
Start: Glasbury Bridge, Glasbury, **HR3 5NP**
Finish: Redbrook Car Park, Redbrook, **NP25 6JL**
OS Maps: Explorer 201 Knighton and Presteigne, Explorer 189 Hereford and Ross-on-Wye and Explorer 14 Wye Valley and Forest of Dean

We suggest completing this route over 4 days, with your final day as a short one. However, you may decide to do it in a shorter or longer time period.

The River Wye wends its way from the Welsh mountains to join the River Severn at Chepstow. For much of its length it cleaves a gentle split between England and Wales. The Wye is regarded as one of the finest lowland landscapes in Britain, with plants and animal life of international importance. On the river you can see kingfishers, otters and salmon. In the Forest of Dean wild boar and deer roam freely.

The whole length of the river is protected as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and from Hereford onwards you enter The Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The protection of the river and its habitat ensures that canoeists can enjoy the unspoilt wonders of the Wye.

Paddling along the Wye takes you past Neolithic cave dwellings, Iron Age forts and Roman settlements, whilst taking in the peaceful pace of modern life in this area.

It is possible to extend this Challenge Route by paddling a further 15 miles to Chepstow. This would make your journey a full 100 miles. However, from Brockweir, 7 miles below Redbrook, the river changes its nature and has the characteristics of a tidal river. There are strong tidal currents and bank access is extremely difficult, so any planned stops on the bank should be at or before Brockweir. This section of river should be navigated by experienced canoeists only.

For a wealth of further information, including canoe hire, accommodation and further reading **please see the Supporting Document** which accompanies this challenge.

Don't forget to register your completed challenge at **britishcanoeing.org.uk/wyechallenge** to receive your medal and certificate and get your name on the challenge leaderboard!

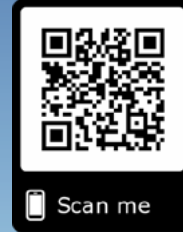


Bredwardine Bridge by Claire Cox



Day 1 Glasbury to Byecross

Distance: 23 miles
Start: Glasbury Bridge, Glasbury, HR3 5NP
Finish: Byecross Farm Campsite, Preston on Wye, HR2 9LJ
BE AWARE: There is a weir on this route; please see safety information.

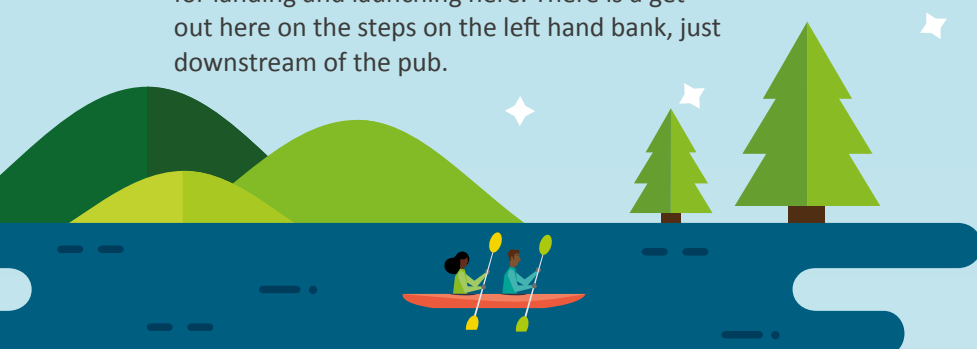


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Start above Glasbury Bridge, in an area surrounded by spectacular hills and mountains. Pass through Hay on Wye, renowned for its bookshops and literary festival, taking in small rapids and calm waters as you go. Continue through Whitney on Wye and pretty Bredwardine before reaching your finish at Byecross.

- 1 Launch from Upper Glas-y-Bont Common (beach get in), just above Glasbury Bridge and turn left. Launch times are restricted to between 10.00am and 4.00pm with paddlers asked to be at Hay on Wye no later than 5.00pm.
- 2 At around 2 miles pass Hollybush Campsite on your right. After about 4.5 miles, just above Hay-on-Wye, come across The Warren as you round a right hand bend in the river. **This is a natural small weir which you normally pass through on the right. In low water it can be a bit rocky and worth an inspection before shooting.**
- 3 Hay-on-Wye is reached after 5 miles. Well worth a visit the town can be accessed by landing on the purpose-built slipway on the right hand bank about 50m below Hay Bridge.
- 4 Continue on for a few more miles, passing under Whitney Toll Bridge at 10 miles before reaching the Boat Inn at Whitney-on-Wye. There is a charge for landing and launching here. There is a get out here on the steps on the left hand bank, just downstream of the pub.
- 5 Heading downstream from Whitney-on-Wye the river meanders through the countryside set against the Welsh mountains. 5 miles after Whitney, pass Turners Boat Island to your left. Beyond this there are a series of small rapids that take you the 4 miles down to the village of Bredwardine. Bredwardine has an impressive 6 arch bridge. Access is below the bridge, on a beach then up a difficult bank, on the right hand bank.
- 6 3.5 miles later you reach the end of the trail at Byecross. Access is at Byecross Farm Campsite, which has good facilities. Steps and a ramp lead from the water on the right hand bank at the entrance to the campsite. Congratulations on completing day one of your challenge!





Day 1 Glasbury to Byecross

Area Information

Mid Wales and The Brecon Beacons National Park

Mid Wales and the Brecon National Park provide an incredible outdoor playground, filled with things to do and see.

www.midwalesmyway.com
www.breconbeacons.org

Hay-on-Wye

This picturesque border town started life as a coaching route. The world famous Hay Literary Festival takes place annually, attracting visitors from all over the world.

www.hay-on-wye.co.uk

Whitney Toll Bridge

Built in the late 1770's under Prime Minister Pitt the Younger, this is one of only 8 privately owned toll bridges in the country. It costs £1 to pass over but is free to pass under!

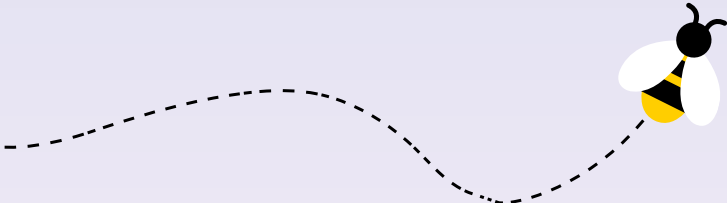
www.whitneybridge.co.uk/about

Bredwardine

The impressive brick built, six arch bridge at Bredwardine was built in 1769. This picturesque village has a post office, shop and pub. The village also boasts a Norman church, well worth a visit.

greatenglishchurches.co.uk/html/bredwardine.html

For a wealth of further information, including canoe hire, accommodation and further reading **please see the Supporting Document** which accompanies this challenge.



Day 2 Bycross to Hoarwithy

Distance: 28 miles

Start: Bycross Farm Campsite, Preston on Wye, HR2 9LJ

Finish: Tresseck Farm Campsite, Hoarwithy, HR2 6QH

BE AWARE: There is a rapid on this route; please see safety information.



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Your longest challenge day takes you from the countryside into the city of Hereford and back out into the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. With rapids from the start you will sweep through beautiful countryside and steep wooded valleys.

- 1 Putting in from Bycross Campsite, turn right and immediately come to the Grade 2 rapids of Monnington Falls. **This is a rapid that requires inspection and careful navigation.** The rapid runs alongside an island located after a steep 180 degree left hand bend in the river. At low and medium water levels the rapid can be shot to the left of the island. Inspection for obstructions and route finding can be undertaken by landing on the beach on the left hand bank and walking down to the rapid via the river. Plot your route through the rocks and watch out for the boils, particularly down the deep channel in low water.
- 2 There are occasional small rapids at points on the way to Hereford but nothing that needs inspection. The river is quiet and peaceful. Pass the tiny village of Bridge Sollers at just over 3 miles, with its 12th Century, Grade 2 listed church.
- 3 After passing another small village, Canon Bridge, on your right at five miles, round a bend in the river and see the National Trust owned The Weir Garden.
- 4 At 10 miles Belmont Golf Course is on your right. Not long after this start to enter the outskirts of Hereford. Hereford Rowing Club is on the left at almost 12 miles. If you would like to take your lunch break here there is a purpose built canoe launch point under Greyfriars road bridge.
- 5 Another 3 miles after Hereford you pass the Wye Invader, a 150ft Dutch barge. The river is quiet and meandering. A diversion can be taken after 19 miles to explore the River Lugg where it joins the Wye. If you explore the Lugg, upstream after 500 meters you will find the village of Mordiford and the Moon Inn.
- 6 Towards the end of the trail, encounter Carey Island rapids. A simple grade 1 rapid, normally taken on the right. Finish your journey 100 meters below Hoarwithy bridge on the right hand bank. At low water there is a beach and steps leading up a steep bank to Tresseck Farm Campsite. Congratulations on completing day two of your challenge!



Siblings paddling the Wye by Ian Harris



Day 2 Bycross to Hoarwithy

Area Information

National Trust - The Weir Garden

The Weir Garden is a 10 acre site including riverside gardens, glass houses and a walled garden. An ideal place to stop for a picnic or purchase refreshments. You are likely to be charged as visitors

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/the-weir-garden

Hereford

The historic city of Hereford has a friendly market town feel. Visit the Cathedral of Hereford, a place of worship for over 1,300 years.

www.herefordcathedral.org

Wye Invader

A 150 ft Dutch barge; in 2015 it was the first vessel of its size to navigate the Wye from Chepstow for 150 years.

www.wyeinvader.uk

Hoarwithy

Visit St Catherine's Church; inspired by Italianate Romanesque and Byzantine architecture.

British Canoeing own Toll Paddock here. Wild camping is allowed, strictly by prior arrangement via

SYMG@britishcanoeing.org.uk

www.visitherefordshirechurches.co.uk/st-catherines-hoarwithy

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Discover more about the diverse, protected wildlife that is of international importance.

wyevalleyaonb.org.uk

For a wealth of further information, including canoe hire, accommodation and further reading **please see the Supporting Document** which accompanies this challenge.



Day 3 Hoarwithy to Symonds Yat

Distance: 25.4 miles

Start: Tresseck Farm Campsite, Hoarwithy, HR2 6QH

Finish: River Wye Caravan and Camping, Symonds Yat West, HR9 6DA
or Wyedean Canoe Centre, Symonds Yat East, HR9 6JL

BE AWARE: There are rapids on this route; please see safety information.



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The remoteness of this section has enabled wildlife to flourish. Your meandering route is punctuated by small rapids, taking you through historic Ross on Wye and the Forest of Dean. Pass under the dramatic Yat rock before finishing at picturesque Symonds Yat.

- 1 Launching from Tresseck Farm Campsite turn right. After 2.5 miles pass under Sellack footbridge. 200 meters downstream of the bridge lies Sellack Common on the right hand bank, which offers a place to stop.
- 2 The river meanders quietly through the countryside, passing the odd farm and small village. There are some minor rapids around the hamlet of Hole in the Wall, some 7 miles after the start.
- 3 At around 9.2 miles you will pass by the remains of Backney Railway Bridge, which once carried the Great Western Railway over the Wye. At Backney Common there is a popular picnic site.
- 4 At just over 11.5 miles you reach Ross on Wye. There is a public canoe launch point 200 meters downstream of the Hope and Anchor pub on the left hand bank. You can get out here then, a further 200 meters away by road, there is a car park with toilets.
- 5 500 meters after the Hope and Anchor pub reach Wilton Bridge. Take the centre arch then keep to the right of the island just downstream. **After Wilton Bridge, to the accompaniment of the A40, encounter a series of rapids with some waves that will hold your attention.**
- 6 After just over 16 miles look out for Goodrich Castle high up on the right hand bank. One mile later approach Kerne Bridge. The river becomes busier from here down to Symonds Yat. **Immediately below Kerne Bridge fast water and strong currents can push you into trees/branches. At low water levels there is a gravel bank below the bridge from which you can inspect.**
- 7 Two miles on from Kerne Bridge the river takes a sharp right hand bend. On this bend is Lydbrook rapid. Rounding the bend you will see an island on the right. Keep to the left of the island. Lower Lydbrook village and picnic site is on the left just after the rapids.
- 8 The river makes its way around Yat Rock and down to Symonds Yat. There is a charge for landing and launching here. This is a very popular tourist destination with a lot of river traffic. Make sure you know where your finish point is as Symonds Yat has an East and a West on opposite banks.
- 9 Immediately after Symonds Yat East there is a grade two rapid. If you overshoot your get out, the rapid will take you a long way downstream. It's a long walk back with your boat!!! Congratulations on completing day three of your challenge!





Day 3 Hoarwithy to Symonds Yat

Area Information

Ross-on-Wye

St Mary's Church spire has shaped the skyline of Ross-on-Wye for over 700 years. A focal point for tourism over the centuries Ross-on-Wye is somewhere you will want to spend time.

visitrossonwye.com

Lower Lydbrook

There is a popular picnic site and pub at the small village of Lower Lydbrook, with a canoe launching point on the left hand side of the river.

Symonds Yat West

Ice cream served is almost on the river bank with a bar, children's entertainments and The Old Court Hotel just 200m away. Get out on the right hand bank at a small purpose built canoe launch point. A few hundred meters further downstream on the right you will see Ye Olde Ferrie Inn.

Symonds Yat East

With its historic hand-pulled ferry across the river this is one of the most idyllic places on the Wye. There are a range of refreshment opportunities here.

From Symonds Yat East the imposing Yat Rock can be reached by footpath. Here you can enjoy the view across the Wye valley.

Symonds Yat Rapid

British Canoeing is proud to be the custodian of Symonds Yat Rapids. Due to the hard work and commitment of local volunteers the rapid is protected and maintained for everyone's enjoyment.



For a wealth of further information, including canoe hire, accommodation and further reading **please see the Supporting Document** which accompanies this challenge.

Day 4 Symonds Yat to Redbrook

Distance: 9 miles

Start: River Wye Caravan and Camping, Symonds Yat West, **HR9 6DA**
or Wyedean Canoe Centre, Symonds Yat East, **HR9 6JL**

Finish: Redbrook Car Park, Redbrook, **NP25 6JL**

BE AWARE: There are rapids on this route; please see safety information.
Stay on the right hand side of rowers when passing.



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The final day of your challenge is short but sweet. Start by taking in a Grade 2 rapid before entering the dramatic gorge of the Seven Sisters Rocks. Take in the bustling, historic town of Monmouth before finishing at the welcoming village of Redbrook.

1 Shortly after the start are Symonds Yat rapids; a 150m, grade 2 rapid, modified to enhance its recreational value by the addition of boulder groynes along its length. Inspect the rapid from the path that runs along the left hand bank. If starting from Symonds Yat East it's best to do this before you set off, although it's possible to land on the left before the rapid. Pass the Royal Lodge Hotel on the left and enter the rapid. It should be shot in the main flow that takes you to the left hand side of the island. Avoid the boulder walls on the left bank and any stray boulders that have broken away in the current.

2 1.5 miles further on there is a small rapid by Biblins campsite. Shortly after this you will see a number of limestone crags above the treeline. These are the Seven Sisters Rocks. When you come to Hadnock Island, take the left channel.

3 Hadnock Island marks the end of the gorge and the start of the run into Monmouth. On this section watch out for rowers training on the river. The navigation rules are that you stay on the right hand side. There is a get out at Monmouth on the steps just after you pass the Rowing Club; right hand bank. Monmouth town centre is a short walk from here.

4 As you leave Monmouth there is a small rapid as you navigate down the left hand side of an island and make your way down to your finish at Redbrook.

Congratulations on completing the River Wye Challenge Route!

Don't forget to register your completed challenge at britishcanoeing.org.uk/wyechallenge to receive your medal and certificate and get your name on the challenge leaderboard!



Day 4 Symonds Yat to Redbrook

Area Information

King Arthur's cave

Hidden in the trees around the Seven Sisters Rocks you can visit the cave and a local visitor centre:

showmeengland.co.uk/ross-on-wye/tourism/king-arthurs-cave-symonds-yat-herefordshire

www.kingarthurslabyrinth.co.uk

Monmouth

Stop off and visit the historic border town of Monmouth. The get out is on the set of steps just after you pass Monmouth Rowing Club, right hand bank.

www.royalforestofdean.info/monmouthshire/monmouth.shtml

Redbrook

There are two good pubs here. The Bell Inn in Redbrook village and Boat Inn on the opposite bank via a footbridge from the car park.

Extending Your Challenge

Experienced paddlers can extend their challenge to 100 miles by continuing on to Chepstow. This section is tidal. It is very important that you read the information in the Supporting Document before choosing to do this.

For a wealth of further information, including canoe hire, accommodation and further reading **please see the Supporting Document** which accompanies this challenge.



Safety Advice

As with all sports and activities taking place in the natural environment there can be an element of risk involved in canoeing and kayaking.

The following are some basic tips for staying safe on the water - you can find out more on our website at britishcanoeing.org.uk

- **ALWAYS** be certain to let others know where you're going and when you're expected to return
- **BE CERTAIN** that the journey you plan is within your capabilities
- **CHECK** weather forecast and river levels
- **WEAR** appropriate safety equipment and clothing

Safety Equipment

ALWAYS wear a buoyancy aid and ensure that all in your party, especially children, have one suitable to their size. Keep your mobile phone to hand in a waterproof case in case of emergencies. A whistle would also be good to carry if possible.

Clothing

Take footwear you don't mind getting wet and clothing suitable for the weather conditions. Ideally take dry clothing in a suitable dry pack, especially in colder weather conditions.

Rapids And Natural Weirs

When inspecting these river features look out for boulders/rocks that might be in the river and plan a route down the river which avoids these. Pick a

clean route down the rapid by looking for sections of water that are still green coloured (these may often form a V shape). If in any doubt just get out and walk around the rapid from the bank.

Rapid spots tend to be busy and popular sections so always keep an eye out for other river users to avoid collisions as you paddle through.

River And Weather Conditions

Know the weather forecast before you set out and be prepared for this to change; sometimes quickly and without warning. If you are unsure of your ability to deal with the weather conditions leave the trip for another day. River levels can change rapidly on the Wye due to rainfall across a large catchment area. You will need to be aware and take account of changing water levels in and immediately after heavy rainfall.

The river should not be paddled in flood conditions unless you are a very experienced paddler. If you are hiring a boat, the hire company can advise you on conditions and safety.

River levels can be checked and viewed on www.riverlevels.uk

Navigation Rules

Ensure to keep to the right where possible and take care around bridges and other infrastructure where visibility can be impaired. Powered boats have right of way over unpowered craft. Give other river users as much space as possible.



Environment and Good Practice

Paddling is a low impact activity, giving great opportunities to see and hear wildlife and the environment up close. Please follow the tips below to ensure we continue to protect and enhance our natural environment and share the space considerately with others:

- Leave the environment as you found it and take your litter home with you.
- Keep noise to a minimum.
- Do not 'seal' launch or drag boats to avoid damage to the natural banks. Where possible keep to designated paths or launching points.
- Paddle a safe distance away from wildlife to avoid causing disturbance and stress.
- Show consideration to other water users and treat them with courtesy and respect.
- Change discreetly, using public facilities where possible.
- Keep a look out for anglers while paddling. Co-operate to avoid lines, nets and swims. If it is unclear where to pass, quietly attract the attention of the angler and agree a route to follow.

In addition, always follow the **CHECK, CLEAN, DRY** guidance to minimise the spread of invasive aquatic species:

Check

Check your equipment and clothing for live plants and animals. Particularly in areas that are damp or hard to inspect.

Clean

Clean and wash all equipment, footwear and clothing thoroughly. If you do come across any plants or animals, leave them at the water body where you found them.

Dry

Dry all equipment and clothing - some species can live for many days in moist conditions. Make sure you don't transfer water elsewhere.

Licence Information

The waterways on this trail don't require you to have a licence to paddle on them. However if you paddle regularly you should consider becoming a member of British Canoeing.

A British Canoeing membership gives you a whole range of benefits including a licence to paddle on 4500km of Britain's waterways and Civil Liability Insurance, worth up to £10 million.

Not only will membership help save you money, it will give you peace of mind when out on the waterways. For more information on British Canoeing membership visit: www.britishcanoeing.org.uk